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Metaphor Manifested: an Examination of Metaphor in Katherine Mansfield

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Following the strict conventions of the Victorian era, modernism was viewed as a radical explosion of ideas and techniques. Modernists sought affirmation of the validity of humanity. Oppressed by the restricted Victorian attitude, modernists aspired to establish innovative ways of story telling based on aesthetic design. According to David Lodge, modernism was defined as "...experimental or innovatory in form, exhibiting marked deviations from existing modes of discourse..." (481). Modernism facilitated multiple literary possibilities and therefore the movement thrived upon its diversification. "The search for a style and typology becomes a self-conscious element in the modernist's literary production; he is perpetually engaged in profound and ceaseless journey through the means and integrity of art" (Bradbury, McFarlane 29). The individuality allotted by modernism was borne out of its emphasis on the creative. Lodge explored modern literature, particularly the development of the text.

Frequently, therefore, a modern novel has no real 'beginning', since it plunges us into a flowing stream of experience with which we gradually familiarize ourselves by a process of inference and association; its ending is usually 'open' or ambiguous, leaving the reader in doubt as to the characters' final destiny (Lodge 481).

He further asserted "...other modes of aesthetic ordering become more prominent-such as allusion to or imitation of literary models, or mythical archetypes [...] motifs, images, symbols..." (Lodge 481). Modern literature as defined by Lodge can be applied to Katherine Mansfield, whose work is an exemplar of modernity in its eclectic style and exaggeration, or manipulation of traditional literary techniques, such as metaphor. Mansfield's use of metaphor is specifically derived from the influence of the Symbolist movement, a precursor of modernism.

Symbolism was a movement centered on the belief that literature should aspire to embody total truths attained only by an oblique method. *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, by Arthur Symons, explored the development of symbolism in French literature. Symons quoted Carlyle, who wrote that in a symbol "...there is concealment and yet revelation: hence therefore, by silence and speech acting together, comes a double significance" (2). Symons considered symbolism an exploration of the previously contained consciousness and further asserted that symbolism enabled the reader to view a concealed reality. Symbolist poet Villiers De L'Isle-Adam portrayed the attitude of the movement with the exploration of the idealism. "...It must always be the choice of the artist, to whom, in his contemplation of life, the means is often so much more important than the end" (Symons 22). Villiers believed the process of creating literature and experiencing life was much more significant than the actual end result. Symons emphasized Villiers to expose symbolism's deviation from science "as materialistic" (24). Literary critic Clive Scott quotes Symbolist poet Paul Valery describing the movement, "For a long, long time, the human voice was the foundation and conditions of all literature...a day came when the reader could read with his eyes alone without having to spell things out, or hear them, and literature was completely transformed by this" (Scott 207). Valery argued the reader was capable and willing to examine the text. He believed the reader would be able to identify and apply the use of symbolism to the text without explicit direction. Symons dedicated his text and credited the migration of symbolism and its influence to W.B. Yeats. Yeats also rejected the "scientific" and believed, prior to symbolism, literature had lost its significance with its convergence to the external world. Yeats affirmed symbolism's intent to evoke reader response. "All sounds, all colours, all

forms, either because of their preordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotions..." (Yeats 156). Yeats emphasized synaesthesia as an important aspect of symbolism. Symons emphasized the uniqueness of form in symbolist literature and referred to form as "carefully elaborated" (4). "Here, however, all this elaboration comes from a very different motive, and leads to other ends. There is such a thing as perfecting form that form may be annihilated" (Symons 5). Symbolism embraced mysticism and exonerated itself from "...the old bondage of rhetoric, the old bondage of exteriority" (Symons 5). Symbolism extricated itself from tradition and aspired to "come closer to humanity" (Symons 5).

The difference between symbol and metaphor is addressed in Max Black's text *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. Black used Sir Thomas Browne's quote "Light is but the shadow of God" to establish the dissimilarity between symbol and metaphor (26).

Light must be supposed to have a symbolic sense, and certainly to mean far more than it would in the context of a textbook on optics. Here, the metaphorical sense of expression 'the shadow of God' imposes a meaning richer than usual upon the subject of the sentence (Black 27).

Black argued a simple metaphor consisted of "...some words [...] used metaphorically while the remained are used nonmetaphorically. An attempt to construct an entire sentence of words that are used metaphorically results in a proverb, an allegory, or a riddle." (27). Symbol and metaphor are dually employed by Mansfield, with the latter being predominant. Mansfield often "transferred" meaning to an object to implicate the theme. Black proposed a metaphorical statement consisted of "two distinct subjects -- 'principal' subject and a 'subsidiary one' (44). "The metaphor selects, emphasizes,

suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject” (Black 45). Black considered the definition of metaphor and its function in literature related to the role of the reader.

“Again, the reader is taken to enjoy problem-solving -- or to delight in the author’s skill at half concealing, half-revealing his meaning. Or metaphors provide a shock of ‘agreeable surprise’ and so on” (Black 34). Black’s exploration of metaphor “half concealing” or “half revealing” is evident in Mansfield’s work. “To know what the user of a metaphor means, we need to know how ‘seriously’ he treats the metaphorical focus (Black 29).

David Daiches explored the relevance of the symbol within modern fiction. He referred to the “literary artist” and questioned the importance of the symbol within the construction of the modern story.

Modern fiction has been concerned, to a greater degree than fiction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with two questions. The first is what symbol will suggest most effectively the required aspect of experience? And the second is, what aspects of experience do you want your symbol to suggest (Daiches 166).

Most importantly Daiches established the departure of Mansfield from traditional employment of the symbol and exposed her modification of it to align with her style.

“She preferred to approach human activity from the very limited single situation and work ‘out,’ setting going overtones and implications by means of her manipulation of symbols...” (Daiches 171).

Mansfield emulated Villiers’ philosophy of idealism in several of her short stories. Villiers preferred “...the complex to the simple, the perverse to the straightforward, the ambiguous to the either” (Symons 28). Mansfield’s own characters and themes resonate

with Villiers' Symbolist objective. Clare Hanson explored Mansfield as a Symbolist and unveiled Symbolism's influence on her style. "The central idea which she took from these writers was the belief that in literature abstract states of mind or feeling should be conveyed through concrete images rather than described analytically" (Hanson 217).

Mansfield extracted several of Symbolism's principles and customized them accordingly to create a unique style. The application of metaphor in Mansfield's work guides the reader toward the revelation of a theme. Mansfield uses metaphor for two purposes.

... we are led into an acknowledgement of relationships and suggestive analogies of whose existence we had previously been unaware. [...] KM is able to exploit the 'luminous halo' surrounding the lighted core of any given metaphor: she able to utilize the wider, less well defined attributes or associations of a particular image in order to suggest indirectly a point of view which she was unable to openly state (Hanson 214).

Metaphor as exercised by Mansfield resulted in modern literature that embodied the creativity of the movement itself.

Borne out of Symbolism's influence, Mansfield's use of the literary device metaphor led to what Robert Caserio referred to as the "Mansfield moment." Caserio believed Mansfield constructed her stories so that at the center of each was a pivotal moment of recognition, a "...expanded moment, minutiae magnified, rather than a world contracted" (344). Caserio referred to the "Mansfield moment" as one "which relations fail, and revelations are useless" (344). The "Mansfield moment" is exposed through the implementation of metaphor. Further study of Mansfield's literary technique was embarked upon by W.H. New. New's *Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form* emphasized "...language, the process of reading, or the context of narrative as the idea of solution..." (New xi). New examined the "writing and reading practice, and on the

contexts that affect them” (xiv). New evaluated Mansfield’s originality and suggested “...how reading Mansfield calls for a reconsideration of the function of formal design” (xv). Caserio and New’s study of Mansfield’s work is further acknowledgment of her importance in modern literature.

“The Garden Party” is Mansfield’s most anthologized work and rooted in metaphor. The story is centered on the character of Laura Sheridan, a naïve, privileged young woman. Mansfield’s use of metaphor resulted in the exposure of Laura Sheridan’s character. Mansfield recognized the responsibility of character development. The incorporation of “language provided the medium. External description, dialogue, symbolic imagery, plot: these became trial structures on which to hang possibilities” (New 43). When Laura noticed the roses in her garden she thought,

As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden-parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds, had come out in a single night; the green bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by archangels (282).

Critic Ben Satterfield wrote, “...the flower imagery throughout the story serves to keep the reader reminded of the delicacy of Laura’s world. The flowers are splendid, beautiful, and- what is not stated- short lived” (69). Satterfield echoes New’s expression of the importance of language and explores the element of irony in relation to language. Similar to a rose, Laura is a delicate creature; the limited existence and fragility of a flower is a metaphor for the subject of death. The employment of the rose as a metaphor for death is evidence of symbolism’s influence in Mansfield’s work. Symbolism placed value in the exploration of life as a journey. Symons argued the fear of death revealed a lack of happiness within life. “And so there is a great, silent conspiracy between us to forget

death; all our lives we spent in busily forgetting death. That is why we are so active about so many things which we know to be unimportant..." (Symons 94). The metaphor of the rose implicates death's function in the development of the story.

The portrayal of class hierarchy and identity are critical to the construction of the theme in "The Garden Party." Laura's recognition of social hierarchy is exposed to contrast herself amongst society. Assigned the task to deliver and observe the instruction of workmen, Laura identified a curiosity within the activity.

Four men in their shirt-sleeves stood grouped together on the garden path. They carried staves covered with rolls of canvas and they had big tool-bags slung on their back. They look impressive. Laura wished now that she had not go the bread-and-butter, but there was nowhere to put it, and she couldn't possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look sever and even a bit short-sighted as she came up to them (Mansfield 283).

The attempt of Laura to display severity is a response to her embarrassment over the bread and butter, which she believed to signify immaturity. As she monitored the workmen she discovered a sincerity in their behavior and asked herself, "Why couldn't she have workmen for friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper?" (Mansfield 284). The acknowledgment of Laura's preference toward the workmen is a revelation of her identity and its disparity from the Sheridan family.

Occupied with the activity of the preparation of a garden party Laura is interrupted by the announcement of Mr. Scott's death, a young carter who lived in a cottage near the Sheridan residence. Laura's immediate reaction to cease the party is followed by her family's disbelief of the proposal. The social bias of the Sheridan family is disclosed in their reaction to the death of Mr. Scott. References to drunken behavior and poor living conditions expose the Sheridan family's inability to identify with any

class structure other than their own. Laura's contemplation of the event is suspended by her mother's gift of a hat. Satterfield quotes Marvin Magalaner, "When the mother thus presents her daughter with her own party hat in typical coronation fashion, she is symbolically transferring to Laura the Sheridan heritage of snobbery, restricted social views, narrowness of view-the garden party syndrome" (69). Laura's independent identity is stricken upon receipt of the hat and replaced with Mrs. Sheridan's social belief.

When Laura decided to visit the home of the deceased, the hat marked her entrance into an ordinary world with an extraordinary accessory. Laura's own thought, "And the big hat with the velvet streamer-if only it was another hat" is an acknowledgment of her displacement (Mansfield 295). Faced with the confrontation of the widow she sobbed and uttered, "Forgive my hat" (Mansfield 96). Laura's request for forgiveness is definitive of Caserio's "Mansfield moment."

The agonized moment has two characteristics: the sudden alienation and estrangement of daily life from itself; and resistance to any closure of the estrangement, once it occurs. The momentary agony's effect is enduring suspense, ordinary life is disoriented permanently (Caserio 344).

The apologetic nature of Laura is not for the manner of her dress, but rather for the mannerism of her class. The hat is a metaphorical accessory that is used to portray class division; it is the center of expression of class hierarchy. Faced with the "agonized moment" Laura experienced education of social value.

The "Mansfield moment" is uniquely created in each story. "Instead of the ending hinging on a character's return from pleasant fantasy to unpleasant reality, fantasy or the imagination intervenes to ameliorate a distressing situation in the real world" (Hankin

189). “The Doll’s House” is the story of the Burnell family. A gift to the children, the doll’s house is magnificent in its structure and detail.

They had never seen anything like it in their lives. All the rooms were papered. There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with gold frames complete. Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing-room, green in dining-room; tables, beds with real bedclothes, a cradle, a stove, a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug (Mansfield 315).

Isabel and Lottie’s were infatuated with the doll house and focused on its ornate detail.

The house was constructed to resemble a life size model. “But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully was the lamp. It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe (Mansfield 315).

Kezia’s fascination of the lamp established her as dissimilar to her siblings. “The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll’s house”

(Mansfield 315). The remark of the mother and father doll as “stiff” followed by the mention of them “not belonging” identified opposition to elaborate modernity. “But the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, ‘I live here.’ The lamp was real”

(Mansfield 315). Applied as a metaphor, the lamp portrayed a difference of appreciation between the Burnell children. The gift mesmerized the children and the next day the eldest Burnell child, Isabel, shared the announcement of its arrival. Girls positioned around Isabel with the exception of the Kelveys. “They knew better than to come anywhere near the Burnell’s” (Mansfield 316). Isabel described the arrival of the doll’s house and many shared an interest in its grandeur. Kezia added to the conversation with the mention of the lamp, but was ignored by the crowd who had become interested in the elaborate description of the other details of the house. The reiteration of the lamp is

introduced for a two fold purpose; to again establish the difference between Kezia and the other children and to "...emphasize an observation or idea, perhaps to reaffirm it, perhaps with some other reason in mind" (New 103). The lamp is metaphorically employed to foreshadow an idea which will further develop in the story.

Social class hierarchy is introduced as a reason for the Kelveys distance from Isabel. "For the fact was, the school the Burnell children went to was not at all the kind of place their parents would have chosen if there had been any choice. But there was none. It was the only school for miles" (Mansfield 316). The school "forced" children of different socio-economic backgrounds to "mix." The Kelveys "...were the daughters of a spry, hardworking little washerwoman who went about from house to house by the day" (Mansfield 316). Clothing was employed to emphasize class division. "Why Mrs. Kelvey made them so conspicuous was hard to understand. The truth was they were dressed in 'bits' given to her by the people for whom she worked" (Mansfield 317). Lil was dressed in an outfit that was made out of an old Burnell table cloth. Lil's outfit is important to the establishment of social hierarchy. ~~It once belonged to the Burnell family,~~ but it was discarded or thought useless until Mrs. Kelvey viewed its potentiality as an outfit. Fashion expressed social position, but was also metaphorically employed to portray an art form. "... In this story independence of art from the world and its dependence on the world seem mutually possible, and mutually transformative" (Caserio 347).

As days passed the doll house was viewed by everyone except the Kelveys. The Burnell children were forbidden to socialize with the Kelveys. Kezia asked her mother for permission to invite the Kelveys to visit and view the doll's house. When her mother

declined the request Kezia asked for further explanation. "Run away, Kezia; you know quite well why not" (Mansfield 318). Social hierarchy controlled and delegated social activity. Continually mocked by the children, the Kelveys are further distanced from social interaction. Despite direction, Kezia decided to invite the Kelveys to view the doll's house. Kezia's tour of the doll's house is interrupted by Aunt Beryl's discovery of the Kelveys. The Kelveys left and Kezia are reprimanded as Aunt Beryl admitted pleasure in the action, "But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming" (Mansfield 321). The infliction of pain and the enjoyment of the act revealed the cruelty of elite society.

The construction of the story is important in the disclosure of the "Mansfield moment." "When Our Else, in 'The Doll's House,' tells her sister Lil that she 'seen the little lamp,' her speech communicates only part of her message; it is the silence that follows that the rest of the message occurs, in the unstated..." (New 80). Kezia and the Kelveys are united by the shared joy they exhibit for the lamp. The lamp is used to "...provide the conditions for human sympathy and its preciousness" (Cochrane 151).

What has happened, obviously, and what has been shown by Mansfield, is that a lifelike miniature, an almost exact artistic double of a real thing, can create such wonder and interest that it has a power to change the real world, as well as to copy it. This model, having inspired a breach in Kezia's class feeling, also consoles the class-damaged children for their hurt, by giving them the liberty to be conscious, in a new way, of what is real (Caserio 347).

"The Doll's House" embodied Symbolist ideology and introduced the idea that "...a visible world is no longer a reality, and the unseen world no longer a dream" (Symons 3).

The “Mansfield moment” revealed the metaphoric purpose of the lamp; to illuminate the spirit in a dark world.

The institution of marriage in the modern world was explored in the short story entitled “Bliss.” Bertha is introduced as a jovial woman, seduced by the magnificence of life. Her exuberant attitude is acknowledged in a pivotal introductory moment of self-pleasure. “What can you do if you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss-absolute bliss!...”(Mansfield 143). Bertha, overwhelmed by the ecstasy of the moment, recognized its presence and intensity, “But in her bosom there was still that bright glowing place- that shower of little sparks coming from it. It was almost unbearable” (Mansfield 144). “The metaphorical use of an expression consists, on this view, of the use of that expression in other than its proper or normal sense, in some context that allows the improper or abnormal sense to be detected and appropriately transformed” (Black 31). As the narrative is unfolded the personality of Bertha is further disclosed.

Amidst the preparation for a dinner party Bertha is distracted by a view of the garden. Her vision is directed to the pear tree, “...in fullest, richest bloom; it stood perfect as though becalmed against the jade-green sky” (Mansfield 147). Bertha confessed the pear tree a ‘symbol of her own life’ (Mansfield 147). “All in flower, it symbolizes the height of sexual readiness, since flowers are sexual organs. ‘Down below, in the garden beds, the red and yellow tulips, heavy with flowers,’ phallic but not fully erect, ‘seemed to lean upon the dusk’” (Dilworth 149). Continuously employed, symbolic imagery is integrated to emphasize the text. When Pearl Fulton arrived she was dressed, “all in silver, with a silver fillet binding her pale blond hair...”(Mansfield 150). When Bertha escorted

Pearl into the dining room she experienced a “blazing” of bliss, cementing a connection between the two women. “And in the back of her mind, there was the pear tree. It would be silver now, in the light of poor dear Eddie’s moon, silver as Miss Fulton...” (Mansfield 151). The experience of “bliss” and the thought of the pear tree led to a pivotal moment in the story. Bertha discovered desire for her husband,

Oh, she’d loved him-she’d been in love with him, of course, in every other way, but just not in that way. And, equally, of course, she’d understood that he was different. They’d discussed it is so often. It had worried her dreadfully at first to find that she was so cold, but after a time it had not seemed to matter. They were so frank with each other-such good pals. That was the best of being modern (Mansfield 154).

The expression of desire after its absence in the marriage is a commentary on the modern institution of marriage itself. Usually Miss Fulton remained ambiguous and quiet, but she requested to view the garden, “And the two women stood side by side looking at the slender, flowering tree. Although it was so still it seemed, like the flame of a candle, to stretch up, to point, to quiver in the bright air, to grow taller and taller as they gazed-almost to touch the rim of the moon” (Mansfield 153). W. H. New explored spatiality of metaphor in Mansfield’s work. New wrote,

Just as the quiet day’s end in a Mansfield story is seldom as peaceful as illusion suggests, and the stillness of nature (the pear tree in ‘Bliss,’ for example) unlikely as immutable as the perceiving character thinks, so the silent women are not without language“ (81).

The most significant “Mansfield moment“ occurs in the revelation of the affair of Pearl Fulton and Harry. Bertha’s devastation or “Mansfield moment“ is emphasized by Pearl Fulton’s exclamation, “Your lovely pear tree!” (Mansfield 156).

The intimate connection Bertha believed to share with Miss Fulton is affirmed in the pear tree. “...Miss Fulton is referring to Harry and might as well be saying, ‘Your

lovely husband' (Dilworth 150). Pearl Fulton's expression of sexuality is undeniable as it is exchanged in the relationship shared with Harry. Bertha's "bliss" is distorted as the realization of the absence of passion is admitted. The falsity in Bertha's perception of "bliss" does not hinder the relevance of the pear tree. "oh, what is going to happen?" she cried. But the pear tree was as lovely as ever and as full of flower and as still" (Mansfield 156). Bertha is a sexual being defined by the stillness of the pear tree; repressed, but awakened to its presence. Disenchanted by marriage, the pear tree remained a "...symbol of her life" but represented itself with a new purpose, her own admission to sexuality (Mansfield 147). Symonds emphasized "there is something almost vulgar in happiness which does not become joy, and joy is an ecstasy which can rarely be maintained in the soul for more than the moment ... (95). "Bliss" is evidence of support of this particular Symbolist belief as the story portrayed the devastating effect of Bertha's misconstrued interpretation of joy.

"Marriage a la Mode" displayed Mansfield's careful constructed inclusion of metaphor and portrayed the value she placed on language. "Marriage a la Mode" is the story of William and Isabel's marriage. William's discontentment is staged against Isabel's extravagance as a story is unfolded to reveal a marriage disrupted by the luxury of life. "In practice Europe valued what it deemed to be sophistication over what it praised as innocence- which is, of course, the cultural point of Mansfield's short story..." (New 5). At the end of the London work week, William is onboard a train to travel to Isabel and the children. He is reflective of his marriage and its failure as the journey is in progress.

New wrote, "Form works for Mansfield both as aesthetic design (a language about the shape of language) and as a vehicle of social comment (a language about the character of relationships in the empirical world)" (89). The sentiment of New is evident in "Marriage a la Mode" as metaphorical language is employed to represent Williams' disappointment with Isabel. William's thoughts wandered to a conversation with Isabel, a conversation which portrayed a disillusioned marriage. Isabel and William disagreed over the toys their children received. Isabel favored fancy styled toys, over William's simple designs. "'Well, I don't know,' said William slowly. 'When I was their age I used to go to beg bugging an old towel with a knot in it.' The new Isabel looked at him, her eyes narrowed, her lips apart. 'Dear William! I'm sure you did!' She laughed in the new way" (Mansfield 304). Mansfield's word choice of new is designed to act as a "vehicle of social comment" as it is an establishment of a change in Isabel's demeanor; metaphorically it represented a change.

The true disparity of William is unveiled as his visit home neared its end. William's suitcase is packed and Isabel's insistence to carry it is a critical metaphorical moment. "She stooped down and picked up the suit-case. 'What a weight!' she said, and she gave a little awkward laugh. 'Let me carry it! To the gate.'" (Mansfield 310). The suitcase is a metaphor for their marriage, heavy and difficult to bear, but an undeniable necessity. Situated on the train back to London William is once again occupied by the thought of Isabel. William's decision to express himself in a letter is received by Isabel in way that is definitive of the "Mansfield moment."

My darling precious Isabel. Pages and pages there were. Isabel read on her feeling of astonishment changed to a stifled feeling. What on earth had induced William....? How extraordinary it was....What could have made him...? She felt confused, more and more excited, even frightened. It was just like William. Was

it? It was absurd, of course, it must be absurd, ridiculous. 'Ha, ha, ha! Oh dear!' What was she to do? Isabel flung back in her chair and laughed till she couldn't stop laughing (Mansfield 312)

The psychology of Isabel, the uncertainty of emotion, is exposed. The decision to read the letter aloud proved to be an additional source of pain. Isabel experienced a "Mansfield moment," centered upon "alienation and estrangement of daily life."

And before she could recover she had run into the house, through the hall, up the stairs into her bedroom. Down she sat on the side of the bed. 'How vile, odious, abominable, vulgar,' muttered Isabel. She pressed her eyes with her knuckles and rocked to and fro. And again she saw them, but not four, more like forty, laughing, sneering, jeering, stretching out their hands while she read them William's letter. Oh, what a loathsome thing to have done. (Mansfield 313).

Isabel's moment of self recognition is "...hallucinatory suspense," as she recognized the deviancy in the marriage (Caserio 344). Symons believed, "...we wake up, every now and then, to the whole knowledge of our ignorance, and to some perception of where it is leading us" (94). Isabel is interrupted by the plea of her friends to bathe and decided to postpone a response to William and 'laughing in the new way, she ran down the stairs' (Mansfield 313). William desired a marriage that resembled Symbolism's idealism.

"What we all want is to be quite sure that there is something which makes it worth while to go on living, in what seems to us our best, at our finest intensity; something beyond the mere fact that we are satisfying a sort of inner logic..." (Symons 95). Mansfield created a story that portrayed the modern marriage as trivial and used language and metaphor to depict its falsity. Isabel's "new" self is a commentary on the modern marriage and its demands. Most importantly "Marriage a la Mode" asked the question of what a marriage should entail.

If "Marriage a la Mode" posed the question of modern marriage, then the story of "Miss Brill" warned of the effect of modernity itself. "...Judgments (insecure or

otherwise) repeatedly surfaced in Mansfield's texts, as moral commentaries on various kinds of iniquity, offensiveness, and inequality, and as aesthetic commentaries on the limitations imposed by triteness and vapidty" (New 86). "Miss Brill" is the story of a single middle aged woman. Every Sunday Miss Brill is situated in the Jardines Publiques, a French Garden park, and observant of the people nearby. An eavesdropper, Miss Brill is comfortable with the routine; her complacent nature is derived out of the Sunday ritual.

Introduced to the story early, Miss Brill's fur is employed as a metaphor to expose the theme of alienation. The attention directed to the fur is evidence of Miss Brill's lonely state. "She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes" (Mansfield 298). The preparation for the afternoon is allotted detail as the Sunday custom is a significant aspect of Miss Brill's identity. The complexity of identity in "Miss Brill" is a result of the creation of fantasy by Miss Brill herself. "The pride of *being*, the pride of *becoming*: these are the two contradictions set before every idealist" (Symons 22). Upon observance of activity in the park, a reference toward the theater is suggestive of a struggle between reality and imagination. "They were all on stage. They weren't only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday; No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was a part of the performance after all" (Mansfield 301). A validation of her activity, the insight of her "role" in each Sunday is further conviction for Miss Brill of her importance.

The justification of self, aligned with symbolism, disclosed the psychology of Miss Brill. The fur, applied metaphorically, divulged the desires of Miss Brill.

The most important elements of course is the heroine's fur. It has virtually a one-to-one correspondence to all that Miss Brill aspires to, for it is male, it is

adventuresome, and it provides some sort of sensual, if not sexual, satisfaction. 'She could have taken it off and laid it in her lap and stroked it.' But most important, the fur is a substitute for society, the love, sympathy, and understanding which are absent from Miss Brill's life (Thorpe 662).

Modernity represented independence, especially to the "modern" woman. Mansfield created Miss Brill to embody the independent spirit of modernity, as it was perceived to be "modern" to choose a direction other than marriage. Unearthed by a "Mansfield moment" Miss Brill is transformed to be presented as a middle aged woman void of a relationship, therefore in crisis.

To live through a single day with that overpowering consciousness of our real position, which, in the moments in which alone it mercifully comes, is like blinding light or the thrust of a flaming sword, would drive any man out of his senses. It is our hesitations, the excuses of our hearts, the compromise of our intelligence which save us (Symons 94).

The sentimentality directed toward the young couple is altered as Miss Brill is aware of their distaste toward her presence.

'No, not now,' said that girl. 'Not here, I can't.' 'But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?' asked the boy. 'Why does she come here at all-who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?' 'It's her fu-fur which is so funny,' giggled the girl (Mansfield 302).

The commentary of the couple is presented as the "agonized" moment as defined by Caserio as it is recognition of "alienation." Void of enthusiasm Miss Brill returned home. "When the fur and the heroine return to their prospective boxes, the 'something' that she hears crying is herself and the fur" (Thorpe 662). Lonely, Miss Brill's fur is used as a precautionary example of the modern independent woman.

Modernist literature was "...by its nature, oblique, allusive, formally experimental..."(Hanson 216). The characteristics of modernist literature outlined by Hanson derived in part from the philosophy of the Symbolist movement. Influenced by

the Symbolist movement, Mansfield created stories that reflected its beliefs. Mansfield employed metaphor to represent the modern world. Her characters straddled the fine line of reservation and passion and were confronted with what would otherwise be considered a hardly noticeable, but yet significant, moment. It is the events that lead up to the moment in which metaphor is applied. New explored Mansfield's personal aesthetic and the value it added to the modern story:

To fill in the spaces by questioning the assumptions that support empty conventions, by reading past the cliché [...] in order to find the words that will refine, reaffirm, or redesign values, and by relating one set of words to another so as to be able to distinguish a judgment founded [...] in stereotype from one that addresses the moral dilemmas of observed life (New 88).

Mansfield's development as a modern writer is reflected in her use of metaphor. She formed her stories around its use and relied on it to convey each story's theme. The influence of Symbolism partnered with her use of metaphor resulted in literature that was evocative of modernism and established her as an original modern writer.

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