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Katherine Mansfield and Memory: Bergsonian Readings

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Edinburgh

2016

Abstract

This thesis is the first full-length study to investigate memory discourse in Katherine Mansfield's short stories. It presents multiple close readings of the ways in which memory is inscribed in Mansfield's stories, taking an approach to memory drawn from the philosophy of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. What Mansfield and Bergson share in common is an idea of the insistence of memory – its survival, determination, assertion and resistance – during a period of multiple social and historical change when memory was variously seen to be in crisis. Bergson's distinctive theory of memory which opposes temporalism (or 'time in the mind') with measured (or 'spatialised') time provides a rich interpretive tool for analysing memory in Mansfield's fiction.

Following phases of Bergson's developing thinking, each of the four chapters introduces a different dimension of memory – the generative, the topological, the degenerative and the cosmic – through which I analyse *The Aloe* and *Prelude*, 'At the Bay', 'The Garden Party', 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', 'Bliss' and 'The Canary' as well as other less well-known examples of Mansfield's fictional and personal writings. What emerges from this process is a new Mansfield acutely sensitive to the insistent power of memory and the attenuation of time past into the present, concurrent with some of her modernist contemporaries, yet especially attuned to the signal and significant thought of Bergson.

Lay Summary

This thesis explores the way in which memory is represented by the modernist short story writer Katherine Mansfield both in her personal writings and in a selection of her short stories against a backdrop of historical and cultural change in the early twentieth century. It approaches the idea of memory using the philosophical ideas of the late nineteenth-century French philosopher Henri Bergson and develops some of his concepts into an apparatus for close readings of both well-known stories by Mansfield, such as *Prelude*, 'The Garden Party' and 'Bliss', as well as less well-known and sometimes unfinished stories. I claim that memory is a strong, dynamic force both for Bergson and for Mansfield even when there were historical reasons to think that memory might be under pressure.

Mansfield's experimental literary techniques are developed, alongside her contemporaries, partly as a means of representing the fecundity as well as the occasional failures of individual memory in her characters. These techniques, which find analogies with Bergson's

thought, render in fiction the power of the past and of dream; the movement of time; the complexities of forgetting; and epiphany. For the first time, in critical discussions of Katherine Mansfield's work, the notion of subjective or interior memory is brought together with the idea of an exterior, and encompassing, cosmic memory.

I declare that I have composed this thesis myself, that it is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Signed.....

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For Mum and Dad, for their love, and without whom I would not have been able to embark on this journey

For Sandy, for his love, and with whom I journeyed

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Maggie Humm and Gill Plain, who supported my thesis proposal; Lynne Pearce and Angela Smith for their invaluable insights along the way; members of the Katherine Mansfield community for fellow feeling towards Mansfield, especially Delia Da Sousa Correa, Claire Davison, Janka Kaščáková, Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan; Olga Taxidou for our café conversations; Michelle Keown, my second supervisor; and David Farrier and Clare Hanson, my examiners. I would also like to thank Edinburgh University's Corporate Services Group for the award of a Staff Studentship for this study; and Eddie Clark. Most of all I would like to thank Randall Stevenson whose support, guidance and faith in me have been remarkable and whose brilliant humour has kept me going; my parents for all their support; my sister Carolyn; and always Sandy.

Abbreviations and Textual Note

CLKM1 *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 1*

CLKM2 *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 2*

CLKM3 *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 3*

CLKM4 *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 4*

CLKM5 *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 5*

CWKM1 *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 1: The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1898-1915*

CWKM2 *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 2: The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1916-1922*

CWKM3 *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 3: The Poetry and Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*

CWKM4 *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 4: The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield Including Miscellaneous Works*

Life *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*

M&M *Matter and Memory*

N&N *Novels and Novelists*

Stories *The Stories of Katherine Mansfield, Definitive Edition*

T&FW *Time and Free Will*

TKMN *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*

TSMR *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*

Katherine Mansfield's use of spelling and punctuation conventions was often idiosyncratic. Rather than scatter '[sic]' through the text, I have retained Mansfield's usage throughout.

In quotations, points indicating an ellipsis have been enclosed in square brackets; points that occur in the original text have been retained.

I have italicised the stories *Prelude* and *Je ne parle pas français* on the grounds that both stories were published first as individual books. This practice also defers to the two-volume edition of Katherine Mansfield's fiction published by Edinburgh University Press.

From issue 5, *Katherine Mansfield Studies* has been published as a book rather than a journal.

For referencing, I have used *MHRA Style Guide: A Handbook for Authors and Editors*, 3rd edn (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013).

Introduction

In May 1907 Katherine Mansfield took notes on her reading, apparently, of Edmund Parish's *Hallucinations and Illusions: A Study of the Fallacies of Perception*.¹ At the age of nineteen she exhibits an interest in the mind and its habits, of having cognisance of an object, of passing from image to language. Juxtaposed with these reading notes is a vivid, metaphorical description of her perceptions of her surroundings, of the brooding twilight shining through the window onto her personal possessions, her books, her pictures, her 'cello, which are all enlivened by the light. Mansfield feels the weight of the past on the present; she recalls her life until it seems not merely one life, but a 'thousand millions lives', comprising present, past and an 'uneasy consciousness of future strivings' (p. 42). In 1909 she records that her writing is only interesting if she can 'make it psychological' (p. 113). In 1918 she is striving to 'get into touch' with her mind (p. 247); and in 1919 she is reliving the past in all its vibrant and sensory particularity (p. 290). By 1922 she is making notes about escaping from 'the prison of the flesh – of matter' (p. 396) and putting the question: 'What is the universal mind?' (p. 396). Such comments highlight Mansfield's preoccupation with her own mind and its workings as well as her curiosity about a world consciousness; they point to the interplay of accumulated personal memories and the 'making' of fictional texts attuned to states of mind and memories. They indicate her engagement, as a reader and as a writer, with wider concerns about the mind and memory in the first decades of the twentieth century and set the framework for my investigation into Katherine Mansfield and memory through the philosophy of mind of Bergson and the formative intellectual and cultural contexts of the period which were also reformulated by the contributions of each.

In this Introduction I first historicise memory, delineating the ways in which rapid and specific changes in early twentieth-century Britain led to a sense of crisis in historical and personal memory which impacted on Mansfield's generation. If change brought with it a sense of temporal discontinuity as well as spatial disorientation, I argue that for the two principal figures in this study, Henri Bergson and Katherine Mansfield, the opposite was true: change inheres in temporal continuity and memory endures. I examine Bergson's theory of memory and establish similarities with Mansfield's approach to memory. I then

¹ See *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, 4: The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield Including Miscellaneous Works*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 42. Subsequent references to this edition are abbreviated to *CWKM4* followed by the page number. Subsequent references in this paragraph are given in brackets in the text.

look at the ways in which memory is significant for the development of the modern short story and whether its potential for depicting memory was a reason Mansfield was drawn to the form. Finally, I outline what I term Mansfield's 'Bergsonian aesthetic' and I set out my critical strategy which is to draw on some of Bergson's philosophical concepts as a methodological tool for analysing four different dimensions of memory – the generative, the topological, the degenerative and the cosmic – in a selection of Mansfield's short stories.

A Generation's Memory

The turn of the twentieth century seemed to separate the generations and introduce a sense of discontinuity, a fact noted by Rupert Brooke who in 1910 observed a marked difference between his world and that of his septuagenarian Victorian uncle: 'The whole machinery of life, and the minds of every class and kind of men, change beyond recognition every generation. I don't know that "Progress" is certain. All I know is that change is.'² Change, and the speed of that change, registered with all kinds of people, even royalty. A year later, in 1911, Queen Mary concurred with her aunt 'about the ideas of the two centuries being so totally different, and [...] come so rapidly too'.³ But when Virginia Woolf published her now famous assertion in her essay on 'Character in Fiction', that 'on or about December 1910 human character changed', it was a reflection on the past from the vantage point of 1924.⁴ Looking back after more than a dozen years and remembering, Woolf also suggests that change 'was not sudden and definite [...]. But a change there was'.⁵ Change also returns Woolf to an even earlier period of the past in the essay to Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, written between 1873 and 1884 and published posthumously in 1903, indicating both that the past may still have much to contribute to the present, and that change is accumulative and may not be drastic or catastrophic. Thus, Woolf's choice of the word 'about' may be deliberately imprecise allowing for gradual continuity-in-change, and looking back in historical time points to the persistence of the past and of memory.

² Donald Read, 'History: Political and Diplomatic', in *The Twentieth-Century Mind: History, Ideas, and Literature in Britain*, ed. by C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson, 1: 1900-1918 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 1-50. Quoted by Read, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴ Virginia Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 3: 1919-1924, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), pp. 420-38 (p. 421). As Andrew McNeillie's accompanying editorial note makes clear, the essay was first published in the *Criterion* in July 1924 and was based on a paper read to the Cambridge Heretics on 18 May 1924, which itself had its roots in the earlier essay 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' from November 1923. These iterations of Woolf's ideas are themselves a product, therefore, of revision and change.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

These remarks set Woolf's suggestion of gradual but definite change against the idea of a decisive break with the past. While Woolf settled on 1910 for her example, the year in which the reigning monarch Edward VII died and George V came to the throne, as well as the year in which the iconoclastic First Post-Impressionist Exhibition was mounted at the Grafton Galleries, she might have picked any number of other years as being representative of distinct changes occurring in the modern world. For my purposes, it is significant that 1910 was also the year in which Henri Bergson's work first began to be translated into English having had a considerable impact on an earlier generation in France, further indicating that intellectual ideas may take a generation in which to percolate into other cultures. Examples of cultural transition as well as technological innovation in 1910 included Igor Stravinsky's score for *The Firebird* ballet with Mikhail Fokine's startling choreography which was performed in Paris by the Ballets Russes, and Edison's demonstration of talking motion pictures. Katherine Mansfield was still a fledgling writer publishing her Chekhov-inspired story 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' and satirical short stories in the *New Age* and as a 'modern' was at an early stage of literary experimentalism.

Given advances especially in the arts and in technology, why might there have been a turn to the past and a preoccupation with memory? Was this a reaction to the specific types of innovation underway, or to the rapidity and diversity of change? The answer lies partly in the fact that Mansfield's generation was subject to myriad and far-reaching changes in the sciences, in technology and philosophy as well as in literature and the arts which were felt to have undermined social stability and community identity, disturbed temporality, and challenged cultural memory and meaning. The continuing pace and extent particularly of technological change in the early years of the twentieth century had such an impact that the structures of the mind were seen to have altered: the process of modernisation at this time transformed the very 'dimensions of [...] thought', as Stephen Kern has observed.⁶ In a period which has been described by Kern as a 'crisis of abundance', of multiplying consumer goods and choices, a more retrospective mood may have helped maintain a much-needed sense of continuity with the past.⁷

Technological change was however not all rejected or feared. In the sphere of cultural modernism the Italian Futurists notably embraced the power and potential of new technology as an artistic means to celebrate speed and change, an attitude, in turn, repudiated initially by Wyndham Lewis's Vorticism, thereby indicating an oscillating dynamic in

⁶ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

cultural innovation between action and reaction, avant-gardism and retreat. Developments in technology also enabled the past to be preserved. For example, Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877 had altered the way people experienced their personal and historical past. Like the photograph which fixed an image, the phonograph could faithfully record and memorialise voices.⁸ Other 'transformative technologies' which contained the mechanical means to record memories, as Alex Goody observes, were the commercial typewriter (1873) and the cinematograph (1895).⁹ With the advent of the typewriter, all kinds of writing were technologised, enabling writers to mechanically register thoughts and memory impressions as well as to simultaneously carbon 'copy' and reproduce them.¹⁰ The cinematograph both contributed to the reproducibility of memories and provided, for some, an analogy for the movement of the mind.¹¹ As Laura Marcus has observed, the cinematograph was fundamental to the theorisation of mind and reality of Henri Bergson, even though Bergson was sceptical about film 'as an appropriate analogue for time and motion' because it mechanistically segmented time.¹²

Simultaneously, new disciplinary developments in psychology, psychiatry and philosophy opened up the field of memory-study reflecting a desire to understand why and how we remember – and forget. The late nineteenth century was a period of formal experiment and measurement as scientists and psychologists sought both to locate and understand the functioning of the mind and memory, often with very different methods and results. Herman Ebbinghaus inaugurated the experimental study of memory, publishing his path-breaking book *Über das Gedächtnis* in 1885 (translated into English as *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology* in 1913), while William James earned the appellation the 'father' of American psychology for his philosophical psychology, metaphysical pluralism and pragmatic epistemology. In the first volume of *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890, James famously promoted the idea of consciousness as moving and flowing rather than as 'chopped up': 'let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or

⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

⁹ See Alex Goody, *Technology, Literature and Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 2.

¹⁰ Goody makes an interesting observation about Heidegger's description of technology as 'techne', both as 'bringing-forth' and as related to the 'poietic' including the 'arts of the mind' (p. 31). See Martin Heidegger [1955], *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 13. Picking up on Heidegger, we might therefore regard writing itself as a technology which both reproduces memory and operates as a mode of 'revelation'.

¹¹ For a full discussion of the impact on cultural modernity of the cinematograph see Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and *Dreams of Modernity: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹² Marcus, *Dreams of Modernity*, pp. 179-80.

of *subjective life*', he declared.¹³ What James called the 'wonderful stream of consciousness' inaugurated a term which would of course become attached to an influential narrative technique associated with modernist fiction.¹⁴

Among the contributions to the new psychology of mind was Sigmund Freud's theory of childhood memory, 'Screen Memories', of 1899. Although his ideas were not fully established in Britain until after the First World War, an influential feature of Freud's theory was memory distortion. Freud's suggestion that traumatic memories are repressed, and that a process of psychotherapeutically led remembering is needed to recover potentially damaging experiences, added to the period's sense of general memory 'crisis'. Freud also saw memory in terms of an 'imprint', as on a wax tablet, and in terms of retention: as 'psychical' memories lodged in the brain. Freud's 'Mystic Writing-Pad' provided a binary model of memory between perceptual consciousness and the unconscious which retained a permanent memory trace.¹⁵ If for Freud memory was often connoted in negative terms, as being submerged, repressed or contained, for Henri Bergson memory was a more insistently positive and generative force as I will go on to show. Although Bergson discussed 'false recognition' or *déjà vu*, as well as other pathological 'failures' of memory (see Chapter Three) such as amnesia, he tended to provide redeeming interpretations of such phenomena, and eschewed the idea that memory might be unreliable or falsified.

While the public may have found some of the psychological investigations into the mind perturbing, for Virginia Woolf they characterised what it was to be 'modern'. In her essay 'Modern Novels' of 1919 Woolf observed that the 'tendency of the moderns and part of their perplexity is no doubt that they find their interest more and more in [the] dark region of psychology'.¹⁶ Woolf may have been echoing the views of others before her, including T. S. Eliot in his poem 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night', in which the moon with its feeble

¹³ William James [1890], *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), 1, p. 239. James's account was first published in article form in the British journal *Mind* in 1884 as 'On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology', *Mind*, 9 (1884), 1-26. Rick Rylance has, however, traced the origins of the term to G. H. Lewes and to his book of 1859, *The Physiology of Common Life*, in which Lewes distinguished between 'the general stream of Consciousness', which referred to the movement of our minds between conscious and unconscious states, and 'the general stream of Sensation', which referred to the individual's 'feeling of existence – the consciousness of himself as a sensitive being'. See Rick Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture 1850-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 9.

¹⁴ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 243.

¹⁵ See Sigmund Freud [1925], 'A Note upon the "Mystic Writing-Pad"', in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, The Penguin Freud Library, 11, trans. by James Strachey, ed. by Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 429-34.

¹⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'Modern Novels', published in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 April 1919 and revised as 'Modern Fiction' for *The Common Reader 1*, and collected in Woolf, *Essays*, 3, pp. 30-7 (p. 35).

reminiscences is confronted by the sputtering artificial light of modern lamp-lit streets, and memory produces ‘A crowd of twisted things’.¹⁷ Intriguingly, this was the poem which Katherine Mansfield reportedly read in 1917 to a gathering at Garsington Manor (home of the society hostess Lady Ottoline Morrell) shortly after Eliot’s collection *Prufrock and Other Observations* was published, indicating that Mansfield was herself engaged with a ‘modern’ social set interested in the new discourses of the mind.¹⁸ Woolf’s essay more forcefully than Eliot’s poem contrasts the shadowy places of the inner regions of the mind with the artificial brightness of the external world. To be ‘modern’, however, was also to be ‘psychological’ and the ‘dark region’ of the mind was a source of potent memories of the past, if also an opaqueness regarding the future.

The First World War clearly played a significant part in complicating memory for Mansfield’s generation. Shell-shock was emerging as a legitimate diagnosis of war neurosis and memory dysfunction, as critics such as Lyndsey Stonebridge have noted, and some psychoanalytically trained medical practitioners were beginning to address the possibility that mentally ravaged soldiers were suffering from ‘unbearable memories’.¹⁹ The war undoubtedly prompted both a cataclysmic rupture with the past as well as feelings of anguished nostalgia: a clash between fearing to remember the war, yet longing to remember a pre-war past. Lorna Martens has suggested that after the First World War ‘nostalgia for the past intensified’.²⁰ However, the idea of a pre-war idyll is itself not straightforward, as Graham Hough, among others, has observed:

The concept of pre-1914 England as a long summer afternoon is quite false; it was filled with conflict, political, social, and ideological. But it is true that the fabric of

¹⁷ T. S. Eliot, ‘Rhapsody on a Windy Night’, in [1954], *Let Us Go Then, You and I: Selected Poems* (London: Faber, 2002), p. 16.

¹⁸ This was an account given by Clive Bell according to Antony Alpers. See Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 239; and note 4, p. 441; hereinafter referred to as the *Life*. Quoting a diary entry of 1917, Alpers shows that Mansfield admired the poem and that its cadences registered with her (footnote, p. 239). For its insight into Mansfield’s view of literary genre, in a letter to Virginia Woolf [c.12 May 1919], Katherine Mansfield said she didn’t think of Eliot as a poet because ‘Prufrock is, after all a short story’. See *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 2, 1918-1919, ed. by Vincent O’Sullivan with Margaret Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 318. Hereinafter abbreviated to *CLKM*, with the volume and page number(s) provided.

¹⁹ Lyndsey Stonebridge, ‘Psychoanalysis and Literature’, in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*, ed. by Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 269-85 (p. 272).

²⁰ Lorna Martens, *The Promise of Memory: Childhood Recollection and its Objects in Literary Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 49.

high bourgeois culture was as yet unbroken, and it managed to hold all together in a precarious fusion until the war blew it away for ever.²¹

At best, post-war remembering could be displaced onto *idealised* memories of a time before the war allowing the remembering subject to place himself or herself in a time and place which did not contain the later memory of war-time suffering. By artificially returning to an earlier past, war-traumatised individuals could temporarily erase the horrors of the most recent past.

The inverse of the psychological need to forget, however, was the danger of not remembering, and of losing a sense of past time, history and memory. To deny the past runs the risk of becoming ‘forgetful in the present’.²² This may be where modern writers of the period, as one principal group of literary ‘guardians’ of memory, played their part in textually mediating the processes of remembering by attending to stylistic innovation as a new mode of memorialising. A narrative technique such as Free Indirect Discourse lent itself to bringing *together* past recollection with present thought. In particular, as Randall Stevenson has observed, Great War Fiction found new ‘registers’ for conveying the effects of war on memory and the disturbances of the mind. In his tetralogy *Parade’s End*, Ford Madox Ford explores to striking effect Christopher Tietjens’s troubled recall of his trench experiences, capturing in ‘fractured phrases’, as well as textual pauses and ellipses, the ‘flickering uncertainty’ of his thoughts and memories.²³ Paradoxically, therefore, literary fiction could serve as a means of articulating disjointed memory and of proffering a form of tentative fictional memorialisation of the recent traumatic past.

While literary modernism has long been associated with a preoccupation with the present and with time passing (or the transitory moment), modernists such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound indicated an equal concern with commemorating the past, whether construed as cultural tradition, cultural memory, or literary history. Yet the kind of past that Bergson was interested in, and which is crucial to placing him at the centre of a philosophical rapprochement between the past and the present, was one which did not *exclude* the present, at least when it came to individual memory. In fact, as I will detail in Chapter One, for Bergson the past must merge with the present as part of its sustaining power in the mind as

²¹ Graham Hough, ‘English Criticism’, in *The Twentieth-Century Mind: History, Ideas, and Literature in Britain*, 1: 1900-1918, ed. by C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 475-84 (p. 476). See also Anne Fernihough, *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²² See Mark S. Muldoon, *Tricks of Time: Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur in Search of Time, Self and Meaning* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006), p. 254.

²³ Randall Stevenson, *Literature and the Great War 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 113.

well as its necessary opening onto the future. Furthermore, in Bergson's schema, the individual's past always contains complete representations of the past ('memory, laden with the whole of the past, responds to the appeal of the present state').²⁴ I contend that Mansfield shares this assumption in representing, even seeming to empathise more closely with, characters whose memories assist in living in the present and in representing as alienated those who turn back to the past, thereby contributing to a modernist literary practice decidedly based on folding the past *into* the present.

A focus on the past, whether *as* past or as fused with the present, was closely bound up with ideas about time. The most widespread outcome of economic and technological developments as well as the expansion of communication was the 'standardisation' of time which brought with it also a sense of spatial 'zones': time segmented for the purposes of furthering industrial capitalism and colonialism. The changing concepts, measurement and experience of time also impinged on memory during the period. Mansfield's generation was subjected not only to the temporal rupture of war but to multiple new definitions of time which seemed to oscillate between two sides of a dichotomy: between 'primitive' and 'modern' time, Messianic and geological time, seasonal time and manufacturing time, agrarian time and railway time, rural and metropolitan time, public time and private time, and measured time on the clock and the free flow of unfettered time in the mind. An oscillation between – and a challenge to – such binaries may even mark the modern condition in as much as writers, philosophers, artists and other cultural producers variously reinforced, reversed and attempted to harmonise some of these temporal dichotomies. As I go on to demonstrate in Chapter Two, Bergson challenged the hegemony of measured time by acknowledging the 'lived' time of the individual, theorising the expansion and contraction of time, and seeing in the flux of time different temporal rhythms. Simultaneously, writers such as T. S. Eliot, Woolf, Joyce, Mansfield, Proust, Dorothy Richardson and Gertrude Stein, artists such as Van Gogh and Cézanne, musicians such as Stravinsky, Berg and Bartók and philosophers such as Nietzsche and Husserl sought new and different conceptual and cultural modes to express a sense both of changing times and changes to the measurement of time.

Finally, some of Mansfield's literary generation sought solace in personal memory as a means of rejecting the overarching grand narratives of the historical past. According to

²⁴ Henri Bergson [1896, *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit*] [1911], *Matter and Memory*, trans. by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London: Swan Sonnenschein; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1911; made from the 5th edition of 1908), p. 220. Hereinafter abbreviated to *M&M*. The English translation does not have a sub-title.

Stephen Kern the establishment of the general laws of history was regarded as overly deterministic by ‘avant-garde’ thinkers such as Nietzsche and Bergson, dramatists such as Ibsen and writers such as Gide, Proust and Joyce.²⁵ While such figures of course did not originate the idea of a personal past, they extended its application by turning inwards to the psyche and memory in a search for meaning, also finding there a troubled persistence in ‘dreams and neuroses, retentions and involuntary memories, guilt and ghosts’.²⁶ For Kern, this focus on the personal past over that of the historical past lines up with the general shift of focus from public time to private time. However, within the ‘private’ time of the mind, the case may be more complex. Bergson, for one, pointed to multiple axes of personal memory which took the form of different dimensions or ‘planes’, as I will discuss in Chapter Two. That Bergson was responding to multiple cultural and intellectual sources is picked up by Ben-Ami Scharfstein who suggests that Bergson’s thought ‘mirrors the culture that was its source, as the clear river mirrors the land in which it rises and through which it flows’, an image which introduces a key component of this study’s understanding of memory as change, fluid movement and flow.²⁷ And as I turn to Bergson’s and Mansfield’s attitudes to memory, it is in the multiple contexts of their times.

Bergson, Mansfield and Memory

‘Memory’ is typically held to be the faculty by which things are remembered; it is a function of retaining or storing a mental impression, recalling information or recollecting an event or person, carried out by a part of the brain. A memory, by contrast, is generally regarded as that which is remembered, denoting a particular recollection *of* something which is returned to us from the past. Bergson uses the terms ‘*mémoire*’ to refer to memory and ‘*souvenirs*’ to refer to recollections but his theory puts pressure on conventional ideas about memory. Bergson’s unique contribution to the theory of memory is in my view threefold: 1. His scepticism that the brain ‘stores’ memories and his assertion that memories are retained intact and are always potentially available; 2. His presentation of two types of memory (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter One), on the one hand ‘habit’ memory (the memory necessary for action / *l’action*) and on the other hand ‘pure’ memory which is unconscious and virtual (the totality of our memories); and 3. His belief that memory has different rhythms which contract and expand according to the requirements of action in the

²⁵ Kern, p. 63.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁷ Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *Roots of Bergson’s Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 138.

world.²⁸ These aspects of Bergson's theory of memory point to what I am calling memory's 'insistence'; that is, its potency and its protean adaptability to the inner or psychological life, which is summed up in the following description from Bergson in 1901:

Our memories, at a given moment, form one solidary whole, a pyramid whose point coincides with our present, – with a present moving ceaselessly and plunging into the future. But, behind the memories which crowd in upon our present occupation and are revealed by means of it, there are others, thousands on thousands of others, below and beneath the scene illuminated by consciousness ... [A]ll we have perceived [...], persists indefinitely.²⁹

In Bergson's theory of memory, memories are latent until they are required for action in the present, with the unknowable future unfolding out of the present. Bergson does not dwell on the past *as* past or articulate memory in terms of a longing to *return* to the past; he does not offer a theory of nostalgia. The very idea of nostalgia, it might be said, is eliminated in Bergson's schema, for the past is only what interests us in the passing present.

The role of the past in memory was a distinctive feature of memory as it was understood during the period. To memory was attributed a temporal aspect as well as the feeling of recalling something which has already occurred. In *The Principles of Psychology* William James distinguished between the 'directly intuited' or 'just' past³⁰ and a past in which one was felt to be reliving or back in the past: '*[I]t is the knowledge of an event, or fact, of which meantime we have not been thinking, with the additional consciousness that we have thought or experienced it before.*'³¹ This affirming sense that memory carries with it a sense of having come from the past and into the present is also outlined by Bergson who suggests that carrying the 'mark' of the past is 'constitutive' of memory's 'essence'.³² For

²⁸ As Muldoon points out, Bergson's notions of action and movement are not the same as the 'motion' of changing position which is studied in mechanics. It is not the relative movement of physics. Rather, sensation (which also involves 'being moved') and motion equals duration (see Muldoon, p. 88).

²⁹ Henri Bergson, 'Dreams', a lecture given by Bergson at the 'Institut Psychologique', 20 March 1901, in [1919], [*L'Energie Spirituelle: Essais et Conférences*], *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. by H. Wildon Carr (London: Macmillan, 1920), pp. 84-108 (p. 94).

³⁰ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 646.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 648. Italics are in the original text.

³² Bergson, 'Memory of the Present and False Recognition', in *Mind-Energy*, pp. 109-51 (p. 135). Further references to this paper are given in brackets in the text. An incisive comparative assessment of the thought of Bergson and William James is provided by Horace Meyer Kallen in his book *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1914). Kallen argues that the difference between James and Bergson 'turns on what is ultimately a philosophic prevision of the future and a philosophic summation of the past' (p. vii). While both are regarded as assimilating evolutionism (p. 38), James is aligned with radical empiricism or pragmatism, Bergson with vitalism. Kallen points to a 'unanimity of tendency' rather than a 'concrete vision' between the two. (p. 43) On matters relating to method and their views of

Bergson, however, memory and present perception are generated together, as part of the continuous ‘unrolling of psychical life’ (p. 129). Bergson theorised an ‘actual’ perception of an object occurring simultaneously with a ‘virtual’ memory image; in effect, a mirror image (pp. 134-5). He could then assert that while the memory of a perception is not the same as the actual perception, memory nonetheless does not alter the past in its virtuality (p. 133).

What is new and distinctive about Bergson’s theory of memory, according to Jean Hyppolite, is his ‘cogito’: ‘*I endure therefore I am*’, a principle which points to the synthesis of the past and the present with a view to the future.³³ One of Bergson’s metaphors for memory with which he tries to capture this sense of the survival of the past is of a ‘continual winding, like that of thread into a ball’; in this way, ‘our past follows us, becoming larger and larger with the present it picks up on its way’.³⁴ Contemporary critic, Leonard Lawlor, describes this process as being ‘the whole of the past plus one more moment’.³⁵ That is, memory for Bergson grows by natural additions but is continually being renewed in its entirety; ‘memory as a whole has a constantly new organization’, suggests Lawlor, which ‘includes the whole of the past’.³⁶

An aspect of Bergson’s originality lies in introducing memory as the term which would reorganise the dominant philosophical dualism of ‘mind’ and ‘matter’. Ian W. Alexander goes as far as to say that Bergson’s thought transcends philosophical dualism by explaining the world in terms of acts or events.³⁷ This view, with its emphasis on action and, with it, movement, comes close to recognising Bergson as a process philosopher with links to vitalism and the idea that the processes of life are self-determining. Contemporary critics have more overtly aligned Bergson’s thinking with varieties of vitalist thought, such as Darwin’s adaptive evolution, the moral philosophy of Nietzsche, the sociology of Simmel and the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead.³⁸ Bergson certainly seems to express views which

experience, individuality, life, reality and spirit, James and Bergson are shown to be distinctively different.

³³ Jean Hyppolite [‘Aspects divers de la mémoire chez Bergson’], ‘Various Aspects of Memory in Bergson’, trans. by Athena V. Colman, in Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2003), Appendix 2, pp. 112-27 (p. 112).

³⁴ Henri Bergson [1903], ‘*Introduction à la métaphysique*’, [1912] *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by T. E. Hulme with an introduction by Thomas A. Goudge (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), p. 193.

³⁵ Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 81.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Ian W. Alexander, *Bergson: Philosopher of Reflection* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1957), p. 103.

³⁸ See, for example, Omri Moses, *Out of Character: Modernism, Vitalism, Psychic Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). Moses provides a long overdue account of character in modernist novels and poems from the perspective of vitalist psychology. See also the discussion of vitalism in

are similar to the vitalist ideas of life as flow, of valuing becoming over that of being, of movement over stasis and of action over structure.³⁹ If vitalism is fundamentally concerned with the animation of the universe, the question arises as to whether that animation is spiritual in nature or derived from physical energies. I am interested in Bergson as a spiritual vitalist and in Chapter Four I explore some of the positive implications of this more spiritual side to Bergson, including his view that all that exists is engendered by the *élan vital* or vital impetus. In the views of his detractors at the time, however, vitalist philosophy was associated with ‘irrationalism’ and with excessive subjectivity or an over-emphasis on individual consciousness and experience.⁴⁰

In analysing the theory of memory of a philosopher of change, it must also be noted that Bergson’s thinking itself changed over time. Lawlor argues that whereas Bergson’s first major work, *Time and Free Will*, constructed a dualism between time and space, and between spirit and matter, where the difference between spirit and matter was one of a difference in nature, in his second work, *Matter and Memory*, Bergson gave credence to the reality of matter as well as of spirit representing a distinct development in his thinking.⁴¹ Victor Delbos in a review of 1897 explained that *Matter and Memory* ‘surmount[ed] the dualism with which the *Essay* [i.e. *Time and Free Will*] had been content’.⁴² Pilkington, by contrast, identifies a departure in Bergson’s work between the third major text, *Creative Evolution*, and the fourth, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, which, he suggests, pivots on ‘the more transcendental theses of 1932’, pointing to the later phase of Bergson’s philosophical thinking.⁴³ Pilkington, I think rightly, alludes to the ‘more cosmic and verbal plane on which the theory of the *élan vital* develops’ in *Creative Evolution*.⁴⁴ In Chapter Four I pick up on this development in Bergson’s thought and argue for a more mystical aspect to his later works which sees a broadening out from the individual mind to a cosmic

Kirsty Martin’s *Modernism and the Rhythms of Sympathy: Vernon Lee, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), as well as the earlier essay collection, *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy*, ed. by Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³⁹ As Moses explains, Bergson, together with Emerson, William James, Darwin and Nietzsche are vitalists ‘in the sense that they accord specific explanatory attention to biological processes, which are not coextensive with deterministic physical and chemical ones’. Moses, p. 65.

⁴⁰ George Santayana argues that with Bergson ‘we seem to have reached the extreme of self-concentration and self-expansion, the perfect identity and involution of everything in oneself’. See G. Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion* (London: Dent, 1913), p. 13.

⁴¹ Lawlor, p. xii.

⁴² Victor Delbos, ‘Compte rendu de l’ouvrage de H. Bergson: *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l’esprit*’, *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, V, 1897, 353-89 (p. 378). Quoted in Lawlor, p. xiii; citation checked.

⁴³ A. E. Pilkington, *Bergson and His Influence: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

consciousness. Alexander describes *Two Sources* as ‘the terminal point of a spiritual dialectic, of which each of Bergson’s works represents a stage, whereby the mind becomes progressively aware of the transcendent nature of the activity immanent within its operations.’⁴⁵ Like Pilkington, Alexander maintains that this development is ‘divinely inspired’ in *Two Sources*.⁴⁶ I take the view that Bergson’s philosophy is continually being creatively remade with memory the connecting conceptual thread that runs throughout his work. The concept of freedom, for example, is elaborated by Bergson from the early idea of individual human freedom and culminates in ‘its final glorification of Christian mysticism’.⁴⁷

Mansfield’s view of memory, like that of Bergson, hinges on an active process of remembering which she referred to as the ‘memory game’.⁴⁸ This process includes vivid recollections of childhood, of place and of her native country, New Zealand.⁴⁹ Centred on the reiterated question, ‘Do you remember?’, Mansfield engages in the game with friends and family. A letter from Mansfield to her sister Jeanne (Renshaw Beauchamp), for example, captures both the intensity of this process and highlights the insistence of memory for Mansfield:

Ah, Jeanne, anyone who says to me ‘do you remember’ simply has my heart ... I remember everything, and perhaps the great joy of Life to me is in playing just that game, going back with someone into the past – going back to the dining room at 75 to the proud and rather angry looking selzogene on the sideboard, with the little *bucket* under the spout. Do you remember that hiss it gave & sometimes a kind of groan? And the smell inside the sideboard of worcester sauce and corks from old claret bottles?⁵⁰

What stands out here is Mansfield’s own ‘strong’ memory, in which she returns to the past, not in order to reside in the past, but in order to bring memories into the present.

⁴⁵ Alexander, *Bergson*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See Scharfstein, p. 102.

⁴⁸ Referred to by Vincent O’Sullivan in his Introduction to Katherine Mansfield, *New Zealand Stories*, selected by Vincent O’Sullivan (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 1-14 (p. 9); reprinted in *Katherine Mansfield’s Selected Stories*, ed. by Vincent O’Sullivan (New York: Norton, 2006), p. 404. Antony Alpers also refers to the ‘game’ of “‘Do you remember?’” in the *Life*, p. 182.

⁴⁹ For an astute analysis of ‘active’ collective memory of place which has been remade by settlement in relation to New Zealand, see Stephen Turner, ‘Settler Dreaming’, *Memory Connection*, 1:1 (2011), 115-26.

⁵⁰ Letter to Jeanne Beauchamp Renshaw, 14 October 1921, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 4, 1920-1921, ed. by Vincent O’Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 294. Hereinafter referred to as *CLKM* with the volume and page number(s) provided.

Late in her life, and in a sometimes strained psychological state, Mansfield recorded in her notebooks her ability to select powerful and highly specific memories of her family past:

I lie on my right side & put my left hand up to my forehead as though I were praying. This seems to induce the state. Then for instance its 10.30 p.m. on a big liner in mid ocean ...

[...]

People are beginning to leave the Ladies Cabin. Father puts his head in & asks if one of you would care for a walk before you turn in. It's glorious up on deck. That begins it. I am there.⁵¹

What is worth noting about this passage is the way in which Mansfield actively invokes memories by placing herself in the past ('I am there'), a view which Bergson articulates in *Matter and Memory*: 'the truth is that we shall never reach the past unless we frankly place ourselves within it'.⁵²

Examples of Mansfield's purposeful and sensory memory process occur frequently in her letters.⁵³ Remembering might be seen, then, to stand for Mansfield as a form of Bergsonian 'action', necessary in order to write about the past in the present. By contrast, Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* explores forms of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' recall which

⁵¹ Katherine Mansfield, Notebook 26, qMS-1264; [1992], *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Complete Edition, ed. by Margaret Scott, 2 vols (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 2, p. 181. Subsequent references to this edition are abbreviated to *TKMN* followed by the volume and page number(s). Collected in *CWKM4*, pp. 289-90, from which this text is taken. I am grateful to Professor Angela Smith for pointing out this passage to me.

⁵² *M&M*, p. 173.

⁵³ Some examples include: '[Y]ou convey so much of your personality in your handwriting. Do you remember those horses you used to draw on the back of envelopes with very over-developed ears and under-developed stomachs?' Letter to Harold Beauchamp, 15 December 1914, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 1, 1903-1917, ed. by Vincent O'Sullivan with Margaret Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 142. Hereinafter referred to as *CLKM* with the volume and page number(s) provided.

'My brother is here often, laughing, and calling "do you remember, Katy?"'. Letter to S. S. Koteliensky [late December 1915], *CLKM*, 1, p. 238.

'By the way do you remember the brown china bear on the top of the black what-not? I can see it!' Letter to Charlotte Beauchamp Perkins and Jeanne Beauchamp Renshaw, 1 March 1922, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 5, 1922-1923, ed. by Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 82. Hereinafter referred to as *CLKM* with the volume and page number(s) provided.

'I am more than happy to know you are there. Most blessed house! How it lives in my memory. [...] Michaelmas daisies remind me of a solitary bush in Acacia Road. Do you remember?' Letter to John Middleton Murry, 14 October 1922, *CLKM*, 5, p. 297.

have been variously construed and contested by critics as Bergsonian.⁵⁴ Yet ‘involuntary’ memory is not conducive to Bergson’s theory. It is true that he wrote in *Time and Free Will*: ‘I smell a rose and immediately confused recollections of childhood come back to my memory’, which suggests that present sensory stimuli could stir a strong sense of the personal past in the present. But Bergson’s observation may have been taken out of context, because he goes on to say that ‘[i]n truth, these recollections have not been called up by the perfume of the rose: I breathe them in with the very scent; it means all that to me’, suggesting that it is the memory *itself* which is insistent.⁵⁵

In terms of her aesthetic principles, Mansfield was clear that the discerning writer ought to be selective in choosing which memories to use; those, if looked at through a Bergsonian lens, that have a particular ‘interest’ in the present for her characters. Mansfield argued that her contemporary Dorothy Richardson had failed in ascribing specific memories to her character’s actions and interests in the present by including too many recollections in her narrative. In her review of *The Tunnel*, the fourth ‘chapter’ of Richardson’s novel sequence *Pilgrimage*, Mansfield expressed her suspicion of Richardson’s ‘passion for registering every single thing that happens in the clear, shadowless country of her mind’.⁵⁶ Like Bergson, Mansfield believed the mind continues to preserve all of its memories, while memory has an active and presiding role to play in choosing what it needs:

Memory mounts his throne and judges all that is in our minds – appointing each his separate place, high or low, rejecting this, selecting that – putting this one to shine in the light and throwing that one into the darkness.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The most incisive presentation of the impact of Bergson’s thinking on Proust’s writing is by A. E. Pilkington. In relation to the topic of memory, however, Pilkington notes: ‘It appears that valid affinities between Bergson and Proust must be sought elsewhere than in their conceptions of memory.’ See Pilkington, p. 172. Furthermore, he argues that Bergson’s ‘habit’ memory is not in evidence as such in Proust’s novel while ‘pure’ memory, which describes the ‘total persistence of the past, and its integral continuity with the present’, is not the same as Proust’s involuntary memory found in *In Search of Lost Time* (p. 173).

⁵⁵ Henri Bergson [1889, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*], [1910], *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. by F. L. Pogson (New York: Dover Publications, 2001; an unabridged republication of the 3rd edition of the work originally published in 1913 by George Allen & Unwin, London), p. 161. Hereinafter abbreviated to *T&FW*.

⁵⁶ Katherine Mansfield, ‘Three Women Novelists’, which included Mansfield’s review of *The Tunnel* by Dorothy Richardson, first published in the *Athenaeum* (an independent literary weekly edited at the time by John Middleton Murry, and for which between April 1919 and December 1920 Mansfield reviewed fiction), 4640, 4 April 1919, 140-1 and reprinted in *Novels and Novelists*, ed. by J. Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1930), pp. 1-4. Hereinafter abbreviated to *N&N*. Collected in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, 3: The Poetry and Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, eds Gerri Kimber and Angela Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 444-7 (p. 446), from which the text is taken. Subsequent references to this edition are abbreviated to *CWKM3*, followed by the page number(s).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 446-7.

Virginia Woolf also recorded strong personal memories which she referred to as ‘shocks’ and which required words to tame them. In her memoir, ‘Sketch of the Past’, Woolf describes the way in which ‘exceptional moments’ from her remembered past are made ‘whole’ by being made concrete in words. It is her ‘shock-receiving capacity’ that has made her a writer.⁵⁸ If for Woolf, writing consolidated the ‘sledge-hammer’ blows from the past in the pleasure of writing in the present, for Mansfield, it was writing, and in particular writing short stories, which provided a means of representing memory states – not her own – but those of her characters. I turn now to look at the development of the experimental modern short story as a form, adopted and adapted by Mansfield and her contemporaries, capable of rendering consciousness, inner processes and the compelling nature of memory in the modern age.

Mansfield, the Modern Short Story and Memory

When Katherine Mansfield was writing her major stories, short story ‘theory’ was in its infancy. In the criticism of Edgar Allan Poe and Brander Mathews, in the mid- and late nineteenth century respectively, short stories were broadly seen in terms of the ‘unity of impression’.⁵⁹ Critics of the short story in the early twentieth century were preoccupied with whether a story could convey something unique of an event or character in its use of language, imagery, symbol and ‘impression’.⁶⁰ They also debated who could be said to have inaugurated the ‘modern’ short story in Britain: Walter Scott or R. L. Stevenson

⁵⁸ Virginia Woolf, ‘Sketch of the Past’, in *Moments of Being: Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind (London: Pimlico, 2002), pp. 78-160 (p. 85).

⁵⁹ In the second of his two-part review of *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) by Nathaniel Hawthorne in *Graham’s Magazine* (May, 1842), 298-300, Edgar Allan Poe puts forward his idea of the ‘unity of impression’ and the advantages of the ‘short prose narrative’ as a means of achieving a particular ‘effect’. Reprinted in *The New Short Story Theories*, ed. by Charles E. May (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994), pp. 59-64 (p. 60; p. 61). See also Brander Mathews [1901], *The Philosophy of the Short Story* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917). It is often overlooked by critics that Mathews first outlined his ideas in the late nineteenth century. His views were published anonymously in the *Saturday Review* (SumJanmer, 1884) and in *Lippincott’s Magazine* (October 1885) and were included in *Pen and Ink: Essays on Subjects of More or Less Importance* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1888). For Mathews, a true ‘short-story’ differs from the novel in its ‘unity of impression’ (p. 15). Mathews claimed to be the first to observe that the short story differs from the novel ‘essentially’ and not merely in terms of length. Other early commentaries include: Henry Harland, ‘Concerning the Short Story’, the *Academy*, 5 June 1897, 6; Frederick Wedmore, ‘The Short Story’, *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, March 1898, 406-16; Henry Seidel Canby, ‘On the Short Story’, *Dial: a Semi-monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion, and Information*, 16 October 1901, 271. Canby suggests that it is ‘a distinction in the point of view which differentiates a novel from a Short Story’ (p. 271). See also Henry Seidel Canby, ‘Two Books on the Short Story’, *Dial*, 1 May 1913, 382.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Henry Seidel Canby who comments: ‘It is the short narrative used for life-units, where only brevity and the consequent unified impression would serve, that becomes the short story.’ Henry Seidel Canby, *The Short Story in English* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909), p. xii.

(overlooking the major mid-Victorian writers like Thackeray, Dickens, Gaskell, George Eliot and Henry James who wrote short stories which contain ‘modern’ elements); although Chekhov was generally regarded by Mansfield’s generation as the principal instigator of a new type of story.⁶¹ Discussion also focused on defining the short story in terms of measurement: how long, or how short, a short story should be in order to make it distinguishable from the anecdote, tale or novel.

This drive to identify the modern short story’s specificity focused on whether or not the form might be particularly suited to representing the mind over that of the novel, an idea outlined by Alfred Ward in 1924: ‘The brief prose form [...] affords a more suitable medium than the novel for excursions into the dim territory of the subconscious; it allows experimental glimpses into “the other-world”.’⁶² This apparent propensity of the short story was taken up by contemporary critic Mary Rohrberger who brings Bergson into her discussion about the different properties of the short story and the novel in her claim that the two aspects of Bergson’s philosophy of time can be mapped directly on to the novel and the short story respectively:

[T]he essential characteristics of *durée* as outlined by Bergson are remarkably similar to essential characteristics of the short story. Bergson’s characterization of mechanical time seems to define the novel’s temporal base. [...] *Durée*, on the other hand, seems perfectly fitted to the short story.⁶³

But this assertion shows how dangerous it is to try to reduce the short story to one formal characteristic; Rohrberger’s distinction cannot be pressed very far because Woolf’s and Proust’s *novels* have also been considered in terms of Bergsonian duration.⁶⁴

A preoccupation with the individual memory states and perceptions of her characters relates to Mansfield’s search for new formal ways of representing multiple viewpoints as though from within the mind. This endeavour required the concomitant abandoning of the

⁶¹ Walter Allen suggests that the modern short story in English begins with Walter Scott’s ‘The Two Drovers’ which appeared in *Chronicles of the Canongate* in 1827. See Walter Allen, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 9. Henry Seidel Canby dates the beginnings of the modern short story to 1877 and R. L. Stevenson’s ‘A Lodging for the Night’, Canby, *The Short Story in English*, p. 323.

⁶² Alfred C. Ward, *Aspects of the Modern Short Story: English and American* (London: University of London Press, 1924), p. 18.

⁶³ Mary Rohrberger, ‘Strange Loops: Time in the Short Story’, *Visions Critiques*, 6, 1990, 73-81 (p. 76).

⁶⁴ For suggestive and sustained Bergsonian readings of Virginia Woolf’s novels, see James Hafley, *The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as Novelist* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), and for a Bergsonian study of Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, see Pilkington, especially Chapter 4. For a Bergsonian perspective on Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, see Shiv K. Kumar, *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* (London: Blackie, 1962).

omniscient narrator for an ‘invisible’ narrator; that is, a narrator stealthily occupying the separate ‘consciousnesses’ of the characters and the characters’ pasts and present. That memory was central to such a strategy has been noted by modernist critics, including Randall Stevenson:

For modernist narrative, seeking to place ‘everything in the mind’, memory offers the ideal means of including the past alongside present experience. As fiction in the early years of the twentieth century moves further within the consciousness of characters, [...] the ‘rope’ of memory is increasingly employed to hold past and present together.⁶⁵

As modernist literary authors adjusted chronology and used flashbacks as a means of altering the temporal order in which events are recalled by characters, memory had a unifying role to play. Mansfield’s stories, from the ‘The Tiredness of Rosabel’ through ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ to ‘The Canary’, depict characters’ memories as having significance for their present situations, aligning her practice with an aspect of literary modernism *and* Bergsonian philosophy focused on a modern mind that ‘makes it new’ by incorporating past memories.

Mansfield’s short stories are also examples of the story-as-revelation and use epiphany with specific Bergsonian overtones as a literary device, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Four. Just one example indicates that such literary and philosophical ideas were intertwined and culturally prevalent at the time. A writing competition running in American *Life* magazine in 1915 required the submitted stories to ‘reveal in the briefest possible manner – as it were, like a flash – a situation which carries the reader beyond it’; and to offer ‘a picture out of real life’ which must yet ‘convey an idea much larger than itself [...] in such a way as to produce in the reader a sense of revelation’.⁶⁶ The requirements for revelation and a sense of transcendence align with Bergson’s philosophical preoccupations, as I will go on to discuss.⁶⁷ A review entitled ‘A Model Story’ of 1920 shows that, for Mansfield, ‘being modern’ is to do with imparting a sense of mystery, vision and revelation to the reader:

⁶⁵ Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, rev. edn (London: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 96.

⁶⁶ Anon., ‘What Is a Short Story?’, *Life*, 12 August 1915, 274 (p. 274).

⁶⁷ The importance of revelation to the modern short story is also related to the so-called ‘significant moment’ although, as Clare Hanson has argued, this is equally true for the ‘insignificant’ moment which is then elevated or heightened in, for example, the Joycean epiphany. See Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions 1880-1980* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), p. 55.

Has it quickened our perception, or increased our mysterious response to Life? Do we feel that we have partaken of the author's vision – that something has been revealed that we are the richer for having seen?⁶⁸

While the literary critical insights here are caught up with a wider discourse of the times, including a perturbed fascination with the mind or soul, Mansfield is especially interested in whether or not the writer's prose has *transcended* the ordinary and enriched the reader's spirit, contrary, perhaps, to Woolf's valuing of the ordinary itself, 'the spirit we live by, life itself'.⁶⁹

Mansfield's Bergsonian Aesthetic

Mansfield's 'modern' short story technique involves merging her narrator with (in Gerard Genette's terms) her 'focal character', the latter an example of what is now referred to as Free Indirect Discourse, and in historical terms is also closely aligned with Bergson's notion of intuition. Mansfield's use of Free Indirect Discourse involved first actively and imaginatively identifying ('coinciding' in Bergson's terms) with an object or thing, in order to generate a sense of its aliveness. In October 1917 she outlined her practice in a significant statement to her friend the painter Dorothy Brett, claiming that artists, rather than merely 'perceiving' an object, must 'become' the object itself:

It seems to me so extraordinarily right that you should be painting Still Lives just now. What can one do, faced with this wonderful tumble of round bright fruits, but gather them and play with them – and *become them*, as it were. [...] For although that is as far as most people can get, it is really only the 'prelude'. There follows the moment when you are *more* duck, *more* apple or *more* Natasha than any of these objects could ever possibly be, and so you *create* them anew. [...] But that is why I believe in technique, too [...]. I do, just because I don't see how art is going to make that divine *spring* into the bounding outlines of things if it hasn't passed through the process of trying to *become* these things before recreating them.⁷⁰

This creative process has clear affinities with Bergson's philosophical method of intuition as outlined in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903; first translated into English in 1912).

Bergson's method is to imaginatively sympathise with the interiority of the objects he

⁶⁸ Katherine Mansfield, 'A Model Story', Review of *The Third Window* by Anne Douglas Sedgwick. First published in the *Athenaeum*, 4701, 4 June 1920, 736, reprinted in *N&N*, pp. 197-200, and collected in *CWKM3*, pp. 610-11 (p. 610) from which the text is taken.

⁶⁹ Woolf, *Essays*, 3, p. 436.

⁷⁰ *CLKM*, 1, p. 330. However, Mansfield was not unique in developing a more 'direct' or 'intuitive' writing technique. Henry James had already used point of view as a means of merging with the consciousness of his characters, especially in his late trilogy of novels, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*, indicating that philosophy and literature were travelling along parallel paths before Mansfield. According to Graham Hough, in these novels James 'pays much attention to the point of view from which the story should be told, working gradually towards the elimination of the external narrator, and the centring of the work in the consciousness of one or more of the characters'. See Hough, p. 481.

perceives: ‘I insert myself in them by an effort of imagination.’⁷¹ Bergson then slips from philosophy to literature in applying his intuitive method to *reading* a novel in a rare inference to textual reception. The conventional use of ‘point of view’, he argues, places the reader of literature *outside* the character and does not give access to the character’s ‘essence’.⁷² Intuition, by contrast, is the active process by which we ‘enter into’ a thing or object and fully identify ourselves with it, which includes identifying with a character in a story: ‘By intuition is meant the kind of *intellectual sympathy* by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible.’⁷³ Here, the philosopher’s literary example seems interchangeable with the short story writer’s philosophically inflected literary practice. However, a significant caveat is that the intuitive method is bound up with the ‘*inexpressible*’ for Bergson, which is problematic when it comes to literature. Noting the limitation, Bergson concedes that even though a true metaphysics should operate without ‘symbols’, writers and artists require an, albeit imperfect, language, a means of symbolisation, with which to operate creatively.⁷⁴

Despite the imperfect tools, Bergson is clear that the artist who is equipped with unique perceptual powers should conform to his idea of rhythm in deploying language and symbols. In his work of 1901, *Rire* (translated into English in 1911 as *Laughter*), Bergson had already suggested that while most individuals function in a ‘*utilitarian*’ way in order to carry out the actions associated with living, the souls of artists are naturally endowed with the ability to see things in their ‘native purity’.⁷⁵ It is by using words rhythmically arranged and which exceed conventional language and modes of expression, that artists may get in

⁷¹ *Metaphysics*, p. 19.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 24. I take Bergson’s focus here to be on the term ‘sympathy’ rather than ‘intellectual’ given that it is the latter term that he goes on to contrast with instinct (rather than intuition), in *Creative Evolution*.

⁷⁴ Intuition is of course a primary concept in phenomenology deriving from the thinking of Edmund Husserl, and Husserl’s contemporaneous thinking can be placed in complex relation to that of Bergson. If phenomenology grasps things in their immediacy, Bergson’s ‘sympathy’ joins with the object and becomes it. Husserl’s own thinking changed from framing phenomenology as a description of the direct ‘eidetic’ seeing of objects to the liberation of the ‘essence’ of thought and its contents in his 1905 ‘phenomenological reduction’. Husserl also distinguished between direct experiences of objects and those where the object is not immediately present, such as in memory, and was interested, also, in the role of symbolisation. See *The Phenomenology Reader*, ed. by Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 7; p. 14. Bergson’s attitude to the function of language in the process of intuition is ambivalent; while he reluctantly acknowledges that the medium of language is important for creative practitioners, he pays little attention to language in the (re)production of memory, a view with which post-structuralists would take issue. In following Bergson into Mansfield, I also de-emphasise the role of memory as text, narrative, or as mediated through language.

⁷⁵ Henri Bergson [1901, *Le Rire: Essai sur la signification du comique*], *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 151; p. 155.

touch with ‘certain rhythms of life’ which bring them closer to a more ‘direct vision of reality’.⁷⁶ In the 1910s, then, as *Laughter* was circulating, Mansfield was expressing a similar sentiment, praising Brett for adopting a Bergsonian style of empathic intuition in her painting technique and seeking to enact this form of artistry herself by immersing herself in her characters, and describing them from the inside.

When it comes to artistic creation, Bergson’s thinking about the past in *Matter and Memory* is closely bound up with the free play of imagination. Although the past is ‘powerless’ in the sense that it cannot reoccur, Bergson sees a role for *imagining* the past. If ‘mind’ is equated with memory and is temporal, and ‘matter’ is equated with action and is spatial, the past must be ‘acted by matter’ and ‘imagined by mind’.⁷⁷ It is the proclivities of a mind capable of invoking the past which gives credence to Mansfield’s imaginative rendering of the memories of her fictional characters couched in terms of sympathetic and self-effacing ‘immersion’. This ‘impersonality’ of the author also materially altered the role of the reader of modern fiction.⁷⁸ According to Edith Rickert, writing in 1923, the intuitive method encouraged the reader to participate in the writer’s immersive process. Rickert heralded Mansfield as a successful exemplar of a new mode of short story writing which demanded the reader’s ‘willingness to be identified with the person from whose point of view the story is told’.⁷⁹ By losing her own self-consciousness in order to describe the consciousness of a character, Mansfield ‘herself made the identification that it is necessary for the reader to make in order to understand her technique’.⁸⁰ Framed historically, Mansfield’s Bergsonian practice of authorial depersonalisation would now be called her technique of character focalisation.

At least one contemporary critic, however, has attributed to Bergson a fundamental role in the emergence of modernist literary experimentation. Paul Douglass maintains that although Bergson admits in *Time and Free Will* that we cannot directly represent the temporal flux of duration, artists can render the ““emotional equivalent”” of it by continually

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 156; p. 157.

⁷⁷ *M&M*, p. 298.

⁷⁸ Whether such immersion or merging with her characters is also a form of modernist ‘impersonality’, I am unable to explore further here. See Moses for an interesting critique and redeployment of T. S. Eliot’s contemporaneous ideas about impersonality. Moses regards ‘impersonality’ as an ‘attitude or orientation to the world’ (p. 32) and Eliot’s term as one that ‘names a relationship to a scene, situation, set of objects, or events that defines one precisely because one is altered by the *interaction* with it’ (p. 33; emphasis added). In contrast, Mansfield’s immersive literary technique is one of abandoning herself to the object or character and of *effacing* herself.

⁷⁹ Edith Rickert, ‘Some Straws in Contemporary Literature: Fiction in England and America’, *English Journal*, 12:8 (October 1923), 509-16 (p. 513).

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 514.

experimenting with form.⁸¹ What Bergson means by ‘form’, however, is the way in which the poet develops emotions into images through the use of rhythm ‘by which our soul is lulled into self-forgetfulness, and, as in a dream, thinks and sees with the poet’.⁸² Alongside rhythm, Bergson identifies harmony brought about by ‘the free play of sympathy’ as contributing to the development of ‘aesthetic emotion’.⁸³ Aesthetic feeling, according to Bergson must, however, be ‘suggested’ which brings into play Mansfield’s own view that the writer ought to imply rather than ‘tell anybody *bang out*’ about the effects of the world on the senses.⁸⁴ While Douglass goes as far as to say that ‘The modernist idea of “experimental literature” derives from a Bergsonian paradigm’ which, if true, brings modernist writers into close contiguity with Bergson’s philosophical aesthetics, this statement needs to be confined, in my opinion, to the development of modernist empathy and emotion.⁸⁵

Method

One might ask, why draw on Bergson in the context of reading Mansfield? I have already begun to suggest some reasons. Bergson’s pre-eminence in public life in Britain in the second decade of the twentieth century at a time when Mansfield was beginning to establish herself as a writer provides the conditions for influence if not discipleship. Bergson gave lectures on his work in London, Oxford and Birmingham in 1911, while his theories were being explained in prominent newspapers, particularly *The Times*, as well as in little magazines such as the *New Age*, in which T. E. Hulme, an early supporter and translator of Bergson’s work, published his ‘Notes on Bergson’ between November 1911 and February 1912.⁸⁶ Bergson’s ideas were regarded as challenging received orthodoxies which may have appealed to a ‘self-exiled’ writer from the colonies looking to move in progressive, and transgressive, circles. Here was a philosopher who, as early as 1909, had been described as

⁸¹ *T&FW*, p. 15. Paul Douglass, ‘Bergson, Vitalism, and Modernist Literature’, in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski and Laci Mattison (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 107-27 (p. 121).

⁸² *T&FW*, p. 15.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16; p. 17.

⁸⁴ Letter to J. M. Murry [16 November 1919], *CLKM*, 3, pp. 97-8. Mansfield is discussing the way in which the First World War has ‘intensified’ life; she cannot understand why contemporary novelists seem to shy away from writing about its effects; she feels one must do so *indirectly*: ‘I might write about a boy eating strawberries or a woman combing her hair on a windy morning & that is the only way I can ever mention them. But they *must* be there. Nothing less will do’ (p. 98).

⁸⁵ Douglass, p. 121.

⁸⁶ Mary Ann Gillies observes that from 1909 to 1911 more than two hundred articles were published on Bergson in English journals, newspapers and books. See Mary Ann Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), p. 28.

going further than any other philosopher before him in troubling the ‘stable order of concepts’.⁸⁷

Bergson’s influence seemed far-reaching. For example, despite being an outspoken sceptic of Bergson’s metaphysics, Wyndham Lewis acknowledged that in founding ‘time-philosophy’ Bergson was ‘more than any other single figure [...] responsible for the main intellectual characteristics of the world we live in’.⁸⁸ And the leading philosopher of the day, William James, warmly anointed Bergson, affirming the novelty and profundity of his ideas:

[O]pen Bergson, and new horizons loom on every page you read. It is like the breath of the morning and the song of birds. It tells of reality itself, instead of merely reiterating what dusty-minded professors have written about what other previous professors have thought. Nothing in Bergson is shop-worn or at second hand.⁸⁹

Bergson also valued the spiritual at a time when opposing ideas about material progress held sway. In 1913, in admittedly rather excessive terms, Edwin Björkman heralded Bergson as a messiah whose ideas could be seen as ‘spreading, like flames across a sun-scorched prairie’ finding an eager and varied audience: ‘everywhere laymen and learned alike feel compelled to define their intellectual, moral and artistic attitudes by reference to his ideas.’⁹⁰ Björkman also placed Bergson’s work squarely within the then influential philosophical movement of New Mysticism, ‘the thought-structure most expressive of our own day and its tendencies’.⁹¹ While Bergson denied he was a mystic, if the term implied being anti-scientific, he embraced the idea that the mystical was commensurate with an ‘inner’ and ‘profound’ life.⁹² That

⁸⁷ T. E. Hulme, ‘The New Philosophy’, *New Age: A Weekly Review of Politics, Literature and Art*, 5:10, 1 July, 1909, 198-9 (p. 198). See also T. E. Hulme, ‘Mr. Balfour, Bergson, and Politics’, *New Age*, 10:2, 9 November 1911, 38-40. Hulme describes three distinct elements to Bergson’s philosophy: his theory of ‘intensive manifolds’ [now known as ‘multiplicity’]; the theory of duration, which is set against ‘the nightmare of universal mechanism’; and his ‘cosmology’ or ‘views on the soul’ (p. 38).

⁸⁸ Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, ed. by Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), p. 158.

⁸⁹ William James, ‘Bergson and His Critique of Intellectualism’, in *A Pluralistic Universe: Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the Present Situation in Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), pp. 225-73 (p. 265).

⁹⁰ Edwin Björkman, *Voices of To-Morrow: Critical Studies of the New Spirit in Literature* (London: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913), p. 206. Björkman attributes Bergson’s appeal to a magnetic personality, a new way of seeing and interpreting life, and humanity’s need of Bergson’s ‘wider vision’ (p. 209).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159. However, Bergson’s anti-mechanistic / anti-materialist stance occurred at a time when physics was itself exploring ideas of relativity and flux.

⁹² In response to having been accused of being a mystic, Bergson commented: ‘If one understands by mysticism [...] a reaction against science, the doctrine I uphold is nothing from one end to another but a protest against mysticism, for it proposes to reestablish the bridge (broken since Kant) between metaphysics and science. This divorce between science and metaphysics is the great evil from which our philosophy suffers [...] But now, if one understands by mysticism a certain appeal to internal and profound life, then all philosophy is mysticism.’ See Henri Bergson, ‘*Le Parallélisme psychophysique et la métaphysique pure*’, *Bulletin*, 1 (1901), 63-4. Quoted in Scharfstein, p. 133. This

Bergson was seen to be part of a mystical movement as well as an innovator, sage and guide only underscores the fact that he was both an exemplary spokesperson *for* his time as well as at the forefront of thinking *in* his time.

Bergson also had his detractors who accused him of anti-intellectualism. They included Bertrand Russell, whose philosophy, like that of George Moore, was associated with English empiricism and rationalism.⁹³ Russell was deeply resistant to Bergson's focus on intuition, while George Santayana denigrated Bergson's thinking as a form of 'romantic anarchy'.⁹⁴ Santayana castigated Bergson for suggesting that humans lived in a 'Babylon of abstractions' and were outcasts from reality compared to the mystic who is perfectly happy 'in the droning consciousness of his own heart-beats and those of the universe'.⁹⁵ Bergson's 'originality' has also been questioned by Ben-Ami Scharfstein who identifies many aspects of Bergson's thought in the work of a wide range of French philosophical precursors.⁹⁶ However, such a distinguished philosophical lineage does not detract from Bergson's particular and timely philosophical articulations in my view. Bergson's significance to the intellectual culture of the period is that he brought both established ideas and novel departures demonstrably into conjunction in the face of emerging discourses: psychophysics in *Time and Free Will*, physiological psychology in *Matter and Memory*, biology and evolutionary theory in *Creative Evolution*, and sociology and religion in *Two Sources*.⁹⁷

comment also shores up the idea that Bergson was by no means opposed to science but was rather seeking a rapprochement between metaphysics and science.

⁹³ See Bertrand Russell, 'The Philosophy of Bergson', *Monist*, 22:3 (1912), 321-47. Mary Ann Gillies confirms that in eight separate works Russell accused Bergson of being anti-intellectual and as favouring mysticism rather than science. See Gillies, p. 190, note 17.

⁹⁴ Santayana, p. 12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹⁶ See Scharfstein (all chapters).

⁹⁷ As noted above, Bergson's thought can also be aligned with phenomenology, although whether Bergson was a proto-phenomenologist depends on the definition of phenomenology being used. For example, on the one hand, Alexander has argued that *Matter and Memory* can be understood in terms of subsequent developments in phenomenology and existentialism, commenting that: 'Like the phenomenologists, Bergson conceives the mind and consciousness as being intentional in structure.' See Alexander, p. 13. Alexander's position is that Bergson is a forerunner of phenomenology: 'From Bergson to phenomenology is but a step' (p. 17). Pilkington also argues that much of Bergson's thinking anticipated 'the pursuit of truth through the phenomenological mode of adhesion to immediate experience'. See Pilkington, p. 242. On the other hand, Lawlor suggests that Bergson's focus on the 'primacy of memory' and not, as with Merleau-Ponty, the 'primacy of perception' results in Bergsonian thought deviating from the path towards phenomenology. See Lawlor, p. ix. Lawlor goes as far as to suggest that the central importance of memory to Bergson is so extreme that for him 'being is memory' (Lawlor, p. ix). My view is that it is important to distinguish between Bergson's focus on memory and the phenomenologists' preoccupation with perception. Even Husserl's distinction between 'retention' (the consciousness of immediate past experience) and 'recollection' (experiences which have faded and can be recalled only by the 're-presentation' of experience) are different from Bergson's theory of memory in being more

One problem this thesis acknowledges is whether in his metaphysics Bergson was codifying emergent aspects of a new literary practice which sought to represent the mind, or whether writers at the time, such as Henry James (in his later work), Joyce, Richardson, Mansfield and Woolf, were incorporating salient ideas about the inner processes of the mind into their narrative modes for rendering characters' minds in their fiction. While I cannot resolve this conundrum in terms of causality, I can point to a productive contiguity. There may also be an interest which philosophy and literature share in this period: *reading* as a new interpretative strategy for understanding the modern condition. On the back of a new mode of modern writing and thinking comes, suggests Edith Rickert, a new art of reading: 'We must learn to read in the new way.'⁹⁸ Reading in a new way is what I aim to do in this thesis and my method is to deploy aspects of Bergson's philosophy as a strategy for re-reading Mansfield's short stories. That is, I do not look to determine the 'origins' of Mansfield's writing in Bergson but rather seek to illuminate an implicit dialogue one with the other, acknowledging at the same time that Bergson's ideas were disseminated throughout the age, that Mansfield was a pioneer of the modern/ist short story, and that both Mansfield and Bergson contributed and responded to ideas circulating among their contemporaries.

While this thesis is the first to think about Mansfield, Bergson and memory in a sustained way, it both builds on and departs from interpretations put forward by previous critics who have invoked Bergson's thinking in relation to Mansfield, including Mary Rohrberger, Sydney Janet Kaplan, Angela Smith and more recently Eiko Nakano and Louise Edensor. Early reviewers of Mansfield's stories in newspapers and periodicals picked up on her acute perception as an artist and her way of representing a character's consciousness, although none did so in explicitly Bergsonian terms except for Martin Armstrong in his obituary of Mansfield.⁹⁹ Critics who first connected the stories directly with Bergson's

temporally bound. See Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. by John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 353; p. 378. In allowing for the actual passing of time into memory as well as the retrieval of past memories, Husserl's theory divides memory between consciousness and recall which produces a problem in determining at what 'point' the one transfers into the other, a dilemma which Bergson avoids by refusing to think in terms of a 'point' in time. Given these differences in emphasis, I do not take a phenomenological line on Bergson. For a full and varied interpretation of Bergson and the development of phenomenological thought, see *Bergson and Phenomenology*, ed. by Michael R. Kelly (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁹⁸ Rickert, p. 515.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Malcolm Cowley, 'The Author of Bliss', a review of *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, *Dial: a Semi-monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion and Information*, August 1922, 230. Cowley notes: 'Katherine Mansfield does not treat events, but rather the reflection of events in someone's mind' (p. 230). In his obituary of Mansfield in the *Spectator Literary Supplement*, 10 February 1923, 211, Martin Armstrong observes that in one type of Mansfield story 'we are shown a personality reacting more or less acutely to a moment of

concepts tended to focus on three aspects of his thinking: his theory of philosophical intuition; his concept of duration and, with it, of continuity and heterogeneity; and, in passing, his theory of memory.

One of the earliest direct critical references to Bergsonian intuition in relation to Mansfield was in 1970 when Christiane Mortelier suggested a connection to the 1930s French view of her:

‘Woman’, ‘Tuberculosis’, ‘English’, ‘Poet’, ‘Mystic’ – these were highly charged words for the French mind of the thirties, for their overtones were related to intuition, an aspect of the cognitive process to which Bergson had drawn attention.¹⁰⁰

However, Mortelier is sceptical of the ‘self-revealing’, intuitive Mansfield stemming from the hagiography of her instigated by John Middleton Murry after Mansfield’s death, and instead champions Mansfield’s ‘sharpened realism’.¹⁰¹ Regarding intuition in a more favourable light, Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr in their 1981 study of Mansfield outlined the impact of Bergson’s intuition on the little magazine *Rhythm*, on Post-Impressionism and on Fauvism.¹⁰² They also associated Mansfield’s stories with Bergson’s ideas of time, suggesting that in her story ‘At the Bay’, Mansfield’s women ‘live by “real time”’. But in a curious note they also maintain that: ‘K.M. had read her Bergson years before Virginia Woolf, and the opposition in his philosophy of “clock time” and “real time” is equally strong in her work.’¹⁰³ Yet there is no tangible evidence that Mansfield actually *read* Bergson, just as there is debate about whether Woolf did so. What does seem highly likely is that Mansfield would have ‘read’ the signs of culture, its preoccupation with ideas about time, memory, perception and consciousness, and would have been aware of Bergson’s impact on English society in the 1910s. Whether or not Bergson directly influenced Mansfield, he established a terminological framework which is useful for thinking about Mansfield’s own inventiveness.

Although there is no mention at all of Bergson in Antony Alpers’s 1953 biography of Mansfield, in the much expanded and revised edition of 1982 in the chapter on *Rhythm*,

psychological crisis or revealed for a moment in its own special psychological atmosphere’ (p. 211). More Bergsonian is his comment that Mansfield’s ‘sensibility acts upon the whole as a flux, melts it into a single consistent experience’ (p. 211), suggesting to me an affinity with contemporaneous philosophical and cultural discourse to which, as already noted, Bergson both contributed and out of which his ideas arose.

¹⁰⁰ Christiane Mortelier, ‘The Genesis and Development of the Katherine Mansfield Legacy in France’, in *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Jan Pilditch (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 94-103 (p. 99). First published in *AUMLA*, 34, 1970, 252-63.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁰² Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr, *Katherine Mansfield* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), p. 35.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 102; note 2, p. 139.

Alpers discusses the ‘profound’ influence of Bergson’s ‘new philosophy of the intuition’ on Middleton Murry’s *Rhythm*, a journal Mansfield would go on to co-edit.¹⁰⁴ Murry, with whom Mansfield began a relationship in 1912, had read Bergson in French while in Paris. He had already written an editorial for *Rhythm*’s first issue in the summer of 1911 which was inflected with avowedly Bergsonian terms.¹⁰⁵ Murry and Mansfield then co-wrote an article on ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ for a subsequent issue the following summer in which they retrieved for art Bergson’s term ‘intuition’, described as ‘the power of divining individuality in other persons and other things’.¹⁰⁶ In the article they claimed that the ‘free’ artist is one who rejects ‘machine-made realism’ and uses intuition to directly apprehend reality.¹⁰⁷ A further joint editorial in the following issue of *Rhythm* on ‘Seriousness in Art’ is also suffused with Bergsonian imagery.¹⁰⁸

In her 1991 study of Mansfield, Sydney Janet Kaplan observed that arguments about Bergson’s ideas had already taken place earlier in the *New Age*, under the editorship of A. R. Orage, an observation also made by Wallace Martin in his in-depth study of the periodical.¹⁰⁹ A review in the *New Age* in the summer of 1911 by T. E. Hulme calls for attention in being juxtaposed with Mansfield’s story ‘The Journey to Bruges’ and provides tangible evidence that Mansfield’s early fiction was published alongside accounts of Bergson; it seems inconceivable that she would not have glanced at the issues in which her work was placed.¹¹⁰ From my perspective, ‘A Journey to Bruges’ is significant for the way it seemingly plays with a felt sense of interior time, in this case with its apparent oscillation and suspension, when an individual is held in spatial confinement:

¹⁰⁴ *Life*, p. 132; p. 134. For a detailed case study of *Rhythm*, see Faith Binckes, *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde: Reading Rhythm, 1910-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ John Middleton Murry, ‘Art and Philosophy’, *Rhythm: Art Music Literature Quarterly*, 1:1, Summer, 1911, 9-12. In this article Murry asserts that Bergson’s ideas have come late to England whereas in France his philosophy is ‘a living artistic force. It is the open avowal of the supremacy of the intuition, of the spiritual vision of the artist in form, in words and meaning. [...] We attain to the truth not by that reason which must deny the fact of continuity and of creative evolution, but by pure intuition, by the immediate vision of the artist in form’ (p. 9).

¹⁰⁶ John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’, *Rhythm: Art Music Literature Monthly*, 2:5, June 1912, 18-20 (p. 18). After four quarterly issues, the magazine became a monthly publication.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ J. Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, ‘Seriousness in Art’, *Rhythm: Art, Music Literature Monthly*, 2: 6, July 1912, 46-9.

¹⁰⁹ Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967). Martin comments that Bergsonian ‘intuition’ according to Orage was equated with impulse and Orage worried that this trend in contemporary culture would lead to a type of de-intellectualisation or literary decadence (p. 250).

¹¹⁰ See T. E. Hulme, review of *L’Attitude du Lyrisme Contemporain* by Trancrede de Visan, *New Age*, 9:17 (24 August 1911), 400-1. This review is immediately followed by Mansfield’s story ‘The Journey to Bruges’.

In the shortest sea voyage there is no sense of time. You have been down in the cabin for hours or days or years. [...] You do not believe in dry land any more – you are caught in the pendulum itself, and left there, idly swinging.¹¹¹

There is also a clear sense of moving in public time in the story: of journeying and voyaging and promenading. There seem to be affinities, then, in the theme of Mansfield's quite early story and Bergson's philosophical preoccupations.

In her biography of Mansfield, Angela Smith was one of the first critics not only to suggest a possible connection between Bergson's duration and Mansfield's 'late' work, but to use explicitly Bergsonian conceptual language in describing the link:

Mansfield constantly expresses in her late fiction and in her personal writing ideas that could stem from Bergson's emphasis on deep structures and his analysis of time and duration, that duration is an experience of heterogeneity, the merging and becoming process of psychic states, not of homogeneous identifiable emotions.¹¹²

Smith also links Bergson's thinking to Fauvist techniques (p. 128) and explores the Bergsonian ideas of heterogeneity and multiple experience (p. 135) and the idea of self or 'becoming' as 'demonic' in opposition to Bergson's 'creative heterogeneity' (p. 147). In a subsequent article of 2003, Smith states that Mansfield was in Paris during Christmas 1912 where she associated with a group of painters, writers and critics who were 'inventing Bergson', a phrase coined by Mark Antliff to refer to Bergson's organicist ideas about creative freedom as 'continual invention' and 'self-generation', as well as to the caution that Bergson's ideas do not precede cultural conventions but are rather 'socially authorized' (that is, 'invented').¹¹³ Smith maintains that 'the dominant intellectual influence' on this artistic group at the time was Bergson.¹¹⁴

Smith's work is a defining moment in Bergsonian-inflected criticism of Mansfield. She was also one of the first critics to provide close textual analysis of several of Mansfield's stories from a Bergsonian perspective, including 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' (in terms of duration) and 'At the Bay' (in terms of Bergson's approach to consciousness and

¹¹¹ See Katherine Mansfield, 'The Journey to Bruges', *New Age*, 9:17 (24 August 1911), 401-2 (p. 402). Further contiguous pieces are: Katherine Mansfield, 'Love Cycle', *New Age*, 9:25 (19 October 1911), 586, followed by T. E. Hulme's 'Notes on Bergson: 1', *New Age*, 9:25 (19 October 1911), 587-8; and, in successive issues, T. E. Hulme's 'Notes on Bergson: 2', *New Age*, 9:26 (26 October 1911), 610-11 and Katherine Mansfield's 'The Mating of Gwendolen', *New Age* (2 November 1911), 14-15. Authorship of this last story, however, which is signed 'Mouche', is questioned by Mansfield scholars.

¹¹² Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 124. Further references to this book are given in brackets in the text.

¹¹³ See Antliff, p. 12; p. 13.

¹¹⁴ See Angela Smith, 'Katherine Mansfield and "Rhythm"', *Journal of New Zealand Literature: JNZL*, 21 (2003), 102-21 (p. 103).

memory). Further close readings were provided by Eiko Nakano in her 2005 thesis in which she offered a detailed study of Bergson's influence on Mansfield's fiction.¹¹⁵ In particular, Nakano analyses 'Maata' through the concept of duration, continuity and heterogeneity as outlined in *Time and Free Will*; links the narrator's body with her memory in 'The Woman at the Store' by deriving ideas from *Matter and Memory*; and reads 'How Pearl Button was Kidnapped' through the child's intuitive perception, distinguishing between instinctive, intelligent and intuitive tendencies put forward in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. The main thrust of Nakano's argument is that, overall, Bergson balanced the 'one' and the 'many' or the singular and the multiple, and was not, as some critics have argued, fervently on the side of intuition over intellect, or of spirit over matter, a view with which I concur. Nakano also published an article in 2011 in which she claimed that Bergson's philosophy particularly influenced Mansfield's early stories 'The Woman at the Store' and 'How Pearl Button was Kidnapped' (published in *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review* in 1912 and 1913 respectively). Nakano focuses on the 'inseparability of intuition and intellect' in the way the stories depict the characters' 'continuously changing consciousness'.¹¹⁶ She also argues that the 'inseparable relation between spatial and temporal aspects' is central to Mansfield's early work.¹¹⁷ My own approach broadens this terrain by suggesting that Mansfield's earliest through to her last stories can be read through a range of Bergson's philosophical terms specifically with respect to memory.

There has been very little written directly on Mansfield and memory. While Clare Hanson raised the topic in her introduction to her anthology of Mansfield's critical writings in 1987, she did not do so with Bergson in view. Rather, she suggested that memory is an important aspect of Mansfield's 'personal' aesthetic which Mansfield 'places at the centre of the artistic process.'¹¹⁸ However, in her Katherine Mansfield birthday lecture, Hanson begins to draw together in suggestive ways aspects of Bergson's thinking in relation to Mansfield,

¹¹⁵ Eiko Nakano, 'One or Many: Bergsonian Readings of Katherine Mansfield's Modernism' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Stirling, 2005), p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Eiko Nakano, 'Katherine Mansfield, *Rhythm* and Henri Bergson' in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, eds Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber and Susan Reid (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 30-41 (pp. 39-40).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40. See also: Eiko Nakano, 'Intuition and Intellect: Henri Bergson's Influence on Katherine Mansfield's Representations of Places', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 40: 1 (2002), 86-100; Eiko Nakano, 'Katherine Mansfield and French Philosophy: A Bergsonian Reading of *Maata*', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 1 (2009), 68-82; and Eiko Nakano, 'Travelling between the Real and the Virtual: Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* and Katherine Mansfield's "The Woman at the Store"', *Cuadernos de Literatura Inglesa y Norteamericana*, 6:1-2 (May-November, 2003), 25-37.

¹¹⁸ Clare Hanson, ed., *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1987), p. 11.

touching on memory.¹¹⁹ Hanson discusses Bergson's account of the self, as well as of the past, memory, intuition, virtual and actual futures, and freedom briefly in relation to various Mansfield stories. Whereas I focus on Bergson's metaphysics and specifically on memory, Hanson places greater emphasis on Bergson's vitalist psychology and on emotion and affect. In her dissertation, Louise Edensor brought memory into her consideration of Mansfield's stories by drawing on Bergson and Arthur Symons to focus on the ways in which Mansfield critiques women's oppression.¹²⁰ Edensor provides readings of 'The Tiredness of Rosabel', some of *The German Pension* stories, and 'The Swing of the Pendulum' in terms of Symbolist representations of Bergson's concepts of perception, memory images and duration. And in her persuasive reading of 'A Dill Pickle' she illuminates the ways in which the evocation of memory is achieved using symbols which point up the discrepant memories of the two characters. My approach concentrates on multiple aspects of memory in a more philosophically inflected reading and selects entirely different stories for my textual analyses.

While delineating my engagement with recent Mansfield criticism on aspects of Bergson's philosophy, I also want to place my work in relation to studies of modernism and memory and to studies of Bergson and memory more generally. The key contemporary study on European modernism and specifically *autobiographical* memory has recently been provided by Lorna Martens in *The Promise of Memory*, in reading the childhood memories of Proust, Rilke and Benjamin, while the unsurpassed cultural history of modernism in describing intellectual, technological and scientific developments, including those of time and space, is the work of Stephen Kern. Of the critical work on Bergson and modernism, important precursors are *The Crisis in Modernism*, which redefines Bergson's thought in relation to the vexed question of vitalism, and *Bergson and British Modernism* by Mary Ann Gillies, who established the intellectual contexts in Britain for Bergson's reception and outlined a Bergsonian modernist aesthetics in relation to T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Joseph Conrad but who in this work excluded Mansfield. While doing valuable ground work, Gillies engages with three themes: the nature of origins in the early twentieth-century materialist world; problems of identity; and representation in

¹¹⁹ Clare Hanson, *Katherine Mansfield and Vitalist Psychology*, The Katherine Mansfield Society Annual Birthday Lecture, 6 (Bath: Katherine Mansfield Society Publications, 2015). For readings of Mansfield in the context of developments in psychology and psychoanalysis, see also the very recently published volume *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber and Todd Martin, *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 8 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

¹²⁰ See Louise Edensor, 'Creative Evolution: Symbolist Representations of Bergson's Duration in the Works of Katherine Mansfield' (unpublished MA dissertation, The Open University, 2010), the typescript of which was kindly provided to me by the author.

art, rather than with memory. Mark Antliff's 1993 magisterial study of Bergson exclusively focuses on his impact on cultural politics, and particularly on the artistic practice of the Cubists and Futurists in pre-war France. More recently, the collection *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism* has reframed Bergson for a twenty-first-century readership especially in the light of the Deleuzian 'turn' to Bergson. In this vein, the recent essay collection on *Bergson and the Art of Immanence* brings this contemporary Bergson to bear on art's philosophy in approaching painting, photography and film.¹²¹

In contradistinction to a political Bergson, a new vitalist Bergson, a post-Deleuzian Bergson and an aesthetic Bergson I return to a more historicised Bergson in order to extend incipient readings of Mansfield via Bergson's theory of intuition and duration. My study provides Bergsonian readings of Mansfield's fictional rendering of the subjective processes of memory. It does so in relation to Bergson's ideas of action and dream, of movement in relation to time, of the persistence of memory (or unforgetting) and on the possibilities of personal memory subsumed within a wider cosmic consciousness. It is less to do with the *reconstruction* of the past, whether seemingly mimetic or textually memorialised through the stories we tell about it, because Bergson and Mansfield evidently eschewed a theory of mediated memory and the past in favour of direct apprehension, even while they each, of course, used language and a particularly metaphorical style at that in order to represent their ideas.

In the four chapters which follow, I examine four types of memory: generative, topological, degenerative (that is, memory loss or forgetting) and cosmic memory. What Bergson and Mansfield share in common, I argue, is the idea that memory not only persists, but is insistent: it is a vital, life-giving, agglomerative and creative force. I use a model of memory which is not preoccupied with psychic repression, nostalgia, involuntary recollection, cognitive impairment or visual images, all valid approaches to remembering in the period covered by this thesis. Rather, I attend to memory's resilience and its protean and potent qualities and the ways in which it is actively involved in bringing the past into the present; is time-filled and in motion; and is not only a creative force at work within individual minds, but exhibits cosmic or worldly properties.

I derive the four memory types from Bergson's thinking as it developed from *Time and Free Will* through to *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, a period stretching

¹²¹ See Martens, Kern, Burwick and Douglass, Gillies, and Ardoin et al., cited above; and Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and *Bergson and the Art of Immanence*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Charlotte de Mille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

from 1889 to 1932, for publication in French, and from 1910 to 1946 in English translation. While I should have liked to map Bergson's own four major books onto four of Mansfield's most important stories across my four chapters in sequence, I deal with *Matter and Memory* principally in Chapters One and Three, *Time and Free Will* in Chapter Two and *Creative Evolution* and *Two Sources* in Chapter Four as I develop my argument about the way in which memory expands from the inner world of the individual subject outwards towards the cosmos. By placing Mansfield in dialogue with Bergson I aim to contribute to a *process* of re-reading Bergson and Mansfield as a continuous and reciprocal, rather than conclusive, re-creative act. If I find Bergsonian philosophical ideas in Mansfield's writing, I also suggest that Mansfield takes Bergson in new and intriguing literary directions.

In the first chapter, I discuss Bergson's theory of memory in *Matter and Memory* in terms of what I call 'generative' memory, which is memory that expands and accumulates over the lifetime of an individual. I contend that generative memory is a means of bringing together Bergson's dual concepts of pure and habit memory which are in turn related to the two planes of memory he outlines in *Matter and Memory*: that of action and of dream. I use the idea of generative memory to think about the ways in which memory is attributed by Mansfield to her characters in *The Aloe* and *Prelude* according to whether they are action-led or dream-led and whether they are orientated towards the past, present or future. I align the character of Stanley Burnell with action-led memory, Linda Burnell with passive, past-orientated dream memory, which inhibits her ability to act in the present, and the character of Mrs Fairfield, the grandmother, with the harmonious resolution of action and dream memory. Through the character of Beryl I suggest Mansfield blends Bergson's practical memory with his dream memory but as a form of anticipation of the future in the forming of adult sexual orientation and gendered identity. I read the character of the child Kezia in terms of the creative dimension of memory, or memory-making, suggesting that the significant events which will produce some of Kezia's formative childhood memories and which will later 'dominate' her memory are in the process of being made during the course of the narrative. I also look at Mansfield's own views of memory and examine whether or not the texts of *The Aloe* and *Prelude* are creatively generated re-inscriptions of Mansfield's own personal memories.

In the second chapter I outline what I refer to as topological memory which I regard as a 'mobile geometry' of space and time developing out of the philosophical dualism Bergson outlined in *Time and Free Will* between homogeneous, quantitative and spatialised time and the heterogeneous, qualitative and living time of 'duration'. I deploy the trope of

topological memory to read Mansfield's story 'At the Bay', a story which also happens to expand out of *Prelude* and generates intertextual memories between the two narratives. This topological reading follows the 'curve' of time in the story, which I argue is one of the narrative means by which Mansfield brings the Bergsonian duality of space and time into something like harmony by re-shaping time through movement in space in what I call 'time-space'. In this way I give what I consider to be a necessary and proper weighting to the importance of time and space in Bergson's philosophical thinking by way of Mansfield's fictional writing. A brief chapter interlude looks at two less well-known stories in relation to Mansfield's apparent mockery of spatialised time and duration.

My third chapter focuses on degenerative memory, or forgetting. I argue that while memory, for both Bergson and Mansfield, is rarely thought of or represented as being catastrophically degenerative (that is, permanently erased or lost), it is nonetheless intimately bound up with forgetting.¹²² Forgetting, in Bergsonian terms, I suggest, relates to memory in abeyance, latent in the virtuality of 'pure' memory or in the 'habit' memory of the body. If memory, as Mary Warnock has claimed, 'consist[s] in thinking of things in their absence', absence is another way of thinking about forgetting.¹²³ I argue that Bergson and Mansfield articulate in different ways the idea of the *temporary* absence of memory. Drawing on Bergson's clinical and philosophical investigation of the conditions of amnesia and aphasia principally in *Matter and Memory*, I establish temporary forgetting as the necessary corollary of remembering in a close reading of Mansfield's story 'The Garden Party'. In this Bergsonian reading, I suggest that Laura's temporary forgetting is represented both by her distraction from remembering (amnesia) as multiple events impinge on her during the fraught excitements of the party, and in the linguistic disarray of her stammering (aphasia) as she makes the difficult transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

In my final chapter I turn to the more expansive concept of cosmic memory. I do so by bringing individual and cosmic memory together via the concept of epiphany understood in Bergsonian terms. I approach epiphany neither as a 'moment' captured in time nor as an aestheticised enhancement of manifest everydayness, but in terms of a Bergsonian typology which has cosmic, mystical and transcendental properties. My fourth chapter turns to Bergson's two works *Creative Evolution* and *Two Sources* to think about the ways in which

¹²² Bergson's focus on the indestructibility of memory leads him in his essay 'The Perception of Change' to comment that because the inner life continues indivisibly 'we no longer have to explain the preservation of the past, but rather its apparent abolition. We shall no longer have to account for remembering, but for forgetting.' Henri Bergson, 'The Perception of Change', in *The Creative Mind*, trans. by Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), pp. 153-86 (p. 181).

¹²³ Mary Warnock, *Memory* (London: Faber, 1987), p. 12.

cosmic memory denotes a movement from the individual inner mind towards a general mystic consciousness. I outline the ways in which Bergson and Mansfield were associated with mysticism: with cosmic consciousness in Bergson's case, and with cosmic anatomy and 'the work' of self-awakening associated with the Armenian-Greek spiritual leader Georgii Ivanovich Gurdjieff in Mansfield's case.¹²⁴ I provide a close textual reading of 'Bliss' in terms of Bergsonian epiphany and cosmic memory.

My brief Conclusion examines Mansfield's and Bergson's attitudes to life after death in relation to the survival of memory as Mansfield, following a 'spiritual crisis', lived out her final months of life at Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man.¹²⁵ The thesis culminates in a reading of Mansfield's last complete story, 'The Canary', as a means of reprising the four elements of memory traced in the previous chapters.

¹²⁴ I take the spelling of Gurdjieff's name and nationality from Paul Beekman Taylor's *Gurdjieff and Orage: Brothers in Elysium* (York Beach: Weiser Books, 2001).

¹²⁵ The last sentence of Mansfield's last posted letter to her cousin Elizabeth concerns memory: 'I shall remember every little thing about you for ever.' See Letter to Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 31 December 1922, *CLKM*, 5 (1922-1923), p. 346. Bergson's last words were still focused, reputedly, on time: "'Gentlemen, it is five o'clock. The class is over.'" Quoted by Michael Foley in *Life Lessons from Bergson* (London: Macmillan, 2013), p. 9 (original source untraced).

Chapter One

Generative Memory – *The Aloe* and *Prelude*

[T]he past should be *acted* by matter, *imagined* by mind. – Henri Bergson¹

Is my love of *reverie* greater than my love of action. – Katherine Mansfield²

Introduction

In my Introduction I indicated the historically specific grip that memory had on Mansfield's generation of writers and suggested that, in confronting a crisis in memory, writers turned to the novelty of experimenting with the past in the present during the early changeful decades of the twentieth century. In identifying Mansfield's generation as one unusually preoccupied with memory I found a homology with Bergson, as one of the shapers of a generation's thought, although not necessarily the cause of that thought. I stressed that there may have been comparable influences of contemporaneity on both Bergson and Mansfield via common antecedents and that the work of the former makes helpfully explicit a set of responses to the moulding of the imagination of each.

In this first chapter I turn to the idea of what I call 'generative' memory in the context of Bergson and Mansfield. While Clare Hanson has written about the 'generativity of life' in connection with Bergson's vitalist psychology and what Mansfield refers to as 'the life of life', I focus on the ways in which memory is creative and insistent for both.³ I first establish that Mansfield had long been writing about memory as she developed her writing technique. I go on to look at the way in which *Prelude* was generated from *The Aloe*, identifying the ways in which Mansfield eliminated some aspects of her remembered past and of family memory in *Prelude*. Having set out Bergson's theory of recollection and of memory, I take up Bergson's concept of the 'planes of memory' as I believe it provides an unparalleled methodology for analysing memory in the story. I deploy Bergson's Plane of Dream and Plane of Action to examine the presentation of memory in the fictional characters

¹ *M&M*, p. 298.

² Katherine Mansfield, diary entry [Notebook 36, qMS-1272], *CWKM4*, p. 353.

³ See Hanson, *Katherine Mansfield and Vitalist Psychology*, p. 8. See also Notebook 34, qMS-1252, *TKMN*, 2, p. 57 (emphasis in the original) from which I take this text; collected in *CWKM4*, p. 202 (emphasis removed).

of the Burnell family. Finally, I look at what I call the ‘Time Plane’ in relation to the two stories.

Mansfield’s Early Memory Texts

In 1916, in addressing her brother Leslie Heron Beauchamp (also known as ‘Chummie’) in a notebook entry following his untimely death in a hand grenade accident during an army training exercise in France, Mansfield referred to the need to find a storytelling technique which would illuminate life, where death had precipitately foreclosed on life:

[A]ll must be told with a sense of mystery, a radiance, an after glow because you, my little sun of it, are set. You have dropped over the dazzling brim of the world. Now I must play my part –⁴

Putting the three terms ‘mystery’, ‘radiance’ and ‘after glow’ together suggests a speculative illumination relating to the divine, even to Christian mysticism. This triad can also be seen as part of Mansfield’s debt to literary impressionism and to Symbolism; and as an aspect of her affiliation with Bergsonian views about significant memories coming into the light of consciousness.⁵ In alignment with other modern or burgeoning modernist writers who expressed anxiety about finding a new artistic form which could adequately represent the plethora of modern life, Mansfield went on to outline a new form for her writing, a blend of fictional lament with lyrical prose, which would represent both memory and mourning: ‘But especially I want to write a kind of long elegy to you perhaps not in poetry. No, perhaps in Prose – almost certainly in a kind of special prose.’⁶ Mansfield captures here the options open to the writer in memorialising the dead and in raising personal memories to the level of art. Truth to experience and fairness to memory may be forfeited or find themselves at variance with the necessities of artistic practice and literary form.

⁴ Notebook 45, qMS-1253; *TKMN*, 2, p. 32; published in *CWKM4*, pp. 191-2, from which this text is taken.

⁵ For a full reading of Mansfield’s aesthetic technique in the context of the sensory evocations associated with literary impressionism, see Julia van Gunsteren, *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Impressionism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990). In particular, van Gunsteren discusses light and atmosphere as one aspect of Mansfield’s technique of presenting ‘intensity and expressiveness through images of light’ which for the Literary Impressionist loses its ‘sacrosanct connotations’ (p. 56). Van Gunsteren suggests a common cultural root for Bergson and Mansfield is likely to be Symbolism in which light is regarded as ‘the equivalent of the highest spiritual principle; [...] it opens up a world beyond space and matter’ (p. 56). In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson associates recollections with light: ‘What we really need to discover is how a choice is effected among an infinite number of recollections [...], and why only one of them, – this rather than that, – emerges into the light of consciousness.’ See *M&M*, p. 213; also discussed on p. 198 and p. 220. Bergson also discusses light in relation to duration and consciousness (*M&M*, pp. 272-3).

⁶ Notebook 45, qMS-1253; *TKMN*, 2, p. 33; published in *CWKM4*, p. 192, from which this text is taken.

Critics have suggested that Mansfield turned to recollecting her early life and her ‘own country’ of New Zealand either following the arrival of her brother in England in 1915 or in the aftermath of his accidental death. But the ‘special *prose*’ to which Mansfield refers was probably *The Aloe* and was, as will become clear, an imaginative work of family and childhood memory already underway before her brother’s death. It is also apparent that Mansfield was preoccupied with the compelling power of memory and of utilising her own memories as part of her creative narrative process from an early age. While at school at Queen’s College in London from early 1903 to 1906, and on her return to London from New Zealand in August 1908, Mansfield re-inscribed her memories of her colonial childhood and home in beginning to forge her distinctively modern Anglophone identity. An early example is the story ‘About Pat’, published in the *Queen’s College Magazine* (December 1905), in which Mansfield shows an interest in recollecting her childhood home in Wellington. And in October 1908 she is framing her diary entries around childhood memories of New Zealand, following a turbulent sea crossing on a trip to Paris with her friend Margaret Wishart:

A rough sea journey is a strange conglomeration of sensations. I, in a moment seem caught by a thousand memories – am a child again, sitting on the deck in my Grandmother’s lap – and me in a red riding cloak – going over to Nelson, to Picton, to England for the first time & the second – – –⁷

In these evocations of her past, memories are depicted both in fictional fairy tale terms (‘in a red riding cloak’) and as a form of sensory recall. Another early text which appears as a diary entry (‘April 1st’) from 1906 titled ‘My Potplants’, mixes different generic elements, this time diary and fantasy modes, to produce a sense of memory’s protean qualities. In the ‘diary’ entry, Mansfield as diarist records an evening spent thinking about the past:

This evening I have sat in my chair with my reading lamp turned low, and given myself up to thoughts of the years that have past. Like a strain of minor music they have surged across my heart, and the memory of them, sweet and fragrant as the perfume of my flowers, has sent a strange thrill of comfort through my tired brain.⁸

This seeming recollection of a day dreaming of the past, prompted possibly by the primroses Mansfield has bought from a passing flower-girl, presents a sophisticated doubling of memory and time: a recollection in a diary entry together with an inset narrative reverie. In

⁷ Notebook 8, qMS-1245; *TKMN*, 1, p. 213; published in *CWKM4*, p. 97, from which this text is taken.

⁸ Notebook 29, qMS-1241; *TKMN*, 1, p. 41; published in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 1: The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1898-1915*, pp. 32-5 (p. 32) from which I take this text. Page references to subsequent quotations are given in the text. The edition is hereinafter abbreviated to *CWKM1* with the page number(s) provided.

the ensuing paragraph, Mansfield then adopts the use of a first-person narrator caught up in a fictionalised fantasy of being orphaned as a child which contains fairy-tale elements:

During my childhood I lived surrounded by a luxurious quantity of flowers, and they were my only companions. My Mother died when I was very young and I had no brothers or sisters. How I loved my life. [...] I remember the year when Spring was very late in coming. (p. 33)

This ‘vulnerable’ child-self is demonstrably contrived, given that towards the end of the reverie, in which the narrator has wandered in the woods and met the ‘Goddess of the wood’ to whom she tells her story, Mansfield, as diarist, abruptly interrupts her own narrative: ‘Stop! Why do I sit here and dream of all that is past, long past. Life is before.’ (p. 34) At the end of the dream-reverie, signalled in the text by a dotted line, Mansfield returns to the ‘present’ of writing in the notebook, which is seemingly external to the story world, writing ‘Ah! my poor little primroses in the blue dish, they have withered and died! FINIS’ (p. 34). ‘My Potplants’ is worth lingering on as an early text for its oscillation between a first-person narrator and the ‘I’ persona of the diary-writer. Mansfield experiments here with narrative time and narrative mode to evoke memories of the past as well as to explore the memory motifs of childhood, flowers and places which she will recall in other stories and which mark her out as a writer of memory texts.

As I noted in my Introduction, from a poststructuralist viewpoint all memories are mediated via language and narration and in this process, as Lorna Martens has observed, they are ‘no longer memories, but *texts*’.⁹ Memories, in this understanding, are aesthetically inscribed recollections and ‘the very effort of recording memories means translating into language what was once scene, image, or feeling’.¹⁰ Moreover, authors, whether of autobiography, memoir, fictionalised autobiography or memory-based story – that is, of ‘literary’ memories – deliberately use rhetorical strategies and aesthetic design as a means of producing particular ‘effects’ on the reader.¹¹ Bergson and Mansfield clearly precede this

⁹ See Martens, p. 55.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. There is a large body of feminist scholarship which deals with memory and/as narrative which is psychoanalytically inclined and focused on reconstructing the past through story that I am unable to deal with here. Similarly, I cannot cover the work which came out of Second-Wave feminism’s concerns with autobiographical memory, truth-telling and bearing witness which connects with the field of trauma studies, its concerns with recovered memory, and the ‘memory wars’ of the 1990s. For examples of this scholarship see: Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*, 2nd edn (London: Verso, 2002) as well as Susannah Radstone’s work on the discursive construction of truth; memory understood as a ‘regime’; her critique of the trauma theory of Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman; and her analysis of memory in terms of ethics, power and fantasy: Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds, *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (London: Routledge, 2003); Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, eds, *Regimes of Memory* (London:

body of theorising. While Bergson acknowledges that ‘the word’ functions to ‘intervene’ between ourselves and an object, whereby the ‘original life’ of objects is ‘screened’ from us, he stops short of acknowledging that there is no memory without language.¹² The purpose of artistry for Bergson is to render by means of colour and form and language ‘the inner life of things’ (p. 155). Even though ‘at a pinch’ emotions might be translated into language, writers do so in order to ‘grasp something that has nothing in common with language, certain rhythms of life and breath’ (p. 156). Art’s primary function is for Bergson, then, to ‘brush aside the utilitarian symbols [...] in order to bring us face to face with reality itself’ (p. 157).¹³ For Mansfield, her aesthetically rendered fictionalised memories as well as the imagined memories of her characters are not necessarily ‘false’ or any less ‘authentic’ if they remain true to *feeling*.

As early as June 1907, Mansfield described the characteristics of the book she wanted to write, which included the deliberate use of a technique to arouse genuine emotions and sensations in her readers:

I want to write a book – that is unreal yet wholly possible because out of the question – that raises in the hearts of the readers emotions, sensations too vivid not to take effect, which causes a thousand delicate tears, a thousand sweet chimes of laughter. [...] it must be ultra modern.¹⁴

Routledge, 2003); and Susannah Radstone, ‘Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics’, *Paragraph*, 30:1 (March 2007), 9-29. There is also a large literature in the social sciences on false memory syndrome in relation to the narrativising element. See, for instance, Janice Doane and Devon Hodges, *Telling Incest: Narratives of Dangerous Remembering from Stein to Sapphire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001) and Judith Herman [1992], *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2015). For work on the psychobiology of trauma and ‘somatic’ memory, see Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000). For an incisive recent overview of memory discourse in relation to false memory, social psychology, new technology, law and neuroscience, see Alison Winter, *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹² Bergson, *Laughter*, p. 153. Further references to this text in this paragraph are given in brackets in the text.

¹³ Bergson does refer, however, to what he terms the ‘myth-making function’ (*la fonction fabulatrice*) in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, but by this term he seems to mean the ‘story-making’ role carried out by societies rather than any form of textual mediation. It is ‘fiction’ which produces ‘phantasmic representations’ based on superstitions, in early societies, or on imagination, in modern societies. Henri Bergson [1932, *Les Deux sources de la morale et de la religion*], *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter (London: Macmillan, 1935). See Chapter 2 throughout, and p. 88. Bergson identifies two historical dimensions to this function: in bringing about cohesion within an ancient ‘closed’ society through the invention of divine beings to reinforce the interdictions of society; and in opening up society, in the Christian era and into modern times, via mystics who use common storytelling to express their visions. In these ways, story-making shapes the continuous nature of social life. Further references to this text are abbreviated to *TSMR*.

¹⁴ Notebook 39, qMS-1243; *TKMN*, 1, p. 103; published in *CWKM4*, dated i.vi.07, pp. 51-2, from which this text is taken.

A young Katherine Mansfield is here testing out a ‘modern’ mode of writing by investing in the potential of technique to convey the memorable. Similarly in an early notebook entry of 1909, Mansfield recorded an epigram by Prosper Mérimée for the way in which it captured the insistence of memory: ‘The artist becomes an artist by the intensification of Memory.’¹⁵ This pithy sentiment encapsulates not only the centrality of memory to artistic practice but the way in which artistic practice represents memory: through accentuating, enhancing, heightening and inevitably altering the memory itself, while retaining the memory feeling. A feeling for the past, together with this emphatic sense of intensity and illumination, are ideas also framed later by Mansfield in a 1920 review of two novels for the *Athenaeum*: ‘And therefore the childhood that we look back upon and attempt to recreate must be – if it is to satisfy our longing as well as our memory – [...] must have, as it were, a haunting light upon it.’¹⁶ As I noted in the Introduction, while the past, in Bergson’s view, cannot be repeated or re-lived, with the right expressive literary technique, the past can be made ‘present’ affectively and effectively in the reader’s mind. Mansfield seems to echo Bergson in suggesting that while no experience is actually repeatable, a significant purpose of literary technique is to generate memory affect; to produce something itself memorable, mysterious, moving, even haunting in the ‘after glow’ of story-making.

Family Memory and Textual Generation

Mansfield wrote in her notebooks of her “‘debt of love’” to her family which involved remembering the past.¹⁷ I contend that Mansfield’s writing presents a complex and ambivalent form of ‘tribute’ memory to her family. Kirsty Gunn has argued more literally that *The Aloe* is a text bringing together the ‘shattered pieces’ of Mansfield’s past, whereas *Prelude*, according to Mary Burgan, is Mansfield’s text of ‘reparative recollection’, a view for which I have more sympathy if Burgan means by this that the text is less mimetic and more re-constitutive.¹⁸ By looking at the way in which the texts of both stories were generated and altered, it can be shown that in the process of editing *The Aloe* into *Prelude* Mansfield not only edited out narrative description in favour of implication, but also pared

¹⁵ ‘Quotations on Art’, Notebook 2, ATL, qMS-1244; *TKMN*, 1, p. 165; published in *CWKM4*, p. 110, from which this text is taken.

¹⁶ See ‘The Magic Door’, a review of *Adam of Dublin* by Conal O’Riordan and *Forgotten Realms* by Bohun Lynch, *Athenaeum*, 12 November 1920, pp. 652-3; reprinted in *N&N*, pp. 288-92 and collected in *CWKM3*, pp. 687-91 (p. 687), from which the text is taken.

¹⁷ Notebook 45, qMS-1253; *TKMN*, 2, p. 32; published in *CWKM4*, p. 191, from which this text is taken.

¹⁸ Katherine Mansfield, *The Aloe*, with a Foreword by Kirsty Gunn (London: Capuchin Classics, 2010), p. 7. Mary Burgan, *Illness, Gender and Writing: The Case of Katherine Mansfield* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 91.

back elements of personal memory.¹⁹ As Vincent O’Sullivan observes, Mansfield was prompted to write about family memory ‘so that she both preserved a memory for herself, yet gave it radiance and solidity as a work of art’.²⁰ That there are fewer direct personal memories retained in *Prelude* compared to *The Aloe* suggests that Mansfield’s aesthetic sense took over during the editing process. Mansfield edited from *The Aloe* some of the pre-history of the Burnell family which related to her own family history, reducing the possibility of biographical interpretation. If the story is boldly modern for being multi-perspectival, it is so in the sense of turning through one character’s psychological and memory perspective after another.

Although it wasn’t published in its own right until 1930 (a fact which introduces a sense of belatedness into any critical comparison of *The Aloe* and *Prelude*), the earliest textual mention of *The Aloe* dates to December 1914. At this time, Mansfield wrote a list apparently of titles for stories between diary entries for 18 December 1914 and 28 December 1914:

Given the [...]
Henry in the K[?] Sixpence
Farkey Anderson
The Aloe
Mother’s Guitar²¹

Both Antony Alpers, in his edition of Mansfield’s stories as well as in his biography of Mansfield, and Cherry Hankin in her edition of the letters between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry, document that the story was begun in Paris in March 1915 when Mansfield borrowed the French writer and her recent lover Francis Carco’s empty flat and that she added to it in May 1915 when she returned there (for the third time) from London. In a well-known letter to Murry of 25 March 1915, Mansfield describes what may be a draft of *The Aloe* as a novel:

I had a great day yesterday. The Muses descended in a ring like the angels on the Botticelli Nativity roof – or so it seemed to “humble” little Tig and I fell into the

¹⁹ Katherine Mansfield, *The Aloe with Prelude*, ed. by Vincent O’Sullivan (Wellington: Port Nicholson Press, 1982), p. 161.

²⁰ Katherine Mansfield, *The Aloe*, ed. by Vincent O’Sullivan (London: Virago Press, 1985), p. 13.

²¹ MS-Papers-4006-02; *TKMN*, 1, p. 287; published in *CWKM4*, p. 145, from which this text is taken. N.b. In the manuscript ‘Farkey Anderson’ is printed on the same line.

open arms of my first novel. [...] Its queer stuff. Its the spring makes me write like this. Yesterday I had a fair wallow in it.²²

If there might be doubt as to whether these comments in fact relate to *The Aloe*, the story's identity is corroborated in a letter from Murry to Mansfield of 11 May 1915 in which Murry includes a drawing of a bookshop on which is written 'THE ALOE 10th Edition' and 'THE ROUNDABOUT, 6th Edition'²³ (see Figure 1).

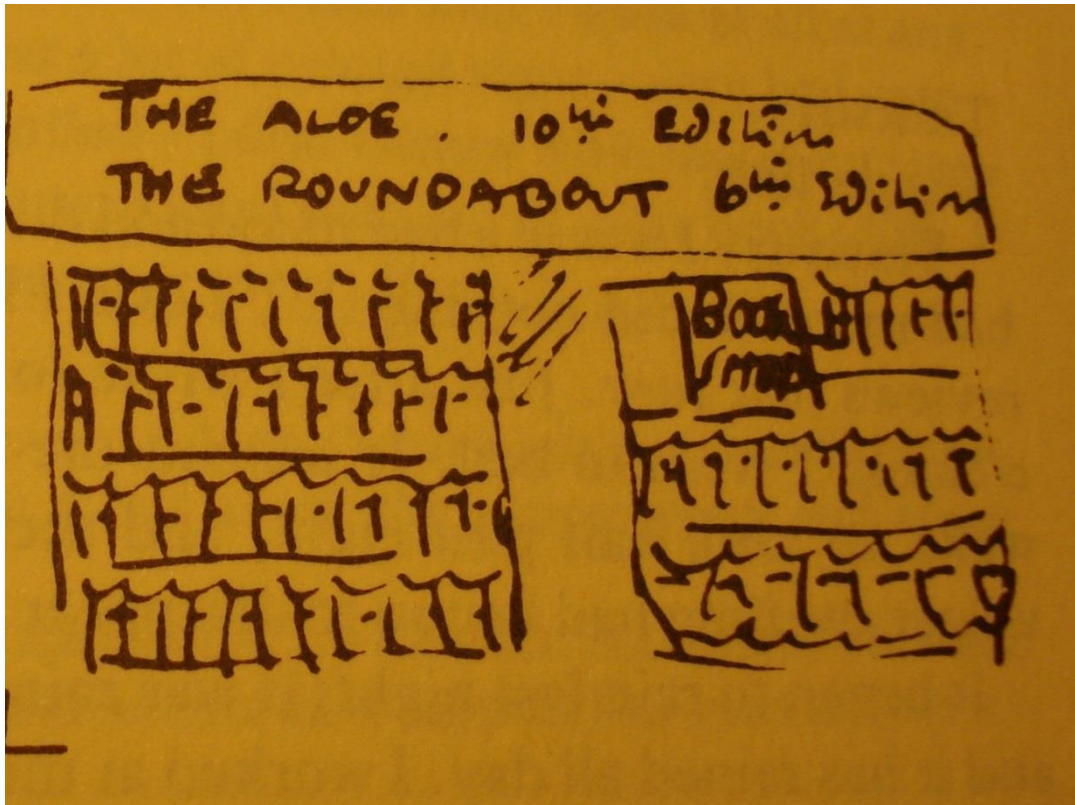


Figure 1. Murry's drawing of a bookshop projecting the future success of *The Aloe*

Mansfield's brother Leslie arrived in England in February 1915 to train as an officer in a British regiment. While on leave, Mansfield and Leslie are said – by Alpers and by Hankin – to have reminisced about their childhoods together in New Zealand. A month after Leslie's death (on 6 October 1915), Mansfield and Murry left for Cassis and then Bandol in the South of France, where Mansfield worked on the story after Murry had returned to England. In a letter to Murry of 10 December 1915, Mansfield mentions she has taken a

²² Katherine Mansfield, *CLKM*, 1, p. 167-8.

²³ Cherry A. Hankin, ed., *Letters Between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 55.

walk by the sea at St Cyr and, in brackets, she notes it was 'very beautiful & wild & like my NZ'. She goes on to say:

My work is shaping for the first time today – I feel nearer it. I can see the people walking on the shore & the flowery clusters hanging on the trees – – if you know what I mean. It has only been a dim coast & a glint of foam before – The days go by so quickly.²⁴

At the same time, Mansfield begins to use phrases in her letters that have a Bergsonian inflection to them. Thus, on 19-20 December 1915 in another letter to Murry, she explains: 'Writing to you I love you simply boundlessly. My love for you is always being new born.'²⁵ And again on 29 December 1915, in the second of two letters written to Murry that day, she writes to him:

Love possesses me utterly love for you and for our life and for all our richness and joy. [...] I seem only to have played on the fringe of love and lived a kind of reflected life that was not really my own but that came from my past.²⁶

The words 'boundlessly' and 'new born', as well as the idea of a 'fringe' and of life coming from the past, echo Bergsonian terms. Murry joined Mansfield again in Bandol at the end of December 1915; on 13 February 1916 Mansfield records in her notebook that she has written nothing: 'There is nothing done.'²⁷ By mid-February, she reflects on an 'unfinished memory' which she wants to turn into a story, 'Lena'; by 16 February she mentions 'finding' *The Aloe*, and she addresses her notebook comments about the story directly to her brother: 'I found The Aloe this morning. [...] The Aloe is right. The Aloe is lovely. It simply fascinates me, and I know that it is what you would wish me to write.'²⁸ Yet the actual 'tribute' to her remembered brother alters during the writing process because Leslie's 'resurrection' in fiction is postponed until the later story, 'At the Bay', as I will come on to show.

As Vincent O'Sullivan documents in the Introduction to his dual edition of *The Aloe with Prelude*, over three weeks Mansfield filled several exercise books with the story.²⁹ *The Aloe* was completed in March 1916, although O'Sullivan suggests that Mansfield had reworked it by early summer. Virginia Woolf asked for a story for The Hogarth Press in

²⁴ *CLKM*, 1, p. 206.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

²⁷ Notebook 34, qMS-1252; *TKMN*, 2, p. 57; published in *CWKM4*, p. 202, from which this text is taken.

²⁸ *TKMN*, 2, p. 60; *CWKM4*, pp. 204-5.

²⁹ O'Sullivan, *The Aloe with Prelude*, p. 14.

April 1917 and had accepted the text of *Prelude* by summer 1917.³⁰ It was delivered in typescript in final form by early October. According to Alpers, it was Murry who suggested the new title.³¹ It then took Leonard and Virginia Woolf until June 1918 to set and print the volume. There is some question as to whether there is a rough written or typewritten draft of *Prelude*.³² Tracing the letters sent between Mansfield and Virginia Woolf, Mansfield wrote to Virginia Woolf in August 1917 accepting an invitation to visit her at Asheham, her house in Sussex, on 17 August and commenting on a typescript version of the story: ‘Do have me. My story I have sent to the typist who lets me have it back on Thursday. I couldn’t cope with the bloody copying: I’ve been so “ill”.’³³ Mansfield’s letter suggests there is an earlier handwritten draft from which the typist is copying while John Middleton Murry’s note to this letter in his two-volume edition of Mansfield’s letters of 1928 indicates that the story was *Prelude*.³⁴

At the same time during the summer of 1917, there was an intriguing triangular correspondence between Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Ottoline Morrell relating to memories of gardens, which for both Mansfield and Woolf became the subject of creative endeavour. Mansfield wrote to Ottoline Morrell around 11 August 1917 referring to the ‘perfect’ memory of the days they had spent together at Garsington, referring to both the house and garden, and her disturbed feelings: ‘But between these lovely memories and me there opened a deep dark chasm – it *trembled* open as if by an earthquake – and now it is shut again and no trace of it remains.’³⁵ In her letter of around 15 August she mentioned the ‘glimpse of the garden – all flying green and gold’ and had wondered ‘*who* is going to write about that flower garden’. Mansfield goes on to suggest that she might attempt it: ‘I must have a fling at it as soon as I have time’ (although she turns the memory into a poem, ‘Night-

³⁰ Woolf writes: ‘I am going to see Katherine Mansfield, to get a story from her, perhaps; please experiment with papers.’ Letter to Vanessa Bell, 26 April [1917], in *The Question of Things Happening: The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 2, 1912-1922, ed. by Nigel Nicholson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976), p. 150. And, ‘At present we’ve promised to do Katherine Mansfields [sic] story’, Letter to Vanessa Bell, [26 July 1917], p. 168.

³¹ *Life*, p. 244.

³² See Peter H. Hughes, ed., *Katherine Mansfield: Manuscripts in the Alexander Turnbull Library* (Wellington, NZ: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1988), p. 12 for the following entry: ‘*Katherine’s typescript: Prelude, ca. 1917* / MS Papers 4063 / 1 folder (11 leaves) / ts. and ms. The description reads as follows: ‘A note by Murry, attached to the typescript states “I have included the only surviving pages of K.M.’s own typescript of ‘Prelude’, the few pencil corrections on it are her own. She revised & rewrote ‘The Aloe’ into ‘Prelude’ directly on the typewriter in the summer of 1917”. A second note attached to the manuscript, by R. T. Robertson, disputes Murry’s claim.’

³³ *CLKM*, 1, p. 324. In Murry’s 2-volume edition of Mansfield’s letters published in 1928 (see note below), the word ‘bloody’ was excised.

³⁴ Katherine Mansfield, *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 2 vols, ed. by J. Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1928), 1, p. 75.

³⁵ *CLKM*, 1, p. 323.

Scented Stock’).³⁶ In a subsequent letter to Virginia Woolf of around 23 August 1917, also referring to the memory (and possibly to a lost letter in which Mansfield had described Ottoline Morrell’s garden to Woolf), Mansfield praises a story of Woolf’s: ‘Yes, your Flower Bed is *very* good. There’s a still, quivering, changing light over it all and a sense of those couples dissolving in the bright air which fascinates me –’³⁷ John Middleton Murry explains in his footnote to the letter in his edition of Mansfield’s letters, that ‘Flower Bed’ refers to ‘Mrs. Woolf’s story, *Kew Gardens*’.³⁸ A generative intertextuality, then, seems to be based on the summoning of memories between the three women, especially between the two writers. Mansfield comments on their shared vocation in the same letter to Virginia Woolf: ‘it is really very curious & thrilling that we should both, *quite apart from each other*, be after so very nearly the same thing. We are, you know; there’s no denying it’.³⁹ While Mansfield is perhaps being tactful in suggesting that their creative imaginations work separately, it may be that a new poetics is emerging *between* them, based on memories of the qualities of light and a sense of ethereality which is reminiscent of Bergson’s description of an intuitive and rhythmic ideality achieved via language.

If memories were being shared between Mansfield and Woolf, writing methods discussed and ideas mutually absorbed, the question arises as to whether Virginia Woolf herself advised or made specific alterations to the text of *Prelude* when she received the typescript from Mansfield; that is, whether she participated in the creative endeavour of generating the text. Nora Sellei suggests an interesting reciprocity:

It seems a well-based supposition that Mansfield re-shaped her story at Virginia Woolf’s advice and request, as Mansfield was not in the habit of re-writing her stories several times. But it is also possible that the recommended changes coincided with her own better judgement as she was not easy to convince either. [...] The changes from *The Aloe* to ‘Prelude’ thus, perhaps, show a delicate interplay of the two women’s literary theory and taste.⁴⁰

Sellei goes on to assert that the changes, ‘while remaining typical of Mansfield’s style and concerns, could satisfy also Woolf’s critical expectations, laid down in “Modern Fiction”’.⁴¹ Yet Woolf’s essay, ‘Modern Novels’ (later republished under the title ‘Modern Fiction’) was not published in the *Times Literary Supplement* until 10 April 1919, whereas the first copies

³⁶ Ibid., p. 325.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 327.

³⁸ *Letters to Katherine Mansfield*, 1, p. 78.

³⁹ *CLKM*, 1, p. 327 (emphasis added).

⁴⁰ Nora Sellei, ‘“The Detached Existence of a Work of Art.” Mansfield’s *The Aloe* versus “Prelude” and Woolf’s Theory of Fiction’, *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, 1:2 (1995), 75-84 (pp. 75-6).

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 76.

of *Prelude* were sent out on 10 July 1918. Is it not equally conceivable, therefore, that Mansfield's story had also given Woolf inspiration for her essay? Woolf accuses the 'materialist' novelists Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy of 'blotting out the light of the conception' which picks up on Mansfield's idea of the writing process as one of illumination.⁴² Perhaps also in a reference to *Prelude* – which is still a long story even after the editing process – Woolf notes, 'There is, perhaps, no need that a short story should be brief and intense' (p. 35). Woolf may also be alluding to Bergson's emphasis on the spiritual over the material and on the role novelty and change might play in generating fiction when she comments that 'every good quality whether of the mind or spirit is drawn upon and used and turned by the magic of art to something little or large, but endlessly different, everlastingly new' (p. 36).

An example of the way in which *Prelude* had an impact on the cultural memory of the period can be seen in a review of the story in the *Times Literary Supplement* in January 1920 in which Harold Hannyngton Child drew attention to its formlessness and singled out the way in which Mansfield used light, colour and movement to represent the lives of her characters:

The form of the tale is necessarily undefined; but the flashes of light are so adroitly directed, the whole thing is so lively with subtle movement and colour, that it holds the reader more firmly than many an elaborated study.⁴³

The review is juxtaposed with one by D. L. Murray in which he discusses the doctrine of 'philosophic materialism' in a book on *Modern Science and Materialism* by Hugh Elliott. While matter and mind are approached by Elliott as part of the 'stream of experience', he still focuses on the physical functions of the mind rather than on its psychical components.⁴⁴

⁴² Virginia Woolf, 'Modern Novels', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 3, pp. 30-7 (p. 33). Further references to this essay are given in brackets in the text. The play of light and darkness in Mansfield's and Woolf's fiction is also an area of shared interest. For instance, the lights going out in *Prelude* might signal foreboding as well as time passing and a new phase of the family's memory might be cognate with the opening of Part 2 of *To the Lighthouse*.

⁴³ Harold Hannyngton Child, 'Two Stories', *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England], 29 January 1920, 63. Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive [last accessed 21 May 2016], http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroupName=ed_itw&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EX1200194325&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0

⁴⁴ D. L. Murray, 'Philosophic Materialism' *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England] 29 January 1920, 63. Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive [last accessed 22 May 2016], http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroupName=ed_itw&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EX1200194325&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0

A second example is the small multi-title advert for Virginia and Leonard Woolf's Hogarth Press printed in the bottom right-hand column of the *Times Literary Supplement* for Thursday, 29 July 1920.⁴⁵ What stands out here is that the advert is juxtaposed with a review

THE HOGARTH PRESS

Reminiscences of
TOLSTOI
by **MAXIM GORKY.** 5/- net.
"The book did not horrify me; it held me
breathless."—Wayfarer in *The Nation*.

The Story of the Siren, by **E. M.
FORSTER**, author of "Howard's End." 2/6 net.

Stories from The Old Testament,
Retold by **LOGAN PEARSALL
SMITH**, author of "Trivia." 4/6 net.

Paris, a Poem by **HOPE MIRRLEES.** 3/- net.

Prelude, by
KATHERINE MANSFIELD. 3/6 net.

The Critic in Judgment, by
J. MIDDLETON MURRY. 2/6 net.

By
VIRGINIA WOOLF.
Kew Gardens. 2nd Edition. 2/- net.
The Mark on the Wall.
2nd Edition. 1/6 net.

THE HOGARTH PRESS, Hogarth House, Richmond.

Figure 2. Hogarth Press advert for *Prelude* in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 1920

⁴⁵ "THE HOGARTH PRESS", *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England], 29 July 1920, 481. Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive [last accessed 21 May 2016], <http://gdc.gale.com/products/times-literary-supplement-historical-archive-1902-2005/>

of A. S. Eddington's *Space, Time and Gravitation: An Outline of the General Relativity Theory*, which discusses the new view of gravity, of space-time and the 'fourth dimension' (that is, the three dimensions of space and a fourth of time) which, according to the reviewer, is too complex for 'ordinary language' to present to the non-mathematically trained reader.⁴⁶ The adverts for *Prelude* and for Woolf's *Kew Gardens* and *The Mark on the Wall* – stories which experiment with 'modern' literary technique as a means of generating the qualities of perception and memory – are indicative, like Eddington's book, of an era whose mentalities moved beyond ordinary or natural language. These items, published in a prominent literary periodical, and which bring the latest philosophical thinking and new modes of story writing into conjunction, seem to underscore that writers of fiction in the period had further reason and ambition to be thinking about ways of newly representing unaccustomed dimensions of the mind as well as of time and space.

Generating *Prelude* from *The Aloe*

Various critics have outlined the principal cuts and alterations made to the text of *The Aloe* as it was transmuted into *Prelude*. Most critics seem to agree that *Prelude* is a technical improvement over *The Aloe*. In the *Life*, Antony Alpers comments that Mansfield 'refined' *The Aloe* into *Prelude*.⁴⁷ And John Middleton Murry explains in the Introduction to his 1930 edition of *The Aloe* that *The Aloe* material couldn't be published in the 'ordinary edition' of Mansfield's stories because 'it repeats, in a less perfect form, the material of PRELUDE'.⁴⁸ Patrick Morrow asserts that *Prelude* is 'noticeably incomplete', which could be read as indicating that the edits denuded the text, or that it fails to end; it is a puzzling statement.⁴⁹ A response to Morrow might be that of Suzanne Ferguson who argues that by adopting the short story form Mansfield resisted the 'novel convention of working everything out over time', suggesting that inconclusiveness is part of the way in which temporality can be dealt with in the short story.⁵⁰ Taken together, Morrow's and Ferguson's comments could be explained as Bergson's appeal to Mansfield of the incessantly generative

⁴⁶ Herbert Hall Turner, 'Space, Time and Gravitation', *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England], 29 July 1920, 481. Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive [last accessed 21 May 2016], http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroupName=ed_itw&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EX1200195877&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0

⁴⁷ *Life*, p. 178.

⁴⁸ Katherine Mansfield, *The Aloe*, ed. by John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1930), p. vii.

⁴⁹ Patrick Morrow, *Katherine Mansfield's Fiction* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993), p. 51.

⁵⁰ Suzanne Ferguson, 'Genre and the Work of Reading in Mansfield's "Prelude" and "At the Bay"', in *Postmodern Approaches to the Short Story*, ed. by Farhat Iftekharrudin, Joseph Boyden, Joseph Longo and Mary Rohrberger (Westport: Praeger, 2003), pp. 25-38 (p. 35; p. 36).

nature of memory: memory itself is never complete; and in a short story not everything can be fitted in. What I turn to now is the question of whether, in generating the text of *Prelude* from *The Aloe*, Mansfield deleted descriptions of seemingly personal memories. At the same time, did she emphasise the generative capacity of the past to compound the present?

In her critical study of 1951, Sylvia Berkman suggests that temporal digressions into the past were actually cut in order to retain a sense of the present:

[H]owever much of the past history of her figures she might or might not be able to suggest [...] she must keep her group within the limits of the single week she had chosen to represent. Each one of the digressive episodes was excised.⁵¹

Berkman also reinforces the idea that Mansfield was concerned to avoid writing autobiographically, suggesting that the character of Linda was the most decisively altered between the two stories, because the 'earlier' depiction of Linda might seem too closely modelled on Mansfield's mother. By careful reshaping Mansfield 'strengthened and integrated Linda's original endowment of exterior detachment and interior absorption' (p. 91).

Forty years after Berkman's study, Sydney Janet Kaplan tracked the changes to *The Aloe* as Mansfield revised it for publication. Kaplan argues that the textual changes brought 'the narration closer to a specific character's consciousness and away from interpretation by an omniscient narrator', thereby generating a more psychological dimension to the story as well as multiple female viewpoints.⁵² Nora Sellei also notes that elements of traditional narrative technique are replaced by Free Indirect Style while also substituting words that are not consistent with the characters' vocabularies.⁵³ For Kaplan, Mansfield also importantly eliminated a 'nostalgic, personal tone' (p. 113). I take Kaplan's line that Mansfield downplayed her own personal memories while enhancing those befitting her characters. In this way she also effected a more ambivalent attitude to family memory; representing the 'family' not as a like-minded and integrated unit but as a loose assemblage of individual consciousnesses.

The act of cutting 'extraneous narration' is regarded as feminine by Kaplan, and as rejecting male narrative modes located in the story's 'multiplicity, its fluidity, its lack of a

⁵¹ Sylvia Berkman, *Katherine Mansfield: A Critical Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 88. Further references to this work are given in brackets in the text.

⁵² See Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 113. Further references to this work are given in brackets in the text.

⁵³ Sellei, p. 79.

central climax, and its many moments of encoded sexual pleasure' (p. 114). For Kaplan what makes Mansfield's technique unique in this story is the way in which 'the typical linear pattern of individual development is [...] spread out among the female characters, who tend to represent the central consciousness at various stages of her life: early childhood, late adolescence, young motherhood, and old age' (p. 117). These views are problematic in that they attribute gendered properties to the mode of narration and identify a single 'feminine' consciousness. I think Mansfield assigns a specificity of consciousness and memory to each character. This emphasis on the development of characters' minds and memories serves to show Mansfield foregoing the personal in favour of the impersonal and experimenting with the constitution and depiction of consciousness in time.

Picking up on the idea of the feminine, but valorising *The Aloe* over *Prelude* as the more 'feminine text', Sellei points to Mansfield's use of typography and other graphic devices as a means of rendering a sense of 'the ceaseless and unbounded flow of individual consciousnesses' (p. 82). She suggests that Mansfield experiments in the earlier version of the story with what Woolf might have labelled 'the psychological *paragraph* of the feminine gender' in its use of long paragraphs and rolling pages (p. 82). But this tendency to essentialise the flow of consciousness as being somehow feminine is one I eschew for a more gender-neutral Bergsonian approach. That is, Mansfield can be seen to be taking up a more *intuitive* or sympathetic mode to her characters as she altered *The Aloe* into *Prelude*. Sellei does conclude that Mansfield's narrative strategy in *Prelude* is ultimately the more effective in illuminating the subjective realities of the characters. By removing the 'observer narrator', she says (objecting to Kaplan's use of the 'omniscient narrator'), Mansfield 'successfully adopted an exclusive use of the point-of-view technique, transferring all the experiences to the individual consciousness' (p. 82). Sellei suggests that Mansfield's final achievement was in shifting between the singular minds of her characters as a means of generating an 'interplay of truths' to challenge the monolithic truth of 'traditional narration' (p. 82). The use of multiple viewpoints can also be read as a type of Bergsonian heterogeneity.

While both Kaplan and Sellei focus on a feminine mode of consciousness encoded in the narrative technique, Vincent O'Sullivan looks to the operations of the mind and time in outlining Mansfield's new method of storytelling:

Various minds in turn are entered into, then drawn back from. Anything like ‘reality’ is in how they converge, drift apart, lose touch, come back – the intricacies of time on the point of becoming memory. The story itself has become how it is being told.⁵⁴

As Mansfield told Dorothy Brett, she thought the form that emerged in *Prelude* was original: ‘As far as I know, its more or less my own invention.’⁵⁵ In textually representing the memory consciousness of her characters, Mansfield was effectively employing a Bergsonian intuitive method for literary ends. Mansfield’s *personal* memories are present only at the level of a description of the landscape and the atmosphere of early morning in New Zealand, conveyed ‘with something of its sparkle and its flavour’.⁵⁶

The one personal, and traumatic, memory which may have been a prompt for Mansfield’s story, however, is the death of her only brother. Mansfield’s Notebook 45, known as the ‘Massilia’ notebook, includes a version of her elegiac poem to Leslie, as well as the last section of *The Aloe* in autograph manuscript draft.⁵⁷ It also contains Mansfield’s well-known reactions to her brother’s death as well as her pledge to write ‘recollections of my own country’, which she describes both as a ‘debt of love’ to her family, as well as a ‘sacred debt’ to her sibling:

[B]ecause my brother & I were born there, but also because in my thoughts I range with him over all the remembered places. I am never far away from them. I long to renew them in writing.⁵⁸

The idea of ‘renewal’ does suggest a more literal revival whereas the phrase ‘in writing’ acknowledges the potential for textually modified re-inscription. Mansfield’s notebook entries suggest, therefore, both a personal valedictory *and* a fictionally rendered validatory

⁵⁴ *The Aloe with Prelude*, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Letter to Dorothy Brett [11 October 1917], *CLKM*, 1, p. 331.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ The MS details for the last section of ‘The Aloe’ run as follows:

[Notebook 45] [Mar?] 1916 – ‘The Aloe VI commencé March 12th [1916]’. Includes prose:

Saunders’ Lane

[Jinnie Moore ...]

The beautiful Miss Richardson

The aloe

[My dearest Ray]

[A letter from Beryl ...]

[In a way of course ...]

[No really ...]

And poem:

‘To L.H.B.’

qMS [1253]

⁵⁸ See Notebook 45, qMS-1253; *TKMN*, 2, p. 32; published in *CWKM4*, p. 191, from which this text is taken.

impulse towards filial memory. However, Mansfield did not overtly write her brother into the text of *The Aloe / Prelude*: the arrival of the longed-for baby boy is deferred until ‘At the Bay’ (although he has been ‘conceived’). Nor did Mansfield dedicate the published text to her brother as she had stated in her notebook that she would.⁵⁹ If *Prelude* is a memorial for anyone, it is more likely that it commemorates Mansfield’s maternal grandmother who died a few weeks after Mansfield returned to New Zealand following her school years in London and who Mansfield did not go to see. This is perhaps a guilt-laden memory for Mansfield which the text seeks partially and faithfully to assuage, with all the caveats associated with rendering ‘real’ memories in textual form. As far as propagating memory is concerned, it is to Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* that I now turn, and to a reading of the two versions of the story via Bergson’s multi-stranded theory of memory.

Generative Memory and Bergson’s Theory of Memory

In *Matter and Memory*, first translated into English in 1911, Bergson outlined his theory of memory, the purpose of which was both to demonstrate that human consciousness cannot be reduced to the activity of the brain and that memory can be separated from ‘matter’ (‘the philosophy of matter must aim in the first instance [...] at eliminating the contributions of memory’).⁶⁰ Having established this separation during the course of his philosophical enquiry, Bergson later brings the two terms of matter and memory back together to indicate that each plays its complementary part. In dealing with what he regards as the limitations of both the idealist and the realist philosophy of his time, which on the one hand overemphasised the role of the mind and on the other overstressed the role of reality in our perceptual engagement with the world, Bergson proposes a dynamic rapprochement between memory and perception. What he terms ‘memory images’ (that is, past experience which is dormant rather than a visual representation) continually ‘mingle’ with our perception of the present.⁶¹ Because memory images are latent but not available until required, accessing a memory generally involves a degree of deliberate effort as well as of

⁵⁹ Mansfield writes: ‘I will just put on the front page: To my brother – Leslie Heron Beauchamp. Very well: it shall be done.’ See *TKMN*, 2, p. 16; *CWKM4*, p. 172, from which this text is taken.

⁶⁰ *M&M*, p. 80.

⁶¹ *M&M*, p. 70. In the opening pages of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson defines ‘matter’ as an ‘aggregate of “images”’, that is, ‘a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*, – an existence placed half-way between the “thing” and the “representation”’ (pp. vii-viii). Matter is the ‘vehicle of an *action*’ and it is the body which is given the ‘sole function of preparing actions’ (p. 82). Memory in its simplest form is ‘the survival of past images’ (p. 70). That all such images survive, argues Bergson, means they are *potentially* available to be recollected or recalled principally for the purposes of being useful to actions taken in the present.

‘automatism’.⁶² There is little sense, then, in Bergson’s theory that memories appear in random or completely spontaneous ways.

Bergson outlines his thinking about the survival of memories and the past as early as 1889 in *Time and Free Will* and again in his lecture on ‘Dreams’ in 1901, where he states: ‘Yes, I believe our past life is there, preserved even to the minutest details; nothing is forgotten.’⁶³ According to Bergson the past and the present cannot be separated as such.⁶⁴ There is no definitive present and no ‘point’ at which the present turns into the past. So too, our ‘psychical existence’ continues from the birth of consciousness without ceasing.⁶⁵ Bergson asserts that our past is indestructible and accessible: our ‘whole past still exists’ in our ‘unconscious’, which is virtual, while consciousness ‘has but to remove an obstacle, to withdraw a veil, in order that all that it contains, all in fact that it actually is, may be revealed’.⁶⁶ Yet Bergson also values the future. While our past is ‘always behind us’ and to claim it we have ‘only to look back’, our real purpose is ‘to live, to act’, and ‘life and action look forward’.⁶⁷ In Bergson’s theory of memory the active and ongoing aggregation of the past is also always inclined towards the future.

Bergson’s Two Forms of Recollection

I turn first to unpacking Bergson’s distinction between recollection and memory for the important reason that most recent interpreters of Bergson, including Mary Warnock, Suzanne Guerlac and Anne Whitehead, tend to divide Bergson’s theory of memory into a two-part schema represented by ‘pure’ and ‘habit’ memory when the theory is more subtle and complex than this.⁶⁸ Bergson’s theory of memory distinguishes first between two forms of recollection, between what he calls habit-memory and representational memory, and then develops a distinction between recollected image-memory and *unrecollected* pure memory. John Mullarkey regards Bergson’s theory of memory as tripartite but I approach it as an

⁶² See Henri Bergson, ‘Intellectual Effort’, in *Mind-Energy*, pp. 152-88 (p. 165). First published in *Revue Philosophique*, January 1902.

⁶³ Bergson, ‘Dreams’, p. 94.

⁶⁴ Henri Bergson, ‘The Soul and the Body’, a lecture given by Bergson in Paris, 28 April 1912, and published in *Mind-Energy*, pp. 29-59.

⁶⁵ This view allows Bergson to speculate, albeit briefly, on immortality or the ‘survival for a time’ of consciousness after death. See ‘The Soul and the Body’, p. 58.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

⁶⁷ Henri Bergson, ‘Phantasms of the Living’ and ‘Psychical Research’, Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research, 28 May 1913, and published in *Mind-Energy*, pp. 60-83 (p. 76).

⁶⁸ See Mary Warnock, *Memory* (London: Faber, 1987), Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006) and Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

integrated process which folds the binary of recollection into one half of another, the binary of memory.⁶⁹

In outlining his theory of memory stage-by-stage, Bergson begins by looking at the way in which the past survives in two distinct forms of recollection: in ‘independent recollections’ and in ‘motor mechanisms’.⁷⁰ Bergson establishes that of these two types of recollection, one ‘*imagines*’ while the other ‘*repeats*’ (p. 93). Independent recollections are ‘spontaneous’ in the sense *only* of being temporally unique or ‘singular’, whereas motor mechanisms are repeated and become distanced from the past the more they are used (p. 95). The ‘independent recollections’ require an ‘effort of the mind’ in order to bring them into play in the present (p. 87) and rely on what John Mullarkey refers to as ‘iconic recollections representing the past’.⁷¹ They are attached to a particular occasion in the past, for instance, when we first learned to recite a poem or to ride a bicycle. This form of recollection is called *representational memory* by Bergson. The second form of recollection is based on automatic actions and relies on bodily movements. This form of recollection is termed *habit-memory* (‘*habit interpreted by memory*’, p. 95), or motor-memory. It is the memory that repeats via the actions of the bodily sensori-motor mechanisms, for instance, when the words of a poem learned by heart are recited on subsequent occasions or the bodily movements involved in riding a bicycle are reproduced.

While both aspects of recollection have a function in ‘the utilizing of past experience for present action’ (which Bergson also refers to as ‘recognition’), the first form of recollection memory is less ‘useful’ in terms of everyday action, whereas the second has a ‘use’ value and is most closely aligned with the routines of living. For Bergson representational memory consists in ‘dream images’ (p. 97) which are associated with a dependence on a past that does not act. The past is regarded by Bergson as being somewhat ‘fugitive’, because it is always being eluded, while ordinary, everyday habit memory, directed towards action in the present and towards the future, embraces life. Bergson stresses that these two forms of recollection are extreme forms in a pure state at opposite ends of a spectrum (p. 103). He does not prioritise one form over the other because no individual can only dream or only act; there is a movement between both in each individual’s mind.

I summarise the two forms of recollection in tabular form below.

⁶⁹ John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 51.

⁷⁰ *M&M*, p. 87. Further references to *Matter and Memory* in this section are given in brackets in the text.

⁷¹ Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, p. 48.

<u>Independent recollections</u>	<u>Motor mechanisms</u>
Representational Memory	Habit Memory
Imagination	Action
Preservation	Use
Directed towards dream and the past	Directed towards the present
Fugitive	Everyday
Spontaneously recalled (singular)	Repeated

Following the two forms of recollection, outlined in Chapter Two of *Matter and Memory* and equating to representational and habit memory, Bergson develops the idea of ‘pure memory’ in Chapter Three. The important distinction to note between the two types of recollection and ‘pure memory’ is that ‘pure memory’ is *unrecollected* or ‘latent’ (p. 181); and it is ineffectual because it is virtual: ‘pure memory, though independent in theory, manifests itself as a rule only in the coloured and living image which reveals it’ (p. 170). Pure memory is without use or sensation as such; its ‘radical powerlessness’ is what allows it to be maintained in its latent state (p. 181) until it is drawn upon in the form of an image-memory to mix with perception in the present.

By the end of Chapter Three of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson has established a difference between ‘pure memory’ and ‘image-memory’, as laid out below.

<u>Pure Memory</u>	<u>Image-Memory</u>
Virtual; ‘an image not imagined’	Actualised in an image
Unrecollected	Recollected
Totality of the past	The moving present / immediate past
Powerless without use	Useful for action
Preserved in a latent state	Mixed with bodily sensation
Unconscious (‘ineffective’)	Consciousness (‘immediate efficacy’)

Crucially, Bergson has introduced the idea of the *unconscious* as an aspect of memory which is linked to the past (and which, by being virtual, is distinctly different from Freud’s theory of the Unconscious and of repression). The two forms of recollection have now been merged into the concept of ‘image-memory’ which is brought forth to mingle with perception in the present.

Bergson’s well-known ‘cone’ diagram ‘SAB’ represents the totality of an individual’s accumulated *and still accumulating* memories, and brings together all recollections as well as the two types of memory on which he settles in his third chapter –

image-memory and pure memory, the one embodied, the other virtual (see Figure 4., p. 197 and reproduced below).

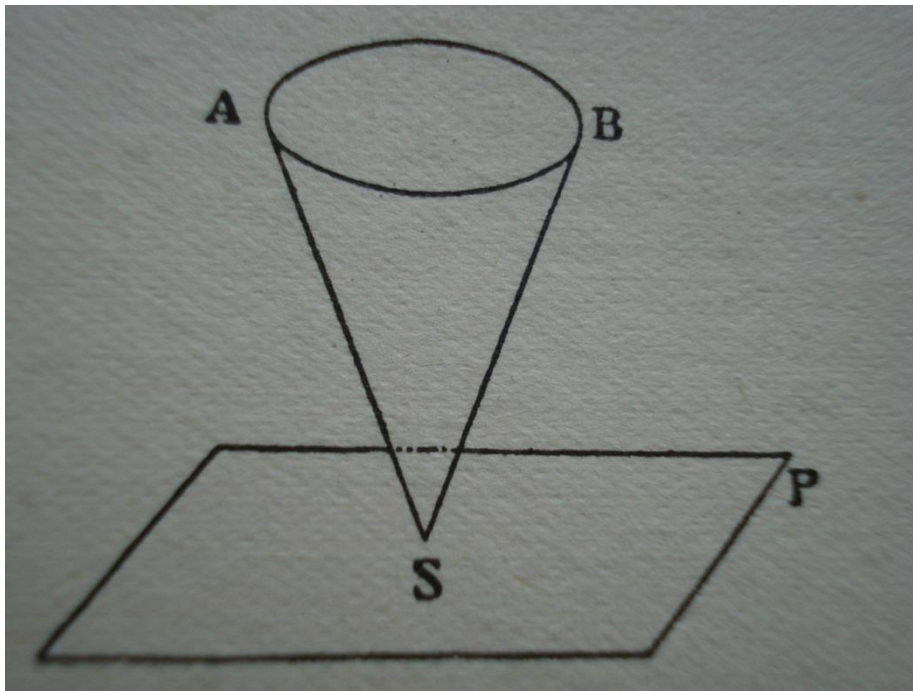


Figure 3. Bergson's cone diagram from *Matter and Memory*

The base of the cone (AB) represents the entire virtual or inactive past, while the pinnacle (S) is the moving present which touches the plane (P) which denotes an individual's 'actual representation' of an ongoing engagement with the world (p. 196). At S, the mind perceives an actual object and the body's sensori-motor mechanisms actualise the images it receives from P. Importantly, for Bergson, there is 'mutual support' (p. 197) between these two planes.

Bergson's theory of memory turns out to be a dynamic one. It is movement in the 'shifting plane of experience' of P (p. 197) that allows the interaction between bodily mechanisms and pure memory to be mutually supportive: '[T]hat a recollection should reappear in consciousness, it is necessary that it should descend from the heights of pure memory down to the precise point where *action* is taking place (p. 197).' Memories thus move downwards to connect with action, which is for Bergson always where practical, active life is taking place. In the cone diagram Bergson illustrates and reinforces the core of his

theory in reanimating the dualism between mind and body by the intermediary function of the memory-image: it is the memory-image only which ‘partakes of the “pure memory”’, while perception of an object is ‘impregnated with memory-images’ which are required to ‘complete it’ (p. 170). There is, then, an ongoing and mutually supportive relationship between pure memory and memory images and between memory images and perception, as well as movement from inaction to action, and an interaction between the mind and the body: ‘it is from the present that comes the appeal to which memory responds, and it is from the sensori-motor elements of present action that a memory borrows the warmth which gives it life’ (p. 197).

The Plane of Dream and Plane of Action: Memory in *The Aloi* and *Prelude*

Bergson explains in *Matter and Memory* that there are different ‘planes’ of memory ranging from the ‘plane of dream’, in which there are perfectly preserved past images (represented by the base of the cone at its widest) and which can be aligned with representational memory, to the ‘plane of action’ which can be aligned with habit memory (represented by the tip of the cone) where memory merges with action in being useful (p. 137).

Plane of Dream.....

Representation, imagination, dream

Plane of Action.....

Repetition, habit, reality

Bergson is careful not to attach any value judgements to these forms of recollection or to the planes of dream and of action: they each have their role to play in the memory process.

Plane of Dream

Plane of Action

The Past

The Passive Dreamer

Linda Burnell (Mother)

The Present

The Man of Impulse

Pat (the Handyman)

The Man of Action

Stanley Burnell (Father)

The Practical Woman

Mrs Fairfield (Grandmother)

The Present-Centred

Child

Kezia (Daughter)

*The Practical
Dreamer*

Belle Dyer (Aunt)

Clock Time

Alice (The Maid)

Figure 4. The Plane of Dream and Plane of Action

In Bergson's philosophy of memory the mind ranges ceaselessly between the two planes (p. 225). The plane of dream is where our ever-expanding past psychological life is exclusively 'dreamed', whereas the plane of action is where our psychological life is 'acted' and more narrowly related to immediate action in the present (p. 218). My reading of *The Aloe / Prelude* is in terms of these two planes: dream (imaginative memory; the past) and action (habit memory; the present), which represent lesser or greater tendencies of the characters towards taking action in the present or towards dreaming about the past as these planes pertain to the time during which the story unfolds. In the diagram above, I place the characters among (rather than 'on'; this is not a linear placement) Bergson's planes of memory according to their memory inclinations (what Bergson calls 'dispositions') according to whether they dwell on the past, act in the present or lean towards the future.

In discussing the function of time and place in *Prelude* Mary Rohrberger uses Bergsonian terminology to explain that, in the story, past and present merge as the future is

poised to combine with the present. In the context of this fusion of temporalities Rohrberger finds a sense of the ‘generations of the family’ which is ‘delineated in all its tenses’. Time and motion are blended and: ‘The child becomes mother and the mother is child. Generation follows generation in an unbroken sequence.’⁷² In my reading of *The Aloe* and *Prelude*, memory is actively generated in different ways for different members of the Burnell family depending on age, experience, the generation they currently occupy, and their gender. There is the dreaming wife-mother Linda Burnell, Stanley, the active patriarch and father-husband, the pragmatic mother-grandmother Mrs Fairfield, the practical yet fantasising young woman-aunt Beryl, and the girl-child Kezia for whom her most profound or ‘memorable’ recollections are in the process of being formed during the narrated time of the story. While Ruth Parkin-Gounelas suggests that Mansfield presents the ‘female life cycle’ in the story, I relate both female and male characters to the planes of dream memory and habit memory as well as to the plane of past-present-future available to each character in his or her temporal specificity.⁷³

According to Bergson, a well-balanced mind is one in which the two types of memory, pure and habit memory, ‘insert themselves each into the other’.⁷⁴ The individual who lives only in the present Bergson refers to as a ‘man of *impulse*’ (p. 198). Using Bergson’s thought to think about the characterological aspects of the story, while the character of Stanley Burnell displays elements of impulsiveness, he more closely resembles Bergson’s ‘man of action’ who promptly summons memories most useful to the situation in hand and blocks those which are ‘useless’ or ‘indifferent’ (p. 198). Stanley moves along the plane of present-centred practical action and is inscribed as living predominantly in the realm of habit memory. The character of Linda Burnell is represented at the far end of the memory plane as the ‘dreamer’, who imagines escaping from her marriage and children, but is unable or unwilling to make a bid for freedom. Bergson describes the dreamer as someone ‘who lives in the past for the mere pleasure of living there, and in whom recollections emerge into the light of consciousness without any advantage for the present situation’; such a figure is ‘hardly [...] fitted for action’ (p. 198).

Between these ‘extremes’ Bergson identifies the person with good, practical sense who displays a ‘happy disposition’ of memory and one ‘docile enough to follow with precision all the outlines of the present situation, but energetic enough to resist all other

⁷² Rohrberger, p. 77.

⁷³ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Fictions of the Female Self: Charlotte Brontë, Olive Schreiner, Katherine Mansfield* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 152.

⁷⁴ *M&M*, p. 198. Subsequent references in this paragraph are given in the text.

appeal', typified in the story by the character of the grandmother, Mrs Fairfield, content with living in the present while resistant to recollection that has no 'advantage' for the present. The child, represented principally by the character of Kezia, is aligned with what is happening in the present. As Bergson notes, most children 'have not yet persuaded their memory to remain bound up with their conduct. They usually follow the impression of the moment', while childish action is not beholden therefore to 'the suggestions of memory' and children 'remember with less discernment' (p. 199).⁷⁵ In living life, elements of the plane of dream and the plane of action interpenetrate each other; in the story world, different aspects of the past are revealed through the focal point of each character while characters also respond to each other in relation to how active or dream-like they regard each other. Stanley Burnell, for instance, is to Linda like a 'Newfoundland dog' who bounds up to her (P, p. 140; A, p. 141); while to Beryl, Linda is mysterious and unfathomable (P, p. 148; A, p. 149).

Linda's character can be seen to be preoccupied with past time; her dream-memory, perhaps impelled – and imperilled – by the (medical) foreclosure of her likely future as a mother, attends to her distant past as a young adventurous woman. In *The Aloe* we learn that as a child Linda had been a 'wild thing'; her eagerness in the past for the future has in the present of the story world been replaced by passivity and disillusionment as she struggles with the present burdens of family life. Beryl is practical in the present while inclined towards the future, while Mrs Fairfield represents an acceptance of the interpenetration of past and present with the unfolding future. While she is in comfortable harmony with present time, remembering validates both the present and the past. Stanley, by contrast, is fixed on taking repetitive and somewhat self-aggrandising actions in the present. I now turn to each main character in turn to assess his or her dream and action memory states.

THE PASSIVE DREAMER

At the beginning of each version of the story, Linda is already sitting on the buggy ready to depart. She is described by the narrator of *Prelude* as 'trembling with fatigue and excitement' (P, p. 22) and in *The Aloe*, as showing 'over excitement' (A, p. 23).⁷⁶ In both stories, she lets out a 'strange little laugh' (P, p. 22 / A, p. 23). When she announces that she will have to leave two of the children behind, she seems fatigued: 'she leaned back against

⁷⁵ Bergson comments at this point in the text that as the child's intellect develops there is a 'diminution of memory' due to the 'growing organization of recollections with acts' (p. 199). This statement relates, I think, to the contraction of memory required for responsible adult behaviour rather than to memory *loss*, as such.

⁷⁶ All quotations are taken from Vincent O'Sullivan's facing page edition of *The Aloe with Prelude*. References are given in abbreviated form in brackets in the text with 'A' denoting *The Aloe* and 'P' denoting *Prelude*, followed by the corresponding page number(s) in each case.

the buttoned leather cushions and shut her eyes' (P, p. 22; A, p. 23; 'upon'). These descriptions suggest that Linda is overcome by tiredness and emotion, and is experiencing a mental state bordering on hysteria. At the same time there is a textual clue that Linda is pregnant: 'the grandmother's lap was full and Linda Burnell could not possibly have held a lump of a child on hers for any distance' (P, p. 22; A, p. 23; 'Grandmother's'; 'Mrs'; 'not possibly'; 'for such a distance'). The luggage is apparently more important to her than her children: "These are absolute necessities that I will not let out of my sight for one instant" (P, p. 22; A, p. 23; 'absolute'; 'one instant': note that emphases tend to be removed between the earlier and later versions of the text as though Linda hasn't the energy to be emphatic). The next episode in which Linda appears is when the children who have been left behind arrive with the storeman at the new house and Linda is lying down; she asks whether it is the children, 'But', we are told, 'Linda did not really care; she did not even open her eyes to see' (P, p. 48). In *The Aloe*, the following words were cut from *Prelude* either because they implied that Linda *was* worried about the children or that she was being melodramatically fanciful: "Have either of them ~~killed on the~~ dray maimed for life" (A, p. 49). Without opening her eyes Linda's voice is described as being 'faint far-away' as though she barely perceives present realities (P, p. 56; A, p. 57; 'far away'; the repetition of 'far away' and the words 'sleeping voice' are removed).

While Linda dreams of the 'long' past prior to her marriage to Stanley, the recent past, symbolised by family belongings and mementoes, has been absorbed into the present: 'All the furniture had found a place – all the old paraphernalia [...]. Even the photographs were on the mantelpiece' (P, p. 60). But Linda repudiates this continuation of domestic life and imagines 'going away from this house, too' (P, p. 60). In a scene cut from *Prelude* Linda recalls a more active youthful past, 'thrilling with life', with plans for travel and adventure with her father, as 'a couple of boys together' (A, p. 73). The effect of such an excision is to focus on Linda's passivity and her tendency in the present to drift into a dream state, encapsulated by what Bergson suggests is 'The state into which you naturally fall when you let yourself go, when you no longer care to concentrate yourself on a single point, when you cease to will'.⁷⁷

Dreaming requires no effort; it represents the relaxing of the 'tension' of our faculties: 'The dream-self is a distraught self, a self which has let itself go. The memories which harmonize best with it are the memories of distraction, those which bear no mark of

⁷⁷ Bergson, 'Dreams', p. 103.

effort.⁷⁸ Linda's dream-memory includes a disturbing one of her father and a tiny bird which swells and mutates into a baby with a 'gaping bird-mouth, opening and shutting' (P, p. 60; A, p. 61). While in a psychoanalytic reading this dream episode might indicate incestuous father–daughter relations, it may also suggest Linda's own distraught and incomplete sense of self: she is the 'gaping' bird/baby. While Linda is distracted by memories and dreams of the past, in the present time of the story-world she cannot seem to tolerate the present in which she perceives the world strangely. Things have the properties of swelling, of seeming to come alive and of frightening her. Her active perception of the wallpaper is disturbed and yet she is apathetic. Linda waits suspended from the action of the world, in a seeming out-of-body experience: 'she floated, held up in the air [...] waiting for someone to come who just did not come' (P, p. 80; A, p. 81). She is disconnected from the present: the passive dreamer.

This passive and detached state is represented by Linda's sleepiness; she is often depicted in the text as recumbent. An incisive view of this passive sleep state is provided by Bergson in *Matter and Memory* as well as in an essay on dreams. Sleep, Bergson proposes, generates 'indifference' because the sleeper no longer acts; that is, he or she loosens his or her 'attention to life'.⁷⁹ The sleeper loses interest in the present and 'phantom' memories unite with sensation to produce dreams. Bergson's description for such renegade memories is that they 'rise and spread abroad and perform in the night of the unconscious a wild phantasmagoric dance'.⁸⁰ In this view of the hidden forces at work in sleep Bergson grants a sense of volition to the past; the past manages to breach consciousness while the sleeper puts aside the needs of 'effective action' and places himself or herself back in the dream state.⁸¹ In this way, the past has the power to haunt not only the present but the sleeper's dream life too. At the same time, there is a risk associated with such dreaming because dreams also have the power to disturb the balance of the mind. They may 'imitate insanity' and generate a 'psychic vertigo' in which the brain stops attending and memory disassociates from reality.⁸² Linda Burnell seems to drift in and out of reality; her sensations, dreams, memories and perceptions collide, fuse and confuse. On the wallpaper she traces poppies with her finger and they feel to her both sticky and silky as well as hairy and rough; she has 'often' hallucinated that the tassels of the bed quilt have altered from their real state into 'a funny procession of dancers with priests attending' (P, p. 78; A, p. 79), indicating also, perhaps, a

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

⁷⁹ *M&M*, p. 199; p. 226.

⁸⁰ Bergson, 'Dreams', p. 95.

⁸¹ *M&M*, p. 199.

⁸² Ibid., p. 228; p. 229.

spiritual malaise. Medicine bottles transmogrify into ‘a row of little men with brown top-hats on’ (P, p. 80; A, p. 81; ‘top hats’); her mind often seems to be elsewhere.

Linda also imagines the aloe in the garden of the new house as a ship on which she dreams of rowing away from her world (P, p. 138; A, p. 139). Curiously, this image happens to mirror one offered by Mansfield’s contemporary, George Santayana, in describing Bergson’s doctrine of duration:

In a sensuous day-dream past feelings survive in the present, images of the long ago are shuffled together with present sensations, the roving imagination leaves a bright wake behind it like a comet, and pushes a rising wave before it, like the bow of a ship.⁸³

In a psychoanalytic reading of *The Aloe* and *Prelude*, however, Bruce Harding argues that Linda’s dream of the aloe-as-ship is her means of fantasising an escape which would ‘facilitate the construction of a mature, androgynous (sexually protean) self’. The fantasy of escape is Linda’s antidote to the psychosomatic guilt and rage she feels at her role as ‘primary caregiver’ and one which she resists, albeit unconsciously.⁸⁴ It is telling, however, that Mansfield cut from *Prelude* Mrs Fairfield’s comment, “‘What a baby you are’” (A, p. 69), which would reinforce her daughter’s infantile state. My reading differs from that of Harding in that I think Linda’s fantasy falls short of any such resistance; her dream of the aloe/ship is an escapist fantasy of an impossible future which only serves to reinforce her present unbearable reality: ‘How much more real this dream was than that they should go back to the house where the sleeping children lay and where Stanley and Beryl played cribbage (P, p. 140; ‘natural this dream’, A, p. 141).’ Linda’s dream state is shown ultimately to be a false reality, because she returns indoors to the house to resume her ‘confinement’ (in both senses of the word – her domestic incarceration and her pregnancy); her fantasy is part of her ‘mania’ merely to ‘keep alive’ in the face of the intolerable and seemingly insoluble prospect of bearing more children.

Towards the end of the narrative, however, Linda’s dream memory is overlaid by the idea of a more positive *anticipated* memory represented by the aloe in the garden of her new home: “‘I am sure I shall remember it long after I’ve forgotten all the other things’” (P, p. 140; A, p. 141). This expectation – or ‘promise’ to use Lorna Marten’s term – of memory, based on the slow germination of the aloe’s fruitfulness, carries the narrative into an

⁸³ Santayana, p. 78.

⁸⁴ See Bruce Harding, “‘The Women in the Stor(y)’”: Disjunctive Vision in Katherine Mansfield’s “‘The Aloe’”, in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. by Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber and Susan Reid, pp. 115-27 (p. 125; p. 119).

imaginary future, an effect that would have been lost had Mansfield gone ahead with an earlier, more dramatic denouement for the story which she recorded in her notes: 'They cut down the stem when Linda is ill. She has been counting on the flowering of the aloe.'⁸⁵ Mansfield it seems had planned to deal the aloe and, in turn, Linda a Chekhovian-style blow, reprising elements of *The Cherry Orchard*. Instead, Linda's dream state and her inability to harness memories for living adequately in the present in Bergson's terms continue, at least as far as into *Prelude*'s 'sequel', 'At the Bay'.

THE MAN OF ACTION

In stark contrast with the character of Linda, the character of Stanley Burnell exhibits a memory focused on successful action in the present; he is Bergson's 'man of action'. Linda refers to Stanley as 'Mr. Business Man' (P, p. 56; A, p. 57; 'man'), mocking his self-important commercial activity; while Stanley congratulates himself (twice) on having driven a hard bargain to buy the new house to which they have just moved. As a character, his energy, keenness to do his fitness exercises and his 'amazing vigour' set him apart from the representation of the listless Linda (P, p. 60; A, p. 61). His memory is employed in fully experiencing the present and planning the future. His impatience, his joy in his new house, his eagerness to express physical love for his wife, and his action-centred plans for the weekend and the week following in the story-world, are all assertions of his exuberant future-directedness. Even in what might have been presented as a moment of regret towards the past, the reader is given a rare moment of insight into Stanley's optimistic mind. During the externally focalised description of the children's nursery at teatime, the narrative switches to a passage of rare internal focalisation for Stanley in which he reflects on the absence of a boy child in the family, while simultaneously, the child's *future* presence is indirectly invoked:

Isabel and Lottie sat one on either side of the table, Kezia at the bottom – the place at the top was empty.

'That's where my boy ought to sit,' thought Stanley. He tightened his arm round Linda's shoulder. By God, he was a perfect fool to feel as happy as this. (P, p. 100; A, p. 101; 'They sat [...] Isabel and Lottie')

Yet it is worth noting two things: Stanley is also a somewhat diminished and derided male character when placed against the backdrop of the female-centred and often female-focalised story; and the polarisation of character types, especially between the 'dominant' male and the female characters, also serves a range of narratological functions in the text such as

⁸⁵ *The Aloe with Prelude*, Note 9, p. 163.

setting up point of view and character motivations and interiority, as well as emphasising the ideological dimension of gendered relations.

THE MAN OF IMPULSE

Stanley's absence from most of the narrative of *The Aloe* and *Prelude* is counterbalanced by the masculine presence, in several episodes, of the character of the handyman Pat who is figured as the 'man of impulse' who takes action in the here and now and is content with living in the present. In the very first scene, it is Pat who has 'swung' the children onto the buggy (P. p. 22; A, p. 23); in the fourth scene he is 'sprawled' in his room off the kitchen; and in the seventh scene he drives Stanley home in the buggy. While Stanley is 'impatient' to get home, Pat, in a description focalised through Stanley and also representing Stanley's apparent 'mastery' over his employee, 'looked as if he was pleased with his job – happy and contented already' (P, p. 94; A, p. 95). And it is Pat who is full of purpose in the shocking scene in which, with skilled violence, he quickly beheads the duck, rendered in mostly single-syllabled words which add a sense of immediacy to the action: 'Pat grabbed the duck by the legs, laid it flat across the stump, and almost at the same moment down came the little tomahawk and the duck's head flew off the stump' (P, p. 116; A, p. 117; text revised). Yet Pat also displays masculine sensitivity alongside his practical brutality in that he coaxes and smiles at the children and soothes Kezia during the beheading.

THE PRACTICAL WOMAN

The character of the grandmother is at the further reaches of family memory having passed through all the phases of girlhood and womanhood. In terms of the planes of dream memory and action memory, Mrs Fairfield contentedly lives in the present, with a demeanour which is practical and seemingly at peace with her past. The grandmotherly figure's usefulness is in keeping family memories safe while also being able to utilise her habit memory for everyday life. This harmonious fusion is demonstrated in a scene in which Mrs Fairfield is in the kitchen of the new house washing the breakfast crockery (which uses her habit memory) when she has a recollection (evoked by the sight of the grapevine in the lean-to) of Beryl as a baby:

And she remembered how Beryl when she was a baby had been picking some white grapes from the vine on the back verandah of their Tasmanian house and she had been stung on the leg by a huge red ant. (P, p. 82; A, p. 83; 'she suddenly remembered')

While this memory is suffused with emotion – ‘Mrs. Fairfield caught her breath remembering’ (P, p. 82; A, p. 83) – the scene ends with a description of the grandmother’s reassuring sense of familiar, habitual time: ‘It was very hard to believe that they had only arrived yesterday and that she had not been in the kitchen for years – she was so much a part of it’ (A, p. 83; P, p. 82; text shortened). Moreover, Mrs Fairfield repeats her habit of imposing order on the present, especially in the domestic sphere: ‘When she had finished, everything in the kitchen had become part of a series of patterns’ (P, p. 82; A, p. 83; ‘finished tidying’). While the grandmother of the family might be expected to dwell on the past, this is not evidently so. The past is respected rather than revered; and when asked by her daughter Linda what thoughts the sight of the aloe in the moonlit garden has provoked, Mrs Fairfield replies: “‘I haven’t really been thinking of anything’” (P, p. 144; A, p. 145). Rather than dreaming of the past, or anticipating the future, the grandmother’s thoughts are practical ones in which the future also combines with habitual action: that of making jam in the autumn.

THE PRACTICAL DREAMER

If Linda’s character represents the passive dreamer lacking in will to draw down memories to act in the present, whose recollections are associated with dream memory of the past, and who is anxious about the future, and the grandmother’s character combines habit memories with recollections of the family’s past and is sanguine about the future, the character of Beryl Fairfield is that of a young woman who, mostly cheerfully, acts practically in the present while simultaneously anticipating the future. Beryl’s ‘habit’ memory is evident in the way in which she plays the guitar and plays cribbage with Stanley; she can ‘act’, in Bergson’s sense of the word, usefully in the present. Beryl also ‘acts’ her femininity not only in the contemporary theoretical sense of ‘performing’ her gender; her performance is based on the repetition associated with Bergson’s habit memory. Beryl’s self-conscious sense of how she looks to others as well as to herself (in a mirror), the way she elects to sit in the softened light with Stanley (the only man of her class habitually in her life), the way she tosses her hair, her pouting and the charm she exudes (regarded from Linda’s perspective) in wearing a velvet ribbon around her neck, are all attributes of a habit-forming and inhabited femininity.

That Beryl’s femininity is also reiterated through gazing in mirrors also connects with Freud’s thinking on narcissism (or self-absorption) as well as with scopophilia (the pleasure derived from looking) and provides the basis also for a Freudian reading:

Standing in a pool of moonlight Beryl Fairfield undressed herself. She was tired, but she pretended to be more tired than she really was – letting her clothes fall, pushing back with a languid gesture her warm, heavy hair. (P, p. 54; A, p. 55; ‘charming gesture’)

She jumped up and half unconsciously, half consciously she drifted over to the looking-glass. (P, p. 152, A, p. 151-53)

In the absence of being scrutinised by any legitimately available male gaze, Beryl is curious about looking at her own body, which indicates autoeroticism. This activity is also a form of displacement activity: by making herself the object of her own desire, she circumvents erotic yearnings towards others, both male and female.

The character of Beryl can also be regarded as being in a liminal state between febrile late adolescence and sexually active adulthood. In a perceptive reading, Claire Drewery argues that *Prelude* highlights the ways in which characters manage the social-subject positions expected of women, which for Beryl is one of being trapped ‘in a liminal position between her fantasies of suitors and a sexual “role”, and her rejection of this experience when the opportunity arises’.⁸⁶ In this reading, Beryl experiences the ‘painful “undecidability” of the liminal state’.⁸⁷ However, I read Beryl’s restlessness as implying her emergent and frustrated heterosexuality. For example, Beryl writes to her friend Nan of being ‘buried’ in the country with only ‘big louts of boys’ (P, p. 146, A, p. 147) rather than sexually eligible men.

Thinking with Bergson, if the character of Beryl could develop an ability to bring to the fore and integrate memories that would help her live contentedly in the present, she might be less inclined towards expectations of a more exciting future. In the last scene of the story, a romantic future starts to unfold for Beryl. Stanley has returned home to lunch bringing with him from the alluring city an unidentified, yet potentially enticing, sexually potent, man. Conscious of her femininity in smoothing her crumpled skirt, she automatically powders her nose (a gendered ‘habit’ memory perhaps) and runs out of the room in romantic anticipation. Mansfield cancelled *The Aloe*’s original ending, however, a scene in which a young Englishman is invited to the house to play tennis, not only, I suggest, to leave the story’s ending focalised through Kezia, but to withhold until ‘At the Bay’ a fuller and more ambivalent development of heterosexual desire in the form of Beryl’s dubious encounter with the sinister and yet sexually charged Harry Kember.

⁸⁶ See Claire Drewery, *Modernist Short Fiction by Women: The Liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 99.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

THE PRESENT-CENTRED CHILD

Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr have observed that the main theme of *Prelude* is one of ‘discovery and opening out’.⁸⁸ My view is that in *The Aloe / Prelude* such ‘discovery’ is principally in terms of the formation of the character Kezia’s ‘childhood’ memory via a series of memorable ‘shocks’. While Kezia lives in the ‘now’ of the present, the main events of the story, as they happen to her specifically, are particularly memorable because they are related to sudden dramatic events. These ‘shocks’ generate apprehension and expanded awareness in the present, the implication being that they will lead to consolidated knowledge as well as worldliness in the future. They include: moving house; being left behind at the old house by her mother; arriving at a strange new house in darkness; witnessing the slaughter of an animal; and suddenly dropping an object which doesn’t belong to her. Shocking events, I argue, are memorable because they are powerful, exceptional or extraordinary.

Bergson’s thought is helpful here because he registers that not all memories are the same. Some carry with them a greater affective power; some register more intensely, and carry more intensive sensations. Of course, not all memories are generated by shocks. But in relation to the characterisation of Kezia’s childhood memory-formation, it becomes significant that Bergson does distinguish clearly between ‘ordinary’ and ‘exceptional’ (or what he terms ‘dominant’) memories. Dominant memories are the ‘shining points round which the others form a vague nebulosity’.⁸⁹ Such ‘shining points’, importantly for my argument, ‘are multiplied in the degree in which our memory expands’.⁹⁰ My claim here, then, is that there are multiple shining points in the development of Kezia’s character, around which her memories congeal and expand; the ‘shocking’ memories’ will become her most ‘memorable memories’. While her grandmother’s memory has accumulated more memories due simply to her greater age, Kezia’s particular experiences during the course of the narrative are, I suggest, represented as being the most memorable.⁹¹

In describing the shocking experience which might prompt strong memories, Bergson puts the reader in mind of Virginia Woolf’s memory shocks discussed in my

⁸⁸ See Hanson and Gurr, *Katherine Mansfield*, p. 100.

⁸⁹ *M&M*, p. 223.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Bergson also coins the phrase ‘attentive recognition’ to describe shocks to perception as Mullarkey notes: ‘Attentive recognition [...] is a set of circuits or reverberations within perception caused by the disturbance of some novel event. Conscious awareness is amplified by shock, resistance or disorder interrupting our habitual actions, following which perception is more and more enhanced with memory-images in an attempt to reintegrate the object or dissipate the shock of the disturbance.’ See Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, p. 50.

Introduction: moments which for Woolf began with a ‘sudden violent shock’ in which, she says, ‘something happened so violently that I have remembered it all my life’.⁹² As Bergson says, ‘A sharp shock, a violent emotion, forms the decisive event’ to which memories ‘cling’.⁹³ The affective dimension is clear here, as well: the shock is accompanied by intense emotion, although not in a destructive sense; the ‘violence’ is the power of intensity. The shock occurs in the present. It is not, therefore, the past that haunts us; it is rather that what is memorable first occurs in the present and is later reinserted into the *then* present if and when required. What may be an attitude equivalent for Mansfield to that of Bergson and Woolf towards the forging of strong or distinctive memories is expressed in a diary entry in May 1915 in which Mansfield comments that she can tolerate reading any amount of Henry James’s ‘turgid’ prose if only ‘for the sake of that sudden sweet shock, that violent throb of delight that he gives me at times’.⁹⁴ The shock, then, need not be traumatic in order to be insistently memorable.

The character of Kezia is situated both in the ‘now’ of the plane of action and in the present of the temporal plane of memory as the narrative recounts what will come to seem the shockingly memorable events of her day. Left behind by her mother, she explores by herself the empty house she seems reluctant to leave. She notices small objects also left behind, to which she is mostly indifferent, although she picks up a black pill box from her parents’ bedroom which is lined with cotton wool and in which she thinks she could keep a bird’s egg. From a Bergsonian perspective, memory fuses Kezia’s immediate perceptual consciousness (of the black pill box) with her ‘memory images’ of the past (her memory that the object has been in her parents’ bedroom) which also opens out into the future (the anticipation of making a keepsake). Combined together these temporal elements coalesce with the event and its affect to make a significant memory. That is, Kezia is likely to remember being abandoned by her mother, roaming around her old home, picking up a personal memento, imagining a way of keeping it by making it her own. At least, by rendering this scene with these seemingly insignificant but particular details – displaying what Kirsty Gunn calls Mansfield’s ‘emotional tone’ which is a combination of memory feeling and physical detail – the narrative initiates this possibility.⁹⁵ Detail is important to

⁹² See Woolf, ‘Sketch of the Past’, p. 84.

⁹³ *M&M*, p. 224.

⁹⁴ Hanson, ed., *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, p. 26.

⁹⁵ Kirsty Gunn, *My Katherine Mansfield Project* (Honiton: Notting Hill Editions, 2015), p. 37. Gunn provides a much more autobiographical reading of *Prelude* than I do, finding a ‘homewardness’ in much of her fictional and personal writing: ‘Mansfield’s stories about New Zealand don’t just describe the home that was left, sealed off in the memory chamber of the past, but re-enact the experience of being back there again’ (p. 2; p. 3). Elizabeth Bowen also thought Mansfield’s stories

Mansfield as a way of giving specificity to her characters' memories; she cherishes the sense of 'an infinite delight and value in *detail* – not for the sake of detail but for the life *in* the life of it', a sentiment that echoes a Bergsonian sense of a life-giving force as well as a sense of unfettered temporal flow.⁹⁶

As a child character, Kezia's past is necessarily limited to her earlier childhood. In looking through the coloured panes of the dining-room window, she bends down 'to have one more look' at a 'blue lawn with blue arum lilies' followed by a 'yellow lawn with yellow lilies and a yellow fence' (P, p. 34). This is a distinctive memory image associated with imaginative rather than habitual memory. Kezia's sensory perception in the present is heightened by the quixotic hues of the coloured glass through which she looks, and which interpenetrates with her memory image of the same perspectival view in the past. The unusual perspective (the blue lawn, the blue lilies) adds to the sense of this being a captivating and precious perception and is clearly focalised through Kezia, whereas in *The Aloe* the narrator controls the viewpoint: 'From the window you saw beyond the yard a deep gully filled with tree ferns' (A, p. 35). This refinement in Mansfield's technique not only renders Kezia's consciousness more directly, but conveys a sense of the fusion of her past, present and beckoning future. The end of her present time in her childhood family home is definitively marked by the cessation of daylight when Kezia subsequently looks through the 'shining' glass of the window in her grandmother's room: 'As she stood there, the day flickered out and dark came' (P, p. 34; 'As she stood the day flickered out and sombre dusk entered the empty house, thievish dusk'; A, p. 35, p. 37). In the revision from *The Aloe* to *Prelude*, natural time is allowed to preside, Mansfield having eliminated the adjectives 'sombre' and 'thievish'. Rather than a schism between dark and light, aspects of the temporal plane interpenetrate: the shining glass symbolising the future, the dark symbolising the unfolding of the ever-renewing past.

represented an unmediated and direct apprehension of her personal past: 'They would be miracles of memory if one considered them memories at all – more, they are what she foresaw them as: a re-living.' See Elizabeth Bowen, ed., *Katherine Mansfield: 34 Short Stories* (London: Collins, 1957), p. 22.

⁹⁶ Letter to S. S. Koteliansky [17 May 1915], *CLKM*, 1, p. 192. This was sent while Mansfield was in Paris working on the draft of *The Aloe* and exemplifies her Bergsonian aesthetic. The letter itself describes Mansfield's recent memories of Paris rendered in minute detail, from the 'myriad little voices of the rain' (p. 191) to the 'smell of leather and the smell of *upholstered buttons*' (p. 192). Mansfield explains: 'I can't help living it all, down to the smallest details – down to the very dampness of the salt at supper that night' (p. 192). It is these accumulated and yet particular details which give Mansfield a sense of living fully in a present powered by her insistent remembering in which 'every single ripple' is 'touching and drawing into its circle every slightest thing it touched' (p. 192).

There are two scenes in the story in which Kezia is more forcefully initiated into time and memory through memorable shocks. The first is when Pat the handyman chops off the duck's head. Kezia's screaming to have the severed head put back is a naïve request, but the 'coming off' of the duck's head is as strange as the way in which Kezia perceives Pat's earrings. She asks Pat, "Do they come on and off?" (P, p. 120; A, p. 121; "Do they come off and on"). Things that come 'on and off' or come off that shouldn't, like the head of a duck, invert the child's known world and suggest, in that they are disturbing, that they are likely to be remembered. Kezia also finds it puzzling that earrings are worn by a man. In the act of sudden violence of the duck's beheading, Kezia is, I suggest, introduced not only to death but to the troubles of gendered identity.

The second initiation is at the end of the two stories in a scene in which Kezia, her calico cat and her aunt's cream jar come into collision:

And the top of the cream jar flew through the air and rolled like a penny in a round on the linoleum –and did not break.

But for Kezia it had broken the moment it flew through the air, and she picked it up, hot all over, and put it back on the dressing table.

Then she tip-toed away, far too quickly and airily.... (P, p. 158; A, p. 159; 'put it on the dressing table and walked away, ~~looking very guilty~~ far too quickly – and airily'.)

This scene is a source of a significant memory for Kezia, I suggest, due both to its suddenness and to the shock it induces which produces a dramatic culmination to the story. The toy cat seems to have the capacity for self-reflection: 'The calico cat was so overcome by the sight that it toppled over' (P, p. 158; A, p. 159; 'was so appalled at the effect that it toppled over backwards'). A Freudian reading would see a parallel with Beryl's propensity to look in mirrors as an example of the specular; but I suggest this reading is forestalled because it is Kezia who puts the cream jar lid on the toy cat's ear, and commands it to look at itself. Kezia both puts something on (the cream jar on the head of the cat) and puts something back (the cream jar on the dressing table) with which she has meddled. This action contrasts with her unrealised desire to put back the duck's head; that is, she cannot reverse time when it comes to the truly animate animal, compared with the anthropomorphised toy.

While the lid of the cream jar does not break, Kezia has already anticipated and assumed that it *will* break, and reacts as though it has broken. With this event it seems that Mansfield manages, with a versatility of technique, to represent the fusion of time past,

present and future in a way which echoes Bergson's idea of the indivisibility of time. The falling of the cream jar may signify, but by no means arrest, the passage of time and the remorseless momentum of the past and present in the process of becoming the future. The temporal markers, '*When*', '*Now*', '*the moment*', '*Then*', that occur at the very end of the story, also imply that Kezia's future memory will now always include this 'decisive' event in her past to which her memories will 'cling' in Bergson's formulation. In narratological terms, the implication is that the character of Kezia may breach the confines of this narrative. That is, what seems 'modern' about this 'closing' scene is that it is left unterminated and undetermined; Kezia tip-toes away from her aunt's room and the final three dots punctuating the story suggest both the narrative's 'futurity' – the future being in Bergson's understanding an unforeseeable one – and the 'future' of the character 'Kezia', which is narrated, as it happens, in 'At the Bay'.

THE ALOE

The aloe plant has symbolised many things for Mansfield critics, but at its simplest, it represents longevity and natural growth. The aloe follows its own slow, flowering cycle, seemingly free of human intervention or human inventions of time. When Kezia and her mother observe the aloe, it is its height (they look up at it), its tenacity, its mystery and its 'blind stem' that are most prevalent. There may be Freudian phallic connotations to the aloe's 'swelling' upward-reaching 'fleshy stem' (P, p. 94; A, p. 95), but 'swelling' in the story may also suggest an identification with Linda's implied pregnancy. The aloe in my reading contains the plant memory of its long past and its potential, perhaps endless, capacity to flower once a century. And as such, it seems to be a symbol of that which endures; an interpenetration of past, present and future. It is also an example of a Bergsonian heterogeneous multiplicity, for it represents a unity of temporal change and continuity. It is a shifting, elusive object to the human individuals who perceive it and one which functions as an 'objective correlative', in T. S. Eliot's term, for the characters. Kezia, for example, perceives the aloe as something strange and unknown.

Linda, at the first time of viewing the aloe with her daughter Kezia, regards it as something sinister and frightening with its 'cruel leaves' and 'blind stem'; she projects her anxiety onto it, perceiving the plant as having 'claws instead of roots' (P, p. 94; A, p. 95). Mrs Fairfield, in keeping with her character as one who sees the world as more benign and fruitful, believes the aloe is going to flower. Yet this may also be a misperception; the buds may be 'only an effect of light' (P, p. 138; A, p. 139). Linda, at the second time of observing the aloe alongside her mother, in an exquisitely crafted temporal parallel in the story, senses

that the aloe is inchoate and chameleon-like. It alters perception; it *becomes* an image of a ship; it apprehends *her*; it approaches.

ALICE AND CLOCK TIME

A second minor character, aside from Pat, is Alice the servant girl. Alice is both bound by 'habit' memory and the 'privacy' of her own dreaming, imaginative mind. Her place is in the kitchen where a feminised present time presides, giving a gendered aspect to mechanical clock time: 'The clock ticked in the warm air, slow and deliberate, like the click of an old woman's knitting needle' (P, p. 120, A, p. 121; 'kitchen clock', 'knitting needles'). The clock implies regularity, while knitting, in Bergson's schema, invokes the habit memory required of a repetitive, learned action. But in her imaginative memory, Alice is caught up with superstition, ancient lore and the meaning attached to dream-symbols, such as beetles and spiders, which she divines from her *Dream Book* (P, p. 122, A, p. 123; 'Dream Book'). But when Alice is given her own occasionally internally focalised thoughts in the narrative, she mentally constructs a meta-character who transcends both domestic habit and dreamscapes: an 'imaginary Alice' who is ready with bold retorts to bossiness from Beryl.

The Time Plane – Leaving the Past Behind: Moving On

My final approach to *The Aloe / Prelude* centres on the narrative trajectory of leave-taking and arrival, of ending and beginning, of a period of time in which accumulated memories attached to one place, a family home, are detached as three generations of an extended family move from city to country, necessitating the forging of new memory attachments. Leaving the past behind is a wish-fulfilment of Linda Burnell signalled by her willingness to leave two of her children behind in the opening scene of the story during the crucial time of 'removal'. In its theme of moving home, the story provides a sense of Bergsonian change, both in the sense of moving somewhere new and in the sense of moving forward in time.

I diverge from Meghan Hammond's view that in *Prelude* the 'family feeling' Mansfield generates is 'what we might understand as a collective stream of consciousness' in which the characters' minds are 'thinking and feeling together'; or that only a 'we' rather than an 'I' is encountered.⁹⁷ In my view, each of the characters is singular, alone, while the reader is permitted only intermittent access to each character's thoughts and memories.

⁹⁷ See Meghan Hammond, *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 112; p. 114.

Rarely more than a trio gather in the present time of the story and larger groupings tend to dissolve: Kezia wanders away from the Samuel Josephs and from Isabel, ‘just away’ (P., p. 64; A. p. 65); Beryl is alone in a pool of moonlight; Pat is alone in his room behind the kitchen; Linda is by herself in bed; Linda leaves Stanley and Beryl playing cribbage (and Linda’s meeting with her elder and younger sisters is removed from *The Aloe*). Mansfield’s personal ‘Do you remember?’ game is not played among the family members in the story. The tribute to family memory, both personal and fictive family, is ‘removed’.

Narrative time moves from an afternoon during which a house has already been emptied out, to the filling of a new house with familiar things such as photographs and furniture the next day, to the nocturnal vision of the aloe plant which may be coming into bud. In answer to her mother’s comment that she believes the aloe is going to flower “‘this year”” (P, p. 138; A, p. 139), Linda replies: “‘I believe those are buds”” (P, p. 140; A, p. 141, “‘I believe there are buds”). It might be the aloe’s time to flourish or there may be implications in the temporal alterities of moonlight as a departure from the ratiocinative clarities of daylight as the story moves to the deeper time of the long-enduring aloe.

In *The Aloe* the story opens poised between the past and the future, signalled by the first chapter heading, ‘Last Moments Before’. On the title page of the autograph manuscript of *The Aloe*, Mansfield indicated that the story was to be divided into four parts:

Chapter I Last Moments Before

Chapter II A Journey with the Storeman

Chapter III The Day After

Chapter IV

In the first published edition of *The Aloe*, John Middleton Murry added the missing fourth chapter heading, ‘The Aloe’, thereby suggesting that the story *culminates* with the aloe. In *Prelude*, there are no titles for the headings of the twelve sections which open *in medias res*. The reader, then, might reasonably question what these ‘last moments before’ both precede and presage. It is only in the second scene that the reader learns, for certain, via a minor character’s observation, that this is the Burnell family’s ‘last day’ (P, p. 28; an addition to A).

The narrative provides sufficient clues to suggest that the story begins in the afternoon; Lottie and Kezia are given tea by Mrs Samuel Josephs and they will be taken on

the dray ‘afterwards’. By the time they are on their journey with the storeman (scene three of *Prelude*, Chapter Two of *The Aloe*), it is dusk and the visual perspective again shifts:

It was the first time that Lottie and Kezia had ever been out so late. Everything looked different – the painted wooden houses far smaller than they did by day, the gardens far bigger and wilder. Bright stars speckled the sky. (P, p. 38; A, p. 39)

The time of the narrative’s passing is effected by Kezia and Lottie falling asleep, also marking the transition from the action-centred and moving present to the ‘timeless’ world of childish dream. As the children reach their destination, Kezia is reunited with her beloved grandmother, and in a significant moment in the text she is entrusted to carry the lamp, a ‘bright breathing thing’ (P, p. 48; A, p. 49). The children emerge from the darkness of the night and the protective grandmother emerges ‘out of the dark hall carrying a little lamp’ (P, p. 46; ‘The Grandmother had appeared on the top step – she carried a little lamp’, A, p. 47). Kezia’s previous fears of ‘It’ / IT are of the dark. But at the end of the story she has exchanged darkness for light, emphasising Sydney Janet Kaplan’s point that *Prelude* as a whole emphasises ‘the initiating moments of the awakening consciousness’ and represents an ‘originary’ moment for Kezia.⁹⁸

The narrative moves from the late afternoon (light enough for children to play out) to darkness (‘dark came’; P, p. 34) and to Beryl standing in the moonlight at the end of the moving day, to dawn and the morning glare on a second day (during which there are references to anterior time: ‘last night’; P, p. 62; A, p. 63), through to darkness on the second day and onto lunchtime of a third day. The natural rhythms of light and darkness frame – and illuminate – the story which is about the multiple rhythms of consciousness and memory. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson distinguishes between the ‘illuminated part’ of our immediate past and the ‘dark’ past. This ‘dark’ past is where ‘memories preserved in the shadow’ are of less use to a present which ‘impends’ over the future.⁹⁹ It is the member of the youngest generation, Kezia, who lives and moves in the natural light of day in the present, contrasted with the grandmother, symbol of the oldest generation, who has adjusted her eyes and her memories to her ‘illuminated past’. Somewhere in between, constrained by the child-bearing time of her life, Linda Burnell lives in a ‘dark’ past, unable to use her memories adequately to fully experience the pleasure of life in the present.

⁹⁸ See Kaplan, p. 102.

⁹⁹ *M&M*, p. 194.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn on Bergson's notions that the past exists as a whole to which memories are continually being added and that all memories are latent within us until either called upon for the purposes of acting in the world or are detached for dreaming. It should be noted that the action-led or the dream-driven individual is only a 'type' for Bergson. In life, he suggests these characteristics are not distinct or separate but 'interpenetrate' and vary in 'tension' and 'tone'. As individuals live out their lives, their dream states or action states will vary as their relationship to the quantitative multiplicity of spatiality and the qualitative multiplicity of duration varies.

I have shown that for Bergson as well as for Mansfield an individual's memories are pertinacious and creative and that significant memories are constituted by shocks. And I have demonstrated that in *Prelude*, the streamlined and 'modernised' version of 'The Aloe', aspects of Bergson's planes of dream and of action, as manifested in the minds of the different characters in the story, can be traced. I have used these ideas to provide a new reading of the generative properties of memory and of the way in which the text contrives the characters' various psychological dispositions towards the past, present and future in childhood, adulthood and old age, and in the liminal states between childhood and adolescence, and adolescence and adulthood.

In the next chapter I turn to Bergson's theory of duration to offer a close reading of Mansfield's later, and related, story, 'At the Bay'. I read Mansfield back into Bergson by showing how, through topological images of movement through space and in time, Mansfield brings the separated concepts of space and time into something like narrative alignment.

Chapter Two

Temporality, Topology and Temperament: The Geometry of Memory in 'At the Bay'

Why will you always measure? Life is not a clock. – D. H. Lawrence¹

Bergson's genius [...] was above all geometrical. – Jacques Chevalier²

Introduction

An analysis of memory is impossible without bringing in the dimension of time. In this chapter I draw on Bergson's *Time and Free Will* as a rich philosophical source with which to think about temporality and memory in Mansfield's texts. I invoke the mathematical concept of topology to argue that the topological bending of time, as time follows the course of the sun in Mansfield's 1922 story 'At the Bay', represents not only time on the clock and the unfettered flow of real time, but also cosmic time.³ By deploying the idea of topology to explain movement *through* space and in time, I suggest Mansfield textually inscribes what I refer to as 'time-space' which addresses Bergson's duality between spatialised, linear, external and homogeneous 'clock' time and the internally felt, psychological, indivisible 'lived time' (*temps vécu*) of 'real duration' (*durée réelle*). The topological bending or 'curve' of time is a trope for what I term the 'geometry of memory' which relies not on points, lines and angles but rather on the mobile properties of timespace.⁴

¹ D. H. Lawrence, '[Autobiographical Fragment]', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 817-36 (p. 836).

² Jacques Chevalier, *Henri Bergson*, trans. by Lilian A. Clare (London: Rider, 1928), p. 45.

³ While topology relates to branches of several disciplines, including mathematics and geography, I adopt the term as it relates to a sub-discipline of mathematics concerned with specific changes to geometric configurations which are reversible even when deformed (for example, by stretching, bending or twisting). In this definition, topology is concerned with relationships between spatial objects and includes the features of proximity, separation, connectedness, compactness, convergence, continuity, curves, arcs and surfaces and the properties of inside and outside. For an introduction to topological terminology, see M. A. Armstrong, *Basic Topology* [1979] (Berlin: Springer, 1983); and James R. Munkres, *Topology*, 2nd edn (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2000).

⁴ Bergson refers in passing to the 'curve of time' when discussing the 'indivisible present' in *Matter and Memory* (*M&M*, p. 177).

My argument also develops the idea of character ‘temperament’ and gendered traits in relation to the way in which they are mobilised in time-space.⁵

I begin this chapter by looking at ‘when’ and ‘where’, temporally and spatially, ‘At the Bay’ was written, before exploring the story’s narrative form. My analysis points to the modernist period’s attention to fluidities which were both temporal and spatial in the elision of firm boundaries between the objective and subjective, at least so far as narrative tactics

⁵ While I am unable to discuss developments in spatial theory at any length here, there are several spatial theorists whose work would be productive for reading some of Mansfield’s stories. In *The Poetics of Space*, as part of a poetics of intimacy, Gaston Bachelard outlines two principal ways of theorising space: on the one hand there is ‘felicitous space’, which harnesses imagination, dream and memory to think about space which is graspable and ‘the space we love’, and ‘topophilia’ which is a ‘eulogized’ space. See Gaston Bachelard, [*La poétique de l’espace*, 1858]; [1964], *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How we Experience Intimate Places*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. xxxv. Intimate spaces feature in Mansfield’s stories as houses, rooms and the domestic ‘indoors’ and are contrasted with both the ‘wildness’ and the cultivated beauty of ‘outdoors’. A Bachelardian reading could be made of ‘The Doll’s House’, for example, in terms of miniature spaces, special objects and Mansfield’s penchant for detail as well as for ‘littleness’ (which is not a belittling term in Mansfield’s lexicon). Two narrative fragments, ‘On her way back to the garden’ and ‘What was there about that little house’, would also yield interesting readings. See *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, Volume 2: The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1916-1922*, p. 436 and p. 437. Further references to this edition are abbreviated to *CWKM2*. The first fragment turns on a misunderstanding, the second on an atmosphere of foreboding in a house with its ‘expressionless’ windows (p. 437). In another critical vein, Michel Foucault refers to spaces and places as a ‘heterotopology’. See Michel Foucault [1984], ‘Of Other Spaces’, trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, Spring, 1986, 16: 1, 22–7, <http://foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heterotopia.en.html> [last accessed 21 May 2016], 1-9 (p. 4). Within this description, the concept of ‘heterotopia’ has been especially productive for literary and cultural critics. For Foucault, heterotopias are physical ‘real’ spaces or ‘countersites’ which are the antinomy of utopias, which are ‘unreal’, ‘perfected’ or what might be called ‘non’ spaces (p. 3). Another of Foucault’s concepts, ‘heterochronies’, has a dual dimension: heterochronies are heterotopias which either place objects in ‘accumulating time’ and are orientated towards preservation, such as museums, or are related to ‘transitory time’, such as festivals and fairgrounds (p. 7). A Foucauldian reading of heterotopias in ‘At the Bay’ could be made looking particularly at spaces of ‘temporary relaxation’ (such as the beach) and of rest (such as the houses at the colony) (p. 3). Furthermore, heterotopias which form ‘contradictory sites’ such as the garden (p. 6) or the boat, which for Foucault is a ‘floating piece of space’ (p. 9), could provide the basis of an insightful reading of the several garden scenes in ‘At the Bay’, for example, when Kezia explores the different textures of the garden at the new house and when Linda dreams of sailing away from her life. A Foucauldian utopia / heterotopia might be traced in Mansfield’s stories such as ‘In the Botanical Gardens’, a story which plays with the idea of the ‘artificial and the natural’ (*CWKM 1*, p. 84), or ‘The Tiredness of Rosabel’ in which the real spaces of workplace and lodgings are at variance with the protagonist’s imagined spaces. In ‘The Woman at the Store’ the grim physical space of the outback is in sharp relief to the ideal of the ‘mother’ country, represented by the pages of English periodicals used as wall coverings (*CWKM 1*, p. 270). Foucault’s heterochrony might find purchase on stories such as ‘Her First Ball’ or ‘The Garden Party’, places of transitory time. Other contemporary critics have focused on topography and the phenomenology of memory as they relate to place, as such, including Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012); while Julia Kristeva in her psychoanalytical study of Proust introduces the idea of ‘polytopia’ to denote the ‘perverse’ desire connected with Proust’s time regained and to think about why and how such ‘monsters’ find their places within us. See Julia Kristeva, *Proust and the Sense of Time*, trans. by Stephen Bann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 25.

are concerned. The use of Free Indirect Discourse in the story strengthens the idea that Modernist authors' capacity to move into the subjectivities of their characters, discussed in the previous chapter, involves the taking up of a spatial position *within* the mind from *where* a character sees and hears. I suggest that examples of Free Indirect Discourse and of multiple focalisation in the multi-perspectival narrative of 'At the Bay' relate to both temporal *and* spatial 'flux' which I regard as topological. I also discuss Bergson's concerns about symbolising duration given the seeming impossibility of representing the fluidity of time in words or symbols. I then provide temporal and topological readings of 'At the Bay', demonstrating the way in which Mansfield reconciles Bergson's time dualism via 'time-space'. Finally I discuss the critical reception of 'At the Bay' to determine whether, in 'looking back' on the story in the light of later interpretations, anything further can be gleaned about Mansfield and memory from a Bergsonian perspective.

Personal Memory

'At the Bay' was one of the stories that Mansfield wrote as time was running out for her. By May 1921, having arrived in Switzerland from Menton on the French Riviera, she had less than two years to live. While she could not have anticipated exactly when she would die, her early death from tuberculosis was by then almost certain. As Vincent O'Sullivan recounts, Mansfield went to Switzerland hoping for new spiritual direction and her writing was to be a response to the 'debilitating intellectualism that followed the First World War'.⁶ This attitude echoes a Bergsonian idea: that one should be intuitively on the side of life as a counter-balance to the overarching rigidities of the intellect which are especially in evidence in times of war.⁷ Mansfield lived in various hotels for nearly two months before moving to the Chalet des Sapins in Montana-sur-Sierre in late June 1921. It was here that she wrote some of her most memorable stories, 'The Doll's House', 'The Garden Party' and 'At the Bay', while she was also writing to commission during the summer of 1921 a set of six magazine stories for the *Sphere*.⁸

'At the Bay' was partly the result, according to Antony Alpers, of Mansfield's challenge to herself to write a long story with '*more difficult relationships*' than she felt she

⁶ *CLKM*, 4, p. 213.

⁷ See, for example, Bergson's lecture 'The Meaning of the War: Life and Matter in Conflict' which he gave to the annual public gathering of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques as its President on 12 December 1914. Henri Bergson, *The Meaning of the War: Life and Matter in Conflict*, trans. by H. Wildon Carr (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915).

⁸ See Antony Alpers, ed., *The Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, Definitive Edition (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 568-71; hereinafter abbreviated to *Stories*.

had achieved in a recently completed story, 'An Ideal Family'. The story was thus 'prefigured' in the Journal for 23 July 1921.⁹ Alpers speculates that 'At the Bay' was Mansfield's depiction of family love, and, as such, an answer to D. H. Lawrence's novel *Women in Love* (in which Mansfield, in a provocative fictional transposition, was the model for the character Gudrun).¹⁰ Living in Switzerland, she could not imagine returning to England, which represented 'a kind of *negation*' where 'Nothing goes forward'; whereas when she was outside England, she felt as though 'every *thing & place* is near'.¹¹ The story carries with it, then, a set of multiple charges: it is intuitive; it expresses family feeling; it is a response to the pathological imaginings of a fellow writer; it reflects Mansfield's sense of herself in mobile time and place, virtually in 'exile' yet going 'forward', while going back, in time, to the past.

According to Alpers, during August 1921 Mansfield temporarily stopped writing 'At the Bay', in order to work on several other stories – 'Marriage à la Mode' (11 August), 'The Voyage' (14 August) and 'A Married Man's Story' (c.20 August; unfinished).¹² The writing was compulsive and yet arduous. 'At the Bay' was finished after '9 solid hours' of writing on 11 September, as noted in a letter to Brett the following day.¹³ And in a letter of around 12 September to Richard Murry, John Middleton Murry's younger brother, Mansfield says that she had 'been at it for seven hours a day all this last week'.¹⁴ Mansfield was clearly concerned about her *writing time* and consumed with a sense of urgency to complete the story; she wrote to Michael Sadleir on 24 September, having just sent her book off to her agent J. B. Pinker: 'Never have I had my pen so snatched away by The Furies.'¹⁵ And in a letter of the same day to Sylvia Lynd, she commented that finishing the book had

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 569, Note 421.

¹⁰ 'At the Bay, among all the other things which it is, is a response by Gudrun to Gudrun's creator on the subject of "*family love* warm, vivid, intimate – not 'made up' – not self-conscious.'" *Life*, p. 341. That Mansfield's reaction to Lawrence's novel was hostile is conveyed in a letter to Ottoline Morrell of 24 July 1921, in which she referred to the book as 'almost purely pathological'. *CLKM*, 4, p. 252.

¹¹ See the letter to Brett of around 25 July 1921, *CLKM*, 4, p. 255; and the letter to Brett of 29 July 1921, *CLKM*, 4, p. 257.

¹² *Stories*, p. 571, note 441. Mansfield mentions the story in a letter to Dorothy Brett of 4 August 1921 (dated 8 August according to Alpers): 'I must stop this letter & get on with my new story. Its called *At the Bay* & its (I hope) full of sand and seaweed and bathing dresses hanging over verandahs & sandshoes on window sills, and little pink "sea" convolvulus, and rather gritty sandwiches and the tide coming in. And it smells (oh I DO hope it smells) a little bit fishy.' *CLKM*, 4, p. 261.

¹³ *CLKM*, 4, p. 279. The date of the letter is given in brackets as being around 12 September 1921 (in which Mansfield notes that she 'Finished last night at 10.30' (p. 278)); Alpers suggests the story was completed 10 September 1921. See *Stories*, p. 571.

¹⁴ *CLKM*, 4: p. 280.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

perpetuated time: ‘Its last moments lingered on and on.’¹⁶ Mansfield had already written to Pinker ten days earlier, referring to her new collection of stories as ‘At the Bay and Other Stories’.¹⁷ She wrote again to Pinker on 10 October 1921 explaining that she wanted to add a more ‘substantial’ story as well as provide a more ‘solid’ title: ‘At The Bay now seems to me flimsy and vague. One forgets it –’.¹⁸ It is ironic to think that the story’s title might be easily forgotten, given that the story is replete with ideas about time and memory. ‘At the Bay’ was first published in the *London Mercury* in January 1922. Alpers notes that for the American edition, Mansfield made a ‘shapely improvement’: the final paragraph was set as a separate, numbered ‘episode’, giving thirteen sections to the story.¹⁹ It can also be viewed as comprising twelve episodes together with a coda.

While writing ‘At the Bay’, Mansfield was more than once reminded of her childhood. Among the letters written from the Chalet des Sapins during the summer of 1921 was one of 30 July to John Ruddick, the father of Mansfield’s childhood friend, Marion, who had sent via her sister Chaddie (Charlotte Beauchamp Perkins) two ‘old and quaint’ photographs of themselves as children. In response, Mansfield speculated, somewhat rhetorically, whether Marion might remember their shared childhood: ‘Does she remember Island Bay, I wonder, and bathing her doll in the rock pools with me. But perhaps so much has happened since then that these things have faded.’²⁰ While ‘At the Bay’ may be said to contain uncannily resonant references to a similar seeming actual past, the point to note is the insistence of memory *per se* for Mansfield: ‘If we are ever together down the Kenepuru Sounds come off with me for a whole day – will you? And lets just remember.’²¹ In this letter to Jeanne, Mansfield seems to suggest that remembering (‘lets just remember’) is a less *mediated* activity, less self-consciously textually driven, less motivated to use memories as the basis for textual reconstruction; remembering the unfiltered past fulfils a personal need, in the present, which may have enhanced her sense of her temporal and spatial dislocation from that past. At the same time, ‘At the Bay’ may reconfigure the co-ordinates of the *actual* place, ‘Day’s Bay’, where Mansfield’s family spent some of their summers, the very name also implying a temporal dimension in keeping with the focus on the daily lives of a holiday community during a single day. However, in the story, Mansfield used the name ‘Crescent

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁷ Later to become *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, when in October of that year she finished the new title story.

¹⁸ *CLKM*, 4: p. 293.

¹⁹ *Stories*, Note 441, p. 571.

²⁰ *CLKM*, 4, p. 258.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

Bay' instead to significant effect to suggest the image of the 'curve' of time as I go on to discuss.

Alpers comments that the characters who are 'at the bay' are set apart spatially and temporally, but in a recognisable, recollected location, from the rest of the community: 'Their sense of isolation in time and place is implied by numerous local details, wonderfully remembered [...]'.²² But I would query this sense of the particularity of place. And having completed the story, Mansfield reflected on the apparent specific resemblance of several of her characters to family members: 'Theres my grandmother, back in her chair with her pink knitting, there stalks my uncle over the grass. [...] All is remembered.'²³ What interests me most about these 'memories' is not the personal dimension nor the possible temporal connection to a real past or place, but a spatiality in time and a temporality in space: the figure of the grandmother is given a particular spatial location in the past – 'back in her chair' – while the figure of the uncle moves over the grass: the temporality of the past takes on a spatial dimension. The sense of a fluid temporality (anytime) combined with an un-localised spatiality (anywhere) is a feature of what I am calling 'time-space'.

Writing many years later, and comparing her stories with those of Chekhov, V. S. Pritchett criticised Mansfield for her weak impression of place and for failing to account for the 'unseen' or 'anonymous' characters which form the backdrop to a successful story: 'who are these people, who are their neighbours, what is the world they belong to? We can scarcely guess,' he observes.²⁴ Pritchett's disappointment is with an apparently nebulous quality to the narrative. But perhaps this sense that the stories are pendulous with a significance that is never fully articulated is what gives them their unique appeal of a particularly *scriptable* (or *writerly*) kind in Roland Barthes' sense of the term.²⁵ Pritchett associates the 'gaps and silences' he finds in Mansfield's 'plotless' stories with her rootlessness and isolation. But such aporias may equally be Mansfield's technical means of 'implying' rather than 'telling', a view which is not inconsistent with simultaneously invoking *and* disguising personal memories; transmuting the personal into the fictional for

²² *Life*, p. 342.

²³ *CLKM*, 4, p. 278.

²⁴ V. S. Pritchett, 'Books in General', a review of *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 2 February 1946, 87. What previous critics tend to overlook is that Pritchett's view is not all negative; he also refers to 'At the Bay' as 'one of the minor masterpieces of our language' (p. 87).

²⁵ See Roland Barthes [1970], *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974). Barthes' terms *lisible* and *scriptible* translate into the 'readerly' and 'writerly' text, the former typically being related to conventional realist novels, the latter to largely twentieth-century works which undermine such conventions and instead encourage readers to figure out meaning for themselves.

her readers' pleasure. In doing so, Mansfield, as Pritchett I think rightly notes, 'liquefied' the short story and her characters' lives 'as they dissolved and formed again'.²⁶

Mansfield wrote to Dorothy Brett that 'At the Bay' was a 'continuation' of *Prelude*.²⁷ The story follows on from *Prelude* in several senses. It moves the Burnell family on in conventional time. While Linda Burnell is 'expecting' and Stanley Burnell is longing for a boy in *Prelude*, in 'At the Bay' the son has been born. The narrative also incorporates intertextual 'memory' traces of *Prelude* in that it looks back to and reprises elements of the earlier story. One example concerns the characters' temperaments in relation to temporality: Stanley remains full of vigour and vitality in the present and demonstrates an enthusiasm for buying gifts (a pineapple and cherries for Linda in *Prelude*; gloves, for himself, in 'At the Bay'); Mrs Fairfield remains sensibly practical in the present; Linda still dreams of the past; Alice occupies her present-centred everydayness; and Beryl still exhibits dissatisfaction with the present and a desire to bring about a more exciting future. There is also novelty and change in the new story: there is a new location, new characters, such as the Kembers and Mrs Stubbs, and a sense of returning to a familiar place compared to the leave-taking in *Prelude*. Perhaps the most significant change is that of Linda's emotional state, from indifference to her female children to something like maternal affection for her baby son. Alpers refers to the story as an 'after-Christmas pastoral'.²⁸ That a baby boy has been born might suggest the Christ child; and Mansfield's younger brother's textual 'resurrection' is intimated, perhaps, in the very opening of the story: 'the sun [the son] was not yet risen'. The boy's arrival is presaged but not delivered in *Prelude*; in 'At the Bay', the un-named child is alive, and he is loved.

Narrative Time

In reading 'At the Bay' the reader is 'placed' in what I am calling 'time-space', a claim bolstered by the first word of the story's title, 'at'. That this 'at' mattered to Mansfield is underscored in a letter she wrote to Michael Sadleir on 10 October 1921 outlining her concerns that the story's title had been misquoted: 'I received yesterday two letters about the story *At the Bay* & in both cases the title was wrong: i.e. *In the Bay* & *On the Bay*'.²⁹ The preposition 'at' can be used to indicate both a point occupied in space suggesting proximity (for example, to stand *at* the gate) as well as a location in time (for example, *at* noon; *at* the

²⁶ Pritchett, p. 87.

²⁷ *CLKM*, 4, p. 278.

²⁸ *Life*, p. 342. An Antipodean summer occurs during the months when readers in the northern hemisphere experience winter.

²⁹ *CLKM*, 4, p. 293.

end). To give an ontological meaning to the word ‘at’ would be to suggest that individual subjects are ‘at’ the bay, ‘there’ in time-space.

The story’s form reproduces this doubled sense of ‘at’-ness. Like *Prelude*, it is divided into unequal segments: either thirteen episodes, or twelve episodes and a ‘coda’. The musical term hints that the ‘ending’ arises through the prolongation of the other episodes, giving to the temporal the quality of interpenetration and a Bergsonian quality. Peter Mathews notes that the story ‘lacks continuity and narrative drive’ and this not a criticism; it is left to the reader to form ‘a unity from its heterogeneous parts while resisting this process at every step’.³⁰ In their analysis Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr suggest the opposite, arguing that the story has a ‘controlling narrative framework’, tracing the passage of a single day, like Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*.³¹ My view is that each of the twelve episodes and the coda occur at randomly occurring times according to what is happening in the characters’ time-space (where they are in their temporal flow), during the same summer’s ‘day’ (in natural time), only rarely punctuated by measured time (on the clock). In this way, each section of the narrative is left deliberately un-concluded, under-narrated, ‘lingering on’.

Joan Silber notes that all fiction has to deal with the experience of time that passes, given that fictional events tend to unfold in sequence.³² Her classification of fictional time includes ‘classic time’ which covers a ‘natural span’ such as a month, a season or a year.³³ The time frame of ‘At the Bay’ is a single day, from at dawn – and it is wonderfully liminal with sheep straying into dream and sleep – until after dusk in summertime, in no specific year, during which the various families in the story are seemingly enjoying ‘holiday time’. According to Helen Rydstrand, both *Prelude* and ‘At the Bay’ are organised around ‘brief slices’ of time often containing minor incidents and frequently involving meal times. In this analysis, *Prelude*’s timeline runs from teatime to lunchtime two days later, while ‘At the Bay’ includes breakfast time as well as teatime; meal times could be said, therefore, to structure time within both texts.³⁴ But Rydstrand does not push the point any further to suggest that meal times therefore impose regulated, punctuated time on everyday life.

³⁰ Peter Mathews, ‘Myth and Unity in Mansfield’s “At the Bay”’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature: JNZL*, 23:2 (2005), 47-61 (p. 48).

³¹ See Hanson and Gurr, p. 99.

³² See Joan Silber, *The Art of Time in Fiction: As Long As It Takes* (Minneapolis: Greywolf Press, 2009), p. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8. The other categories identified by Silber are ‘long time’, ‘switchback time’, ‘slowed time’ and ‘fabulous time’ (pp. 8-9).

³⁴ Helen Rydstrand, ‘Brevity and Rhythm: Modernist Poetics in Katherine Mansfield’s “Prelude”’, an unpublished paper presented at the Moving Modernisms conference, Oxford University, 21 March 2012.

In narratological terms, of Genette's four types of narration, 'At the Bay' is a 'subsequent narration' in which the narrator relates what has happened in a past time. In terms of narrative time order, the sequence of events in the story is in chronological order apart from several anachronous analeptic moments. Mansfield's use of flashback, and a shift into past time, is to recount memories and thus the temporal progress of the events in the story is not interrupted as such. As Mark Currie has observed, the recounting of memory is not, strictly, analepsis.³⁵ A focus on remembered time is then brought back to the present time of the narration. The two flashbacks involve Linda's and Mrs Fairfield's memories. The temporal distance in each case is of several years: for Linda, the memory is of her pre-marital state before she assumed the burden of child-bearing; while Mrs Fairfield recalls the time when she lost her son in a mining accident. The temporal reach in each case is long although the recalling of the memory within the narrative is relatively brief in both cases, but they mirror each other: if Mrs Fairfield recalls the loss of her son, Linda recalls the loss of herself. Linda remembers a time when she was free to make her own future: a dream of a future that does not arrive. The link between these two memories is the death and birth (or the awakening to the existence) of a son.

In Currie's view, the 'now' of the narrator's telling clearly refers to 'back then', and in 'At the Bay' the 'what has been in the past' is generally invested in the women characters. Recounting a memory indicates to the reader that the past is still there, in its virtuality in Bergson's terms; and even though it cannot be repeated, it can be called up. Mansfield also plays with narrative speed (in Genette's typology).³⁶ Narrative tempo seems to slow for emphasis when evoking the memories of Linda and Mrs Fairfield, and seems to increase around Stanley. While in scenes of dialogue, according to Genette, narrative time generally equates to story time, Mansfield interjects summary between dialogues in which Stanley features, which, together with the use of active verbs, accelerate the story. A primary example is when Stanley is getting ready to leave the house for work in the town and has mislaid his stick:

³⁵ Mark Currie, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 36. Currie states: '[T]he narration of a memory is not quite the same thing as the narration of the past in the sense that it is not the past itself that is the object of narration but the subjective act of recall belonging to a character. The narration of memory is not strictly speaking an anachrony, since the event of recalling might belong in the temporal chain of the first narrative, and yet memory is normally considered to be the predominant mode of analepsis' (p. 36).

³⁶ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 94-5.

‘But I put it here,’ Stanley began to bluster. ‘I remember distinctly putting it in this corner. Now, who’s had it? There’s no time to lose. Look sharp! The stick’s got to be found.’

[...]

Stanley dashed into the bedroom where Linda was lying.

[...]

Stanley waved his arm to Linda. ‘No time to say good-bye!’ he cried. And he meant that as a punishment to her.

He snatched his bowler hat, dashed out of the house, and swung down the garden path. Yes, the coach was there waiting.³⁷

The narrative also sets up a series of ironically gendered contrasts between Stanley’s male sense of urgency and the women of the household’s mockery. Certain repeated words serve to accentuate the way in which the narrative tempo slows and quickens according to the women’s temperaments. There is Linda’s unhurried dreaminess, Beryl’s quick, sharp imperiousness, and Mrs Fairfield’s equability:

‘Stick, dear? What stick?’ Linda’s vagueness on these occasions could not be real, Stanley decided. Would nobody sympathize with him?

‘Coach! Coach, Stanley!’ Beryl’s voice cried from the gate.

[...] Into the living-room she [i.e. Beryl] ran and called ‘He’s gone!’ Linda cried from her room: ‘Beryl! Has Stanley gone?’ Old Mrs Fairfield appeared, carrying the boy in his little flannel coatee.

‘Gone?’

‘Gone!’ (pp. 347-8)

The iteration of the word ‘gone’ mockingly echoes Stanley’s abrupt tempo as he accounts for time, his hat and stick standing in metonymically, and with humour, for his self-aggrandisement as a man of business, while the women wait for him to leave.

In ‘At the Bay’, the reader is immersed both in the ongoing occurrences of the day and in the consciousnesses of the characters. All is mobile. Storytelling, it might be said, is itself movement: the on-going recounting of time, memory and event. And in this story all kinds of time and memory are in play: remembering and forgetting; anticipating the future and regretting the lack of time in the present; squandering time and opining over misused

³⁷ Katherine Mansfield, ‘At the Bay’, in *CWKM2*, pp. 342-72 (p. 347). Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

time; grasping and losing time. Currie comments that while all novels are ‘about time’ there is also a ‘backwards time’, or a backwards temporality at work in narrative.³⁸ The reader’s present in fictional narrative is really the past. It is a character’s present related to us in the past tense: either the past perfect or the past historic. Yet there is also an inevitable temporal disjunction involved between the times of reading, of writing and of narrating. And there is the fact of an ending in each case. The end will come, as Frank Kermode has famously observed. A story requires its own past and the reader cannot be ‘denied’ an end: ‘it is one of the great charms of books that they have to end.’³⁹ But for Kermode, this is not a teleological understanding on the part of the reader; while the beginning might seem to imply ‘the’ end, the reader does not ask that the narrative unfold towards its end as expected; there is rather ‘an’ end.⁴⁰

According to Silber, the ‘real end’ is the finality of death which has a role in storytelling as ‘mortality’s natural link with closure’.⁴¹ In ‘At the Bay’ Mansfield inverts this idea. There is neither a death within the story nor at the end of the story. There have, though, been at least two deaths in the time *prior* to the story’s narration: that of Mr Stubbs and that of Mrs Fairfield’s son, William. In the seventh episode when Mrs Fairfield and Kezia are enjoying an afternoon siesta together and speak of the death of Kezia’s uncle, the narrator invites the reader into the present of both characters via a playfulness which seemingly repudiates (or holds ‘at bay’) the pressures of time. For Mrs Fairfield, this teasing deflects the pain of memory while for Kezia it reserves further knowledge about the inevitability of human mortality for a later time (only the reader is potentially reminded of the traumatic episode with the killing of the duck in *Prelude*). In ‘At the Bay’, the notion of *Memento mori* (‘remember that you must die’) is replaced by that of *Memento vivere* (‘remember that you must live’). Kezia’s kisses and soft tickling function to overcome the grandmother’s memories of death, while the narrative ‘remembers’ the forward momentum of life as Kezia and her grandmother both forget the time they have just lived through (p. 358).

Memory is built into most narratives because most stories recount the ‘already has been’ of time’s passing for their characters. Randall Stevenson has argued that memory characterises modern and modernist novels in particular while functioning locally within at least some vestigial chronological (clock-based) construction. For example, in Joyce’s

³⁸ Currie, p. 4

³⁹ Frank Kermode [1966], *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction with a New Epilogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴¹ Silber, p. 83.

Ulysses, the reader always knows what hour Leopold Bloom is in, even if his mind may not remain there. That is, time and memory work in conjunction to narrate time's flow within discreet temporal scaffolding: 'For modernist novelists, memory becomes an essential structuring device in the creation of a "time in the mind" able to move – through the randomness of recollection – away from "mechanical succession" and the oppressive control of the clock.'⁴² Mansfield moves us discreetly through a sense of time-space in the story by continually advancing the time of day in each episode, although, importantly, *not* by regular amounts such as by the hour. Time is more fluid and loosened around the clock: it is 'about' or 'just gone'. The more overt rigidity of clock time is reserved for Stanley and the daily habits and routines of the women of the household. A sense of time-space as experienced internally by the characters is described through Free Indirect Discourse, while time in flow and space being lived in follow myriad and not linear temporal rhythms. In order to follow the implications of 'time-space' as a Bergsonian multiplicity, I now turn to explicating Bergson's theory of time to establish a methodology for reading Mansfield's story and to read Bergson back through Mansfield.

Bergson's Philosophy of Time

In this section I look at Bergson's two notions of time as outlined in *Time and Free Will*; that is, the 'unreal' or external, spatialised and segmented time associated with nineteenth-century materialism and mechanistic science, and the 'real', internal, fluid and lived time of duration (*durée*) which stems from the 'inward turn' of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century metaphysics, psychology and narrative.⁴³ I then look at the later works in which Bergson augmented his theory of time which gives us a third notion of temporality: cosmic time. I examine the ways in which memory is not only implicated in these considerations of time in the mind and in the cosmos, but, in the case of duration, helps constitute time.

A principal example of 'mechanical' or external time was 'Railway Time', first established in Britain as early as 1840 while Greenwich was set as the zero meridian for

⁴² Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 96.

⁴³ T. E. Hulme observes the widening gulf between mechanistic science and metaphysics in the period in his 'Notes on Bergson' in the *New Age*. See T. E. Hulme in 'Notes on Bergson: 4', *New Age*, 10:5 (30 November 1911), 110-12 (p. 111). Thomas Henry Huxley had observed as far back as 1868: 'any one who is acquainted with the history of science will admit, that its progress has, in all ages, meant, and now, more than ever, means, the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation, and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity.' See Thomas Henry Huxley, 'The Physical Basis of Life', *Collected Essays* 1, <http://aleph0.clarku.edu/huxley/CE1/PhysB.html>

world time in 1884. As Stephen Kern has amply demonstrated, in 1912 at the International Conference on Time, a system was set up to implement standard time, while on 1 July 1913 the Eiffel Tower transmitted the first standard time signal around the world.⁴⁴ By dividing the world precisely into twenty-four discrete one-hour time zones, the idea of uniform time was established. In the realm of physics, also, individual experience was an irrelevance; physicists looked for a ‘purely impersonal definition of time’.⁴⁵ The homogenising temporal impositions, or ‘new systems and rationalizations’ of life, represented by Greenwich Mean Time or ‘clocking in’ at factories, and the synchronisation of time experienced by soldiers in the trenches of the First World War, resulted in what critics now refer to as a ‘commodified temporality’.⁴⁶

If some modernists and others of the age rebelled against the commodification of time, it is perhaps not surprising that Bergson and Mansfield, while by no means precisely causes of a new temporality and as much a consequence of it, were exploring new and similar discourses about time and were valid commentators on this aspect of each other’s work. In the prolonged debate in philosophy concerned with whether time was ‘homogeneous or heterogeneous, atomistic or a flux, reversible or irreversible’, Bergson was concerned to account for and Mansfield to represent both, giving proper place to the fluidities of internally experienced time. Bergson also had his detractors, especially in Bertrand Russell and Wyndham Lewis.⁴⁷

The British Hegelian philosopher John Ellis McTaggart took the opposite approach to time from that of Bergson, mounting a philosophical case for the ‘unreality’ of time.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ See Kern, p. 13; p. 14.

⁴⁵ Norman Feather, *An Introduction to the Physics of Mass, Length and Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1959), p. 38.

⁴⁶ See Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 126; p. 120; p. 119.

⁴⁷ See Kern, p. 11. During the early decades of the twentieth century philosophers were by no means all won over to Bergson’s theory of time, as articles published in the journal *Mind* and the *Monist* attest. See, for example, J. S. Mackenzie, ‘Notes on the Problem of Time’, *Mind*, New Series, 21:83 (July 1912), 329-46; David Balsillie, ‘Prof. Bergson on Time and Free Will’, *Mind*, New Series, 20:79 (July 1911), 357-78 (p. 367); Bertrand Russell, ‘The Philosophy of Bergson’, the *Monist*, 22:3 (1912), 321-47; and Wyndham Lewis, Book Two: An Analysis of the Philosophy of Time, and especially Chapter 3, ‘Spatialization and Concreteness’, in *Time and Western Man*, ed. by Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), pp. 158-77. A corrective reading of Lewis’s view of Bergson is offered by SueEllen Campbell in her article, ‘Equal Opposites: Wyndham Lewis, Henri Bergson, and Their Philosophies of Space and Time’ in *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 29:3 (Autumn, 1983), 351-69.

⁴⁸ John Ellis McTaggart, ‘The Unreality of Time’, *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, 17 (1908), 456-73. McTaggart identified two main time series: the ‘A’ series and the ‘B’ series (where the ‘A’ series denotes past, present and future, and the ‘B’ series the relation of ‘earlier’ or ‘later’ than) and claimed that only that of ‘past-present-future’ could indicate the real change essential to temporality. But McTaggart argued there was an inherent contradiction in the

McTaggart regarded time as ‘a succession of distinct, non-interpenetrating units, directly apprehended only one at a time’, in other words, as discrete temporal units or ‘moments’.⁴⁹ Contemporary analysis of a modernist aesthetics of time has split along philosophical lines. For example, Ann Banfield has placed Virginia Woolf on the side of Cambridge time philosophy, rejecting the implications of Bergson’s philosophical duration, whereas James Hafley has read Woolf entirely through Bergson.⁵⁰

The following diagram outlines the elements of Bergson’s dual aspect of time upon which I elaborate below.

<u>Spatialised Time</u>	<u>Duration</u>
Homogeneity	Heterogeneity
Mathematical Time	Living Time
Abstract Time	Concrete (or Real) Time ⁵¹
Scientific	Metaphysical
Quantitative	Qualitative
Spatial	Temporal
Juxtaposed Objects	Interpenetrating Consciousness
Moments	Duration
Divisible	Indivisible
Immobile	Mobile
Objective / Intellectual	Subjective / Intuitive
Extensive / Numerical Multiplicity of Things in Space	Intensive / Qualitative Multiplicity of Conscious ‘States’ which Interpenetrate
Linear	Flux
Fixity	Change
Repetition	Singularity
Surface	Depth

‘A’ series that we would require any and all events to be simultaneously past, present and future, which would be impossible. Bergson does not abandon these terms but avoids simultaneity; in his theory of time, the past is brought into the present by way of adding to it while the future unfolds from the present in a process of ceaseless becoming and change. Duration is felt as real because it is continuous.

⁴⁹ See Ann Banfield, ‘Time Passes: Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism, and Cambridge Time’, *Poetics Today*, 24:3 (2003), 471-516 (p. 480).

⁵⁰ See Hafley.

⁵¹ Bergson uses the term ‘concrete’ meaning ‘real’ even though this may not seem to be the most apt term for something defined as so fluid and mobile. However, the Oxford English Dictionary helpfully gives ‘not abstract’ as a definition of concrete.

While time had been generally thought of in terms of a form of mathematical quantification or measurement, Bergson approached it in terms of the intensities of states of consciousness or inner experience. In *Time and Free Will*, he rejects intensity as a property of magnitude (that is, 'greater than') and distinguishes between different conscious states which are felt either as immediately qualitative (demonstrating differences in kind) or as quantitative (demonstrating differences in degree).⁵² The qualitative refers to how we sense things as we experience them, whether that may be as brightness, darkness, heat, coldness, happiness or beauty. The quantitative describes *how much* there is of something. Bergson asserts that there is a multiplicity of our conscious states in which different sensations and affects correspond to *qualitative changes* that cannot simply be measured.

Bergson uses his distinction between the qualitative and the quantitative to distinguish between two forms of multiplicity. The first is *quantitative* ('discrete' or 'numerical') multiplicity in which things are placed alongside one another in space and are thus homogenised. The second is a *qualitative* multiplicity in which states of consciousness interpenetrate and unfold in heterogeneous ways; it is this multiplicity which constitutes pure duration (*durée réelle*): '[A] succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number'.⁵³ A criticism of duration was posed by Darcy Kitchin, one of Bergson's contemporaries, who questioned whether Bergson regards our inner life as *having* or as *being* duration; for the answer impacts on the relation of the reality of duration to consciousness.⁵⁴ Bergson's response was that we recognise duration only when we sense the power, movement and flow of it; that is, duration working through our consciousness and our consciousness working through duration.⁵⁵

The principal image that Bergson uses to depict the idea of the interpenetration of mental states is that of a melody: 'as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so

⁵² See *T&FW*, Chapter 1.

⁵³ *T&FW*, p. 104.

⁵⁴ Darcy B. Kitchin [1913], *Bergson for Beginners: A Summary of his Philosophy*, 2nd edn (London: George Allen, 1914), p. 127.

⁵⁵ As Suzanne Guerlac notes, for Bergson consciousness helps the body cope with time, for time is constantly moving: 'Consciousness serves the body as centre of action by synthesizing the heterogeneous rhythms of duration into temporal horizons of past, present, and future. Consciousness is more or less equated with memory and therefore with the past. The present is defined in terms of action. [...] There is no present moment except the moment of action, the event of contact with the real. All the rest, essentially, is memory.' See Guerlac, p. 122.

to speak, into one another'.⁵⁶ Note that it is in the *recalling* of the notes from memory that we experience them as *having* melted into each other. Memory's insistent and integrating power therefore plays a significant role in duration. The melody image represents a 'temporal synthesis of memory that knits temporal dimensions together'.⁵⁷ In duration there is no spatial distinction, no gap or stop: '[P]ure duration excludes all idea of juxtaposition'.⁵⁸ It is important to Bergson's theory of time that in pure duration there is 'succession' in which the immediate past folds into the present and which allows for a distinction between 'past', 'present' and 'future', but without an interruption to time's flux: 'Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states.'⁵⁹

The idea of the indivisibility of time or duration concerns some of Bergson's commentators, however. J Alexander Gunn, for example, argues that Bergson sidesteps the question of whether we have any knowledge of the past *as* past and ignores the difference between the 'no more' and the 'not yet' feeling in consciousness.⁶⁰ Bergson does partially overcome the first part of this problem and it is memory that provides the answer. He suggests that we must be placed *in* the past in order for memory to bind the sense of present and past together: memory is 'the very basis of our conscious existence' which facilitates 'the prolongation of the past into the present'.⁶¹ In terms of the individual experience of lived duration, the past and the present, the feeling of the 'no more' and the 'not yet' are folded into each other but can be distinguished because the 'no more' is extended by the just lived through present; that is to say, the difference in feeling must be down to the sense that the past is growing. David Balsillie questions the role of memory altogether: 'what need would there be for memory on the author's theory that past states enrich the present by permeation? Memory would be an unnecessary and cumbrous duplicate. We should have an intuitive understanding'.⁶² However, permeation by itself would lack differentiation; memory allows for that sense of pastness to which Gunn refers. And as Bergson explains in *Matter and Memory*, it is memory that is required to blend with immediate perceptions in preparing for action in the present.

⁵⁶ *T&FW*, p. 100.

⁵⁷ Guerlac, p. 66.

⁵⁸ Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 26.

⁵⁹ *T&FW*, p. 100.

⁶⁰ J. Alexander Gunn, *Bergson and His Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1920), p. 142.

⁶¹ Henri Bergson [1907, *L'Evolution créatrice*], *Creative Evolution*, trans. by Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 18.

⁶² Balsillie, p. 367.

While in *Time and Free Will* Bergson seems to confine duration to an individual's internal consciousness, his thinking changes in his later works.⁶³ Duration in *Time and Free Will* is presented as an experience of inner consciousness, as non-spatial and a continuous multiplicity, while external reality is depicted as being simply space. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson questions whether duration can be attributed to external things but does not supply a conclusive answer. It is not until *Creative Evolution*, when Bergson extends his thinking about time to life, evolution and creation as a whole, that he asserts that duration is 'immanent to the whole of the universe' and that the universe 'endures'.⁶⁴ In the later work, *Duration and Simultaneity* (1922), Bergson seems to back-track a little, restating that time is principally 'identical with the continuity of our inner life', but he then takes a giant leap in adding that time and memory also extend to the 'whole physical world' which would seem to include all matter as well as all things and creatures.⁶⁵

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson acknowledges the role of spatialised time in everyday life, but strenuously critiques the idea of an external spatial dimension (extensity) to inner temporal consciousness: 'introducing space into our perception of duration [...] corrupts at its very source our feeling of outer and inner change, of movement, and of freedom'.⁶⁶ If this were to happen, homogeneous time would be 'nothing but the ghost of space haunting the reflective consciousness'.⁶⁷ But in *Duration and Simultaneity*, Bergson suggests that duration extends to all of space (the material / physical world) where the duration of the universe takes on the form of a superior 'impersonal consciousness' connected to every consciousness.⁶⁸ At this stage, Bergson introduces the idea of cosmic time or memory which is 'endlessly prolonged from past to future' in a continual unfolding.⁶⁹ Bergson thus establishes the full extent of what is at stake in his time theory: while individually we cannot and need not be disencumbered of measured time, only the flow of temporal consciousness within each of us and within the cosmos at large meets the need for change, movement and freedom.

In summary, Bergson argues that scientists have immobilised time by approaching and measuring it as so many juxtaposed positions in space conceived along a line; spatialised

⁶³ For a more detailed overview of the development of Bergson's thinking, see *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey (London: Continuum, 2002), especially the Introduction.

⁶⁴ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 11.

⁶⁵ Cited in Pearson and Mullarkey, p. 205.

⁶⁶ *T&FW*, p. 74.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁶⁸ Chevalier, pp. 151-2.

⁶⁹ See Pearson and Mullarkey, p. 210.

time hampers the individual's ability to subjectively experience change, movement and freedom. Duration is not related to quantity; it is heterogeneous, continuous and 'with no analogy to number'.⁷⁰ The real time of duration simply *is*. It is the continuity of memory and consciousness which brings something new to the experience of time. Bergson's theory of time is closely related to his theory of memory. On the one hand, pure memory like duration is internal and unreflective. On the other hand, spatialised time like habit memory is externalised and repeats actions in segmented time. Duration is ultimately 'made up of moments inside one another'.⁷¹ This interpenetration takes us to the limits of what is thinkable. But that is Bergson's point: we cannot 'think' time, we must live it.

According to Bergson, we rarely experience our duration because we live in the everyday world of spatialised and symbolic (represented) time which is a requirement for social life. Once we reflect on consciousness we introduce symbols.⁷² The act of writing is part of this symbolising process: the 'word' with its 'well-defined outlines [...] overwhelms or at least covers over the delicate and fugitive impressions of our individual consciousness'.⁷³ But for artists and writers the use of symbolisation would seem to exclude the possibility of representing true duration. Katherine Mansfield found her answer in the philosophical work of Hans Vaihinger: 'Fiction: is impossible but enables us to reach what is relatively truth.'⁷⁴

Mary Ann Gillies asserts that of all the Modernist writers, Dorothy Richardson comes closest in *Pilgrimage* to representing time as it is lived in her character Miriam. The length of this thirteen-book novel also suggests that it takes considerable page space in which to present the temporality of consciousness. Richardson represents Miriam's duration in two ways according to Gillies: by transferring the past into a vividly realised present; and via the solitary act of contemplation which puts Miriam in touch with her inner world, and therefore with reality.⁷⁵ Miriam's consciousness is rendered by 'a series of meaningful moments' each appearing to be the present one, with Richardson using frequent 'haphazard shifts' in narration and tense to achieve this effect.⁷⁶ Even more important is what Gillies

⁷⁰ *T&FW*, p. 120.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁷² Kitchin, p. 128.

⁷³ *T&FW*, p. 132.

⁷⁴ Notebook 44, qMS-1281; *TKMN*, 2, p. 266; published in *CWKM4*, p. 345, from which this text is taken. Mansfield seems to have been taking notes from Vaihinger's *Die Philosophie des Als Ob* (published in 1911) in German given that the English translation was published in 1924 after her death.

⁷⁵ Gillies, pp. 153-4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

refers to as the use of ‘memory-enhanced special moments’ which structure Miriam’s ‘ever-changing inner world’.⁷⁷ It is therefore memory which plays a vital part in narrating Miriam’s duration and in presenting it to the reader.

But Gillies does not mention Mansfield at all in discussing the function of memory in modernist narrative technique. In her analysis specifically of ‘At the Bay’ Saralyn R. Daly argues that in the story there are ‘many passages which dwell with fondness on the quality of the living’ which might be taken as a Bergsonian comment on the qualitative aspects of duration, but the comment is not developed further.⁷⁸ For Alpers, while the story is outwardly shaped by ‘ancient universals’ such as sun, moon and tide, it is more profoundly structured within by the characters’ reflections, some in dream and others through deeper reflection on ‘the mysteries of birth and love and death’.⁷⁹ This observation focuses on the story’s narrative structure: on the narrated ‘external’ description combined with the rendering in Indirect or Direct Discourse of the character’s inner thoughts. Alpers does not, however, explore the ways in which the development of modernist experimental technique, particularly Free Indirect Discourse, might mirror Bergson’s ideas about duration and the multiple rhythms and tensions of inner consciousness.

It is Eiko Nakano who has gone on to identify the Bergsonian elements of duration in several of Mansfield’s stories.⁸⁰ In her reading of ‘At the Bay’ Nakano suggests that Mansfield is concerned particularly with the different rhythms of duration, regarded in terms of slowness and speed, and that Mansfield describes time as passing more slowly in some sections of the story than in other sections.⁸¹ However, Nakano unexpectedly focuses on the untypical (for Mansfield) delayed opening to the story. She argues that Mansfield describes ‘the time before the story really begins [...] the time before you could see where things begin and end’ and asserts that Mansfield ‘makes the reader wait for the characters to wake up and move’.⁸² The close of the story is also important in Nakano’s analysis. The day’s ending, she claims:

[S]uggests the discrepancy between spatialized duration, describable in words in a ‘story’, and ‘real’ duration by showing that the ending of the story is the opening of

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 162.

⁷⁸ Saralyn R. Daly, *Katherine Mansfield*, rev. edn (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994) p. 86.

⁷⁹ *Life*, p. 342.

⁸⁰ Nakano, ‘One or Many: Bergsonian Readings of Katherine Mansfield’s Modernism’.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁸² Ibid.

something else. In other words, life goes on, unlike a story which begins and ends at a given point.⁸³

While Nakano's reading is suggestive, especially the idea that real time cannot be contained by boundaries imposed by the telling of a story and that duration overflows the narrative, I want to argue that Mansfield attends both to a more fluid space *and* time within the structure of the story itself. I therefore turn now to asking: what sense of time do we encounter in a story like 'At the Bay' if we deploy Bergson's theory of time in reading it?

Temporal Readings

Temperament and the Temporal Plane

There are, as I have indicated, three kinds of time in Bergson's philosophy: spatialised time, duration, and cosmic time. Katherine Mansfield, I maintain, presents these three kinds of time in her story 'At the Bay', the last of which is fashioned by her as 'immemorial' time: the time of the cosmos related to the duration of all life. In what follows, I offer a reading of 'At the Bay' through the lens of Bergsonian time but with Mansfield's augmentations, which bring together spatialised time and duration in a topological movement through space, or 'time-space'. I begin with the individual characters' gendered temperaments as they relate to what I identify as the 'temporal plane'.

Of the male characters in the story, Stanley lives in spatialised, public, clock time, counting and apportioning time and, as a result, paradoxically, he feels he has 'no time'. Jonathan by comparison is 'too late'; he lives in belated time (although from Stanley's point of view, he arrives too early at the bay for Stanley's liking). Both characters' temperaments are related to habit memory, and both are tethered to their habit-memory by spatialised, regulated and masculine 'work time', which Stanley embraces and which Jonathan eschews. The shepherd moves in natural time, associated with the rhythms of the land and of animal life and the cosmos, while the Burnells' baby boy represents the novelty of felt durational time, continuous and unreflective.

Of the female characters, Linda dwells in dream time which, as noted, in *Matter and Memory* Bergson categorises as belonging to the 'unconscious psychological states' of pure memory which is neither durational nor spatialised and to which is attributed a 'radical powerlessness'.⁸⁴ This passivity is identified with the past which also does not act. However,

⁸³ Ibid., p. 194.

⁸⁴ *M&M*, p. 181.

Linda's temperament is temporally and temporarily adjusted, it seems, when she experiences the first feeling of joy towards her baby son in the real time of her duration. Of all the female characters, Mrs Fairfield is comfortable in the time of her surroundings and within herself; in the house and garden; and in full acceptance of the past. She is capable of living comfortably in the world and of 'casting on' memories as they are required for everyday life. Beryl's temperament is one of hesitancy related to anticipation of the future. That her desire is seemingly thwarted signals the ebb and flow of her romantic imagination. Her nocturnal wakefulness inclines her towards both a possible freedom – in Bergson's terms, towards 'the radical unforeseeable' future⁸⁵ – as well as the curtailment of that freedom by the shackles of domesticity. Beryl's sense of temporality matches her temperament: it is one of anticipatory retrospective; she tends to look forward to a past that has already happened.

Mrs Stubbs, a minor character, is depicted as existing in public, spatialised time, that of running a shop and of entertaining. In recounting the cause of death of her late husband, a recollection prompted by an apparently 'life size' photographic portrait of him, memory is both figured and enlarged through the spatial quality of dimension:

'Size,' said Mrs Stubbs. 'Give me size.'

[...]

Mrs Stubbs creaked and seemed to expand herself at the memory. (p. 360)

Photographs and pictures occur in several of Mansfield's stories and function as a means of codifying memory. According to Mark Currie, photographs 'structure the present as the object of a future memory' yet they also make a claim on the past when viewed in a later present.⁸⁶ Couched in Bergsonian terms, photographs represent an interpenetration of time present, time future and time past. But as Jacques Chevalier has commented in relation to Bergson, photographs are necessarily *incomplete* as a form of knowledge because the object(s) within a photograph cannot be fully apprehended 'absolutely', intuitively.⁸⁷ Because they are constituted out of change and movement, their temporality cannot be fully grasped; they are never truly 'still'. If the photograph both eludes the presence of the subject of the photograph as well as that of the photographer, the kind of memory it gives rise to is indeterminate, comprising a shifting temporality as well as a 'non-fixity' of space, for space is neither 'here' nor (any longer) 'there'. This loosening of the conventional meanings of

⁸⁵ Bergson, 'Introduction 1', *The Creative Mind*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ Currie, p. 41.

⁸⁷ Chevalier, p. 94.

'time' and 'space' together with this indeterminacy are features of what I am calling time-space in relation to the geometry of memory.

The 'Curve' of Time

Time is represented as mobile and indivisible in many of the episodes of 'At the Bay'. There is the sense of a day beginning and ending, but in relation to indeterminate temporality such as: 'a few moments later'; 'by this time'; 'as the morning lengthened'; 'it's getting late'. The unnumbered episodes in the story do not relate to the hours on the clock, although clock time is clearly marked at different points in the story. In the first episode, it is 'very early morning' and yet in the second episode it is only 'A few moments later'. Later than what, the reader is not told; it could be the time elapsed since 'early morning' or from the time of the colony sleeping, or waking, or the time of the shepherd moving across the landscape.

That the landscape is shrouded in white mist also imparts a sense of temporal indeterminacy *in space* – a time-space – rather than sequential time. In episode three, time on the clock dominates, although clock time passes more quickly than the implied narrated time of the story: 'Twenty-five minutes' very quickly dwindle to 'Twelve and a half minutes'. Mansfield's representation of time here can be regarded topologically: clock time is bent out of shape into story time, as the household pursues its multiple, time-bound rituals 'every single morning'.

When the story begins the reader does not know what time it is: 'Very early morning. The sun was not yet risen.' (p. 342) The negative of 'not yet risen' is just one of several negations of perception or consciousness in which the bay is 'hidden', the hills 'smothered', the sandy road 'gone' and time is hazy. Space and dimension are also negated for there is 'nothing to mark which was beach and where was the sea' (p. 342). By contrast, time's indeterminate flow in a perpetual present is signalled throughout this opening scene, in phrases such as 'For a time', 'And now' and 'Now the leaping, glittering sea'. As the mist clears, spatial qualities of proximity and distance and perspective are brought into the scene but are topologically altered in phrases such as: 'There ahead was *stretched* the sandy road' (p. 343; emphasis added). Distance is collapsed and turned back on itself: 'The far-away sky [...] was reflected in the puddles' (p. 343). The dual Bergsonian terms of the spatial and the temporal come together in the phrase 'The sun was rising' (p. 343) which expresses the movement of time: the sun had not yet risen; now it is rising in and across the sky. The sun bends through space, in a mobile 'time-space'.

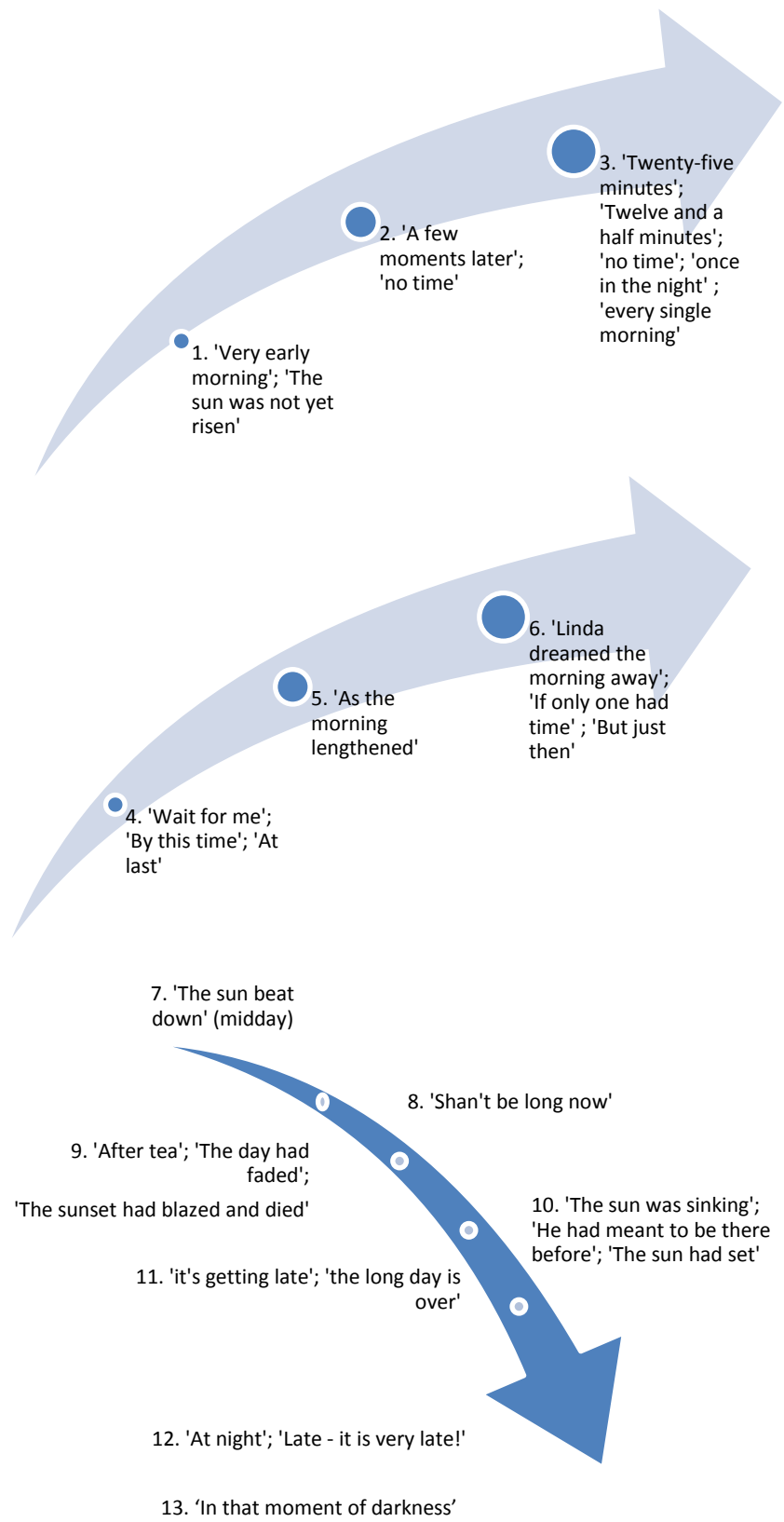


Figure 5. The 'Curve' of Time

In the first episode, there are no references to a specific historical time in which the story is set – only the time of year which is that of the ‘summer colony’ – just as there are few references to any place beyond the immediate bay and the town except in memory (when China and Tasmania, vast distances away, are recollected in present time). The crescent-shaped curve of the bay area is established as well as movement around the bay in the form of the shepherd who appears in the landscape. The white mist may even provide a metafictional suggestion of the blank page and of the story not yet unfolded on it; even a kind of blankness or partial blindness and obscurity in the narrator. The non-characterised, and perhaps noncommittal, narrator’s aloofness established by this opening description compares with Conrad’s in *Nostramo* where the narrative is also distanced and the narrator obscured or ‘disowned’ in parenthetical phrases such as ‘– it is said –’; ‘The sun – as the sailors say – is eating it up’; and ‘– as the saying is –’.⁸⁸ This opening section also contrasts with Woolf’s use of ten very definite interspersed sections in *The Waves* which track the movement of the sun very deliberately from dawn to dusk. In ‘At the Bay’ the liminality of the seashore further enhances the image of topological shape-shifting and a fused time-space.

The opening words of the second episode are ‘A few moments later’ (p. 344), implying a very short temporal span, in which the ‘First man’, with its gesture towards an idyllic Eden, is apparently Stanley. But this is a temporal misapprehension, for Jonathan Trout is *already* at the bay. Jonathan’s first words, “‘Hail, brother! All hail, Thou Mighty One!’” (p. 344), mock Stanley. The phrase possibly references Cardinal John Henry Newman’s epic poem of 1865, ‘The Dream of Gerontius’, which recounts the fall of Gerontius into death and purgatory, although Stanley’s plunge into the water is a delight. Jonathan’s ‘velvety deep bass voice’ may similarly resonate with a musical intertext, that of Elgar’s oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* of 1899-1900. The symphonic flow and the gradual unfolding of the music of the *Dream* seem to recall Bergson’s metaphor for time as a melody, as well as suggesting a musical metaphor for the undertow and movement of the flowing sea.

In the third episode Stanley’s preoccupation with quantifying time (‘he pulled out his watch’, p. 346) is a clear example of Bergson’s time on the clock and when Stanley counts backwards, precisely noting that he has twenty-five and later twelve-and-a-half minutes until his coach leaves, consciousness attached to the interests of impending action is taken to extremes. Stanley’s ‘stiff collar’ is perhaps a synecdoche for his stiffness as well as

⁸⁸ Joseph Conrad [1904], *Nostramo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 17; p. 19; p. 20.

his 'mechanical' clock-watching. Once Stanley has departed, the women of the household sympathetically come together in their empathic everydayness: 'Their very voices were changed as they called to one another; they sounded warm and loving and as if they shared a secret' (p. 348). As the women relax, Stanley's paternalistic individualism recedes from the space of the narrative.

Episode four opens with the repetition of Lottie's call, "'Wait for me, Isa-bel! Kezia, wait for me!'" (p. 348). The repeated call suggests Lottie's habitual straggling as she is 'left behind again' (p. 348). Here the child who is not yet able to keep up with the pace of her sisters in exploring outdoor spaces, and who only and 'at last' manages to climb over the stile with Kezia's help, contrasts with Stanley's adult sense of keeping to time on the clock. The words 'As the morning *lengthened*' (p. 350; emphasis added) open episode five and indicate that when the members of the different families are brought together in the time of play and relaxation at the beach, time seems to stretch out.

In episode six, the time of memory and the time of the present are brought together. Initially, time and memory are deflected into dream and inertia: 'Linda Burnell dreamed the morning away' (p. 353). Linda's tendency towards dream and inattention to the present is indicated by a memory-image from the past: '... Now she sat on the veranda of their Tasmanian home' (p. 354). This shifty temporal deixis alerts the reader to the Free Indirect Discourse move into the character's consciousness and her temporality. Linda recalls her father's promise that they would escape the world together; her recollections reflect her past desire to journey into the future, but these memories are ineffectual in Bergsonian terms because they do not lead to action in the present. This is a form of what might be called 'retrospective anticipation'. If Linda relapses into the past, she simultaneously grieves for the lack of time in the present: 'If only one had time to look at these flowers long enough, time to get over the sense of novelty and strangeness, time to know them!' (p. 354).⁸⁹ Linda is sensitive to the mutability of all things, such as exquisite flowers, but her time is squandered on Stanley: 'Her whole time was spent in rescuing him, and restoring him, and calming him down, and listening to his story. And what was left of her time was spent in the dread of having children' (p. 355).⁹⁰ It is Linda who listens to Stanley's narratives ('his-story') of his

⁸⁹ This scene could be an intertext with D. H. Lawrence's poem 'Last Hours' which was published in his collection of war poems, *Bay* (and whose title is itself suggestively intertextual with Mansfield's 'At the Bay') in 1919: 'But not even the scent of insouciant flowers / Makes pause the hours.' D. H. Lawrence, *Bay: A Book of Poems* (London: Beaumont Press, 1919), p. 15.

⁹⁰ Julia Kristeva seems almost Mansfieldian in her discussion of women's time in her pioneering and influential article, 'Women's Time'. See Julia Kristeva [1979 / 1981], 'Woman's Time', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 187-213. Kristeva's two

daily life, while Linda's dream time lacks a narrative, or a space for 'retelling'. When Linda finally has time to attend consciously to her son, the baby has forgotten his need of her. Linda's awareness may function in the narrative to indicate her entry into fully maternal time as well as to reinforce her essentialising state of motherhood while the male baby enjoys his own, unfettered temporal rhythms.

The seventh episode serves as a narrative interlude which invokes an empty time-space; empty, at least, of human kind: 'The tide was out; the beach was deserted' and 'Nothing seemed to move but the small sand-hoppers' (p. 356). The rhythms of the earth and sea occur unseen except as recounted by the apparently aloof narrator. In the summer colony the blinds are closed in the bungalows against the heat of the midday sun. This episode also contains Kezia and her grandmother's siesta, in which the grandmother recalls the death of Kezia's Australian uncle William, who died of sunstroke. There is no sorrow in the memory, however:

Did it make her sad? To look back, back. To stare down the years, as Kezia had seen her doing. To look after *them* as a woman does, long after *they* were out of sight. Did it make her sad? No, life was like that. (p. 357)

If the word '*them*' refers to the years, then the grandmother is the keeper of family time yet also of measured time, symbolised by the way in which she counts the stitches in her knitting ('Mrs Fairfield began counting the stitches in threes', p. 357). She is the guardian of memories of the dead, yet death is both more natural and somehow more forgettable than the immediacy of the present activity of knitting ("It just happened," she said in an absorbed voice' p. 357). In this scene Kezia is exposed to human mortality and to the limits placed on temporality for every living being, which is a potential future traumatic memory (like the episode with the duck in *Prelude*) for Kezia. But at this point in the narrative, I think the power of love in the present triumphs over death in the past as the child and the grandmother 'forget' time in the time-space of the *here* and *now*.

In episode eight, the sun is 'still' on the garden, indicating that the sun has continuity (even when it is not observed). The back door serves (spatially) as the backdrop for the servant Alice's (temporal) afternoon off, and she goes out to tea at the house of Mrs Stubbs.

types of temporality are 'cyclical' and 'monumental' (p. 192). The first relates to 'repetition' (the cycles and biological rhythms which combine with cosmic time to produce *jouissance*) and the second to 'eternity' (which is 'infinite like imaginary space') (p. 191). But in what seems an essentialising explanation, women's time is bound up with 'maternal time' (or motherhood) set against the linear time of politics and history. There is a similarity here also with Ricoeur's distinction between 'lived' and 'cosmic' time, with the latter relating to infinite or eternal time. I draw on Ricoeur's ideas in more detail in Chapter Three.

The phrase “‘Shan’t be long now’” is spoken by Alice to the ‘distant gum-tree’ (p. 359), and distance and proximity are invoked here as a signal that Alice is able, occasionally, to remove herself from the confines of domestic space and time. While the narrative events of episode eight focus on the taking of tea, episode nine takes place after tea, signalled by a shift in the sun’s movement and the age-old struggle between light and dark: ‘While they were playing, the day had faded; the gorgeous sunset had blazed and died. And now the quick dark came racing over the sea, over the sand-hills, up the paddock’ (p. 363). In depicting the movement of the dark over the land Mansfield also, I think, represents time-space: temporal mobility is evoked in the use of different tenses, the fading of the day, the sunset that has come and gone, and the movement of the dark across the sea, the sand and the paddock. The blinds are now pulled down against the dark rather than the heat of the sun. Significantly, several of the characters have changed locations during the time before and after dark: Jonathan peers through the window of the washhouse having been in the sea earlier in the day. Beryl has been at the beach and sitting at the window and finally moves out into the moonlit garden, the moonlight which ‘stared and glittered’ (p. 370) having penetrated the dark. Movement and stillness are framed by windows, while the artificial light of lamps illuminates the passing of time in unidentified, approximate space: ‘And somewhere, far away, grandma was lighting a lamp’ (p. 363).

The sun is described as being on its apparent downwards curving path in episode ten, ‘The sun was sinking’ (p. 364), and Jonathan is once more untimely, as he was from Stanley’s point of view at the beach: ‘He had meant to be there before’ (p. 364). Such temporal markers continue to be indefinite in terms of time on the clock. In narrative time, this episode is an analepsis. The sense of belatedness matches the belatedness of the scene to the chronological time of the story. Jonathan, who has come upon Linda ‘with her little air of remoteness’ in the garden, has delayed going to fetch his children home after tea. Jonathan’s refrain is “‘The shortness of life’” (p. 366) and he likens himself to a moth or butterfly whose time on earth is especially, movingly, brief. The natural time of the cosmos represents this sombre mood: ‘The sun had set’ (p. 366) and, in keeping with his time-anxious character, Jonathan seems to feel that the sun has set on him.

In episode eleven as lights shine through the windows from inside the bungalow, time is channelled through Florrie, the cat, to whom consciousness is attributed. In Florrie’s time-space, time has seemingly come about sitting on the step: ‘as though she had been waiting for this moment all day’ (p. 367). Florrie is placed in the tensed time of the present: “‘Thank goodness, it’s getting late,’” said Florrie. “‘Thank goodness, the long day is over’” (p.

367). She is not reflecting on time past; even though the day has gone, its being 'over' is now. That the narrator gives tensed speech to a cat perhaps captures the sense of exhaustion among the human inhabitants, with animal time taking over from human time. Late in the day, Stanley returns from work seeking Linda's forgiveness for consciously not having said goodbye to her that morning. But Stanley's self-important time at work is undermined as Linda (perhaps like the reader) has, without embarrassment, forgotten Stanley and feels no need to forgive him.

By the penultimate episode it is night-time and one of thrilling and queer sensations. Beryl, in a textual echo of *Prelude*, is again fantasising a romance and anticipating her future. Beryl's time is at variance with space, a rare example in the story where 'time-space' does not occur. The external world is a conspirator and in the moonlight the vegetation is anthropomorphised and given emotions – sad, imploring, full of sorrow – a projection of Beryl's represented affective state. Depicted in her loneliness, Beryl imagines being hailed (also heralding perhaps the opening of Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, published nine months after 'At the Bay' in October 1922):

[I]t's as though, in the silence, somebody called your name, and you heard your name for the first time. 'Beryl!'

'Yes, I'm here. I'm Beryl. Who wants me?'

'Beryl!'

'Let me come.' (p. 369)

Beryl particularly wants to be remembered in future time. In a proleptic vision (or anticipatory retrospective), she imagines a future conversation about the past:

It wasn't possible to think that Beryl Fairfield never married, that lovely fascinating girl.

'Do you remember Beryl Fairfield?'

'Remember her! As if I could forget her! It was one summer at the Bay that I saw her. She was standing on the beach in a blue' – no, pink – 'muslin frock, holding on a big cream' – no, black – 'straw hat. But it's years ago now.'

'She's as lovely as ever, more so if anything.' (p. 369)

This passage is significant because Beryl holds both sides of a conversation which plays with tenses, even to the extent of interrupting herself in the memory she prefigures: what would she have been wearing all those years ago in order to have made an impression on her two imagined interlocutors, one of whom is a longed-for lover? Beryl doesn't want the absence

of love to define her past. Beryl's desire (signalled perhaps by the sensually suggestive 'wide open flowers' which are as 'bright as by day' in the moonlight and which therefore seem to adjust to time's passage) for Harry Kember is one of both terror and excitement. The external world itself witnesses the encounter: the moonlight 'stared'; the garden is 'stern'. This desire comes to an abrupt halt, however, and is therefore figured as being *untimely*, as Beryl realises that she has the wrong man; it is too *soon* to be at a man's beck and call: 'Nobody answered him' (p. 371).

The coda is set in darkness, which I would suggest is not a limit-point for natural or cosmic time, but an aspect of its unceasing, diurnal flow. The inhabitants of the bay are asleep. Syntactically, agency is given to a cloud which moves away from the night sky only to awaken from a 'dark dream' during the night. By contrast, human minds, in the unconsciousness of sleep, have relaxed their grip on measured time and have ceased to experience their duration or movement in space: 'All was still' (p. 371).

Topological Readings

According to Bergson, the time of lived duration is related to movement: time and consciousness figured as flux. In this section I argue that movement in and through space in 'At the Bay' configured topologically is related to temporality as well as to consciousness and memory. This 'geometrical' approach is, I suggest, one of Mansfield's major contributions to the modern short story. Given the short story's limitations, compared to the novel, for disrupting narrative chronology on a long timescale, Mansfield instead uses movement and lack of movement through space as a means of figuring temporal differences.

In this section, I assert that the spatial topologies of the 'At the Bay' can be mapped onto memory using the features of distance and proximity in relation to the past and the present. In approaching distance and proximity in temporal and spatial terms, it is the character Linda who is most distant from the present and often immobilised in that present. Linda is rarely seen 'in action'. For instance, the reader discovers her on the garden lawn rather than following her movements there. Beryl is also depicted as being uncomfortable with her proximity to the present and to the spaces around her and shown as being preoccupied with moving, psychologically, towards the future. While Stanley moves too close to Linda in spatial terms, in terms of distance he travels furthest, leaving the colony for the town. His movements are physical and spatial as he is rarely given a sense of interiority or of consciousness via Free Indirect Speech. The shepherd moves through the familiar landscape of the bay yet the mind of this mobile figure is opaque to the reader. The Burnells'

youngest daughter, Lottie, seemingly cannot yet avail herself fully of her durational consciousness; at the same time, as noted above, she struggles with traversing space and with keeping up with her older siblings:

There was poor little Lottie, left behind again, because she found it so fearfully hard to get over the stile by herself [...] And when she did finally put one leg over with a sort of stamp of despair – then the feeling was awful. She was half in the paddock still and half in the tussock grass. She clutched the post desperately and lifted up her voice. ‘Wait for me!’ (p. 348)

Lottie’s predicament here is one of being ‘de-fence-less’ in topological or deformed space; the stile, like Lottie, straddles two spaces, paddock and tussock grass; and stiles are impediments to her small form. In this episode time is also distorted; Lottie is ‘left behind’.

However, the three girls together do traverse space as they are described climbing a hill. As they halt at the top to survey where to place themselves on the beach when they reach it and as they judge the proximity of the people who have already staked their claim there, the narrative bends the perspectival view of the girls, topologically distancing them from the reader in the same way that the girls are distanced from the location they are viewing: ‘Seen from behind, standing against the skyline, gesticulating largely with their spades, they looked like minute puzzled explorers’ (p. 349). The reader is located *behind* the girls looking at them looking, topologically compacted to ‘minute’ size. This ‘back view’ is not the same view as that of the narrator, however; on this occasion only the narrator seems to have the privileged proximity to the scene to facilitate a description of the children looking ‘puzzled’. In the paragraph that follows, the narrator describes the Samuel Josephs at the beach with the lady-help and the previously stretched perspective reverts to normal.

Various spaces are given dimensions in which relationships of proximity and distance are played out. In the holiday home, interior space seems regularly rectangular: it is a house containing boxes which are used for furniture and of window frames and windows where the women and children are contained. Mrs Stubbs’s space is confusedly divided between her living and working space while the fully commercial spaces of the town and the city are at some unspecified distance from the seaside bay where Stanley Burnell carries out business. The garden is a topological space in which nature and life, as well as human movement and human stasis, are intertwined.

Topological Movement and Memory

Key:

(= bend

└ = corner

→ = forward movement or progression

||̄ = open threshold

||̅ = blocked threshold

∩ = gateway

□ = open space

■ = building or room

/ object or thing

= = ledge

< = opening to freedom

▮ = blocked freedom

_ = horizontal / flat

← = memory

O = contemplation of life

There are very distinct types of topological movement in and through space in 'At the Bay' which are related also to time, temperament and memory. Movement through space may at first appear to be an opening to duration and to freedom, yet movement is often impeded or blocked, especially for female characters. For male characters, an intervening object or thing may halt their progression through space but is subsequently negotiated. In

what follows each character is given a ‘geometrical equation’ to represent a particular movement in and through the story in relation to memory according to the key noted above.⁹¹

The shepherd’s trajectory through the story is via the spaces in the landscape between the two bays. His progress is from ‘Crescent Bay’ to ‘Daylight Cove’, ‘taking his time’ (p. 343); a movement forwards in time-space. His flock moves around a corner and ‘between’ broken rock, a natural threshold, the shepherd finally emerging through a ‘rocky gateway’ (p. 343). He passes the gum tree, the shop, the fisherman’s hut, the whare and the rocky pass and moves past a ledge of rock, and round the bend towards the cove. His perspective is wide and broad like a bay; he looks ahead ‘in the direction of the sea’ (p. 343) and the summer colony. The narrator recounts his journey as one of familiarity based on the repetitions of habit memory as well as movement through familiar space.

The Shepherd, cove-to-cove:

$$(\perp \rightarrow \parallel \cap \rightarrow / \rightarrow \square \rightarrow \square \rightarrow \square \parallel = \perp)$$

Stanley’s movements in the narrative are recounted in terms of constant physical and spatial movement forwards, eschewing memory and promoting impending action in the continuous present. He is confronted by unexpected objects and things in space which he overcomes. In the second episode, however, Stanley comes closest to being temporarily in the time of his duration, as he runs, albeit somewhat clumsily, from the summer bungalow to the sea. This scene brings hints of the durational flow of his consciousness together with spatial impediments as Stanley negotiates his way through a paddock, over a stile, across the tussock grass, a hollow, a sandy hillock, and stones and pebbles, until he plunges, triumphantly – he ‘waded out exulting’ (p. 344) – into the sea. A vast expanse seems to open up to him, life *is* seemingly precious (‘dear life’) and he is seemingly free; and yet his inner sense of duration is soon stymied and his calculating, social mind takes over when he discovers that his brother-in-law has preceded him in being first to swim in the sea that morning.

⁹¹ Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr make a different distinction between the women in the story who, they argue, live in ‘real time’ and ‘mechanical memory’ which is represented by Mrs Stubbs’s photographs of her dead husband (see Hanson and Gurr, p. 102, p. 103). They also comment that Linda and her mother exhibit ‘organic memory’, finding they can ‘plunge easily back into the past, to recreate the very feel and texture of experience’ (p. 103). But they can ‘judge’ the past and, by doing so, overcome it. This reading seems to draw closely on Bergson’s ideas although they are not alluded to as being Bergsonian. My reading is very different in distinguishing between Linda’s inability to overcome her attachment to the past of reverie and dream, and Mrs Fairfield’s acceptance of the past’s role in her present life.

Stanley's impeded progress to the beach:

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Linda is generally reclining: lying down in the bedroom or in Beryl's hammock; or sitting: in the steamer chair, or on the front grass, of the holiday home. In her memory she recalls sitting on the veranda of her Tasmanian home. 'Now she sat' (p. 354) sums up Linda's relative lack of movement in the story. However, while spatially moribund, she roams further than any other character in her dream reveries. Yet with each memory, the possibility of real action towards conscious freedom seems to recede and Linda's hopes are spatially, temporally and psychologically bounded, and confounded, by her reality as a wife and mother.

Linda, immobile and reminiscing:

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Jonathan is similarly horizontal: floating in the sea, or lying down beside Linda on the front grass. He is similarly a dreamer who wishes for a life elsewhere, and towards which he is unable to move, psychologically and emotionally. Just for a while, bathing in the sea, Jonathan is able to glimpse his freedom: 'not to fight against the ebb and flow of life, but to give way to it – that was what was needed. It was this tension that was all wrong. To live – to live!' (p. 345). Bergson relates a relaxing of tension to the lessening of dream memory; Jonathan's attachment to the plane of dream, symbolised by his horizontality, prevents him from gaining his freedom and moving towards a fulfilling future.

Jonathan, immobilised:

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Beryl is beset by numerous obstacles to her free movement in space; such impediments perhaps symbolise her bodily inhibitions in the present. There are various negative thresholds or liminal spaces through which Beryl either does not pass or through which she passes reluctantly. The thresholds represent her fear of freedom and of her sexuality. During the course of the narrative, she is stationed at the garden gate, at a barrier; she stands in front of Mrs Kember, which feels awkward to her, while she gets undressed at the beach; she sits at the window of the office and, later, on her bedroom window seat. It is this last threshold through which she eventually ventures in trepidation but only to stop at another gate: she 'stepped over her low window, crossed the veranda, ran down the grass to

the gate' for a rendezvous with the ominous Harry Kember (p. 370). Her fear overcomes her desire and she retreats to the haven of the house. The moon's shadows are 'like bars of iron' (p. 370), a metaphor for Beryl's powerlessness to act and her present self-imprisonment, both psychologically and in the home.

Beryl, her future blocked:

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By comparison, Alice, the maid, confined to domestic spaces such as the kitchen (where she is action-centred, washing up or wielding a teapot) ventures freely into outside space for a social encounter. She moves across the threshold of the back door (a mark also of her class standing), along the path, through the garden gate, along the road and into the domestic space of Mrs Stubbs's parlour where she is given a lesson in freedom: "freedom's best!" (p. 361), declares Mrs Stubbs, twice; this emphatic advice surely signals to young Alice that any wished-for freedom should be from 'burly' husbands. Alice moves between the confines of rooms, spatially, and lives in the present, temporally, in her own time-space in the story.

Alice, venturing out:

■ || → || → ■

Mrs Fairfield represents living harmoniously in duration and in public time, stable in her 'deep content' (p. 347) with the time of the present, past and future and in the multiple spaces she inhabits. Her long-living memory is balanced with her present-centred activity, whether in the domestic space of the living room, in the public space of the beach or in her shared private space with Kezia. Once in the story there may be textual evidence of a muted longing when Mrs Fairfield halts at a threshold: she 'paused [...], to gaze out of the open door into the garden' (p. 346). Here the hesitation can be regarded as a positive one in terms of Bergson's schema, for Mrs Fairfield simultaneously looks out from within through an open door to the enclosed space of the garden, but into a space which she neither craves nor fears. Her siesta indoors with Kezia is when past and present time and domestic space come together in a serenely mature acceptance of her place in the world.

Mrs Fairfield, balanced in time and space:

■ □ ■ || ← O

Kezia and the other Burnell children, by comparison, roam freely in open space and in present time, and are little preoccupied with memory. Despite Lottie's impeded progress down to the bay, the children bound through the paddock and the tussock grass, confront and eventually overcome the stile and traverse the hill. Their lives and minds are unbounded. Only indoors, in the living room, are they subject to adult social rules or, while in the washhouse, bound by the shared rules of play.

Kezia, towards the future:

■ → → → → □ ■

Elizabeth Bowen comments on how expertly Mansfield could present locations as well as people in action:

Scenically, how keen is her eye for the telling detail! The street, quayside, café, shop interior, teatime terrace, or public garden stand concretely forward into life. [...] Her liking for activity, for the crowd at play, for people going about their work, her close interest in process and occupation, give an extra vitality to stories.⁹²

Bowen here touches upon an element of Mansfieldian time-space: the spaces in and through which the characters move signal varying tendencies towards inner freedom as well as towards the freedom to act within the 'spaces' of their lives. Bowen also relates Mansfield's scene-making to the creation of emotions (themselves 'movements' in affective states): 'She engraves a scene all the more deeply when it is [...] contributory to a mood or crisis.'⁹³ Movement through space and in time in 'At the Bay' is accompanied by various affects, from trepidation to contentedness and from frustration to the celebration of life.

The Mobile Narrator

Although I have discussed the significance of the narrator in the story, I would like here to extend this discussion to frame it in topological terms. Mansfield creates a narrator in 'At the Bay' who takes on various forms and for this reason I call a 'mobile' narrator. That the narrator seems to be overtly mobile in the story relates to Mansfield's technique of using Free Indirect Discourse: of moving into the minds of her characters. Kathryn Walls has suggested that the narrator in the story is cast as Mansfield's '(necessarily fictional) post-mortem self, her ghost.'⁹⁴ According to Walls the narrator exhibits a certain 'ghostliness' in

⁹² Bowen, p. 19.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Kathryn Walls, "'At the Bay': A Ghost's Story", in *Still Shines When You Think of It: A Festschrift for Vincent O'Sullivan*, ed. by Bill Manhire and Peter Whiteford (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2007), pp. 345-63 (p. 345). Further references to this article are given in brackets in the text.

the opening episode while also showing signs of ‘real, human presence’ in her idiosyncratic responses to the scene (p. 347). Walls goes as far as to say that Mansfield’s narrator becomes the main character of the story while Mansfield as author haunts her own autobiographical childhood self in the story through the medium of hallucination and dream (p. 354). Walls implies that Mansfield’s own past encroaches on the narrative because the narrator seems to have access to more ‘history’ and knowledge than might be thought possible. The narrator knows the bay in more detail than any other character, for example, which suggests to Walls that the narrator is ‘not unambiguously omniscient’ (p. 348). Peter Mathews, while agreeing that the narrator’s voice is ‘ghostly’ and ‘anonymous’, by contrast suggests that the narrator’s point of view is a ‘subversion’ of omniscience.⁹⁵

While Walls focuses on Mansfield’s authorial ‘intervention’ – the author saturating the text by the superimposition of herself in the form of a narrator-as-character – I propose a different way of framing omniscience which draws on Bergson’s idea of ‘supra-consciousness’. Supra-consciousness is for Bergson the ‘origin of life’; a consciousness which is a ‘*need of creation*’ which he outlines in *Creative Evolution*.⁹⁶ Applied to narrative, the supra-conscious narrator in my view is therefore one who occupies the characters’ minds from the perspective of a cosmic mind. The concept of supra-consciousness thereby extends the notion of conventional omniscience to a narrator who does not just ‘see’ but becomes the characters and who occupies their mind-time and their movements through external space in a time-space which permeates the text.

The principal example of this ‘supra-insight’ is from the opening scene of the story when the narrator seems to extend [her] knowledge to all things, times and places:

Ah-Aah! sounded the sleepy sea. And from the bush there came the sound of little streams flowing, quickly, lightly, slipping between the smooth stones, gushing into ferny basins and out again; and there was the splashing of big drops on large leaves, and something else – what was it? – a faint stirring and shaking, the snapping of a twig and then such silence that it seemed some one was listening. (p. 343)

The narrator is here re-constituting the external world for the reader in a way which exceeds chronicity and knowledge while simultaneously placing herself within the narrative: ‘what was it?’, the narrator asks on behalf of the reader and the characters. One unusual effect of this textual permeation is that the narrator may seem to *over-remember* in a way which overwhelms the time of the narrating. Kathryn Walls suggests that in addition to the narrator,

⁹⁵ Mathews, p. 49.

⁹⁶ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 275. That the supra-consciousness has the ‘unceasing life, action, freedom’ associated with God (p. 262) also restores a more traditional meaning to narrative omniscience.

the characters and the reader, there is ‘someone’ *else* over-hearing the story. She surmises that it is Mansfield’s dead brother, another ghost at the bay (immortalised as the baby boy). While the ‘You’ of the opening sequence of the story may retain some resonance of address to Mansfield’s earlier self, or even to a dead brother, my reading maintains that the ‘you’ functions in heterogeneous terms: as ‘any and everyone’. The narrator who in her supra-consciousness is everywhere invites everyone to listen to the story, while including herself among that community of addressees.

As Mathews perceptively notes, in the opening section of the story, the narrator brings temporal markers into play with a variety of ‘spatial transitions’.⁹⁷ But the narrator further ushers time and memory into the story via the sheep. The cries of the sheep enter ‘the dreams of little children’ and the children in turn absorb the memory of their cries as they ‘cuddle the darling little woolly lambs of sleep’ (p. 344). Then the cries are given back to the sheep as they move from the colony of sleeping people at Crescent Bay to Daylight Cove. In this inter-animation of time, consciousness and memory, the potential for duration is given to both human-kind and animal-kind brought within the interpenetrating consciousness of an overall cosmic mind.

Looking Back at ‘At the Bay’

‘At the Bay’ was positively received both when it was first published in the *London Mercury* in January 1922 and when it was included shortly after in Mansfield’s third short story collection, *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922). But her cousin Elizabeth unsettled her with a comment about the story as Mansfield recorded in a diary entry later that month:

In the afternoon Elizabeth came. [...] She spoke of my ‘pretty little story’ in *The Mercury*. All the while she was here I was conscious of a falsity. [...] No, she is not my friend. There is no feeling to be compared with the joy of having written and finished a story.⁹⁸

Mansfield was irked enough to write to Elizabeth around the same day, 11 January 1922:

Ah, Elizabeth, what can I do to know that my little figures projected on the bright screen of Time make a ‘pretty little story’ in the *Mercury*. Good God! How I worked at them and tried to express and squeezed and modelled ... and the result was a ‘pretty little story’!⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Mathews, p. 50.

⁹⁸ Notebook 20, qMS-1282; *TKMN*, 2, pp. 315-16; published in *CWKM4*, p. 403, from which this text is taken.

⁹⁹ *CLKM*, 5, 1922-1923, p. 11.

Elizabeth's comments diminish Mansfield's handling of a significant human theme: the illumination of the lives of her characters against the backdrop of time and memory. Later, in a diary entry for 16 October 1922, Mansfield recalled:

It took me nearly a month to 'recover' from *At the Bay*. I made at least three false starts. But I could not get away from the sound of the sea and Beryl fanning her hair at the window. These things would not die down.¹⁰⁰

The memory is not only of writing the story; it is also a powerfully lingering impression of one of the characters. Reflecting much later on the New Zealand stories as a whole, Elizabeth Bowen commented that Mansfield's characters seemed so real that they must come from a larger, longer memory that existed 'before stories began'.¹⁰¹ Not only have the stories come from a deep memory, suggests Bowen, which also implies a Bergsonian supra-consciousness, but they seem to be everlasting: 'The stories are more than moments, instants, gleams: she has given them touches of eternity.'¹⁰² This idea of lingering on has something in it of Bergson's concept of duration and the continual unfolding of an irreversible temporality, although Bergson stops short of implying that duration might be eternal.

Contemporaneous critical reception of Mansfield's stories also seems steeped in Bergsonian language. What is notable about the review of Mansfield's work by Martin Armstrong in the *Spectator Literary Supplement* a month after Mansfield's death is the strongly suggested Bergsonian terms in which his appraisal is couched: 'She is like a delicate spring in tension, quivering at the smallest stimulus: she is waiting, it seems, for the moment of release, waiting for something to happen.'¹⁰³ This idea of waiting provides another way of reading 'At the Bay' with Bergson. According to Joseph Solomon, a contemporaneous critic, duration 'is most plainly felt when our purpose is not to do or observe anything, but simply to wait for something, and when – just because we are awake and doing nothing – we attend to our waiting'.¹⁰⁴ Waiting, therefore, does not imply stasis: waiting occurs while time passes and there is a 'motion' of attention given to waiting. There are numerous examples of attending to 'waiting' in 'At the Bay': Linda waiting to feel something like love for her children, or the two older Burnell girls waiting for Lottie to climb the stile, or Florrie the cat waiting for darkness to fall, or Beryl waiting for romantic love. It seems counter-intuitive, perhaps, but for Bergson and for Mansfield, temperaments which include a willingness to

¹⁰⁰ Notebook 31, qMS-1278; *TKMN*, 2, p. 290; published in *CWKM4*, p. 443, from which the text is taken.

¹⁰¹ Bowen, p. 25.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁰³ Armstrong, p. 211.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Solomon, *Bergson* (London: Constable, 1911), p. 17.

wait (contrasted with, say, Stanley's impatience) are those which are more likely to experience real duration.

Armstrong cites *Prelude* and 'At the Bay' as examples of stories in which 'the writer's sensibility acts upon the whole as a flux and melts it into a single experience'.¹⁰⁵ His use of the word 'melting' recalls Bergson's metaphor for duration as the notes from a melody melting one into the other. Similarly, Raymond Mortimer, in his 1923 review in the *New Statesman* of Mansfield's fourth short story collection, published posthumously as *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories*, also captures the Bergsonian sensibility of Mansfield's work: 'Few writers have better described the unorganised flow of thoughts and feelings that continually move through the different layers of human consciousness.'¹⁰⁶ Mortimer's comment touches on Mansfield's successful symbolisation of duration, the achievement of depicting life in its temporal flow.

Conclusion

These critical assessments show Mansfield working, like other artists, critics and cultural commentators, and like Bergson, within the same manifold. As Randall Stevenson suggests, they were caught up in the modernists' preoccupation of 'looking within'.¹⁰⁷ They did so, I suggest, using a particular philosophical lexicon. But what Mansfield and Bergson *additionally* seem to do is to suggest that as well as looking 'within' the mind to experience psychological time in its flow, looking 'without' also required a temporal aspect, and one associated with universal or cosmic time. Bergson and Mansfield I believe were not merely contributing to Modernism's interest in what Virginia Woolf describes in *Orlando* as that 'extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind'.¹⁰⁸ Rather, they both sought a rapprochement between these assumed manifestly opposite temporal impulses.

In this chapter I have argued that Mansfield experiments with narrating the topological bending of time which brings space and time together in time-space. Such time-space permits individuals who live rarely in their own duration and more commonly within spatialised time to be open to a geometry of memory, longing and freedom. The ways in which I have traced the characters' spatial movements in narrative time has then been

¹⁰⁵ Armstrong, p. 211.

¹⁰⁶ Raymond Mortimer, 'Review of *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories*', *New Statesman*, 21: 534 (7 July 1923), 394; reprinted in *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Jan Pilditch, pp. 12-13 (p. 13).

¹⁰⁷ Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁸ Virginia Woolf [1928], *Orlando: A Biography*, ed., with an Introduction and Notes, by Rachel Bowlby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 95.

extended in a second series of readings of the topological bending of time acutely rendered by what might be called Mansfield's 'perspectival prose' which has, I suggest, productive implications for thinking not only about Mansfield's fiction, but about the short story as a form, with its particular deployments of narrative time.

In the following chapter interlude, I analyse several other stories which have affinities with Bergson's philosophy of time and memory.

Chapter Interlude: Before and After ‘At the Bay’

In this brief interlude, I examine whether Bergson’s philosophy of duration and of spatialised time drives the narrative structures of two of Mansfield’s less well-known stories, ‘The Wrong House’ and ‘Such a Sweet Old Lady’, and whether these stories help to shed light on Mansfield’s approach to time. When writing about older women Mansfield often depicts them knitting. In Bergsonian terms, the activity of knitting represents habit memory in that it is an automatic, learned action. A point that Bergson overlooks, however, is that a learned habit performed multiple times until it is ‘second nature’ might actually *free* consciousness into the flow of duration. The image of knitting, like the concept of time-space, yokes together in rather less philosophical terms but in a very particular way two aspects of Bergson’s theory of memory: the habitual and the imaginative or dream-like.

In the first published version of ‘The Wrong House’ the character of Mrs Bean is incanting her knitting pattern: ‘Like an old song, like a song that she had sung so often that only to breathe was to sing it.’¹ Tired as she is, she counts the stitches, sighs and drops her knitting and then pauses until resuming again: ‘What did she think about when she sighed like that? Nothing. It was a habit. She was always sighing’ (p. 210). Having established that Mrs Bean is a creature of habit, the narrator then invokes several mechanical timepieces: a clock, which strikes three o’clock in the dining room, and a kitchen clock which strikes three o’clock two minutes late. The paragraph is preoccupied with Bergson’s spatialised or measured time, but the means of measurement are shown to be faulty because the clocks in the house are unsynchronised. Furthermore, the maid’s absence ‘since a quarter to two’ suggests that the individual, while being subject to mechanical time, might also circumvent its measurement, in this case by dawdling: ‘Really, she got slower and slower!’ (p. 211). The character of the maid is therefore associated with habit memory but also with ‘wasting’ time, indicating that her own particular rhythms of duration are set against clock time. Mrs Bean is puzzled by the seemingly untimely external actions of Dollicas because she does not empathise with her internal sense of time: ‘What did she *do* with the time? One cannot spend more than a certain time buying a chicken....’ (p. 211). The narrator seems to be mocking

¹ ‘The Wrong House’ was first published posthumously in *Something Childish and Other Stories*, ed. by John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1924), pp. 233-8 but without the first two paragraphs which were published in *TKMN*, 2, p. 182; published in *CWKM2*, pp. 210-12 from which this text is taken (p. 210). Further references to this story are given in brackets in the text.

time measured on the clock by pointing up Mrs Bean's habit of keeping track of her maid's 'misuse' of it, while also suggesting that lived time variously speeds up and slows down when one is not attending to measured time.

A funeral procession which sends one of the pall bearers down Mrs Bean's own garden path, as though to claim her while she is still alive, sends her into a state of shock like a stopped clock: 'the blow fell, and for the moment it struck her down' (p. 211). The old lady falls into a reverie and at some unspecified time later comes round with a 'deep inward shock' (echoing perhaps Bergson's sense of the shocks which accompany memory). Because time seems to be missing from her self-remembering, Mrs Bean undoes her habitual activity seemingly to regain time: 'when she took up the knitting she drew out a needle of stitches and began to unwind what she had done' (p. 212). This unravelling questions the irreversibility of time, perhaps, and comments humorously on habit memory, given that the two women's lives are ones of long-term interrelated co-dependence, which anticipates elements of the later story, 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel'.

'Such a Sweet Old Lady' also includes the elements of spatialised time and Bergsonian duration. The story begins with a question: 'Why did old Mrs. Travers wake so early nowadays?'² Not only does she wake 'early', but she wakes up 'every morning at almost precisely the same time, at half-past four'. When she wakes, each time it is with a 'small shock' as though she is also trying to remember herself and her surroundings: 'as if she were trying to remember for certain whether this was the same wallpaper, the same window she had seen last night' (p. 310). In a temporal interlude (which need not be a hiatus of suspended time, however) of waiting between waking and fretting, the old lady is happy; in Bergsonian terms, she inhabits her duration rather than living in quantitative, measured time.

Mansfield further undermines the reliability and stability of clock time by attributing temporal rhythms and affects to time: 'Now the church clock sounded from outside, slow, languid, faint, as if it chimed the half hour in its sleep' (p. 310). Mrs Travers's watch is endowed not only with a sense of mechanical time, but with purpose, personality and cunning: 'And, staring at the prim, severe face of the watch, it seemed to her that the hand[s] – the minute hand especially – knew that she was watching them and held back – just a very

² 'Such a Sweet Old Lady' was first published in *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories*, ed. by John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1923). Margaret Scott includes a two-line notebook entry: '10.iv[?].1921. A Sweet Old Lady / Montana.' Newberry Notebook 7, *TKMN*, 2, p. 279. Kimber and O'Sullivan give the MS date as '10 vii 1921'. Published in *CWKM2*, pp. 309-11 (p. 309) from which this text is taken. Further references to this story are given in brackets in the text.

little – on purpose....’ (p. 310). The old lady believes that the watch, since being removed from her late husband, has hated her; time has been given agency to run amok; clock time has been topologically stretched out of joint; the watch is vulnerable as a time-keeper as it must be wound or it will stop dead.

In an introspective mood Mrs Travers reflects on foreign clocks and being at a distance from her home, in a seaside hotel, abroad. She feels out of place and time: ‘Foreign clocks never go. They are always stopped at twenty minutes to two. Twenty minutes to two! Such an unpleasant time, neither one thing nor the other’ (p. 310). She longs for that ‘timeless’ English habit: a cup of tea. The rhythms of clock time are set against the world outside the confines of the hotel where there is a sense of freedom and movement and of a world animated with living things in their own duration: ‘at this early hour you could smell the sea, you could hear it breathing, and flying high on golden wings sea-gulls skimmed past’ (p. 311). Sea and sky are endowed with feeling and are contrasted with the solidity, fixity and sterility associated with internal spaces, ‘shut in by the same wallpaper’ (p. 310). Duration is associated with animal life and the natural world in this story, while in unfamiliar interior spaces mechanical timepieces are absurd or uncanny. In this story Mansfield gives a topological twist to Bergson’s two theories of time by mocking clock time and embracing durational or lived time, but not for human kind. The story ends as though Mansfield has run out of time because time itself has run out, and the old lady is tired of looking at palm trees. Yet the concluding ellipsis simultaneously implies that the story might keep unfolding, even if along much the same lines as before, in narrative time.

Chapter Three

Memory and Forgetting: Aphasia, Amnesia and Hyper-Reminiscence in 'The Garden Party' and Other Stories

[Bergson] stood the question of memory on its head, asking not *how* we remember, but *why* we forget. – Paul Douglass¹

One must learn, one must practise to forget oneself. – Katherine Mansfield²

Introduction

The previous two chapters have explored memory and time in the fiction of Katherine Mansfield drawing on the philosophy of Henri Bergson as a strategy for reading Mansfield's stories in a new way. In the last chapter, in detecting the movement of 'time-space' following on from Bergson's theory of spatialised time and duration in my reading of 'At the Bay', I asserted that Mansfield's writing responds to the issue of how to bring space into an understanding of time without 'spatialising' time in terms of dimension and measurement. In this chapter I turn to the concept of forgetting to argue that forgetting is also a requirement for living. My premise is that Mansfield is aligned with Bergson, both in subscribing to the idea that there is the potential for remembering all that has passed, and in observing that there are times when memory is *temporarily* impaired and fails to be useful. Rejecting the idea of forgetting as permanent memory failure, I argue that the two types of 'pathological' memory loss, aphasia and amnesia, discussed by Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, can be mapped onto several of Mansfield's stories to elucidate the idea of temporary forgetting. But whereas Bergson recuperates memory loss from the denigrations of pathology by claiming that there are no lasting ill effects, Mansfield leaves such recuperation open to question; the stories I discuss suggest not only that remembering can be restored subsequent to forgetting but that there may be occasions of forgetting when memories or memory trauma remain irrecoverable.

According to Bergson, both amnesia and aphasia occur when the remembering functions are disordered, are put under intolerable strain or are subject to multiple external

¹ Douglass, p. 108.

² Notebook 41, qMS-1277; *TKMN* 2, p. 296; published in *CWKM4*, p. 390, from which this text is taken.

pressures, conflicting values or mixed semantic signals. Taking up several of these factors, I argue that in some of Mansfield's stories there are occasions when it is prudent or practical for the mind to temporarily forget. In 'The Garden Party' I argue that the protagonist's forgetting is an instance of temporary amnesia and aphasia. Laura's memories, and memory for language and speech, are not permanently lost; rather, she is overwhelmed by the heterogeneity of sensation prompted by the eventfulness of the day presented in the narrative. In 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', however, I assert that Mansfield *exceeds* Bergson's position on forgetting in that the daughters' memories seem utterly incapacitated. Forgetting is also for Mansfield as a writer a form of surrendering personal memories to her fictional writing practice. Paradoxically, an active memory for the personal past and a creative imagination capable of generating images of characters' memories in her stories also provide the conditions for the effective textual rendering of forgetting.

I begin this chapter by briefly contextualising the different approaches to forgetting of several major thinkers who precede Bergson, such as John Locke, Friedrich Nietzsche and William James, before looking at Paul Ricoeur's work on 'happy forgetting' for further comparison with Bergson. In the context of contemporaneous developments in neurology, experimental psychology and aphasiology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I compare Bergson's theory of 'unforgetting' and researches into aphasia and amnesia with those of Freud. I then deploy the concepts of aphasia and amnesia as understood by Bergson to provide new readings of Mansfield's 'The Garden Party' and 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel'. Finally, I briefly analyse the stories *Je ne parle pas français* and 'A Married Man's Story' in terms of what I term 'hyper-reminiscence', regarded as a form of dismal and destructive over-remembering.

Necessary Forgetting and Unforgetting

In his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Locke expounds his view of the decay of memory. In a chapter on the idea of retention, he regards memory as 'the Store-house of our *Ideas*' on the basis that the 'narrow' human mind cannot retain 'many' ideas all at once.³ Although Locke suggests that a 'Repository' is required, a notion which Bergson rejects, he is prescient in introducing the notion of the utility of memories, noting that such a store is required to house ideas which the mind 'might have use of'.⁴

³ John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 10:2, 2-3, p. 150.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10:2, 6, p. 150.

Locke also believes that ideas fade in the memory when they have not been stamped into the mind via repetition:

The Memory in some Men, 'tis true, is very tenacious, even to a Miracle: But yet there seems to be a constant decay of all our *Ideas*, even of those which are struck deepest, and in Minds the most retentive; so that if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated Exercise of the Senses, or Reflection on those kinds of Objects, which at first occasioned them, the Print wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen.⁵

While the concepts of use and of memory retention through repetition seem to prefigure Bergson's ideas about utility and habit memory, Locke also speculates that disease can 'quite strip the Mind of all its *Ideas*'.⁶ In a theory that associates memory loss with the 'constitution' of our bodies as well as the 'temper' of the brain, Locke's view is that memories can be permanently erased.

Nearly two hundred years later, in 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' of 1874, the second of his *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche posited a dichotomous struggle between memory and forgetting, or the past and the future.⁷ According to Nietzsche, history should be directed towards living 'life' in the present and should break with the past, a view which was anathema to Bergson. Furthermore, Nietzsche takes the somewhat provocative view that happiness is equated with *lack* of memories, a repudiation of Bergson's view that memory is vital to consciousness, duration and living. For Nietzsche animals live entirely in the present of instant forgetting, living 'unhistorically' (p. 103). The human being, fettered to the past, envies the happiness of the animal and wonders why he or she cannot 'learn to forget'. Even death is not a solution to historical living: while death 'at last brings the desired forgetting', it simultaneously 'extinguishes the present and all existence', letting us know that 'existence is only an uninterrupted has-been' (p. 103). Thus, even the inevitability of death does not deliver happiness in the time of living. Nietzsche's pessimistic conclusion, in sharp contrast to that of Bergson, is that happiness is the human's 'ability to forget' by fully denying the past (p. 103).

By contrast, William James, whose work straddled physiology, psychology and philosophy, also addresses the question of forgetting towards the end of the first volume of

⁵ Ibid., 10:5, 24-30, p. 151.

⁶ Ibid., 10:5, 10-11, p. 152.

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, [1874, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*], 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', in *Theories of Memory*, ed. by Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 93-107. Further references to this work in this paragraph are given in brackets in the text.

The Principles of Psychology (1890). James, like Bergson, is clear about the usefulness of forgetting:

If we remembered everything, we should on most occasions be as ill off as if we remembered nothing. It would take as long for us to recall a space of time as it took the original time to elapse, and we should never get ahead with our thinking.⁸

Although James conceives the temporal dimension in spatial terms ('a space of time'), his important contribution is to frame forgetting as a way in which human beings progress with thinking *forwards* ('ahead') in time. Unlike Nietzsche, James takes the view that what we remember is significant to us. For James, what is important is whether an experience was memorable *at the time it occurred* while in Bergson's view, while a present 'shock' might lay down a memory for the future, it is the time of the remembering which is most important for the efficacy of action in the present.

Katherine Mansfield subscribed to the idea that powerful 'shocks' in the present would help trigger her writing memory when it seemed to fail ('I can't write. [...] I believe if I had another shock [...], I might manage').⁹ Yet she also saw memory as a form of hibernation, like Bergson's pure or virtual memory; from girlhood, her memories had been forming her 'treasure' and 'weaving' into a 'pattern' ready to be rediscovered when required.¹⁰ The inter-animation of the past and the present in memory may also help to answer Lily Briscoe's question in *To the Lighthouse* about the survival of particular memories over others: 'Why, after all these years had that survived, ringed round, lit up, visible to the last detail, with all before it blank and all after it blank, for miles and miles.'¹¹

For Virginia Woolf, the answer lies in what she calls the 'extraordinarily fertile' moment.¹² For Mansfield, it is in the combined atmospheric and aesthetic effect of the light, the rain and the flowers in their vividness which bring memory forth in the present. What Mansfield and Woolf seem to share is the idea that the raw perceptual immediacies of childhood form particularly 'shining' memories. These are examples of Bergson's 'dominant' memories, memories strongly formed in childhood before memory 'expands' with memory-images. Nietzsche came to the opposite conclusion but for the same reasons:

⁸ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 1, p. 680.

⁹ *CWKM4*, p. 183. Mansfield gives as an example of such a 'shock' the onset of her menstrual cycle.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹¹ Virginia Woolf [1927], *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2000), p. 231.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

childhood was a 'state of forgetfulness' because the child has 'as yet nothing of the past to shake off'.¹³

In his discussion of forgetting, James addressed the pathology of memory in cases either of hypnotised patients or amnesiacs and provided a brain-centred view of dysfunction in which he was given to think that recollections might not be entirely destroyed: 'in certain matters apparent oblivion is no proof against possible recall under other conditions.'¹⁴ Even so, he relegated Bergson's position that nothing we experience can be absolutely forgotten to the realms of the 'transcendental'.¹⁵ In regarding amnesia and aphasia in terms of the 'lost paths of association between the brain-centres', James's explanation is associated with nineteenth-century psychophysicalism and is one against which Bergson determinedly argues in theorising memory and forgetting from a philosophical point of view.¹⁶

As discussed in my first chapter, in Bergson's thinking each individual's pure or virtual memory includes the whole of her or his past experience and memories are potentially available to be drawn down to meet action in the present when required. Thus, as Rudolf Bernet argues, it is difficult to find 'a force of forgetting of one's past' in Bergson's work.¹⁷ This is because the past, in being always virtually available, always responds to the appeal of the present. Bernet's analysis is worth quoting in full:

Each memory one wishes to remember brings with it (more or less explicitly or distinctly) all the other memories of this same consciousness. The same has to be said in the case of concrete perception: it is never an isolated pure memory that comes to aid the lack of the present perception. Rather, the whole past presses itself into the encounter with the present and contracts itself to fit through the eye of the needle that is the tip of the cone. Thus, no memory is excluded, no memory is too much, in the actualization of virtual memories in the context of the present perceptual situation.¹⁸

Bernet's last sentence requires some further explanation, however. Bergson actually states, on the one hand, that a consciousness aware of all of the past in its totality would not be able to select the one most useful to the present perception. To remember each memory would be impossibly recursive with the memory of memories proliferating *ad infinitum*. Individuals could not function in the world faced with the simultaneous actual recall of all of our

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', in *Theories of Memory*, ed. by Rossington and Whitehead, p. 103.

¹⁴ James, p. 682.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 682-3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 684.

¹⁷ Rudolf Bernet, 'Bergson on the Driven Force of Consciousness and Life', in *Bergson and Phenomenology*, ed. by Michael R. Kelly, pp. 42-62 (p. 44).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

memories; even the attempt would lead to an engulfment of psychotic proportions.¹⁹ On the other hand, Bergson also states that potentially ‘any’ memory could be called up to assist the present: ‘the moment that the recollection is linked with the perception, a multitude of events contiguous to the memory are thereby fastened to the perception – an indefinite multitude’.²⁰ It is clear to Bergson, and to Mansfield in her appeal to writers to select their memories, that while memory is a ‘multiplicity’ of recollections (p. 226), and insistently motivated as such, there is still the necessity to bring forth memories which are useful in the present.

The role of the brain in Bergson’s analysis plays a specific and finite role in this process. The brain cannot ‘give birth’ to a recollection (p. 315). Rather, it assists with the contraction of memories which are drawn down into the present; it is a ‘motor ally’ (p. 152) just as the body must also be disposed to assist with recollection. The most important feature of ‘necessary forgetfulness’, then, is that it allows Bergson to refute the prevailing scientific claims of his day that memories are ‘stored’ physically in the brain, which would be to contain and spatialise them as ‘matter’ (*‘Memory is something other than a function of the brain’*, p. 315). The role for spatialised time in ‘necessary forgetfulness’ is the way in which it ‘hinders everything from being given at once’, as Bergson explains in *The Creative Mind*.²¹ Thus, the brain and measured time have a part to play alongside duration, just not in relation to ‘locating’ or ‘storing’ memories.

In historical terms parallel investigations were being made into memory with the development of psychoanalysis, particularly in the work of Freud, and Freud’s theory of forgetting offers a further interesting comparison with Bergson. In reviewing his major papers, I have found that Freud identified at least six forms of forgetting: there is what might be called a benign form of forgetting associated with parapraxis, slips of the tongue or forgetfulness in misplacing objects; there is the ‘normal’ forgetting of memory-traces as well as the repression of memory-traces which involves distortion; there is forgetting which is temporary and memory can be reawakened; there is faulty recollection; there are screen memories, based on a form of forgetting; and there is infantile amnesia. For the purposes of

¹⁹ A case in point is Borges’ story [1942; 1954, English translation], ‘Funes the Memorious’, a fable about a man who, following an accident turns from being an ordinary human who quite normally forgets almost everything to a man who, agonisingly, forgets nothing: ‘who remembered not only every leaf of every tree of every wood, but also every one of the times he had perceived or imagined it’ and who thought ‘that by the hour of his death he would not even have finished classifying all the memories of his childhood’. Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Funes the Memorious’, in *Labyrinths* (London: Penguin, 1970), pp. 87-95 (p. 93).

²⁰ *M&M*, p. 218.

²¹ See Bergson, ‘The Possible and the Real’, in *The Creative Mind*, pp. 107-25 (p. 110).

my argument in this chapter, Freud's theory of repression and his ideas about faulty recollection are most germane.

In a chapter on 'The Forgetting of Impressions and Intentions' in a note that was found in Freud's copy of the 1904 edition of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud distinguishes between 'normal' forgetting and repression.²² Whereas 'normal' forgetting involves the process of condensation, repression utilises condensation but produces confusion, distortion and falsification. And in work which dates back to 1901 in the chapter on Determinism and Superstition, but in a footnote added in 1907 to the text of the chapter, Freud repeats his theory regarding the mechanism of forgetting in its 'proper sense'. That is, the forgetting of past experiences, in which memory traces are subject to both condensation and distortion: '[T]he distorting trends feed on the indifferent material if they have remained unsatisfied at the place at which they sought to manifest themselves.'²³ Thus distortion occurs when memory traces exhibit resistance to condensation, whereas traces that have grown indifferent succumb without resistance to the process of condensation.

In an extension of the concept of repression in a paper of 1914, the 'blocked' memory that Freud outlines in 'Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through' is not one of irretrievable forgetting; rather repressed memories re-emerge in the patient's relationship with the analyst in the process of the transference (i.e. the clinical encounter).²⁴ The patient *repeats* rather than remembers the past trauma (p. 151). Repetition might, then, be likened to a reiteration of forgetting. The 'compulsion to repeat' is tied both to the transference and to resistance: to the transference in that it is a repetition of aspects of the patient's past worked through via the analyst ('the transference is itself only a piece of repetition', p. 151); and to resistance in that 'the greater the resistance, the more extensively will acting out (repetition) replace remembering'(p. 151). The psychoanalyst therefore treats the illness not as a past

²² Sigmund Freud [1901], 'The Forgetting of Impressions and Intentions', in [1960], *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, 6, trans. by Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 134-61 (p. 134).

²³ Sigmund Freud, 'Determinism, Belief in Chance and Superstition – Some Points of View', in [1960], *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, 6 (1901), trans. by Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 239-79 (p. 274, Note 2).

²⁴ Sigmund Freud [1914], 'Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through: Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-analysis II' [1958], in *Case History of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, 12, trans. by James Strachey et al. (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 145-56 (p. 154). Further references to this volume are given in brackets in the text.

event about which the patient remembers nothing, ‘but as a present-day force’ with the aim that the analysis will work to link the illness consciously with the patient’s past experience.²⁵

In his classic work on memory from the later twentieth century, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur observes that it might be argued that the techniques of psychoanalysis were developed partly to enable what is apparently forgotten to return under supervision. While both Bergson and Freud can thus be regarded as two proponents of ‘unforgetting’, they differ in their understanding of whether that unforgetting is aberrant. Whereas Bergson suggests the pure past is waiting for us, unencumbered and only temporarily in abeyance until required, it is Freud who tends to pathologise memory, treating it as a function of the mind concerned with the forbidden and the repressed. Here purity and pathology are opposed and to Freud is ascribed the seemingly more negative view. However, when it comes to power or efficacy, whereas Bergson suggests the past – and unconscious ‘pure memory’ – is *powerless* to act, Freud’s unconscious, in being linked to the instinctual drives, is conceived as energy and thereby *motivated* to act.²⁶

In his magisterial phenomenological investigation, Ricoeur comes down on the side of what he calls ‘happy memory’ over forgetting (p. 494). From the outset he hypothesises that in remembering, we remember *something*, thereby counselling against approaching memory on the grounds of its deficiencies or dysfunctions (p. 21). Rather, he favours an approach which looks to memory’s capacities and their ‘happy realization’. Why should he work so strenuously to emphasise the ‘good’ memory? It is because human beings have no other means of being ‘faithful’ to the past: ‘To put it bluntly, we have nothing better than memory to signify that something has taken place, has occurred, has happened *before* we declare that we remember it’ (p. 21). Ricoeur urges that the so-called defects of memory which stem from forgetting should not automatically be viewed in terms of ‘pathology’, but rather as ‘the shadowy underside of the bright region of memory’ (p. 21). It is this underside which, crucially, gives us a sense of what has passed. Ricoeur takes an optimistic view of remembering and forgetting and one which rebuts that of Nietzsche: there is an historical and political impetus to remembering given that forgetting equates to oblivion of the historical past.

²⁵ For a useful summary of this text see Jean-Michel Quinodoz, [2004] *Reading Freud: A Chronological Exploration of Freud’s Writings*, trans. by David Alcorn (Hove: Routledge, 2005; first published as *Lire Freud* in 2004 by Presses Universitaires de France, Paris), p. 117.

²⁶ See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 445. Further references to this work are given in brackets in the text.

It seems clear to me that Ricoeur shares Bergson's view that what is remembered is a unique and unrepeatable event and is therefore historicised. The singular event is accompanied by a 'discrete appearance' (Ricoeur gives the example of a certain sunset one particular summer evening) which ensures the event reappears *as the same* when recalled and it is due to this 'sameness of reappearing' (p. 23) that we remember the particularity of events. This sounds similar to the way in which Bergson describes a 'spontaneous' recollection in which there is temporal and spatial specificity: 'Spontaneous recollection is perfect from the outset; time can add nothing to its image without disfiguring it; it retains in memory its place and date.'²⁷ But there may be a leap of faith at work here, both for Ricoeur in trusting that what has reappeared once will reliably reappear in identical form, the same in kind, quality, feeling and without addition, distortion or diminishment, and for Bergson, that the memory is pure from its temporal inception.

In addition to his notion of 'happy memory', Ricoeur also allows for a certain kind of 'happy forgetting'. By comparing the very different understanding of the neuroscientific and the phenomenological approaches to forgetting, he identifies two types of 'profound' forgetting: 'forgetting through the erasing of traces' (the neural trace) and a 'forgetting kept in reserve' (the psychical trace).²⁸ Whereas neuroscience does allow for the 'reactivating' of the neural traces, it is closer to what Ricoeur calls a *definitive forgetting* through erasure. By contrast, phenomenology instead refers to the 'persistence' of the psychical trace or the original impression and carries with it the notion of *reversible forgetting* or 'the reserve of forgetting' (p. 416; emphasis added). From this reserve come the pleasures of recollection (p. 417). It turns out, then, that the 'reserve of forgetting' is really a reserve of remembering, which is similar to Bergson's idea of the enduring nature of memory images. Ricoeur surmises that we might learn from Kierkegaard's extolling of forgetting as the 'liberation of care' in wishing for a 'happy forgetting' (p. 500). But he settles finally on the idea of a 'carefree memory' which is one that both forgets and yet does not forget (p. 505). Such memory might thus be seen as a form of responsible remembering.

Bergson and Freud on Aphasia and Amnesia

Aphasia is defined within the neurosciences and psychology primarily as a dysfunction of language that occurs with acquired brain lesions. In what is called 'anterior' or 'non-fluent aphasia', the dysfunction is accompanied by errors of initiation, timing and syntax, phonetic sequencing and production. With 'posterior' or 'fluent aphasia' there are

²⁷ *M&M*, p. 95.

²⁸ Ricoeur, pp. 414-15.

manifest lexical-semantic and phonemic errors.²⁹ *Amnesia* is the Greek word for forgetfulness and refers to a loss of memory, or an inability to recall past experiences. It can be ‘organic’, when caused by head trauma, for instance, or ‘psychogenic’, when resulting from emotional stress, hypnotic suggestion or inner conflict. Both Freud and his contemporary the neurophysiologist Josef Breuer contended that this form of amnesia was the result of a splitting of consciousness arising from psychological trauma.³⁰

As Arthur L. Benton notes, by the mid-nineteenth century the main aphasic syndromes of expressive aphasia (which relatively preserves the capacity to understand speech), ‘amnesiac aphasia’ (word-finding disturbance), jargon aphasia and jargon agraphia, as well as the distinction noted above between fluent and non-fluent types, had been identified. Impairment of speech which yet preserved the ability to sing had also been described.³¹ Given advances in experimental psychology, by 1861 the French physician Paul Broca had demonstrated that aphasia could be linked to brain lesions in particular locations.³² Historically, aphasia was a word proposed by Armand Trousseau to replace the term ‘aphemia’ first suggested by Broca. The disturbance identified by Broca later came to be known as ‘motor aphasia’.³³ Benton records that in 1874 the German neurologist Carl Wernicke developed an advanced theory of the nature of aphasic disorders focused on disease and its impact on the neurological mechanisms. Crucially, for materialist – psychophysical – approaches to the brain, Wernicke’s model proposed the existence of ‘inter-connected cerebral centers of speech in which memory-images of the different modalities of speech were stored’.³⁴ It was this storage model of the brain to which Bergson was especially antipathetic, likening the brain to a telephone exchange which lacks the capacity for containing memory traces.³⁵

Bergson was familiar with the work of Freud and Charcot on amnesia and aphasia.³⁶ And Freud had already written his book *On Aphasia* before Bergson published *Matter and*

²⁹ See *The Edinburgh International Encyclopaedia of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Ross M. Skelton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 31.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³¹ Arthur L. Benton, ‘Bergson and Freud on Aphasia: A Comparison’, in *Bergson and Modern Thought: Towards a Unified Science*, ed. by Andrew C. Papanicolaou and Pete A. Y. Gunter (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1987), pp. 175-88 (p. 175).

³² Guerlac, p. 22.

³³ See the entry on ‘Amnesia’ in the *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (Thomson Gale, 2005), <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3435300069.html> [last accessed 21 May 2016].

³⁴ Benton, p. 176.

³⁵ Bergson states the brain is not a ‘storehouse’ of memories, *M&M*, p. 164.

³⁶ See F. C. T. Moore, *Bergson: Thinking Backwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5, note 4.

Memory.³⁷ What was it that made for such similar but independent thought? I would argue that Freud and Bergson were each reacting to the mechanistic view of mind and memory, derived from the emerging formal discipline of experimental psychology of the period. By the 1890s, the prevailing theory of aphasic disorder was neurological and related to lesions in specific cortical areas of the brain.³⁸ While Freud, like Bergson, criticised the idea of there being a specific central area in the brain in which memory images are *stored*, he did assert that all types of aphasia were brought forth by interruptions in the neural connections within the *brain*. Freud also thought that the aphasic disorders resulted not from the loss of memory-images, as such, but from the impairment of the speech apparatus as a whole and in this he comes closer to Bergson's view.³⁹

In focusing on memory as a way to distinguish between and then reconnect body and mind, the material and the spiritual, Bergson assessed existing clinical studies in experimental psychology and memory studies, especially those on aphasia.⁴⁰ In *Matter and Memory*, he asserts that a brain lesion would have an impact on the motor schema involved in connecting memory-images to bodily perception, but not on the *memory-images themselves*. For Bergson, the language disorders of memory are due to a fault in the faculty of recognition. Such failures are not because recollections occupy an injured region of the brain. Rather, there are two possible explanations: that our body may not be able automatically to make a choice among our memories; or that the memories are unable to find 'a fulcrum in the body, a means of prolonging themselves in action'.⁴¹ Significantly, however, it is only actual movements which are prevented from occurring: 'there has been no destruction of memories' (p. 133). Thus in aphasia, it is the function which is diminished, not the recollections themselves (p. 149); and Bergson is adamant that the dynamism required for a memory-image to pass into perception has been inhibited (p. 162):

Our contention [...] is that no trace of an image can remain in the substance of the brain, and that no [...] centre of apperception can exist; but that there are merely, in that substance, organs of *virtual* perception, influenced by the intention of the memory. (Footnote 1, p. 164)

However, Bergson does raise the possibility in certain cases of amnesia that 'definite groups of representations have disappeared from memory' (p. 149). Such 'disappearance' falls into two types – 'abrupt' and 'progressive' (p. 150). In the first case the recollections which are

³⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Zur Auffassung der Aphasien* (Leipzig and Wien: Deuticke, 1891); translated into English as *On Aphasia*, trans. by E. Stengel (New York: International Universities Press, 1953).

³⁸ Benton, p. 177.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180, p. 181.

⁴⁰ Guerlac, p. 6.

⁴¹ *M&M*, p. 132. Further references in this paragraph are given in brackets in the text.

‘detached from memory’ may be the result of a violent shock. In these instances, the patient may ‘often recover the lost memories’ (p. 151). The second type is caused by ‘the faculty of actualizing the recollection of words’ (p. 151). But in neither case are the images to be found in the cells of the cortex or are memories actually destroyed (pp. 151-2; p. 153). Rather, these occurrences can be explained by acknowledging that for their actualisation memories require ‘a motor ally’, and ‘a kind of mental attitude which must itself be engrafted upon an attitude of the body’ for their recall (p. 152). The brain merely organises motor movements for the purposes of calling up past memories according to different levels of ‘psychic tension’ for action in the present.

But is there room for disturbed, false or inappropriate memories in Bergson’s schema? Marie Cariou suggests that habit memory inhibits ‘pure memory’ from allowing movements which would bring about ‘inopportune reminiscences’.⁴² In her phrase the ‘hygiene of forgetting’, Cariou describes what she terms a ‘spontaneous asceticism’ in the memory which ensures for Bergson’s theory in *Matter and Memory*, a ‘mental equilibrium’.⁴³ In her analysis, Cariou is one of the few commentators to suggest that Bergson never allows for the possibility that we might call up ‘untimely reminiscences’ which might not serve the individual’s present interests. According to Cariou, Bergson presents an ‘ideal’ operation of memory rather than describing fully the ‘phenomena of forgetting’.⁴⁴ Where, she asks, is Bergson’s explanation for occasions of difficult remembering or ‘harmful or corrupt’ memories? It may be that Bergson puts to one side negative memories which are not purposeful for everyday living given the pre-eminence of ‘utility’ for his theory of memory. Where he does acknowledge that memory-images are anything but practical, however, is in dream: as I noted in the last chapter, the dreamer is one who calls up past memories even when they have little apparent immediate use in the present.⁴⁵ It does seem to be the case, however, that ‘false’ or distorted memories are not admissible in Bergson’s theory.

Mansfield: The Unforgettable and Self-Forgetfulness

For Mansfield, remembering is associated with affect and with strong visual and synaesthetic cues such as touch, colour, light and scent. Such qualities constitute what I refer

⁴² Marie Cariou, ‘Bergson: The Keyboards of Forgetting’, trans. by Melissa McMahon, in *The New Bergson*, ed. by John Mullarkey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 99-117 (p. 104).

⁴³ *M&M*, p. 228.

⁴⁴ Cariou, p. 104.

⁴⁵ *M&M*, p. 200.

to as the ‘unforgettable’ and attend intense experience and the remembering required for the creative act of writing. A prime example is a memory of Garsington manor and its gardens, recalled in a letter to Ottoline Morrell:

You have sent me flowers and Garsington lavender & Ive never said a word – for all that I have loved them. The lavender is in a big sachet. It breathes of that afternoon when we gathered it – of the cool darkened green room where the trays were spread – of the aeroplane high up, glittering above the trees – that looked so lovely – I feel that *all waits to be written* – its as though something magical drew a circle about that afternoon holding it for ever ...⁴⁶

An example of almost-anticipated retrospection, the experience seems to have lent itself to being especially memorious: living, breathing, imbued with emotion, beauty and colour. Memory is drawn down into the present to meet the sensory actuality of the lived moment, efficaciously evoked by the particularity of the Garsington lavender, both then and now interpenetrating. The past demands attention. And there is no more powerfully Bergsonian-inflected statement than that the past is recalled to the present and that memory joins perception to participate in the living of life.

The textual example which demonstrates most clearly both the unforgettable as active remembering and as temporary forgetting is contained in a letter to her cousin Elizabeth in which Mansfield evokes Elizabeth’s Swiss home, the Chalet Soleil:

[D]o you remember smelling the geraniums in the late afternoon in the hall? It seemed just the time and the place to smell those geraniums – I can’t even imagine what going back there would be like; it would be too great happiness. But I shall remember that day for ever.

Oh, I’ve just remembered that you asked me about Ernestine.⁴⁷

The first paragraph demonstrates Bergson’s trust in the singularity of memory in its very specificity of time and place (‘in the late afternoon in the hall’) while the second records the remembering of something temporarily forgotten. A doubled temporality of remembering is at work here: the recall of a past experience in the present and the recall in the present of a more recent question in the past.

Mansfield’s writing method, as she explained it, often in letters to Richard Murry or to Dorothy Brett, involves a form of ‘self-forgetfulness’. Such forgetfulness is caught up with Mansfield’s Bergsonian method of intuitively ‘becoming’ her characters in identification with them which also involves losing her own sense of self: ‘One must learn,

⁴⁶ Letter to Ottoline Morrell, c13 August 1919, *CLKM*, 2, p. 346. Emphasis added.

⁴⁷ Letter to Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 24 March 1922, *CLKM*, 5, p. 124.

one must practise to forget oneself. I can't tell the truth about Aunt Anne unless I am free to enter into her life without selfconsciousness.⁴⁸ The role of self-forgetting for the purposes of following an artistic life is encapsulated in *Time and Free Will* in a section in which Bergson identifies the role of images, and the feelings which are their 'emotional equivalent', in discussing the function of rhythm in poetry. The 'regular movement' of rhythm is a means of lulling the soul into 'self-forgetfulness'.⁴⁹ In self-forgetting, the self is removed from the process of writing, allowing the feel of writing's rhythms to take over. Bergson and Mansfield happen to coincide because the importance of rhythm to Mansfield's style is well known; the very shape, cadence and length of her sentences were a vital part of her writing practice.⁵⁰

Recalling Bergson's discussion in *Time and Free Will* regarding the double sense of the self, the forgetting of the self that is required for writing and the self that Mansfield relinquishes is the socially functioning personal self. But the 'fundamental' living self is unfettered and unforgetful. A letter from Mansfield to Sidney Schiff puts this view:

The artist who denies his Time, who turns away from it even as much as the fraction of a hair is false. First, he must be free; that is, he must be controlled by none other than his deepest self, his truest self. And then he must accept Life, he must submit, give himself so utterly to Life that no personal quâ personal self remains.⁵¹

The true inner self may be a refuge from the ravages of modernity and a source of artistic freedom but it may also register the collapse of signifying practices when the mind is put under pressure. With the twin notions of efficacious memory and memory effacement (which nevertheless does not invalidate the ineradicable nature of memory for Bergson or Mansfield) in view, I now turn to reading several of Mansfield's stories from the perspective of a character's temporary amnesia and aphasia as well as the writer's self-forgetting, or textual blankness.

⁴⁸ Notebook 41, qMS-1277; *TKMN* 2, p. 296; published in *CWKM4*, p. 390, from which this text is taken.

⁴⁹ *T&FW*, p. 15.

⁵⁰ For example, in a letter to Richard Murry, Mansfield wrote in relation to her story 'Miss Brill': 'Its a very queer thing how *craft* comes into writing. I mean down to details. Par exemple. In Miss Brill I chose not only the length of every sentence, but even the sound of every sentence – I chose the rise and fall of every paragraph to fit her – and to fit her on that day at that very moment.' 17 January 1921, *CLKM*, 4, p. 165.

⁵¹ *CLKM*, 4 [? mid-February 1921], p. 181.

Readings

Reading 1: Amnesia and Aphasia in 'The Garden Party'

Perhaps Mansfield's most famous and most often anthologised story, 'The Garden Party' was begun on 9 October 1921 and completed five days later on her thirty-third birthday.⁵² It follows on from 'A Married Man's Story' and 'At the Bay' and is apparently based on a re-inscription of a real event in Mansfield's personal life, as Alpers explains:

It is founded on events that actually occurred when Mrs Beauchamp gave a garden party at No. 75 Tinakori Road, Wellington, in 1907 – though it wasn't Kathleen who went down with the party leftovers but her sister Vera.⁵³

Ian Gordon goes further in suggesting that in 'The Garden Party' Mansfield 'is expressing a view of life on a basis of recorded memories'.⁵⁴ But there is nothing clear-cut here about an apparent personal memory source because the story, in being derived from a 'borrowed' event belonging to her sister, is arguably already distorted as a memory for Mansfield.⁵⁵ The 'corruption' is all the more evident given the contradictory critical approach to narrative voice in the story.

Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr identify 'The Garden Party' as a 'straightforwardly sequential narrative' with Laura as its centre of consciousness.⁵⁶ However, Perry Meisel argues that Mansfield's stories do not have a 'privileged center of consciousness' either of character or of narrator. Rather, he suggests the focus is almost always on the individual's 'unconscious'.⁵⁷ Angela Smith has come closest to a Bergsonian position in arguing that the distinctive 'flexible' and 'polyphonic' narrative voice in the story is Mansfield's unique mode of depicting Laura's consciousness.⁵⁸ While taking a Bakhtinian approach, Thomas Day has provided a reading of the 'textures of voices' and of 'voicelessness' in the story

⁵² Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan mention that an edited version was published in the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* in three parts for the 4 February 1922, pp. 9-10; 11 February 1922; p. 10; and 18 February 1922, pp. 16-17. *CWKM*, 2, p. 413.

⁵³ See *Stories*, p. 572 and also, *Life*, pp. 45-6.

⁵⁴ Ian A. Gordon, *Katherine Mansfield, Writers and Their Work*: No. 49 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1954) p. 15.

⁵⁵ In relation to borrowed memory, Alpers notes that Virginia Woolf 'devoted a novel to a woman (with a difficult daughter) who is to give a party, with lots of flowers, but the day is marred by a death in the street. *Mrs Dalloway* also contains some interesting business with a hat.' *Stories*, p. 573.

⁵⁶ See Hanson and Gurr, p. 115.

⁵⁷ Perry Meisel, 'Review of *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two* by Angela Smith', *Modern Philology*, 100:1, 160-4 (pp. 161-2). Quoted in Şebnem Kaya, 'Laura's Lessons in Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party"', *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 1:2, September 2011, 54-61 (p. 60).

⁵⁸ Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 140.

which condition its ideological tensions and power relations.⁵⁹ In a subsequent reading, Angela Smith returned to the story to discuss the way in which the narrative's 'polyphonic voice' manoeuvres the reader into experiencing both the pleasure of the party and the 'dark knowledge' of the carter's death. With these dual aspects held in tension, she suggests that Mansfield provides a pivotal 'disruptive moment' in the story which defies fictional conventions.⁶⁰ Suggestive as these critical interpretations are, my view is that it is possible to be more overtly Bergsonian with regard to voice and voicelessness by bringing the idea of consciousness (perception and memory brought to bear on action), the unconscious (pure memory in abeyance) and forgetting (memory temporarily lost or suspended) into convergence around the character of Laura.⁶¹

In reading 'The Garden Party' with Bergson, I argue that Mansfield draws on the psychological concepts of amnesia and aphasia not as a means of indicating a form of permanent forgetting but as a way of thinking through a surface or temporary forgetting which comes about because the apparatus of the mind is disordered. My reading is supported by Mansfield's own appraisal of the story outlined in a letter to the writer William Gerhardi in which she explains what she had tried to achieve:

The diversity of life and how we try to fit in everything, Death included. That is bewildering for a person of Laura's age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one and then another. But life isn't like that. We haven't the ordering of it. Laura says "But all these things must not happen at once" and Life answers "Why

⁵⁹ Thomas Day, 'The Politics of Voice in Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party"', *English*, 60: 229 (2011), 128-41 (p. 128).

⁶⁰ Angela Smith, "'Looking at the party with you': Pivotal Moments in Katherine Mansfield's Stories", in *The Modernist Party*, ed. by Kate McLoughlin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 79-94 (p. 92).

⁶¹ In an analysis of time in the story, Hubert Zapf has argued that the elements of narrative time and space provide insight into the dialectical aspects of the story's composition. See Hubert Zapf, 'Time and Space in Katherine Mansfield's *The Garden Party*', *Orbis Litterarum*, 40:1 (1985), 44-54 (p. 45). In examining the relationship between 'narrative time' and 'narrated time' Zapf offers two conclusions. First, he states that the story is not directly about the garden party but about its prelude and aftermath, meaning the party is a relatively unimportant event in the flux of time: 'Its temporal presence seems to dissolve between expectation and retrospection, between past and future' (p. 46). Second, Zapf notes that the story's time rhythms change between what he identifies as the story's first and second phases, with the extension of narrative time compared to narrated time in the second phase presenting a sense of time slowing down as the story leads up to its 'existential climax' (p. 47). The effect is one of 'breathtaking mobility' but 'superficial *change*' while the theme of the fleeting quality of life is realised by the temporal dimensions of the story, even though that sense of brevity eludes the consciousness of most of the characters (p. 48). According to Zapf, Laura's visit to the carter, however, results in the 'timeless moment of her initiation' (p. 52). An unresolved dualism in the story is between Laura's seemingly timeless epiphany and humankind's general experience of the ephemerality of time.

not? How are they divided from each other.” And they *do* all happen, it is inevitable. And it seems to me that there is beauty in that inevitability.⁶²

The simultaneity of life’s happenings outlined here resembles a Bergsonian heterogeneous multiplicity applied to consciousness in which memories and perceptions (without being segregated) interpenetrate, both uniting and continuing.⁶³ It is this impact on her consciousness, I suggest, which disturbs the remembering (for Bergson, the sensori-motor) functions. Laura receives a surfeit of multiple and competing perceptual and sensory stimuli during the day of the garden party and her memory apparatus is unable to deal with such heterogeneity all at once. In the face of various ‘shocks’ a temporary forgetting comes into play. Memories are not lost; they are merely temporarily mislaid. This form of forgetting might also be seen, therefore, as an incipient *re-remembering* in that Laura is likely to be able to recall what she has forgotten in the future.

I identify three key phases of forgetting in the story in terms of amnesia and aphasia:

- Phase One: Laura’s amnesia as the result of her over-stimulated perceptual apparatus and sensori-motor overload in the face of new, shocking and multiple events. Laura oscillates between entering and withdrawing from an adult world of conventional time, memory and discourse and is at the threshold of deriving her own meaning from unforeseen life events;
- Phase Two: Laura’s forgetting of the death of the carter; her recalling the death; her being reminded to remember his death; and her later encounter with the man who is dead and therefore in an absolute state of forgetting;
- Phase Three: Laura’s aphasia, following the profound (and marvellous) shock of viewing the dead carter and in being unable to utter the words which express either what life (or death) might mean.

PHASE ONE

A garden party might reasonably be thought to be a memorable occasion for an adolescent girl; and at the beginning of the story there is a sense of the features which will enable the day to be apparently happily memorable: the perfect weather (‘And after all the weather was ideal’)⁶⁴; the garden in bloom; a marquee being put up in the garden; a band expected; the arrival of flowers and food to a house which is ‘alive with soft, quick steps and

⁶² *CLKM*, 5, 11 March 1922, p. 101.

⁶³ See Guerlac, p. 119.

⁶⁴ The text of the ‘The Garden Party’ used here is published in *CWKM2*, pp. 401-14 (p. 401). Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

running voices' (p. 404). The narrative establishes a sense of abundance, of fructifying plenty, of the bustle of preparation and of anticipation, and particularly of Laura's movement through the open and intimate spaces of her known world: 'Away she skimmed, over the lawn, up the path, up the steps, across the veranda, and into the porch' (p. 403). Yet the reader is also subtly led to believe that while the party is probably an annual one, there is a hint of something different: 'this year' Mrs Sheridan is 'determined' to leave the party arrangements to the children. The idea that there might be something to forget during the course of the day is prefigured in ironic tones from the outset by Mrs Sheridan's first utterance in the story: "'Forget I am your mother. Treat me as an honoured guest'" (p. 401). It is against the powerful force of Mrs Sheridan's unforgettable voice, and the requirement to 'honour' that maternal voice, that Laura must struggle – and fail – to find her own.

Into this scene comes Laura who despite, or perhaps because of, her 'artistic' temperament is plunged into confusion in her encounter with the workmen putting up the marquee. In attempting to make 'small talk' with them, it is as though Laura hasn't the memory experience of the right speech codes to draw on which would enable her to act appropriately in her unexpected encounter with a different social group. Hanson and Gurr argue that Laura has an affinity with the workmen (and later with the dead carter and her brother) which suggests that her world is beginning to extend beyond the narrowly feminine confines of family and garden.⁶⁵ But any affinity, I would suggest, is superficial. That Laura is socially inexperienced is suggested by her blushing in front of the workmen, her attempt to mimic her mother's voice, and her stammering: "'Oh – er – have you come – is it about the marquee?'" (p. 402).⁶⁶ Furthermore, Laura's stammering 'like a little girl' (p. 402) suggests she is in an aphasic and liminal condition between that of regressive child, curious adolescent and incipient adult in which her memory states are in collision. Laura stammers again when she cannot complete her own internal thought: 'The friendliness of it, the – the –' (p. 403). This second stammering instance implies that Laura doesn't yet have an efficacious habit memory of the words and tone of voice with which to convey feeling offended by the injustice of class distinctions. Her vocal vulnerability is also indicated by her somatic

⁶⁵ Hanson and Gurr, p. 115.

⁶⁶ Stammering or stuttering is speech 'that is characterized by frequent repetition or prolongation of sounds or syllables or words, or by frequent hesitations or pauses that disrupt the rhythmic flow of speech'. Stammering is classified as a disorder if it is severe enough to noticeably disturb the fluency of speech. World Health Organization, Classification F98.5 (ICD-10, Version 2010), <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en#/F98.5> [last accessed 21 May 2016].

response to the party: she can but ‘gasp’, rather than eloquently express, her love of parties (p. 403).

While stammering is the first instantiation of Laura’s aphasia, the first occurrence of her amnesia is, if thinking in Bergsonian terms, when a mild shock inhibits her sensori-motor reactions: one of the workmen picks and smells a piece of lavender which surprises Laura and, distracted by the unexpectedness of the workman’s sensitivity, she temporarily forgets the slightly vexing inconvenience that the karaka trees in the garden will be obscured during the party by the marquee: ‘When Laura saw the gesture she forgot all about the karakas in her wonder at him caring for things like that’ (p. 403). Out of Laura’s forgetting emerges her proto-conscience as she strains towards taking right action in the world. While there is no moral dimension to Bergson’s idea in the text that memory is required for action, I think Mansfield promotes the idea that forgetting distracts not just from acting in the world, but from acting *well*.

PHASE TWO

That there is a proleptic hint of something untoward about to happen in Laura’s world is established with small textual clues: the day is perfect except for the fact that the blue sky is ‘veiled with a haze of light gold’ (p. 401), the word ‘veiled’ hinting at obfuscation, concealment and perhaps Laura’s cloistered social life. While things in the house and garden are being moved and are sounding, even clamouring, with a sense of being alive, objects are also being re-arranged, such as the furniture, which hints at spatial displacement (p. 404). To add to the subtle sense of foreboding, the song the Sheridan girls rehearse before the party contains rather mournful lyrics:

This Life is *Wee*-ary,

Hope comes to Die.

A Dream – a *Wa*-kening. (p. 405)

Here Mansfield sounds a note of temporal change through decay but also through the use of the ambivalent word, ‘a *Wa*-kening’, which in its accentuated syllables could imply becoming ‘awake’ to circumstances but might also signal ‘a wake’, as in ‘keening’ for the dead. Changefulness for Bergson is the very basis of life; ‘awakening’ conjugates the two ideas that we are compelled to awaken from the dream of permanence into the knowledge of our mutability which is the *leitmotif* of the story. The fact of continual change is expressed by the interruptions, before the party, to the Sheridan world: the men putting up the marquee,

the telephone ringing, the delivery of the lilies, the confusion over the fifteen types of sandwiches that the cook has made, and Godber's delivering the cream puffs (p. 405).

Yet as these changes occur, the narrative also introduces the reassuring and cohesive dimension of memory: Mrs Sheridan remembers 'vividly' ordering cream-cheese and lemon-curd sandwiches, while for Laura cream puffs evoke familiarity ("Don't they carry one back to all one's parties?") (p. 406). These small stabilising adjustments come just before the undermining shadow falls over the party preparations. It is signalled by the impeded movements of the hired working staff: 'the back door was blocked by cook, Sadie, Godber's man and Hans' (p. 407). The schism between the upper middle class and working class is encapsulated in this phrase, the back door being the point of entry and exit for the servants. Laura's shocked reaction to the death of the carter, Scott, who has been killed as his horse shied at a traction-engine, is her single exclamatory "Dead!" (p. 407) Is Laura surprised at the sudden cutting short of life? Or is she afraid? Or is this the end of Laura's naivety about the way in which her social world functions as she alone expects the party, consequently, to be postponed? What the narrative seems to be telling the reader is that a single word can convey all of these meanings as well as indicate that Laura is unable to say anything *more* in her aphasic state.

Laura's suggestion to cancel the party is regarded as 'extravagant' and 'absurd' by her mother and sisters, thereby establishing their ethical difference and distance from her. Laura's ethical gesture is based on momentarily *recalling* that working men are not just 'extraordinarily nice' but caring in a way that she finds lacking in men of her own class (p. 403). At the same time, the fact that Laura is 'breathless' and 'half-choking' as she imparts the news of the real tragedy to her mother (which follows so quickly on the heels of the 'drama' of party-making) suggests that strong emotion can lead to *forgetting* how to speak and what to say. Thereafter in the conversation with her mother Laura makes repeated but thwarted attempts to make her own voice heard.

Far from letting herself be 'forgotten', Mrs Sheridan reclaims the party-arranging and in the midst of the crisis also orchestrates the recuperation of Laura's adolescent bourgeois identity by deploying the social status symbols of a hat and a hand-mirror. In placing on Laura her own new black hat, Mrs Sheridan attempts to recall Laura to her proper place of femininity, charm, domesticity and upper-middle-class customs. In this way Mrs Sheridan seems to be trying to substitute Laura's recently forged personal memories with those of hegemonic family and class-based memories. That is, a black-hatted Laura is required to remember and act differently in the world from a hat-less Laura following the death of the

carter. In Bergsonian terms, Laura will remember being in mourning under the shocking sign of the black hat.⁶⁷ While Laura cannot initially bring herself to look at herself in Mrs Sheridan's hand-mirror and she is therefore only partially recuperated to her mother's version of the world (or only semi-resistant) at this point, shortly after, when inadvertently seeing herself in the mirror in her own room, Laura is reclaimed by the social co-ordinates of her class identity.

A psychoanalytic reading of this scene is possible as well: Laura is returned to the Lacanian mirror stage and there (mis)recognises herself after having been encouraged by her mother, her primary care-giver, to admire herself: 'My child! [...], the hat is yours. It's made for you. It's much too young for me. I have never seen you look such a picture' (p. 409). Mrs Sheridan's comments fit with two aspects of Lacan's thinking: that the ego is seduced by *others'* expectations, wishes and dreams into thinking itself as an authentic 'me'; and that the state to which Laura is recalled precedes the Imaginary in the form of the Symbolic register of Sheridan language and party sociability. With a few well-chosen words, Mrs Sheridan emphasises Laura's youth (the hat is 'much too young' for Mrs Sheridan), her beauty and the importance of Laura looking at *herself*. In finally doing so, Laura is surprised by the aesthetic effect: 'Never had she imagined she could look like that' (p. 409). In my reading, however, it is at this juncture that the principal struggle between remembering and forgetting is played out in Laura's mind. In remembering the plight of the carter's family, briefly, conscience prevails: 'Just for a moment she had another glimpse of that poor woman and those little children, and the body being carried into the house' (p. 409). But this projected image, this imaginary 'picture' seems to Laura 'blurred' and 'unreal', perhaps because it is not a memory of something she has actually experienced *as such*; the memory is a recalling of what she has *heard* has happened to the carter and she has extrapolated a memory-image from that.

Laura's strategy at this point is to determine, with her inner voice of emerging social conscience, to postpone remembering until after the party: 'I'll remember it again after the party's over, she decided' (p. 409). But life again intervenes and, having forgotten the tragedy, Laura momentarily remembers it at the sight of her brother arriving home to change

⁶⁷ Marvin Magalaner also discusses the symbolism of hats in the story, arguing that a hat is passed to Laura by her mother in typical 'coronation' fashion, whereby Laura inherits the Sheridan's social snobbery and the 'garden party syndrome'. Magalaner also comments that when Laura visits the dead carter, the discrepancy between what the hat symbolises and her own growing self-understanding provokes a realisation: 'Laura has had her vision.' See Marvin Magalaner, *The Fiction of Katherine Mansfield* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), p. 117.

for the party: 'At the sight of him Laura remembered the accident again' (p. 409). Her attempt to assuage her soul-searching in seeking Laurie's opinion on the subject of cancelling the party is undermined, however, when Laurie reinforces his mother's view of Laura's external appearance: "My word, Laura! You do look stunning," said Laurie. "What an absolutely topping hat!" (p. 410). Being once again recalled to the Sheridan world, Laura forgets about the carter. This time of forgetting is condensed into a few brief sentences, several of which also mark the time of the party having taken place:

And the perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed.

'Never a more delightful garden party....' 'The greatest success....' 'Quite the most....' (p. 410)

The reader, it seems, is never quite invited to the party, almost as though it occurs off-stage as in a drama; and the reader would be forgiven for forgetting the party *qua* party. The story is preoccupied rather more with anticipating and, to a lesser extent, recollecting the day. Laura's condition of forgetting is only brought to an end by her father who, *de trop*, reopens the subject of the accident. Laura is thus recalled a third time to the recent past by her father (having been earlier in the narrative recalled to present Sheridan realities both by her mother and her brother).

Şebnem Kaya argues that in instructing Laura to take some left-over party food to the carter's widow, Mrs Sheridan makes a crucial mistake in dealing with her daughter. Mrs Sheridan has gone to some lengths to erase the accident from Laura's mind in the hat scene, but now reinforces it, suggests Kaya, rather than letting the event fade, 'just when Laura started to enjoy forgetfulness after a painful transition period of obfuscation'.⁶⁸ There are two points to be made in response to Kaya's comments here: first, Mr Sheridan has already triggered the memory of the inconvenient (for Laura, awful) event in mentioning it after the party; and, second, the narrative time of the story has shifted to its post-party aftermath. The *material* remains of the party, that is, the leftovers, contrast with the *mortal* remains of the dead carter and there is an unexpected moment of further exposure to class difference for Laura. Laura, who initially cannot understand why she should be asked to deliver 'scraps' from the party, and who feels her difference from other family members, still acts in deference to her mother. Laura is consumed by the thought of the party's reverberations to such an extent that she again forgets the death of the carter: 'And it seemed to her that kisses, voices, tinkling spoons, laughter [...] were somehow inside her. She had no room for anything else' (p. 411).

⁶⁸ Kaya, p. 58.

In his reading of the story, Don W. Kleine makes a pertinent point when he suggests that while Laura says she will remember the dead workman after the party is over, she has learned too much to permanently forget the carter's widow.⁶⁹ In Bergsonian terms, Laura is in a state of temporary forgetting, absorbed as she is by the party – “Yes, it was the most successful party” (p. 411) – until she is prompted to remember. Cherry Hankin argues that Laura ‘*decides* to forget’ the suffering inflicted by the carter’s death which suggests a cynical reading of her emerging sense of conscience.⁷⁰ Hankin also observes that what Laura forgets is the different social standing of her family and that of the carter.⁷¹ But I challenge Hankin’s view about the forgetting of class distinctions. In ‘going down’ the hill from the grand house of the Sheridans to the shaded little cottage in the hollow, Laura is evoked descending not just to an ‘underworld’ of death and shadows but to the realms of a ‘lower’ class of which she is acutely aware due to her attire: ‘How her frock shone! And the big hat with the velvet streamer – if only it was another hat!’ (p. 411). The black hat which ‘becomes’ her; that is, which *defines* and *suits* her, is reiterated for a fourth time (“What a becoming hat, child!”), a party-goer has exclaimed, p. 410); and also functions as an absurd accoutrement to mourning.

PHASE THREE

There are, I suggest, two aphasic events which are brought into conjunction around Laura’s excursion to take the party leftovers to the dead carter’s family. The first precedes the viewing of the dead body. In a moment of seeming aphasia, Mrs Sheridan is unable to describe, forgets to describe, or withholds describing what Laura should not do once she arrives at the carter’s house: “don’t on any account –” (p. 411). On any account, the reader is led to ask: what? The reader might try to fill in the gap with words such as ‘look at the dead body’, ‘touch the dead body’, ‘cry’, ‘stay too late’, ‘say something to offend’, or ‘forget what you see’. The first command seems most likely (and is therefore a prohibition which Laura ignores, or is inadvertently led to ignore by the widow’s unnamed sister) while the last might be an open invitation to Laura *to* forget.

Much has been made of the episode in which Laura views the dead carter. Critics have speculated about whether this is an aestheticising or epiphanic moment, an awakening,

⁶⁹ Don W. Kleine, “The Garden Party”: A Portrait of the Artist’, *Criticism*, 5:4 (Fall, 1963), 360-71 (p. 369).

⁷⁰ C. A. Hankin, *Katherine Mansfield’s Confessional Stories* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), p. 239 (emphasis added).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

or a response associated with fantasy, dream state or fairy tale.⁷² What interests me, however, is the after-effect of Laura's witnessing. Contrary to what might be expected, in viewing the corpse Laura finds the carter to be 'wonderful', 'beautiful', a 'marvel'. This may be because he has been laid out in accordance with class custom and Laura has expected to see corporeal deformity, disfigurement or devastation. While the widow's sister's comment "'e looks a picture'" echoes that of Mrs Sheridan about Laura wearing the black hat, the sister's further comment, "'There's nothing to show'" (p. 413), suggests that she may have had a hand in rendering him presentable.⁷³ But Laura's interiorised description of the carter may equally be an example of class-based hyperbole or inauthenticity because it is difficult to believe that he *could* look 'wonderful' or a 'marvel'. The only words spoken by Laura at the dead man's side are: "'Forgive my hat'" (p. 413). Kleine reads this utterance as suggesting that what is meant is rather 'forget my hat' as Laura succumbs to the dream that death makes of life.⁷⁴ In his reading of the story, Vincent O'Sullivan suggests that Laura's encounter with the dead carter 'is a genuine moment of fulfilment'.⁷⁵ I take the opposite view that Laura's disturbed, amnesiac mind results in her absurd statement about her hat which is compounded by her passing aphasia as she returns home and encounters her brother along the way.

It is at this stage in the story that the second instance of aphasia occurs, when Laura encounters Laurie and he asks her whether her experience has been 'awful'. At this crucial point in the text Laura is unable adequately *either* to recall *or* to speak about her attitude to life in the face of its complexity:

⁷² See, for example, Donald S. Taylor, 'Crashing the Garden Party', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 4:4 (Winter, 1958-9), 361-2 and Daniel A. Weiss, 'The Garden Party of Proserpina', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 4:4 (Winter, 1958-9), 363-4. Marvin Magalaner comments: 'The death of Scott the carter postpones maybe forever the death of the heart in Laura – a death already suffered by the other Sheridan women.' See Magalaner, p. 114. Kate Fullbrook analyses Laura's 'affectation' and her romanticised identification with an idealised working class noting that when Laura looks on the dead carter's body, her response is still in the 'aesthetic mode of the party'. Kate Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), p. 122. Hubert Zapf observes that Laura's visit to the carter results in the 'timeless moment of her initiation' (Zapf, p. 52). While for Dominic Head, Laura's 'epiphany' is 'compromised' because 'her Sheridanese is inadequate for rendering the experience'. See Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 135-6.

⁷³ Christine Darrohn argues that anxieties about the working class are displaced from the carter onto the grieving women in the house thereby becoming conflated with anxieties about the 'maternal feminine'. See Christine Darrohn, "'Blown to Bits!": Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party" and the Great War', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 44.3 (1998), 513-39 (p. 526). Darrohn also suggests that Laura's nostalgia for 'the perfect afternoon' is linked to the First World war dead in that it 'veils the unspoken – the unspeakable – fantasy that the war's devastation be borne by the working class' (p. 532).

⁷⁴ Kleine, "'The Garden Party": A Portrait of the Artist', p. 371.

⁷⁵ *Katherine Mansfield: New Zealand Stories*, selected by Vincent O'Sullivan (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 10.

‘No’, sobbed Laura. ‘It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie –’ She stopped, she looked at her brother. ‘Isn’t life,’ she stammered, ‘isn’t life –’ But what life was she couldn’t explain. No matter. He quite understood.

‘Isn’t it, darling?’ said Laurie. (p. 413)

In his interpretation of this scene, Magalaner picks up on the implications of Mansfield’s letter to William Gerhardt. While Laura has largely viewed life in terms of comfortable generalisations before the fact of death enters her life she is unable to find a word that can take in all of life. For Magalaner, it doesn’t matter which word is used, whether ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘ugly’ or ‘beautiful’, ‘sad’ or ‘happy’: ‘What matters is that no one word suffices in a world that encompasses, though it may not always reconcile, all of them.’⁷⁶ For Carole Froude Durix, Laura ‘has had a glimpse of the afterlife which has given her a concept of duration and time outside the timeless frivolities of society circles’.⁷⁷ In her stammering to Laurie, Laura repeats the phrase ‘Isn’t life’ twice but Durix suggests she can only achieve ‘phatic’ utterance, that is, (barely) keeping a line of communication open. Thomas Day claims that while the ‘floating’ narrator in the story maintains an ‘ironic’ distance, the narration could at any moment ‘degenerate into a mode of ventriloquism’, with the closing lines of the story representing Laura’s ‘inarticulate meditation on life’.⁷⁸ But I am most sympathetic to Saralyn Daly’s argument that Mansfield’s strategy at this point is to leave the reader ‘to intuit the unspeakable in Laura’s inarticulate response’.⁷⁹ There are at least two possible outcomes as I see it: either Laurie then plays his part in echoing, empathically and emphatically, Laura’s aphasia; or Laura’s stammering stymies Laurie’s own confirmatory response. Either way, life, in this encounter, is figured as an ineffable mystery.

Reading with Bergson, the explanation of Laura’s condition is that Laura’s sensori-motor mechanisms have temporarily failed to find image-memories which enable her to respond to and recount in the present not just the encounter with the dead carter but the multiplicity of her confused and contradictory day. Laura’s amnesia and aphasia might suggest that she lacks *historical* self-understanding in the sense of not being able to benefit from memories from her past. Her forgetful yet awakening state might also suggest that she is struggling to resist becoming fully ‘conventional’. That is, for Laura it may be better to say nothing rather than to speak from a hegemonic class position, to be co-opted into

⁷⁶ Magalaner, p. 118.

⁷⁷ Carole Froude Durix, ‘Both Sides of the Broad Road in Katherine Mansfield’s ‘The Garden Party’ and Witi Ihimaera’s ‘This Life is Weary’, in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel and Michel Dupuis (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989), pp. 175-85 (p. 184).

⁷⁸ Day, p. 140.

⁷⁹ Saralyn R. Daly, *Katherine Mansfield*, rev. edn (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), p. 92.

dominant social dialect norms and speech patterns, or to attempt to inculcate the mores of death and mourning rituals.

Reading 2: Agraphia in 'By Moonlight'

I turn now to a story fragment, 'By Moonlight', not only because it contains the germ of the text of 'The Garden Party' and is, as such, an 'ur' text, but because I think it sheds light on another type of aphasia: Mansfield's 'agraphia'.⁸⁰ As one of the aphasic disorders outlined by William James, agraphia is a term given to those who have 'lost the power to *write*' and who 'cannot use the pen'.⁸¹ In a passage in which Mansfield breaks off the manuscript of 'By Moonlight', she provides a meta-commentary on the story:

This isn't bad, but at the same time it's not good

[...]

I am stuck beyond words – and again it seems to me that what I am doing has *no form!* I ought to finish my book of *stories first* and then when it's gone get down to my novel *Karori*.

Why I should be so passionately determined to disguise this I don't quite know. But here I lie pretending, as heaven knows how often I have done before, to write. Supposing I were to give up the pretence and really try? (pp. 400-1)⁸²

During the period in which the story fragment was written, Mansfield was staying in Switzerland, initially in Sierre and later in Montana; and she admits in a letter to Brett on 4 June 1921 that she is hurrying in case her illness catches up with her: 'Im working against time'.⁸³ There are several stories which Mansfield begins at this time, including 'Such a Sweet Old Lady', but which remain unfinished and are published posthumously in *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*. In late July she writes to Ottoline Morrell that while she has completed her commissioned stories for *The Sphere*, 'It is always the next story which is going to contain everything, and that next story is always just out of reach.'⁸⁴ The day after

⁸⁰ The fragment was first published by John Middleton Murry in *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1939), pp. 180-4 and at that point given a date of June-July 1921. It was later published in *TKMN*, 2, pp. 224-6. The text of the story I refer to is the one published in *CWKM2*, pp. 398-401. Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

⁸¹ James, *Principles*, 1, 1890, p. 40. James refers to individuals whose 'motor localization' is impaired and who are physically unable to write; I give the term an additional psychological inflection.

⁸² This 'interruption' in the text is dated by John Middleton Murry to September 1921 in the 'definitive' edition of Mansfield's *Journal* prefaced by Murry's own note: '*The following occurs in the middle of an unfinished MS. called "By Moonlight". "Karori" was the "novel" of which Prelude and At the Bay were – at one time – to have formed parts.*' See John Middleton Murry, ed., *Journal of Katherine Mansfield, 1904-1922, Definitive Edition* (London: Constable, 1954), p. 262.

⁸³ Letter to Dorothy Brett [4 June 1921], *CLKM*, 4, pp. 245-6 (p. 246).

⁸⁴ Letter to Ottoline Morrell, 24 July 1921, *CLKM*, 4, pp. 251-2 (p. 252).

she comments on her struggle to write, even though she is at her desk working every morning until lunchtime and from teatime until supper:

Oh, Heavens – how difficult Art is. Its the perpetual work at technique which is so hard. Its not enough to know what you want to say – but to be able to say it – to be equipped to say it!⁸⁵

In August she records that she does not know how she will write her next story.⁸⁶ At the same time, during August 1921, Mansfield has been working on ‘At the Bay’, as she tells Brett in several letters, and at the end of the same notebook for 30 August, she makes a list of twenty-five stories, most of which, in fact, she completed.⁸⁷ But by November of that year, she is in despair again:

Yes, for the last two weeks I have written scarcely anything. I have been idle; I have *failed*. Why? Many reasons. There has been a kind of confusion in my consciousness. It has seemed as though there was no time to write. [...] I haven’t felt able to yield to the kind of contemplation that is necessary. [...] Out of hand? Yes, that describes it – dissipated, vague, not positive, [...] – wasting time.⁸⁸

Perhaps more than any other of Mansfield’s statements about her inability to write, this one points to the pressures of time, a failure of memory and an impoverished ability to submit to story-making. Mansfield’s comment that she feels ‘out of hand’ is suggestive of the loss of the power to write, even to ‘handle’ a pen, and of the shadow upon her, not of the past, but of what will remain ‘unwritten’ in the future.

‘By Moonlight’ describes the accoutrements of beauty, upper-middle-class luxury and domesticity. There is affection and music, brightness and cheer. Yet there is also a sense of something vaguely sinister or uncanny inhabiting the text as well as a sense of the narrator’s distance: the ‘ghostly’ chatter from the kitchen sounds ‘far away’ and Mansfield’s narrator only gradually takes up Laura’s point of view. While the brother Laurie is in his ‘dark-room’, Laura is hiding on a landing window-sill and is puzzling over her life: ‘What was she to do?’ (p. 399). The oscillating description between brightly lit rooms and dark passages, openness and secrecy, and exterior and interior spaces, such as cupboards which

⁸⁵ Letter to Dorothy Brett [25 July 1921], *CLKM*, 4, p. 255.

⁸⁶ Newberry Notebook 5, xi.viii.1921; *TKMN* 2, p. 273; *CWKMA*, p. 379, from which this text is taken.

⁸⁷ Newberry Notebook 5, 30.viii.1921; *TKMN*, 2, p. 276; *CWKMA*, pp. 383-4, from which this text is taken.

⁸⁸ Newberry Notebook 6, 13.xi.1921; *TKMN*, 2, p. 277; *CWKMA*, pp. 387-8, from which this text is taken.

are imposing, empty and strange, suggests a sense of Mansfield's own ambivalence about her writing at this late stage in her life.

In this story fragment, Laura is 'waiting for someone', as Mansfield, perhaps, waits for inspiration followed by periods of imaginative fluency. As the text dwindles to its *lack* of an ending, Laura 'forgets' her resolve not to disturb her brother; she can no longer be alone with her fearful, doubting thoughts and heads towards Laurie's dark-room. Despite her anticipated pleasure at encountering her brother, the dark-room may be a covert textual clue for Mansfield's own anticipation of being silenced; it may *also* represent the sense that a surfeit of memories obliterates the capacity of language to articulate them; *and* that a lack of memories (the mind becoming dark) can stultify creativity. In the last paragraph it is Laura who approaches an interior space of darkness but it is Laurie who is doing the 'creative' work in his 'dark-room' (p. 400).

Although parts of 'By Moonlight' find their way into 'The Garden Party', what might be termed 'the inarticulacy of incompleteness' of the story could be seen as a form of stammering. There happens to be an intriguing, and belated, connection to Bergson, writing, agraphia and stammering. In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (translated into English in 1935), Bergson outlined the risks of carrying too far an immersion in 'a unique emotion, an impulse, an impetus received from the very depths of things' because too much novelty might result in a failure to communicate.⁸⁹ This immersive 'style' was subsequently called by Gilles Deleuze the 'stammering' of language, and given as an instance of 'Being like a foreigner in one's own language'.⁹⁰ The paradox in Mansfield's case, however, is that her agraphia and her hesitation occurred during the most productive period of her writing life, and as her life was drawing to an end, towards oblivion and permanent forgetting.

Reading 3: Oblivion

There exists a rather strange story fragment, 'It fell so softly, so gently', the writing of which John Middleton Murry dates to 1921 and which is therefore coterminous with the writing of 'The Garden Party'. The story was not published in Mansfield's lifetime and consists of two brief paragraphs, but it is suggestive for my purposes because it invokes a

⁸⁹ *TSMR*, p. 217.

⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 1977, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002 (p. 4). Quoted by Laci Mattison in her chapter on 'Bergson on Language', in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Ardoin, Gontarski and Mattison, pp. 323-4 (p. 324).

type of oblivion related to memory and forgetting.⁹¹ In this fragment the falling snow adopts the position of the narrator, advising the un-named ‘him’ of the story to forget:

‘Forget! Forget! All is blotted out, all is hidden – long ago,’ said the snow. ‘Nothing can ever bring it back – nothing can ever torture you again. There is no trace left. All is as if it never had been.’ (p. 435)

The ‘blotting out’ may invoke Mansfield’s agraphia, with the snow’s effacing return to whiteness or the blankness of the page. There may also be distant echoes of Joyce’s short story ‘The Dead’ in as much as it snows, obliteratingly, in both stories. In Mansfield’s story, footsteps are covered over, effectively blotted out, and an unidentified ‘she’ is lost and the ‘he’ of the story gains his freedom.

In this narrative fragment, the clock evidently frightens the snow, indicating that the clock is possibly expressing timely antagonism in choosing the very word at which to strike:

At that moment, upon that word [i.e. free] a clock struck one loud single stroke. It was so loud, so mournful, so like a despairing groan that the feathery snowflakes seemed to shiver, to hesitate an instant, to fall again faster than ever as though something had frightened them – – – (p. 436).

The antinomies between the clock and the snow might seem perfectly Bergsonian (representing clock time and the real time of duration), if they can be seen as being antipathetic. In these two enigmatic paragraphs, the reader does not know whether freedom is from time’s ravages, or from another human being. But if clock time wins out over the subtleties of temporal flow (snow), and consciousness and memory are confined to nothingness, Mansfield may have been signalling that she was not yet ready to encounter the release from temporality that might come with death’s oblivion.

Reading 4: Amnesia and Aphasia in ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’

‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, as Alpers notes, was begun at the Villa Isola Bella in Menton in the South of France in late November 1920 and finished on 13 December that year. It was published in the *London Mercury* in May 1921 and included in Mansfield’s short story collection *The Garden Party* in 1922.⁹² It was one of the few stories that

⁹¹ Dated 1921 by John Middleton Murry and first published under the title ‘Snow’ in *The Scrapbook*, pp. 173-4. It was also published in *TKMN*, 2, p. 254. The version I refer to here is published in *CWKM2*, pp. 435-6; further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

⁹² Katherine Mansfield, ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, *London Mercury*, 4:19, May 1921, 15-30; *Stories*, p. 566.

Mansfield felt was successful.⁹³ She makes a revealing comment in a letter to John Middleton Murry in November 1920 about the form of the story: ‘Its form is the form of *The Prelude* BUT written today – not then.’⁹⁴ And in January 1921 Mansfield wrote to Richard Murry more explicitly about the method she had used: ‘Its the outcome of the *Prelude* method – it just unfolds and opens. But I hope its an advance on *Prelude*. In fact I know its that because the technique is stronger.’⁹⁵ ‘Daughters’ has been approached in terms of time and narrative form in extremely insightful and probing ways by several critics.⁹⁶ Angela Smith has observed that the numbered sections have a direct function in the story in that they represent the ‘structural rhythms of order and temporality’ which are counterpoised by ‘the durational wavering of the sisters’ consciousness’ which provides a Bergsonian interpretation of time in the story.⁹⁷ Narrative structure can thus be seen to work against the temporal shifts in the characters’ consciousness in an overt dualism. Don W. Kleine, by contrast, suggests the story is ‘most hospitable’ to the phenomenological perspectives of time and space in narrative fiction advanced by Henri Poulet and Gaston Bachelard.⁹⁸ The deployment of the narrative strategies of flashback, dream image and interior monologue creates the seeming impossibility of a narrative “‘becoming”’.⁹⁹ My reading, while alert to the temporal dimension of the story, concentrates primarily on amnesia at the thematic level and on aphasia at the narrative level.

The daughters of the Colonel, Constantia (Con) and Josephine (Jug), look back at the longer past following their father’s recent death of the week before. It is their absent-mindedness, such as their inability to make up their minds about simple domestic issues, and their forgetfulness, which characterise their mental state, rather than a sense of grief or mourning. Constantia’s mind is characterised as being vague, while Josephine’s

⁹³ Mansfield wrote to William Gerhardt on 8 February 1922: ‘The only story that satisfies me to any extent is the one you understand so well, ‘The Daughters of the Late Col.’ & parts of *Je ne parle pas*.’ *CLKM*, 5, p. 55.

⁹⁴ Letter to John Middleton Murry, 27 November 1920, *CLKM*, 4, p. 123.

⁹⁵ Letter to Richard Murry, 1 January 1921, *CLKM*, 4, p. 156.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Gordon, *Katherine Mansfield*; Magalaner, *The Fiction of Katherine Mansfield*; Don W. Kleine, ‘Mansfield and the Orphans of Time’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, 24.3 (Autumn, 1978), 423-38; Tanya Grenfell-Williams, ‘Katherine Mansfield and Time’, in *The Fine Instrument*, ed. by Paulette Michel and Michel Dupuis (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989), pp. 71-9; and Gerardo Rodríguez-Salas, “‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’: Feminine Temporality in Katherine Mansfield’s Short Fiction”, in *The Short Story in English: Crossing Boundaries*, ed. by Gema Soledad Castillo García et al. (Alcalá de Henares: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alcalá, 2006), pp. 786-98.

⁹⁷ See Smith, ‘Katherine Mansfield and “Rhythm”’, p. 118.

⁹⁸ See Kleine, ‘Mansfield and the Orphans of Time’, p. 424, footnote 2, in which Kleine refers to Henri Poulet’s *Studies in Human Time* and Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 423; p. 425.

consciousness tends to fly off at tangents.¹⁰⁰ One aspect of what I regard as their amnesiac condition is the abandonment of measured time, as in this instance: ‘Constantia was still gazing at the clock. She couldn’t make up her mind if it was fast or slow. It was one or the other, she felt almost certain of that. At any rate, it had been’ (p. 276). This mental dithering is combined with a tendency of both women to repeat their memories of stultifying sameness, without, that is, the accretion of new memories associated with Bergson’s theory of memory: ‘Constantia looked for a moment as though she might begin going over all the other times’ (X, p. 278). This stasis traps the daughters in their gendered obedience and self-abnegation. Regarded in Bergsonian terms, a tendency to repeat suggests an adherence to a fixed idea of the past and of habit memory and may signal the daughters’ perplexity at being ‘released’ into a present from a past in which the *paterfamilias* has presided over them; they have been left stranded without the memories required for action in the present which leads to a failure of futurity. Subject even in his *absence* to their father’s continuing tyranny, the daughters are prevented from living in the continuous time of their duration.¹⁰¹

The daughters’ forgetting is ‘a kind of symbolic death’ depicted by the obscuring of the sun for Josephine, as Pamela Dunbar notes.¹⁰² When Constantia remembers lying in the light of a full moon secluded indoors, she had felt compelled to stretch herself out in sacrifice, as though ‘crucified’ (p. 282). Angela Smith suggests that these moments, in which Constantia stands before the Buddha and recalls her wonder, her longing, and her submission to the moon, express Bergson’s *élan vital*. When Constantia is ‘on the verge of acting freely and recovering possession of herself at the moment when she loses her awareness of clock time’ she ‘acknowledges the durational flow that she has always repressed’.¹⁰³ According to Smith, Constantia is ‘on the edge of rebarbarising herself’ but it is ‘habitual self-denial’ which prevents this from happening (p. 119). I would add to this perceptive view that between the thieving sun, with its hints of the poetry of John Donne, and the crucifying

¹⁰⁰ The text of the story I use here is that published in *CWKM2*, pp. 266-83 (p. 270; p. 275). Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

¹⁰¹ For an argument about discontinuity in Mansfield’s writing, see David Trotter, ‘Modernism Reloaded: The Fiction of Katherine Mansfield’, *Affirmations: of the modern*, 1.1 (Autumn, 2013), 21-43. Trotter argues that rather than favouring ‘continuity’, Mansfield’s later writing was shaped by ‘energies [...] more spasmodic – more discontinuous, more jittery’ than the concepts of *durée* and *élan vital* which were in circulation at the time (p. 24). He outlines what he calls a ‘bicameral’ narrative structure to explore several of Mansfield’s stories, including ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ in which the action begins in one place and ends in another (p. 33), the narrative purpose of which is to ‘channel arousal’ or energy ‘without sublimating it into meaning’ (p. 35).

¹⁰² Pamela Dunbar, *Radical Mansfield: Double Discourse in Katherine Mansfield’s Short Stories* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 156.

¹⁰³ See Smith, ‘Katherine Mansfield and “Rhythm”’, p. 119. Further references to this article are given in brackets in the text.

moon, the daughters' natural world *erodes*. Just like their dead mother's fading photograph, the daughters' lives are bleached of colour and light.

Where Smith finds positive renderings of Bergsonian duration in the story, I read these more negatively. For instance, Smith argues that Josephine's musing about sending their father's watch to their brother Benny in a corset-box is a transgressive image in which feminine duration comically *subverts* masculine temporality by means of a concealed aspect of women's bodies (p. 118). I read the conversation about whether or not to despatch the watch as indicating, rather, that the daughters are on the margins of clock time which is the time of history, empire, chronology and 'progress', while their individual sense of durational time is occluded. They are therefore not only 'outside' time, but the rapid temporal shifts of the narrative back and forth between past and present suggest an anxiety about time with the 'stopped' watch signifying the 'winding down' of time to what becomes the 'now' of their forgetting.

The times when Constantia and Josephine *do* remember are signalled by colour for Smith, indicating that a change is about to happen and that the sisters '*dare* to bring memory into the durational present' (p. 118, emphasis added). While I agree that there are textual hints about memory-led anticipation, such thoughts are abandoned. An example is at the beginning of scene XII in which Constantia and Josephine are prompted to imagine that they no longer have to silence the barrel-organ in the street outside in order to placate their father because he is no longer alive. The sound of the barrel-organ evokes an explicit memory that a week has passed since their father's death. But that Josephine finds this knowledge disturbing (rather than liberating) is symbolised both by her strange, faint smile and the square of sunlight which is 'pale red' and then 'almost golden'. The word 'almost' is telling, as is the preceding description of the mote of sun which 'came and went and came' (p. 280). Josephine's insight is not only fleeting but elusive and ungraspable; and the daughters' memories flicker back and forth between remembering and forgetting in amnesiac distortion. This scene leads up to the end of the story when the daughters' memories and their lives are effectively brought to an abrupt end, foreclosing the possibility for the reader of imagining narrative continuity for the characters.

At the narrative level, the end of the story enacts what might be regarded as a stylistic amnesia, particularly in its use of punctuation. I quote in full the passage which presents Constantia's attempts to say something meaningful 'about the future and what....' (p. 282) The missing words may be 'comes next' or 'we are to do', either of which would

anticipate a future. This trailing away of language is also a marker of aphasia in as much as the dialogue fails due to the sisters' conjoint inability to remember what they want to say:

'Don't you think perhaps –' she began.

But Josephine interrupted her. 'I was wondering if now –' she murmured. They stopped; they waited for each other.

'Go on, Con,' said Josephine.

'No, no, Jug; after you,' said Constantia.

'No, say what you were going to say. You began,' said Josephine.

'I ... I'd rather hear what you were going to say first,' said Constantia.

'Don't be absurd, Con.'

'Really, Jug.'

'Connie!'

'Oh, *Jug!*'

A pause. Then Constantia said faintly, 'I can't say what I was going to say, Jug, because I've forgotten what it was ... that I was going to say.'

Josephine was silent for a moment. She stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. The she replied shortly, 'I've forgotten too.' (XII, p. 282)

Aside from the comic absurdity of the exchange and the Beckett-like sense of the ruin of language as well as the Bergsonian sense of the rueing of language, there is pathos in this entropic running down, and out, of things to say. The two women are unable to remember the words to express themselves but they support each other in their inarticulacy and forgetfulness. The pauses, the silences, the hesitations and the interruptions, the tentative advances, retreats and the denials are realised, paradoxically of course, in language but in small negative words such as the repeated 'no', 'don't' and 'can't', while the dashes, ellipses and the exclamation marks denote that time (the sun going down on them) has run out for the daughters, and memory has been eroded. Not only do speech and memory run out, the sudden and decisive end of the story reminds the reader that writing has been discontinued; perhaps the most potent image for this being the extraordinary description of the note left outside the sisters' door, its writing completely effaced by steam from the jug on which it was left.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ One meaning of 'jug' (which is implied in Jug's name) is to 'imprison' while 'con' (similarly implied in Con's name) contains the meaning 'deception' and 'to memorise'.

William Gerhardi, as Vincent O’Sullivan notes, wrote in positive terms to Mansfield about the story, saying ‘I think it is, and in particular the last long paragraph towards the end, of quite amazing beauty’; while about the story as a whole, he wrote: ‘I don’t remember ever reading anything so intolerably real – *stifling* – since “The Three Sisters”.’¹⁰⁵ While Gerhardi celebrates the quality of the writing as well as the way in which the scene is deftly handled in delivering a lack of consolation to the reader, he accentuates the story’s oppressiveness. Mansfield claimed she also saw beauty in the daughters’ lives. Yet any beauty seems tempered by the sense of their moribund existence. Mansfield was clear about the deliberate conclusion to the story, one of tentative hopes dashed, of time in decline, of the future denied:

All was meant, of course, to lead up to that last paragraph, when my two flowerless ones turned with that timid gesture, to the sun. ‘Perhaps *now*.’ And after that, it seemed to me, they died as truly as Father was dead.¹⁰⁶

Mansfield’s comment may also allude to Thomas Hardy’s apparently favourable reaction to the story, having read it in the *London Mercury*, and which he conveyed either in a note given personally to John Middleton Murry at Hardy’s home, Max Gate, or in a letter from Hardy’s wife, now lost.¹⁰⁷ Mansfield regarded Hardy’s reaction as evidence of his having mis-read the story, as she explained to Dorothy Brett in a letter of 11 November 1921: ‘Even dear old Hardy told me to write more about those sisters. As if there was any more to say!’¹⁰⁸ Mansfield had finished with the daughters, perhaps even to the extent of wanting to forget them. Certainly the aphasia (Con’s inability to speak) and amnesia (she has forgotten what she was going to say) at the end of the story do seem to take the reader beyond Bergson’s notion of recoverable forgetting. Mansfield, I suggest, supervenes on Bergson’s theory of memory in this story both in de-mobilising the sisters’ processes of remembering and in demoting their memories to the realms of the forgettable.

In the light of writing ‘Daughters’, Mansfield’s understanding about the mind seemed to change. In a letter to Richard Murry a month after having written the story, she speculated about ‘a whole mind – with absolutely nothing left out’.¹⁰⁹ The context for her comments is that she had expressed regret for the way in which prose was being written by her contemporaries who, she feared, were ‘still cutting up sections rather than tackling the

¹⁰⁵ *CLKM*, 4, p. 249, note 2.

¹⁰⁶ Letter to William Gerhardi, 23 June 1921, *CLKM*, 4, p. 249.

¹⁰⁷ Alpers gives the former explanation in *Life*, note 37, p. 446; and in *Stories*, p. 567, whereas O’Sullivan refers to the former but suggests the latter in *CLKM*, 4, note 2, p. 318.

¹⁰⁸ *CLKM*, 4, p. 316.

¹⁰⁹ Letter to Richard Murry, 17 January 1921, *CLKM*, 4, p. 165.

whole of a mind'.¹¹⁰ Her concerns may also prefigure 'A Married Man's Story' which she worked on in August of 1921, which represents a mind that cannot stop remembering ('with [...] nothing left out'), but that remembers horribly and unreliably.

Reading 5: Hyper-Reminiscence in Je ne parle pas français and 'A Married Man's Story'

In this last reading, I offer a brief analysis of the much earlier *Je ne parle pas français* and the later 'A Married Man's Story' using a type of unforgetting which I speculatively term 'hyper-reminiscence'. I therefore supplement Bergson's ideas in *Matter and Memory* which, according to Gunter, are focused on an 'all-preserving human reminiscence'.¹¹¹ The *inability* to forget also invokes Freud and I will not overlook a possible Freudian interpretation. In both stories, the past seems a burden for the characters which is more characteristically Freudian. The idea of 'hyper-reminiscence' is also an inversion of Ricoeur's idea of 'happy memory', in that the memories involved are dismal and degrading.

Hyper-reminiscence in my characterisation has a 'pathological' element to it. While, as noted, Bergson has little to say about the inadvertent (or indeed, the culpable) distortions or manipulations of memory, in *Matter and Memory* he does allow for memories which may become detached in cases where there is a 'violent emotion'. In such cases, the individual may be cut off from his or her history.¹¹² This type of 'detached' memory seems to share elements of Freud's idea of the repression of memory-traces. Bergson also asserts that memories we *believe* to have been abolished may resurface and we may 'live over again [...] forgotten scenes of childhood'.¹¹³ In Bergson's schema, however, such memories are not distorted. If for Bergson any memory is pristine and persistent, it is also new each time it is remembered, in as much as it is accompanied by all previous memories. Thus a memory of childhood remembered a month ago is the same memory yet different from that memory remembered a week ago in that other memories have, in the meantime, accumulated.

Je ne parle pas français was written in Bandol in France in January and early February 1918. It was dated 1919, but was published in early 1920 by John Middleton Murry's Heron Press.¹¹⁴ In this story the cynical first-person male narrator's hyper-

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Pete A. Y. Gunter, 'Bergson and Proust: A Question of Influence', in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Ardoin, Gontarski and Mattison, pp. 157-76 (p. 158).

¹¹² *M&M*, p. 224.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 200.

¹¹⁴ See *Stories*, p. 559.

reminiscence involves distortion and a sense of cynical yet wounded memory. While Raoul Duquette asserts that he rejects his past, he is clearly disturbed by it, and, in particular, by the memory of a childhood sexual trauma. The story, as Kate Fullbrook has observed, concerns 'the pressure of the past on the present' and is 'deeply concerned with regret'.¹¹⁵ Another way of looking at Duquette's first-person account is that he falsifies his past by recalling his earlier memories, which may be 'false' memories. When Duquette wavers between retelling apparent truths and apparent falsehoods, this ambivalence produces a heightened sense of the fallibility and distancing of the narrator.¹¹⁶ As a writer Duquette's autobiographical past is also subject to a present fictionalising process; what Cherry Hankin calls his 'narcissistic confession'.¹¹⁷ Given the irony with which he approaches his own fictional writings, the authenticity of his memories as a first-person narrator of his own life must be put in doubt.

All the signs of an unresolved Freudian psycho-drama are in place in this story. There is Duquette's obsessive repetition in returning to the café where he has apparently humiliated others: 'I enjoyed one of these moments the first time I ever came in here. That's why I keep coming back, I suppose.'¹¹⁸ The repetitious behaviour, however, lacks the 'working through' undertaken in psychoanalysis and places the reader in the uncomfortable position of 'listening' to Duquette's confessions. Duquette's distorted narcissism is exemplified in his inability to really see himself for who he is when he looks in a mirror (p. 114). Psychoanalysis is invoked in his boastful claim about his 'subconscious' mind: 'I am going to write about things that have never been touched before. I am going to make a name for myself as a writer about the submerged world' (p. 117). Yet these Freudian elements collide with more Bergsonian ones, for example, when Duquette reveals that he is aware that he can never recapture an experience exactly: 'you never do recover the same thing that you lose' (p. 115) evokes Bergson's idea that the past, while not lost, cannot be repeated. That said, Duquette is unable to see the potential for using his past memory for action in the present. He regards the past in terms of loss, an attitude which points to an underlying abjection.

Falling between 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' and 'The Garden Party', the unfinished 'A Married Man's Story' was written in late August 1921 and was published

¹¹⁵ See Fullbrook, p. 90.

¹¹⁶ See Daly, p. 52.

¹¹⁷ See Hankin, *Katherine Mansfield and Her Confessional Stories*, p. 157.

¹¹⁸ The version of the story I use here is published in *CWKM2*, pp. 112-34 (p. 113). Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

posthumously and incomplete in *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.¹¹⁹ Several critics have approached the story from a Freudian perspective: Hankin focuses on childhood trauma, regarding the married man's 'second self' as a metaphor for the unconscious or for repression, and his childhood as fantasy; while Alex Calder treats the story entirely as a case history.¹²⁰ More recently, Bruce Harding has provided a provocative interpretation of the text as a 'psychological fable about a mentally ill male in the grip of a form of mania and who is dangerously dissociated from other people: radically alienated and emotionally sterile to a horrifying degree'.¹²¹ Pamela Dunbar, taking a reader-response approach, suggests that the reader is witness to the married man's steadfast 'determination to uncover his past', compared to being confronted by Duquette's 'repressions' in *Je ne parle pas français*.¹²²

Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr have, I think rightly, distinguished the attitudes towards the past held by Raoul Duquette and the nameless narrator of 'A Married Man's Story' in suggesting that the latter story's first-person narrator 'accepts fully that the past influences the present, is indeed part of the present', with the use of the present tense placing the reader in 'close relationship' with the narrator at the start of each scene.¹²³ Hanson and Gurr claim that what is most shocking about the story is the narrator's way of directly addressing the reader: 'We are not used to being addressed so summarily and directly in fiction: we are unused, as it were, to the text's need of us.'¹²⁴ The story, I agree, brings up an issue of textual intimacy between the narrator and the reader; as another of Mansfield's rare male first-person narratives, it may also be the case that Mansfield was ill at ease in probing into the recesses of a disturbed male consciousness.

The married man's comment, 'While I am here, I am there', reverses Bergson's idea that memory joins the present: the narrator's pathologised self is located in the traumatic events of an abusive childhood while the multiple recurring memories of these events suffuse

¹¹⁹ Alpers dates its composition to around 23 August 1921 when Mansfield was in the midst of writing 'At the Bay' and before she embarked on 'The Garden Party' (See *Stories*, p. 572).

¹²⁰ See Hankin, *Katherine Mansfield and Her Confessional Stories*, p. 170; p. 171; p. 172 and Alex Calder, 'My Katherine Mansfield' in *Katherine Mansfield: In from the Margin*, ed. by Roger Robinson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), pp. 119-36.

¹²¹ Bruce Harding, 'Unmasking Desire and Need: An Exploration into the "textual Mansfield"', Eros, Repression and the Staging of the Lawrentian / Appetitive Self, unpublished paper given at the 'Katherine Mansfield: Masked and Unmasked' conference, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 8-11 February, 2013, pp. 1-34 (p. 29). I am grateful to the author for sending me a copy of his paper to read after the conference.

¹²² Dunbar, *Radical Mansfield*, p. 84.

¹²³ Hanson and Gurr, p. 110; p. 108.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

and distort his actions in the present.¹²⁵ Mansfield reworks Bergson's idea that the past is potentially available and pushes it to the extremes of hyper-remembrance: what if too much of the past presses relentlessly onto the present and prevents a man from living? What if the man's present is taken up with deflecting his wounded memories from his family? What if the past is so active that it has the potential power to insinuate itself into his married life, perturbing and perverting it, and corrupting his child's future?

Hanson and Gurr observe that colour is used to evoke the married man's childhood and his father's chemist's shop, the scene of some of his childhood trauma, recalling Mansfield's symbolic use of colour also in 'Daughters' discussed above. Windows, posters and his father's bald head take on the reflections from the coloured glass bottles evoking the 'feverish vividness of a dream-image'.¹²⁶ While the lurid and bright colours of scarlet and yellow, red and gold suggest 'perverse sexual relationships' for Hanson and Gurr, the glass jars may also symbolise the married man's memories which are 'unstoppable'; they are so much a 'living part' of him (p. 387). The first-person narrator, however, denies that he remembers everything. The 'dark stretches, the blanks, are much bigger than the bright glimpses' (p. 386). The idea of 'blanks' once more suggests the blank page on which the married man is attempting to record his traumatic life-story. His memories are a site both of textual inscription (his own narrated story) and of contradiction (those of the unreliable narrator). In this formulation, memory is a text of repressions, a site of warped possibilities.

The 'married man' is at his writing desk at the beginning of narrating his story; he is in a reverie evoked by the 'wavering reflections of the lamps' (p. 380). His wife is a shadowy figure. While he is not minded to wonder what she might be thinking, the reader may be moved to do so because the vacuum of actually transcribed thoughts draws in all the more forcefully the reader's anticipations of what she must be thinking, or feeling. This lack of empathy adds to the sense of this being a story about failed consolation: the father, the mother, the woman seeking a 'pick-up', the married man and his wife, even the married man's writing. The narrator provides strong sensory and often emphatic descriptions of his hyper-memories narrated in the present tense: of sounds ('the whole earth is [...] sounding with a soft quick patter'; 'How loudly those tied-up boats knock against one another!'); sights and smells ('peering into moist smelling summer-houses'; 'How strong the sea smells!'); touch ('brushing through deserted gardens'; 'you know how soft and almost crumbling the wood of a summer-house is in the rain'); and movement ('running from

¹²⁵ Katherine Mansfield, 'A Married Man's Story', *CWKM* 2, pp. 379-90 (p. 380). Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

¹²⁶ Hanson and Gurr, p. 110.

shelter to shelter, dodging someone, swerving by someone else') (p. 380). But they serve only to give a manic hypostasising aspect to his troubled story of psychological damage.

The married man's self-diagnosis is of having been a child suckled by wolves, a pathologically distorted Freudian memory. His past dominates: 'Who am I, in fact, as I sit here at this table, but my own past? If I deny that, I am nothing.' (p. 387) But this story is itself one of retractions and admitted 'falseness' (p. 384). The married man's ambivalence is represented by his longing to subject his writing to 'the plain truth, as only a liar can tell it' (p. 384). The narrator may be suggesting that all art is artifice and lies; or that his memories are false; or that his truths are warped by painful experience into falsehoods, and that memory is distorted in the hands of one who remembers unfaithfully. In the light of the narrator's confessed unreliability, the narrative itself poses the question of whether the story itself still has the reader's involved attention. Unreliable memory becomes a litmus test of the married man's fictionalising tendency: memory distortion as the re-definitive basis of narrative:

It is just as close, as strange, as puzzling, and in spite of all the countless times I have recalled the circumstances, I know no more now than I did then whether I dreamed them or whether they really occurred. (p. 388)

A Freudian phantasmatic aspect undermines the narrative. Finally the narrator explains that he 'saw it all, but not as I had seen before.... Everything lived, but everything' (p. 390), and while the married man's memories survive, they are closer to Freud's notion of repression than to Bergson's belief in efficacious memory.

The inconclusive end to the un-concluded story is illuminating: 'I did not consciously turn away from the world of human beings [...] but I from that night did beyond words consciously turn towards my silent brothers....' (p. 390). There are several points to note about the final words of the unfinished story. First, this is an ending, of sorts, as the narrator has recounted his troubling memories. Secondly, he turns from humankind to the wolves (with its echoes of Freud's 'wolf man' perhaps) and to a wildness that takes him 'beyond words', and out of the arena of language which separates humans from other species. Thirdly, in that he is 'beyond words' may be Mansfield's comment on her own stance as a writer of this particular story: that she is herself beyond writing anything further. It may be that the story cannot continue, the final words inscribing a necessary hesitation in which imagination cannot fill the aporia. And yet, the typographic lack of closure might also just signal the possibility of there being more to say.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the complexities of forgetting. I have aligned Mansfield's approach to forgetting with that of Bergson, through a discussion of aphasia and amnesia, suggesting that forgetting need not be a complete annihilation of memory, but a temporary or reversible state, using a reading of 'The Garden Party' as evidence. I have also provided a contrasting reading of 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' suggesting that in this story, Mansfield confronts the idea of the fragility of memory over its persistence, demonstrating that some memories cannot be effectively recalled. The daughters put their father out of mind; he is uncannily recalled, but ultimately the daughters' memories are permanently erased, buried like their father. I have then provided a further Freudian-inflected reading of two of Mansfield's stories in which my idea of 'hyper-reminiscence' is evinced particularly in first-person male narrators, suggesting a gendered dimension to distorted recollection.

In this chapter I have also suggested that not only do the stories discussed evince the Bergsonian idea of the survival of the past and of the mind's potential for recalling memories, they put pressure on this idea. The cumulative effect of my readings (Laura's hesitation about speaking, the step into the dark-room, the effaced note and the silenced sisters, even the negatives in the title of '*Je ne parle pas ...*', and the married man's being 'beyond words') seems to suggest a deep scepticism of language and perhaps even an unconscious anxiety or fear of the effacement of memory on the part of Mansfield which brings her into contemporaneous alignment with Bergson. The concern with blackness (the black hat) and the blankness (the whiteness of snow) of the empty page may echo Bergson's view that language is inadequate while simultaneously demonstrating that it is the best tool available to the creative artist.

Bergson's view of memory has in the course of time been challenged by poststructuralist accounts which present language, narrative and storytelling as a means of securing memory by textualising it. Arguably, a poststructuralist account of memory would start from a Husserlian rather than a Bergsonian base, and from that position maintain that all 'retentions' will disappear unless they are secured through some act of memorialisation. This view is in stark contrast to Bergson's theory that we need to strategically 'forget' and 'select' from an intact and accumulating 'pure memory'.¹²⁷ However, a type of 'retention' does come

¹²⁷ I am unable here to review the literature in neuroscience or the current endeavours within biology to understand memory and memory loss at the molecular and cellular level. What can be said,

into play for Bergson when thinking about time and memory: while the temporality of time consists in the *passing* of one moment to another, crucially, the latter moment always *retains* the former.¹²⁸ In my final chapter, I explore the ways in which Bergson extends the idea of memory retention from inside the human mind to the whole of the cosmos and does so by invoking the idea of an all-embracing, pervasive cosmic mind. In re-examining epiphany from a Bergsonian perspective, I read Mansfield's story 'Bliss' in terms of the opening of consciousness and memory to an insistently creative cosmic spirit.

however, is that Bergson did not pave the way for neuroscientific theories of, for instance, the absolute loss of both memory function and memories in cases of dementia.

¹²⁸ See Henri Bergson [1922], *Duration and Simultaneity*, ed. by Robin Durie, trans. by L. Jacobson and M. Lewis (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000), p. xv.

Chapter Four

Mansfield, Mysticism and Cosmic Memory: The Bergsonian Epiphany in 'Bliss'

The splendid rhythm of Life is absent. [...] Silence hung motionless over the church, the shadow of her great wings darkened everything. [...] The High Altar shone mystical – vision-like. – Katherine Mansfield¹

We single out, we bring into the light, we put up higher. – Katherine Mansfield²

Introduction

In this chapter I develop the idea that by 'memory', Bergson means both consciousness and spirit. In his Huxley Lecture, 'Life and Consciousness', delivered at the University of Birmingham on 24 May 1911, Bergson explicitly states that consciousness 'means, before everything else, memory'.³ And in *Matter and Memory* he asserts that '[w]hen we pass from pure perception to memory, we definitely abandon matter for spirit'.⁴ In the same passage, Bergson also postulates that '[n]o doubt also the material universe itself [...] is a kind of consciousness'.⁵ With these three statements in view, I argue that Bergson turns in his later works to thinking about memory as a form of cosmic or universal consciousness or spirit. The notion of memory-as-spirit or cosmic memory is, in my view, not simply reducible to a post-Cartesian split between the immanent consciousness of the subject and the transcendence of the external world. Neither is it a purely ontological antithesis between immanence, understood as that which is within being, and transcendence, understood as that which is above or beyond being, including the Christian 'God'.⁶ Rather, I

¹ Katherine Mansfield, prose vignette dated '1.X.06' [Notebook 1, qMS-1242], published in *CWKM4*, p. 23.

² Katherine Mansfield, notes on the work of Hans Vaihinger's *Die Philosophie des Als Ob*, in *CWKM4*, p. 346.

³ Henri Bergson, 'Life and Consciousness', in *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. by H. Wildon Carr (London: Macmillan, 1920), pp. 1-28 (p. 5). Bergson goes on to say in this same passage: 'All consciousness, then, is memory, – conservation and accumulation of the past in the present' (p. 5).

⁴ *M&M*, p. 313.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *The Edinburgh Dictionary of Continental Philosophy*, ed. by John Protevi (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 303-4. I concede that in the later works of *Creative Evolution* and *Morality and Religion*, Bergson is unable to relinquish the idea of 'God' as a supra-being or supra-consciousness entirely.

contend that immanence and transcendence are coterminously held in relation to a continuous creative consciousness, memory or spirit regarded as a form of mystical 'ultimate reality'. This 'spirit' is to do with Bergson's concept of *élan vital* or 'vital impulse' which he outlines in *Creative Evolution*, a work in which he also extends consciousness to the cosmos at large.

Why, though, invoke the mystical? I do so, because mystical discourse was prominent in the period in which Bergson and Mansfield were being read in Britain; because the mystical provided Bergson with a set of concepts which took him further in the development of his philosophical thinking; because these concepts can be transposed to a literary setting, providing a particularly rich apparatus for reading Mansfield's writing; and because mysticism is related to the search for ultimate reality which is also a philosophical quest. On this latter point, Leszek Kolakowski observes that Bergson's metaphysics develops a distinctive 'cosmology' which shares elements of Western mystical discourse: 'the Whole is of the same nature as myself. The time-generating life of the consciousness is the model for the universe'.⁷ And that Bergson himself explains mysticism as a 'manifestation of the primordial divine energy' provides the *élan vital* with mystical underpinnings. Just as Bergson speculates about this aspect of philosophical process – a mystical metaphysics, we might say – I postulate a more mystical Bergson than contemporary critics would perhaps entertain.⁸

This chapter is grounded in the idea that mysticism and literary epiphany share the property of revelation or that which is 'disclosed'. I propose a Bergsonian approach to epiphany which is based on reinterpreting the 'moment' as time-filled and continuous, such that epiphany opens out from the memory of the individual mind to the memory of the cosmos when certain conditions are met. The Bergsonian epiphany differs in intensity from the ordinary experiences of everyday life. In analysing Mansfield's story 'Bliss' I suggest the protagonist experiences an epiphanic state of mystical rapture. This transcendent feeling of 'bliss' is compromised, however, when the revelations in the story provide knowledge of the carnal, earth-bound body which undermine the sense of mystical oneness with cosmic spirit. In the course of the chapter I also suggest that it is time to revalorise the 'extraordinary' over the 'ordinary' in the context of recent work in modernist studies on the 'everyday'. I begin by establishing the importance of mysticism to the period, to Bergson's developing philosophy and to Mansfield's experimental literary technique; I then re-evaluate the

⁷ Leszek Kolakowski, *Bergson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

modernist moment and literary epiphany before turning to the Bergsonian epiphany which lends itself especially well to my reading of individual and cosmic memory in 'Bliss'.

Mysticism

In historical terms, the development of Western mysticism, and with it a monism which recognises the search for a single unknown being or higher power, can be seen as a response to a late nineteenth-century scientific culture in which an overt materialism prevailed. It may be that materialism so pressured the modern psyche that diverse but related practices such as mysticism, spiritualism, theosophical thought, occultism and magic forced materialism into more open contemporary engagement and scrutiny. While these movements all have antecedents in the nineteenth century, they arguably acquire even more purchase on culture, belief and the mind in the twentieth century, especially during and after the First World War.⁹ In the literary context, Virginia Woolf's article on 'Modern Fiction' captures the idea that modernist writers especially looked to the 'spiritual' in the aftermath of the 'materialism' of the Edwardian novelists.¹⁰ Pericles Lewis argues that it was modernist writers who experimented with form in an attempt to make narrative structure 'more capable of describing transcendent experiences'.¹¹ In re-evaluating the notion that the population at this time was somehow lacking religious belief, Lewis outlines his idea of the 'secular sacred' which finds its expression in modernist literary experimentation.¹² While Mansfield does not figure in his discussion, he finds in Virginia Woolf's experimentation with multiple and 'intertwining' streams of consciousness a means to produce a 're-enchantment of the world' and a 'new form of spirituality independent of the Christian God' which was appropriate for modern times.¹³ This association between changes in literary form and patterns of spiritual feeling in society is of course entirely compatible with theories of modernist fiction which see inner focalisation, psychologisation (and its expression as 'spirit'), as refuges from the material world.

In discussing H.D.'s 'writing on the wall', May Sinclair's 'ecstasies', Mary Butt's 'mystic intuition' and Virginia Woolf's childhood 'moments of being' in terms of mystical

⁹ For a view of the rise of the occult in the last decade of the nineteenth century, see Francis King's discussion of 'The Magical Decade', in *The Magical World of Aleister Crowley* (London: Arrow Books, 1977), p. 8.

¹⁰ A shift in literary form towards the 'modern psychological novel' finds an antecedent in the 'psychologizing of religious experience' by William James and Sigmund Freud in their explorations of the borders of consciousness. See King, p. 50.

¹¹ Pericles Lewis, *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 20.

¹² Lewis, p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 143; p. 144.

experiences, Heather Ingman points to women writers' particular observance of a spiritual dimension in their writing, but not necessarily one which eschewed a Christian God.¹⁴ The link between transcendence and modernist women authors' innovations in literary practice, however, suggests that the binaries of 'materialism' and 'spirit' were hierarchised along gendered lines. In my view, of all the British women literary modernists, it was May Sinclair who engaged most fully with Christian mysticism on philosophical and literary levels. Sinclair devoted a chapter to explicating 'The New Mysticism' in her philosophical work, *A Defence of Idealism*, asserting that the mystical quest for 'Unity' or 'Ultimate Reality' is a metaphysical one.¹⁵ She also brings Bergson into her discussion, commenting that he sees, like the mystic, that 'the process of Becoming is a spiritual process of ascension'.¹⁶ In her later work, *The New Idealism*, Sinclair acknowledges that there are forms of consciousness beyond the human and forms of space-time systems which are derived from the 'ultimate consciousness which is God'.¹⁷

In Sinclair's novel, *Mary Olivier: A Life*, the protagonist experiences intimations of the divine which help define her sense of self.¹⁸ In the novel, these instances of 'secret happiness' that are 'like God' are described as being similar to a mystical revelation:

She could never tell when it was coming, nor what it would come from. It had something to do with the trees standing up in the golden white light. It had come before with a certain sharp white light flooding the fields, flooding the room.¹⁹

The final words of the novel, 'If it never came again I should remember', indicate that what secures mystical knowledge for Mary is memory.²⁰ It should be noted that Katherine Mansfield, however, criticised Sinclair's novel in a review for the *Athenaeum* for its 'vast barn of impressions' and rejected Sinclair's psychological approach of rendering multiple sensory stimuli.²¹ While Mansfield herself claimed to have 'a terribly sensitive mind which receives every impression', she also professed that it was the duty of the writer to 'single out, [...] bring into the light, [...] put up higher'.²² Writing therefore elevated the ordinary to a

¹⁴ Heather Ingman, 'Religion and the Occult in Women's Modernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Women Writers*, ed. by Maren Tova Linett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 187-202.

¹⁵ May Sinclair, *A Defence of Idealism* (London: Macmillan, 1917), p. 272.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁷ May Sinclair, *The New Idealism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 246.

¹⁸ May Sinclair, *Mary Olivier: A Life* [1919] (London: Virago Press, 1980), p. 192.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144; p. 93.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

²¹ Katherine Mansfield, 'The New Infancy', a review of *Mary Olivier: A Life* by May Sinclair, *Athenaeum*, 4651, 20 June 1919, 494; reprinted in *N&N*, pp. 40-3; and collected in *CWKM3* (pp. 478-80), from which the text is taken.

²² *CWKM4*, p. 409; p. 346.

spiritually transcendent and extraordinary state. Mansfield also complained that Sinclair's 'surface impressions' prevented the reader from exploring the 'mystery of life', implying any 'higher' truth unknowable except by divine revelation.²³

According to Alex Owen, a renewed interest in mysticism occurred at the *fin de siècle* as 'many looked to a re-formulated spirituality as a vital precursor of the coming age'.²⁴ Seeking solace in spiritual truths was part of the complex constellation of being modern. In the pre-war period, mysticism gained ground as writers such as Friedrich von Hugel in *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1908) and Rufus Jones in *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909) provided accounts of mysticism's principal tenets, while Caroline Stephen, Virginia Woolf's aunt, published several books on Quaker mysticism, including *Light Arising: Thoughts on the Central Radiance* (1908) and *The Vision of Faith* (1911). Evelyn Underhill, a pacifist and Christian convert, theological editor for the *Spectator* and a reviewer for *Time and Tide*, became an influential commentator on mysticism in the second decade of the twentieth century with her book, *Mysticism* (1911). Underhill defined mysticism as 'the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order'.²⁵ In this formulation, rather than seeking the divine within, the human spirit looks to a unity with a higher being or divine spirit via mystic revelation. By the outbreak of the First World War, the new mysticism or 'mystical revival' was in evidence and fully established by its end, and linked at that time to philosophical idealism and European vitalism.

In his Gifford Lectures given at the University of Edinburgh in 1901 and 1902, William James defined religious feeling explicitly in relation to the transcendent or divine as '*the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine*'.²⁶ In his later lectures, James related personal religious experience directly to particular mystical states of consciousness.²⁷ In doing so, he identified four 'marks' associated with the mystical: ineffability (referring to direct experience); noetic quality (a state of insight inaccessible to the intellect); transiency (in which insights fade quickly and may not be recoverable in memory); and passivity (where the will is in a submissive state and associated

²³ CWKM3, p. 479.

²⁴ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 5.

²⁵ Evelyn Underhill, [1911; 12th edn, 1930], *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (New York, Dover Publications, 2002), p. xiv.

²⁶ William James [1902], *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 31.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

by James with automatic writing and mediumistic trances).²⁸ These four signifying aspects of the mystical state correlate with some of Bergson's ideas, especially those of direct apprehension and of intuition as opposed to intellect, although James differs from Bergson in his description of memory and ephemerality. Where James's distinctive approach to the mystical is, I think, taken up by Bergson in his later writing is in the sense of intensity combined with abandonment to a momentous or exceptional experience.²⁹ James based his explanations on accounts taken from writers such as Charles Kingsley, John Addington Symonds and Henri-Frédéric Amiel, whose recollections of mystical experiences are couched in terms of trance, spiritual possession and access to the divine, the last being described as 'cosmogonic reveries, when one reaches to the stars [...]. Moments divine, ecstatic hours'.³⁰ What seems clear is that the mystical state is one of heightened consciousness often accompanied by a sense of ecstasy. Mystical states are also of a higher order than ordinary consciousness; when passing from one to the other, James suggests it is 'as from a less into a more, as from a smallness into a vastness', a quantitative definition that Bergson would have eschewed for one more qualitative or intensive.³¹

In his own Gifford Lectures of 1916-18, Samuel Alexander mentioned some of the criticisms that had been levelled at James's presentation of religious states, such as his failure to consider the 'calm' and un-exalted religious feelings of the 'ordinary' man in favour of the excited, disturbed and even 'pathological' varieties of religious feeling.³² Yet Alexander's own definition of religious sentiment as 'the feeling of our going out towards something not ourselves and greater and higher than ourselves, with which we are in communion' seems also to take on a mystical and transcendent dimension.³³ Alexander adds that it is the mind *and* body caught up in the forward movement of time *and* reality in its 'nisus towards a new quality' that characterises religious feeling.³⁴ The notion of 'nisus', of effort or impulse, might also evoke Bergson's concept of the *élan vital* were it not for the intimation of goal-striving teleology that the term implies.

The idea of the mystical or elevated state was also outlined by Richard Maurice Bucke, a Canadian psychiatrist, who in 1901 had made a study of 'cosmic consciousness'

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 380-1.

²⁹ James refers here to the 'deepened sense of the significance of a maxim or formula which occasionally sweeps over one', *ibid.*, p. 382.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 385; p. 395.

³¹ Ibid., p. 416.

³² Samuel Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity: The Gifford Lectures at Glasgow 1916-1918, Volume 2* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1920), p. 375.

³³ Ibid., p. 373.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 377.

which he described as ‘a higher form of consciousness than that possessed by the ordinary man’.³⁵ The cosmic mind in Bucke’s view was an exceptional one that rose above that of the ‘simple’ consciousness shared by both animals and humans as well as that of ‘self’ consciousness in which only a human is aware of ‘his own mental states as objects of consciousness’.³⁶ The cosmic mind was also accompanied by a sense of enlightenment that allows access to ‘a new plane of existence’, and feelings of ‘elevation, elation and joyousness’, as well as a sense of *already* having eternal life; a kind of predestined immortality.³⁷ Cosmic consciousness, a term Bucke had adopted from Edward Carpenter who had been influenced by the Eastern term ‘universal consciousness’ when travelling in the East, was neither supernatural nor supra-normal, but the result of an evolved ‘intuitional mind’.³⁸

Bergson and Mysticism

In his later thinking, Bergson extends his theory of consciousness and memory which also leads to an account of the mystical. From describing ‘memory’ as the primary instance of individual consciousness with its own sense of the past, he moves to a position in which memory also includes the unforeseen continual unfolding of the *future*, an idea which is made explicit in *Creative Evolution* when he comments that we are ‘pressed against the future and cutting into it unceasingly’.³⁹ ‘Cosmic’ memory, in the form it takes in *Creative Evolution*, is the whole of the past brought into the present and the impending future. In tending towards the future, cosmic memory is a form of ‘pan-consciousness’ that takes in all life forms and is all-pervasive, as G. William Barnard explains:

The consciousness that Bergson claims is connected to the energy of life is not simply human consciousness [...] Nor is it just the consciousness that seems to be present in different degrees within all organisms [...] Instead, Bergson suggests that the level of consciousness which is connected to the *élan vital* is an ‘enormous field’ of creative awareness that is expressed in and through all organisms, to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon the level of development of their respective nervous systems. In the more rudimentary organisms, this creative cosmic consciousness is

³⁵ Richard Maurice Bucke [1901], *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (Philadelphia: Innes & Sons, 1905), p. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9; p. 15.

³⁹ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 212.

squeezed tightly ‘in a kind of vise’; but in more advanced creatures, especially in human beings, it is expressed increasingly freely and completely.⁴⁰

In attributing duration, consciousness and memory to the ‘whole of the universe’ in *Creative Evolution*, which opens up another dimension of reality, Bergson is clearly invoking a mystical realm.⁴¹ The mystical aspect to Bergson’s thought also relates to a philosophical strain of vitalism. The idea of the dynamic movement associated with ‘becoming’ and the emphasis on the *élan vital* as a creative life force, spirit or impetus outlined in *Creative Evolution*, share something with ‘vitalist’ philosophy, even though critics have debated the nuances of Bergson’s position.⁴² According to Barnard, in *Creative Evolution* Bergson vigorously asserts his own ‘critical’ vitalism that postulates that life is a form of universal energy or consciousness.⁴³

Bergson’s closest investigation of mysticism is in his last substantial work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. In identifying both the ancient origins of morality and religion and their modern-day expression, he sets up a new dualism between the ‘closed’ and the ‘open’ soul. The beliefs and practices which pertain to the ‘closed soul’ are associated with ‘static’ religion, automatism, obligation and ‘morbid’ states, whereas the ‘mystic’ or ‘open’ soul is associated with ‘dynamic’ religion, creative emotion, love and mystical states. As with the dualism between matter and memory, the two aspects of the dualism between the closed and open soul have a specific role to play: Bergson suggests that for religion to be ‘dynamic’ it *requires* its opposite, static religion, for its ‘expression and diffusion’.⁴⁴ In historical terms, the open soul arises out of the past formations of the closed variety. This interpretation allows Bergson to suggest that the mystic soul is a unique product of the ‘evolutionary dynamism’ of the *élan vital* first articulated in *Creative Evolution*.⁴⁵ Bergson’s ‘mysticism’, then, brings together the cosmic life force of the *élan vital*, which is pervasive and inclusive of all forms of life, with the more rare condition of the individual mystic soul. For a few, the soul, driven by the cosmic life force, may be lifted to ‘another plane’ and, via a creative effort, may make contact with the ‘divine’, which is ‘of God’.⁴⁶ Thus the

⁴⁰ See G. William Barnard, ‘Vital Intuitions: Henri Bergson and Mystical Ethics’, an unpublished paper from 2005, <http://www.aarmysticism.org/documents/Barnard.pdf> [last accessed 21 May 2016], pp. 1-73 (pp. 23-4).

⁴¹ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 11.

⁴² See, for example, the chapter by Paul Douglass in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Ardoin, Gontarski and Mattison, as well as the essays in Burwick and Douglass, eds, *The Crisis in Modernism*.

⁴³ Barnard, ‘Vital Intuitions’, p. 69, note 18.

⁴⁴ *TSMR*, p. 151.

⁴⁵ Barnard, ‘Vital Intuitions’, p. 42.

⁴⁶ *TSMR*, p. 181; p. 188.

transcendent experience may be one of apprehending or merging with a universal life force or cosmic spirit or with a supra (Christian) being.

Mansfield and Mysticism

Caroline Maclean maintains that Katherine Mansfield's encounter with mysticism began as early as her camping trip to the Urewera district in the northern part of North Island, New Zealand in 1907. Observing that 'Mansfield was certainly interested in the Maori mysticism she encountered during her trip', she points to Mansfield's notebook entries as evidence.⁴⁷ My view, however, is that *The Urewera Notebook* rather reflects a young writer training herself to record her vivid sensory impressions and is as much steeped in European culture as Maori spirituality. The *Notebook* just as frequently evokes pagan images of landscape as Maori customs and celebrates a sense of beauty more reminiscent of the English Romantic poets.⁴⁸

Mansfield may have been initially quite dubious about mysticism. An early 1912 review in *Rhythm* of an anthology of poems, *The Triumph of Pan* (1910) by Victor Neuburg, who wrote on occult and theosophical subjects, suggests a degree of ambivalence. While Mansfield praises Neuburg for having 'something of the poet's vision' and for 'delighting in simplicity and sensuality which is born of passionate admiration', she describes mysticism as 'perverted sensuality' and a practice that 'leads to the annihilation of any true artistic effort'.⁴⁹ Neuburg was an associate of Aleister Crowley, who had been a member of the occult society the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (as had Bergson's sister, Mina Bergson⁵⁰) until he founded his own occult order in 1907. The poems had emerged out of the occult rituals of sex and magic that Neuburg and Crowley had practised in the Algerian desert; Mansfield's response is quite possibly a result of her distaste for Neuburg's lifestyle and his poetry rather than for 'mysticism' as such. The Neuburg review, like that of May Sinclair, underlines the importance to Mansfield of sensitive and selective artistry coupled with appropriate 'vision'.

⁴⁷ Caroline Maclean, *The Vogue for Russia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 87. Maclean also comments that John Middleton Murry took an interest in 'mystical aesthetics' especially at the time he was involved with the journal *Rhythm* (p. 87).

⁴⁸ In her edition of Mansfield's Urewera notebook, Anna Plumridge notes that Mansfield thought Maori culture important, but had a tendency to romanticise it. But she also exhibited 'empathy and respect' for the Maori people she encountered. See Katherine Mansfield, *The Urewera Notebook*, ed. by Anna Plumridge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 11; p. 13.

⁴⁹ Katherine Mansfield, review of *The Triumph of Pan* by Victor Neuburg, *CWKM3*, pp. 430-1 (p.431). First published in *Rhythm*, 2.6 (July, 1912), 70.

⁵⁰ See Owen, p. 3. Mina Bergson was married to Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, one of the founding members of the Order.

An early period of personal crisis does, however, suggest a mystical awareness linked to her writing practice. Following the death of her brother, Mansfield described a feeling of mystic closeness to him. In Murry's view, albeit based on his recollections in the 1930s, Leslie's death occurred when Mansfield was also seeking in her writing an 'inward clarity'. Murry comments that writing the first draft of *Prelude* was part of the 'purification of her memory of New Zealand' as well as the 'purging of all resentment from her soul' and the 'outward and visible sign of [...] inward and spiritual grace'.⁵¹ After her death, the journalist and writer Thomas Moulton gave considerable credence to Mansfield as a 'saint' in two short commentaries for the *Bookman*: 'To her friends she has bequeathed a treasure most noble: [...] an exalted sense that they have been privileged to sojourn awhile in the presence of one who was among the saintliest of women.'⁵² As a Georgian poet, Moulton brings a prevalent religious discourse to the life, and death, of one of the literary 'moderns'. This discursive construction of a spiritual Mansfield was still in circulation in the 1930s, as evidenced in a discussion of Mansfield by André Maurois who referred to her 'pure and feminine mysticism'.⁵³ The idea of a 'mystical' Mansfield was also captured in the 1950s by Katherine Anne Porter who comments:

As her health failed, her fears grew, her religious impulse wasted itself in an anxious straining toward some unknown infinite source of strength, of energy-renewing power, from which she might [...] find some fulfillment [sic] of true being beyond her flawed mortal nature.⁵⁴

But Porter stops short of claiming that Mansfield was a mystic, possibly as a reaction to John Middleton Murry's cult of saintliness of Mansfield after her death: 'Katherine Mansfield has been called a mystic, and perhaps she was, but in the severe hierarchy of mysticism her rank cannot be very high.'⁵⁵

⁵¹ John Middleton Murry, 'Katherine Mansfield', in *Katherine Mansfield and Other Literary Studies* (London: Constable, 1959), pp. 71-93 (p. 84). Compiled by Murry's fourth wife, Mary Middleton Murry, and published posthumously.

⁵² Thomas Moulton, 'Katherine Mansfield', *Bookman*, February 1923, 227-8 (p. 228).

⁵³ See the review by Orlo Williams of *Poets and Prophets* by André Maurois, 'A French Interpreter's Tribute: From Kipling to Katherine Mansfield', *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 March 1936, 218. *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive* [last accessed 25 May 2016], http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroupName=ed_itw&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EX1200252362&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0. Williams himself refers to Mansfield's gift for 'ecstatic mystical communion' with the world (p. 218).

⁵⁴ Katherine Anne Porter, 'The Art of Katherine Mansfield', in *The Days Before* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1953), pp. 82-7 (p. 84).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

In a brief review of Mansfield's so-called journal, assembled by Middleton Murry from diverse writings and published in 1927, Moulton further refers to the spiritual quest in Mansfield's writing:

One of the great values of the 'Journal' is that of its revelation of her attitude to writing. Almost an obsession with her was her desire to go on refining and purifying her expression of material existence, until it became a wholly spiritual expression.⁵⁶

Moulton's angle is that while the life of the spirit is neither attainable nor desired by most individuals, Mansfield desired it with 'an intensity' and 'a hunger'.⁵⁷ Why it should be that it has tended to be fellow writers who evince a spiritual dimension to Mansfield's writing is perhaps a comment on a writer's need for a 'muse' or sacred source of inspiration. The novelist Sally Vickers has also recently identified a 'quasi-mystical strain' in Mansfield's writing which she attributes to Mansfield's literary technique of bringing her characters' consciousnesses into contact in 'webs of inter-consciousness effects'.⁵⁸

That what Maclean calls 'aesthetic mysticism' can be detected in Mansfield's early work is confirmed by Vickers, who argues that Mansfield's interest in the theosophy of Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky derived from 'a lifelong preoccupation with the generative interplay between states of consciousness' and was far from sudden.⁵⁹ While I think Vickers is right, it was clear that Mansfield was thinking more determinedly about mystical and religious states during the early 1920s, as her reading at the time shows. As she told Violet Schiff in January 1922, a book which resonated with her was an esoteric treatise by 'M. B. Oxon': 'What saved me finally was reading a book called *Cosmic Anatomy*, and reflecting on it.'⁶⁰ Why did this disorganised account of mystical thinking published in 1921, with its scattered references to astrology, cosmology, the supernatural, dreams, thought-transference, eastern scriptures, Sanskrit, Egyptian mythology and eurhythmic dancing, captivate Mansfield?

There were aspects to *Cosmic Anatomy* which would have appealed to Mansfield. It promised to address the post-war 'discontent' described by Wallace as the 'present sorrows'

⁵⁶ Thomas Moulton, 'Katherine Mansfield', *Bookman*, October 1927, 40 (p. 40).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Sally Vickers, 'My Debt to Katherine Mansfield' in *The Legacy of Katherine Mansfield*, The Katherine Mansfield Society Birthday Lecture, 3 (Bath: Katherine Mansfield Society Publications, 2012), pp. 7-15 (p. 14; p. 13).

⁵⁹ See Maclean, p. 87; and Vickers, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Letter to Violet Schiff [c.8 January 1922], *CLKM* 5, p. 8. M.B. Oxon was a pseudonym for Lewis Alexander Richard Wallace, a former New Zealand sheep-farmer, banker, philanthropist, Theosophist and contributor to A. R. Orage's the *New Age*.

of the world.⁶¹ It purported to be on the side of ‘Feeling and Emotion’ rather than ‘Reason and Intellect’, and to offer a ‘more expanded outlook’ on life as well as provide a new means of expression.⁶² It referred to the ‘appalling wave of untruth which has swamped us’ at a time when Mansfield was thinking about truth as a value above all others.⁶³ That the book clearly preoccupied Mansfield for a while is evident from a notebook entry she made while she and Murry were at the Chalet des Sapins in Switzerland in 1922:

I have read a good deal of *Cosmic Anatomy* – understood it far better. Yes, such a book does fascinate me. Why does Jack hate it so? To get even a glimpse of the relation of things, to follow that relation & find it remains true through the ages enlarges my little mind as nothing else does. It’s only a greater view of psychology.⁶⁴

Vincent O’Sullivan suggests Wallace’s reassurances about the unity underlying things might have been of comfort to Mansfield given her own increasing sense of a schism within herself; furthermore, Wallace’s insistence that time was not merely mechanical (probably an allusion to Bergson’s thought) might also have registered with her.⁶⁵ Jeffrey Meyers, however, maintains that Mansfield’s reading of *Cosmic Anatomy* and her ‘enthusiastic acceptance of its doctrines’ more likely indicate that Mansfield’s mind ‘had moved far into the realm of the mystical’ and that mysticism, while providing some consolation, also hastened her death.⁶⁶ The mystical dimension of Mansfield’s work and life thus still generates controversy among critics. Most significant for me is that reading *Cosmic Anatomy* seems to have rekindled Mansfield’s ability to write. She mentions this on 4 and 5 January 1922, recording in her notebook on the latter day: ‘Read *Cosmic Anatomy*. I managed to work a little. Broke through. This is a great relief.’⁶⁷ At this time, Mansfield also recorded in her notebooks her vivid dreams and memories of New Zealand; and it could be the case that her sense of a wider ‘cosmic’ spirit provided the context for reconnecting with the spirit of her childhood past.

⁶¹ M. B. Oxon (James Wallace), *Cosmic Anatomy and the Structure of the Ego* (London: John M. Watkins, 1921), p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁶⁴ Notebook 20, 4 January 1922; *TKMN*, 2, p. 313; published in *CWKM4*, p. 399, from which this text is taken.

⁶⁵ Vincent O’Sullivan, ‘Signing Off: Katherine Mansfield’s Last Year’, in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 13-27 (p. 19).

⁶⁶ Jeffrey Meyers [1978], *Katherine Mansfield: A Darker View* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), p. 239.

⁶⁷ Notebook 20, 5 January 1922; *TKMN*, 2, p. 313; published in *CWKM4*, p.400, from which this text is taken. However, Maclean, for example, takes the view that for Mansfield mysticism and writing were not connected. See Maclean, p. 96.

Mansfield's connections to contemporary mysticism extended to Middleton Murry's friend W. J. Millar Dunning, who was an adherent of the mystical thinking that was growing in popularity. In a letter to Murry in September 1922 Mansfield comments, 'There seems to me little doubt that the wave of mysticism prophesied by Dunning is upon us.'⁶⁸ While she also referred to mysticism as 'dark matters', at this point in 1922, Mansfield had been meeting with A. R. Orage, her old friend and sometimes foe from her early association with the *New Age*, and Orage was a strong advocate of Ouspensky's mystical esotericism. In a direct and confirmed association with Mansfield, Ouspensky gave a series of lectures in London in 1922 which Mansfield attended and which contributed to her decision to join the Gurdjieff Institute.

Mansfield told Murry, writing from Paris in October 1922, that the mystical ideas she was hearing about were confirming her own: 'I don't *feel* influenced by Youspensky or Dunning. I merely feel Ive heard ideas like my ideas but bigger ones, far more definite ones.'⁶⁹ It is perhaps not surprising that Mansfield found solace in the mystical when she felt that medicine and science had failed her. Writing from the Prieuré later in the month, having abandoned Manoukhine's irradiation treatment in Paris⁷⁰ to join the Gurdjieff Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, while Murry moved next door to Dunning, Mansfield affirmed that Gurdjieff might be her saviour:

Haven't I been saying, all along, that the fault lies in trying to cure the body and pay no heed whatever to the sick psyche. Gurdjieff claims to do just what I have always dreamed might be done.⁷¹

Many Mansfield critics have written about her decision to enter the Institute, some of it sceptical, some of it sympathetic, largely depending on whether Gurdjieff is regarded as a charlatan or not.⁷² According to Sophia Wellbeloved, the Institute's aim was to turn

⁶⁸ Dunning had an interest in Eastern religion and yoga, and his impact on Mansfield and Murry goes back to 1920 as a notebook entry shows: 'After the talk with Dunning there is a change. [...] I believe that D. has the secret of my recovery and of J's awakening.' See Notebook 22; *TKMN*, 2, p. 194, and Scott's footnote, numbered 162; published in *CWKM4*, p. 320, from which this text is taken.

⁶⁹ Letter to John Middleton Murry, [4 October 1922], *CLKM*, 5, p. 285.

⁷⁰ Mansfield recorded in October 1922 that following Manoukhin's treatment she was still 'an absolutely hopeless invalid' and 'My spirit is nearly dead'. Notebook 30, qMS-1276, 14.x.1922; *TKMN*, 2, pp. 283-4; published in *CWKM4*, p. 433, from which this text is taken.

⁷¹ See Notebook 30, 14.x.1922; *TKMN*, 2, p. 288; published in *CWKM4*, p. 437, from which this text is taken.

⁷² A first-hand view is given by James Carruthers Young in 'An Experiment at Fontainebleau: A Personal Reminiscence', a paper read before the Medical Section of the British Psychological Society, the *New Adelphi*, September 1927, 447-61. At the sceptical end is the account given by Jeffrey Meyers. Meyers states that Mansfield's 'surprising attraction' to Gurdjieff can be explained in terms of 'a triumph of the romantic and Russian over the cynical and sceptical side of her

‘mechanical man’ into a ‘real’ man, ‘possessed of will, identity and consciousness’.⁷³ Mansfield had already heard of Gurdjieff’s teachings via Ouspensky.⁷⁴ At this advanced stage in her illness, the Institute probably provided a peaceful environment in which to die, but Mansfield approached it in hope of both spiritual and physical renewal.

Mystical Analogies between Bergson and Katherine Mansfield

In a 1912 article on ‘Bergson and the Mystics’, Evelyn Underhill both discusses Bergson’s philosophy from a mystical point of view and presents mysticism in Bergsonian language, asserting that the mystical is opposed to the mechanistic.⁷⁵ To Bergson’s categories of the artist-philosopher, the genius and the practical man, Underhill adds the mystic who sees the world ‘in a larger way than that of humanity in general’ and has access to higher cosmic reality.⁷⁶ That artistic perception and mystic contemplation share in an alteration and intensification of consciousness provides a clear link between contemporary writers such as Mansfield and a form of mystically derived creativity which might also offer a purview of a different level of consciousness, a world mind or cosmic mind.

Bergson’s reference to a cosmic or ‘supra-consciousness’ in *Creative Evolution* is related to what he describes as the ‘need of creation’.⁷⁷ In *Two Sources*, mysticism is also bound up with writing and creative emotion which may have relevance to Mansfield, as well as to many other contemporary writers, of course, in the early twentieth century. Bergson suggests that the mystic may have access to an elusive form of creativity which is

character’ and that this attraction was ‘directly related to her mystical yearning for her dead brother in the autumn of 1915 and her flirtation with Catholicism in the spring of 1920’. See Meyers, p. 238.

⁷³ Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 91.

⁷⁴ Mansfield had heard Ouspensky lecture on 14 September 1922 and on two further occasions, meeting with him on 30 September 1922. She read Ouspensky’s experimental mystical work of 1912, *Tertium Organum*, in the autumn of 1922. While it has been observed, for instance by James Moore in *Gurdjieff and Mansfield* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 55), that she didn’t much like it, she records, rather, that she was not in the mood for it: ‘You have rather a horror of anything at all ... Eastern – haven’t you? I read Ouspensky’s Tertium Organum the other day. For some reason it didn’t carry me away. I think it is extremely interesting but – perhaps I was not in the mood for books.’ See Letter to John Middleton Murry [9 December 1922], *CLKM*, 5, p. 332. Murry was seemingly hostile: ‘I could scarcely bear to discuss the doctrines of Ouspensky with Katherine.’ Quoted in F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: 1959), p. 90. Yet he replied to Mansfield’s letter of c9 December around 17 December, saying, ‘As a matter of fact I have begun to read something Eastern, or rather something odder than Eastern. [...] And in a queer way I was *very much* impressed by it. Moreover I’ve promised Dunning that I will read an Indian book on, I think, Rama Yoga.’ *The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by C. A. Hankin (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), p. 366. See also, *CLKM*, note 2, p. 332.

⁷⁵ Evelyn Underhill, ‘Bergson and the Mystics’, the *English Review*, 10 (February, 1912), 511-22 (p. 511).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

⁷⁷ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.275; emphasis in the original text.

incommunicable. He suggests, somewhat mysteriously, that this creativity would ‘not be writing’; and, as such, this non-writing would require an entirely new set of concepts.⁷⁸ It is not clear whether Bergson is referring here to a form of unwritten and unvoiced communication such as telepathy or whether he believes there are no adequate expressive means for conveying mystic revelation. The analogue with Mansfield, as well as with Virginia Woolf, is Bergson’s assertion that individuals can have access to an original, natural state of mind beneath the surface of his or her habits using a process of introspection, a ‘moment of vision’.⁷⁹ In mystic discourse there are echoes of Bergson’s intuition such as the observation from Caroline Spurgeon, in a book of 1913, that ‘we can know a thing spiritually only by becoming it. We must *be* the thing itself’ that recalls Katherine Mansfield’s literary technique of immersing herself in her characters in order to ‘become’ them.⁸⁰

In the light of analogies between Bergson and Mansfield, I now provide a counter-argument to the prevailing view of the modernist short story and the ‘moment’ to suggest that it is durational or time-filled rather than fixed. In doing so I expand understanding of Mansfield’s use of epiphany in her fiction, which has often been couched in terms of gleams, instants and ‘glimpses’.⁸¹ In delineating epiphany as an apprehension of the mystical and transcendent, I suggest it produces not fleeting but rather *abiding* memories. What I call the ‘Bergsonian’ epiphany is made especially clear in Mansfield’s story ‘Bliss’. There are three aspects of Bergson’s philosophy which I align with mysticism in my reading of ‘Bliss’: the extension of memory to cosmic consciousness via the *élan vital*; the mystic’s vision as an intuition of that cosmic consciousness; and the idea of creative inspiration leading to an apprehension of cosmic or ‘higher’ reality.

The Moment

An important aspect of the critical lineage of literary epiphany turns on the idea of the passing ‘moment’. The moment can be situated in the context of nineteenth-century literary aestheticism, especially that of Baudelaire in France, the Pre-Raphaelites and Algernon Charles Swinburne in mid-century Britain and, in the later part of the century, with

⁷⁸ *TSMR*, p. 217.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁸⁰ See Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Mysticism in English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), p. 4. Other features of mysticism in Spurgeon’s account relevant to Bergson (and to Mansfield) include: the advancement of the soul towards a state of bliss (pp. 20-1); an ecstasy of vision (p. 54); a perception of the infinite (p. 67); and harmony or reconciliation (p. 157).

⁸¹ See, for example, René Godenne’s article in which she adopts the term ‘nouvelle-instant’ to describe the brevity of Mansfield’s short stories: René Godenne, ‘Katherine Mansfield’s “Nouvelle-Instant”’, in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel and Michel Dupuis (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989), pp.107-16.

Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. Baudelaire described the moment as ephemeral and as a sign of the modernity of life in the nineteenth-century French urban metropolis. In his view, the duty of the artist was to ‘distil the eternal from the transitory’ and arrest the moment before it faded forever.⁸² This role for art was significant because it ushered in the idea that some modes of artistic practice could freeze time. Photography was a new visual technology which provided the very means of fixing the moment, whereas cinematography created an illusion of continuity through moving but juxtaposed individual frames. Fictional techniques used during the period of late nineteenth-century aestheticism, particularly that of literary impressionism, drew on symbols as a means of capturing a momentary image or sensation, whereas short fiction in particular had previously tended to narrativise the moment via plot and scene.⁸³

In his well-known Conclusion to his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, Walter Pater also regarded the moment as fleeting, intense and psychological: a ‘single sharp impression’ which was ‘unstable, flickering’ and ‘gone while we try to apprehend it’.⁸⁴ Pater’s ‘moment’ was also a ‘relic’ of time that has passed which allowed for the possibility of retaining the momentary in memory.⁸⁵ But in the later essay ‘The School of Giorgione’, Pater described moments as being replete with life but only for the time in which they are held in suspension; they are ‘exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fullness of existence, and which are like some consummate extract or quintessence of life’.⁸⁶ Pater seemed, therefore, to offer to capture the ephemeral moment, momentarily. In doing so, the moment still barely existed. Artistic ardour to experience further intense moments merely seemed to motivate the arduous pursuit of the evanescent.⁸⁷

⁸² Charles Baudelaire, *Selected Writings on Art and Literature* [1972], trans. by P. E. Charvet (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), p. 402.

⁸³ For a detailed account of literary impressionism, see van Gunsteren.

⁸⁴ Walter Pater, ‘Conclusion’, in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. by Matthew Beaumont, new edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 119.

⁸⁵ Kate Hext establishes that there are at least two types of Paterian moment: ‘the distinct moment experienced as an isolated experience of intense, unreflective sensation, and the moment of aesthetic contemplation in which time is experienced as a fusion of past, present, and future moments, all inherent in the *now*’. For Hext, Pater’s moments are ‘necessarily experienced as relics in the memory, with nostalgic longing for them integral to their being’. That is, the moment when perceived in its immediacy is ‘pure receptivity which leaves no space within it for reflection’. Hext reserves the term ‘aesthetic moment’ to describe this retrospective artistic contemplation. See Kate Hext, *Walter Pater: Individualism and Aesthetic Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 148; p. 150; p. 155.

⁸⁶ Walter Pater, Appendix A, ‘The School of Giorgione’, in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, p. 133.

⁸⁷ Pater, ‘Conclusion’, p. 120.

The transitory but exquisite ‘moment’ in the modernist literary mode has typically been associated with a heightened awareness or revelation arising out of a banal episode or occurrence, particularly in the work of James Joyce. But in a recognisable ‘turn’ associated with the new modernist studies, critics have recently focused on the *unexceptional* moment in relation to the ‘everyday’. Among modernist critics Liesl Olson has argued that ordinary experience is the dominant subject of literary modernism, implying that the ‘ordinary’ is always associated with the exteriorities of living in the world in order to challenge what she refers to as literary modernism’s previous interest in ‘an aesthetic of self-conscious *interiority*’.⁸⁸ Olson therefore commits herself to examining the ‘moments’ which are not heightened, as such, in literary modernism. The ordinary, in Olson’s categorisation, is an ‘affective experience of the world characterized by inattention or absentmindedness’, pertaining to moments which are likely to be mundane, anti-revelatory or forgettable.⁸⁹

Also as part of an identifiable ‘turn’ to the everyday, Bryony Randall has recently examined the way in which modernist authors represent ‘dailiness’, referring to both daily time and everyday life.⁹⁰ In shifting focus from the ephemerality of the present as well as the exceptional moment that might be the means with which to encapsulate the everyday, Randall concentrates her analysis on present ‘ongoing daily time’.⁹¹ While this welcome approach to the continuities of time in the work of Dorothy Richardson, Gertrude Stein, H.D. and Virginia Woolf resonates with my own interests, the suggestive attention given to the ‘temporality of dailiness’ nonetheless valorises the ordinary. Greater insight is to be gained in approaching Katherine Mansfield, I contend, by re-evaluating the moment as continuous and time-filled but also as exceptional and opening out to the mystical, as understood especially through Bergson’s philosophical insights.

Mansfield refers to the ‘moment’ in several of her book reviews for the *Athenaeum*, thereby giving the term a literary framework. In a review of 1919 she comments that there are ‘signs of the writer’s “literary” longing to register the moment, the glimpse, the scene’.⁹² And in discussing Vita Sackville-West’s novel *Heritage* a month later, she defines the moment clearly in terms of a spiritual crisis:

⁸⁸ Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 3 (emphasis added).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹⁰ Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹² Katherine Mansfield, ‘Portrait of a Little Lady’, a review of S. Macnaughton’s *My War Experiences in Two Continents*, *Athenaeum*, 4643, 25 April 191, 237-8; reprinted in *N&N*, pp. 11-14; and collected in *CWKM3*, pp. 452-5 (p. 453), from which the text is taken.

[H]ow are we to appreciate the importance of one 'spiritual event' rather than another? What is to prevent each being unrelated – complete in itself – if the gradual unfolding in growing, gaining light is not to be followed by one blazing moment?⁹³

What is interesting in this passage is not only the way in which Mansfield gives a spiritual significance to the moment, indicating that it is something which is rare and exalted rather than ordinary or mundane, but also the fact that it includes the idea of a continuous movement towards the crisis suggesting that the moment is not isolated, fixed or fragmented.

Understanding of the moment can be pushed further if it is approached as being psychological, as a form of consciousness, which is where Bergson is so productive for reading Mansfield. As Sydney Janet Kaplan has noted, Mansfield looked for a way to represent 'the pressures of the "moment," the sudden breakthroughs into deeper levels of consciousness'.⁹⁴ It is this emphasis on the shifts in and layers of consciousness that gives Mansfield's thinking about the 'moment' its Bergsonian overtones, encapsulated in a notebook entry for 30 August 1922 following a conversation with A. R. Orage: 'Let me take the case of K.M. [...] through it all, there have been moments, instants, gleams, when she has felt the possibility of something *quite other*'.⁹⁵ The strange disembodiment which is also suggested by referring to herself in the third person, suggests Mansfield thought the moment could be of an extraordinary kind leading to some form of access to a higher spiritual reality. The idea of the transcendent moment is echoed in Virginia Woolf's 'moments of being', associated with memories of her early childhood. Such moments are similarly exceptional and characterised by an ecstatic 'revelation of some order; [...] a token of some real thing behind appearances'.⁹⁶ Such revelatory moments are offset by moments of 'non-being' or what Woolf calls the 'cotton wool of daily life', behind which is hidden a pattern connecting all human beings.⁹⁷ For Julie Kane these 'moments of being' are 'mystical experiences' which 'constituted true "reality" for Woolf'.⁹⁸

⁹³ Katherine Mansfield, 'A Novel Without a Crisis', a review of Vita Sackville West's novel *Heritage*, the *Athenaeum*, 4648, 30 May 1919, 399; reprinted in *N&N*, pp. 29-32; and collected in *CWKM3*, pp. 466-9 (p. 467).

⁹⁴ See Kaplan, p. 54; p. 167.

⁹⁵ *CWKM4*, p. 436 (emphasis added).

⁹⁶ See Woolf, 'Sketch of the Past', p. 85.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83; p. 85.

⁹⁸ Julie Kane, 'Varieties of Mystical Experience in the Writings of Virginia Woolf', in *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 41:4 (Winter, 1995), 328-49 (p. 332). Kane identifies several representations of 'natural' mystical experiences in Woolf's fiction in Clarissa Dalloway's 'states of transport', for example, or in Mrs Ramsay's 'trance state' induced by the beam of the lighthouse (p. 333).

But Woolf also attached importance to the idea of ‘separate moments of being’ in her memoir that implies a segmentation of time which Bergson would have rejected.⁹⁹ In *To the Lighthouse*, this impulse is represented particularly by the separate desires of James, Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe to ‘crystallize and transfix the moment’, but they do so in vain.¹⁰⁰ It is apparent that Woolf could not entirely make up her mind:

Now is life very solid or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on for ever; will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world – this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves.¹⁰¹

While Woolf veers between fixity and fleetingness, Harvena Richter suggests that in her essay ‘The Moment: Summer’s Night’ Woolf conceptualised the moment not as a single ‘atom’ of experience but as a compound one bringing together visual and sensory impressions, bodily affects and awareness of time and change.¹⁰² In this reading, Woolf’s moment is, as Woolf herself described it, a dense “‘knot of consciousness’”, a complex clustering of momentary experience.¹⁰³ Richter is sympathetic to Bergson, noting that Woolf’s ‘moment of being’ with its ‘diversity in unity’ is similar to that of Bergsonian duration, while Woolf’s characters experience time ‘in the all-inclusive *now*’.¹⁰⁴ If Woolf’s ‘moment’ is open to diverse interpretations, my view is that for Woolf and for Mansfield the notion of something spiritual and lasting was attached to the moment which aligns with Bergson.

For Bergson there are no moments as such, because there are no ‘instants’: ‘[T]here is for us nothing that is instantaneous,’ he observes in *Matter and Memory*.¹⁰⁵ There are no ‘instants’ because there is ‘already some work of our memory, and consequently of our consciousness, which prolongs into each other’.¹⁰⁶ In his lecture, ‘Life and Consciousness’, Bergson states that an instant: ‘is the purely theoretical limit which separates the past from the future’. It is never perceived. Rather, what is actually perceived is ‘a certain span of

⁹⁹ See Woolf, ‘Sketch of the Past’, p. 83.

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, with an Introduction by Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2000), p. 7. There is also Lily’s musing on ‘Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)’, p. 218.

¹⁰¹ Virginia Woolf, *A Writer’s Diary*, ed. by Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1954), p. 141.

¹⁰² Harvena Richter, *Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 29-30. For Richter, this approach to the moment also allowed Woolf to establish a character’s point of view and to place the reader inside the consciousness of the character (p. 29).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ *M&M*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

duration composed of two parts – our immediate past and our imminent future'.¹⁰⁷ Past, present and future form a duration which is an 'indivisible continuity'; it arises out of life's impetus to preserve the past and to anticipate the future.¹⁰⁸ A Bergsonian 'moment' might, then, be understood as being one of perceptual consciousness imbued with duration and memory. It is movement which cannot be disaggregated.¹⁰⁹ It continually changes without, it seems, fading: 'A *moving continuity* is given to us, in which everything changes and yet remains'.¹¹⁰ Such a moment might best be characterised in terms of its memorability ('it remains') and its duration (it is continuous), and not spatially, whereby a moment in time is 'arrested'.

This way of thinking anew about the transitory offers a different way of understanding epiphany which has long been seen as one of the defining features of Modernist short stories, and usually as a means of distilling and fixing a moment of emotional intensity, transformation, revelation or knowledge, especially useful in a short narrative to convey dramatic effect.¹¹¹ I argue that the epiphany, based on a Bergsonian understanding of the moment, allows for a cosmic dimension and that the epiphanies in 'Bliss' both facilitate and interrupt the expansion towards the cosmos of Bertha's 'mystical' consciousness.

Epiphany

Epiphany in biblical thought refers to the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (*Matthew* 2, 1-12) and the festival celebrating this on 6 January. Its longer historical derivation is from the Greek *epipháneia* (to 'reveal' or 'show forth') and refers to a moment of sudden and great revelation. The definition of epiphany offered by M. H. Abrams in the 1980s, however, has been lastingly influential for literary criticism. For Abrams epiphany is 'a manifestation' or 'showing forth' used in modern poetry and fiction

¹⁰⁷ Bergson, 'Life and Consciousness', p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ The aggregate moment is also implicated in Bergson's understanding of the present. In his lecture on 'The Soul and the Body' (A Lecture delivered in Paris, at Foi et Vie, 28 April 1912, and published in *Mind-Energy*, pp. 29-59), Bergson states that there is no definitive present – each moment in time is 'decomposable' and: 'however you try, you cannot draw a line between the past and the present, nor consequently between memory and consciousness' (p. 55). For Bergson, nor is there a precise moment when the present becomes the past, or when perception becomes recollection (p. 56).

¹¹⁰ *M&M*, p. 260.

¹¹¹ See Kenneth Millard, 'Genre and Form: The Short Story' in *The Edinburgh Introduction to Studying English Literature*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 101-9. Millard notes that it is 'characteristic of the short story to focus with great intensity on a single episode that is hugely dramatic and significant' and that "'epiphany" is a word that is crucial to the short story as a genre' (p. 106; p. 107).

to apply to ‘the sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene’.¹¹² At the end of that decade, Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey defined epiphany as ‘a fleeting moment of mythic perception when the mystery of life breaks through our mundane perception of reality’.¹¹³ Taking these two definitions together, the modern view of epiphany is of a sudden revelation of significance arising out of the ordinary which then fades. But I want to reclaim a more spiritually inflected understanding of epiphany which allows for the extraordinary, the mystical and the transcendent as well as the durational; an approach which challenges the commonly held view, expressed by Mary Rohrberger, that the epiphany is ‘a point of frozen energy resonating just beyond understanding’.¹¹⁴

The specifically mystical impetus to literary epiphany can be traced back at least to Arthur Symons who in his 1899 work, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, regarded symbols as the ‘sign of an unseen reality’. Symons borrowed his definition from Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* in which Carlyle suggested the epiphany is ‘some embodiment and revelation of the Infinite’ which is made to ‘blend itself with the Finite, to stand visible, and as it were, attainable there’.¹¹⁵ Symons champions modern writers who attempt to ‘spiritualise literature’, who rebel against a ‘materialistic tradition’, and reject ‘the old bondage of exteriority’ attributed to nineteenth-century realist narrative technique.¹¹⁶ Writing is regarded by Symons as revelation; he sees the artist as a mystic and symbolical literature as being intertwined with ‘the doctrine of Mysticism’.¹¹⁷ Katherine Mansfield, who was well read in both Impressionism and Symbolism, shares some of Symons’s Symbolism and mystical aims for literature.

Why critics of modernist literature in particular have been preoccupied with the epiphany is largely due to James Joyce having used the term, supposedly in a secular way, to indicate an unexpected revelation of a passing but significant moment in *Stephen Hero*, the early draft of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The often-quoted passage reads:

By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that

¹¹² M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th edn (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1985), pp. 80-1.

¹¹³ Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey, eds, *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), p. 22.

¹¹⁴ Rohrberger, p. 78.

¹¹⁵ Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), p. 4; p. 5.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.¹¹⁸

As Abrams points out, however, the secularisation of theological concepts had already taken place in Romantic literature; Joyce had merely substituted 'epiphany' for what earlier authors had been referring to as the 'moment'.¹¹⁹ But even Joyce's 'secular' epiphanies in *Stephen Hero* are motivated by a spiritual impetus, as Stephen comments: "I wish to bring to the world the spiritual renewal which the poet brings to it ...".¹²⁰ Stephen himself possesses a sensitive soul and a 'temperament ever trembling towards ecstasy'.¹²¹ He attributes 'soul' to objects which suggests that it is the epiphanee who engages the object of attention rather than there being anything inherently or potentially sublime in the object itself. The epiphany is ephemeral for Joyce, therefore, because the epiphanee's consciousness moves on from the object; it is the 'phase of the mind' which is distinctive, rather than the object *qua* object.

For Proust, by comparison, the epiphany is something remembered, and is either triggered by an object or deliberately recalled. These two important types of epiphany are closely related to memory: the one recalling a past moment, the other of immortalising a present moment for all time. But neither is given a spiritual dimension. In Virginia Woolf's case, however, I have identified at least five types of spiritual epiphany in *To the Lighthouse*: Mrs Ramsay's 'reading epiphany' (the sonnet); Lily's 'appropriated epiphany' (of 'making of the moment something permanent' (p. 218), borrowed from Mrs Ramsay); Lily's 'recalled' epiphany (of the leaf pattern on the tablecloth); and Lily's final 'aesthetic' or 'painterly' epiphany. There is also James's epiphany: 'For nothing was simply one thing' (p. 251). Woolf valorises both the 'great revelation' and the 'little daily miracles' (p. 218), suggesting that epiphany is always significant and spiritual.

In the critical literature, while Morris Beja maintains that epiphany need not involve a mystical experience or conversion, more recently, Sharon Kim has shifted focus from the 'suddenness' associated with epiphany to the 'manifestation'; she considers epiphany as 'the mutual visibility of both the revealed and the perceiver' which, because it is rare, attracts the

¹¹⁸ James Joyce, *Stephen Hero: Part of the first draft of 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'*, ed. by Theodore Spencer (London: Jonathan Cape, 1944), p. 188.

¹¹⁹ Abrams gives as examples Shelley's description of the 'best and happiest moments ... arising unforeseen and departing unbidden' from his *Defense of Poetry* (1821) as well as Wordsworth's 'spots of time'.

¹²⁰ Joyce, p. 171.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-3.

language of spirituality.¹²² By contrast, Liesl Olson counters the idea that any (modernist) epiphany can produce a prolonged spiritual experience, arguing that a return to ordinary experience is inevitable after an epiphany, and that it is only in the ‘fold of everyday life’ that ‘real change can actually manifest itself’.¹²³ My argument runs against that of Olson, relying on an opposite trajectory for epiphany: that it is not merely a moment of transcendence but a transcendent experience of cosmic memory; and it draws on Bergson to do so.

The most extensive treatment of epiphany in Mansfield’s work has been a full-length, unpublished study by Sarah Sandley, although mysticism is not directly under consideration in this work.¹²⁴ Sandley argues that Mansfield used a unique epiphanic mode for her moments of illumination, the ‘glimpse’ (p. 100). According to Sandley, this mode was Mansfield’s way of representing subjective life or interiority associated with literary modernism’s aesthetic impulse more generally (p. 305). In Sandley’s view, Mansfield’s story ‘The Escape’ is the exemplary ‘glimpse’ story which explores ‘an *alternate* state of consciousness’ rather than an expansion of consciousness as such (p. 94). Sandley identifies sixteen stories and two fragments (from the Alpers edition of Mansfield’s stories) that contain one or more of her multiple ‘glimpse’ criteria:

[H]eighted awareness, a blurring of the senses, a removal from everyday states of consciousness, a physical sensation of being raised above the situation or scene, a change of feeling to either extreme excitement or extreme calm, a feeling of intense joy, of harmony, sudden belonging or ‘rightness’, and a non-discursive expansion of awareness. (p. 103)

In particular, Sandley concentrates on Mansfield’s use of certain technical narrative devices such as the shifting use of Free Indirect Thought and her use of multiple poetic effects which contribute to a sense of ‘climax’ (p. 103). Within Sandley’s comprehensive and compelling typology of Mansfield’s use of the ‘glimpse’ is the ‘Remembered Glimpse’, exemplified in stories such as *Prelude*, ‘A Dill Pickle’ and ‘The Stranger’, in which a character recalls a glimpse. Valuable for my thinking is the idea that intensely realised glimpses are ‘the only time when characters experience a deeply apprehended “now” that is not related to clock

¹²² See Morris Beja, *Epiphany in the Modern Novel* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), p. 14 and Sharon Kim, *Literary Epiphany in the Novel, 1850-1950: Constellations of the Soul* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 2-3.

¹²³ See Olson, p. 64.

¹²⁴ See Sarah Sandley, “Epiphany” in the Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield’ (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1992). See also a distillation of some of the ideas put forward in the thesis in her article, ‘The Middle of the Note: Katherine Mansfield’s “Glimpses”’, in *Katherine Mansfield: In From the Margin*, ed. by Roger Robinson (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), pp. 70-89.

time' (p. 264). Sandley also emphasises that the glimpse has a memorial function: 'Those characters who have experienced Glimpses carry the memory with them to compensate for their mundane, disappointing day to day life' (p. 304). This view predates the current predilection for finding depth of meaning in the 'ordinary'; it also validates the Bergsonian idea that it is memory that ensures continuity and meaningfulness for individuals in the modern world. Coming close to a Bergsonian view, in approaching the moment as time-filled and without restraining it, Julia van Gunsteren argues that instants may emerge from duration in a way in which time is hypostatised even while 'the moment itself has its own duration'. The instant then 'returns to the flow of fleeting time'.¹²⁵ But it is not clear whether this 'instant' is continuously in the flow of real time or is given a distinct substance. If the instant is an unceasing deviation, it could perhaps be understood in terms of Bergson's idea of the different rhythms of time and of consciousness; in this way, the Bergsonian moment is a multiplicity which expands and contracts with consciousness.¹²⁶ What I would like to add to Sandley's and Gunsteren's approaches is the idea that the continuous 'now' of epiphany opens on to the plane of cosmic memory; that is, of 'all' memory.

More recently Josiane Paccaud-Huguet has discussed Mansfield's epiphanic moments from a Lacanian perspective which offers a very different angle to that of my Bergsonian approach. What is particularly suggestive in her analysis is her description of epiphany as 'secular mysticism' which allows for the possibility of transcendence without framing it in Christian terms.¹²⁷ Paccaud-Huguet identifies three distinctive modes of epiphany – the 'arboreal', the 'blank' and the 'dark' – which are, in turn, related to the forces of desire, betrayal through language, and danger and erasure, all of which suggest 'negative' forms of non-spiritual epiphany.¹²⁸ Where I concur with Paccaud-Huguet's argument is in her identification of 'anti-epiphanies' and in her assessment that Mansfield's characters are overwhelmed by their experiences of epiphany, especially in their experience of 'plenitude', which, as Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle have argued, is akin to 'bliss'.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Van Gunsteren, p. 61.

¹²⁶ 'In reality there is no one rhythm of duration; it is possible to imagine many different rhythms which, slower or faster, measure the degree of tension or relaxation of different kinds of consciousness'. *M&M*, p. 275.

¹²⁷ Josiane Paccaud-Huguet 'A Trickle of Voice: Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Moment of Being', in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 131-43 (p. 132).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹²⁹ See the chapter on 'Pleasure' in Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle [1995], *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 4th edn (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2009), pp. 289-98.

The Bergsonian Epiphany

In *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*, Mary Ann Gillies explores the idea of a Bergsonian epiphany in relation to James Joyce's work. She puts the case for the way in which Joyce uses memory to provide a narrative structure for his novels that relies on epiphanies.¹³⁰ The argument hinges on the idea that Stephen's subjective awareness of time is similar to Bergson's immersion in duration.¹³¹ What Gillies terms a 'memory-derived' epiphany (likened to what Morris Beja identifies as 'retrospective' epiphany¹³²) is Bergson's 'recollection of the past moment [which] illuminates both the previous experience from which it comes and the present experience that prompted the recollection in the first place'.¹³³ Joyce, she contends, uses just such a two-way process in a 'memory (epiphany)'. Gillies provides close readings of 'A Little Cloud', 'A Painful Case' and 'The Dead' from *Dubliners* in terms of a 'Bergsonian-like involuntary memory'. In 'The Dead', the principal epiphany is described in terms of a 'memory-based central moment' which, in a Bergsonian manner, 'shows how memory impinges on present life and is, in turn, altered by this relationship'.¹³⁴ Dustin Anderson has pushed this reading further in suggesting that the Joycean epiphany resembles Bergson's memory cone: 'The initial recollection (or first memory-image) interacts with both the aggregate representation of pure memory and with perception to create the epiphany (moment of consciousness)'.¹³⁵ While these are, I think valid, interpretations, they position epiphany in relation to the memory dyad outlined in *Matter and Memory*. My model of epiphany builds on Bergson's early texts but further derives from Bergson's thinking about *cosmic* memory in the later texts of *Creative Evolution* and *Two Sources*.

In reclaiming the idea of literary epiphany as a textual form of mystical revelation which provides access to cosmic duration, consciousness and memory, I provide a typology

¹³⁰ Gillies, p. 135.

¹³¹ Gillies quotes Margaret Church who comments that for Stephen 'epiphany is a moment of heightened awareness in which time rather than being rejected is seen subjectively in terms of his own relation to it'. See Margaret Church, *Time and Reality: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 35. For Gillies, this is what Bergson means by immersion in duration (Gillies, p. 136).

¹³² According to Beja there are two kinds of revelation that arise from memory. There is 'retrospective' epiphany in which the epiphanic sensation is delayed until a time after the initial event has occurred and which Beja attributes to James Joyce. And there is 'the past recaptured' which is not recollection, as such, but an entire reliving of the past and Proust is the example used here. See Beja, p. 15.

¹³³ Gillies, p. 136.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137; p. 139.

¹³⁵ Dustin Anderson, 'Joyce's Matter and Memory: Perception and Memory-Events in *Finnegans Wake*', in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Ardoin, Gontarski and Mattison, pp. 177-93 (p. 178).

of epiphany which relates to the move Bergson makes in *Creative Evolution* in extending memory from the human mind to the cosmos.¹³⁶ I frame literary epiphany as a mystical apprehension of cosmic consciousness or an all-creative ‘supra-consciousness’. Bringing together Bergson’s thinking from *Creative Evolution* and *Two Sources*, as well as that of William James on the mystical experience, Richard Bucke on cosmic consciousness and Evelyn Underhill on the mystical experience outlined above, the Bergsonian epiphany is characterised by the following features:

1. Revelation or disclosure.
2. Intensity of feeling: elation, ecstasy, love, mystic rapture, bliss.
3. Apprehension of transcendent reality and the ‘divine’, accompanied by a sense of brightness or luminosity.
4. Individual consciousness expanded into cosmic memory.
5. The ‘moment’ as durational.

Something akin to this idea of epiphany as a shining, mystical revelation opening out to cosmic memory and potentially to the ‘divine’ is alluded to by Mansfield in a notebook entry for January 1920, in which she comments directly on the nature of the epiphanic ‘glimpse’:

And yet one has these ‘glimpses’, before which all that one ever has written (what has one written) all (yes, all) that one ever has read, pales.... The waves, as I drove home this afternoon – and the high foam, how it was suspended in the air before it fell.... What is it that happens in that moment of suspension? It is timeless. In that moment (what do I mean?) the whole life of the soul is contained. One is flung up – out of life – one is ‘held’ – and then, down, bright, broken, glittering on to the rocks, tossed back – part of the ebb and flow. [...] [W]hile I watched the spray I was conscious for life of the white sky with a web of torn grey over it [.]¹³⁷

This record of something momentous having occurred encapsulates the Bergsonian epiphany: there is the heightened awareness of the ‘white sky’; and there is light, both ‘bright’ and ‘white’. There is the continuity of movement of the waves while Mansfield’s consciousness forms ‘part of the ebb and flow’ of the forces of nature; and there is immersion in the cosmos (‘for life’). Something is revealed of reality *beyond* life (‘One is flung up – out of life’). There is mystery (‘what do I mean?’); and there is an intuition of cosmic memory (‘the whole life of the soul is contained’). Consciousness is durational (‘I

¹³⁶ As Bergson observes early on in *Creative Evolution*, duration is immanent to the whole of the universe. The universe endures and duration means the creation of forms; the ‘continual elaboration of the absolutely new’. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 11.

¹³⁷ See Notebook 38, qMS-1266; *TKMN*, 2, p. 209; published in *CWKM4*, p. 310, from which this text is taken.

was conscious for life’); while time is unbounded (‘It is timeless’). A paragraph later in the same notebook Mansfield discusses Dickens’s ‘immersion’ in his writing, which she couches in terms of an elevated feeling of bliss: ‘There are moments when Dickens is possessed by this power of writing – *he is carried away* – that is bliss.’¹³⁸ Being ‘carried away’ towards a state of cosmic consciousness and writing as a form of bliss or creative emotion are the ideas to which I now turn.

‘Bliss’

Bliss generally refers to a state of gladness, enjoyment or delight as well as the beatitude of heaven. But the story, ‘Bliss’, was a product of mixed feelings for Mansfield. It was written in Bandol in the South of France during the second half of February 1918, when Mansfield was experiencing a crisis in her health as well as contemplating the relationship between ‘corruption’ and ‘love’; and it followed one of her most cynical stories, *Je ne parle pas français*. Mansfield wrote to Murry in late February 1918 about being taken over by writing:

Ive just finished this new story *Bliss* and am sending it to you. But though my God! I *have* enjoyed writing it [...]. One extraordinary thing has happened to me since I came over here! Once I start them they haunt me, pursue me and plague me until they are finished and as good as I can do.¹³⁹

The passage suggests Mansfield wrote the story possessed by her own creative ‘bliss’; and that it ‘plagued’ her may be a covert reference to her health, or to her relationship with Murry, which was known to be under strain at that time. ‘Bliss’, then, is a potentially ambivalent title for the story.

My reading focuses on an ambivalent process of transfiguration and of apprehension of cosmic consciousness rather than on a moment of transfixion. It is signalled by Bertha’s state of ‘waiting for something ... divine to happen ...’.¹⁴⁰ That the ‘divine’ can be read ironically, as pleasure which becomes degraded, as well as in mystical terms brings the mundane and the everyday and the celestial and the cosmic together. Bertha’s anticipation of the ‘divine’, I argue, further prefigures two disturbing epiphanic ‘revelations’ in the story: her apparent self-revelation to Pearl in her mystic rapture gazing at the pear tree; and her

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 209. Emphasis added.

¹³⁹ Letter to John Middleton Murry [28 February 1918], *CLKM*, 2, pp. 97-8.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Bliss’ was first published in the *English Review* on 27 August 1918. The version used here is published in *CWKM2*, pp. 141-53 (p. 142). Further references to the story are given in brackets in the text.

delayed revelation that her husband and Pearl have deceived her and ‘blinded’ her conscious awareness.

The story opens with the words: ‘Although Bertha Young was thirty she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement’ (p. 14). There is a Bergsonian dimension to this opening description of Bertha’s bliss in that there is a sense of the past continuing into the present which is caught up in the feeling. The inclusion of elements of Free Indirect Discourse, normal Indirect Discourse as well as Direct Discourse, often shifting fairly freely between these narrative modes, also indicates ambivalence and places the reader in a position of uncertainty from the outset about who is narrating the story. When Bertha’s exalted state is indirectly narrated, the implication is that she is not fully aware of her own consciousness:

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! – as though you’d suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that late afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks into every particle, into every finger and toe?... (pp. 141-2)

Such a state of blissful abandonment, as Evelyn Underhill observes, is also typical of the mystic who ‘must be “oned with bliss”’ in their communion with transcendent reality.¹⁴¹

This ambivalent narrative mode is encoded by the opposing emotions in the story which are both tentatively valorised and subtly undermined. Bertha is in a ‘bright glowing place’ but is ‘fearful’; her radiance and the ‘fire in her bosom’ contrast with the cold mirror, Harry’s coolness, and Pearl Fulton’s silver and white attire. There is the solidity (and artificiality) of objects such as the pyramid of fruit, but an ‘airy’ atmosphere; there is light and shadow; Bertha appears to be in the full flow of bodily feeling whereas Pearl is represented as being ethereal; there is Bertha’s *joie de vivre* and Harry’s ‘zest for life’ countered by Bertha’s tiredness and the ‘dragging’ cats. These polarities are encapsulated by the proleptic irony that Bertha is waiting for something (superb or spiritual) that ‘must happen ... infallibly’ (p. 142) for it suggests any ‘absence of error’ will later be tested, even negated. There is an ironic reference perhaps, also, to divine Infallibility – that ‘inability to err in teaching revealed truth’ – as Bertha is finally able to perceive the truth (or read the falsehood) with respect to Pearl’s and Harry’s amatory relations.¹⁴² The story’s ambivalence

¹⁴¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 68.

¹⁴² *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 831. There is also a suggestive link to John McTaggart’s philosophy here in that McTaggart maintained that in each person there is a state of perception, encompassing a person’s whole psychical content and which is wholly free from error. For

is further captured in the image of the pear tree which lacks buds or petals, but is in bloom; it is tall and slender but ripe and full. In Bertha's heightened state, which induces a (mis)reading of her situation, the tree is perfect. Also ambivalent is Bertha's exaggerated sense of being 'too happy – too happy!' (p. 145). The iteration of such phrases throughout the story seems to call such feelings into question rather than reinforce their power and persuasiveness and, by extension, raises a further question about the perfection, the infallibility, of Bertha's life.¹⁴³

In the story, the phrase 'Nothing is one thing' (which is echoed across time by Woolf in *To the Lighthouse*) might be seen both in terms of a Bergsonian multiplicity and of Mansfield's sense, as discussed in relation to 'The Garden Party', of the 'diversity of life' and 'how we try to fit in everything'.¹⁴⁴ Two of the same, or two different things experienced simultaneously, extend to earthly, bodily lust ('bliss/om') and an apprehension of mystic, cosmic 'bliss'. That is, on the one hand there is the effect of Pearl Fulton on Bertha: 'What was there in the touch of that cool arm that could fan – fan – start blazing – blazing – the fire of bliss that Bertha did not know what to do with?' (p. 147). On the other hand there is Bertha's apparent (and as it turns out, ironically construed) mystical intuition in relation to Pearl:

What she simply couldn't make out – what was miraculous – was how she should have guessed Miss Fulton's mood so exactly and so instantly. For she never doubted for a moment that she was right, and yet what had she to go on. Less than nothing. (pp. 148-9)

In this passage the Bergsonian idea of the 'many' (or heterogeneity) collides neither with the 'one' (unity), nor with a negation (nothing), but with a subtraction: 'Less than nothing'. The ironic undertones undermine Bertha's ability to 'commune' with Pearl which relies on Bertha's sense of her rare and seemingly mystical ability to divine what others are feeling: "I believe this does happen very, very rarely between women" (p. 149). This 'inspoken' thought, or Free Indirect Discourse, gives us Bertha's interior point of view, which is overlaid with foreboding for the reader who has already been alerted to the idea that Bertha

McTaggart, this error-free state is not only 'timeless' (as all things must be, according to McTaggart's argument that time is illusory) but is 'self-consciously eternal'. See P. T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality: An Introduction to McTaggart's Philosophy* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), p. 150.

¹⁴³ Other examples of these doubled repetitions include: "You're nice – you're very nice!" said she, kissing her warm baby' (p. 144); 'Really – really – she had everything' (p. 145); "I'm absurd. Absurd!" (p. 145); 'fan – fan – start blazing – blazing (p. 147); "What a pity someone does not play!" she cried. "What a pity somebody does not play" (p. 150).

¹⁴⁴ Letter to William Gerhardt, 11 March, 1922, *CLKM*, 5, p. 101.

is not entirely in control of herself, and that *another* narrator – a supraconsciousness – is covertly manipulating the narrative.

There are, I suggest, two revelations in the story: one of ‘mystic revelation’ or ‘cosmic epiphany’, the other of ‘untimely’ revelation’ or inverted epiphany. The first revelation is in the encounter with Pearl Fulton when Pearl and Bertha look at the pear tree together. Bertha, having seemingly intuited that there is some mystic communion with Pearl, has waited for a ‘sign’ from Pearl; this comes when Pearl asks about the garden. As Bertha pulls the curtains apart and opens the windows (actions which can be construed as unconscious preparation for the epiphany as well as unconscious sexual self-display), there is Bertha’s annunciatory exclamation: “‘There!’” she breathed’ (p. 149). Bertha’s breath is the spirit (‘breath’ deriving from Latin *spiritus* meaning ‘spirit, breath’) working in her. The pear tree in the garden, in full bloom, is Bertha’s spiritual *and* sensual ‘revelation’ to Pearl Fulton in that the tree can be regarded, not only as a phallic symbol, but as a symbol of a Bergsonian ‘cosmic epiphany’: ‘[I]t 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 round, silver moon’ (p. 149).¹⁴⁵ Here is Bertha’s ‘disclosure’ to Pearl; the intense joint gaze (accompanied by the heat of a flame); a reaching up towards the light with its intimation of transcendence; the quivering of consciousness; and the sense of durational continuity in the ‘moment’ of the tree-as-candle stretching and growing, all fulfilling the terms of the Bergsonian epiphany. The moon symbolises potentially both a female sexual state (in the words ‘rim’ and ‘round’) as well as the shining emblem of Bertha’s projected mystical love onto the ‘silvery’, tall and transcendent Pearl.¹⁴⁶

The aura that surrounds the two women is also reminiscent of a mystical experience, the two women, ‘caught in that circle of unearthly light [...] creatures of another world [...] wondering what they were to do in this one with all this blissful treasure that burned in their bosoms and dropped, in silver flowers, from their hair and hands?’ (p. 149). At this point there is also an apparent synthesis of opposing states: the mystic communion between the two women evinced by the sight of the pear tree (certainly an ‘arboreal’ epiphany in Paccaud-Huguet’s schema) brings the otherworldly *and* the earthly into a unified state of ‘bliss’. Not only do the immanent and transcendent aspects of consciousness and reality

¹⁴⁵ The moon, in many religious traditions, symbolises the mother and the feminine principle and Pearl might also be seen as emblematic of the full femininity that Bertha apparently lacks.

¹⁴⁶ The name ‘Pearl’ also, perhaps, serves as an echo for the Pearly Gates of Heaven in some Christian teachings from the description of the New Jerusalem, as in the *Book of Revelation 21:21*: ‘And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl.’ *The Bible*, ed. by Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 1997), p. 318.

merge, but the moment is given over to cosmic memory encapsulated by the questing and questioning phrase on which my interpretation of the story turns: 'For ever – for a moment?' (p. 149). The idea of an endless continuity of time, 'forever', pushes a Bergsonian reading beyond his own limits towards everlastingness; Mansfield, I suggest, is implying in this phrase that the 'forever' is found *within* the moment and depicts the possibility of enduring consciousness and memory.

This cosmic experience is simultaneously compromised, however. For in the story Bertha's seemingly perfected state of mystical communion with Pearl is brought into doubt: the text establishes that the mystical state may merely be Bertha's psychological projection or a fantasy, a dream state or a reverie, even a self-induced hysterical state.¹⁴⁷ This raises the idea that mystic revelation may itself be in some sense untrue. The supra-narrator's repeated questioning signals this ambiguity: 'did Miss Fulton murmur: "Yes. Just *that*." Or did Bertha dream it?' (p. 149). The possibility of error or uncertainty breaks the reader's spell at this point, although at this stage in the narrative Bertha's own ecstasy is not undermined. It is the reader who has questions: to what does Pearl Fulton's indistinctly yet emphatically spoken pronoun '*that*' refer: the experience of bliss; of sexual desire; of a state of arousal in response to the 'quivering' pear tree; of Pearl's own desire for Bertha's 'exquisite' feeling? Or, perhaps, the experience of the shining light which I am associating with Bergsonian epiphanic transcendence and the apprehension of the 'unearthly'? This last supposition is especially suggestive given that the apparent spell between the women is broken only when an *electric* light is switched on. The story continues in the glare of artificial illumination which only emphasises the artifice of Bertha's and Harry's modernity evinced by their fashionable suburban lives and the banality and affectation exhibited by their metropolitan dinner-party guests.

That Bertha understands that she has shared something mystical and other-worldly with Pearl allows her to anticipate the world of earthly pleasures: and the possibility, for the first time, of desiring her husband. That this carnality would take place in a 'dark room' contrasts with the luminescence associated with Pearl. This light / dark dyad not only raises light to the principal term over darkness (and Pearl over Harry), it also implies desire which is not necessarily fully or only sexual on both sides of the binary. That is, Bertha's initiation with Pearl may be into a form of mystical love which in turn initiates the first feelings of heterosexual desire towards Harry. But Bertha imagines the sexual dimension to the latter

¹⁴⁷ There is a warning, too, that Bertha's bliss might be at risk given that the name 'Pearl' is also an (almost) homonym for 'peril'; does Pearl herself represent maximum 'full on' ('Fulton') danger for Bertha?

relationship to be 'blind' and frightening, also emphasising her ambivalence towards heterosexuality (p. 150). Read in Bergsonian terms, there is a hesitant interplay between 'matter' and 'memory': the 'matter' of flesh (carnal union with Harry) takes place once the 'memory' has found its outlet (in mystical union with Pearl). The phrase (which may be Bertha's or the supra-narrator's) 'Was this what that feeling of bliss had been leading up to?' (p. 151) suggests that Bertha experiences some carnal ardour. And yet the narrative quickly checks this notion, too: 'But then, then –'; the iterated adverb 'then' alluding to a possible continuing *deferral* of Bertha's bliss/om.

The second revelation, or what I am calling 'inverted epiphany', occurs when Bertha witnesses a revelatory scene of intimacy between Pearl and Harry in the hall at the end of the dinner party as they seem to affirm (from Bertha's point of view) a future (sexual) assignation. The anticipated tryst is presumably within an already established relationship which may itself result in a distortion of time for Bertha whose faith in the reliability of the past as well as that of her future may be put in doubt by Harry's unfaithfulness. The 'untimely' revelation or 'inverted epiphany' is of an unhappy truth which results in bathos. At this stage in the narrative, Pearl Fulton is still associated with the moon ('her moonbeam fingers', p. 151), and in symbolising changeability allows the story to turn on Bertha's revelation that she has been mis-reading her own story; the disclosure, in which 'bliss' changes to 'blight', happens without foreknowledge.¹⁴⁸ The Bergsonian sense of the future that is unforeseeable is played out at the end of the story:

'Oh, what is going to happen now?' she cried.

But the pear tree was as lovely as ever and as full of flower and as still. (p. 152)

It is the pear tree that seems to be able to continue unchanged, the word 'still' signifying both 'going on' (temporally) and remaining in its place (spatially). And the tree is 'still' itself, capable of change and continuity in its growth cycle. These two types of epiphany, the 'mystical' and the 'inverted', might be regarded as a means of shedding further light on

¹⁴⁸ In Greek drama this sudden surprise or moment of critical discovery is termed *anagnorisis*, a subset of Aristotle's concept of *peripeteia* which signifies a reversal of circumstances or turning point in the drama. Vincent O'Sullivan observes that 'Bliss' is a story of epiphany which 'distorts, or even tricks'. See Vincent O'Sullivan, 'The Magnetic Chain: Notes and Approaches to K.M.', in *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Jan Pilditch, pp. 129-55 (p. 143). First published in *Landfall*, 29:2 (June 1975), 95-131. Similarly, Elaine Showalter notes that in Mansfield's stories, 'the moment of self-awareness is also the moment of self-betrayal'. [1977], Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, rev. edn (London: Virago Press, 1982), p. 246.

Bergson's own dualism between matter and spirit via the recalibrating of Bertha's mystical rapture with profane sexuality, spiritual enlightenment with earth-bound realities.

Sally Vickers has suggested that Bertha and Pearl Fulton looking together at the pear tree is a 'transforming moment' which brings communion with both her friend and husband. Where I differ from Vickers is in her claim that evoking this 'epiphanic conjoined state' as perfect leaves the reader as unprepared as Bertha for the later episode in the hall. According to Vickers, this 're-visioning of the former vision only quickens the sense of life's mysterious ineffability' shared both by Bertha and the reader.¹⁴⁹ But in my reading the signs are already there for the reader but not yet for Bertha. In another analysis, which also runs counter to my own, Paul March Russell argues that the story's ending invokes a 'true bliss' associated with the pain of *non-spiritual* revelation:

[T]he story undercuts romantic conceptions, including the identification of epiphany with spiritual transcendence. [...] [T]he narrative structure of 'Bliss' is anti-transcendent: it returns both Bertha and her readers to the ambiguity of human relations.¹⁵⁰

In my view, Bertha has her exalted mystical feeling attended by light, but she is also 'blind'; her 'blindness', nonetheless, is the very symbol of her mystic state. The mystic *believes* in truth beyond understanding; the etymology of the mystical indicates that the mystic must keep her mouth ('close lips or eyes') shut for there is secrecy or mystery attached to the word itself.¹⁵¹ It is significant, then, that in the first epiphany Bertha is in a mystic state of having her eyes closed (she sees the pear tree 'on her eyelids'). In the second epiphany, rather than hearing the assignation being made with Harry, Bertha appears to see the affirmation on Miss Fulton's eyelids. In the one case she may be a naïve reader of her world, in the second, she 'lip-reads' on the eyes the revealed truth.

The critical literature on 'Bliss' is extensive, much of which advances various interpretations of the story, often via the symbolism of the pear tree, in relation to Bertha's sexuality.¹⁵² Bertha's 'bliss' has also been discussed in terms of hysteria, although critics

¹⁴⁹ Vickers, pp. 11-12.

¹⁵⁰ Paul March-Russell, *The Short Story: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 96.

¹⁵¹ See Spurgeon, p. 1.

¹⁵² See, especially, Helen Nebeker, 'The Pear Tree: Sexual Implications in Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss"', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 18:4 (Winter, 1972-3), 545-51 for a reading of the 'covert sexual nuances of the story' (p. 545), Bertha's 'frigidity' (p. 545), and the botanical significance of the pear tree (p. 546). Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr point to the possibility of 'voyeuristic' characteristics in Bertha rather than lesbian ones which they suggest makes more credible the sudden birth of desire in Bertha, when she is for the first time in the presence of Pearl and Harry for an extended period of time (Hanson and Gurr, p. 63). For Walter E. Anderson, the flowering pear tree is a 'composite

have not made a link between Bertha's ecstasy and mysticism. Patricia Moran has commented persuasively on Bertha's hysteria, suggesting that Mansfield intended Bertha to be 'recognizably hysterical'.¹⁵³ Bertha displays the classic symptoms of *globus hystericus*, including mood swings, uncontrollable laughter and a choking sensation which Moran associates with 'bliss'. But Moran claims the story is not so much 'about' hysteria, as such, as about Bertha's attempt to repress her 'abnormal' sexual desire, with the text becoming 'the hysteric's stream of (un)consciousness'.¹⁵⁴ Earlier critics such as Sylvia Berkman and Saralyn R. Daly have also taken the view that Bertha is hysterical, with Daly maintaining that Bertha's 'high excitement', demonstrated by the description 'She began to laugh.[...] I'm getting hysterical', derives from her knowledge *before* the story begins that her husband is having an affair.¹⁵⁵ This reading denies the possibility of dramatic disclosure which I find in the story and points rather to self-denial. Daly further relates the 'hysterical tone' of Bertha's interior monologue to her status as a 'treacherously fallible narrator'.¹⁵⁶ In this

symbol'. Its tallness represents Bertha's 'homosexual aspirations' and its blossoms 'her desire to be sexually used'. See Walter E. Anderson, 'The Hidden Love Triangle in Mansfield's "Bliss"', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 28:4 (Winter, 1982), 397-404 (p. 400). Pamela Dunbar reads the story as a radical narrative for its 'daringly experimental evocation of the nature of female sexuality'. See Pamela Dunbar, 'What Does Bertha Want? A Re-reading of Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss"', in *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Rhoda B. Nathan (New York: G. K. Hall, 1993), pp. 128-39 (p. 128). Gillian Hanscombe maintains that in the story 'the repression of sexual desire and a consequent confusion and conflict, are played out within the ordered aesthetic parameters of the story' and that the theme of the story is illicit sexual desire. See Gillian Hanscombe, 'Katherine Mansfield's Pear Tree', in *What Lesbians do in Books*, ed. by Elaine Hobby and Chris White (London: The Women's Press, 1991), pp. 111-33 (p. 114). Hanscombe also offers a biographical reading suggesting the pear tree expresses the (forbidden) love between Mansfield and her brother Leslie as well as of her intense feelings for Ida Baker. 'Bliss' dramatises this love triangle (p. 115). For Dominic Head there is 'fluidity' in the tree's symbolic meaning. Not only is the pear tree an 'emblem of Bertha's sexuality', it also represents 'the blossoming, fecundating processes of nature from which she is excluded', an exclusion which 'highlights her predicament as frustrated homosexual and as unwilling participant in a heterosexual system'. See Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 25. Armine Kotin Mortimer contends that the principal story has 'an undoubted lesbian meaning' that means we must read into it homosexual desire; but 'the second-story construction' is the heterosexual affair between Pearl and Harry which 'sweeps away mistaken interpretations and irreparably changes the first'. See Armine Kotin Mortimer, 'Fortifications of Desire: Reading the Second Story in Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss"', *Narrative*, 2:1 (January, 1994), 41-52 (p. 42; p. 43). Patricia Moran reads the story in terms of desire and female sexuality, as well as hysteria, arguing that the text 'encodes Bertha's repudiated desires and disavowed knowledge in an allusive network that occults the subtext instead of illuminating it'. See Patricia Moran, *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996), p. 44. More recently, Rishona Zimring has explored Pearl Fulton's charm, suggesting that Pearl represents a 'quasi-supernatural power' as well as 'the fantasy and desire of both husband and wife: she is an unconfessable longing, both adulterous and homoerotic'. See 'Mansfield's Charm: The Enchantment of Domestic "Bliss"', in *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 4 (2012), 33-50 (p. 47).

¹⁵³ Moran, *Word of Mouth*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Daly, p. 74.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

reading Bertha is either selfless (she knows but does not reveal that she knows) or nihilistic (she rejects knowledge and accepts nothing).

The link between hysteria and the mystical state in particular was made by Evelyn Underhill, who observed that hysteria had long been interpreted as perverted mysticism. In this, early twentieth-century, view hysteria is seen as a disease which causes the disintegration of consciousness, with the hysteric exhibiting tendencies towards 'automatism' as well as 'ecstasy'.¹⁵⁷ The subtle difference between the mystic and the hysteric, however, is that while the consciousness of each is dominated by one fixed and intense idea, in the hysteric that idea becomes obsessional whereas in the mystic the idea is uplifting: it is a 'perception of the transcendent reality and presence of God'.¹⁵⁸ This difference seems to turn on rationality; and the reader may ask: is Bertha rational or irrational? Is she a mystic and / or a hysteric? The story surely allows multiple readings. Bertha has a 'habit' of repeating herself, such as falling in love with strange women (p. 144), a symptom perhaps of an obsessional personality. She also perceives a higher level of reality in the objects and things around her; symbols such as fruit arranged in a pattern in a bowl, the fructifying pear tree, the transcendent moon and Pearl's luminosity announce Bertha's mystical *and* hysterical state. I would suggest that both Bertha's epiphanic perception *and* her 'hysterical' consciousness foster the conditions for a mystical feeling towards Pearl and cosmic memory: a double means of entry into 'another world'.

Bertha's ecstatic / hysterical state aligns with the mystic's psychological disposition, according to Underhill, to display 'nervous organization of the artistic type'.¹⁵⁹ In this view, artistic contemplation, creativity and inspiration relate to divine influence. The artist longs to express himself or herself, trying 'to give us in colour, sound or words a hint of his ecstasy, his glimpse of truth'.¹⁶⁰ In 'Bliss', Bertha's 'artistry' seems redolent of a hyper-aesthetic state as she struggles with self-definition, description of the world and a confused understanding of the beautiful or sublime. The idea of writing as inspiration in 'Bliss' is set against the superficial 'modern' works satirised in Eddie Warren's enthusiasm for inane-sounding 'new' poems such as 'Table d'Hôte' with its ludicrous lines about tomato soup. But what Bertha's feeling of bliss might also allude to is an authorial comment on the ecstasy (and agony) of writing. While Bertha finds it difficult to express herself in speech (which recalls Laura's stammering in 'The Garden Party'), it may be that 'bliss' is

¹⁵⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 60.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

nonetheless indicative of a divinely inspired, creative life; 'Bliss' can also be seen, then, as a story 'about' writing as revelation and inspiration; as the very breath of words.¹⁶¹

Who, though, narrates the story? Saralyn Daly argues that Bertha is the narrator but is a 'treacherously fallible' one.¹⁶² Patricia Moran also finds ambiguity in the story, suggesting that the text is 'Focalized through Bertha and yet not her voice', and that "'Bliss' speaks the unspeakable story of a woman who has no story."¹⁶³ While Moran argues that there is no omniscient narrator, she does not suggest 'who' it is that 'speaks'; the text seems to speak itself. Mansfield herself admitted to Middleton Murry that the story exceeds Bertha's own consciousness:

What I *meant* [...] was, Bertha, not being an artist, was yet artist manqué enough to realise that those words and expressions were not & couldn't be hers – They were, as it were *quoted* by her, borrowed [...] ... Yet she'd none of her own ... But this I agree is not permissible – I cant grant all that in my dear reader.¹⁶⁴

As well as being a citational character in the way Mansfield describes, it could be argued that Bertha is possessed by Katherine Mansfield's own creative spirit in an almost occult way.

While Mansfield makes her supra-narrator withdraw from view, s/he becomes 'ghostly' and, as I have noted, at times covertly operates in the text by providing the reader with information ahead of Bertha. T. O. Beachcroft notes that stories by Mansfield, as well as those by Joyce, Lawrence and the now largely forgotten A. E. Coppard, are not strongly action centred and 'put across by a self-important narrator'. Rather, their distinguishing feature is that 'The stories are not so much narrated as revealed'.¹⁶⁵ If in 'Bliss' Bertha is never given full access to memory and consciousness her limited (or false) consciousness is, ironically, *revealed* via epiphany. The two types of epiphany I have described in the story represent Bertha's transition from one of expectation leading to the revelation of the mystical state to one of dismay at the revelation of the betrayal of earthly desire. While the latter state of knowledge may signal a Christian fall from grace for Bertha, the reader has *already* been

¹⁶¹ In January 1920 Mansfield wrote from Ospedaletti to Richard Murry outlining her own state of writerly bliss in the face of the extreme hardship and worry she had experienced while living on the Italian Riviera in the post-war era: 'God forbid that another should ever live the life I have known here and yet there are *moments* you know, old Boy, when after a dark day there comes a sunset – such a glowing gorgeous marvellous sky that one forgets all in the beauty of it – these are the moments when I am *really writing*. Whatever happens I have had these blissful, perfect moments and they are worth living for.' Letter to Richard Murry [c12 January 1920], *CLKM*, 3, p. 176.

¹⁶² Daly, p. 74.

¹⁶³ Moran, *Word of Mouth*, pp. 65-6.

¹⁶⁴ Letter to John Middleton Murry [14 March 1918], *CLKM*, p. 121.

¹⁶⁵ T. O. Beachcroft, *The Modest Art: A Survey of the Short Story in English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 177.

barred from paradise: as Storm Jameson observes, Bertha's happiness 'fills us with a monstrous foreboding'.¹⁶⁶

While Bergson's mystical-inspired epiphany has been primarily helpful for reading 'Bliss', it could also be so for reading other stories by Mansfield in which an intimation of cosmic memory can be discerned, namely, *Prelude* and 'The Escape', both of which feature prominently in the story a tree which has symbolic mystical properties. In 'The Escape' the story brings in the five aspects of the Bergsonian epiphany: a disclosure or unexpected revelation; an unexpected intensity, for the protagonist is a 'hollow man' in T. S. Eliot's sense; an apprehension of the divine accompanied by luminosity; an extension of memory consciousness to the 'beyond' of the cosmos; and a sense of durational continuity. The mystical revelation happens to the male character whose transcendent vision is triggered both by a tree with its silver stem and copper leaves as well as by something white and opaque with pillars which is 'beyond' the tree. The epiphany turns on a double exposure to the silence *and* the voice of a woman singing, emanating *either* from within the tree (immanence) or the unknown 'beyond' (transcendence), with the repetition of the word 'beyond' highlighting the story's mystical dimension (p. 221). Some of Mansfield's stories which include children also lend themselves to a reading in terms of 'mystical epiphany'. 'The Doll's House', for instance, culminates in little Else's revelation that she has 'seen' the little lamp; and in 'The Voyage', the boat's passage through mist to the early light of dawn charts the growing understanding of the inevitability of death of the motherless child Fenella as she is passed from her grieving father to the old Father Time figure of her grandfather.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have placed a renewed emphasis on Bergson's mystical philosophy in the context of the modernist period and I have argued that Bergson attributed consciousness and memory not only to the individual but to the universe or cosmos as a whole and which not only historicises Bergson, but contributes to twenty-first-century re-evaluations of early twentieth-century religious belief. I have then argued that Mansfield represents cosmic memory in some of her stories by deploying the technique of what I have described as the Bergsonian epiphany. I have claimed that in 'Bliss', however, Mansfield forestalls the durational possibilities of epiphany for Bertha by allowing her to oscillate

¹⁶⁶ Storm Jameson, 'The Genius of Katherine Mansfield', a review of Mansfield's story collection *Bliss and Other Stories*, in *Voices: A Magazine of the Creative Arts*, 5:1, January 1921, 10-12 (p. 11).

between immediate time-based and earthly desires and spiritual yearnings towards a potentially more timeless memory.

In providing a new and distinctive reading of 'Bliss', a well-worked text in Mansfield studies, I have brought together Bergson's articulation of cosmic memory with a reinvigorated approach to epiphany conceptualised in terms of the extraordinary as a means of countering a recent tendency in modernist studies to over valorise the ordinary and mundane. My approach has rested on the idea that the 'moment' is neither foreclosed by being captured nor everlasting, but is time-filled. As the moment passes, in Bergson's schema, it is also retained. But one question remains unresolved: when, if at all, does the temporal consciousness of the individual cease? Is duration endless for the individual or is it curtailed by death or death's brief 'thereafter'?

Other than in 'The Voyage', a death features or is recounted in several of Mansfield's stories, notably 'The Child-Who-Was Tired', 'The Woman at the Store', 'Millie', 'Old Tar', 'The Stranger', 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', 'Widowed', 'At the Bay', 'The Garden Party', 'Six Years After', 'Weak Heart', 'The Fly' and 'The Canary'. There is also a symbolic death of the heart or of hope in stories such as 'Miss Brill' and 'The Life of Ma Parker', 'Marriage à la Mode' and 'A Cup of Tea'. By way of a final Conclusion, I turn to the potential inconclusiveness of death by examining Mansfield's and Bergson's attitude to the afterlife; and in offering a reading of Mansfield's last completed story, 'The Canary', I reprise the four key concepts of Bergson's thought that have enabled the readings in my four chapters.

Conclusion

Life after Death

She is a bird.

[...]

‘A moment – a moment ... I die’.

Up and up beat her wings.

– Katherine Mansfield¹

Throughout this thesis I have aimed to show that an understanding of a range of Katherine Mansfield’s stories can be enriched by using some of Bergson’s key philosophical ideas to interpret them. By way of a conclusion, I explore Bergson’s and Mansfield’s attitudes to life after death in answering the question of whether what I have referred to as the ‘insistence’ of memory extends up to and beyond bodily death. I show that both Bergson and Mansfield expressed ambivalence about immortality, and in a reading of her last completed story, ‘The Canary’, I bring Bergson’s thought to bear on this ‘final’ Mansfield text. ‘The Canary’, I argue, addresses the ‘matter’ of bodily death and intimations of the immortality of the ‘spirit’ through remembering. In my reading, I identify four specific types of binary terms which recapitulate the topics of my four chapters: generative memory, temporality, forgetting and cosmic memory.

Historians and literary critics have attested that in the early twentieth century spiritualism – the belief that the spirits of the dead exist in another realm and can be contacted by the living – was pitted against scientific rationality. As Jenny Hazelgrove explains, ‘Spiritualism emerges as the pathological outcome of science’s triumphant but traumatic shedding of religion.’² Growing interest in spiritualist practices prevalent in late Victorian culture associated with the occult and magic, with paranormal phenomena, and with mediums and parapsychology continued to inform the emerging cultures of modernity,

¹ A poem by Mansfield entitled ‘TO K.M.’, *CWKM4*, p. 487, dated 1910 by the editors and therefore very early which is why this quotation makes a fitting ‘bookend’ between Mansfield’s early writing life and her final work.

² Jenny Hazelgrove, *Spiritualism and British Society Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 5. See also Alex Owen, ‘The “Religious Sense” in a Post-War Secular Age’, *Past and Present*, Supplement 1 (2006), 159-77.

especially technological cultures, of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.³ That spiritualism had a mainstream following in the immediate post-war and interwar years was largely due to the devastating psychological impact of the First World War. Grieving relatives attended séances to try to make contact with the war dead and soldiers turned to the supernatural to make sense of the incoherencies of life in the trenches. But spiritualism also had a wider cultural impact on some writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle who, while they might not have found a means to resolve the question of whether the dead return or remain among the living, found in spiritualist discourse an echo of the way art transmogrifies the world. Modernists, in particular, also found an exemplum for their formal and thematic experimentalism, such as the ‘displacements of authorial voice’ and ‘subversions of spatial and temporal conventions’, as Helen Sword has demonstrated.⁴

Bergson’s investigation of psychic phenomena such as séances, clairvoyance and telepathy, as well as the life of the spirit after the death of the body, provided him with the framework for his lifelong work on the interaction of memory and material life.⁵ In his 1914 lecture about the First World War, he berated Germany for having deployed ‘the mechanization of spirit instead of the spiritualization of matter’.⁶ And in ‘Life and Consciousness’ he speculated that if the activity of our minds exceeded that of our brains and if memories were independent of the brain, as he had theorised in *Matter and Memory*, then the ‘personality’ might be preserved, even enhanced, after bodily disintegration, with consciousness ‘preparing itself for a more efficient action, for an intenser life’.⁷ A year later, in his lecture on ‘The Soul and the Body’, Bergson hypothesised, a little more cautiously, that it might be possible to establish ‘survival for a time’ after death.⁸

³ See Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 2.

⁴ Helen Sword, *Ghostwriting Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 78.

⁵ For a full discussion of Bergson’s interests here, see G. William Barnard, *Living Consciousness: The Metaphysical Vision of Henri Bergson* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), p. 257.

⁶ Bergson, *The Meaning of the War*, p. 16.

⁷ Bergson, ‘Life and Consciousness’, p. 27; p. 28.

⁸ See Bergson, ‘The Soul and the Body’, in *Mind-Energy*, pp. 29-59 (p. 58). It is clear that Bergson is talking here only about the survival of *consciousness* after death, which is a hypothesis made possible due to the separation Bergson had already made in *Matter and Memory* between the physical functioning of the brain and that of consciousness / memory and which he recaps in *The Creative Mind*: ‘If, as we believe, experience proves that only a minute part of conscious life is conditioned by the brain, it will follow that the suppression of the brain will probably leave conscious life subsisting.’ See Bergson, ‘Introduction 2’, *The Creative Mind*, p. 53. In his 1898 lecture ‘Human Immortality’, William James had also questioned what life after death might mean, supposing that if the brain dies, the ‘sphere of being’ that supplied the ‘special stream of consciousness’ might remain intact. See William James, ‘Human Immortality’, in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy with Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine*, 2nd edn (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 18.

More than twenty years later, in *Two Sources*, Bergson returned to the same problem but this time he took a more mystical view, arguing that if our soul survives physical death, the afterlife might be accessed via something similar to mystic intuition accompanied by feelings of joy: ‘Joy indeed would be that simplicity of life diffused throughout the world by an ever-spreading mystic intuition; joy, too, that which would automatically follow a vision of the life beyond.’⁹ Bergson demonstrates his willingness to use the methods of science to produce knowledge about a possible spiritual life after death by going on to say that such an experience could only be confirmed by *scientific* experiment. The unanswered question, however, was whether either mystics, with their special faculties of apprehending the mystical realm, or mere ordinary human beings, even, could reach the highest plane of ‘everlasting life’. In *Two Sources* Bergson concluded that there was insufficient information about the ‘conditions of the afterlife’ to be able to judge, especially when it came to whether the afterlife had duration ‘for a time or for all eternity’.¹⁰ And in the second of his two introductions to *The Creative Mind*, he observed that there could only be a ‘degree’ of ‘added life’ after physical death. He eventually came to the conclusion that only religious faith could account for an afterlife of ‘endless duration’.¹¹ What is noteworthy, then, is the way in which Bergson seemed to defer to the discourses of science and religion over metaphysics when it came to the contested question of the immortality of the soul.

Like Bergson, Katherine Mansfield was also sceptical about the possibility of life after death. In 1919 she had confided in Ottoline Morell: ‘weve only one life and I cannot believe in immortality. I wish I could’.¹² Rather, she seemed to aspire to a renewed life *in* life, a condition she worked hard to achieve at the Gurdjieff Institute, confiding in her friend Olgivanna: ‘more than ever I feel that I can build up a life within me which death will not destroy’.¹³ The chance of eternal life was not ruled out by Gurdjieff and his followers, however; they thought that through sacrifice and suffering the life of the mind might become immortal.¹⁴ Despite her doubts, it seems clear that in her by then advanced stage of tuberculosis Mansfield had especially good reason to contemplate the life of the soul and the potential for immortality, as I show in turning to ‘The Canary’, which she finished on 7 July 1922, only six months before her death.

⁹ *TSMR*, p. 274.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹¹ Bergson, ‘Introduction 2’, *The Creative Mind*, p. 53.

¹² Letter to Ottoline Morrell [c13 July 1919], *CLKM*, 2, p. 339.

¹³ Olgivanna (Mrs Frank Lloyd Wright), ‘The Last Days of Katherine Mansfield’, *Bookman*, 73:1 (March 1931), 6-13 (p. 8).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

'The Canary'¹⁵

'The Canary' is unusual among Mansfield's stories in being presented as a spoken monologue where the speaker is alone and yet seems to address an unidentified listener, 'you' (p. 513). Whereas in 'Bliss' there is ambiguity about who is speaking, in 'The Canary' it is unclear just who is the addressee of the story. Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr suggest that in as much as it is the reader who is made to overhear the story, the reader is invited to 'complete the circle of its creation'.¹⁶ Mansfield may also have been partially addressing herself as the canary: she referred to her lungs as 'wings' and had at that time also written what was to be her last poem in which the speaker of the poem is likened to a 'wounded bird'.¹⁷ The landlady's soliloquy may therefore be an act of recalling the dead to life via remembrance, but also in song.

Vincent O'Sullivan, one of the few critics to have written about 'The Canary', maintains that the story is a lament for the death of the canary which intimates that 'more than mere decease might be drawn from it'.¹⁸ Mansfield herself wrote in spiritually uplifting terms to her cousin Elizabeth in February 1922 about the enchanting song of the canaries that she could hear from her hotel window in Paris, but also commented on the difficulty of aesthetically rendering the birds' sonorous sound: 'How can one possibly express in words the beauty of their quick little song rising, as it were, out of the very stones ...'.¹⁹ This sentiment points to that which goes beyond words: to transcendence ('rising'), deriving from the spirit immanent in things ('the very stones'), as well as an aural 'resurrection', with sound holding memory within it which might continue after the death of the physical body.²⁰ The idea of going beyond speech is countered by Anne Besnault-Levita, who refers to the 'dramaturgy of voice' in the story and suggests that it is speech rather than song that functions as a 'form of memorialization' which temporarily offsets the speaker's loss. Without an interlocutor or audience for speech, the reader is required to take on an 'impossible mourning'.²¹ This 'monologic' story is redefined by Besnault-Levita at the end

¹⁵ The text I use here is published in *CWKM2*, pp. 511-15. Subsequent references to the story are given in the text.

¹⁶ Hanson and Gurr, p. 132.

¹⁷ See editors' note, *CWKM2*, pp. 514-15; see also *CWKM3* for the text of the poem, pp. 135-6.

¹⁸ See Vincent O'Sullivan's introduction, in *CLKM*, 5, p. ix.

¹⁹ Letter to Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 21 February 1922, *CLKM*, 5, p. 70.

²⁰ That music was associated by Mansfield with some form of afterlife is given credence by Olgivanna, who reports Mansfield as saying during her last days at the Gurdjieff Institute: "At the present time music to me is one of the swiftest carriers into the Beyond; it makes me fearless of all fears." Olgivanna, 'Last Days', p. 12.

²¹ Anne Besnault-Levita, 'The dramaturgy of voice in five modernist short fictions: Katherine Mansfield's "The Canary", "The Lady's Maid" and "Late at Night", Elizabeth Bowen's "Oh!

of her analysis as an example of ‘dialogism in absentia’, a form of polyphony in which different utterances seem to be self-generated in a ‘dramaturgy of the solitary self’.²² ‘Voice’, then, signifies not only borrowed speech, but the de-authorising of narrative voice; a metaphorical rendering of the vulnerable self; and a demand for the reader’s re-vocalisation of utterance.²³

The function of sound or song in ‘The Canary’ is the basis of the first opposition in my reading and recalls my first chapter on Bergson’s differentiation between habit and pure memory. The landlady is subject to the routines of looking after her boarders and of listening to her washerwoman every Monday. She brings her sewing onto the veranda in the afternoons, the canary repetitively hopping ‘from one perch to the other’ and launching into song: ‘it was always the same, every afternoon’ (p. 512). These habits are interspersed with recollections from pure memory of specific occasions when the bird has consoled her with its singing:

... It surprises even me now to remember how he and I shared each other’s lives. The moment I came down in the morning and took the cloth off his cage he greeted me with a drowsy little note. I knew it meant ‘Missus! Missus!’ (p. 512)

While the bird may sing, it is of course a captive and the text may also resonate extra-textually with Mansfield’s fears for her creativity, when a month before her death she wrote that she was ‘tired’ of her ‘little stories like birds bred in cages’ and hadn’t ‘written a word’ for several months.²⁴ The tension between the productive recollection of the sonorous bird in the story and the restrictions on creative freedom also recalls Bergson’s idea that it is rare that we are truly ‘free’, even though it is the artist and the mystic who are most likely to defy convention and make that leap to freedom.

The second opposition that I identify in the story, recalling my second chapter, is between spatialised time and the ‘real’ time of duration. The landlady’s day consists of both the measured time of attending to her lodgers and the fluid time of recollecting the ‘exquisite’ song of her canary. Just as memory for Bergson, going all the way back to *Time*

Madam ...” and Virginia Woolf’s “The Evening Party”, *Journal of the Short Story in English*, 51 (Autumn, 2008), 2-10 (p. 3; p. 5). Besnault-Levita also provides a phenomenological reading of voice as a ‘sonorous phenomenon’ in several of Mansfield’s stories in her chapter, ““– Ah, what is it? – that I heard”: Voice and Affect in Katherine Mansfield’s Short Fictions”, in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. by Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber and Susan Reid, pp. 89-100 (p. 90). In this article Besnault-Levita argues that ‘The Canary’ is a ‘tragedy’ of ‘the inaudible’ (p. 97).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 7; p. 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁴ Letter to Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 31 December 1922, *CLKM*, 5, p. 346.

and Free Will, is represented by the chimes of the clock which supply an image for ensuring that ‘distinct terms’ have ‘melted into one another [...] to make a kind of musical phrase’²⁵ and is later described in *Matter and Memory* as being the continuity of the past in the present, memory is prolonged for the landlady through the canary’s repeating song. The canary seems to bring the different rhythms of time together through its singing which is singular: ‘It was not like the singing of other canaries’ (p. 511) and entire: ‘it really seemed to me he sang whole songs’ (p. 511).

Memory and forgetting (in Bergson’s sense that forgetting is remembering in abeyance) were the subject of my third chapter and is the third opposition I identify in ‘The Canary’. The immediacy of the landlady’s spoken word, and the canary’s iterated song, are countered by the pauses (or ‘hesitation’ in Bergson’s schema) denoted by the ellipses in the text which indicate that the landlady’s memories are being recalled. The pause or hesitation necessarily precedes the drawing down of memories from their latent state when required in the present. The different use of tenses in the story brings the remembered memories into conjunction with the speaker’s perceptual consciousness of her immediate surroundings, as well as with the temporal horizon of her future:

... *You see that big nail* to the right of the front door? I can scarcely look at it *even now* and yet I could not bear to take it out. I should like to think it was there *always even after my time* [...] I feel *he is not quite forgotten*. (p. 511; emphases added)

The landlady is able to ‘forget’ the evening star when it is no longer needed to assist her in living; and she speaks ‘without being morbid, or giving way to – to memories’ (p. 514). The story is not, then, a nostalgic retreat into the past or a succumbing to the pressures of the past; rather, it is a commemoration in the present of the unforgettable life of a living creature *and* a celebration of the very act of remembering via necessary forgetting.

The fourth opposition that I identify is between immanence and transcendence, and the individual and the cosmic aspects of memory which map onto the subject of my fourth chapter. The memory of the sweetness of the bird’s singing, which is absorbed by the soul ‘like one’s breathing’ (p. 514) (the immanent), is in tension with a mysterious aurality (the transcendent): ‘Ah, what is it? – that I heard.’ (p. 514) This collocation may function both as a form of mystic sensitivity to a Bergsonian ‘supra-consciousness’, as a sensitive receptivity to a higher being, who may or may not be God, or as a form of sorrow ‘deep down’ in the self. The landlady may even be approaching in her soliloquy a quasi-mystic apprehension of

²⁵ *T&FW*, p. 127.

the ‘fringe of the real’, or she may be incanting a prayer. A ‘note’ of potential resurrection may be sounded in the canary’s song: the landlady’s memory is partly auditory; she hears again the song of the canary. Song is not a trigger for memory but a form of memory itself: the aural heard as a refrain.

The possibilities of resurrection and redemption clearly preoccupied Mansfield at this time. ‘The Canary’, as Pamela Dunbar argues, was ‘Mansfield’s own literary epitaph’.²⁶ Having completed the story and just before she entered the Gurdjieff Institute, Mansfield experienced a crisis in her own being which she couched in terms of death and rebirth. As she explained to Murry: ‘I have to die to so much; [...] the only thing to do is to get the dying over – to court it, almost [...] and then all hands to the business of being reborn again.’²⁷ Once she had entered the Prieuré in Fontainebleau, she found a form of redemption there which negated her writing: “‘What were all my teas and dinners and people, my writing –, yes, my writing, too – in comparison with the *real* life that I find here?’”²⁸ Removed from the realm of writing she questioned her own truthfulness and fidelity to life and envisaged a form of artistic resurrection for herself following her spiritual rehabilitation through Gurdjieff’s teachings. In ‘Talks with Katherine Mansfield’, A. R. Orage reports that at that time Mansfield understood herself as a writer seeking a true ‘creative principle’, an insight which is akin to Bergson’s *élan vital* and which in *Two Sources* he reconceptualises as ‘creative emotion’.²⁹ Mansfield hoped to reach beneath the veneer of insincerity which she found in her writing to see ‘what *remains*’: by this she meant what would survive in its emotional truthfulness rather than in any material sense.³⁰ In her conversations with Orage, she is said to have doubted that she had yet found the technique with which to harness pure creative emotion.

Mansfield’s own ‘beyond’ is of course unknown. Did her spirit live on? Ida Baker believed so, recording in her memoir many years later that Mansfield was in touch with her from beyond the grave: ‘I saw her face radiant with light as she smiled and passed through the room, telling me that all was well.’³¹ And it is well known that John Middleton Murry recalled having a mystical vision of Mansfield after her death and that he sanctified her

²⁶ Dunbar, *Radical Mansfield*, p. 72.

²⁷ Letter to John Middleton Murry [11 October 1922], *CLKM*, 5, p. 294.

²⁸ Olgivanna (Mrs Frank Lloyd Wright), p. 9.

²⁹ A. R. Orage, ‘Talks with Katherine Mansfield’, in *Selected Essays and Critical Writings*, ed. by Herbert Read and Denis Saurat (London: Stanley Nott, 1935), pp. 125-32 (p. 131).

³⁰ Letter to John Middleton Murry [11 October 1922], *CLKM*, 5, p. 294.

³¹ [Ida Baker], *Katherine Mansfield: The Memories of LM* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), p. 19.

posthumously in the pages of the *Adelphi*.³² While a story like ‘The Canary’ may hint at the limited possibilities of extension beyond death accompanied by spiritual belief as in Bergson’s view, in doing so, it also transcends the normal limits of artistic vision. The specific nature and extent of Mansfield’s focus on insistent memories, temporal recollections and epiphanies which intimate a ‘beyond’ and tentatively stretch the membrane separating us from eternity take us, I believe, further than most other authors.

³² It is particularly ironic that the apparently sceptical Murry recorded a vivid and self-aggrandising mystical experience shortly after Mansfield’s death. Murry published his account in the *Adelphi* the journal he founded in 1923 and which also became a vehicle for publishing material by Mansfield posthumously. See John Middleton Murry, ‘A Month After’, in *To the Unknown God: Essays towards a Religion* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924), pp. 34-44; first published in the *Adelphi* in June 1923. Virginia Woolf commented in her correspondence, doubtless without sympathy: ‘Poor Middleton Murry has had a conversion.’ Letter to Jacques Raverat, 30 July 1923, in *A Change of Perspective: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 3, 1923-1928*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977), p. 59.

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