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DIPLOMA THESIS

**Katherine Mansfield in Themes and Motifs of her
Poetic Creation**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I have worked on this thesis, “Katherine Mansfield in Themes and Motifs of her Poetic Creation” on my own using only the sources on the Works Cited page.

I declare that I have not used this diploma thesis to gain any other degree.

Prague, December 9th 2016

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Abstract

The diploma thesis focuses on the poems of Katherine Mansfield and the extent to which chosen themes and motifs reflect her personal life. It also aims at the interconnection of the themes in her poetry with the other genres the writer used. The study is predominantly based on two biographies, collections of Mansfield's poems, letters, diary entries and short stories. Owing to a great number of her letters, diary entries and detailed autobiographies, the thesis presents the life and work of Katherine Mansfield with her sources of inspiration; in the practical part it attempts to connect the themes and motifs from Mansfield's poetry with the events in her life and different genres she chose to use.

Key words

Katherine Mansfield, Katherine Mansfield's poetry, Katherine Mansfield's biography, Katherine Mansfield's short stories, Modernist Literature, New Zealand Literature

Abstrakt

Cílem diplomové práce je odhalit, do jaké míry vybraná témata v básních Katherine Mansfieldové reflektují její osobní život. Pozornost je věnována také propojenosti témat v poezii s ostatními žánry, které spisovatelka v průběhu svého života používala. Práce se opírá zejména o dvě autobiografie a o sbírky básní, dopisů, deníkových úryvků a povídek. Právě díky velkému množství dopisů, deníkových úryvků a podrobným životopisům práce prezentuje život a dílo Katherine Mansfield, i zdroje její inspirace; a v praktické části na tomto pozadí propojuje témata a motivy jejích básní se životem spisovatelky a žánry, které ovládala.

Klíčová slova

Katherine Mansfieldová, Básně Katherine Mansfieldové, Životopis Katherine Mansfieldové, Povídky Katherine Mansfieldové, Modernistická literatura, Novozélandská literatura

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INTRODUCTION

One thing I cannot bear and that is the mediocre – I like always to have a great grip of Life, so that I can intensify the so-called small things – so that truly everything is significant.

(Letter to Garnet Trowell, 8 November 1908)¹

Despite having been almost forgotten in the course of the 20th century, Katherine Mansfield is considered by many critics to be one of the greatest Modernist authors. Together with such English literary voices as Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence, she represents the generation of authors whose main concern was to look inwards as well as observe. After the thirty-four years of Mansfield's life, what is left are collections of short stories, a book of poems, her journals and, the most significant when it comes to quantity, her letters. Based on these literary achievements, there exists a contradiction in the reception of this author. As James Bertram mentions in *Towards a New Zealand Literature*, Katherine Mansfield was considered by many generations as an author with a very narrow vision of the world, too sensitive, too locked inside her own emotions. However, thanks to biographies and other published works, her name has become increasingly prominent. Today, Katherine Mansfield even has her own exhibition in Wellington and is being taught not only as a New Zealand writer, but also as someone who greatly contributed to English literature.

So far, the greatest importance has been attributed to her short stories which are undoubtedly innovative, original, at times inspired by the philosophy of Plato, Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson. Although the stories differ greatly as far as style, length and themes are concerned, they share the author's talent for depicting the individual impressions in life. I would not have written this thesis had I not read the short story "The Wind Blows." The author's use of imagery, symbolism and her talent for expressing the exact mood of the characters and places, all led me to a growing interest in her work. An exploration into Mansfield's works of art and her personality makes the reader wonder

¹ Mansfield, Katherine. *Selected Letters*. Ed. Vincent O'Sullivan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. 19. [Subsequent page references preceded *SL* are given in parentheses in the text]

about the conspicuous ambivalence which is present and inevitably leads the reader to question: Is she a distinctly New Zealand or a British (Modernist) author? How does she depict and transform her autobiographical experience in her writing? Is she original or is the influence of philosophers and writers upon her striking? Possible answers are to be discussed, among many other secondary sources, based on two biographies, mainly Claire Tomalin's *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* and Anthony Alper's *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, as well as three collections of her letters and journals, the first edited in *The Letters and Journals of Katherine Mansfield: A Selection* by C.K. Stead, the second edited by Vincent O'Sullivan and published as *Katherine Mansfield: Selected Letters*, and the third edited by Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott in *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield: Volume I*. The thesis further focuses on two collections of short stories: *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, with an introduction written by Stephen Arkin, and *Stories: Katherine Mansfield*, selected and with an introduction by Elizabeth Bowen. And most importantly, the source for the study is a collection of her personal poetry *Poems*.

Even though an immense number of sources is available, it is rather difficult to fully depict Mansfield's life and personality. When it comes to the question of clarifying the versions of Katherine Mansfield's life, one can draw information from what was written and collected by her husband J.M. Murry, from the biographies or from the personal correspondence and journals of the author. Her fondness for inventing various versions of the truth has contributed to adjusting her own name to her needs, moods and the people she was in contact with. She changed her signature according to the recipients of her letters. Among the names she chose to use were: "Kass, Katie, K.M., Mansfield, Katherine, Julian Mark, Katherine Schönfeld, Matilda Berry, Katharina, Katiushka, Kissienka, Elizabeth Stanley, Tig [...]" (Tomalin 5). To Sylvia Payne she was Kathleen or Kass, in letters to J.M. Murry her signature was Tig, Your Own Wife or Your Own Wig, to S.S. Koteliansky she changed her name to Kissienka, to her brother she was Your Katie and to Frieda Lawrence or Virginia Woolf she was simply Katherine. Not only did she alter her names and identities, "Katherine was a liar all her life" (Tomalin 57). Not only because of this fact, her life and personality as well as literary creation, as presented in the two biographies and other relevant sources, may be interpreted in many ways.

Even though most of what has been written about Katherine Mansfield focuses on the short stories, the main interest of this thesis is her poems which are by no means less significant in terms of their quality and originality. Poems, when studied together with

letters, biographies and journals, can reveal a lot about the author to the readers. They mirror, sometimes unconsciously and unintentionally, the thoughts, opinions, the bits of life of the author as a sensitive and perceptive person. As Mansfield wrote in her journal in November 1921, “Art is not an attempt of the artist to reconcile existence with his vision; it is an attempt to create his own world in this world.”² There is no doubt that she creates her own world(s) in her literary work, giving life to nature or memories, minutely reflecting the child’s world through regular rhyme schemes, while still employing free verse as well. Since various authors mention that her short stories are characteristic for their poetic quality, the main questions which come to mind are: How does the writer succeed in projecting her life into her poems? To what extent are the poems interconnected with other genres Mansfield used? The aforementioned works, namely poems, biographies, letters and diary entries, serve as the main sources for the present thesis. The key themes and motifs of selected poems will be interpreted and discussed from the perspective of specific milestones of the author’s life. This thesis strives to connect the leitmotifs with references to the author’s biographies, chosen letters, diary entries and short stories which reflect the mind-set of the poems.

² Mansfield, Katherine. *Letters and Journals*. Ed. C.K. Stead. Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1977. 241.
[Subsequent page references preceded *LJ* are given in parentheses in the text]

THEORETICAL PART

1 Katherine Mansfield's life and work as reflected in the biographies, letters and journals

I'm a 'Colonial'. I was born in New Zealand, I came to Europe to 'complete my education' and when my parents thought that tremendous task was over I went back to New Zealand. I hated it. It seemed to me a small petty world; I longed for 'my' kind of people and larger interests and so on. And after a struggle I did get out of the nest finally and came to London, at eighteen, *never* to return, said my disgusted heart. Since then I've lived in England, France, Italy, Bavaria.

(*SL* 257, Letter to Sarah Gertrude Millin, March 1922)

1.1 Childhood in New Zealand

When considering her thirty-four-year long life, it was definitely the period of her childhood which formed Katherine Mansfield's literary creation the most. Her birthplace of New Zealand as well as her relatives and friends serve as a key backdrop and source of information for her writings: they are to be found even in her latest letters, short stories, diary entries and poems.

Katherine³ Mansfield Beauchamp was born on 14 October 1888 at 11 Tinakori Road in the Beauchamp's house. The first unknown arises when it comes to her origin. Was she a true New Zealander? As Vincent O'Sullivan mentions in *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*⁴, whereas Katherine's grandparents had lived in New Zealand for a long period of time before she was born, her parents, Annie Burnell Dyer and Harold Beauchamp, were both born in Australia. Also, Mansfield's favourite grandmother was

³ Originally, the writer's name is Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp. She later decided to use "Katherine Mansfield" as her pen name, as she is known today.

⁴ Mansfield, Katherine. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield: Volume 1*. Ed. Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

[Subsequent page references preceded *CLKM* are given in parentheses in the text]

Australian, while her other grandmother and her two grandfathers were all English. There was, as Tomalin in *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* puts it, “the luxury of her upbringing” (13). As a daughter of a very successful man, Harold Beauchamp, Katherine and her mother as well as sisters, were bound to be interested and involved in what was expected of ladies of the Victorian era – mostly activities dealing with servants, flowers, parties, dresses, music and reading. Yet Mansfield differed. She was a troubled child, rebellious, affectionate and hypersensitive. “With so intense a person as she, every emotion was the final emotion and everything was for ever” (Davin 5). She was often jealous of the achievements and friendships of others and humiliated because of her corpulence. These facts could have contributed to her need to always become the focus of everyone’s attention, which was, however, very difficult among her siblings. During a period of nine years, her mother had borne six children. The last one was the only and long awaited son, Leslie⁵, whom Mansfield’s mother had when she was thirty. Even though the relationships between Katherine and her family were not always perfect, it is this period of her life which is the subject of most of her short stories and poems. It is particularly these ‘imperfections’ of her family life in New Zealand along with the special ties with the family members that influenced Mansfield’s later literary career.

Although her father’s influence is often discussed in the biographies, letters and journals, information about the mother is rare. The authors, at some points, briefly and usually sternly describe her character: “Mother was remote, delicate, witty, and rather conscious that she had married well” (*CLKM* vii). In Mansfield’s biography, Tomalin also gives an account of Katherine’s mother: “She was good at giving orders to her servants; her pleasures were reading, letter-writing and travel” (9). However, the influence of her Australian grandmother, Annie Beauchamp’s mother, on Katherine’s life and creation is striking. Their connection and relationship was of great importance; Katherine valued her grandmother even more than she did her mother. Moreover, Katherine’s middle name, after baptism, was in fact the maiden name of the grandmother. It is not surprising then that her significance in Katherine’s life is reflected in all kinds of literature she wrote, with the grandmother always being a symbol of kindness, safety and respectability. As opposed to Annie Beauchamp, Mrs. Dyer was able to take care of babies since she herself had had nine. Mansfield’s mother, when Katherine was only one year old, went on a business trip to England for six months and returned pregnant. Gwen, the fourth

⁵ The name “Leslie” was not used by the family very often, rather, he was called “Boy”, “Chummie”, “Bogey” or “Bogie”, as the reader can see mainly in the letters and journal entries.

daughter in the Beauchamp family, who was also taken care of by her grandmother, died of infantile cholera at three months old. This had a huge impact on Katherine who “by then started having nightmares. Beneath the chubby exterior there developed a nature that was insecure, and subject to terrors in the night not only when asleep” (Alpers 4). Bad dreams, visions and sleepless nights followed, and were later reflected in her writings. When she reached the age of six, she started gaining her first responsibilities. Katherine started to attend school, the Karori Public School, for the first time, accompanied by her sisters and other children of different social backgrounds, as is portrayed in her short story “The Doll’s House”. However, Katherine did not belong to the same group as her siblings. She again found the company and support she sought in the presence of her grandmother.

She enjoyed the company of other people as well as moments of solitude. It was from these moments of solitude that she could see and feel the world from different perspectives. Since her childhood her main field of interest was books. Books were something in which she found not only a refuge, but also a source of inspiration when it comes to making observations about the world around: “her observation was as acute as though she had trained herself to examine and retain everything she saw. She called herself a squirrel, storing up her impressions” (Tomalin 14). Observing and making notes became a part of Katherine’s nature and everyday life; she found a great interest in reading even at night by candlelight, waiting for her grandmother to go to sleep⁶. Her writing efforts continued when she, with her sisters, attended Miss Swainson’s private school. She created the school’s first “magazine”, including jokes and stories.

In 1903 the Beauchamp family sailed to England. From that time, Katherine did not have a single home, a single place to stick to, a physical refuge. A sense of displacement, often discussed in connection with the postcolonial authors in general, was present all the time. “The hotel room, the temporary lodging, the sense of being about to move on, of living where you do not quite belong, observing with a stranger’s eye – all these became second nature to her between 1903 and 1906” (Tomalin 30). This time she spent only three years in England, attending the Queen’s College in London. The teacher, Miss Wood, certainly influenced Katherine’s journal⁷ as well as letter writing since she made the pupils “write their letters home, thus giving Sundays a poignancy for Katherine Mansfield which they never lost; Sunday remained her letter-writing day throughout her life” (Alpers 26).

⁶ Mansfield used to share a room with her grandmother, which is reflected in the short stories and poems, “Prelude” and “Candle” in particular.

⁷ Miss Wood gave Katherine a black notebook, which greatly contributed to Katherine’s writing *Journal*.

For instance, the letter correspondence continued for six years with Tom Trowell, a musician whom she met at the age of thirteen. Nevertheless, the feelings were mainly on her side and so was the correspondence. Katherine also admired her German teacher. Not only did Professor Rippmann become an idol for the girls, but also someone who inspired them to read.

In Katherine's mind, London became a place full of life, creativity, opportunities and interesting people. Despite her efforts to stay in Europe, which she considered a brilliant continent to spend the future in, the family sailed back to New Zealand in 1906. During the long trip Katherine made some remarks, not flattering of course, about her parents in her notebook. It was a "journey to 'home' from the other place called 'Home' that was now her spiritual home" (Alpers 41). Her love-hate feelings for her father as well as for her homeland shaped the following years.

Not long after their arrival in January 1907, Katherine's grandmother, a family member with whom she had had the best relationship during her childhood, died. This incident, the first encounter with death in Katherine's life, found her completely unprepared and desperate. This event can be found throughout her writing. The grandmother was repeatedly given an important role, even more important than Katherine's mother, in the short stories and poems. Overall, 1907 was a very intense year when it came to her vitality and activity since "in one busy year, Kathleen flirted with several men, published her first stories, convinced her father that she must leave New Zealand, and settled on 'Katherine Mansfield' as the name she would live by professionally" (*CLKM* xi). Her love affairs with men and two women in that year only partly resolved Mansfield's worsening feelings of loneliness. Her father was elected the chairman of the Board of the Bank of New Zealand, and so the Beauchamps moved to a different address. Even though Katherine had her own room and could practise playing her violoncello, she felt there was something missing. Still, she adjusted her behaviour to the circumstances. Upstairs in her room, she thought and wrote about Europe, but "when she went downstairs again, she was a darling, the dear old thing" (Alpers 48). She introduced herself in different ways depending on her surroundings, so that she could get what she wanted – life in Europe. Katherine's behaviour troubled her parents, and the people around her could see that this was not the life she wanted to live. Katherine believed she would be able to flee from her homeland because of her literary creation. Thus, she attempted to write and soon sent some of her short stories and children's verses to a magazine. She continued writing during one of her closest encounters with the countryside. It was her

few-weeks-long camping trip in the beautiful countryside of New Zealand. *The Urewara Notebook* (2015), which she wrote during that trip, describes her experiences from this caravan journey. It was, in fact, Mansfield's father's idea to send her to the country so she could realize what beauties there were. Yet it did not prevent her from feeling a strong attachment to Europe. It was only later that Katherine realized what her father had done for her: "He had given her an education in London [...] It was he who took the first step toward finding an editor for her stories, and sprang to her defence when their originality was questioned" (Alpers 61-2). Apart from all this, her father also made it possible for Katherine to return to London, sending her money to support her.

1.2 Europe – Katherine Mansfield's second home

The turning point for Mansfield, as far as moving is concerned, took place in 1908. After that, life became something of an endless journey for her, both spiritually as well as in the literal sense. She moved so many times in her life that it would be difficult to count. In Europe, she visited, and mostly lived in, England, France, Switzerland, Poland, Belgium and Germany. During the eight years from 1908 till 1916, for example, she "had amassed a total of twenty-nine postal addresses" (Alpers 201). Whenever she was, she made herself familiar with the countryside as well as the cities, literature, music and art, allusions to which she incorporated in her writing.

She could not have chosen a better period to partake in London society, which was, as opposed to that which Katherine was used to with her family in New Zealand, open to newcomers, new ideas and new artistic viewpoints. After seven weeks on board, Katherine arrived and chose an expensive room with a balcony in the Paddington student residence. As usual, she was amongst the high society, "regarded as the extravagant daughter of a rich Colonial" (Alpers 66). Katherine appreciated and enjoyed the atmosphere of this house full of musicians, where women could practise playing their musical instrument in their rooms. As Katherine was prone to starting relationships with writers and artists, it was no wonder that she, within fourteen days of her arrival to Europe, enjoyed a romance with Garnet Trowell. He was a musician whom she met in New Zealand and the twin brother of Tom Trowell, who Katherine had feelings for not long ago. Garnet's parents did not approve of their relationship, particularly his father objected to it. Therefore, the marriage of which Katherine and Garnet talked about did not take place. However, she met a tenor singer,

George Bowden, who fell passionately in love with her and wrote her long letters. Even though she ridiculed the letters, she very soon left the Beauchamp Lodge and, without any explanation to her family or friends, decided to marry George. Under mysterious circumstances, Katherine (now Bowden), who wore black dress on her wedding day, decided to leave her husband in the evening of the same day. She disappeared without letting anyone know. Her feelings and reasons for marrying him as well as abandoning him remained a mystery to him, if not even to her. It is highly probable that she wanted to free herself from the influence of her family, and possibly, also wanted to try another role in her life, to impersonate a different character. When Katherine's mother found out about the marriage and Katherine's affairs with women, she immediately headed to London from New Zealand. After spending two weeks in Europe, she returned to New Zealand and promptly disinherited Katherine, concentrating more on the wedding of her next daughter Vera. It is not certain whether Katherine's mother knew what Katherine had found out shortly before her mother arrived - that she was pregnant with Garnet's baby. Nevertheless, she had a miscarriage during her stay in Bavaria in Germany after she had hurt herself, and she spent the rest of her life childless. She stayed in Germany till the end of 1909 and became a friend and lover of Floryan Sobienowski, a literary critic and translator. As far as Mansfield's literary creation during this time is concerned, this period brought the collection of short stories called *In a German Pension*, certainly inspired by the time spent in Germany. The year 1909 is a great mystery because of the lack of information about Katherine from this period of time. As Vincent O'Sullivan remarked about the period from 1909 to 1912: "The diaries and notebooks were destroyed, only a couple of dozen letters survive from the hundreds she must have written. She herself tended to regard these as her lost years, and she seldom referred to them" (*CLKM* xiv). Ida Baker, her friend from the Queen's College, was forced to destroy Katherine's letters and Katherine herself burnt her notebooks. Obviously, if more than one out of thirty-four years of life is missing, the rest lacks logical connection.

In December Katherine moved back to London, desperately writing to her husband to meet her. Although he was disinclined to see her at first, he changed his mind and for some time, they even lived together in his flat. He read some of her German stories and suggested she should meet A.R. Orage, an editor of the London weekly, *New Age*. In March 1910, however, Katherine had to go to a nursing home because of an operation for peritonitis. Ida Baker, who received a message from Katherine, took her to the seaside where Katherine got the inspiration for her sad sea poems, "in which the sea has become a

reproving mother to ‘The Sea Child’” and “New Zealand has begun to be idealised as a ‘faraway home’” (Alpers 115). The peritonitis was not the only health problem she suffered from since she had horrible pains and associated them with rheumatic fever. The truth is it was gonorrhoea but Katherine did not know about it. In the same year she met William Orton who inspired her to write a poem called “There Was a Child Once”, which is “a commentary on the friendship” (Alpers 117). It was a very productive period of writing poems.

One of the most influential events of 1910 and great milestones in Mansfield’s life was undoubtedly visiting the exhibition of Post Impressionists, arranged by Roger Fry, which took place in London from 8 November until December. For Katherine “the experience of stepping from London’s November gloom into that luminous exhibition was like a sudden liberation, a shaking free from Victorian and Edwardian attitudes into wholly new ways of seeing” (Alpers 120). Mansfield’s writing was greatly influenced by this experience and the short story “A Birthday” was the first to be written soon after. The story was a huge success and Katherine was finally beginning to gain her renown as a writer.

In May 1911, Katherine’s mother, two sisters and her brother arrived in London, and stayed until 8 March 1912, which was the last time Katherine saw her mother. Her brother particularly enjoyed the time with Katherine who introduced him to Orage and later on to J.M. Murry. Health problems again stepped in, this time in the form of the most serious illness of Katherine’s life, tuberculosis. She felt something was happening with her lungs, yet again did not know what exactly.

Her encounter with John Middleton Murry, whom she met for dinner in 1911, profoundly affected her personal life as well as literary career. J.M. Murry was an Oxford undergraduate and at that time was working as an editor of *Rhythm* art magazine. Murry is described as a rather controversial figure mostly because of the influence he had on Katherine’s public image and reception. However controversial he might at times seem, there is no doubt that Katherine loved him very much. An extract from one of her letters to Murry from 28 May 1918 serves as evidence: “You are simply, incredibly perfect to me – You are always ‘in advance’ of ones most cherished hopes – dreams – of what a lover might be” (SL 92). Vincent O’Sullivan compares the two lovers, who married on 3rd May 1918, as follows: “while formal brilliance certainly was on his side, ‘life’ was on hers” (SL xiv). Sometimes their relationship resembled a separate world or planet in which only these two lovers were caught, depending solely on each other. “They encouraged each other’s belief that what set them apart was in fact what made them special. They began early on a

game they believed in, the game of Mansfield and Murry versus the Rest” (*CLKM* xv). The number of letters Mansfield sent to Murry highly exceeded the others, and the number obviously rose in times of their separation. When apart from Murry, she felt free to comment on him to her friends – “Ida, Lawrence, Kot, Virginia Woolf – regardless of their sex, involving them in a private game in which she denigrated Murry while at the same time professing love to him” (Tomalin 131). They both shared a mutual love of literature, which led to their evenings spent by discussing books and exchanging opinions on writers and philosophers. Murry was interested in French philosophy, particularly in that of Henri Bergson. Enthusiasm for Bergson’s philosophy became one of the main sources of inspiration for the *Rhythm* magazine. Apart from this, it was Bergson’s understanding of time and place, as well as her encounter with the Bloomsbury Group, which profoundly influenced and shaped Mansfield’s writing. The first place to move from England then was Paris where she produced one of her longest stories “Something Childish but Very Natural” (1914) and later the highly-valued “Prelude” (1920). While Paris was an influential place for Katherine’s writing, Murry realized that for him, the main source of inspiration was in England. England was also where they could spend time with the Lawrences, influencing each other’s viewpoints and attitudes towards literature. The close contact of the two couples enabled Katherine to meet a friend of D.H. Lawrence, Samuel Solomonovich Koteliansky, a prominent figure in Katherine’s letters “not as a lover, but in an oddly paternal way as a sort of father-figure, admirer-fromafar, and frowning disapprover” (Alpers 168). Katherine always needed to be admired and with Koteliansky she had a guarantee. Naturally, he was not the only person to occupy a deep spot in Katherine’s heart. Her brother Leslie, who arrived from New Zealand to join the British army, visited Katherine in London in August. At the end of September he had to go to France. Three days after sending his sister a letter he died in Belgium, aged twenty-one. She again felt lost and wrote:

Yes, though he is lying in the middle of a little wood in France and I am still walking upright and feeling the sun and the wind from the sea, I am just as much dead as he is. The present and the future mean nothing to me. I am no longer ‘curious’ about people; I do not wish to go anywhere; and the only possible value

that anything can have for me is that it should put me in mind something that happened or was when we were alive. (November 1915, France)⁸

Leslie Beauchamp's death was an ill fortune. He was teaching his men how to handle a hand-grenade. However, his was faulty. It exploded in his hand and apart from Leslie, it killed his sergeant too. The loss of her brother changed both Katherine and her writing. In her journal, she wrote to Leslie: "I want to write a kind of elegy to you... perhaps not in poetry. Nor perhaps in prose. Almost certainly in a kind of *special* prose" (*LJ* 66). The grief for her brother was deep and she strove to express how she felt via her literary creation. In one of her letters to J.M. Murry dated 13 December 1915 she wrote: "I dreamed last night that I sat by a fire with Grandmother & my brother & when I woke up I still held my brother's hand. That is true. For my hands were not together – They were holding another hand – I felt the weight & the warmth of it – for quite a long time" (*CLKM* 211).

Katherine's relationship with Leslie was one of the most precious ones in her life. They used to talk about their memories of their homeland, New Zealand, a lot, which then resulted in Katherine's writing a "nostalgic sketch" (Tomalin 138) "The Wind Blows". Katherine's brother was an extremely important person for her and she felt there was a need for bringing the dead to life through literature, and it was through writing she could meet her beloved ones again. When she expressed her feelings and thoughts in her journal, she felt her brother's presence and support: "It is the idea [...] that I do not write alone. That in every word I write and every place I visit I carry you with me" (Journal, February 1916).⁹ The author chose to return to her family and New Zealand not only in her memories, but also in her short stories and poems.

There is no doubt that her early childhood shaped her appreciation of nature as well as her perception of the world around. It was also during her trips to France earlier that year when she gathered all she needed to write the short story "Prelude" (1918), later printed and published by Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press. Writing at that time became a sort of confession to her, particularly in the most difficult periods of her life. Yet another difficult time was to come very soon.

⁸ Mansfield, Katherine. *Letters and Journals*. Ed. C.K. Stead. Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1977. 62. [Subsequent page references preceded *LJ* are given in parenthesis in the text]

⁹ Mansfield, Katherine. *Complete Works of Katherine Mansfield*. Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2012. 2156. [Subsequent page references preceded *CWKM* are given in parenthesis in the text]

This time it was Katherine's life itself which was in danger. There had always been illnesses which she had had to live with. Unfortunately, in 1917 she finally found out she had tuberculosis, an infectious disease. It is not sure, however, when the illness really began. In Claire Tomalin's point of view, the beginning was connected with D.H. Lawrence. Katherine spent a lot of time and lived very close to the Lawrences during the war, eating together and sometimes even staying at their cottage overnight. Lawrence had tuberculosis and while Frieda's and Murry's immunity systems were strong enough to resist the illness, Katherine, who was always prone to diseases, did not have such an advantage. Since she was not sure what the best kind of treatment was and believed she could find some, she frequently changed doctors and places to stay. Moving from one place to another and writing in particular became a kind of escape from reality, from the nearness of death. "One can live all sorts of *lives*, indeed, but death is different. There is only one and it happens to oneself" (Alpers 280). In spite of her friends' remarks about her appearance – "steady weight loss, the rings slipping on her fingers, the face once plump growing drawn and haggard, the breath shorter, the temper blacker, the freedom even to move across a room slowly taken from her" (Tomalin 164) – there was another side to her health. Even though her breath was shorter and her moods were changing rapidly, ranging from enthusiasm to depression and exhaustion, her energy and strength, regarding her writing, were incredible and her literary efforts represented "an inward quest" (Alpers 237). Her writing became even more personal, especially after her mother's death in August 1918. The level of intimacy in her writing further increased after the arrival of her father, who, after meeting Murry, decided not to give Katherine any extra money which she so needed for her treatment. She strived to flee from her physical pains and night terrors by means of her writing. Moreover, Murry became the editor of the *Anthenaem* in 1919 and Mansfield started to contribute her poems and book reviews to this journal. Especially in Switzerland, she wrote as much as she could, with the year 1921 being the busiest one, as far as work is concerned. "The writing of these two final years was to yield a total almost as great as all the work of the remainder of her career" (CLKM 13). It was only then when her name gained real prominence in literary circles and when her letters and diary entries became more numerous than at any other moment in her life. She felt an urgent need to compensate for her decline in physical health with the incredible abilities of her mind full of ideas.

But fervent writing spans were at times completely overtaken by the illness. Even on their wedding day, Katherine did not feel well and Murry sent her to Cornwall to visit

her friend. Their separation during her illness was almost unbearable for her. She decided to try a new treatment in Switzerland, enjoying life there with Murry with “nights of planning future travel and future homes” (Tomalin 219). Murry was, after all, the closest person in her life. “Her family was close only in her dreams: dead brother, dead mother, unloved and envied sisters, father so much more satisfactory as a creature of fantasy than in reality” (Tomalin 233). However, as the closest person she had, Murry was not always strong enough to support her. He was often unable to hide his unease at the disease, putting a handkerchief to his mouth and turning aside.

After an unsuccessful treatment in Switzerland, she chose to believe the reputation of Dr Manoukhin, who introduced “a new treatment by irradiation of the spleen” (Davin 20), and so she moved to Paris in January 1922. What Katherine needed the most was her husband’s support. “Murry by this time did not believe a cure was possible and, though she probably at heart agreed with him, she resented the feeling that she would not help her believe. Estrangement grew between them” (*CLKM* 21). Katherine tried not to lose faith in other possibilities of treatment, so she went to London to her friends and then back to Paris for a last attempt at a cure.

Murry and two doctors were the last people who saw Katherine alive. After walking upstairs to her room, her cough got worse and there was nobody who could help her. Although she was waiting for her husband to visit her, their meeting did not take place. She passed away on 9th January 1923.

2 Mansfield's sources of inspiration

Every writer seeks inspiration to enrich their writing or is at least influenced by various factors. Naturally, Mansfield was not *tabula rasa* in this regard. The period of her childhood certainly had a huge impact on the course of her personal life and professional career. The major influences include New Zealand, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. Of course, New Zealand is a broad term as far as Mansfield's life is concerned. Apart from the spectacular natural sceneries, it was undoubtedly her family which influenced her immensely.

2.1 New Zealand

The longer I live the more I turn to New Zealand. I thank God I was born in New Zealand. A young country is a real heritage, though it takes one time to recognize it. But New Zealand is in my very bones. (*LJ* 260, Letter to Sir Harold Beauchamp, March 1922)

Katherine held a rather ambiguous attitude toward New Zealand. Moreover, she always wanted that which she could not have. When in London, she longed for her faraway home and regarded it the best place for a girl to write: "There are great opportunities for a girl in New Zealand – she has so much time and quiet – and we have an ideal little 'cottage by the sea' where I mean to spend a good deal of my time" (*SL* 4, Letter to Sylvia Payne, April 1906). Her opinions then changed and even though she spent one half of her life in New Zealand, she saw her future in writing and playing the cello in Europe. Escape from New Zealand and her family seemed to her the only possibility to become a free woman in charge of her own future. At this point in her life, Katherine was sure that what she was looking for was in London. Nevertheless, it was in Europe, particularly after the death of her brother Leslie, where she realized how important the country of her childhood was for her both personally and as an inspiration for her writing. Not only can the influence of

New Zealand be seen in her short stories, such as “At the Bay”, “Prelude” or “The Wind Blows”, but it is also represented in her poems, namely in “The Sea Child”, “A Little Boy’s Dream” or “Sea Song”. New Zealand forms background for the scene, but more importantly it is an inseparable counterpart to the short stories and poems. Its depiction greatly contributes to the overall atmosphere and to the reader’s perception of the characters and narrators. Mansfield’s thoughts and desires went back to New Zealand where she found, as opposed to London, ‘peace of mind’, and she attempted to make the country alive in her writing. It remained more than her birthplace; she took the best from its natural beauty and atmosphere and made it survive through literature. What is more, together with nature, it was her family, in particular her grandmother and brother who are reflected in Mansfield’s thoughts and memories. Notably, besides her life in New Zealand, it was also contact with literature which shaped her writing.

2.2 Literary influences

Naturally, Mansfield was inspired and influenced by many writers throughout her life. For instance, in June 1921, she confessed to Ottoline Morrell: “On my bed at night there is a copy of Shakespeare, a copy of Chaucer, an automatic pistol & a black muslin fan. This is my whole little world” (SL 216). Especially towards the end of her life, she was engrossed in reading Shakespeare’s plays. All the same, she was a passionate reader as she enjoyed reading, among many others, Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge, the Brontë sisters, Dickens, Conrad, Dostoevski. “Mansfield had sophisticated taste: she was a lifelong reader of Shakespeare and Milton and recognised the importance of Whitman; she knew work by Yone Noguchi; she kept her copy of *The Oxford Book of English Verse* close at hand” (Cappuccio 182). She also read the journals of Dorothy Wordsworth and in a letter to J.M. Murry in March 1918, she wrote: “Well well! The heap of dead ones that we have thrown over – but ah the ones that remain. All the English poets. I see Wordsworth, par example – so *honest* and *living & pure*” (SL 76). Numerous studies on the subject of Anton Chekhov’s influence on Mansfield’s short stories have also appeared. But more importantly, she is very often considered a Modernist writer and is connected with Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. For this reason, the following subchapter is dedicated to these two writers.

2.2.1 Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf

For Mansfield, of course, Woolf was a very near presence, as both writer and friend. The personal relationship between the two women was of vital importance to both, especially between the years 1917-20. There was an element of competition, acknowledged on both sides; each touched the other at her most vulnerable. Woolf's social connections and apparent marital harmony emphasised to Mansfield her own alien and solitary status, while Mansfield's work was, as Woolf admitted, the only writing that achieved effects she coveted. (Parkin-Gounelas 121-122)

In order to understand Katherine Mansfield as a writer, it is necessary to look at how her contemporaries, as well as today's critics, view her. One of the most read Modernist writers and a close friend of Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, once said about her: "No one felt more seriously the importance of writing than she did" (Woolf *Essays* 357). Writing was a kind of therapy for Mansfield. Irrespective of the genre she chose to use, her personality is always reflected in the texts.

Woolf and Mansfield were connected in their professional lives not only by the specific styles of writing, but also in terms of publishing. Mansfield's early works were published and printed by The Hogarth Press, the publishing house owned by Virginia and Leonard Woolf. Nevertheless, Katherine and Virginia differed, certainly socially and culturally. "Mansfield was from a middle-class New Zealand settler family headed by her businessman and banker father; Woolf was from the heart of the British intelligentsia with familial connections to key literary, artistic and political figures" (Simpson 1). Whereas Woolf held the central position within the prestigious and highly influential Bloomsbury Group¹⁰, Mansfield came to London as a stranger, as a Colonial looking forward to the

¹⁰ The Bloomsbury Group was a London group of intellectuals, economists (more precisely there was only one economist and several writers touched upon the economic topics in their works), artists, painters, writers and philosophers, established at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, some of the members did not consider themselves as a part of an organized, rule-based group. "There was never any formal organization of the Bloomsbury Group, no list of members, no acknowledged leader, no official rules, and no recognized identity" (Craufurd 60). What was more important for all who belonged to this interdisciplinary group was that they experimented both in their personal lives and in their writing, they shared certain ideas, opinions and values which differentiated them from the others. It was within and thanks to this group, where Katherine Mansfield, soon after her arrival to London, became familiar with certain

opportunities the new country offered her. Also, Mansfield's nomadic way of life is in a great opposition to Woolf's staying mostly in London. Virginia Woolf fought for the rights of women, especially in writing. She "proposed that the liberation of women artists and intellectuals could be achieved through modest redistribution of income and property: for each a thousand pounds a year and a room of her own" (Craufurd 69). Katherine Mansfield, even if her topics and ideas often concerned women, could not have been called a feminist. Although there are many differences, the similarities in their personal and professional lives are rather striking: the experience of serious illness, the death of a brother, childlessness, the importance given to writing. Both Mansfield as well as Woolf suffered from health problems during their lives. Whereas Mansfield had physical pains, Woolf's illness was mental (for instance she heard voices) and resulted in her suicide. As was mentioned earlier, Mansfield was absolutely devastated after the death of her grandmother, younger sister and brother, and was of course grieving over the death of her mother. Woolf experienced the death of her mother, father and brother, and chose suicide (she drowned herself) as a solution to her mental problems. Both Mansfield and Woolf were childless. While Mansfield miscarried, Woolf was never pregnant. Woolf's husband also thought that she was not prepared or capable of having a child, neither physically, nor mentally. But most interestingly, Mansfield's and Woolf's lives were shaped by writing.

However different their fiction might seem at times, numerous similarities can be found in their works. One of the most obvious is the focus of their texts. They both strove to depict their impressions of life as accurately as possible. Woolf called Katherine Mansfield, as well as one of the chapters in her *Collected Essays*, "A Terribly Sensitive Mind". Concerning her letters, journals, short stories and poems, this designation is obviously more than accurate. They both "use lyricism and symbolism in narrative, and multiplicity of points of view, to render moments of evanescence and intensity" (Simpson 25). Where Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf can be compared in terms of writing prose, Mansfield's poetry can be discussed in connection with D.H. Lawrence.

philosophical thoughts and where she met, among others, Bertrand Russell, T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence.

2.2.2 Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence

Lives of both Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence intersected on personal and professional levels. Two years after their meeting, Mansfield and Murry befriended D.H. Lawrence and Frieda in the United Kingdom. This friendship was a partial inspiration for Lawrence's novel *Women in Love* and, what is more, Mansfield and Murry were witnesses at the Lawrences' wedding. These two couples even attempted to live together, although it did not last long because of D.H. Lawrence and Frieda's frequent quarrels. However, the letter correspondence between Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence continued.

The relationship between Mansfield and Lawrence was a turbulent one. The periods of deep friendship were at times completely overrun by feelings of hatred and misunderstandings. For instance, in a letter addressed to Kotliansky from May 1916 Mansfield expressed her revulsion at Lawrence's behaviour to his wife in the period when the two couples lived next to each other: "I don't know which disgusts me worse – when they are very loving and playing with each other or when they are roaring at each other and he is pulling out Frieda's hair and saying 'I'll cut your bloody throat, you bitch' and Frieda is running up and down the road and screaming for 'Jack' to save her" (*LJ* 78). One year later she sent a letter to Ottoline Morrell in August 1917, also mentioning Lawrence: "I am so fond of him for many things – I cannot shut my heart against him and I never shall" (*CLKM* 325). The disparity present in Mansfield's feelings was striking throughout her life and literary creation. What is more, this emotional instability was true of Lawrence too.

When looking for other similarities between Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence, apart from their love for nature, one which readily comes to mind is their status in society. From the onset, this was a problem for Mansfield as a stranger, a Colonial, and for Lawrence who had a middle-class background. Another similarity is linked to their reception by critics. Whereas the critics focused more on their prose, they have very often been perceived as marginal writers when it comes to poetry. "Both Lawrence and Mansfield deliberately created an idiosyncratic poetic form, ignoring earlier established forms and hence becoming integral participants in the contemporary age of chaos" (Brault-Dreux 23). But Mansfield had an even worse position than Lawrence when it came to critics' appreciation of her poetry since some of her poems were too emotional, too tied to her personal life in a time when Modernist authors more often strived for experimenting with form.

As for Mansfield's relationship with Woolf and D.H. Lawrence, Their strongest bond was through literature. They devoted great parts of their lives to their work. All three of these authors were complicated personalities, struggled for attention and were often misunderstood by those around them. From the period when Mansfield (with Murry) and Lawrence (with Frieda Weekley) had been living together, their relationships alternated between intense, difficult and communicative. Lawrence often quarrelled with his wife, and thus created an unpleasant atmosphere between the two couples. However, both the couples enjoyed discussing literature till night, which was influential for both Mansfield's and Lawrence's writing.

3 Writing as a means to live; Short stories, poems, letters and journals

It is such strange delight to observe people and to try to understand them, to walk over the mountains and into the valleys of the world, and fields and road and to move on rivers and seas, to arrive late at night in strange cities or to come into little harbours just at pink dawn when it's cold with a high wind blowing somewhere *up* in the air [...] – all this – and all this is nothing – for there is so much more (*SL* 54, Letter to Bertrand Russell, December 1916).

Writing was in the centre of Mansfield's life, as she made clear in one of her diary entries: "I live to write" (*CWKM* 2234, Journal, May 1919). She put most of her attention and effort into it, and used it as a means of confession and self-expression. She was permanently trying to find shelter from her grief, pains, worries, night terrors and disappointments. The shelter was found in her husband, John Middleton Murry, her friends, her brother and grandmother, the countries she visited and last but not least New Zealand. The same can be said about literature and it is not an overstatement to claim that writing saved her life several times, mainly after the losses of her relatives, during the times of her illnesses and problems in her relationships. It helped her to calm down, to confess to her pen friends, to focus on other aspects of her life than her pains and sorrows. However, the path from finished short stories and poems to their general approval by the public was long and difficult. There were periods of enthusiasm for Mansfield's writing, but also many silent ones. Since 2008, when Katherine Mansfield Society was formed, "interest in Mansfield has grown steadily" (Martin 179). Many books about Mansfield have been published in the recent years, which has contributed to an increased popularity of this author with the general public.

Her contemporaries and critics often wonder about the technique she employs in her writing. In fact, it is not certain if she ever intended to have any technique. In an attempt to capture every important detail, to bring objects, people and the atmosphere of places to life, she would frequently rewrite again and again until she was satisfied with the result. Mansfield repeatedly, mainly in her letters, expressed dissatisfaction with her

literary creations, poems in particular. She placed significant focus on the impression which each text would have upon the readers as well as upon her herself and wanted to bring all her literary creation to perfection. As Henri Bergson wrote in *Time and Free Will*: “art aims at impressing feelings on us rather than expressing them” (16). The result and the influence upon the reader were crucial for her, especially regarding the short stories. Therefore, is not a coincidence that readers are many times drawn into her short stories and poems. Katherine was a natural observer and one of her greatest capacities was the “capacity to take in visual detail [...], to be drawn on, sorted and selected later, as if from a box of prints” (Tomalin 14-15). She called herself “a squirrel”¹¹, observing from above, storing impressions, always attentive and in motion to see everything properly. What greatly contributed to how she perceived the world was, without a doubt, the First Post-Impressionist Exhibition in 1912 where she, together with other members of the Bloomsbury Group, enjoyed Van Gogh’s painting “Sunflowers”. In a letter to Dorothy Brett from December 1921, she described the influence which this event had had upon her: “That picture seemed to reveal something that I hadn’t realised before I saw it. It lived with me afterwards. [...] They taught me something about writing, which was queer – a kind of freedom – or rather, a shaking free” (SL 233). There are various ways in which this freedom is expressed throughout her writing. For one, some of her characters experience a certain amount of freedom. Additionally, she uses a great freedom in her style, the way she plays with time, perspective changes, and new, unusual techniques.

3.1 Journals, letters

“Having found, in fact, a medium that competed with her music and her cello, she had begun to regard a day as misused if she hadn’t *written* something” (Tomalin 31).

Since Mansfield’s biggest certainty was always writing, she very soon got used to expressing her thoughts and feelings in her journals. The topics in her journals and letters vary from day-to-day issues to her literary works to deep philosophical questions. There

¹¹ As cited earlier (Tomalin 14).

are various allusions to different authors, including Shakespeare, Keats, Coleridge, Wordsworth and D.H. Lawrence; and philosophers, e.g. Plato, Henri Bergson and Bertrand Russell. Inspired by Plato's thoughts, she for instance wrote: "The unknown is far far greater than the known. The known is only a mere shadow. This is a fearful thing and terribly hard to face. But it must be faced" (SL 195, Letter to Richard Murry, January 1921). Mansfield's interest in literature and philosophy was immense. Although Murry's role in editing and publishing Mansfield's personal writing has often been questioned, the journal entries are a great source of information not only because of their subject-matter, but also because of how they present Mansfield's character and mind in their entirety.

Writing was the activity which Mansfield enjoyed the most, often as an escape to a different reality. She could watch and observe and then write for hours without stopping. She spent so much time writing such an incredible amount of letters that they would, collected together, cover hundreds or even thousands of pages. The majority of letters was addressed to her husband, John Middleton Murry, at the times when they, for whatever reasons, were not together. She wrote letters to her family, friends and other writers or philosophers. A great part of the letters focuses on people she admired in her life, on natural beauty and reflections on literary works. The letters are a valuable source of Mansfield's confessions, as well as some of her poems, and are written in different tones, depending on who the addressees were. More importantly, the letters offer a great insight into the author's thoughts, dreams, opinions, feelings, relationships, but also physical pains and complaints so important for the study of the poems.

3.2 Short stories

Katherine Mansfield is predominantly famous for her short stories. She began writing them when she was a child, with her first published one at the age of nine. The short stories as well as poems became popular after being printed in the magazines *New Age*, *Rhythm* and *Blue Review*, and thus became accessible to the general public. In *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*¹² the reader can find more than eighty short stories which are thematically organized into five sections, named after the most important stories: "In a German Pension" (1911), "Bliss and Other Stories" (1920), "The Garden-

¹² Mansfield, Katherine. *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2006. [Subsequent page references preceded *CSKM* are given in parenthesis in the text]

Party and Other Stories” (1922), “The Doves’ Nest” (1923) and “Something Childish and Other Stories” (1924).

Mansfield’s writing is sometimes compared to that of James Joyce or Virginia Woolf. When it comes to technique, there are “no signs that she was casting about to find a formula: a formula would, in fact, have been what she fled from” (Bowen ix). Even though she purposefully incorporated imagery to achieve a certain effect and intentionally experimented with the open endings of her short stories, she primarily focused on her imagination and notions about life. “She wrote of nothing that did not directly happen to her, even when she appeared to be at her most imaginative and fanciful” (Gordon 7). Not only did she write about things that happened directly to her and the people around her, but she also attempted to enter the specific moments and minds of her characters: “She sinks herself inside each of her characters, thinking or speaking in their tone of voice. [...] But the ‘innerness’ of her character-drawing goes beyond the interior monologue” (Gordon 23-24).

In her short stories, Mansfield was able to see the world through the eyes of women, children and even men. She was influenced by moods, places and people around her, and these helped to shape the style of her writing. In her letter to Richard Murry, she talks about the style she chose for the short story “Miss Brill”. She details her careful preparation for the process of writing as well as the precision of depicting the world around:

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 the very moment. After I’d written it I read it aloud – numbers of times – just as one would *play over* a musical composition, trying to get it nearer and nearer to the expression of Miss Brill - until it fitted her. (SL 195, Letter to Richard Murry, January 1921)

She had, as is shown many times in her letters and also in her journals and biographies, the ability to enter the specific moment and to live in it as long as she wished. In her letter to William Gerhardi from March 1922, when talking about the short story “The Voyage”, she explained: “when I wrote that little story I felt that I was on that very boat, going down those stairs, smelling the smell of the saloon” (SL 249). The depiction of reality as well as the imaginary was surely influenced by Freudian thoughts and concepts. Authors would

look inwards and express feelings, thoughts, dreams and ideas. Inspired by this, Mansfield attempted to re-live certain moments and frames of mind in her poems.

3.3 Poems

The poems, even though they definitely deserve attention and are very important in evaluating Mansfield's literary contribution, had been rather forgotten until an article was published on 11 June 2015 in *The Guardian*. In a Chicago Library, twenty-six undiscovered poems were found and further studied, "giving fresh insight into the writer's most painful and difficult period, the evidence for which she had later destroyed" (Robertson). Mansfield, with the help of her closest friends, destroyed most of her personal correspondence and works since she was, according to Robertson, "embarrassed and possibly ashamed of much of her conduct", always critical of the vast majority of works she created. She could have been known not only as a short-story writer. Robertson remarks in the article: "As well as Mansfield being one of the most famous modernist short-story writers, I believe there is a case to be made for reassessing her as a poet." In the near future a collection of those 'new' poems is bound to be published. It will definitely reveal something new about her life in the period from 1909 to 1911; at the same time, it will help show Katherine's life and work from more perspectives.

The collection of her *Poems* was published posthumously by her husband. However, this does not mean that there were no poems accessible during her life. Shortly after Mansfield met Murry in 1911, she sent him some of her poems which were overshadowed by Orage and by the attention drawn to her short stories. Orage rejected them because of the free verse they were written in. Interestingly enough, the poems which were published during her life thanks to Murry were written under the pseudonym Elizabeth Stanley or as translated from Boris Petrovsky (a Russian writer whom Katherine invented). Although Mansfield was highly critical of some of her short stories and poems and did not wish certain personal letters and diary entries ever to be published, Murry edited and published everything he could.

When looking for a source in which most of the poems are gathered in one place, *Poems*¹³ (1923), a collection containing more than sixty poems written between 1909 and

¹³ Mansfield, Katherine. *Poems*. London: Constable and Company, 1930.

1919, is the best choice. *Poems* was edited and published by Murry, similarly to Mansfield's most personal literary works. The book is divided into the following chapters based on the time when the poems were written: 'Poems: 1909-1910', 'Poems: 1911-1913', 'Poems at the Villa Pauline: 1916', 'Poems: 1917-1919' and 'Child Verses: 1907'. The main themes and motifs of the poems can be grouped based on certain aspects from Mansfield's short stories and they are related to the events in her life. The interconnectedness of poems and short stories is exceptionally interesting. It offers new insight into the amazing world of imagination, imagery, melancholy, childhood and dreams. The atmosphere is always excellently depicted and shared throughout the short stories and poems, creating a vital background to the analysis of various themes and motifs.

Mansfield's view on poetry was similar to that of William Wordsworth, whose poems Mansfield read, as mentioned in her letters. She shared the opinion that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 237). At times this is true of Mansfield's poems since they are written as poetry in prose form, as a stream of consciousness; but the poems are very well arranged regarding both form and the message. Sometimes, the tone of the poems is childlike and the rhyme regular, other poems are full of metaphors, symbols, and personification and the tone is rather serious. There are very philosophical and dream related poems, which, to understand, one must be knowledgeable about the author's background.

Generally, the poems are reflections of the diaries and letters and are sometimes autobiographical and emotional. Nevertheless, Mansfield's poetry does not focus only on expressing emotions, it "combines various formal modernist and Imagist features, like acuteness and conciseness" (Brault-Dreux 22). The poems are original, even though sometimes influenced by her reading of, among others, Keats, Wordsworth or Coleridge. They are unique because of the variety of voices the author uses to express her ideas.

3.3.1 Categorising the poems

Firstly, the poems can be grouped according to the period in which they were written, in the same way as in *Poems*. Secondly, the poems can be divided based on their

[Subsequent page references preceded *PKM* are given in parenthesis in the text]

thematic content. From both these perspectives, the interconnection of the poems with Mansfield's life and her other genres is crucial.

Chronologically, the poems can be divided into five sections, thus covering the period from 1907 till 1919. The first group of poems, written in 1907, has been known as 'Child Verses', and, in this thesis, will include the following poems: "Opposites", "A Little Boy's Dream", "A Day in Bed", "The Lonesome Child" and "Evening Song of the Thoughtful Child". The second group of poems, written between 1909 and 1910, will be illustrated by: "Spring Wind in London", "Butterfly Laughter", "The Candle" and "Little Brother's Story". The third group of poems, written between 1911 and 1913, includes "Loneliness", "The Awakening River", "To God the Father", "There Was a Child Once" and "Sea Song". These poems are then followed by Poems at the Villa Pauline from 1916 and include "Waves" and "To L. H. B. (1894-1915)". The last group of poems, written between 1917 and 1919, will, for the purposes of the present thesis, include "Now I am a Plant, a Weed...", "Covering Wings", "Sorrowing Love", "The Wounded Bird" and "Old-Fashioned Widow's Song".

As far as an in-depth, thematic analysis is concerned, many groupings can be made. However, the themes and motifs are very complex, and so, in the practical part, the seven major groups are: Nature, Family, Children, Love and Relationships, God, Memories, and Loneliness and Nearness of Death.

The key to grasping the significance of Mansfield's poetic creations is not only connected with their temporal and thematic classification. It is also necessary to consider the poems from a wider perspective, where the elements of the poems are interconnected with the actions of the characters, their ideas and the overall atmosphere and mind-set of the short stories, letters and diary entries. The events in Mansfield's life are immensely important because "the feelings and thoughts which the artist suggests to us express and sum up a more or less considerable part of his history" (Bergson 17). All these approaches and outlooks will help see the poems in a new light and in an interaction with the other genres in which Mansfield chose to write. Although in the Theoretical part some of the connections between the poems and Mansfield's life, short stories and letters are suggested, the vast majority of her poetry has not been mapped in any way. Thus it will be attempted in the Practical part of the thesis.

PRACTICAL PART

In the Practical part of the thesis, the poems are divided into the following thematic subchapters: nature, family, children, love and relationships, God, memories, loneliness and nearness of death. These belong to the most prominent themes and motifs in Mansfield's poetry. The background of Mansfield's biographies, short stories, letters, and diary entries offers a unique perspective on her poetry. Autobiographical elements are quite prominent in Mansfield's literary creations, especially in her poetry, in which they are often partly hidden behind symbolic language. Undoubtedly, a great number of other thematic groups could be discussed regarding the poetry and short stories of this writer. Nevertheless, the chosen ones are considered crucial in terms of Mansfield's life and its interconnection with her literary works.

4 Nature

Everything that happens is an adventure. When the wind blows I go to the windiest possible place and I feel the cold come flying under my arms – When the sea is high I go down among the rocks where the spray reaches and I have games with the sea like I used to years ago. And to see the sun rise and set seems enough miracle.
(*CLKM* 238)

As a sensitive observer of everything around her, one of the most prominent topics in Katherine Mansfield's short stories and poems is indisputably nature. Influenced by the works of the poets of nature, such as Wordsworth, natural elements are essential for Mansfield's poetry too. Since she was a child, Mansfield was fascinated by nature, its beauty and significance. Whether she was in New Zealand or in Europe, natural backdrops became an inseparable part of her short stories, poems, diaries and letters. New Zealand's

scenery started to play a prominent role in her literary creation, especially after she moved to Europe and started to reminisce about her early childhood. One particularly salient experience was a camping trip she was sent on towards the end of her stay in New Zealand which she took inspiration for her writing from.

One of the leitmotifs in her poems is wind, which was, together with the sea and water in general, an inseparable part of nature where Mansfield grew up. Other natural motifs include the sky and stars, sun, air, light and shadow, plants and trees, fire and rain. However, there is never a simple description of the objects around, neither in the poems, nor in the short stories, neither does nature merely serve as a backdrop. “Where she describes scenery, it is not merely the backcloth to a situation. It is conveyed to the reader emotionally, and uniquely, as only the person in the story can feel it” (Gordon 24).

Before two individual natural elements will be discussed in depth, it is necessary to elaborate on the position of nature in itself, especially the New Zealand of Mansfield’s childhood. Here, D.H. Lawrence’s attachment to nature immediately becomes apparent since Mansfield admired “Lawrence’s impersonal (unegoistical) ‘naked’ contact with living nature” (Brault-Dreux 25). Mansfield’s eagerness for observing and capturing nature is illustrated most clearly in her poem “The Awakening River” (1911). Although Mansfield met Lawrence more than a year later after she had written this poem, it reflects their shared love for the natural world. “This poem manifests a peculiar form of vitality” (Brault-Dreux 25) which can be later found in Lawrence’s writing too.

THE GULLS are mad-in-love with the river,
And the river unveils her face and smiles.
In her sleep-brooding eyes they mirror their shining wings.
She lies on silver pillows: the sun leans over her.
He warms and warms her, he kisses and kisses her. (*PKM* 26)

In the poem, the river is personified by giving it a face. Also, it is in the eyes of the river in which the wings of the gulls are mirrored. Although the gulls have the foam of the sea on their breasts, they are in love with the river. The author enters the poem in the twelfth line and expresses her opinion after she is woken up by the natural elements.

Wake! we are the dream thoughts flying from your heart.
Wake! we are the songs of desire flowing from your bosom.

O, I think the sun will lend her his great wings

And the river will fly away to the sea with the mad-in-love birds. (*PKM* 26)

The two lines starting “Wake!” disrupt the flowing of the poem, bringing a new element into it. Nature wakes the narrator up, telling her that all of its components are in fact springing from the narrator herself, that they are her thoughts and deepest desires. The end of the poem resembles what Mansfield earlier mentioned in her poem “In The Rangitaki Valley” as the “mystical marriage of Earth with the passionate Summer sun” (*PKM* 3), which represents the interconnection of the natural elements and the celebration of natural beauty. Yet in the poem “In The Rangitaki Valley” it is the unity of the river and sun combined with the gulls that creates a harmony in nature. In the poem “Now I Am a Plant, a Weed...” (1917), once again echoing Lawrentian ideas, “Mansfield’s poetic self *belongs* to and merges with organic nature” (Brault-Dreux 35). The importance of natural elements, and those of New Zealand in particular, certainly remained in Mansfield’s thoughts till the end of her life.

With regards to the short stories, the local colour of New Zealand’s countryside as experienced in her childhood is reflected in the majority. From the perspective of this thesis the most notable example is “Prelude”, a short story which is to be mentioned in the subsequent chapters. There are the “painted wooden houses”, “the gardens”, “the bright stars” and spectacular views, as Lottie and Kezia observed in the story: “the moon hung over the harbour dabbling the waves with gold” (*CSKM* 9). The typical features of New Zealand’s nature are made even more prominent in “At the Bay”, a short story situated in beautiful natural landscapes, among sheep, sea and manuka trees. The short story was included in the collection *The Garden Party and Other Stories* published in 1922 by Constable in London and depicts Mansfield’s memories of her home land after her brother’s death (with the notable exception of some stories which are set in Europe).

Besides inanimate objects and natural elements, Mansfield frequently incorporated animals in her writing, mostly birds. However, they mostly function as symbols (unlike the gulls from “The Awakening River”) and for this reason they are to be dealt with in a subchapter regarding loneliness and nearness of death. Two subchapters are discussed below, namely ‘Wind’ and ‘Sea’, chosen as representative elements of New Zealand nature which Mansfield used repeatedly throughout her literary creation.

4.1 The Wind

Both the North and the South island are known for the strong wind coming from the sea. The blowing of the wind, being typically a part of local colour, is one of the most prominent features of Mansfield's writing about New Zealand. At times it plays only a marginal role in the scene for the story or poem, but in some cases, the wind acquires a unique role. It is highly atmospheric as far as the plot is concerned, at times it symbolizes the cruelty of the natural elements, becomes alive or represents something which children should be scared of. Undoubtedly, its importance can be seen throughout all the literary genres that Mansfield chose for her writing.

The wind is an inseparable element of Mansfield's childhood as it was an everyday presence and since that period of her life inspired her the most. Also, whenever it was windy, it reminded her of New Zealand. The power of the wind as a natural element is apparent in her poem "There is a Solemn Wind To-night" (1917). However, it is in the short story "The Wind Blows" (1920) where a more interesting interpretation of the wind appears, and where wind connects the gap between the author's memories and literary creation. The wind is an integral element in the story since it walks the siblings to the esplanade and to the steamer, in fact wishing the two 'good bye' as they leave the island. In the story, the wind is also causes fear in the main character Matilda, who is terrified of the strange sounds.

More importantly, wind repeatedly appears in Mansfield's poetry. In "A Day in Bed", child verses from 1907, the wind is something to be feared. It is repeatedly connected with storms and it intensifies the atmosphere of a dark room shortly before the child falls asleep. The wind is personified, making strange sounds, wanting something from the little child. The form of the poem is very simple, organized in six stanzas of four lines, perfectly regular. Yet even in this child verse the narrator offers remarkable images as she perceives the strong wind as a being which longs for something. She then sees the wind as a dog who wants a bone, using a simile "He's like an awful dog we had" and mentioning the wind's "horrid sound" (*PKM* 95). The child's imagination, when she is alone in her bed, adds to the otherwise unexceptional situation in which a little girl is alone in her room.

Of course, wind is not confined to New Zealand and terrified children only. In "Spring Wind in London" (1909), a seven-stanza-long poem, the wind becomes the narrator. The atmosphere in this poem greatly resembles the one in the short story "The

Wind Blows". Both the poem and the short story contain nostalgia and rosy memories of the old days. In the poem the wind blows across the world and drives the clouds across the sky like a shepherd-dog. The tone changes when the wind addresses the stranger:

O stranger in a foreign place,
See what I bring to you.
[...]
I came from that forgotten place
Where once the wattle grew. (*PKM 5*)

The setting of the far-away place is beyond doubt New Zealand. It seems as if Mansfield knew that she would never return to her beautiful island again, ending the poem as follows: "A memory, stranger. So I pass. ... It will not come again" (*PKM 5*). And even though in the poem the wind will not return, her childhood memories of New Zealand became a place she returned to with rising frequency later in her life in Europe.

4.2 The Sea

Oh, I have such a longing for the sea as I write, at this moment. To stand on the shore long enough to feel the land behind one withdrawn into silence and the loud tumbling of the waves rise and break over one's whole being. (*SL 56*, Letter to Ottoline Morrell, July 1917)

The sea, of course, becomes one of the major natural elements in all Katherine Mansfield's writings. It was always an inseparable counterpart in her journeys as well as in the majority of the places she stayed. A great part of her poems and short stories, and even her personal writing, contains the sea in some form. The sea, like the wind, has a special value and power for Mansfield, yet in the poems it acquires different roles and meanings. In the poems, she mentions it as a boundless ocean, as a sea which is big and strong, as a magical golden sea.

“A Little Boy’s Dream” is a poem from the *Child Verses*. Here, the sea is mentioned as something distant, far-away, and yet also rather intimate, as the only companion:

Far away, far away
From my home and from my play,
On a journey without end
Only with the sea for friend
And the fishes in the sea.
But they swim away from me
Far away, far away
From my home and from my play. (*PKM* 89)

The regular rhyme scheme resembles the ceaseless rhythm of the waves. When the little boy wakes up from his dream, he is no longer “sailing far across the sea” (*PKM* 89). Instead, he is in the rocking chair with his mother, or, in fact, grandmother (as discussed in the chapter 5). The fear of the unknown, which is “far far greater than the known” (*SL* 195, Letter to Richard Murry, January 1921), is one of the most common childhood (and generally human) fears. And in nature, those fears are inevitable. Moreover, the sea is “a journey without end”. Although Mansfield’s experience of her geographical journey from New Zealand to Europe was prominent in her memories and writing, “A Little Boy’s Dream” is not a reflection of her travel. The sea, apart from being big and strong, is a symbol of something endless and boundless.

“Sea Song” (1913) belongs to the ranks of the sorrowful sea poems. It was written after Katherine Mansfield suffered a miscarriage in 1910 and her friend Ida Baker took her to the seaside in England so that her body and mind could heal. Mansfield, typically in the most traumatic periods of her life, returned to New Zealand in her thoughts, and this poem is one of the examples of those reminiscences. The tone is melancholic, showing disappointment or rather hopelessness:

I WILL think no more of the sea!
Of the big green waves
And the hollowed shore,
Of the brown rock caves

No more, no more
Of the swell and the weed
And the bubbling foam. (*PKM* 38)

The sea is in the memories of the narrator, and although she remembers every detail of it, it is painful to think about it. The memory of the sea, the central motif and character in the poem, is personified and yet distant in the narrator's "far away home" (*PKM* 39). The sea is too loud, and so the narrator is terrified. However, the power of sea is better illustrated in the following poem.

In "Waves", written in 1916, the sea has its own God, the God of the Sea. The sea is powerful as opposed to the inland waters. Towards the end of the poem the two Gods talk to each other, with the God of the Sea saying the following:

But Thy kingdom is small,
Said the God of the Sea.
Thy kingdom shall fall;
I shall not let thee be.
[...]
He rose and covered
The tiny God's land
With the tip of his hand,
With the curl of his fingers:
And after—

The tiny God
Began to cry. (*PKM* 49)

As it is discussed in the subchapter concerning God and faith, in this case the power of the God of the Sea overshadows the tiny God of the waters on land. Obviously, Mansfield was conscious of the strength and power of this natural element since she spent her childhood, as well as periods in England or South France, on the seashore.

As for the short stories, the sea is present in a great number of them. "At the Bay" (1922), being inspired by her experiences and memories, obviously revolves around this motif: "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” (*CSKM* 165). The sea is far more than a natural component as illustrated in the previous lines. It is also a symbol for freedom. In “At the Bay” the sea is where Jonathan truly enjoys his existence:

At that moment an immense wave lifted Jonathan, rode past him, and broke along the beach with a joyful sound. What a beauty! And now there came another. That was the way to live – carelessly, recklessly, spending oneself. [...] To take things easy, 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. (*CSKM* 168)

As Mansfield remarked in a letter to Koteliansky in July 1922: “freedom is dangerous, is frightening” (*SL* 266). In the same respect, the sea is dangerous. It is feared by children who are often taught to fear it; and in adults it often raises thoughts about and reflections on time which has passed and about life in general.

Many more natural elements can be found in Mansfield’s writing, including stars, sun, sky, moon, flowers, sheep or even dogs. Nevertheless, it is the sea and wind which are the most prominent and which Mansfield perceived as her lifelong companions. However, natural elements were not her only kindred elements and sources of inspiration. Her childhood and relationships with her family members were equally influential and therefore the following lines are to describe the role and position of family in Mansfield’s writing.

5 Family

I dreamed last night that I sat by a fire with Grandmother & my brother & when I woke up I still held my brother's hand. That is true. For my hands were not together – They were holding another hand – I felt the weight & the warmth of it – for quite a long time. (*CLKM* 211, Letter to J.M. Murry, 13 December 1915)

Normally a reader would expect her parents to be at the centre of Mansfield's attention in terms of family, at least in her journal. In her personal correspondence, however, Mansfield reminisced about her grandmother and brother the most. Interestingly enough, even after her mother's death, she did not become a key figure in her writing, although Mansfield of course mourned her. If the mother is mentioned, as in the poem "A Little Boy's Dream", it rather seems that the female figure in a rocking chair in front of the fireplace is the grandmother, the most important woman of Mansfield's childhood. In "Opposites", the mother represents the authority which expects certain manners and good behaviour from her child. Because of the indisputable importance of Mansfield's grandmother and brother in her life and their prominence in her work, the following subchapters concentrate mainly on these two family members.

5.1 Grandmother

The role of a mother in Mansfield's life was not what one would normally expect it to be. She was not the person to whom the children would go for comfort. She was not afraid of leaving her children behind in New Zealand while travelling to Europe for six months. There was always the grandmother who was able to take her role: to manage the household and to take care of the children. As mentioned earlier, Katherine had a little sister, Gwen, who unfortunately died at the age of three months. In Mansfield's journals, there are childhood recollections which cast light on the relationships between Katherine, her mother and grandmother. On one significant occasion, as Katherine entered the room

and saw her mother, grandmother and Gwen, she noticed her mother lying in bed and her grandmother was holding the baby in her arms. “My mother paid no attention to me at all. [...] ‘Now go and kiss mother,’ said the grandmother. But mother did not want to kiss me. Very languid, leaning against the pillows, she was eating some sago” (CWKM 2159-2160, Journal, 1916). Although she described this event many years later, her disappointment and confusion from her mother’s behaviour are palpable. The female roles in the family remained unclear and problematic. In spite of the fact that this subchapter is called ‘Grandmother’, mother is to be discussed here since they typically stand in opposition and may be easily contrasted. Nevertheless, the primary role in both Mansfield’s personal correspondence as well as literary creation belonged to her grandmother.

In “A Little Boy’s Dream”, a poem from *Child Verses* (1907), the boy wakes up from his dream only to find himself in his mother’s arms cradling him in a rocking chair, in safety, away from the frightening sea:

Then he cried ‘O Mother dear.’
And he woke and sat upright,
They were in the rocking chair,
Mother’s arms around him--tight. (PKM 89)

The mother in the poem represents that which Mansfield repeatedly found in her grandmother who used to sit in front of the fireplace, usually taking care of one of the children of the family. As Mansfield wrote in her journal in June 1910 (one of the few fragments of Mansfield’s personal writing which remained from that year):

The only adorable thing I can imagine is for my Grandmother to put me to bed and bring me the bowl of hot bread and milk [...] Oh, what a miracle of happiness that would be. To wake later to find her turning down the bedclothes to see if my feet were cold, and wrapping them up in a little pink singlet, softer than cat’s fur. (CWKM 2097-2098)

This comfort could only be found in the company of Mansfield’s grandmother to whom she definitely was closest during her childhood.

Time spent with her grandmother was precious to Katherine for she felt safe in her company. The Beauchamp children had in her a caring woman who was always there for

them. This mood and atmosphere is reflected in the poem called “Butterfly Laughter”, written between 1909 and 1910. The poem, written in free verse, describes the children eating breakfast, competing who is to be the first one to see a butterfly painted in the middle of their plates. Every morning, the grandmother says: “Do not eat the poor butterfly” (*PKM 6*), which makes the children laugh. The poem concludes with:

I was certain that one fine morning
The butterfly would fly out of the plates,
Laughing the teeniest laugh in the world,
And perch on the Grandmother’s lap. (*PKM 6*)

Even the butterfly in the poem is safe when in the presence of the grandmother. Her grandmother’s lap and her rocking chair are usually the images Mansfield offers when talking about her beloved “gran”.

In the same period as “Butterfly Laughter”, Mansfield wrote a poem in which she appears together with her grandmother and brother. It is evident that in “Little Brother’s Story” the prevailing mood is again very positive. The grandmother, who emerges in the second line of the poem, is presented here in the same manner as in her granddaughter’s diary. Once more sitting in front of a fireplace, the grandmother is knitting in her rocking chair, with her granddaughter and grandson lying on the ground. The children want her to tell them a story and she, with her mind fixated upon the number of stitches, responds: “Suppose you tell me one instead” (*PKM 10*). At first the girl tries to tell a story about a tiger but does not have any idea how to continue, so the brother takes over:

‘I know a perfect story,’ he cried, waving his hands.
Grandmother laid down her knitting.
‘Do tell us, dear.’
‘Once upon a time there was a bad little girl
And her Mummy gave her the slipper, and that’s all.’
It was not a very special story.
But we pretended to be very pleased
And Grandmother gave him jumps on her lap. (*PKM 10*)

The dialogue between the little brother and his grandmother concludes with three final lines seen from the perspective of the girl as at the very beginning of the poem. Although what the boy said was of no importance regarding the story-telling itself, it made the grandmother stop knitting, pay attention, and at the same time express love to her grandchild. In fact, the girl behaved in the same way as her grandmother did to please the little boy.

Mansfield had always been in the need of shelter from her unsuccessful relationships, jealousy, and physical as well as mental pains and fears. In the poems, there is a constant search for safety and relief. One of Mansfield's most famous poems is "The Candle", written in the same period as the poem above. It deals with the fear of the unknown, dreams, rich imagery and her grandmother. What is more, its atmosphere is clearly interconnected and shared with the short story "Prelude" (1918). In the poem as well as in the short story, the grandmother's presence has a soothing and positive impact. "The Candle" is a poem of thirty lines written in free verse, with the words and pace carefully chosen to contribute to the overall dramatic impression. As in Mansfield's real life, at the onset of the poem the grandmother places a candle on a little table by the bed. Within the first five lines of the poem, the grandmother walks out of the room, leaving the little narrator alone and also leaving space for the strange things to happen. At the end, however, it is the grandmother's memory again which comforts the girl and helps her sleep peacefully. As long as there is the grandmother in the girl's life, there is nothing to be scared of. In the third line of the poem, the grandmother gave the child "three kisses" and told her they were three dreams. In the sky there were "hundreds of friendly candles" (*PKM* 8), as if the grandmother placed them there for the girl not to be afraid.

In the short story "Prelude", told from the perspective of an omniscient third person narrator, Kezia is, as in some of the other stories, the main character. The story is about the Burnell family who are in the process of moving. The relationship between the children, their mother (Linda Burnell) and grandmother is illustrated at the very beginning when the girls wanted to sit down in the buggy, "the grandmother's lap was full and Linda Burnell could not possibly have held a lump of a child on hers for any distance" (*CSKM* 5). The contrast between the aloofness of the mother and the heartiness of the grandmother is striking from the first lines of the story. The grandmother appears in the story again when the storeman arrives with Kezia and Lottie to their new house:

And now one and now another of the windows leaped into light. Someone was walking through the empty rooms carrying a lamp. From a window downstairs the light of fire flickered. A strange beautiful excitement seemed to stream from the house in quivering ripples. [...] The grandmother came out of the dark hall carrying a lamp. She was smiling. ‘You found your way in the dark?’ said she. (CSKM 10)

The grandmother here seems like an angel to the girls. In most of Mansfield’s works, she leads them through their lives, always accompanied by a source of light – a fireplace, a candle or a lamp. The light is, for Mansfield, a symbol of hope, love, safety and solace. In “Prelude”, the caring grandmother is contrasted with the mother who has got a headache: “‘Are those the children?’ But Linda did not really care; she did not even open her eyes to see” (CSKM 11). The grandmother, Mrs Fairfield in the story, tells her daughter she should look after her children. However, from Linda’s point of view, the children are old enough to take care of themselves. It is again the grandmother who led the girls to bed, carrying a candle, of course. Kezia lay down in her grandmother’s bed, with the grandmother “tucking her in as she loved to be tucked” (CSKM 13). Here too, the similarity with the poem “The Candle” is striking since in the fourth line of the poem, after the grandmother kisses her, the girl says: “And tucked me in just where I loved being tucked” (PKM 7). The character of the grandmother looked after the children as well as after the household and thus she re-enacted the everyday routine from Katherine’s childhood. Whereas the grandmother is described as a loving and caring being, the parents are, even here, very restrained and realistic, especially the father who is always talking about money.

Linda Burnell’s thoughts mirror Virginia Woolf’s opinions in *A Room of One’s Own*: “And then, as she lay down, there came the old thought, the cruel thought – ah, if only she had money of her own” (CSKM 14). Linda could of course only dream about that since she was financially dependent on her husband in the same way Mansfield’s mother was. Even Mansfield herself was financially dependent on her father, Harold Beauchamp. Annie Beauchamp felt and “craved herself capable of independence; but since the world was organized along lines that made such independence impossible, she determined at least to order her life as efficiently as possible” (Tomalin 10). Stanley in “The Prelude” is a rich businessman who clearly represents Mansfield’s father, talks to his wife before sleep: “You see land about here is bound to become more and more valuable...in about ten years’ time...of course we shall have to go very slow and cut down expenses as fine as possible. [...] ‘Good-night, Mr Business Man,’ said she” (CSKM 14). Similarly, in a short story “At

the Bay” (1922), we encounter Linda, Stanley, Mrs Fairfield, Kezia, Isabel, and Lottie. There are the same cousins of the girls, but there is also a baby brother. Linda, the mother, is again depicted as a woman who does not care about her children. When she thought about her daughters and son in the story, she felt “the dread of having children” since she “did not love her children” (*CSKM* 178-179). However, the grandmother did.

The loving grandmother, the reserved mother and a successful and wealthy father are depicted in the same way in the poems, short stories and personal writing. Furthermore, their portrayals are authentic. The interconnectedness of fiction and Mansfield’s life is absolutely clear here, offering a great insight into the family relationships.

5.2 Brother

Supposing I were to die as I sit at this table, playing with my Indian paper-knife, what would the difference be? No difference at all. Then why don’t I commit suicide? Because I feel I have a duty to perform to the lovely time when we were both alive. I want to write about it, and he wanted me to. We talked it over in my little top room in London. I said: I will just put on the front page: To my brother, Leslie Heron Beauchamp. (*CWKM* 2144, Journal, November 1915)

Leslie Beauchamp was not only Katherine Mansfield’s brother, but he was also one of her best friends, “the brother of brothers” (*CLKM* 87, Letter to Vera and Jeanne Beauchamp, November 1908). They used to have long conversations, sharing their memories of New Zealand. Some parts of the correspondence between Katherine and Leslie survived. However, the number can by no means approximate that of the letters addressed to her husband. Nevertheless, the letters for her brother are always full of love. She ended a letter from the end of August 1915 with these words: “This is not a letter. It is only my arms round you for a quick minute” (*CLKM* 198). She always adored her brother and expressed it not only in the letters addressed to him, but also in letters to others. In March 1908 she confessed to Sylvia Payne: “I have never dreamed of loving a child as I love this boy. Do not laugh at me when I tell you I feel so maternal towards him. He is intensely affectionate and sensitive – he reads a great deal – draws with the most delicate sympathetic touch – and yet is a thoroughly brave healthy boy” (*CLKM* 41). Katherine was more than five years older than Leslie and felt that she had to protect him, as is suggested

in her confessional poem “To L. H. B. (1894-1915)”. When Leslie died at the age of 21, Katherine’s sorrow was unbearable. Her grief is captured in her personal correspondence and in her short stories and poems. Mansfield shared her memories with her sister Vera Beauchamp in a letter from 26 February 1916:

I would love to tell you a great deal about our brother – One day I shall, dear – There was no one like him and his loss simply can’t be ever less for me. Oh, Vera, I loved him – more than I can say – and we understood each other so wonderfully – When we talked together we were like ‘one being’. [...] We talk of him continually, and when I am alone I feel he is quite close to me – indeed I am *sure* he is – but all the same it is not comfort enough. (*CLKM* 246)

Mansfield does not express her feelings and thoughts about her brother and his loss only in her personal correspondence, but she projects him into her work as well.

A poem which is directly dedicated to her brother was written in 1916 and is called simply “To L. H. B. (1894-1915)”¹⁴. The narrator, Mansfield herself, addresses her brother and talks directly to him, only towards the end the voice changes and the brother is not in her presence anymore. It seems that the poem is a reaction to the frequent recollections of their youth, as if she was reassuring her brother she would never forget and answering his question ““Do you remember, Katie?” I hear his voice in trees and flowers, in scents and light and shadow” (*CWKM* 2143, Journal, November 1915):

LAST NIGHT for the first time since you were dead

I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.

We were at home again beside the stream. (*PKM* 55)

The poem is intimate and sincere as the setting is their home and she addresses her brother directly. The memories are in the form of a dream in which the narrator warns her brother against the white and red berries: “Don’t touch them: they are poisonous” (*PKM* 55). Even here, as in her life, the sister cares for her younger brother so that nothing bad happens to him. After, there is strange laughter flying in the air and the atmosphere is surreal, the narrator wakes up and so do the natural elements – wind and sea during a storm, thus

¹⁴ L.H.B. stands for the name of Mansfield’s brother – Leslie Heron Beauchamp

breaking the regular rhyming. In the last four lines, the narrator asks herself a question, tells the reader what the brother is doing, and has the last line in the direct speech of the brother:

Where--where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?
By the remembered stream my brother stands
Waiting for me with berries in his hands...
'These are my body. Sister, take and eat.' (*PKM* 55)

The path of the narrator's feet is most likely to lead to heaven to her brother. In her memories, the brother is still in all the places they used to be together, yet now he is offering poisonous berries to her so that she could accompany him. The poem expresses Katherine's grief about her brother who was killed by accident during a hand-grenade training in France in 1915. The grief and nostalgia is also depicted in the short story "The Wind Blows".

"The Wind Blows" (1915) is a nostalgic short story written as a reaction to Katherine's and Leslie's reminiscences of their childhood in New Zealand. The strong wind, Katherine's piano lesson, mother, grandmother, the sea and the journey away from her home are all gathered in one short story, illustrating the atmosphere of Mansfield's youth. There is the mother who gives orders and fortunately there is her beloved brother. After Matilda, the main character, is frightened when she is alone in her room, her brother Bogey takes her for a walk at dusk: "Over the breakwater the sea is very high. They pull off their hats and her hair blows across her mouth, tasting of salt" (*CSKM* 84). Suddenly the perspective changes as they see a steamer leaving the island. They are on the steamer looking back, watching themselves on the esplanade and the town until everything gets smaller and then invisible. The house, the family, the piano lesson and the island are far away. They are only memories of their childhood.

Obviously, Mansfield's brother, everything they experienced together and the pain caused by his death, remained imprinted in her memory. Moreover, Leslie was an immense source of inspiration for Katherine and greatly influenced her writing after his death. In February 1916 she wrote in her journal: "When I am not writing I feel my brother calling me, and he is not happy. Only when I write or am in a state of writing – a state of "inspiration" – do I feel that he is calm" (*CWKM* 2152). It always was in Mansfield's nature to reminisce about the people she adored; and she attempted to be in their company

by including them in her literary creation. Mansfield's brother Leslie was deep in her heart. Moreover, he is one of the reasons why children are repeatedly the centre of her attention.

6 Children

Mansfield's depiction of children in her short stories and poems is one of the most prominent themes in her writing. "Her life-long discipline in entering into the mind of her subject [...] is nowhere more essential than when the writer enters the mind of a child" (Gordon 20). Interestingly enough, Mansfield is capable of seeing the world around through the eyes and thoughts of children so well that one would not believe that she wrote the poems in her adult years and that these are all recollections of her childhood. Because of her childlessness she thought of children even more, sorting her thoughts in her journal: "if I had a child, I would play with it now and *lose myself in it* and kiss it and make it laugh. And I'd use a child as my guard against my deepest feeling" (CWKM 2150, Journal, 1914). Children are not captured only from the children's perspective during their games, but also from the point of view of how they are supposed and even forced to behave by their family and society. For this reason, in several short stories and poems the children have adult-like manners.

Inseparable categories in Mansfield's writing are children and their dreams and, often connected to them, their fears. For instance, in the short story "The Wind Blows", Matilda, similarly as in the story "The Prelude" and the poem "The Candle", feels terrified in her room: "The wind, the wind. It's frightening to be here in her room by herself. The bed, the mirror, the white jug and basin gleam like sky outside. It's the bed that is frightening" (CSKM 83). The same atmosphere is to be found in various short stories and poems.

Because of the interconnectedness of the individual themes and motifs in the poems and short stories, the poem "The Candle" and the short story "The Prelude" are to be elaborated on here. In "The Candle" the child is scared after her grandmother places the candle on the little table and leaves the room, a scene which was repeated many times in Mansfield's real life. From the line "I sat up in bed" (PKM 7) what the readers get is a haunted room where strange things happen:

The room grew big, oh, bigger far than a church.

The wardrobe, quite by itself, as big as a house.

And the jug on the washstand smiled at me:

It was not a friendly smile.
I looked at the basket-chair where my clothes lay folded:
The chair gave a creak as though it were listening for something.
Perhaps it was coming alive and going to dress in my clothes.
But the awful thing was the window:
I could not think what was outside.
No tree to be seen, I was sure,
No nice little plant or friendly pebbly path. (*PKM 7*)

The child's fantasy allows various objects to come to life and perform activities which normally belong to people. Through personification and careful choice of words Mansfield achieves a dramatic effect. The child, as well as the reader, is involved. The girl's imagination enables the room to become bigger than a church and chair to dress in her clothes. Apart from imagination, curiosity and courage are also to be found where there is fear among children. In the same respect, the girl decides to discover the reason why the grandmother always pulls the blind down at night:

I crunched my teeth and crept out of bed,
I peeped through a slit of the blind.
There was nothing at all to be seen.
But hundreds of friendly candles all over the sky
In remembrance of frightened children.
I went back to bed ...
The three dreams started singing a little song. (*PKM 8*)

As suggested earlier, every child needs to feel safe and here, as in Mansfield's life, it is the grandmother who shelters her from her fears.

Similarly, in "The Prelude" Kezia's fear is significant. After visiting her old house and walking to the window of her grandmother's empty room, the atmosphere of the story changes completely.

Kezia liked to stand so before the window. [...] As she stood there, the day flickered out and dark came. With the dark crept the wind, snuffling and howling. The windows of the empty house shook, a creaking came from the walls and floors,

a piece of loose iron on the roof banged forlornly. Kezia was suddenly quite, quite still, with wide open eyes and knees pressed together She was frightened. [...] IT was just behind her, waiting at the door, at the head of the stairs, at the bottom of the stairs, hiding in the passage, ready to dart out at the back door. (*CSKM* 8)

The fear is connected to the unknown, in this case the window, wind, and sounds inside the house. This time, it is Lottie, Kezia's sister, who saves her. In the new house, after their grandmother left the children in the room, Kezia "rolled herself up into a round but she did not go to sleep. From all over the house came the sound of steps. The house itself creaked and popped. [...] Outside the window hundreds of black cats with yellow eyes sat in the sky watching her – but she was not frightened" (*CSKM* 13). Kezia is not the only child to be scared of something, however. As illustrated below, in different stories, it may be a boy as well.

"A Little Boy's Dream" is a poem of four stanzas, in which the first three stanzas are told from the point of view of a little boy, whereas the fourth stanza is seen from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. The regular rhyme scheme underlines the childlike tone and vision of the world. In such a world, there is a clear distinction between safety and danger, and dreams are taken very seriously. Moreover, the world around seems bigger than it is in reality and often becomes the subject of children's games. The distance from home appears to be great, and so there are the feelings of loneliness and fear. In the moment when the boy wakes up in his mother's arms, there is no reason to be afraid.

Fear is connected to the strange atmosphere caused by the wind in "A Day in Bed". As with the poem above, this poem belongs to the child verses written in 1907. The narrator, a child, expresses feelings of fear and uncertainty. Here, fear is connected to the wind which is compared to the dog the narrator used to have. In the poem she says: "I do not like the big wind's song, He's growling for a bone" (*PKM* 95). She then ascribes another characteristic to the wind typical of a dog, namely "snatch at things" and "creep around", which she contrasts with the safety of drinking tea inside and having been looked after by the nurse. The wind, however, seems never ending, since the poem ends with:

And oh! I cannot go to sleep
Although I am in bed.
The wind keeps going creepy-creep
And waiting to be fed. (*PKM* 95)

The childlike tone is again illustrated by the regular rhyme scheme, where each stanza has got four lines and the rhyme scheme is ABAB. The sound imagery is rich and thus reflects a child's perception of the world. In a letter to Koteliansky from December 1919 Mansfield wrote: "Of course I am still in bed but it does not matter. *All is well*. [...] And people have come to see me here. What are they? They are not human beings; they are never children – they are *absolutely unreal* – mechanisms" (SL 161-2). Of course, the letter was written twelve years after the poem. Interestingly enough, apart from again having been in bed, Mansfield also expressed her opinions on the differences between the adult and child worlds. She felt that children are more 'real', whereas adults often behave as they are supposed to, acting mechanically. Furthermore, especially because of the problems with her health, Mansfield knew how difficult life was and how nice it is to see it from the child's perspective. On 14 October 1922, she wrote in her Journal: "Life is not simple. In spite of all we say about the mystery of Life, when we get down to it we want to treat it as though it were a child's tale" (LJ 278).

"The Lonesome Child", written in a naïve tone in 1907, consists of five stanzas, with four lines each. It is told from the perspective of a child who is trying to play alone, in front of a mirror. She obviously sees a reflection which closely resembles her:

Her doll, like mine, is sitting close
Beside her special chair,
She has a pussy on her lap;
It must be my cup there. (PKM 96)

The girl then sees the picture book and notices that "The cover's just the same" and at the end tells her reflection to "come through and play" with her. The need for company and friends appears throughout Mansfield's literary creation. There is no doubt that children and their playtime is a favourite topic of Mansfield's stories and poems.

Children can sometimes be cruel, and when playing outside with a large enough audience, morbid scenes can appear. In "The Prelude", there is a very violent scene describing the children cutting off a duck's head in the garden. The duck's body is waddling, the children are screaming as they see the blood. According to Hankin, "Kezia unconsciously identifies with the duck" (9-10) and this identification is typical of Mansfield's writing since she herself was always very much involved in what she wrote. It

is clearly seen in a letter to Dorothy Brett from October 1917: “When I write about ducks I swear that I am a white duck [...] In fact the whole process of becoming a duck (what Lawrence would perhaps call this consummation with the duck or the apple!) is so thrilling that I can hardly breathe, only to think about it” (*LJ* 84). This scene is not significant when it comes to Mansfield’s life itself, although she experienced the beheading of a duck when she was little. There is a large contrast between the dangers of the outside and the safety inside the house. After the violent scene, the first words are: “Up in the house, in the warm tidy kitchen” (*CSKM* 33). In the garden, the children discover the world around them and of course are involved in playing. More importantly, they lose some of their innocence there, as they are drawn into the reality of the adult world.

In the short story “The Doll’s House” (1922) the children’s game creates an important backdrop for the plot. The girls get a new doll’s house which is absolutely perfect, with all the little details which a house has to have. The children’s perception of the world is reflected in Kezia’s description of the lamp inside of the little house:

It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe. It was even filled all ready for lighting... [...] there was something inside that looked like oil and moved when you shook it... [...] two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll’s house. They didn’t look as though they belonged. But the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, ‘I live here.’ The lamp was real. (*CSKM* 320)

The next day Burnell children boast about the doll’s house at school and are allowed to invite two children at once to look at the house. Soon, most of the children see the wonderful toy, only the Kelveys do not. The Kelveys are children from a poor family who are not supposed to see the house because of their social position. Surprisingly enough, they can go to school with the other children, but in fact, they are the ones who mark the boundary between the high and low social classes. Kezia would like the Kelveys to come to their garden too, however, her mother does not agree. Despite that, Kezia persuades Lil and Else Kelveys to come for a visit and leads the way right to the doll’s house. When Kezia presents the house to her schoolmates, Aunt Beryl shouts at her and chases Lil and Else away. When the two girls run away, Else finds satisfaction in having seen the little lamp. The need to have friends and to be accepted is one of the central urges in the stories and verses where children are involved. In both the poem “The Lonesome Child” as well

as in the short story “The Doll’s House” the children strive for attention, for company. No matter what period of life she found herself in, Mansfield also struggled for love, friends and popularity.

As far as the social position and the clear distinctions between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ children in “The Doll’s House” are concerned, the poems “Evening Song of the Thoughtful Child” and “Opposites”, both belonging to the ‘Child Verses’ from 1907, can be grouped in the same way. Shadow children and Sweet star children are contrasted in the first of the two above-mentioned poems. Whereas Shadow children “are dancing on the wall, on the curtains, on the blind” (*PKM* 98), in the sky, there are Sweet star children who have to obey the rules, “stay inside all day” and “go to school”. Once, the omniscient narrator sees the moon and is afraid:

Shadow children, once at night,
I was all tucked up in bed,
Father moon came--such a fright—
Through the window poked his head. (*PKM* 98)

The dream-like setting of the nine-stanza-long poem contributes to the child’s distinction between the two worlds, or two parts of a day, where children either play freely or have to go to school and have to obey rules. In the poem “Opposites”, the border between the well-behaved girl and the girl who does not behave as expected, is very clear. The Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child is the one who plays outside, runs around the house, is dirty, loses her hair ribbons, kisses her mother when she wants and makes “sweet the dullest place” (*PKM* 83). The Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child, however, as the title of the poem suggests, is completely unlike the first one. From the ten stanzas, the first eight are seen from the perspective of an omniscient narrator, the last two directly address both the children. Whereas the Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child is compared to a “scented Summer rose” in the ninth stanza, the Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child is seen as a true daughter and “not an ornament” at the end of the poem. The transition from childhood to maturity is a key component of Mansfield’s poems and short stories concerning children.

As children seek attention in the poems and short stories, it is in fact Mansfield who expresses her desires. The child and adult worlds are often contrasted, offering various themes and motifs.

7 Love and relationships

Mansfield always had a difficult, unstable personality, especially in terms of her relationships. Moments of satisfaction and admiration were frequently replaced by complaints, desperation and even hate. This ambivalence did not concern only her parents, but her husband and friends too. It seems that Mansfield, Murry, Woolf and Lawrence, among many others, were close as well as distant in different periods of Mansfield's life. Her search for an escape from disappointment, and also the search for emotional fulfilment and for love were inseparable counterparts of her relationships. She was capable of writing beautiful love letters and at the same time expressing hate and disgust towards the same person in other letters. Among those expressing love was a beautiful letter addressed to Garnet Trowell from September 1908: "Dearest of all the world – you are never out of my thoughts. I love you – I love you eternally. With you I am secure and rested & content – and *only* with you – Oh, with you, I could conquer the World" (*CLKM* 58). Of course most of her love letters and letters about love were addressed to Murry, as the one from May 1921: "Do you know, darling, what I think Love is? It is drawing out all that is finest and noblest in the soul of the other" (*SL* 214). Naturally, in Mansfield's case, feelings were never clear and definite. In May 1913 she complained to Murry: "Yes, I hate hate HATE doing these things that you accept just as all men accept of their women. I can only play the servant with very bad grace indeed. [...] As though I were a dilatory housemaid" (*SL* 22). And similarly, those feelings are reflected in her writing. Her short stories are full of problematic and unbalanced relationships and the omnipresent "emotional tension that exists between married couples" (Hankin 2), in poems she often expresses her aloofness as far as serious relationships are concerned.

The poem "There Was a Child Once" (1912) was a reaction to Mansfield's attraction to a young schoolmaster William Orton. As Alpers suggests: "This was not a love-affair in any usual sense, but something which a later Katherine would probably have described as 'child love'" (117). Mansfield talked and thought about marriage frequently, once even with Orton, yet at that time she did not mean it seriously. It was from this mind set concerning their relationship that she wrote the poem. A long poem in free verse talks about a pale and silent man who came to the narrator's garden:

And I knew the feel of his hands in my hands
And the most intimate tones of his voice.
I led him down each secret path,
Showing him the hiding-place of all my treasures. (*PKM* 35)

With an incredible ease Mansfield describes the affair, ending it, as well as the poem, in the same manner:

When we met we kissed each other,
But when he went away, we did not even wave. (*PKM* 36)

Mansfield's volatility pervaded her life as well as work. Abrupt changes of mood, opinions and feelings for the people in her life were characteristic of her personality. She was perfectly aware of the contrasting poles love can have.

In the poem "Covering Wings" (1919) the narrator addresses her beloved at the time when she is alone: "Grasp me, fold me, cover me" (*PKM* 66). She asks for companionship, for proximity, for a response to her feelings; however, what love offers is a combination of joy, sorrow, tenderness, pity, grief. In the end she decides to run away from the complicated feelings that are part of love:

Run! Run!
Into the sun!
Let us be children again. (*PKM* 67)

The narrator chooses to flee from the tangled ways of love and suggests that she and her lover should be "children again", that they should free themselves from the problems that love represents for them. Instead, they should return to the light-hearted times of their childhood.

There is always a sense of sadness and disappointment in Mansfield's writing about love and relationships. This is directly expressed in the title of the poem "Sorrowing Love" (1919). The poem of three stanzas interconnects love and nature. Whereas in the first stanza the narrator says to her lover "Come with me", the relationship in the third stanza is completely different. The narrator talks about her "cold fingers" and "frail hyacinth deathly

pale” and as she sees the moss and the hyacinth, she says that they are not intended for her lover:

And the place where they grew
You must promise me not to discover,
My sorrowful lover!
Shall we never be happy again?
Never again play?
In vain—in vain!
Come away! (*PKM* 70)

In fact, she herself is frail and deathly pale, she has got cold fingers as she is ill and does not want to share her sorrow with her lover. It is better for them both if he leaves her since they would not be happy again under these circumstances.

Not only do Mansfield’s short stories touch on the feelings experienced in love and in relationships, they also dive into the topic of the difficulties involved. In fact, “Mr and Mrs Dove” (1921) is a short story about unfulfilled love and marriage. Reggie, who wants to marry Anne, has got a fruit farm in Rhodesia, earning a decent amount of money, but without any vision of increasing his income in the near future. Anne is a beautiful daughter of a rich father and Reggie feels he has got nothing to offer. Despite this, he is deeply in love with her: “In spite of every single thing you could think of, so terrific was his love that he couldn’t help hoping. [...] How he loved her” (*CSKM* 231). However, when Reggie comes to see Anne one day before he leaves for Rhodesia and talks to her, she cannot stop laughing. It is simply a part of her character, to laugh even on serious occasions. When the two talk about their relationship and the reasons why it is not a good idea to get married, Anne says: “I’ve never known anyone I like as much as I like you. I’ve never felt so happy with anyone. But I’m sure it’s not what people and what books mean when they talk about love” (*CSKM* 236). When Reggie reacts calmly to what she is saying, she regards him as cruel. As he is leaving her, Anne tells him to come back, addressing him ‘Mr Dove’ and Reggie slowly returns to her. Reggie’s love is unconditional and forgiving.

Another short story about a complicated relationship is “Marriage à la Mode” (1921), a story of William and Isabel. William works in London, but the family home is in the countryside and William can only travel there at weekends. His wife Isabel is described as “the new Isabel” who smiles in the “new way” (*CSKM* 250) because she has new friends

who she spends time with, mostly eating, drinking and bathing. According to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, "a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house" (10). In "Marriage à la Mode", the husband and wife do not spend every day together, and in spite of that, Isabel seems to be far more independent than William, who is always responsible, reliable and caring. He has the habit of always bringing something to the boys when he visits home, and in the last few weeks it was always sweets. Now he decides to buy fruit as Isabel's friends always eat and drink most of what is in the house. During his last stay with his family, William hopes to see the children. However, they are outside with Miss Neil all day and he only sees them asleep. Similarly, the couple do not spend time alone as they are always accompanied by Isabel's friends. On his way to London, William starts writing a letter to his wife in his head. When the letter arrives and Isabel starts reading it, she does not know how to react. Her feelings change, but the strongest one is confusion which makes Isabel read the lines aloud: "'God forbid, my darling, that I should be a drag on your happiness'" (*CSKM* 258). William's words make Isabel and her friends laugh a lot. Despite all the laughter, when a friend asks to read the letter himself, Isabel runs into her bedroom realizing how horrible it was of her to read the letter aloud. There is now a decision for her to make: either respond to William's letter now, or go swimming with her friends and respond later. Finally, she chooses the second option, the 'new way'. The story offers an insight into a relationship in which there is a conflict of roles in the marriage. Both William and Isabel feel alone. While William works and is rarely with his wife and children, Isabel is in the company of her friends to fill the void. As Mansfield wrote in her letter to Sylvia Payne in April 1906: "The idea of sitting still and waiting for a husband is absolutely revolting – and it really is the attitude of a great many girls" (*SL* 4). Clearly, her need for independence was projected not only on the paper, but throughout her whole life as she tried to free herself from several influences as well as people.

Another complicated relationship and a marriage are present in a short story "At the Bay". Linda and Stanley are married and have children, but Linda is rather distant when it comes to her three daughters and son. Her feelings for Stanley are stronger than those for her children: "she loved him. Not the Stanley whom everyone saw, not the everyday one; but a timid, sensitive, innocent Stanley who knelt down every night to say his prayers, and who longed to be good. Stanley was simple. If he believed in people – as he believed in her, for instance – it was with his whole heart" (*CSKM* 178). While Linda is fond of her

husband, she does not feel the same way about her children. Once again, the children fortunately have a substitute for the mother in their loving grandmother.

Mansfield was rather unstable and insecure about love and relationships in general. She was a dreamer and always felt that there should be something different, more and better. In a letter to Dorothy Brett from August 1921 she merged love and religion in the following way: “Therefore Love today between ‘lovers’ has to be not only human, but divine today. They love each other for everything and through everything, and their love is their religion. It cant become anything less – even affection – I mean it can’t become less supreme because it is an act of faith to believe” (*SL* 222). The relationship of love and faith in the previous extract creates a transition to God’s position in Mansfield’s life and writing.

8 God

As far as God and faith in general are concerned, Mansfield seems to have gone through different periods in her life. Of course, in times of war or personal losses, many people have ambivalent feelings towards religion, and so did Mansfield. Mansfield expressed the need for belief and pointed out the importance of faith, even if not in God. Indirectly, she expressed that she always believed in God by means of the connection with the natural world. Nevertheless, as Alpers said, “She was rebellious, she had a dangerous wit, she was capable of religious fervour” (20). For instance, in a letter to Thomas Trowell from December 1904, she described the following: “The church looked truly very fit for God’s House, tonight – It looked so strong, so invincible, so hospitable [...] I mean this year to try and be a different person, and I want at the end of this year, to see how I have kept all the vows that I have made tonight” (*CLKM* 16). Throughout her life Mansfield admired God as well as criticised faith. Her feelings towards Christianity were ambiguous. Still, in December 1915, she sent a letter to Murry while waiting for him in France: “I am praying – to really the old God – I feel He can do it and will” (*CLKM* 234). She was praying not only for herself and Murry, but for her brother, too. Six years after her brother’s death and as her health had deteriorated considerably, she was not sure about the meaning of faith in her life: “God is now gone for all of us. Yet we must believe and not only that we must carry our weakness and our sin and our devilishness to somebody” (*SL* 222, Letter to Dorothy Brett, August 1921). Based on these contrary opinions, thoughts and beliefs and of course on her personal experiences, she incorporated faith rather in glimpses in her short stories, and addressed it directly in some of her poems.

According to the section “Philosophy and Fiction” of Gerri Kimber’s essay in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, the poem “To God the Father”, written in 1911, was inspired by Mansfield’s visit in Poland. Kimber discovered that “Mansfield’s poem was directly inspired by a monumental stained-glass window entitled ‘God the Father – ‘Let it Be’, [...] designed by Stanislaw Wyspianski for the church of St Francis in Cracow, portraying a monumental figure of God in the act of creation” (Kimber 24). In her letters, she mentioned her plans to travel to Poland. However, when it comes to the picture, it is not clear whether she saw the reproduction or the real picture. Nevertheless, “the

image from what has now become Poland's most iconic stained-glass window was etched into her mind when she wrote the poem" (Kimber 24). God and his creation of the world are central both to the picture and to the poem. The philosophical and rhetorical setting to the poem is connected with the form of free verse. The narrator at first talks in the first person, then directly addresses God, changing the voice to the first person plural and ending again in the first person singular, addressing God. In the first line, the narrator sees God as "little" and "pitiful" and further on tells him what he created: "What a long, long time, dear God since you set the stars in their places, Girded the earth with the sea, and invented the day and night" (*PKM* 30). However, it has been even longer since God "looked through the blue window of Heaven" and saw his children involved in their children's games in the garden. The change in voice from 'I' to 'we' starts with "Now we are all stronger than you and wiser and more arrogant", later calling God a "marionette" and "Grey Beard", who should stop his "play-acting". The last stanza begins with "It is centuries since I believed in you", however, from that moment, the tone is softer. The narrator, after a long period of time, needs God as a person, without his promises of a "rose-coloured future" or the necessities connected with religious faith, such as "books of learning". In the end, the narrator imagines she is sitting on his lap, falling asleep there like a little girl in the company of a beloved person:

O God, I want to sit on your knees
On the all-too-big throne of Heaven,
And fall asleep with my hands tangled in your grey beard. (*PKM* 30)

Mansfield herself wanted God to be more personal and closer to her. In January 1920 she wrote in her journal: "I don't want a God to praise or to entreat, but to *share* my vision with" (*CWKM* 2281). This is not the only depiction of God's grandeur, however.

"Waves" is a long poem written at the Villa Pauline in 1916. The narrator, similarly as in "God the Father", "saw a tiny God [...] Below him His little world Lay open to the sun" (*PKM* 47). The voice then changes to directly addressing of God: "But thou art small! There are gods far greater than thou". These gods of the sea stand in opposition to the tiny God who is in control of the rivers and streams. The poem ends with the God of the Sea saying that the tiny God's kingdom is small and will fall.

With a loud
Pealing of laughter,
He rose and covered
The tiny God's land
With the tip of his hand,
With the curl of his fingers:
And after—
The tiny God
Began to cry. (*PKM* 49)

The gods present in nature were inspired by the Romanticist writers, especially the Lake Poets, who employed nature and its spiritual power in their literary creation. In addition to Mansfield's faith through specific periods of her life, it was a picture of her beloved country and family that helped her immensely when she needed it. In the subsequent chapter, the focus is on recollections of Mansfield's earlier life which heavily influenced her writing.

9 Memories

Time is an integral part of Mansfield's literary creation. Under the influence of Bergson, whom J.M. Murry read and studied extensively, Mansfield echoed his conception of psychological time by filling her works with flashbacks and flash-forwards. One of the frequent forms this treatment of time acquires is memories. She repeatedly incorporated her memories into the letters. In a letter addressed to Dorothy Brett from 12 September 1921, written in Switzerland, she explained her newly completed short story "At the Bay":

It is so strange to bring the dead to life again. There's my grandmother, back in her chair with her pink knitting, there stalks my uncle over the grass. I feel as I write 'you are not dead, my darlings. All is remembered. I bow down to you. I efface myself so that you may live again through me in your richness and beauty.' And one feels *possessed*. (*CLKM* 225-6, emphasis in the original)

It was Mansfield's habit to reflect on her past and to reconsider it in her thoughts or in a written form by means of her characters. It is typical of Mansfield's thinking and writing that herself or one of her characters suddenly stop and escape into their thoughts, especially to their childhood, similarly as Mrs Fairfield used to do in "At the Bay": "To look back, back. To stare down the years" (*CSKM* 181). Naturally, Mansfield's memories go back to her childhood, to her relatives and to her homeland with all its beauties.

In 1913, Mansfield wrote "Sea Song", a poem with a first person narrator who gives an account of her memories. In the poem, memory is represented by an old woman who stays in the narrator's "far away home" (*PKM* 38). "She" stands for the time which is gone, the fact which is intensified by the memory being an old lady:

She searches for something,
Her withered claw
Tumbles the seaweed;
She pokes in each shell
Groping and mumbling
Until the night

Deepens and darkens,
And covers her quite. (*PKM* 38-9)

“She” is in fact an abstract entity which disappears after some period of time because people simply forget. However, “she” is alive through activities typical for living beings and relates to things that are more stable than she is. The sea, the shells or the seaweed represent the stable, eternal natural world, as opposed to the evanescent world of human mind.

The perspectives as well as the tenses change in the short story “The Wind Blows” (1920) where present and past tenses are both used to illustrate the memories which are all gone. Most of the story is already the past which will never return, whereas the very ending is happening right now. Brother and sister are leaving the island on a steamer, looking back to their own lives, but now hidden behind the mist of time.

In 1917 Mansfield created a poem “Now I am a Plant, a Weed...”. The poem is divided in two stanzas, where the first one is a child’s game. The poem’s title is in fact repeated as the first line of the poem. Towards the end of the first stanza, the description of the game acquires a melancholic tone:

Until I pass
Into sand again,
And spin and blow
To and fro, to and fro,
On the edge of the sea
In the fading light--
For the light fades. (*PKM* 61)

In the same manner as the light fades, the past remains in memories. The second stanza captures the nostalgia, the memories when the children played:

Have we not in play
Disguised ourselves as weed and stones and grass
While the strange ships did pass
Gently, gravely, leaving a curl of foam
That uncurled softly about our island home ...

Bubbles of foam that glittered on the stone
Like rainbows? Look, darling! No, they are gone.
And the white sails have melted into the sailing sky. (*PKM* 61-62)

As Brault-Dreux suggests, in the second stanza “the rhythm is less intense. Lines are longer and from immediacy the poem shifts to the past of childhood” (35). The sense of nostalgia is captured via the memories of the “island home”. The sails melted into the sea in the same way as the clouds melt into the sky. Time passes quickly, deleting the living pictures and imprinting them into the mind.

In “Spring Wind in London” (1909) Mansfield returns in her thoughts to her homeland with the wind saying: “I came from that forgotten place” (*PKM* 5). The wind says that he will not come again since he passes in the same way memories do, creating the sense of nostalgia present in “The Wind Blows”, “Prelude”, “The Fly” or “At the Bay”.

To sum up, memories cannot be separated from the analysis of Mansfield’s poems. They are a great source of material for enriching her writing and offer insight into Mansfield’s world. Memories are essential for reflections on childhood since “time is not a line along which one can pass again” (Bergson 181). Nevertheless, it is possible to revive what has gone through writing; and that is what Mansfield greatly succeeds in.

10 Loneliness, Nearness of Death

Katherine spent the majority of her life writing. Writing became her companion and at times even her best friend, for instance when she was feeling lonely when she was a child (“The Lonesome Child”). However, it was primarily the later events in her life that caused her to feel deep and profound loneliness. “But this loneliness is what opens the gates of my soul & lets the wild beasts stream howling through” (*SL* 140, Letter to J.M. Murry, November 1919). She was not capable of living alone, always seeking relations and bonds to her surroundings. In her childhood she did not have the attention of her mother, however there was her grandmother who substituted for her. Especially in Europe then, she felt like a stranger, far away from her home and family since there was nobody to comfort her whenever she needed. She chose to express her loneliness and pains mostly in her letters and poems.

As Mansfield expressed in her poem “Covering Wings” (1919), she was afraid of being alone her whole life.

But, oh, my horror of quiet beds!
How can I longer stay!
One to be ready,
Two to be steady,
Three to be off and away! (*PKM* 66)

She longed for company, and when accompanied by loneliness, she ran away either physically, or spiritually. Additionally, because of the richness of her mind and imagination, she was at times satisfied when at least loneliness was near her, as is illustrated in the following poem.

“Loneliness”, a poem from the year 1911, is written in the form of a sonnet of fourteen lines, divided into an octave and a sestet, extending the variety of genres Mansfield chose to write. The first person narration introduces the reader into a room at night, where loneliness is present instead of sleep:

NOW IT is Loneliness who comes at night
Instead of Sleep, to sit beside my bed.
Like a tired child I lie and wait her tread,
I watch her softly blowing out the light. (*PKM* 19)

The personified Loneliness in the poem is an old woman who is garlanded with a laurel. She walks into the room, blowing out a candle, silently accompanying the narrator. The image of the “slowly ebbing tide” outside induces a sombre mood. Although it is beyond the scope of the written text, this image also evokes a woman in a rocking chair, used throughout Mansfield’s writing. In the last six lines, Loneliness, a quality belonging to living beings, is contrasted with the brutality of the natural elements:

Through the sad dark the slowly ebbing tide
Breaks on a barren shore, unsatisfied.
A strange wind flows ... then silence. I am fain
To turn to Loneliness, to take her hand,
Cling to her, waiting, till the barren land
Fills with the dreadful monotone of rain. (*PKM* 19)

The narrator turns to Loneliness and takes her hand, while the wind and rain show their power outside. Interestingly enough, the poem was written in 1911, the year when Mansfield met many inspiring and influential people. Among others these were J.M. Murry, D.H. Lawrence, Frieda Weekley, S.S. Koteliansky, and, more importantly, it was in this year when her family arrived to visit Katherine in London. However, even in these periods when she was accompanied by people, she felt alone, distant, misunderstood.

Generally speaking, in Mansfield’s short stories almost every character is in a way lonely. Because her language is lyrical and symbolic, the scope of particular motifs and themes ranges greatly. She used symbolism even in her letters; for instance, in February 1918 she sent a letter to Murry saying: “there is a great black bird flying over me and I am so frightened he’ll settle, so terrified. I don’t know exactly what kind he is” (*SL* 71). Clearly, Mansfield was not talking about birds in the literal sense; she was referring to tuberculosis which she was afraid of. Similarly, birds represent a conspicuous group in Mansfield’s poems and short stories. In her personal writing she even compared herself to a bird. For example towards the end of her life, she saw herself as a ‘wounded bird’. In a

letter to J.M. Murry from 24 December 1917 she wrote: “You are so grown into my heart that we are like the two wings of one bird” (*CLKM* 358). Because of her illness, she often wanted to fly, to escape, to be lifted above all the problems she had. In the above-mentioned letter to her husband, she used wings as a symbol for the connection of two parts which become whole only when put together, creating unity.

As far as the short stories are concerned, in a letter to Dorothy Brett, she wrote: “I think my story for you will be about Canaries. The large cage opposite has fascinated me completely. I think & think about them – their feelings, their *dreams*, the life they led before they were caught, the difference between the two little pale fluffy ones” (*SL* 248, February 1922). And as she thought, it happened. One of the short stories in the collection *The Dove’s Nest and Other Stories* is called “The Canary”. Here, the short story narrated in the first person goes back in memories to a canary, and the narrator addresses the reader directly. The canary used to have the same routine every day and always used to sing nicely. The narrator describes the canary’s importance to her as follows:

I loved him. How I loved him! Perhaps it does not matter so much what it is one loves in this world. But love something one must. Of course there was always my little house and the garden, but for some reason they were never enough. Flowers respond wonderfully, but they don’t sympathise. [...] It surprises me even now to remember how he and I shared each other’s lives. (*CSKM* 349)

In this story, there is a great relationship between the narrator and the world around. However much the narrator admires the little house, the garden, or the evening star, she values the canary the most. Even if she is not alone since she lives with her “three young men”, she needs a soul with which to share day-to-day life. “Company, you see – that was what he was. Perfect company. [...] I could not expect them to be interested in the little things that made my day” (*CSKM* 350). The canary, even though in her opinion some people would not understand it, made her days seem better, helped her to get over bad dreams, and accompanied her. When it died, a part of her also disappeared. The story then ends in sadness and melancholy with the narrator saying:

I must confess that there does seem to me something sad in life. It is hard to say what it is. I don’t mean the sorrow that we all know, like illness and poverty and death. No, it is something different. It is there, deep down, deep down, part of one,

like one's breathing. However hard I work and tire myself I have only to stop to know it is there, waiting. I often wonder if everybody feels the same. [...] But isn't it extraordinary that under his sweet, joyful little singing it was just this – sadness? – Ah, what is it? – that I heard. (*CSKM* 351)

In both short stories “Miss Brill” as well as in “Canary”, the theme is “the woman alone in the world” (Gordon 19). When writing the collection *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*, Mansfield was seriously ill, undergoing treatments in Switzerland and France. The mood of the story is thus melancholic, and, even though it is only three pages long, it contains deep philosophical questions. The canary expresses hope and company in a literal sense as well as in the spiritual one. It symbolizes the importance of companionship and at the end illustrates the presence of loneliness and sadness in life.

Similar feelings can be drawn from the poem “The Wounded Bird” which she wrote in 1919 when she was ill, and which is strongly autobiographical. It starts as follows:

In the wide bed
Under the green embroidered quilt [...]
She is like a wounded bird resting on a pool. (*PKM* 72)

The narrator sees herself as a wounded bird. She talks about people coming to her bed, bringing her food, taking care of her, and about the nearness of death. She begs for help and thus ends the poem with: “O waters—do not cover me! [...] I am not so dreadfully hurt” (*PKM* 73). There is a little relief represented by the sight of the two stars in the sky and her two wings, the symbol of safety and comfort, or alternatively “a euphemism for her human ‘lungs’” (Brault-Dreux 38). Obviously, the “hunter” who “threw his dart And hit her breast” (*PKM* 72) symbolizes the illness which Mansfield was suffering from. Both Mansfield and Lawrence wrote poems towards the end of their lives when suffering from tuberculosis, with “two significantly divergent approaches to death.” Mansfield tended towards “a painful withdrawal from life” (Brault-Dreux 37).

Death and loneliness are also present in a poem written in 1919. “Old-Fashioned Widow's Song” is a poem of five stanzas, each composed of four lines. In the first and the last stanza of the poem the narrator talks herself; in the second, third and fourth stanzas the two women talk to each other. At the beginning, the poem seems to be optimistic and positive:

SHE HANDED me a gay bouquet
Of roses pulled in the rain,
Delicate beauties, frail and cold—
Could roses heal my pain? (*PKM 75*)

From the fourth line of the poem, however, the pain which the narrator feels is present. In the first stanza a French woman (when she speaks, she uses French only) hands the narrator a bouquet of beautiful roses. In the fourth stanza the French woman leaves, and as the narrator thanks her for the flowers in French¹⁵, the flowers die. In the fifth stanza the narrator concludes:

The petals drooped, the petals fell,
The leaves hung crisped and curled.
And I stood holding my dead bouquet
In a dead world. (*PKM 75*)

In this “dead world”, the narrator is alone. The “gay bouquet” changes to a “dead bouquet” when the French woman leaves, also leaving no space for hope or comfort.

Illness and death are certainly very important and frequent themes in the short stories as well. “The Fly” was written in 1922 and remained Katherine Mansfield’s last completed short story. Even though it is only five pages long, it is an incredibly accomplished piece. The first half of the story is in general a conversation between Mr Woodfield and his boss who both lost their sons in World War I. When Mr Woodfield mentions the boss’s son, the pace and atmosphere of the story change completely. The boss starts to think about his son, about the time which passes so quickly; he looks at the boy’s photograph. The nostalgic tone is disrupted by a fly which falls into an inkpot:

Help! help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it on to a piece of blotting-paper. [...] Then the front

¹⁵ Mansfield, as she chose to use different names and roles, employed words from foreign languages in her writing. For this reason, readers can encounter French as well as German or Italian words and sentences throughout her short stories and poems; in her personal correspondence and journal there are sometimes even whole pages. Also, French is not a random choice in this poem for Mansfield was in fact in France in 1919.

legs waved, took hold, and, putting its small, sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. [...] The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again. (*CSKM* 347-348)

However, the fly was not safe at all because of the boss's idea to find out how strong the fly was. The boss plunged his pen and dropped ink on the fly, then waited for the fly to recover, and as it did, he "felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die" (*CSKM* 348). It seems that a certain degree of cruelty, almost a childish one, was waiting in the boss to be aroused. He dropped a second and third ink drop on the fly, breathing on it so that it would be dry quicker. However, after the fourth ink drop fell on the fly, the little insect did not recover. "The Fly" is a symbolic story, of course. The fly may be Mansfield's brother who, like the sons of the two men in the story, also died in the war. Interestingly enough, the fly could stand for Mansfield herself. According to Tomalin, "The Fly" is "a bitterly painful and perhaps too obviously symbolic story of a bereaved father and struggling, doomed creature" (224). Mansfield was, at the time she was writing this short story, fighting to stay alive, similarly to the fly. She expressed those feelings even earlier, as in her journal entry from December 1920: "Oh Life! Accept me – make me worthy – teach me. I write that. I look up. The leaves move in the garden, the sky is pale, and I catch myself weeping. It is hard – it is hard to make a good death" (*LJ* 209). Of course, "The Fly" is the last story which Mansfield completed, but the theme of death is present throughout her work. In the same year, a great story "At the Bay" appeared, with Kezia and her grandmother discussing death. The grandmother in the short story explains: "We're not asked, Kezia," said she softly. 'It happens to all of us sooner or later'" (*CSKM* 182). Once again, Mansfield's feelings, worries and thoughts are projected in her writing as she is aware of the nearness of death.

CONCLUSION

Critics have always been prone to concentrating on Mansfield's short stories. On the one hand, they definitely have the attention they deserve. On the other hand, the poems have been rather forgotten and overshadowed by the short stories. This thesis aimed primarily at this unexplored area of Mansfield's writing. It also focused on the interconnectedness of the genres Mansfield used, as well as on selected themes and motifs in her poems and their reflection in the events of writer's life, her short stories, letters and journals. Even though several poems are mentioned in the biographies and literary articles, their value is underestimated. Mansfield's prose has been frequently recognized for its poetic quality, for beautiful images and lyrical language. Nevertheless, the significance of her poetry, ranging from child verses to sonnets and free verse, melted into her other genres.

The theoretical part primarily deals with Katherine Mansfield's life. The first chapter is divided into two parts, namely "Childhood in New Zealand" and "Europe – Katherine Mansfield's second home". The two continents where the writer lived are contrasted to show the completely different settings and conditions essential for her works of art. The second chapter, called "Mansfield's sources of inspiration", stresses the importance of New Zealand as well as Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence, and the influence which they had on Mansfield's writing. In the third chapter "Writing as a means to live; short stories, poems, letters and journals" the individual genres Mansfield chose to use are presented. The poems and their categorisation are intentionally incorporated as the last subchapter, creating a transition between the theoretical and practical parts of the thesis.

In the practical part, seven thematic groups are seen from the perspectives of the poems, short stories, letters and diary entries to cast light on the connections of Mansfield's personal life and its reflections in her writing. The study of the poems is enriched with suitable selections from letters or diary entries to support certain arguments and to suit the overall atmosphere of the specific thematic groups. The following seven paragraphs refer directly to the most important themes dealt with in the thesis.

Firstly, in Mansfield's writing the natural elements show their power and strength, obtain human or animal qualities, pass like memories and provoke thoughts in people's minds. Nature creates a background for the short stories; more importantly, it represents an immense source of energy. At times it is frightening, but characters can also find shelter there, or they start to philosophize about their life.

The characters and their lives in Mansfield's works are immensely colourful. In the same respect, although Katherine Mansfield grew up in a respectable and complete family, certain family relationships were non-functional. What affected Mansfield immensely was her mother, her character and behaviour. Her mother was reserved, realistic and aloof; her father was successful, mostly thinking about his business; her brother was very close to her and owing to him Mansfield used her recollections of their childhood in her writing. For Mansfield, the most important person in the family was her grandmother. These are the reasons why throughout Mansfield's literary works the mother is distant from her children, the father is interested in his work and money, the brother is connected with melancholy and childhood of New Zealand, and the grandmother is a loving woman who tends to the needs of all the children and adults in the family. These relationships in Mansfield's poetry and prose directly reflect her diary entries or passages from letters, as well as her personal life.

There were many traumatic experiences in Mansfield's life which were connected with children. She lost two siblings when they were still young; her younger sister died of infantile cholera and her younger brother died during World War I. What is more, even though Mansfield helped Frieda Weekley (Lawrence) to stay in contact with her three children, Mansfield herself, highly likely because of her health problems, did not have any. These facts and events contributed to an intensified interest in children, their thoughts, wishes, dreams and fears. Children appear throughout Mansfield's genres; they feel terrified when they are alone, their imagination allows them to see the world differently, they enjoy their childish games, yet at the same time feel confused because of the transition between childhood and maturity. The feelings, dreams and wishes of children in fact belong to Mansfield herself.

Throughout her life she attempted to find shelter from her night terrors, from her dark moods, from the anxiety caused by deaths of her beloved and from her feelings of loneliness and sadness. Mansfield's love affairs were numerous and turbulent as were her friendships. The majority of relationships in Mansfield's life were love-hate relationships,

with abrupt changes in moods, feelings and opinions. Here again lies the source of her literary works which present love and relationships in their various forms.

Towards the end of her life Mansfield longed for hope and comfort. She did not want any promises or vows, but a close personal contact, an embrace. Although she visited church and prayed for her family and husband, her inner conflicts regarding faith are prominent in her writing. In her letters, journals and poems, there are always contradictions and ambiguities where God is present, as shown in the chapter called "God".

It was Mansfield's memories which contributed to her biggest achievements in the field of literature. The recollections of her native island, of her family, relationships and love affairs helped her to escape from her nightmares, pains and loneliness. It is because of these memories that there exist such remarkable descriptions of nature and depictions of characters and narrators who strongly resemble the people who surrounded her in her life.

The last chapter of the practical part is called "Loneliness, Nearness of Death" for these are recurring themes in Mansfield's poetry and prose. The writer felt lonely even in the periods of her life when she was not alone. Moreover, loneliness always surrounded her, primarily after the deaths of her sister, grandmother, brother and mother. Mansfield suffered when Murry did not write her letters regularly during the times of their separation. And unfortunately, after all the horrors of her life, there was Mansfield's ill health. When she ascertained she had tuberculosis, she intensified her literary work and at the end of her life was most productive in terms of writing. Her life experiences and feelings intertwine and emerge in her writing rich in imagery, symbols and beautiful language.

Mansfield sent some of her poems to magazines or to friends, in her childhood she even won a poetry competition. Nevertheless, the greatest distribution of her poems, and of course other genres, to a wider public was provided by John Middleton Murry. Her husband published far more writings of different genres than she wished. Since Mansfield was predominantly dissatisfied with her literary creation, she rewrote, adjusted and perfected what she could. Her careful choice of words, settings and the remarkable depiction of characters in her short stories are the result of her sleepless nights spent with writing. More importantly, in the same respect she succeeded in perfecting her poetry. Rich symbols, images, range of feelings and the forms which correspond to them are always connected to the events in her life. The poems, short stories and personal correspondence together reflect the immense importance of Mansfield's childhood and her family members, the conflict between New Zealand and Europe in her thoughts, her friendships and relationships in Europe and of course her nightmares, fears and pains caused by her

serious health problems. Mansfield's incredibly strong personality and determination enabled her to intensify her literary work in the most difficult years of her life. Suffering from tuberculosis did not prevent her from writing, it even enhanced her efforts.

Poetry was certainly one of Mansfield's biggest achievements. Together with her journals, letters and short stories she used it to recall New Zealand or her loves, to express her feelings and opinions, and to confess. In the poems, children are terrified and find comfort in the company of their grandmother, the natural elements are greatly depicted and frequently personified, the confessions and memories of the author are striking, and the beauty of the language is remarkable. The collections of Mansfield's journal entries and letters greatly contributed to understanding the writer's difficult personality as well as the relationships and events in her life which were essential to her writing. The chosen themes are present not only in her literary work, but they are rooted in her life.

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APPENDICES

The Awakening River

THE GULLS are mad-in-love with the river,
And the river unveils her face and smiles.
In her sleep-brooding eyes they mirror their shining wings.
She lies on silver pillows: the sun leans over her.
He warms and warms her, he kisses and kisses her.
There are sparks in her hair and she stirs in laughter.
Be careful, my beautiful waking one! you will catch on fire.
Wheeling and flying with the foam of the sea on their breasts,
The ineffable mists of the sea clinging to their wild wings,
Crying the rapture of the boundless ocean,
The gulls are mad-in-love with the river.
Wake! we are the dream thoughts flying from your heart.
Wake! we are the songs of desire flowing from your bosom.
O, I think the sun will lend her his great wings
And the river will fly away to the sea with the mad-in-love birds.

Now I am a Plant, a Weed ...

Now I am a plant, a weed,
Bending and swinging
On a rocky ledge;
And now I am a long brown grass
Fluttering like flame;
I am a reed;
An old shell singing
For ever the same;
A drift of sedge;
A white, white stone;
A bone;
Until I pass
Into sand again,
And spin and blow
To and fro, to and fro,
On the edge of the sea
In the fading light—
For the light fades.

But if you were to come you would not say :
“She is not waiting here for me;
She has forgotten.” Have we not in play
Disguised ourselves as weed and stones and grass
While the strange ships did pass
Gently, gravely, leaving a curl of foam
That uncurled softly about our island home ...
Bubbles of foam that glittered on the stone
Like rainbows ? Look, darling ! No, they are gone.
And the white sails have melted into the sailing sky. ...

A Day in Bed

I WISH I had not got a cold,
The wind is big and wild,
I wish that I was very old,
Not just a little child.

Somehow the day is very long
Just keeping here, alone;
I do not like the big wind's song,
He's growling for a bone.

He's like an awful dog we had
Who used to creep around
And snatch at things—he was so bad,
With just that horrid sound.

I'm sitting up and nurse has made
Me wear a woolly shawl;
I wish I was not so afraid;
It's horrid to be small.

It really feels quite like a day
Since I have had my tea;
P'raps everybody's gone away
And just forgotten me.

And oh! I cannot go to sleep
Although I am in bed.
The wind keeps going creepy-creep
And waiting to be fed.

Spring Wind in London

I BLOW across the stagnant world,
I blow across the sea,
For me, the sailor's flag unfurled,
For me, the uprooted tree.
My challenge to the world is hurled;
The world must bow to me.

I drive the clouds across the sky,
I huddle them like sheep;
Merciless shepherd-dog am I
And shepherd-watch I keep.
If in the quiet vales they lie
I blow them up the steep.

Lo !In the tree-tops do I hide,
In every living thing;
On the moon's yellow wings I glide,
On the wild rose I swing;
On the sea-horse's back I ride,
And what then do I bring?

And when a little child is ill
I pause, and with my hand
I wave the window curtain's frill
That he may understand
Outside the wind is blowing still.
... It is a pleasant land.

O stranger in a foreign place,
See what I bring to you.
This rain—is tears upon your face;
I tell you—tell you true
I came from that forgotten place
Where once the wattle grew.

All the wild sweetness of the flower
Tangled against the wall.
It was that magic, silent hour. ...
The branches grew so tall
They twined themselves into a bower.
The sun shone ... and the fall

Of yellow blossom on the grass!
You feel that golden rain?
Both of you could not hold, alas,
(Both of you tried—in vain)
A memory, stranger. So I pass. ...
It will not come again.

A Little Boy's Dream

To AND fro, to and fro
In my little boat I go
Sailing far across the sea
All alone, just little me.
And the sea is big and strong
And the journey very long.
To and fro, to and fro
In my little boat I go.

Sea and sky, sea and sky,
Quietly on the deck I lie,
Having just a little rest.
I have really done my best
In an awful pirate fight,
But we captured them all right.
Sea and sky, sea and sky,
Quietly on the deck I lie

Far away, far away
From my home and from my play,
On a journey without end
Only with the sea for friend
And the fishes in the sea.
But they swim away from me
Far away, far away
From my home and from my play.

Then he cried "O Mother dear."
And he woke and sat upright,
They were in the rocking chair,
Mother's arms around him—tight.

Sea Song

I WILL think no more of the sea!
Of the big green waves
And the hollowed shore,
Of the brown rock caves
No more, no more
Of the swell and the weed
And the bubbling foam.

Memory dwells in my far away home,
She has nothing to do with me.

She is old and bent
With a pack
On her back.
Her tears all spent,
Her voice, just a crack.
With an old thorn stick
She hobbles along,
And a crazy song
Now slow, now quick
Wheeks in her throat.

And every day
While there's light on the shore
She searches for something,
Her withered claw
Tumbles the seaweed;
She pokes in each shell
Groping and mumbling
Until the night
Deepens and darkens,
And covers her quite,
And bids her be silent,
And bids her be still.

The ghostly feet
Of the whispery waves
Tiptoe beside her.
They follow, follow
To the rocky caves
In the white beach hollow ...
She hugs her hands,

She sobs, she shrills,
And the echoes shriek

In the rocky hills.
She moans: "It is lost!
Let it be! Let it be!
I am old. I'm too cold.
I am frightened ... the sea
Is too loud ... it is lost,
It is gone ..." Memory
Wails in my far away home.

Waves

I SAW a tiny God
Sitting
Under a bright blue Umbrella
That had white tassels
And forked ribs of gold.
Below him His little world
Lay open to the sun.
The shadow of His hat
Lay upon a city.
When he stretched forth His hand
A lake became a dark tremble.
When he kicked up His foot
It became night in the mountain passes.

But thou art small!
There are gods far greater than thou;
They rise and fall,
The tumbling gods of the sea.
Can thy heart heave such sighs,
Such hollow savage cries,
Such windy breath,
Such groaning death?
And can thy arm enfold
The old,
The cold,
The changeless dreadful place
Where the herds
Of horned sea-monsters
And the screaming birds
Gather together.
From those silent men
That lie in the pen
Of our pearly prisons,
Canst thou hunt thy prey?

Like us canst thou stay
Awaiting thine hour,
And then rise like a tower
And crash and shatter?

There are neither trees nor bushes
In my country,
Said the tiny God
But there are streams
And waterfalls
And mountain-peaks
Covered with lovely weed.
There are little shores and safe harbours,
Caves for cool and plains for sun and wind.
Lovely is the sound of the rivers,
Lovely the flashing brightness
Of the lovely peaks.
I am content.

Opposites

THE Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child
Walked out into the street
And splashed in all the puddles till
She had such shocking feet.

The Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child
Stayed quietly in the house
And sat upon the fender stool
As still as any mouse.

The Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child,
Her hands were black as ink;
She would come running through the house
And begging for a drink.

The Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child,
Her hands were white as snow;
She did not like to play around,
She only liked to sew.

The Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child
Lost hair ribbons galore;
She dropped them on the garden walks,
She dropped them on the floor.

The Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child,
O thoughtful little girl!
She liked to walk quite soberly,
It kept her hair in curl.

The Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child
When she was glad or proud
Just flung her arms round Mother's neck
And kissed her very loud.

The Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child
Was shocked at such a sight,
She only offered you her cheek
At morning and at night.

O Half-Soled-Boots-With-Toecaps-Child,
Your happy laughing face
Does like a scented Summer rose
Make sweet the dullest place.

O Patent-Leather-Slipper-Child,
My dear, I'm well content,
To have my daughter in my arms,
And not an ornament.

Butterfly Laughter

In the middle of our porridge plates
There was a blue butterfly painted
And each morning we tried who should reach the butterfly first.
Then the Grandmother said: "Do not eat the poor butterfly."
That made us laugh.
Always she said it and always it started us laughing.
It seemed such a sweet little joke.
I was certain that one fine morning
The butterfly would fly out of our plates,
Laughing the teeniest laugh in the world,
And perch on the Grandmother's lap.

Little Brother's Story

WE SAT in front of the fire;
Grandmother was in the rocking chair doing her knitting
And Little Brother and I were lying down flat.
“Please, tell us a story, Grandmother,” we said.
But she put her head on one side and began counting the stitches,
“Suppose you tell me one instead.”
I made up one about a spotted tiger
That had a knot in his tail;
But though *I* liked this about the knot,
I did not know why it was put there.
So I said: “Little Brother’s turn.”
“I know a perfect story,” he cried, waving his hands.
Grandmother laid down her knitting.
“Do tell us, dear.”
“Once upon a time there was a bad little girl
And her Mummy gave her the slipper, and that’s all.”
It was not a special story.
But we pretended to be very pleased
And Grandmother gave him jumps on her lap.

The Candle

By my bed, on a little round table
The Grandmother placed a candle.
She gave me three kisses telling me they were three
dreams
And tucked me in just where I loved being tucked.
Then she went out of the room and the door was shut.
I lay still, waiting for my three dreams to talk;
But they were silent.
Suddenly I remember giving her three kisses back.
Perhaps, by mistake, I had given my three little dreams
I sat up in bed.
The room grew big, oh, bigger far than a church.
The wardrobe, quite by itself, as big as a house.
And the jug on the washstand smiled at me:
It was not a friendly smile.
I looked at the basket-chair where my clothes lay folded:
The chair gave a creak as though it were listening
for something.
Perhaps it was coming alive and going to dress in my clothes.
But the awful thing was the window:
I could not think what was outside.
No tree to be seen, I was sure,
No nice little plant or friendly pebbly path.
Why did she pull the blind down every night?
It was better to know.
I crunched my teeth and crept out of bed,
I peeped through a slit of the blind.
There was nothing at all to be seen.
But hundreds of friendly candles all over the sky
In remembrance of frightened children.
I went back to bed...
The three dreams started singing a little song.

To L.H.B. (1894-1915)

Last night for the first time since you were dead
I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.
We were at home again beside the stream
Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.
"Don't touch them: they are poisonous," I said.
But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam
Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head
And as you stooped I saw the berries gleam.
"Don't you remember? We called them
Dead Man's Bread!"
I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar
Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.
Where--where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?
By the remembered stream my brother stands
Waiting for me with berries in his hands...
"These are my body. Sister, take and eat."

Wounded Bird

In the wide bed
Under the green embroidered quilt
With flowers and leaves always in soft motion
She is like a wounded bird resting on a pool.

The hunter threw his dart
And hit her breast,--
Hit her but did not kill.
"O my wings, lift me--lift me!
I am not dreadfully hurt!"
Down she dropped and was still.

Kind people come to the edge of the pool with baskets.
"Of course what the poor bird wants is plenty of food!"
Their bags and pockets are crammed almost to bursting
With dinner scrapings and scraps from the servants' lunch.
Oh! how pleased they are to be really giving!
"In the past, you know you know, you were always so fly-away.
So seldom came to the window-sill, so rarely
Shared the delicious crumbs thrown into the yard.
Here is a delicate fragment and here a tit-bit
As good as new. And here's a morsel of relish
And cake and bread and bread and bread and bread."

At night, in the wide bed
With the leaves and flowers
Gently weaving in the darkness,
She is like a wounded bird at rest on a pool.
Timidly, timidly she lifts her head from her wing.
In the sky there are two stars
Floating, shining...
O waters--do not cover me!
I would look long and long at those beautiful stars!
O my wings--lift me--lift me!
I am not so dreadfully hurt...

The Lonesome Child

The baby in the looking-glass
Is smiling through at me;
She has her teaspoon in her hand,
Her feeder on for tea.

And if I look behind her I
Can see the table spread;
I wonder if she has to eat
The nasty crusts of bread.

Her doll, like mine, is sitting close
Beside her special chair,
She has a pussy on her lap;
It must be my cup there.

Her picture-book is on the floor,
The cover's just the same;
And tidily upon the shelf
I see my Ninepin game.

O baby in the looking-glass,
Come through and play with me,
And if you will, I promise, dear,
To eat your crusts at tea.

Evening Song of the Thoughtful Child

Shadow children, thin and small,
Now the day is left behind,
You are dancing on the wall,
On the curtains, on the blind.

On the ceiling, children, too,
Peeping round the nursery door,
Let me come and play with you,
As we always played before.

Let's pretend that we have wings
And can really truly fly
Over every sort of things
Up and up into the sky.

Where the sweet star children play--
It does seem a dreadful rule,
They must stay inside all day.
I suppose they go to school.

And to-night, dears, do you see,
They are having such a race
With their father moon--the tree
Almost hides his funny face.

Shadow children, once at night,
I was all tucked up in bed,
Father moon came--such a fright--
Through the window poked his head;

I could see his staring eyes,
O, my dears, I was afraid,
That was not a nice surprise,
And the dreadful noise I made!

Let us make a fairy ring,
Shadow children, hand in hand,
And our songs quite softly sing
That we learned in fairyland.

Shadow children, thin and small,
See, the day is far behind;
And I kiss you--on the wall--
On the curtains--on the blind.

There Was a Child Once

There was a child once.
He came to play in my garden;
He was quite pale and silent.
Only when he smiled I knew everything about him,
I knew what he had in his pockets,
And I knew the feel of his hands in my hands
And the most intimate tones of his voice.
I led him down each secret path,
Showing him the hiding-place of all my treasures.
I let him play with them, every one,
I put my singing thoughts in a little silver cage
And gave them to him to keep...
It was very dark in the garden
But never dark enough for us. On tiptoe we walked
among the deepest shades;
We bathed in the shadow pools beneath the trees,
Pretending we were under the sea.
Once--near the boundary of the garden--
We heard steps passing along the World-road;
O how frightened we were!
I whispered: "Have you ever walked along that road?"
He nodded, and we shook the tears from our eyes....

There was a child once.
He came--quite alone--to play in my garden;
He was pale and silent.
When we met we kissed each other,
But when he went away, we did not even wave

Covering Wings

Love! Love! Your tenderness,
Your beautiful, watchful ways
Grasp me, fold me, cover me;
I lie in a kind of daze,
Neither asleep nor yet awake,
Neither a bud nor flower.
Brings to-morrow
Joy or sorrow,
The black or the golden hour?

Love! Love! You pity me so!
Chide me, scold me--cry,
"Submit--submit! You must not fight!"
What may I do, then? Die?
But, oh my horror of quiet beds!
How can I longer stay!
"One to be ready,
Two to be steady,
Three to be off and away!"

Darling heart--your gravity!
Your sorrowful, mournful gaze--
"Two bleached roads lie under the moon,
At the parting of the ways."
But the tiny, tree-thatched, narrow lane,
Isn't it yours and mine?
The blue-bells ring
Hey, ding-a-ding, ding!
And buds are thick on the vine.
Love! Love! Grief of my heart!
As a tree droops over a stream
You hush me, lull me, dark me,

The shadow hiding the gleam.
Your drooping and tragical boughs of grace
Are heavy as though with rain.
Run! Run!
Into the sun!
Let us be children again.

Sorrowing Love

And again the flowers are come,
And the light shakes,
And no tiny voice is dumb,
And a bud breaks
On the humble bush and the proud restless tree.
Come with me!

Look, this little flower is pink,
And this one white.
Here's a pearl cup for your drink,
Here's for your delight
A yellow one, sweet with honey.
Here's fairy money
Silver bright
Scattered over the grass
As we pass.

Here's moss. How the smell of it lingers
On my cold fingers!
You shall have no moss. Here's a frail
Hyacinth, deathly pale.
Not for you, not for you!
And the place where they grew
You must promise me not to discover,
My sorrowful lover!
Shall we never be happy again?
Never again play?
In vain--in vain!
Come away!

To God the Father

To the little, pitiful God I make my prayer,
The God with the long grey beard
And flowing robe fastened with a hempen girdle
Who sits nodding and muttering on the all-too-big throne
of Heaven.

What a long, long time, dear God, since you set the
stars in their places,
Girded the earth with the sea, and invented the day and
night.

And longer the time since you looked through the blue
window of Heaven

To see your children at play in a garden....

Now we are all stronger than you and wiser and more
arrogant,

In swift procession we pass you by.

"Who is that marionette nodding and muttering

On the all-too-big throne of Heaven?

Come down from your place, Grey Beard,

We have had enough of your play-acting!"

It is centuries since I believed in you,

But to-day my need of you has come back.

I want no rose-coloured future,

No books of learning, no protestations and denials--

I am sick of this ugly scramble,

I am tired of being pulled about--

O God, I want to sit on your knees

On the all-too-big throne of Heaven,

And fall asleep with my hands tangled in your grey
beard.

Loneliness

Now it is Loneliness who comes at night
Instead of Sleep, to sit beside my bed.
Like a tired child I lie and wait her tread,
I watch her softly blowing out the light.
Motionless sitting, neither left or right
She turns, and weary, weary droops her head.
She, too, is old; she, too, has fought the fight.
So, with the laurel she is garlanded.

Through the sad dark the slowly ebbing tide
Breaks on a barren shore, unsatisfied.
A strange wind flows... then silence. I am fain
To turn to Loneliness, to take her hand,
Cling to her, waiting, till the barren land
Fills with the dreadful monotone of rain

Old-Fashioned Widow's Song

She handed me a gay bouquet
Of roses pulled in the rain,
Delicate beauties, frail and cold –
Could roses heal my pain?

She smiled: “Ah, c'est un triste temps!”
I laughed and answered “Yes,”
Pressing the roses in my palms.
How could the roses guess?

She sang: “Madame est seule?” Her eye
Snapped like a rain-washed berry.
How could the solemn roses tell
Which of us was more merry?

She turned to go: she stopped to chat;
“Adieu!” at last she cried.
“Mille mercis pour ces jolies fleurs!” ...
At that the roses died.

The petals drooped, the petals fell,
The leaves hung crisped and curled.
And I stood holding my dead bouquet
In a dead world.