

‘That Moment of Suspension’: Class and Belonging in Katherine Mansfield’s short stories, ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ and ‘The Doll’s House’

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Abstract

This essay proposes a re-evaluation of the portrayal of class relations in Mansfield’s short stories using key concepts drawn from her journals and letters. Modernist scholar Charles Ferrall (2014) claims Katherine Mansfield’s work does not include many significant working class characters. He argues that she is ‘unable to represent’ them except as ‘insignificant’, ‘opaque subject[s]’ and even ‘objects’ (2014, p. 117). This paper challenges Ferrall’s claim within the framework of Mansfield’s own theoretical writings on ‘the glimpse’: that moment in which what she terms the ‘soul’ is ‘suspended’. I argue that Mansfield’s short stories ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ and ‘The Doll’s House’ (both published in 1922) include working class characters who defy the categories Ferrall proposes, and whose agency defines and is defined by ‘glimpses’. Furthermore, these characters frequently cross the boundaries of, and within, the home, challenging assumptions about belonging and classed spaces. Scholars such as Mary Wilson and Alison Light have demonstrated that the early twentieth century was a period in which class boundaries, particularly between female servants and their female employees, became increasingly mobile and unstable. As a result, Wilson (2013) claims, the home became the site of paranoid fantasy for women of multiple classes. This paper argues that by transgressing the thresholds of the paranoid site of the home, Mansfield’s working class characters enable and interrupt (‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’), but also share (‘The Doll’s House’) ‘glimpses’ as significant, active subjects. I call for further, systematic revision of our understanding of Mansfield’s working class characters, revisions with the potential to further politicise approaches to Mansfield studies.

Keywords: Modernism, Katherine Mansfield, Class, Home and the Glimpse.

Introduction

I propose a re-evaluation of class relations in Mansfield's fictional work, using concepts drawn from her journals and letters in order to do so.¹ I situate this essay within current debates in Modernist studies regarding early twentieth century portrayals of class relations (Wilson 2013; Ferrall 2014; Light 1991 and 2008). This essay also responds, and aims to contribute to, the recent focus in Modernist studies debates on the interrelated theory and practise of canonical poetry and fiction writers. Such scholarship reads writers, such as Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, through their non-fiction and critical writings (Ryan 2013, Douglas 2013 and Geheber 2011, respectively). This approach enables insight into coherent, consistent preoccupations and politics across each writer's oeuvre. I argue that reading Mansfield's short stories through her critical writings enables crucial, original insight into the class politics of her fiction. How can Mansfield's critical writings, particularly her concept of the 'glimpse', inform a re-evaluation of the class politics at play in her 1922 short stories 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' and 'The Doll's House' (Mansfield 1977, p. 169)? Do her representations of working class characters challenge assumptions about who belongs where in the classed spaces of the home and if so, how? First I will outline key concepts from Mansfield's non-fiction, particularly the 'glimpse' and what she terms 'the soul', and the critical context of my argument (Mansfield 1977, p. 169 and 2008, p. 142). I then analyse 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', focussing on thresholds within the home and the Mansfieldian 'interrupted moment' (Mansfield 1984, p. 302). I reject the claims of Mansfield scholar Charles Ferrall, who states Mansfield is 'unable to represent' working class characters except as 'insignificant', 'opaque subject[s]' and even 'objects' (2014, p. 117). Finally, I turn to 'The Doll's House' and a glimpse which occurs at the borders of the home. I argue that while classed tensions and thresholds prevent glimpses from being shared in 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', they enable such glimpses in 'The Doll's House'. Analysing Mansfield's critical writings not only enable me to reject Ferrall's claims, they are also key to my re-evaluation of her portrayal of class relations in her fiction.

Glimpses, Class Relations and the Home

Mansfield's concept of the glimpse is crucial to my analysis of class relations in her short stories. Mansfield scholar Sarah Sandley (1994) has opened up investigations of the glimpse in relation to Mansfield's practise, though not with regards to the domestic and class related

¹ I use the first person in line with current scholarship which resists the elision of the (in the past predominantly male and privileged) writer implicit in third person essays.

themes and issues outlined above. Discussing what she calls ‘Mansfield’s critical comments on writing’, Sandley (1994, p. 71) notes that, despite being dispersed among Mansfield’s letters, notebooks and reviews, ‘there is a consistency between her comments, her practise [...] and the forms she let the glimpse take’. This consistency implies a coherent critical thread throughout Mansfield’s writing which, if analysed as such, can provide insight into her politics. Her concept of the glimpse, therefore, demands further examination. Sandley (1994, p. 74). observes that Mansfield’s uses of the word ‘glimpse’ ‘are too numerous to list’ For the purposes of this essay the most significant of such uses is a passage from Mansfield’s journal, dated February 1920, in which she defines, or resists defining, the concept. In her journal Mansfield says:

one has these ‘glimpses’ [...] The waves, as I drove home this afternoon, and the high foam, how it was suspended in the air before it fell.... What is it that happens in that moment of suspension? It is timeless. In that moment [...] the whole life of the soul is contained. One is flung up—out of life—one is ‘held’, and then,—down, bright, broken, glittering on the rocks, tossed back, part of the ebb and flow (1977, pp. 169-170).

It is worth reading this passage alongside Mansfield’s description of the soul in order to understand what is being suspended in this momentary yet ‘timeless’ glimpse (p. 170).

In 1922, the year in which the two stories discussed were published, Mansfield wrote to a friend:

By soul I mean the ‘thing’ that makes the mind really important. I always picture it like this. My mind is a very complicated, capable instrument. But the interior is dark. [...] behind that instrument like a very steady gentle light is the soul. And it’s only when the soul *irradiates* the mind that what one does matters... what I aim at is that state of mind when I feel my soul and my mind are one (emphasis in original, 2008, p. 142).

The glimpse, then, is a moment of unification in which any threshold between mind and soul ceases to be. Furthermore, the glimpse is characterised by illumination, a point which will be useful later when we come to consider the significance of the little lamp in ‘The Doll’s House’. Sandley calls Mansfield’s glimpse a particular form – even ‘the most complex and complete’ form – of the Modernist moment (p. 72). As such, Mansfield’s ‘interrupted moment’, also cited in her letters and the subject of my analysis of ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, is in effect an interruption of the Mansfieldian soul suspended in a glimpse (1984, p. 302).

How is the glimpse connected to Mansfield’s portrayal of class relations in the two short stories analysed here? In order to answer this question it is vital that I outline the state

of the domestic sphere and domestication in the 1920s. My focus on Mansfield's female characters in a domestic context responds to recent feminist criticism by Modernist scholars such as Alison Light (1991) and Mary Wilson (2013), who claim that representations of the home were marked, during the early twentieth century, by a dramatic shift in class relations, particularly between female employers and female domestic servants. According to Wilson (2013, pp. 2 and 5), this period was characterised by the emergence of 'widely available domestic technology that replace[d] servants', which enabled the rise of the middle classes as 'servant culture slip[ped] away'. Wilson (2013) says that as a result of these changing class relations, thresholds within the home were destabilised, and it became unclear who belonged in which parts of the home. The role of home in Mansfield's work is discussed by several critics (such as Aimee Gasston 2014, Janet Wilson 2011 and W. Todd Martin 2013). Other scholars analyse her representations of class (e.g. Charles Ferrall 2014 and D. W. Kleine 1963). These two topics are intimately connected. As Wilson points out, the word 'domestic' has multiple meanings, referring to both servants and the household (p. 12). I aim to undertake an original investigation into the depiction of class relations and their connection to thresholds within, but also at the boundaries of, the home in Mansfield's writing.

Despite the rapidly changing class dynamics of the early twentieth century, female servants and employees continued to be alienated from one another through the processes of domestication in the home (processes which were also changing in line with emergent domestic technology). As Wilson puts it:

Labor in the home domesticates [...] lower-class women – that is, it makes them into domestics, attaching them to the home of another to the point at which their identity and labor are inextricable from the space. And directing that labor *also* domesticates the middle- and upper-class women who employ them – that is, it produces and authorizes their class and gender position through their displaced relation to menial household work (p. 4, emphasis in original).

Consequently, as Wilson says, 'othering [...] is intertwined with domestication' (Wilson 2013, p. 135). In the 1920s, then, both domestic servants and their employers could justifiably consider one another the "'other women'" in the house' (Wilson 2013, p. 4). The concept of the other is particularly relevant to Mansfield's critical writing. In another of her letters, dated February 1921, she famously writes: 'when I am writing of 'another' I want to lose myself in the soul of the other that I am not' (1996, p. 180). I am not suggesting that Mansfield has domestic servants in mind when she writes this sentence. Indeed, both 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' and 'The Doll's House' are primarily focalised through

characters from the employing classes. However, I do want to discuss the ways in which characters in the employer-servant relationship do or do not share glimpses which enable them to lose themselves in each other's so-called souls. Such a breakdown of transcendent thresholds may be enabled, or interrupted, by immanent, material thresholds which working class characters cross in the two narratives. The glimpse, then, may be a potentially subversive moment which disrupts the domestication process Wilson describes, and disturbs domesticating spaces of the time.

Interrupted Moments, Thresholds and Paranoia

Mansfield scholar Charles Ferrall (2014, p. 117) claims Mansfield is 'unable to represent' working class characters except as 'insignificant', 'opaque subject[s]' and even 'objects'. I argue that it is Ferrall's (2014) analysis, not Mansfield's portrayal, of working class characters which is reductive. His (2014) essay 'Katherine Mansfield and the Working Classes' does not discuss class relations in 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' whatsoever, despite the centrality of servant-employer relations to the story. The narrative follows two sisters, Josephine and Constantia, as they navigate their relationship with their servant Kate after their father's death. It is to 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' and thresholds within the home – predominantly doors – that I turn first. Wilson (2013, p. 10) claims servants 'both observe and disturb [...] thresholds simply in the fulfilment of their duties'. She discusses the 'green baize door' as 'shorthand for the dividing line between servants' and masters' space' (p. 9). Kate frequently passes through 'her' doors – presumably the green baize door Wilson describes – and 'their' door' in a manner unimaginable in a Victorian household, 'leaving their door open and slamming the door of her kitchen' (Mansfield 1975, p. 111). Furthermore, the sisters are frequently 'interrupted by Kate bursting through the door in her usual fashion' (p. 111). Mansfield's 'interrupted moment' (1984, p. 302) is a recurring theme in the narrative. Such a moment is one in which, as Sandley (1994 p. 76), quoting one of Mansfield's reviews, puts it, 'one can register a moment but not discover and explore it'. Josephine and Constantia refuse to hold communion in their house because, 'Kate would be sure to come bursting in and interrupt them' (p. 96). The drawing room, where the sisters 'always [...] retired when they wanted to talk over Kate', is cast as the only space where Kate will *not* interrupt her employers (p. 112). It is notable that 'Josephine closed the door [to the drawing room] meaningly,' because this signifies an attempt to re-establish the boundaries between domestic servant and domestic employers (p. 112). The sisters experience 'the domestic realm as a site of paranoid fantasy', as Wilson puts it (2013, p. 25). Mansfield

evidently portrays a working class character with agency and the power to disrupt the domestication process, contrary to Ferrall's (2014) claims,. Kate subverts literary stereotypes of servants at the time, as well defying the archetypes Ferrall (2014) perpetuates (even as he criticises them) in his essay.

The structure of 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' is also characterised by interruptions. Wilson (2013, p. 25) defines what she calls the 'paranoid narrative' as 'embed[ding] narrative visions of and relationships with servants into their forms'. Mansfield's short story is divided into twelve brief, numbered sections, each interrupting that which precedes it. For example, section XI ends with the line 'If we postpone it this time – ', and the following section, XII, begins, 'But at that moment in the street below a barrel-organ struck up' (pp. 114 and 115). The dash in the former line implies that the section, like the sentence, is unfinished. Likewise, the use of the conjunction 'but' as the first word of the following section (and of two other sections) indicates another incomplete sentence and raises the question, but what? Indeed, the very first line of the story seems a continuation of an interrupted narrative to which the reader does not have full access: 'The week after was one of the busiest weeks of their lives' (p. 88). The use of the deictic 'their' indicates that the reader ought to know who *they* are and Mansfield does not specify what the busy week came 'after' (p. 88). Assuming the reader is familiar with the who and the what of the narrative is a deliberately exclusive technique because the sentence provides insufficient information for the reader to grasp its meaning. Mansfield therefore raises questions regarding inclusion, exclusion and privileged access through the structure of the text and the structure of her sentences. It is significant, then, that one section begins, 'They were interrupted by Kate'; she not only interrupts the characters, but the narrative and its structure (p. 111). Mansfield constructs both the narrative and text as paranoid, classed spaces which are disrupted by Kate, who is constantly 'bursting' across thresholds into spaces where she does not, according to the sisters, belong (Mansfield 1975, p. 111). Furthermore, Kate resists Ferrall's (2014, p117) categories of 'opaque', object-like working-class characters through her threshold-bursting verbs and interruptions.

But what exactly is interrupted in 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel'? In this short story Mansfield's interrupted moments and threshold crossings are frequently enacted by ellipses. According to Sarah Sandley, (1994, p. 79) 'Mansfield's use of three- and four-dot suspensions [...] conveys characters strategies of mental evasion and deferral'. Such evasions and deferrals are particularly frequent in this short story, in which three-dot ellipses occur no less than twenty times within thirty-two pages (not to mention the numerous dashes used

throughout). Each of these require further investigation with regards to the glimpse. My analysis is limited to a few. A particularly notable example depicts a dual boundary crossing. Kate, on the verge of one threshold, interrupts the sisters as they hesitate to cross another, the entrance to their late father's room:

they noticed that the kitchen door was open, and there stood Kate....
'Very stiff,' said Josephine, grasping the door handle and doing her best to turn it.
As if anything ever deceived Kate! It couldn't be helped, the girl was Then
the door shut behind them (Mansfield 1975, p. 99).

In each instance the ellipsis is immediately preceded by reference to Kate's unwanted presence and followed by a reference to the materiality of the threshold which the sisters cross – the doorknob and the door itself – in order to enter their father's room. It is as though the text, focalising through the sisters, is too paranoid to articulate their thoughts about Kate or acknowledge the moment of their transgression as they enter a forbidden space, to which they do not belong. Interruptions, it seems, are a key characteristic of Mansfield's portrayal of paranoia. Kate does not interrupt a glimpse, but a period of hesitation, indeed of deferral. She prompts the sisters to action, in part, because of their unarticulated paranoia. But this action, whilst transgressive (in entering a forbidden space), is not productive (the sisters do not end up going through their father's things as they had intended, and once in the room defer the task) and is in itself an evasion, of Kate.

In 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', ellipses enact evasions and deferrals on the level of direct discourse as well as on the level of free indirect discourse. As Sandley (1994, p82) notes, 'the key technique of the glimpse stories' involves 'interplay between [the characters'] direct (conscious) thought and free indirect (unconscious) thought; between those forms of thought and direct speech' as well as through the interplay of various characters' thought processes. For example Kate, interrupting the sisters, asks whether they want fried or boiled fish. Constantia notes that 'it might be nice to have it fried' but then adds that 'of course, boiled fish is very nice' (p. 111). Finally, she says 'I think I prefer both equally well ... Unless ... In that case –' (p. 111). Her refusal to voice a preference becomes a refusal to complete a sentence at all, pushing her indecision to the point of absurdity. Finally, Kate interrupts her (as we have come to expect) and declares, 'I shall fry it' (p. 111). Her assertive statement is the opposite of the indecisive utterances of the sisters and suggests that while they are paranoid, Kate is not. The narrative is evidently characterised on multiple levels, including direct and indirect discourse as well as the structure of the text, by perpetual

interruptions, and paranoid evasions and deferrals, which limit the possibility of a shared glimpse with ‘the other that I am not’ (Mansfield 1996, p. 180).

The relationship between the domestic realm and ‘paranoid fantasy’, is related to Wilson’s (2013, pp. 25 and 10) observation that ‘the presence of servants mediates [the] intimacy, between an employer and her personal belongings’. Josephine and Constantia are certainly paranoid that Kate roots amongst their private things ‘not to take things, but to spy’ (something they are too afraid to do with their father’s possessions) (p. 114). Traditionally ‘undomesticated women’ in narratives are, Wilson (2013, p. 16) says, ‘punished’ for their transgressions, usually through ‘marital trials’ and ‘tragedies’. This is not the case with Kate who, despite her potential spy[ing] and her explicit threshold transgressions, does not suffer punishment in the narrative (Mansfield 1975, p. 114). Although the sisters discuss firing her they ‘postpone’ making a final decision ‘again’ (Mansfield 1975, p.114). Furthermore, Wilson claims undomesticated women fall into multiple categories which not only include disobedient domestic servants, but also women who do not conform to compulsory ‘procreative heterosexuality’ and domestication through the ‘childbed’, women like Josephine and Constantia (Wilson 2013, p. 160). That said, the sisters’ resistance to forms of heteronormative domestication is not due to choice. In fact, given the sisters’ indecisiveness, it is highly likely that they will remain celibate, and that Kate will continue bursting across domestic thresholds within their household. Kate’s interruptions and the sisters’ failure to interrupt her (in the act of rifling through their things), ensures the perpetuation of a household of habitually undomesticated, paranoid women whose glimpses are never shared or elaborated on. At the close of the story the sisters seem about to share their glimpses of the life they could have had, and the life they could still have, but they interrupt one another until they are no longer able to share these glimpses. Despite Kate’s subversive potential, the characters are unable to share glimpses across classes or with other women of the same class. They cannot ‘lose [themselves] in the soul of the other that [they are] not’ (Mansfield 1996, p. 180). Consequently, although the women are intentionally subversive (Kate) and unintentionally undomesticated (the sisters), they remain ‘other women’ to each other and co-exist in a state of mutual alienation (Wilson 2013, p. 4).

Home, Non-home and Interrupted Glimpses

Contrary to ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, ‘The Doll’s House’ offers a shared glimpse where threshold transgressions occur not within the house, but at its boundaries. In ‘The Doll’s House’, Kezia, a young girl, disobeys her family by inviting Lil and ‘our Else’ Kelvey,

the daughters of a washerwoman, to look at her family's doll's house (Mansfield 2006, p. 301).² Rather than being divided into paranoid segments, this narrative is temporally and spatially fluid. The form of this particular story speaks to Mansfield's conception of time as she outlines it in her non-fiction. In 1922 she wrote in one of her letters: 'I have given up on the idea of Time [...] There is the Past. That's true. But the Present and the Future are all one' (Mansfield quoted in Sandley 1994, p. 87). In 'The Doll's House', Mansfield enacts the collapsing of temporalities through her use of punctuation. Four-dot ellipses occur four times in the narrative, but they do not mark evasions and deferrals as Sandley suggests. The first two uses of ellipses mark transitions between perspectives (though it is not necessarily possible, or indeed pertinent, to tell whose due to Mansfield's use of free indirect discourse). The latter two occasions both mark temporal and spatial shifts in the narrative between school and home. For example, the sentence where the Kelveys are at school eating 'jam sandwiches out of a newspaper soaked through with large red blobs' is immediately followed by a sentence which depicts Kezia at home asking her mother a question (Mansfield 2006, p. 302). These four-dot ellipses enact transitions between times, places and perspectives, from outside the home to inside the home. As such, they correspond to Mansfield's understanding of time, rather than Sandley's notion of evasions or deferrals.

If, as Mary Wilson (2013, p. 9) claims, the green baize door marks 'the dividing line' between classed spaces *within* the home, then the gates on the threshold of the Burnell property in 'The Doll's House' are poised on what feminist scholar Rita Felski (1999, p. 24) calls, 'the boundaries between home and non-home' which are, she says, 'leaky'. The courtyard where the doll's house stands is both outside the home and within the gates of the Burnell property. Aunt Beryl considers it a transgression when the Kelveys enter this space, exclaiming: 'How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard?' (Mansfield 2006, p. 304). The Kelveys are forbidden from entering the Burnell property because they are 'the daughters of a washerwoman and a jailbird' (p. 301). One schoolchild, Lena, tries to provoke the Kelveys by asking, 'Is it true you're going to be a servant when you grow up, Lil Kelvey?' (p. 302). Lena seems to be regurgitating the employing classes' paranoid impulse to ossify class boundaries. This impulse reflects the period in which domestic life was changing

² I disagree with Ferrall's dismissal of our Else's name as 'a slightly amused condescension' (Ferrall 2014, p. 115). On the contrary, I argue that as readers we are encouraged to sympathise with Else, as ours, as one of us (whoever we may be). The phonetic similarity between our Else and the threat 'or else' suggests that we exclude her at our peril. Kezia's name is also significant. She is a recurring character in Mansfield's stories as one of three sisters. In *The Book of Job* from *The Old Testament* Kezia is one of Job's three daughters who each, unusually for the time, get an equal share of his inheritance (Charlesworth 1983). Both of these names are weighted with associations of belonging, sharing and equality.

drastically, and in which the answer to such a question was far from certain. Lena, the Kelveys and Kezia are children; they are not bound by the co-dependent roles and relationships of employer-employee that characterise 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel'. The Modernists explored a 'metaphoric understanding of the "new" through the child' and this includes new class relations (Higonnet 2009, p. 86).³ There is a tension in 'The Doll's House' between the received rhetoric and ideals which Lena has internalised, and the potential children hold for participating in new kinds of class relations within the rapidly changing social structure of the time. The latter is foregrounded in the following passage.

The permeability of the boundary between home and non-home is evident when the Kelveys encounter Kezia at the gate to the Burnell property:

Nobody was about; [Kezia] began to swing on the big white gates of the courtyard. Presently [...] she saw [...] the Kelveys. Kezia stopped swinging. She slipped off the gate as if she was going to run away. Then she hesitated. [...] Kezia clambered back on the gate; she had made up her mind; she swung out (p. 303).

The gate, rather than fixing the threshold between home and non-home, is neither open or closed but 'swinging' and indeed swings 'out' to meet the Kelveys (p. 303). Mansfield enacts the movement and permeability of this threshold not only through her use of verbs, but through punctuation. The sentence in which Kezia stops swinging is short and without clauses. Yet each sentence that describes her swinging on the gate contains semi-colons, which enact permeable thresholds between clauses. The boundary between home and non-home is indeed 'leaky' (Felski 1999, p. 24). Through verbs and semi-colons, Mansfield presents the object of the gate as a threshold which is open to being crossed by working class characters, despite Beryl's wishes to the contrary. The child characters are able to manoeuvre this permeable boundary, disrupting received ideas about who belongs where, and who is included in what spaces.

The doll's house itself is characterised by being both on, and containing, thresholds between inside and outside. It is placed within the confines of the courtyard gate, yet it is kept outside the house, apparently because of the unpleasant smell of the fresh paint. When the Burnell children first try to open the doll's house, they find the 'hook at the side [...] stuck fast'; it has to be 'prised open' by an adult with a penknife (Mansfield 2006, p. 299). This achieved, 'the whole house-front swung back' (p. 299). Once again, Mansfield uses a

³ Multiple Modernist scholars have become preoccupied with Modernism and childhood, as evidenced by last year's *Modernism's Child* conference (2015) and other recent works (Higonnet 2009 and Gavin 2012).

variation of the verb ‘swing’ to describe the permeable thresholds of both the doll’s house and the Burnell property. Furthermore, when showing the Kelvey children the doll’s house, Kezia ‘undid the hook’ with ease (p. 304). While this ease is partly to do with the paint seal having been broken previously, it is significant that the threshold between inside and outside is more permeable without the presence of adults. Unlike Josephine and Constantia, Kezia and the Kelveys do not associate crossing thresholds with paranoia. The permeable boundaries within the narrative, and the age of the children, enables the ‘suspension’ of children’s souls, through the glimpse of the ‘little lamp’ at the end of the story (Mansfield 1977, p. 169 and 2006, p. 304).

Mansfield’s thresholds are evidently embodied by material objects in both stories: doors, gates, the frontispiece of, and the doll’s house itself. Some attention has been paid (e.g. by Aimee Gasston 2014, J. Lawrence Mitchell 2004 and Emily Perkins 2014) to the objects and ‘things’ which populate Mansfield’s work. The ‘exquisite little amber lamp’ in the Burnell’s doll’s house is no exception (Mansfield 2006, p. 299). Mansfield’s notes on the text, Sandley 1994, p. 83) observes, suggest that ‘the atmospheric climax, or the glimpse’ involving the lamp ‘had been [Mansfield’s] starting point’ from which to write the story. Lawrence Mitchell’s essay ‘Katherine Mansfield and the Aesthetic Object’ traces the history of the lamp image in Mansfield’s works, both her fiction and non-fiction, and reads it as an elegiac symbol. However, I argue that there is more to the lamp than elegy. In order to develop our understanding of the politics at play in ‘The Doll’s House’, it is imperative that we read the lamp in light of Mansfield’s writing on the glimpse. It is significant that in the Mansfieldian glimpse, the suspended soul ‘*irradiates* the mind’, dissolving the threshold between the ‘soul and [...] mind’ which become ‘one’ (Mansfield 1977, p. 261, emphasis in original). I argue that the lamp in ‘The Doll’s House’ prompts such a unification of mind and soul. Unlike the other objects in the doll’s house the lamp, for Kezia, is ‘real’ and significant (2006, p. 300). When she first sees it the lamp is ‘all ready for lighting, though of course you couldn’t light it’ (Mansfield 2006, p. 299). I argue that Mansfield *does* light it, with a glimpse shared between Kezia and the Kelvey children.

Illumination and the glimpse are intimately connected. As Sandley (1994, p. 76) puts it, ‘light [is] an external signal of the moment’, in Mansfield’s work. In fact, one of her non-fiction pieces, a review, describes light using imagery remarkably similar to her description of the glimpse. It is surprising that Sandley (1994), who quotes both the glimpse passage and the one on light, herewith, does not remark on their similarity. In her 1919 review Mansfield writes:

when the sun is over the sea and the waves high a trembling brilliances flashes [...] now illuminating this part, now that [...] something is caught in it, dazzling fine, and then it is gone to be back again for another glittering moment [...] Brilliant light [...] by which one can register a moment but not discover and explore it (Mansfield quoted in Sandley 1994 p. 76).

Both passages feature oceanic imagery; the metaphor of the ‘moment’ like a ‘wave’ (both Mansfield 1977, pp. 169-170 and Mansfield quoted in Sandley 1994, p. 76). In each instance the moment is ‘caught’ or ‘suspended’ and then released (Mansfield in Sandley 1994, p. 76 and Mansfield 1977, pp. 169, respectively). Even the adjective ‘glittering’ appears in both passages. Evidently light and the glimpse and are intimately connected. It is fitting, then, that as Kezia and the Kelvey children gather around the lamp in ‘The Doll’s House’ it becomes a source of metaphorical as well as literal illumination. Although Beryl interrupts them, the little lamp ‘*irradiates*’ the minds of the young girls (Mansfield 1977, pp. 261). It is the lamp which prompts Else to smile ‘her rare smile’ and utter her only line: ‘I seen the little lamp’ (p. 304). In sharing a glimpse the children are able to lose themselves in the ‘soul[s] of the other’ that they are not (Mansfield 1996, p.180). Unlike the characters in ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ who are confined to the domesticating sphere of the home, the children share their glimpse at the boundaries of the domestic sphere in an act of transgression with subversive, unifying potential.

Ferrall (2014, p. 115) claims the Kelveys are ‘devoid of interiority’ citing the fact that ‘they only utter two lines of speech in the whole story’. The latter is true, but the significance of the last line in particular, when read in light of Mansfield’s critical theory, suggests the Kelveys possess interiority and subjectivity that Ferrall has overlooked. He claims the ‘characteristically inconclusive epiphany with which so many of Mansfield’s stories end is realised’, in ‘The Doll’s House’, ‘by the complete inscrutability of the working-class children’ (pp. 115-116). By reading the ending of ‘The Doll’s House’ as a Mansfieldian glimpse shared by significant subjects, rather than an ‘inconclusive epiphany’, I hope to have demonstrated the impact Mansfield’s critical writings can have on our understanding of her working class characters (Ferrall 2014, p. 115). Contrary to Ferrall’s claims, Mansfield does include significant working class characters and these characters challenge what it means to belong in the classed spaces of the home. This essay is not simply a rebuttal of Ferrall’s work. Reading Mansfield’s fictional and non-fictional writings together has ramifications within Mansfield studies, enabling new critical insight into Mansfield’s politics. I propose a systematic re-evaluation of the portrayals of class relations in Mansfield’s work, one which draws on her critical writings as a major point of departure. Such an investigation has

implications for methodological approaches in Mansfield studies, bringing scholarship in line with (re)emerging critical approaches in Modernist studies and the practise of literary criticism. Finally, women (and men) still engage in paid domestic labour, for example as cleaners, carers and *au pairs*. Mansfield's short stories invite us to reconsider who belongs where in the classed spaces of the home today.

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