The Garden as Feminine Space in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories

Elina Mannerhovi
University of Tampere
School of Modern Languages
and Translation Studies
English Philology
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Käsittelen tutkielmassani puutarhaa feminiinisenä tilana Katherine Mansfieldin (1888 - 1923) novelleissa. Analysoin erityisesti seitsemää novellia: ”Prelude” (1917), ”At the Bay” (1921), ”In the Botanical Gardens” (1907), ”The Garden Party” (1921), “Bliss” (1918), “The Escape” (1920) ja “The Man Without A Temperament” (1920).

Tutkielmassani pohdin kysymystä, onko puutarha vain osa yksityistä kotia, johon naiset on suljettu, vai voiko puutarha tarjota naisille vapautta sekä tilan, jossa he voivat ilmaista itseään ja määritellä itsensä uudelleen. Tämän vuoksi selvitän, missä määrin eri kulttuurisesti määritellyt dikotomiat ovat yhteydessä puutarhaan, sillä puutarha on liminaalinen tila eli tila joka sijaitsee erilaisten dikotomioiden – maskuliininen/feminiininen, kulttuuri/luonto, julkinen/yksityinen – rajapinnassa. Tästä seuraa kysymys, merkitseekö luonnon kontrolloiminen puutarhan kontekstissa myös sitä, että naisia kontrolloidaan seksuaalisesti puutarhassa?

Määrittelen aluksi tutkimukselleni sosiaalisen ja kulttuurisen viitekehyksen tarkastelemalla naisten – ja erityisesti Katherine Mansfieldin – suhdetta kirjalliseen modernismiin 1900-luvun alun Englannissa. Kirjallisuutta pidetään yleensä lähinnä ajallisena taidemuotona, jossa tärkeintä on tapahtumien kulku, mutta modernismissa tila saa suuremman merkityksen, koska modernistit halusivat lukijoidensa ymmärtävän tekstinsä ennemminkin hetkenä ajassa kuin ajallisena jatkumona.

Tutkimukseni teoreettisena pohjana on feministinen kirjallisuudentutkimus, jossa analyysissa käytettävät teoriat voi valita melko vapaasti. Tämän vuoksi hyödynnänkin useita tilan teorioita eri tieteenaloilta. Ylittääkseni konkreettisen ja fiktiivisen tilan välisen kuilun turvaudun Michel De Certeaun tilan ja paikan määritelmiin. Tärkeä sija tutkimuksessani on myös julkisen ja yksityisen välisellä jaottelulla, joka 1900-luvun alkupuolella pitkälti määritteli naisten tilan käytön. Otan avuksi myös sosiaaliantropologi Edwin Ardenerin kehittämää teoriaa villistä alueesta (wild zone), joka on erillinen naisten asuttama sosiaalinen ja kulttuurinen tila yhteiskunnassa.

Analyysissani tarkastelen naisten suhdetta puutarhaan eri näkökulmista tukeutuen mainittuihin teorioihin, puutarhaa käsitteleviin teksteihin ja Katherine Mansfieldiä aiemmin analysoineisiin kriitikoihin. Tärkeimpiä analyysin kohteita ovat luonnon ja kulttuurin sekä julkisen ja yksityisen kohtaaminen puutarhassa, seksuaalisuuden suhde puutarhaan ja se, mitä tapahtuu, kun naiset tasapainottelevat puutarhaan jäämisen ja lähtemisen välillä. Tarkastelemalla myös miesten suhdetta puutarhaan pyrin luomaan paremman kokonaiskuvan naisten suhteesta puutarhaan, sillä yhteiskunnan dominoivana ryhmänä miehet vaikuttavat siihen, miten naiset kokevat tilan ja missä määrin heidän on mahdollista liikkua tilassa.

Asiasanat: Katherine Mansfield, puutarha, feminiininen tila, liminaalinen tila

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1. Introduction

Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923) (the penname for Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp) is regarded as one of the masters of the modernist short story. She was born into a middle-class colonial family in Wellington, New Zealand, where she also spent her childhood. At the age of nineteen Mansfield left for England determined on a literary career and spent the remaining years of her eventful short life in Europe. During her life five collections of short stories were published: *In a German Pension* (1911), *Prelude* (1918), *Je Ne Parle Pas Francais* (1919), *Bliss and Other Stories* (1920), *The Garden Party* (1922). Two more collections, *The Doves Nest and Other Stories* (1923) and *Something Childish and Other Stories* (1924), as well as her edited journals and letters, were published posthumously by Mansfield's writer and critic husband John Middleton Murry.

Katherine Mansfield's short stories depict trivial events and subtle changes in human behaviour, and their atmosphere and characters are more important than the plot. The setting of Katherine Mansfield's stories is generally the domestic sphere of home, and she portrays marital relationships between men and women. Mansfield was not as obviously feminist as her contemporary Virginia Woolf, but "there is what must be called a feminist awareness running throughout her writing, in the sense that there is always a strong feeling of division and discontinuity between male and female experiences of life."[1] The restrictions society and patriarchy forces on silenced or muted women, is a reoccurring theme in her writing, for instance.

Space is also an important textual element in the writing of Katherine Mansfield. As Elisanda Masgrau-Peya says "bodies, houses, gardens, cities and nations are

[1] Hanson, Clare and Gurr, Andrew. *Katherine Mansfield* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981) 14.

textualized" and "place is not recovered as some ideal, immutable sort of space, but rather as the site of numerous contests for power and domination". She continues that place is not only a setting for the characters, but the places they inhabit influence their lives, "confining or empowering their prospects for freedom, movement and moulding their identities."[2] In spite of this, Masgrau-Peya's analysis on the house in "Prelude" is the only spatial analysis written on Katherine Mansfield's short stories I have come across.

My intention is to analyse in this thesis, the way in which the garden is presented as a space in seven selected short stories by Katherine Mansfield. I aim to answer the question: Is the garden just a continuation of the private sphere of home into which women are confined, or can the garden offer women freedom and a space for self-definition and self-expression in a patriarchal world? To help me answer this question, I will consider the garden in connection to different culturally determined dichotomies, the most important of which are the masculine/feminine, culture/nature and the public/private dichotomies. I wish to assess to what extent these dichotomies play a role in finding the answer to the research question presented above; for the garden is a space situated somewhere in-between nature and culture, as well as public and private: the nature present in the garden is mainly controlled and well-groomed and can be considered a part of masculine culture. All this then leads to the question: does controlling nature also mean controlling women sexually in the context of the garden?

My research material consists of seven selected short stories by Katherine Mansfield: "Prelude" (1917), "At the Bay" (1921), "In the Botanical Gardens" (1907), "The

[2] Masgrau-Peya, Elisenda. "Towards a Poetics of the 'Unhomed': The House in Katherine Mansfield's 'Prelude' and Barbara Hanrahan's *The Scent of Eucalyptus*" *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature* 18.1 (2004).

Garden Party" (1921), "Bliss" (1918), "The Escape" (1920) and "The Man Without a Temperament" (1920). I have chosen these short stories as my research material, after familiarizing myself with most of Katherine Mansfield's production, because garden imagery plays an important role in them. The garden does not function only as a setting in these stories; it is, rather, used for a more deliberate purpose and is strongly associated with the white middle-class protagonists belonging to different age groups, who all inhabit a middle-class environment. The first four stories are set in New Zealand, while the other three are set in Europe: "Bliss" in London, "The Man Without a Temperament" and "The Escape" somewhere in Southern France. Four of the stories ("Prelude", "At the Bay", "The Garden Party", and "Bliss") have female protagonists, and two of them ("The Escape" and "The Man Without A Temperament") male protagonists. The gender of the narrator/protagonist of the seventh story, "In the Botanical Gardens", is not clearly indicated, but I will explore this question in the hope of finding an answer to it when I focus on the story during my analysis. I have included the two stories with male protagonists, because comparing male and female characters will reveal more about the gendered aspects of the garden as a space. In other words, these stories will better reveal how the gender of the protagonists affects their relationship with the garden and the way they experiences it as a space. I will also include some short stories not mentioned here into my study at points where I feel they can contribute something interesting or more enlightening to my analysis.

I am also conscious of the colonial discourse at the beginning of the 20th century, and will consider the colonial aspects of the garden to some extent in my analysis. Katherine Mansfield was a New Zealander living in Europe, and her background affected her writing. The colonial aspects of Mansfield's stories have been discussed in

more detail, for example, by such critics as Vincent Sullivan (1997), Elleke Boehmer (1995), and Angela Smith (2005). Although it would be interesting to do an extensive comparison between the short stories set in New Zealand and the ones set in England or mainland Europe, this is not possible in the context of this thesis. In the European stories the lush garden imagery of the New Zealand stories is replaced by smaller gardens (mostly only briefly mentioned), flowers in vases or artificial flowers in the button hole of a character. The European stories ("Bliss", "The Man Without a Temperament" and "The Escape") that I have chosen to analyse are almost the only short stories to break this pattern.

After familiarizing myself with criticism written on Katherine Mansfield and her short stories, I have come to realise that a great deal of it focuses on the contents of her letters and journals, as well as the autobiographical aspects of her stories. A great many biographies have been written on Katherine Mansfield: these include, for example, Sylvia Berkman (1965), Antony Alpers (1980), Claire Tomalin (1988) and Gillian Boddy (1988). Many critics have focused on determining how Mansfield's relationship with her husband, or her brother's death affected her writing. I will, however, refrain myself from this type of analysis, because I feel that the short stories have been analysed more than enough from a biographical perspective, and it is more fascinating to study them as a product of their time without much reference to the life of their writer. And because, like feminist critic Kate Fullbrook, I feel that taking the biographical perspective is a too conventional strategy for investigating women writers and "it allows them to be neutralised – kept small, personal, confined to private life which has traditionally been the only life any 'safe' woman maybe be presumed to

lead."[3] Critics who I will be relying on include Kate Fullbrook, Sydney Janet Kaplan, and Angela Smith, for instance.

The garden symbolism in Katherine Mansfield's short stories has been analysed to some extent, but the spatiality of the garden has not been analysed at all. The only extensive analysis written on the plant and garden symbolism, I am aware of, is Marja-Liisa Jenu's pro gradu thesis *Katherine Mansfieldin novellien puutarha-, puu, ja kukkasymboliikkaa* (Tampere University, 1976), which focuses on interpreting the garden symbolism of the short stories through Jungian archetype symbols. In my opinion, the analysis in this thesis is rather superficial and touches the symbolism only from the surface. Similarly, Shelley Saguaro (2006) has analysed Katherine Mansfield's gardens in a short chapter of her recently published book *Garden Plots: The Politics and Poetics of Gardens*, but here too the analysis remains shallow. There are also a few articles on the nature symbolism of Katherine Mansfield: Eithne Henson's "'The bright green streaks': Gender and the Natural World in Katherine Mansfield's Fiction" and Francine Tolron's "Fauna and Flora in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories". In addition, many critics, like Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, Angela Smith and Kate Fullbrook, have discussed Mansfield's plant and garden symbolism in their books, articles or essays. The pear tree symbolism of "Bliss" and the symbolism of the aloe in "Prelude" have, however, been quite widely debated from different perspectives. Judith S. Neaman, for example, has taken the biblical approach to the pear tree, while Walter E. Anderson analyses it from the perspective of lesbian love. I myself will take a third approach, that of bisexuality. In all, the point of view I have chosen appears to be untouched, so I hope to contribute something new and interesting with my thesis to the discussion on Katherine Mansfield's short stories.

[3] Fullbrook, Kate. *Katherine Mansfield* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986) 5.

The theoretical framework of my thesis is located within the field of feminist criticism, which has the same objective as all feminist studies do: namely to expose the mechanisms upon which patriarchal society is based and by which it is sustained, its ultimate goal being the transformation of social relations. Hence, the objective of feminist criticism is basically 'political'. As Pam Morris writes, this transformational activity is advocated by feminists because of their belief that

> gender difference is the foundation of a structural inequality between women and men, by which women suffer systematical social injustice, and that the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the cultural construction of gender differences.[4]

There is, however, no single definition of feminism, rather there are different feminisms that all focus around the above-presented point. These feminisms touch upon many disciplines and are interdisciplinary in their approach. As it is also typical for feminists to borrow the conceptual and methodological tools that meet their needs from other disciplines, I will unite the ideas of feminist criticism with different theories on space to my analysis of Katherine Mansfield's short stories. In addition to the theories, I will also draw on the writings of critics who have written on Katherine Mansfield as well as on different writings on gardens to support my analysis.

My thesis consists of three sections: in the first section I will introduce my cultural and theoretical background; in the second part I will present my analysis of the short stories; in the third section I will sum up my findings and raise some questions for further research.

[4] Morris, Pam. *Feminism and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) 1.

2. Cultural and Theoretical Background

In this chapter I will discuss the cultural and theoretical background of my thesis. As every piece of writing is a product of it's time, I feel, it is important to shed some light on the cultural and social situation in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century – on the time when Katherine Mansfield lived and wrote her short stories – in order to establish a context for the short stories I am analysing. Therefore, I will in the first subchapter examine, modernism, the development of which (particularly that of the modernist short story) was greatly influenced by Katherine Mansfield. I will define the concepts modernism and modernity – in order to identify how the two terms are used in the context of this thesis – and discuss the relationship between these concepts and gender.

Space and spatiality have been on the feminist agenda since its first wave (Mary Wollstonecraft and Virginia Woolf), but the attention given to them did not really increase until two decades ago. In the first subchapter I will present the spatial theories which I will be applying to the analysis of the short stories. First I will look at the relationship space has with time; then I will focus on Michel de Certeau's definition of space in order to cross the divide between material and textual space; and finally as I will focus on the public/ private division, as women's movement in space at the beginning of the 20th century was very much influenced by it.

In the second subchapter I will discuss the series of dichotomies around which modern Western philosophy and literary thought have been constructed. As the garden is a space situated somewhere between nature and culture, the focus will be on this dichotomy. In this context I will also present social anthropologist Edwin Ardener's theory on the "wild zone".

2.1 On Modernism, Modernity and Gender

Defining the terms modernism and modernity is not a straightforward task – even today theorists are attempting to solve this problem – as the meaning of these two terms varies greatly according to the context in which they are applied. Modernism and modernity have contrasting features in various academic disciplines and cover different periods of time according to individual critics, even within the same discipline. Because Katherine Mansfield was a female writer and her chosen form of expression was the short story, I discuss here what modernism and modernity mean in the context of (English) literature, and particularly women's fiction within this discipline. Furthermore, my focus in defining modernity and modernism is not on them as specific periods[5], but rather on the ideas and attitudes they are seen to encompass. The relationship between modernism and modernity has also often been ignored in the definition process, but I feel that it is important to consider modernism and modernity in relation to one another, because one term would not really exist without the other. In the words of Janet Wolff, modernism is a mode of expression – "a particular set of practices and ideologies of representation" – that came into existence in the wake of "a specific historical experience" called modernity.[6] In other words, modernism was an artistic reaction to modernity, or as Peter Childs expresses it, "a way of living and of experiencing life which has arisen with the changes wrought by industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation; its characteristics are disintegration and reformation, fragmentation and rapid change, ephemerality and insecurity." According to Childs, modernity also "involves certain new understandings

[5] The timeframe associated with modernity as well as modernism varies to a great extent. Some critics are of the opinion that modernity reaches from the Renaissance to the present day, others that it originated somewhere in between these two dates; the period linked with Modernism varies also, but the most common period appears to be from 1890 to 1930. See, for example, Childs, Peter. *Modernism.* (London: Routledge, 2000) and *The Gender of Modernism*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

[6] Wolff, Janet. *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) 57.

of time and space: speed, mobility, communication, travel, dynamism, chaos and cultural revolution."[7]

Changes in gender relations at the turn of the century were also a significant element in the birth of modernism, as the period from 1890 to 1930, within which modernism surfaced, was also the time of the first wave of feminism and the woman suffrage movement. Feminists were "committed to overthrowing the Victorian ideal of closeted, domesticated, desexualised, disenfranchised femininity" and "its attendant cultural ideal of high moral insipidity".[8] The Victorian "Angel in the House"[9] was to be replaced by the New Woman[10]. The radical effects of the social-cultural reformations feminism campaigned for, generated in modernist writing an interest in gender, formally as well as thematically. A good deal of this fascination conveyed a male modernist dread of women's new-found strength, and culminated in the synthesis of masculinism and misogyny that are often seen as the defining characteristics of the modernist oeuvre by men. Generally this masculinist misogyny, nevertheless, was complemented by its logical counterpart: a preoccupation and profound connection with the empowered feminine. This resulted in an irresolvable contradiction felt both by female and male modernists toward powerful femininity, by which various distinguishing formal innovations were created. The male modernist writers dreaded the shattering power of the radical cultural change they craved – democratic change many times represented

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[7] Childs, 14-15.
[8] DeKoven, Marianne. "Modernism and Gender." In *Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Michael Levenson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 177.
[9] The title of a poem by Coventry Patmore, but used more generally to refer to the Victorian image of ideal woman, "who was expected to be devoted and submissive to her husband. The Angel was passive, and powerless, meek, charming, graceful, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious, and above all--pure." Quote taken from: http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/novel_19c/thackeray/angel.html.
[10] The "New Woman" was "independent, educated, (relatively) sexually liberated, more oriented toward productive life in the public sphere than toward reproductive life in the home." Quote from DeKoven, 174.

itself in different metaphors of empowered femininity – and the female writers usually were afraid of the penalty for aspiring that change.[11]

The preoccupation with the empowered feminine is also reflected in Katherine Mansfield's writing, and her characters are attempting to cope with an unstable and fluctuating version of personality. Even though Mansfield's writing is not openly feminist, one can discover a critique of women's historical situation, especially an anxiety about the changing views of women's sexuality. In this thesis the contradictions between the changing ideas about femininity are discussed in connection with the garden space.

In spite of the dominating fixation on femininity in modernist writing both men and women, women writers, with the exception of Virginia Woolf (and even her writing was perceived of lesser value than that of the male modernists), were excluded from the white masculine Anglo-American high modernist canon (Conrad, Eliot, Faulkner, James, Joyce, Lawrence, Pound, Yeats), before second-wave feminist criticism's re-examination. According to Janet Wolff, the rejection of women from the modernist canon has been associated by some critics with their social segregation from important experiences (World War I and city life, for instance) in the modern society, which have been perceived as fundamental contributors to modernist writing. Wolff continues that whether or not this is true, "the point is that what women write... is clearly related to their experiences", and their experience of modernity was very different from that of men, but "just as much an expression of and response to the 'modern' experience as the officially acclaimed work of male modernists."[12]

Modernist writing is above all known for its complexity, experimentation and

[11] DeKoven, 174-175.
[12] Wolff, 3.

formalism, as well as its revolt against realism and romanticism. According to Marianne DeKoven[13], it is possible to overturn the patrilineality of modernism and determine that women (Woolf, Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson) were as instrumental to its development, by relying on the stylistic conventions which are considered the most important characteristics of Modernism, and which are used instinctively to categorize literary texts as modernist. In *Modernism* Peter Childs lists some of these features: "interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution…, radical aesthetics, technical experimentation, spatial or rhythmic rather than chronological form, self-conscious reflexiveness, scepticism towards the idea of a centred human subject, and a sustained inquiry into the uncertainty of reality."[14]

Even though many of the above-mentioned features can be found in Katherine Mansfield's writing, she has been excluded from, or only briefly mentioned in writings on Modernism. As Clare Hanson puts it, "Katherine Mansfield is most commonly viewed as a minor modernist writer, dealing in delicate half-tones with the domestic aspects of life."[15] Mansfield's exclusion from the canon has only not been seen to have resulted from her being a woman writer, but from her choice of short story as her preferred medium and from her doubly marginal position as a colonial woman. She, like Dominican novelist Jean Rhys, had difficulties in conforming to the literary scene and determining when to add native content and features into her writing, as their colonialness rendered them inferior to the metropolitan Britons.

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[13] DeKoven, 175.
[14] Childs, 3, 18.
[15] Hanson, Clare. "Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923)". In *The Gender of Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 298.

2.2 Feminist Theories on Space

After familiarising myself with different books and articles about space, I have come to realise that what the authors of these works mean by the term 'space', is seldom defined with precision. The authors seem to assume that the meaning of the term 'space' is unambiguous, even though it can have multiple meanings and connotations depending on the context. I, however, feel that it is necessary to define the term 'space' to avoid misunderstandings, and will, therefore, in this chapter present how 'space' is defined within the context of my thesis.

Even though the main focus of this thesis is to investigate the garden in Katherine Mansfield's short stories in spatial terms, it is impossible to ignore the connection space has with time. Traditionally time has been privileged over space, because time has been defined as totally opposed to time: time is associated with history, change and movement; space seen as stasis and dead. For example, in literature, which has mainly been considered a temporal art, the narrative aspects are usually perceived more important than description and the spatiality of the text. Joseph Frank, nevertheless, argued as early as 1945 that modernist "writers ideally intend[ed] the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence." This spatialisation of form implied that for the length of "the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted; attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the immobilized time-area.[16] In Katherine Mansfield's case the privileging of time over space would also seem to be true, as the temporal aspects of Mansfield's short stories have been discussed by several critics[17], but their spatiality has remained fairly

[16] Frank, Joseph. "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" In *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963) 8-9, 15.
[17] See for example Tanya Grennfell-Williams' essay "Katherine Mansfield and Time" and René Godenne's essay "Katherine Mansfield's 'Nouvelle-Instant'". In *Lectures D'une Œuvre: Selected Stories de Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Stephanie Amar-Flood and Sara Thornton. (Paris: Editions du temps, 1997).

unnoticed.

Doreen Massey has suggested an alternative relationship between space and time – one that is more applicable in the context of my thesis than the traditional relationship. In Massey's view, time and space are not opposed terms, but they are rather thought of "in terms of space-time", which actually brings forth a four-dimensional view of space. Massey continues that this line of reasoning surfaced

> out of an earlier insistence on thinking of space, not as some absolute independent dimension, but as constructed out of social relations: that what is at issue is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations 'stretched out'. The fact, is, however, that social relations are never still; they are inherently dynamic.[18]

To put it shortly, space is made of social relations extended over time.

To take this train of thought further, and connect space to literature, I introduce French philosopher Michel de Certeau's definition of space. According to de Certeau:

> In short, *space is a practiced place.* Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs.[19]

Therefore the act of reading generates textual space, which is the result of the interaction between a described setting and imagination. By reading the stories of Katherine Mansfield I enter a textual space that reproduces both material space in the form of the location and mental female space in the form of the thoughts of the protagonists.

As it can be seen from de Certeau's definition of space, the concepts of space and place are closely connected. Place is usually associated with the idea of stability and passivity, and feminists have associated it with woman and her place in the home. The

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[18] Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) 2.
[19] Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 117.

defining of space and place is complicated by the fact that space is perceived as feminine and time as masculine in Western thought. As Kerstin Shands has observed:

> Woman as both place and space, thus carrying a contradiction within herself: at the same time she represents both the nurturing and maternal *and* frightening expanses of the Other, the unknown and knowable. Woman appears to be a site where place becomes space and vice versa. Place and space both appear to be feminized, and the two concepts are sometimes confusingly conflated since they do merge into or require each other.[20]

The concepts of space and place are also closely intertwined with the construction of gender and gender relations. Gender relations vary over space and time, which means that what it entails to be masculine or feminine in one place or time, is not the same as in another place and time. In other words, gender relations today are different from those of the past, and they also vary between cultures. This is, however, not the only way in which space and place are significant to the construction of gender relations and to endeavours to change them. Doreen Massey points out that

> Spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood. The limitation of women's mobility, in terms of both identity and space, has been in some cultural contexts a crucial means of subordination. Moreover the two things the limitation on mobility in space, the attempted consignment/confinement to particular places on the one hand, and the limitation on identity on the other – have been crucially related. [21]

This dual control of spatiality and identity has been in the West associated with the culturally specific distinction between public and private. As space is discussed in the context of this thesis on the spatial scale of the home (the events of most of the stories I analyse take place within the private sphere of home), I will apply the division between the public and private as one of the tools in my analysis. This division between the public and the private sphere corresponding to male-dominated world of work and politics and female domestic spaces resulted from separation of the workplace and the

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[20] Shands, Kerstin W. *Embracing Space: Spatial Metaphors in Feminist Discourse*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999) 40.

home in Western industrial societies in the nineteenth century. With this allotment the movement of women in space became more restricted than that of men. This development was joined by the cult of domesticity that emphasized the sanctity of family life. Woman's place was in the private sphere of home, that has been traditionally seen to consist of the house and the garden, and she had a moral duty as a mother and a wife. She was to be the Angel in the House, and was given strict instructions on how to behave within the spheres.

It was also assumed that sexuality should be confined to private spaces, and a woman, who ventured outside the private sphere of home in the city without a chaperone risked her reputation and was often mistaken for a prostitute.[22] As social spaces were monitored by men, women were vulnerable to a compromising male gaze in public, and women were thus unable to inhabit public space on their own without either harm to their bodies or reputation. Women's physical mobility, nevertheless, began to change at the turn of the twentieth century, and they were allowed more access to the public sphere. Women also began to fight for their right to have more "room of their own" as Virginia Woolf expressed it.

It is also important to pay attention to the fact that class makes a difference in how men and women occupy public and private space; the public/private dichotomy also distinguished the middle class from the working class: middle and upper class women stayed at home and ran the household, while working class women worked long hours in factories and other public places outside the home out of necessity. In other words, the working class women were not as confined into the private sphere in the same way the middle class women, but they, too, were limited to certain kinds of employment – servicing rather than productive and were denied access to the world of business, and

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[21] Massey, 179.
[22] Mueller, Roswitha. "The City and Its Other" *Discourse* 24.2 (2002) 32.

were still expected to take care of the household and the children. In the short stories I am analysing all the protagonists are white middle class women or men (there are also working class people in the stories, but they do not play primary roles), which is why the public/private dichotomy is more than applicable as a tool for my analysis.

The distinction between public and private space is sometimes ambiguous – not all spaces are clearly just public or private, rather they can be something in between the two opposites depending on the context. For example, for women the concept of public has been problematic because in houses with multiple rooms the degree of privacy varied from room to room: gardens and dining rooms were contrasted with the more private bathrooms and bedrooms. Furthermore, even though the private house is surmised to be woman's sphere, the notions of the 'male head of household' of 'a man's home as his castle' maintained men's privileged status within it: men could dominate their families and claim their right to sexual intercourse in the private home. For women obtaining personal privacy, even in the bedroom, was difficult. The presence of servants also made the home feel more public.

The confinement of women into the private sphere denied them access to knowledge men utilized to generate privilege and power, and reinforced their lower status. [23] Thus women were forced to dispute the male hegemony over spaces, which reinforce their segregation and its concomitant lack of status to achieve access to knowledge. The restrictions placed on middle-class women during the Victorian era and beyond, provoked different reactions from women. Some reactions were more open, such as the efforts to gain the vote or campaigns to guarantee access to health care and education, but also individual women attempted to realize their potential in more far-reaching roles than those the society had prescribed to them. All the afore-mentioned

[23] Spain, Daphne. *Gendered Spaces*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1992) 3.

struggles were of assistance in the process of re-defining the spaces that women could inhabit.

2.3 The Culture/Nature Dichotomy

Women have been affected by a long-lasting tradition of what is commonly known as 'biological determinism', which is "the belief that a woman's 'nature' is an inevitable consequence of her reproductive role."[24] According to this belief, it is not possible to change that which is essential or natural in the same way as it is possible to change the social characteristics. Thus, if women were, in fact, made more compliant and less daring by biology, little could be done to change the situation. This line of essentialistic reasoning has been employed throughout history and across societies for the justification of women's subordination.

The assumption of biological determinism was first challenged by the French existentialist and feminist, Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex* in 1949:

> One is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, physiological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature…which is described as feminine.[25]

In other words, de Beauvoir was the first to recognise that 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are socially constructed (patterns of behaviour and sexuality are enforced by cultural and social norms), and being female does not necessarily equal femininity. Her argumentation was taken further by the introduction of the term 'gender', which is a

[24] Morris, Pam. *Literature and Feminism*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) 2.
[25] Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley (London: Pan Books, 1988/1949) 295.

distinct term from sex, to refer to the ways in which women and men are 'made'. Gender is a category constructed through cultural and social systems, and unlike sex, it is not a biological fact determined at conception. It is more fluid and flexible and multiple in its options than the unchanging biological dichotomy of male and female. In history, across cultures, there are variations in what it means to be masculine, or feminine. As it was already established earlier in this thesis, at the beginning of the twentieth century these identities were being questioned, and in Katherine Mansfield's writing there is no fixed notion of masculinity or femininity because of this.

The man/woman, male/female and masculine/feminine are the oppositions underlying a series of dichotomies around which modern Western philosophy and literary thought have been constructed. The series includes such dichotomies as culture/nature, reason/passion, mind/body, and the dichotomies public/private, time/space discussed in the previous chapter can be added to the list, too. These dualisms are endowed with power, as they are not two sides of autonomous terms, but rather the first term A has a positive status and exists independent of the other; the other term B is negatively defined, and its meaning can only be something A is not.[26] In other words, the masculine side of the pair is always perceived as the positive one and the feminine the negative.

As the garden is a space situated somewhere in between nature and culture (it is both nature and culture at the same time) – it is cultivated and controlled nature that has been constructed by man for his pleasure and satisfaction – I will here focus on the culture/nature opposition, in which culture is the masculine side and nature the feminine. Women have been strongly associated with nature because they are said to be more biological, corporeal and natural than men. Even if woman appears outwardly

civilised, she has been said to conceal an essentially wild inner nature. Furthermore, woman is symbolic of the conflict between nature and culture tempting men with her beauty, but dangerous and therefore in need of conquest. Male writers have mythified women's frightening relationship with nature, and women writers have attempted to break this pattern.

The culture/nature dichotomy is not only at work on the level of garden space in the short stories of Katherine Mansfield, but also on the level of the countries in which the events of the short stories are set – New Zealand and England. In this set of two countries the colonized New Zealand, with its wild and lush landscape, bush and countryside, represents nature and the colonizer England, with its cities and their hectic streets and lifestyle, represents culture. Englishness has been "forced" on New Zealand, and New Zealand's own features have been attempted to suffocate:

> In the far corners of the Empire, the New Brightons and New Londons, the British introduced their language, methods of town planning, upholstery, cuisine, ways of dress, which were believed, as a matter of course, to be superior to other cultural forms. Churches and esplanades were constructed in imitation of parish churches and beach fronts back home.[27]

In a sense the virginal soil of New Zealand was colonised and turned into a miniature England. This male conquest of land can be compared to the subordination of women, and women have been often seen to symbolise a foreign, unknown territory to me conquered.

The existence of the dichotomies has been challenged by feminists in different ways. French feminists, such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, have relied on Derridian deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and focused on

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[26] See, for example, Moi, Toril. "Feminist, Female, Feminine" In *The Feminist Reader* Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism. Eds. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore. (New York: Blackwell, 1993.) 117-132.
[27] Boehmer, 62.

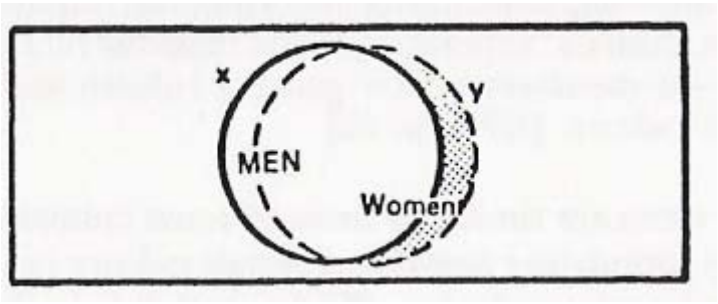
women's language which would force the surfacing of a new polarity. I, however, take a different path in my analysis of Katherine Mansfield's short stories and rely on a theory that is based on a model of women's culture. This kind of theory will offer a more comprehensive and productive method of discussing women and the garden than theories based on biology, linguistics or psychoanalysis. For, as also Elaine Showalter points out, a theory of culture embodies ideas about woman's body, language, and psyche but understands them in association with the social contexts in which they transpire.[28] In other words, a theory of culture is a combination of all the above mentioned fields of study. Showalter continues that women's ways of conceptualising their bodies and their sexual and reproductive functions are elaborately related to their cultural environments; the female psyche can be explored as a creation of cultural forces; and language follows when the social aspects and determinants of language use, the moulding of linguistic performance, are considered. A cultural theory also recognizes that there are differences of great import between women, such as race, class, nationality and history, which are as important as gender. And last but not least, the cultural theory I have chosen to apply to my analysis has a spatial aspect.

A fascinating analysis of women's culture has been conducted by two social anthropologists Edwin and Shirley Ardener in the 1970s, who have, as Elaine Showalter suggests, "attempted to outline a model of women's culture which is not historically limited and to provide a terminology for its characteristics."[29] This cultural model is discussed in two essays by Edwin Ardener, "Belief and the Problem of Women" (1972) and "The 'Problem' Revisited" (1975), in which he uses anthropological field data to support his hypothesis. According to Ardener, women are not part of the dominant communicative structure of society; they are rather perceived as a "muted" group,

[28] Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness". *Critical Inquiry*, 8:2, Writing and Sexual Difference (Winter, 1981) 197.

which has been "rendered inarticulate by the [dominant] male structure."[30] In other words, the muted structures 'exist', but they cannot be 'realised' in the language of the dominant structure, which is a separate cultural and political space that women inhabit in the societies. The term "muted" implies "problems both of language and power."[31] Language is often defined as a male preserve that excludes women to the point that they are unable to speak even of their own condition.

Ardener uses a visual model of the *wild zone* and the relationship between the *muted* and the dominant group consists of two intersecting circles. The circle X represents the dominant group i.e. the male-defined society, while the circle Y represents the *muted* group i.e. the female-defined society. The crescent of the circle Y, which is outside the boundaries of the dominant circle, is the wild zone. The corresponding crescent of the circle X is the parallel male zone. Women are denied access to this zone about which they do, however, receive information.



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Another way of expressing this would be to say that men and women share a large space of existence that is similar to both sexes, but each sex also claims a small proportion of their lives which is unique to that sex. Women's section, i.e. the wild zone, includes features of women's culture which are not approved as a part of the dominant culture and are unique to women. The wild zone is also unutterable through

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[29] Showalter, Elaine, 199.
[30] Ardener, Edwin. "The 'Problem' Revisited." In *Perceiving Women*. Ed. Shirley Ardener. (London: Malaby, 1975) 19-27. 21. Here it is important to notice that there are other muted groups also, not only women.
[31] Showalter, 200.

language, which is why men contradict its importance, and why it remains unfamiliar to them. If a woman attempts to speak from the wild zone, she must follow the structures of the prevailing discourse.

Elaine Showalter adapted the concept of the wild zone into feminist literary theory in the 1980s, as she felt that this cultural theory had various implications for and associations to it, as "the concepts of perception, silence and silencing are so central to discussions of women's participation in literary culture." [33] Showalter's treatment of the wild zone theory remains rather abstract. Nevertheless, the wild zone theory has been applied to the literary analysis of space by at least Cordelia Chávez Candelaria and John F. Kanthak. Candelaria has utilized the wild zone theory to the work of Chicana writers, and has turned the concept from merely conceptual construct into three-dimensional space as she applies it to the work of contemporary women writers, citing textual examples of these wild zones rooted in the physical spaces that fostered them (a neighbourhood or a house, for example).[34] John F. Kanthak takes the wild zone theory a step further in his article "Feminisms in Motion: Pushing the "Wild Zone" Thesis into the Fourth Dimension", in which he analyses Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*, Katherine Mansfield's "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, by adding a fourth dimension – that of time – to it. Kanthak observes the wild zone "forming, functioning, and in some cases eroding or dissipating"[35] over time in a physical space in the texts he analyses. Kanthak feels that analysing the wild zone over time is more valuable "to the study of those social orders which either cultivate or undermine wild zones than is the contemplation of works in which the existence of wild

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[32] Ardener, 23.
[33] Showalter, Elaine, 199.
[34] Candelaria, Cordelia Chavez. "The 'Wild Zone' Thesis as Gloss in Chicana Literary Study." In Feminisms. Eds. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1997.
[35] Kanthak, John F. "Feminisms in Motion: Pushing the "Wild Zone" Thesis into the Fourth Dimension", *Literature Interpretation Theory*, 14, (2003) 150.

zones is static."[36] I agree with Kanthak in this, because as it was stated in the previous chapter space should always be interpreted in connection with time. This is why I will also add the dimension of time to some extent to my analysis of the wild zone in relation to the garden, and try to establish how it operates.

As Sydney Janet Kaplan has pointed out, the wild zone model is particularly enlightening "when applied to the condition of middle-class women in the twentieth century".[37] It is, thus, more than applicable to the short stories of Katherine Mansfield as the protagonists are middle-class women and men whose world is divided into the realms of public and private. Entering into the wild zone is for the characters a mixture of the imaginative, the physical and personal development.

[36] Ibid, 150.
[37] Kaplan, 1991, 9.

3. The Garden as Woman's Space

This analysis chapter is divided into three subchapters, each of which concentrates on a different aspect of the garden as woman's space. In the first subchapter the garden is discussed in connection to the culture/nature dichotomy and other dichotomies revolving around it; in the second subchapter the garden and women's relationship with it is considered in connection with the public and private divide; and the third subchapter focuses on women's relationship with the garden in general.

3.1 Wild Nature, Nature Constructed and Cultural City

In the short stories of Katherine Mansfield the nature/culture binary that plays an important role in the context of the garden functions at the level of four different binaries: the man/woman, the England/New Zealand, the city/countryside and the cultivated nature/wild nature. The public/private binary is also related to these binaries, and will be discussed in the next subchapter. All the gardens in the short stories are a multifaceted combination of the binaries mentioned above. As it was established in the previous chapter, the man/woman or masculine/feminine binary is the opposition underlying all the other binaries. As some of the stories are set in England and other is New Zealand the England/New Zealand binary operates both on the level of comparing gardens in different stories to each other, as well as on the level of a garden in a particular story, especially the stories set in New Zealand. The city/countryside binary is to some extent at work between the stories set in New Zealand and the ones set in Europe. The cultivated nature/ wild nature binary is at work mainly in the New Zealand stories, but in "Escape" and "The Man without a Temperament" there is also nature

outside the garden. This nature seems, however, more domesticated than the nature outside the garden gates in the New Zealand stories.

The New Zealand/ England binary evolves closely around the nature cultivated versus wild nature pair in the New Zealand stories. As gardens in a colonial country are places where land was settled, boundaries declared, and ownership claimed, the gardens of Katherine Mansfield reveal a great deal about the relationship between the colonising England and the colonised New Zealand. The colonisers imported, among other things, the flora and the fauna of Great Britain and other colonised countries into New Zealand in order to obscure or, when possible to substitute "its disquietingly alien features."[38] This imperial activity of elimination is also present in the New Zealand stories of Katherine Mansfield in different ways.

The importance of European culture is reflected in the New Zealand stories through the lack of representations of cultural 'others' i.e. the Maori, with the exception of "In the Botanical Gardens" and "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (1910). The Maori are represented in two very different ways in these two short stories: in "In the Botanical Gardens" they are characterized as savages, while in "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" this view is questioned. Similarly, when reworking *The Aloe (1915-1916)*[39] into "Prelude" Mansfield left most of the colonial references out. An analogous dismissal of colonial references can be seen in "In the Botanical Gardens", "Prelude", "At the Bay" and "The Garden Party". The vegetation is almost the only feature in these stories which reveals their setting as New Zealand. According to Elleke Boehmer, this

[38] Collingwood-Whittick, Sheila. "The Little Colonial". In *Lectures D'Une Œuvre: Selected Stories de Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Stephanie Amar-Flood and Sara Thornton. (Paris: Editions du Temps, 1997) 128.

[39] *The Aloe* is a long short story draft that Mansfield a few years later reworked into "Prelude".

kind of erasure, i.e. emitting "either wholly or in part, the signs of other lives which had unfolded in that particular space", was typical for colonialists. [40]

In "In the Botanical Gardens" and "Prelude" the garden is divided into two parts, the clearly English well-groomed section and the more lush native section. The well-tended part of the gardens can be seen to represent culture, colonizing England, and the patriarchal masculine world; the lush, wilder side can be interpreted as nature, colonised New Zealand with its natives and the feminine side of the garden. It is, nevertheless, worth noting that the more natural part in both gardens is most likely cultivated and tended to some extent instead of letting it entirely run wild. In other words, the difference between the two sections of the garden is more fluid than that which exists between the garden and wild nature outside its gates.

In "Prelude" the garden of the Burnell family's new house is seen through the eyes of young Kezia, and, in the words of Elleke Boehmer, the reader is introduced to "a child's atmospheric perceptions of space."[41] In the well-groomed part of the garden grow all kinds of flowers, most of which Kezia is able to recognise. The vegetation is, however, more exuberant than it would be in a typical English garden, because the New Zealand climate is warmer than that in England:

> …on the other side of the drive there was a high box border and the paths had box edges and all of them led into a deeper and deeper tangle of flowers. The camellias were in bloom, white and crimson and pink and white striped with flashing leaves. You could not see a leaf on the syringa bushes for the white clusters. The roses were in flower – gentlemen's buttonhole roses, little white ones, but far too full of insects to hold under anyone's nose, pink monthly roses with a ring of fallen petals round the bushes, cabbage roses on thick stalks, moss roses, always in bud, pink smooth beauties opening curl on curl, red ones so dark they seemed to turn black as they fell, and a certain exquisite cream kind with slender red stem and bright scarlet leaves. There were clumps of fairy bells, and all kinds of geraniums, and there were little trees of verbena and bluish lavender bushes and a bed of pelargoniums with velvet eyes and leaves like moths' wings. There was a bed of nothing but mignonette and another of nothing but pansies – borders of double and single daisies and all kinds of little tufty plants she had never seen before.

[40] Boehmer, 14.
[41] Ibid, 134.

(NZS, 117)[42]

The roses that grow in abundance as well as the mignonette and pansy beddings with borders in the quote above are even today considered as typical features of an English garden. Some of the flowers mentioned in the citation are of European (fairy bells, pansies and daisies), other of Asian or African descent (camellias and pelargoniums). As, for example, Rebecca Preston points out, in the nineteenth century introducing plants from far-off lands "on to the British soil, and more precisely British domestic soil, was the ultimate horticultural expression of patriotic endeavour."[43] She continues that in the first part of the century exotics were placed in isolated collections or as single specimen, and in the latter part of the century they were naturalized or domesticated with the indigenous flora of Britain. In other words, even though many of the flowers mentioned above are originally from another part of the world they had already been assimilated into the English garden by the beginning of the twentieth century when Katherine Mansfield wrote her stories.

The more natural part of the garden in "Prelude" is frightening to the little Kezia, and she feels that "it is no garden at all":

> …so she had walked away back through the orchard, up the grassy slope, along the path by the lace bark tree and so into the spread tangled garden. She did not believe that she would ever not get lost in the garden. Twice she had found her way back to the big iron gates they had driven through the night before, and then had turned to walk up the drive that led to the house, but there were so many little paths on either side. One side they all led into a tangle of tall dark trees and strange bushes with flat velvet leaves and feathery cream flowers that buzzed with flies when you shook them – this was the frightening side, and no garden at all. The little paths here were wet and clayey with tree roots spanned across them like the marks of big fowls' feet. (NZS, 116)

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[42] Mansfield, Katherine. *New Zealand Stories*. Ed. Vincent O'Sullivan. (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997). Hereafter cited as NZS.
[43] Preston, Rebecca. "'The Scenery of the Torrid Zone': Imagined Travels and the Culture of Exotics in Nineteenth-Century British Gardens". In *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*. Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) 194, 205.

This part of the garden is full of lushness and vegetation native to New Zealand, that Kezia is not, apart from the lace bark tree, able to recognise. The ability to name things is a means by which it is possible to achieve control of one's surroundings. As Eithne Henson points out, the Burnell garden is a reflection of the perplexing adult world with its many paths that offer the little girl too many choices. She continues that Kezia's imagination transforms the garden into the adult world she feels compelled to play at: "She sat down on one of the box borders. By pressing hard at first it made a nice seat" (NZS, 117).[44]

Similarly, in "In the Botanical Gardens" that describes the botanical gardens in Wellington, New Zealand, the garden is divided into the more cultivated and the more natural part, and the gardens are described by the narrator as "such a subtle combination of the artificial and the natural" (NZS, 18). The difference between the botanical gardens and the Burnell garden is that the first is a public garden where anyone can admire the plants and the second is a private one that can be entered only with the permission of the Burnell family. The narrator of "In the Botanical Gardens" is in the third person, and it is not immediately obvious whether the person is male or female. By looking more closely at the vocabulary used to describe the botanical gardens, it would, however, seem that the narrator is a woman, as some of the adjectives and expressions are more feminine than masculine: "the spring flowers are almost too beautiful" and "the kisses of children" (NZS,18-19).

The well-tended part of the botanical gardens is described as rather "artificial" with its carpet beddings, "smooth, swept paths", and visitors "lacking in individuality" looking at the plants with name cards (NZS, 18), while the more natural part with its

[44] Henson, Eithne. "'The bright green streaks': Gender and the Natural World in Katherine Mansfield's Fiction" In *Lectures D'une Œuvre: Selected Stories de Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Stephanie Amar-Flood and Sara Thornton. (Paris: Editions du temps, 1997) 101-102.

"green moss" and "little stream" is native in appearance. Here "the Western scientific will to know and name and own, to categorize, judge for beauty and size and colour"[45] is contrasted, as also Angela Smith[46] has observed, with the irony that the alien and wilder part of the garden appears more familiar to the narrator than the well-kept garden with its recognizable plants:

> And, suddenly, it disappears – all the pretty, carefully tended surface of the gravel and sward and blossom, and there is bush, silent and splendid. On the green moss, on the brown earth, a wide splashing of yellow sunlight. And everywhere that strange indefinable scent. As I breathe it, it seems to absorb, to become part of me – and I am old with age of the centuries, strong with the strength of savagery. (NZS, 19)

In "In the Botanical Gardens" the line between the two parts of the garden appears to be quite strict, while in "Prelude" the naturalness of one part seems to invade the other part to some extent. There are, however, at least cabbage trees, which are native to New Zealand growing in the more cultivated part of the botanical gardens. In "Prelude" the atmosphere of the more cultivated English part is lush and not as controlled as in "In the Botanical Gardens". The aloe growing in the centre of the driveway in "Prelude" is, in a sense, a middle ground between the two parts of the garden;

> But on her way back to the house [Kezia] came to that island that lay in the middle of the drive, dividing the drive into two arms that met in front of the house. The island was made of grass banked up high. Nothing grew on top except one huge plant with thick, grey-green, thorny leaves, and out of the middle there sprang up a tall stout stem. Some of the leaves of the plant were so old that they curled up in the air no longer; they turned back, they were split and broken; some of them lay flat and withered on the ground.(NZS, 118)

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[45] Marcus, Jane. "Registering Objections: Grounding Feminist Alibis" In *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*. Eds. Margaret R. Higonnet and Joan Templeton. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994) 179.

[46] Smith, Angela. "Landscape and the Foreigner Within: Katherine Mansfield and Emily Carr." In *Landscape and Empire 1770-2000*. Ed. Glenn Hooper. Aldershot: Ashgate, cop. 2005. 141-157. 153.

Despite the fact that the aloe is neither native to New Zealand nor Great Britain, for most aloes are of African descent, Elleke Boehmer feels that the plant "with its animal-like qualities contains a strong native energy" and "represents a force that the colonial bourgeoisie cannot fully control."[47] I agree with Boehmer, even if the aloe has been uprooted from its homeland and brought to British soil, as the plant has been placed in between the two sides of the garden it gains some force from each side. The aloe will be analysed to more extent in later chapters.

The abolishment of vegetation native to New Zealand has not been complete in the gardens: In "At the Bay" and "The Garden Party" there grow trees native to New Zealand: a manuka with "dark, close, dry leaves" and "yellow flowers" stands in the garden of the Burnell family (NZS, 189) and there are karakas "with their broad, gleaming leaves and their clusters of yellow fruit" in the garden of the Sheridans (NZS, 243). In "The Garden Party" the setting could be in England instead of New Zealand, if it were not for the karakas, which would not survive in England without being grown in a greenhouse, growing there. It is rather strange that the karakas are in the garden as everything else unworthy, like daisies, has been banished from the garden, and only flowers with "status", such as roses, are allowed to grow there. This might, however, be due to the fact that the English did want exotic plants in their garden, and, thus, the karakas could be there to complete the garden. The karakas are, however, hidden behind the marquee, because the workmen preparing the garden for the party feel that it is the best place for it. Thus the only plants native to New Zealand have been concealed, and the abolishment of everything indigenous in the garden is complete. The young Laura Sheridan objects to this, as she does not like the idea of hiding the beautiful trees, but as it will be later on in this thesis discussed, her worldview is more open and accepting than that of people around her.

When considering the city/countryside dichotomy that is closely connected with the culture/nature dichotomy and the garden through the settings of the short stories, it is worth noting that even though the countryside is commonly recognised as the direct opposite of the city, it is actually wilderness or wild nature, which is at the other end of this spectrum, and the countryside is situated somewhere in the middle. [48] Both the city and the countryside are man-made, while the wilderness is natural, which is why it is here left out of the equation. For it is the man-made environments of the city and the countryside where the gardens are situated and that the women inhabit in Katherine Mansfield's short stories.

The settings of all the stories are quite different from each other: "Bliss" is set in London; "The Garden Party" and "In the Botanical Gardens" are set in a town in New Zealand; the events of "Prelude" and "At the Bay" take place in the New Zealand countryside; and "The Escape" and "The Man Without a Temperament" are set in the Mediterranean countryside. The setting appears to effect women's ability to move in space; the women in the city have more possibilities for physical and social mobility, including new professional opportunities, while the women living in the New Zealand countryside in Katherine Mansfield's short stories are confined to live in a smaller space and are more restricted in their movement. Despite this difference, the women feel themselves out of place both in the city and in the countryside, but the displacement they experience seems to be strongest in the stories set in the countryside. In "Prelude" the Burnell family moves from Wellington to live somewhere in the countryside "six and a half miles" (NZS, 110) from town. Even though moving is a metaphor for the possibility of change, as people are momentarily displaced from their set roles and

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[47] Boehmer, 129.
[48] Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perceptions, Attitudes, and Values*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall , cop. 1974) 109.

routines, particularly Beryl feels buried, and longs for the social scene of Wellington (NZS,115) . In such stories as “Bliss”, “Pictures” (1919), and “Revelations” (1920) the events of which take place in the town or city, the women have more opportunities for moving in space outside the private sphere and the garden. The city women may have potentially more space in which to move in the city – go shopping, live on their own or find employment outside the home - yet they find themselves out of place. Even if the city can provide women more space, it can also exclude them. As Susan Merrill Squier has observed, one reason for the feeling of displacement is the fact that “the city is a cultural artefact, and women have always had a problematic relationship to culture itself.”[49] Meaning that that women have been excluded from culture and the public sphere on account of socially and biologically constructed stereotypes that place women closer to nature, and the pastoral countryside and the private sphere of home have been perceived as the places where they should remain. Mansfield’s city women will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.2 in connection with women leaving the garden.

3.2 Public versus Private Sphere

The above-discussed distinction between the public and private sphere and the confinement of women into the private sphere of home is clear in four of the short stories by Katherine Mansfield I am analysing: “Prelude, “At the Bay”, “The Garden Party” and “Bliss”. In these stories the middle class men enter the man’s world of business and politics, when they go to work at the office, while the women stay in the domestic world to run the household and take care of the children. The women give

orders to the servants, arrange flowers, give parties, play a little music, choose hats and so on, thus fulfilling their role as "the Angel in the House". In "Prelude" and "At the Bay" the women also do some of the chores around the house, and have two servants – Alice and Pat – to help them, while in "Bliss" and "The Garden Party" there is a house full of servants – like a cook - to take care of the household, and all the women have to do is supervise them.

As it was established earlier in this thesis, the garden has been traditionally seen as a part of the private sphere of home. This is because the relationship between the house and the garden is very close, and it is the house that in a sense defines the garden. As Katherine Alexander expresses it:

> All domestic gardens have houses; it is what makes them gardens. Specifically, it is, in large part, the *relationship* of the garden to the house that makes the garden what it is.[50]

The relationship woman has with the garden is much closer than the one that exists between woman and house. This is not only because both the garden and the woman have had to justify their existence by being beautiful and fruitful, but also because the house is seen essentially masculine, as it was owned by a man and was bestowed with his protective embrace. Both this and the fact that the house is a more private and a more enclosed space than the garden, makes it also a more oppressive space to women. Because the house is also often equated with home, there arises a conflict between the security of the home and the oppressive nature of the house. Elisenda Masgrau-Peya[51] has observed, that Katherine Mansfield plays with this conflict in "Prelude", where the oppressive nature of the house can be seen, when Kezia arrives at the new house and perceives the house as "a sleeping beast" guarding the garden:

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[49] Squier, Susan Merrill (ed.). "Introduction" In *Women Writers and the City*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 4.
[50] Alexander, 860.
[51] Masgrau-Peya.

> …and behind the island was the house. It was long and low built, with pillared verandah and balcony all the way round. The soft white bulk of it lay stretched upon the green garden like a sleeping beast. 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 a fire flickered.(NZS,101)

Yet Mansfield carries on with the homely imagery of a lit lamp and a flickering fire. The house is not only turned into a home by Mrs Fairfield, but also into "the territory of patriarchy and class privileges", as Masgrau-Peya puts it, as "it is a space where Stanley has power over all the women in his family, and where the women, in turn, have power over their servants".[52] Whereas Mrs Fairfield takes an interest in stability of the house and the family (she, for instance, thinks about making jams in the autumn), her daughters; Linda and Beryl, fantasise of running away.

For Linda and Beryl, as well as other women who feel trapped in the house, the garden offers an escape or elusion of domestic duties. I do not agree with Waters in that the garden provides women in controlled conditions freedom and privacy only when it is separated from the house to which it is attached and to which it owes its subsistence, and that because a domestic garden has no genuine sovereignty, its female ruler can be a queen in name only.[53] Waters' argument is disproved by the fact that in the short stories of Katherine Mansfield all the gardens are attached to houses, and yet they offer the women a place where they can let their thoughts run wild out of the bounds of the patriarchal society and can more freely express themselves. The freedom of expression also enables the wild zone of Edwin Ardener to begin forming itself for the women.

As it already was established in the theory section of this thesis, the house is a private space, although the degree of privacy can vary inside the house according to the room or space one is in. The garden, on the other hand, is more public than the house; it is situated in between the public and the private spheres; it is in fact both public and

[52] Ibid.
[53] Waters, 252.

private at the same time as more people are usually allowed to enter the garden than the house during garden parties, for instance. Furthermore, as Susan K. Martin writes in her paper "Public and Private Space in 1890s Australian Women's Gardens", it is possible for a woman to introduce the public commercial world into the garden by turning her gardening activities into a career by selling the produce she grows. This type of industriousness cannot be found in Katherine Mansfield's short stories, however.

The relationship a garden has with a house is not the only way of defining a garden, for it can also be identified by the wall surrounding it; there is almost always some kind of a fence, hedge or a wall with a gate that can be opened and shut when needed.[54] Enclosing is a way of separating the garden from wild nature as well as keeping unwanted gazes from seeing into the garden, thus, protecting its privacy and keeping unwanted visitors and intruders out of the garden. The "walls" of the gardens are not given much attention in Katherine Mansfield's short stories; in all of the stories there is a gate leading out of the garden, except in "Bliss", where the garden is a walled garden that appears to be accessible through the house only. The fact that the walls, fences or hedges are not mentioned does not mean that they are not there; their existence is confirmed by the mention of garden gate/s, but the reader has no idea what type of wall is in question. "Prelude" is a case in point, for there are "big iron gates" (NZS, 116) leading into the garden.

In her book *The Garden as a Woman's Space in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Literature*, Elizabeth Augspach discusses the relationship of medieval ladies with the garden and its walls, and points out that gardens owned by remarkable women are surrounded by an invisible wall of air, as these women do not need protection, because

[54] See, for example, Työlahti, Nina. "Nainen, noita ja puutarha – Sylvia Townsend Warner ja 1920-luvun uusi nainen. In *Hullu herttuatar ja muita naisia: sukupuolen konstruointia naiskirjallisuudessa*. Eds. Raija Paananen and Nina Työlahti. Acta Universatatis Ouluensis Humaniora Series, B18. Oulu: Oulun yliopisto , 1995.

they possess supernatural powers.[55] In the light of this information it is possible to come to the conclusion that the degree of attention given to the walls of the garden reflects the confinement of women; the more attention is given to the walls the more confined a woman is in space. In other words, the fact that in connection to most of the gardens in Katherine Mansfield's short stories the walls are not mentioned, speaks for the possibility of the protagonists having the possibility to find some freedom in their lives.

Not only are gardens defined by a house or a wall, but they also offer us pieces of information about power relationships between the family members, between groups of people, or about the power of people over nature. As Robert Riley has observed, power can be conveyed very openly or in a less direct way with the help of symbols of status and class.[56] In Katherine Mansfield's short stories power relationships are expressed quite subtly through descriptions of the garden space and different symbols. The expression of power in the garden can be found particularly in "The Garden Party", where the garden of the middle class Sheridan family is juxtaposed against the gardens of the working class families living down the road. The gardens of the two social classes differ greatly from each other, and the juxtaposition is emphasised by the fact that the working class even lives lower than the Sheridans. Everything, including all the impressive roses, is perfect in the Sheridan garden and the garden has almost Eden-like qualities:

> The gardener had been up since dawn, mowing the lawns and sweeping them, until the grass and the dark flat rosettes where the daisy plants had been seemed to shine. As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds, had come out in a single night; the green bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by archangels. (NZS, 241)

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[55] Augspach, Elizabeth A. *The Garden as Woman's Space in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Literature*. (Lewiston : Edwin Mellen Press , cop. 2004) 134-136.
[56] Riley, Robert B.. "Flowers, Power, and Sex" In *The Meaning of Gardens*. Eds. Mark Francis and Randolph T Hester. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990) 63.

The garden looks as though "Archangels" have been there, and people reminiscent of "bright birds" stroll there during the party. As it was already in Chapter 3.1 mentioned, the unworthy flowers have been destroyed and only the precious flowers are left. The destruction of the daisies can be seen to symbolise the keeping of the other and unwanted elements out of the garden.

The gardens of the lower-class inhabitants of the lane are quite different from the Sheridan garden:

> That was really extravagant, for the little cottages were in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a step rise that led up to the house. A broad road ran between. True, they were far too near. They were the greatest possible eyesore and they had no right to be in that neighbourhood at all. They were little mean dwellings painted a chocolate brown. In the garden patches there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans. The very smoke coming from out of their chimneys was poverty-stricken. (NZS, 250)

Their gardens are restricted to the front of the house and the plants that are grown for food rather than for pleasure. The gardens also appear to be more open to view than the garden of the Sheridans. The attitude of the middle class towards these "garden patches" becomes quite obvious from the description: they are only "eyesores" with their "sick hens and tomato cans".

Similarly, in "Bliss" the walled garden acts as a status symbol, and is accessible only through the apartment of the Young family, which makes it more private than the gardens in the other stories into which outsiders can enter through the gate. Bertha Young sees the blooming pear tree growing in the garden "as a symbol of her own life" (CS, 96)[57]; a life filled with love, money, friends and other things, which is as perfect as the tree. Bertha and the pear tree are each other's mirror images: as the pear tree grows within a walled garden it can be seen to symbolise Bertha's confinement in the private sphere of home. This interpretation is supported also by the fact that, as Michael Waters, points out, the Victorian middle-classes perceived the walled garden as an

[57] Mansfield, Katherine. *The Collected Stories*. (Penguin Group: London, 2001) Hereafter cited as CS.

"image of the ideal home".[58] Walled gardens suggest the control, order, and limitation of women, because they are restricted, which is why the plants, too, must be contained and trimmed. Furthermore, as Susanne Waldenberger has noted, not only is nature's vigorousness controlled, but "females associated with the fecundity of nature, are restricted, protected, and constrained behind thick walls of their gardens", too.[59]

The others (classes and ethnicities) are usually kept out of the garden, except as gardeners. That is to say, the other's access into the garden is restricted to times when they are required to perform some form of manual labour or other tasks. Otherwise there is no place for them in the garden of the privileged. As I already in Chapter 3.1 pointed out, the Maori are absent from the short stories I am analysing, but in "The Garden Party" working class men are let into the garden to help with the arrangements for the party. "The gardener [has] been up since dawn, moving the lawns and sweeping them" (NZS, 241) and the workmen are putting up the marquee. "The Garden Party" is also the only story where the gardener is mentioned, but his presence in the other stories is also quite obvious, as the garden needs to be tended to in order for it to remain in good condition.

Dean MacCannell argues that the only motive for restricting the other's access to the garden is not class privilege, as there is also "a body buried next to the 'enormous old root', specifically, a kind of feminine sexuality that might flourish outside of domestic relationships."[60] In "The Garden Party" it is, nevertheless, not exactly feminine sexuality that is awakened by the presence of the workmen, but young Laura Sheridan's rebellion against the realities of middle-class life. She has led a sheltered and privileged

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[58] Waters, 228.
[59] Waldenberger, Suzanne. "Barrio Gardens: The Arrangement of a Woman's Space" *Western Folklore*, 59:3/4 (2000) 235.
[60] MacCannell, Dean. "Landscaping the Unconscious" In *The Meaning of Gardens*. Eds. Mark Francis and Randolph T Hester. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990) 96.

life, and has not really been in contact with working-class people other than the servants. She has mostly likely been warned against socialising with working-class men, as they have been perceived as dirty, vulgar and overly sexual. When Laura comes in contact with the men setting up the marquee, she understands that in reality working-class men are quite different from she has been lead to believe. The man smelling lavender is anything but vulgar and dirty:

> He bent down, pinched a sprig of lavender, put his thumb and forefinger to his nose and snuffed up the smell. When Laura saw the gesture she forgot all about the karakas in her wonder at him caring for things like that – caring for the smell of lavender. How many men that she knew would have done such a thing. Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought. (NZS, 243)

Equally worth noting is that the dead man, Mr Scott, is mentioned by name, while all the other working class people in the story are presented as representatives of their occupations, rather than as individuals with names and personalities of their own. Laura's reaction also reveals that a wild zone is beginning to open itself for her.

In "The Doll's House", the protagonists of which are the Burnell children who are familiar from "Prelude and "At the Bay", the other is, however, let into the garden for a visit and not to work. The Burnell children have been instructed not to socialize with the working class Kelvey girls – "the daughters of a washerwoman and a jailbird" (NZS, 261) – and all the other children at their school follow their lead. When the Burnell children receive a beautiful doll's house as a gift from Mrs Hay, the house is placed in the courtyard, and the children are given permission to invite their friends to come and see it two at a time: "Not to stay to tea, of course, or come traipsing through the house. But just to stand quietly in the courtyard while Isabel pointed out the beauties, and Lottie and Kezia looked pleased" (NZS, 260). The Kelveys are, however, excluded, even though Kezia asks her mother if she could invite them, and thus the wild zone begins to formulate itself. The answer she receives is "Certainly not, Kezia", and when

Kezia wants to know why, the only answer she has to settle with is: "Run away, Kezia, you know quite well why not" (NZS, 262-3).

Later on Kezia is, however, hanging on the gate like a gatekeeper, when the Kelvey girls happen to come passing by, and breaks the rules by letting the girls into the garden when no one is looking:

> "Hullo", she said to the passing Kelveys.
> They were so astounded that they stopped. Lil gave her silly smile. Our Else stared.
> "You can come and see our doll's house if you want to," said Kezia, and she dragged one toe on the ground. But at that Lil turned red and shook her head quickly.
> "Why not?", asked Kezia.
> Lil gasped, then she said, "Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us."
> "Oh, well," said Kezia. She didn't know what to reply. "It doesn't matter. You can come and see our doll's house all the same. Come on. Nobody's looking."
> …
> Kezia led the way. Like two stray cats the followed across the courtyard where the doll's house stood. (NZS, 264-5)

The Kelvey girls hesitate at first, but then after a little persuasion from Kezia they enter the garden and walk up to the doll's house. Their joy of seeing the house is cut short as aunt Beryl drives the Kelvey girls away and scolds Kezia for letting them into the garden.

The above incident speaks its own language about Kezia being puzzled by the patterns of behaviour of the adult world, and questioning its unspoken laws and rules of behaviour when it comes to class. According to Angela Smith, the presence of the garden gate is "always an indicator in Mansfield's fiction of a child who can cross the barriers that adults create for themselves."[61] I will take this interpretation further by saying that Kezia is opening up a wild zone by letting the Kelvey girls into the garden. This wild zone, nevertheless, collapses when aunt Beryl drives the girls away. In the context of this story the wild zone is not so much a woman's space, but a space where

[61] Smith, Angela. "Landscape and the Foreigner Within: Katherine Mansfield and Emily Carr" In *Landscape and Empire 1770-2000*. Ed. Glenn Hooper. (Aldershot: Ashgate, cop. 2005) 155.

the barriers between different classes begin to crumble and the classes can intermingle. Kezia's relationship with the garden will be discussed more at the end of the next subchapter.

3.3 Women's Relationship with the Garden

In order to make more sense of women's relationship with the garden in Katherine Mansfield's short stories, it is necessary to take a brief look at the history of horticulture. Everyone is familiar with the biblical tale of Eve and the forbidden apple, but not all are aware of the fact that horticulture was a female invention and women were the first gardeners. It was women who first wandered into the fields and forests in search of wild plants, and domesticated them, while men were still tracking wild animals. Women, however, gradually lost control, when men decided to exchange their hunting grounds for agricultural fields. They were no longer the ones to choose what was cultivated, where, or how; and consequently the space that was granted to them in the garden was reduced also, until the only plants women could manage were flowers and herbs. As Eleanor Perenyi says, women's past power turned into myth, and "the inventor of agriculture became the goddess of agriculture", because men feared women's involvement with nature and the power it provided them.[62] She continues that "the other face of the goddess [of agriculture] belong[ed] to the witch brewing her spells from plants, able to cure and also curse with her knowledge of their properties", and because of this two-facedness men were prepared to incarcerate women in a horticulturally safe place, namely the flower garden, and by doing this they both

[62] Perényi, Eleanor. *Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden*. (London: Pimlico, 1994) 260-1.

reinforced and suppressed the superstitious fear that women were allied with nature in some means that men were not.[63] As flowers are the least productive and least threatening plants of all, as their only purpose is to be beautiful and to give pleasure (which is also what one half of man wants from a woman), women were allowed to tend to them without men having to be frightened of their power.

As it was pointed out in the previous chapter, one's social status affected one's garden as well, and, thus, the gardens of different classes differed considerably from each other. Class also influenced women's relationship with the garden. For example, the gardening habits of middle-class women and working-class women were dissimilar: Upper and middle-class women would usually employ men to garden for them, while working-class women were more likely to do some gardening themselves. The middle-class women in the short stories of Katherine Mansfield are not really engaged in any gardening. Linda Burnell does, however, do some light gardening activities, she "stop[s] to pick off a dead pink or give a top-heavy carnation something to lean against" (NZS, 203) in "At the Bay", and Mrs. Fairfield contemplates harvesting the crop in the autumn, but for the others it would appear that it is the gardener (only mentioned in "The Garden Party") who does all the work and the women only focus on enjoying the garden. Therefore, the actual act of gardening[64] does not really play a role in Katherine Mansfield's short stories, as their middle-class protagonists spend time mostly in the garden – walking among the flowers, admiring plants or attending garden parties – or only admire it through a window, as Bertha Young and Pearl Fulton in "Bliss" do. Thus, doing exactly what was typical for middle-class women in the Victorian age. Women were, nevertheless, encouraged to some light gardening activities – like Linda Burnell

[63] Ibid, 261.
[64] There are many examples of women gardening in literature and discovering self, finding freedom and self-sufficiency and sometimes financial independence. Good examples of this can be found in Mary Wilkins Freeman's short fiction, and Mary Gaunt's novel *Kirkham's Find*.

does – as a means of healthy exercise and a way to promote spiritual health without challenging the notion of the delicate Angel in the House, but they were to leave the heavier tasks to the gardeners. In other words, it was not actually women's own idea to take up the light gardening activities, but it was identified as something suitable for them by the society.

The spiritual and symbolic connection between women and nature, here between women and the garden and its plants, is more important in relation to Katherine Mansfield's short stories than the actual act of gardening. As Susan Garland Mann notes: Although women have in all times been associated with flowers, these comparisons increased considerably in the nineteenth century at least in the English speaking world. She continues that it became popular to name "women after plants and plants after women."[65] This type of naming strengthens women's relationship with the garden, and is also in a way related to the tradition of perceiving women as nature. In the short stories of Katherine Mansfield many women are named after plants: for example Kezia in "Prelude" and "At the Bay" and Laura in "The Garden Party".[66] There are also some stories in which women have more obviously been named after plants: there is Rosemary in "A Cup of Tea" (1922)), Violet in the story carrying the same name, as well as Miss Moss and Mrs. Pine in "Pictures" (1919).

Naming, nevertheless, is not the only way in which women are associated with plants in the short stories of Katherine Mansfield; women are also partially defined by plants or connected to them in some suggestive way. Especially in "Prelude" the association of the female characters with different kinds of flowers, that reveal aspects

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[65] Mann, Susan Garland, "Gardening as 'Women's Culture' in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's Short Fiction" *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No.1 (Mar., 1998), 33.

[66] The name Kezia is a variant of Keziah which means "cassia" (the name of a spice tree) in Hebrew, and the name Laura is the feminine form of the Latin name Laurus, which meant "laurel", the plant that was used to make victors' garlands.

of the women's personalities, is strong. In this story the different generations of women are connected to each other by their connection with the flowers and the garden. Mrs. Fairfield wears "a grey foulard dress patterned with large purple pansies"(NZS, 113), which symbolise modesty, virtue and faithfulness in the Victorian language of flowers. All the afore-mentioned adjectives describe Mrs. Fairfield well: she is the one person on whom the other family members depend on and, in all, she embodies the Angel in the house perfectly.

Similarly Beryl Fairfield, Mrs. Fairfield's unmarried younger daughter, wears different flowers at different times of the day – in the morning she has "a big piece of syringa stuck through her hair"(NZS, 110), in the afternoon she has "pinned a black silk rose" (NZS, 123) in her hair, and in the evening she wears "a bunch of pansies" (NZS, 136) in front of her dress. In addition to wearing flowers, Beryl has also painted a picture of "a large cluster of surprised-looking clematis"(NZS, 136) that is hanging in the drawing room. The syringa in Beryl's hair signifies her youth and beauty. The black rose is usually seen as a symbol of death, but here it could also be interpreted as an indication of a major change that is to take place in Beryl's life. However, as the rose is made of an artificial material, silk, the flower can be seen to symbolise the fact that Beryl's situation is unlikely to change in the near future. In other words, it is doubtful that she will find the husband she is desperate for and have her own life in the near future. The bunch of pansies, on the other hand, can be seen as a symbol of Beryl's seditious nature. The clematis in the painting symbolises Beryl's pretentiousness and multiple selves: "I am acting a part. I'm never my real self for a moment" (NZS, 143).

When lying on the bed in the morning Linda Burnell, Beryl's older married sister, sees "a poppy on the wall-paper with a leaf and a fat bursting bud" (NZS, 111). The poppy image appears again later in the form of "two big red poppies" Beryl has taken

off Linda's chapeau (NZS, 141). As symbols of fertility the poppies refer to Linda's pregnancy, to which Katherine Mansfield never really straightforwardly refers to, but can be read in between the lines. Last but not least, there is Linda's little daughter, Kezia, who prepares matchbox surprises that speak of her artistic nature, for her grandmother:

> First she would put a leaf inside with a big violet lying on it, then she would put a very small white picotee[67], perhaps, on each side of the violet, and then she would sprinkle some lavender on the top, but not to cover their heads."(NZS, 117-18)

Similarly, in "Bliss" Bertha Young and Pearl Fulton are dressed in the colours of the pear tree growing at the back of the Young garden. Bertha wears "a white dress, a string of jade beads, green shoes and stockings" (CS, 97). In "The Garden Party" Laura Sheridan is associated with the beautiful pink canna lilies her mother has bought for the party: "she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing in her breast" (NZS, 245). I agree with Eithne Henson[68] in that here the flowers have a social rather than a personal association. Canna lilies are originally from the American continent, and thus probably were very expensive in New Zealand at the time. The flowers have been added to the story mainly to flaunt the wealth of the Sheridan family.

Some of the women in the short stories even identify themselves with the garden or a specific plant in the garden. In "Prelude" Linda Burnell is closely connected with the aloe and in "At the Bay" she focuses her thoughts on the manuka tree, in "Bliss" Bertha Young sees the pear tree as a symbol of her life. The aloe and the pear tree appear several times at crucial moments in the course of the events, and are used as unifying and structuring images, which is a typical feature of modernism. The women achieve a greater understanding of themselves and their life through their identification with the garden and its plants, and therefore the garden is central to their attempts in self-

[67] A picotee is a carnation which has pale-coloured petals bordered by a darker colour.

discovery. The plants also seem to enable the wild zone to begin forming itself for the women.

The women discover different things in the garden depending on their age and marital status: sexuality, escape, romance, comfort, or a playground. Katherine Mansfield depicts different generations; the whole life cycle of a woman is present in the stories. Mrs Fairfield, who represents the older Victorian generation, sees the garden in terms of the productivity of nature and all the edible things it has to offer for the household:

> I wondered as we passed the orchard what the fruit trees were like and whether we should be able to make jam this autumn. There are splendid healthy currant bushes in the vegetable garden. I noticed them to-day. I should like to see those pantry shelves thoroughly well socked with our own jam. (NZS, 139)

She is juxtaposed against the younger generations: unlike the younger women she is satisfied with her life – the main focus of which is to run the household, do chores and look after her grandchildren – as it is.

For Mrs Sheridan in "The Garden Party" the garden is above all a status symbol. Linda Burnell, as well as Jinnie, the sick wife, in "The Man Without a Temperament" find comfort and solace in the garden. Jinnie enjoys looking and smelling the flowers in the garden:

> "Oh, those trees along the drive," she cried. "I could look at them for ever. They are like the most exquisite huge ferns. And you see that one with the grey-silver bark and the clusters of cream-coloured flowers, I pulled down a head of them yesterday to smell, and the scent"- she shut her eyes at the memory and her voice thinned away, faint, airy - was like freshly ground nutmegs. (CS, 131)

Jinnie's experience of the garden is very different from that of the other women in the short stories, but this is mainly because her situation in life is dissimilar to that of the other women. Because of her illness she has a different outlook on life: she does not long for escape, but for life. For Linda's younger unmarried sister Beryl, who is financially dependent on her brother-in-law, the garden offers space for romance and

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[68] Henson, 98.

dreaming. For Bertha and Pearl in "Bliss" the garden is a space through which they can channel their sexual energies.

For the younger generation the garden is a playground where they can spend most of their day. Kezia, in particular, enjoys wandering around the garden and playing there with her sisters and cousins, but manages to lose her way every time. Kezia's inability to find the right path in the garden, means, of course, that her sense of direction has not yet developed completely, but it can also be taken to refer to Kezia trying to navigate her way in the adult world, which still is quite a maze for the young girl. The garden offers Kezia a space of artistic self-expression; as it was earlier mentioned, she prepares matchbox surprises made out of flowers and other things she finds in the garden for her grandmother. According to Elisanda Masgrau-Peya, Kezia "shows the signs of an early rejection of the house and the ideology of domesticity that it embodies."[69] Yet, Masgrau-Peya continues, she longs for the security of home, which can be interpreted with her fascination with "small cosy boxes that shelter and protect". Patricia Moran points out that while most critics have perceived Mrs. Fairfield as the model for Kezia's artistic self-expression, she is of the opinion that Linda is actually the one whose rejection of maternity allows "her daughter both to consider alternative models of female activity and to separate from the seductive figure of Mrs. Fairfield."[70] In my opinion, Kezia, unlike the other children, has more potential to lead a fulfilling and free life than any of the other women in the stories. This interpretation is supported by the fact that when the children are in the garden they occupy themselves in role play that mimics the adult world; and Kezia does not want to play: "'Well, let's play ladies', said Isabel. 'Pip can be the father and you can be all our dear little children.' 'I hate playing ladies' said Kezia" (NZS, 127).

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[69] Masgrau-Peya, 64.

4. The Garden as a Liminal Space

As it was discussed earlier in this thesis the garden is a liminal space i.e. a space between two different things, such as masculinity and femininity, culture and nature, or public and private. This chapter is divided into three subchapters, each of which addresses a different aspect of the liminality of the garden in Katherine Mansfield's short stories. In the first subchapter the garden space is considered in connection to female sexuality; the women are balancing between the traditional and new notions of femininity and sexuality. The second subchapter focuses on women weighing their options between remaining in, leaving or entering the garden, and what happens when the women leave the safety of the garden space. The third subchapter discusses men's relationship with the garden and what it is like in comparison to the relationship women have with the garden.

4.1 The Garden and Female Sexuality

In Katherine Mansfield's time women were "caught between two 'civilised' conventions of female desire – the convention that outlaw[ed] women's physicality as taboo and unnatural, and, on the other hand, the alternative 'modern' convention that sp[oke] endlessly of desire defining and channelling it into patterns that may not accord with individual experience."[71] In the Victorian age women were forbidden to talk about their sexuality and how they experienced their bodies, and they were taught to be ashamed of their corporeality, to deny their sexuality as unfeminine, unlawful and

[70] Moran, Patricia, 117. "Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield.

shameful. There was no socially sanctioned language to communicate sexual matters and this resulted in the symbolic expression of sexuality. With Freud's ideas about sexuality, among other things, the situation gradually began to change in the opposite direction, and women were caught in the middle of two very different sexual identities; they were both allured by and frightened of the innovations in women's roles.

Even if sexuality provided for male writers a means of liberation, for women it was just as liable to be another means of suppression, and women writers were thus more conscious of concealed paradoxes. Katherine Mansfield, for example, rejected articulating "sexual activity as a collision of bodies – mechanical and unproblematic occasions for the manufacture of 'natural' physiological pleasure" and opted for "the conventions of obliqueness that characterised nineteenth-century fiction – conventions of metaphor and symbolic suggestion that point to the inextricability of body and mind in desire."[72] In the short stories I am focusing on in this chapter, "Bliss", "Prelude", "At the Bay", and "The Garden Party", Katherine Mansfield expresses sexuality, particularly female sexuality, through sexually-charged garden and plant metaphors.

The dichotomies – male/female, masculine/feminine and culture/nature – which were discussed earlier in this thesis operate in connection to sexuality as well. Because the garden is the balancing point, "where sexuality is controlled but still potent and available", in a succession of distinct types of natural environments that represent sexuality differently: a tropical jungle is a symbol of "sex beyond human control", while a well-trimmed lawn "is a symbol of the ultimate taming of nature and human behaviour" and "sex corseted and over-controlled".[73] In other words, the controlling of sexuality increases as the natural environments progress from jungle to forest, to

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Feminist Studies, 17:1 (Spring, 1991), 105-125.
[71] Fullbrook, Kate, 98.
[72] Fullbrook, Kate, 96.
[73] Riley, 67.

meadow, to garden and finally to lawn. Relying on this succession for the interpretation of the short stories reveals that the women are more free to express their sexuality and are more connected with it in those stories where the garden has a wilder side (for example “Prelude”), than in “Bliss” where the garden is situated in the city and surrounded by a wall. The garden in “The Garden Party” is meticulously groomed, thus revealing a setting where sexuality is controlled. This is also the case with the more cultivated section of the botanical gardens. Furthermore, all this speaks for the realisation that women’s sexuality cannot be entirely free in the context of the garden as it in the end is cultivated nature even though it may on some occasions be more lush and wild. This would mean that women are freer to express their sexuality in wilder nature than the garden, but the garden does present them with some opportunities for spiritual freedom.

In “Bliss”, where there grows a blossoming pear tree that is entwined with the events of the story and its female protagonist, the sexuality of the garden imagery is the strongest. When “Bliss” begins, Bertha Young is “turning the corner of [her] own street” and is “overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss – absolute bliss!” (CS, 91) Throughout the story Bertha is struggling to find the language to communicate her feelings of bliss to her husband and friends, but the patriarchal society and its codes make it possible to find the right words: “It’s not what I mean, because –” (CS, 92), she says at one point, for instance. Bertha’s inability to express herself is connected with the idea of the wild zone. She is supposed to have self-control and behave like a decent woman should. Bertha’s behaviour is not very appropriate, at least not according to the proprieties of the society she lives in, for a thirty-year-old woman. She wants

> to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or stand still and laugh at – nothing – at nothing simply. (CS, 91)

There are also many other examples of repression and inhibition, Bertha cannot laugh because it is inappropriate, and when she becomes sexually aroused she moves towards the piano to find cover. Because Bertha is aware that any kind of public outburst of feelings will label her "drunk and disorderly"(CS, 92), Bertha does her best not to reveal the upheaval of her emotions and struggles to keep from drifting to hysterics: "Oh, is there no way you can express it without being "drunk and disorderly"? How idiotic civilisation is! Why be given a body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle? (CS, 92)

In her foolishness Bertha imagines that her feeling of bliss is due to her high standard of living, all the status symbols, like a dress maker, a vacation abroad, a cook, the house and the garden, she and her husband have been fortunate enough to obtain. Or if it is not the high standard of living, it must be the spring, rather than "the bursting of unfulfilled desire out of the constraints of her world", as Anna Snaith has expressed it.[74]

The pear tree that is strongly connected to Bertha's feeling of bliss appears at three turning points in the story. Each of these moments can be termed as what James Joyce called an "epiphany"[75] or a moment of intense revelation or realisation for the character. When a character experiences an epiphany, time stands still and spatiality takes over. In "Bliss" the pear tree appears for the first time Bertha stands in her strange blissful mood at the window of the drawing-room and experiences a mystical togetherness with the tree:

> At the far end, against the wall, there was a tall slender pear tree in fullest, richest bloom; it stood perfect, as though becalmed against the jade-green sky. Bertha couldn't help feeling, even from a distance, that it had not a single bud or a faded petal. (CS, 96)

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[74]Snaith, Anna. "'Curious slides and arrests'": Class and Colonialism in the Relationship Between Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf"" In *Lectures D'une Œuvre: Selected Stories de Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Stephanie Amar-Flood and Sara Thornton. (Paris: Editions du temps, 1997) 155.
[75] See, for example, Childs, 199.

Bertha sees the pear tree as a symbol of her own existence, and the wild zone begins to form itself. The tree does, in fact, in its amazing splendour mirror Bertha's state of mind very vividly as she is positively blooming and just as full of life spirit as the pear tree. As the pear tree is commonly seen as a symbol of female sexuality because of its fruit that resemble the figure of a woman's body, it confirms Bertha's bliss as sexual tension. The tree, however, does not bear fruit yet, but is in full bloom. The white flowers are the reproductive or 'sexual' organs of the pear tree, and as Pentti Lempiäinen, for example, has remarked they are commonly seen not only in religious symbolism, but also elsewhere as a sign of sexual purity.[76] All this, too, supports interpreting Bertha's bliss is of sexual nature. In Bertha's case the flowers of the tree can be seen to symbolise her purity and innocence that is both sexual and social. The bright jade-green, on the other hand, is a symbol of Bertha's immaturity and the timidity caused by it. When Bertha dresses for the dinner party, she wears: "a white dress, a string of jade beads, green shoes and stockings" (CS, 97).

When the pear tree appears for the second time, Bertha's bliss and the wild zone reach their peak, as she shares her experience of the tree with one of the guests, the beautiful Pearl Fulton. During the evening Bertha has realised Pearl shares her feeling of bliss and anticipates that she is going to give her a sign:

> 'There!' she breathed. And the two women stood side by side looking at the slender, flowering tree. Although it was so still it seemed like the flame of a candle, to stretch up, to point, to quiver in the bright air, to grow taller as they gazed – almost to touch the rim of the round moon.
>
> How long did they stand there? Both, as it were, caught in that circle of unearthly light, understanding each other perfectly, creatures of another world, wondering what they were to do in this one with all this blissful treasure that burned in their bosoms and dropped in silver flowers, from their hair and hands? (CS, 102)

[76] Lempiäinen, Pentti. Sano se kukkasin: Kasvit vertauskuvina. Porvoo: WSOY, 1992. 200.

Here the pear tree has turned from "becalmed" to resemble "the flame of a candle" now representing Bertha's awakening to herself and her sexual desires, that are now burning hot. Pearl Fulton, who is one with herself and her sexuality, can, thus, be seen as a guide on Bertha's journey to womanhood. There are, however, contrasting views about Bertha's awakening sexuality. Some critics are of the opinion that Bertha desires only her husband; some have chosen to interpret Bertha as a lesbian. I, however, concur with Walter E. Anderson[77] in that Bertha is bisexual, and the pear tree presents the symbol of Bertha's bisexuality because it is self-fertilizing and figuratively speaking has both female and male sexual organs. This view is supported by the fact that Bertha has feelings for Pearl Fulton "as she always did fall in love with beautiful women who had something strange about them" (CS, 95), and she also desires her husband for the first time in her life (CS, 103). Bertha has bottled up her feelings both for men and women until the evening of the party, as she has been confused about them, because of the restrictions of society and has even remained cold toward her husband.

The pear tree appears for the third time at the end of the story after Bertha has learnt of the affair her husband is having with Pearl. Bertha's bliss is shattered and she is left alone with her newly awakened sexual desire: "Oh, what is going to happen now?" she cried. But the pear tree was as lovely as ever and as full of flower and as still" (CS, 105). This scene will be analysed more closely in Chapter 4.2 in connection to women leaving or entering the garden.

"Bliss" is not the only story by Katherine Mansfield to have an important plant growing in the garden, for in "Prelude", there is an aloe, that appears at crucial moments in the story and a female character, Linda Burnell, who is closely associated with the plant. In "Prelude" in connection with the aloe, sexuality, however, focuses on child-

[77] Anderson, Walter E.. "The Hidden Love Triangle in 'Bliss.'" *Twentieth Century Literature*, 28:4 (Winter, 1982) 398.

bearing and fertility rather than embracing one's sexuality and Katherine Mansfield is questioning the cultural definition of women as child bearers. The text implies that Linda is pregnant with her fourth child, and terrified of her husband's sexuality. She refers to Stanley as her Newfoundland dog that she is "so fond of in the daytime", but she wishes "he wouldn't jump at her so, and bark so loudly…. He was too strong for her; she had always hated things that rush at her, from a child" (NZS, 138). When she looks at the aloe in the day time she sees what she is afraid of:

> Linda looked up at the fat swelling plant with its cruel leaves and fleshy stem. High above them, as though becalmed in the air, and yet holding so fast to the earth it grew from, it might have had claws instead of roots. The curving leaves seemed to be hiding something, the blind stem cut into the air as if no wind could ever shake it. (NZS, 118)

The features of the aloe are threatening to Linda with its cruel leaves and claws. The plant is "fat" and "swelling" like a pregnant woman, and the "fleshy stem" is obviously phallic. I agree with Angela Smith in that "the aloe seems to confront her with a phallocentric world, invincible, the power of the phallus cruel, animal, and indomitable."[78]

Linda's resentment with the child-bearing aspects of feminine sexuality are juxtaposed with Beryl's ideas about romantic love and sexuality, which is only just beginning to blossom. Beryl's romantic and sexual fantasies take place in the garden, which is an ideal place for a tryst, since it can offer privacy occasionally. Beryl fantasizes about a young man with a bouquet of flowers in the garden, of finding true love:

> The window was wide open; it was warm, and somehow out there in the garden a young man, dark and slender, with mocking eyes, tiptoed among the bushes, and gathered the flowers into a big bouquet, and slipped under her window and held it up to her. She saw herself bending forward. He thrust his head among the bright waxy flowers, sly and laughing. 'No, no,' said Beryl. She turned from the window and dropped her nightgown over her head. (NZS, 106)

[78] Smith, 98.

Beryl's fantasy is a stereotypical romantic daydream, and has been instilled in her by the society that expects women to marry and be socially defined through their husbands. Thus, Beryl is under the impression that the only way for her to escape her current position as the unmarried financially dependent relative and avoid spinsterhood is to find herself a loving husband. The fantasy resurfaces in "At the Bay", where Beryl in a way enters it when she steps through the window into the garden, and appears to be ready to embrace her sexuality fully. This garden scene will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, which focuses on women leaving the garden.

4.2 Leaving or Entering the Garden

The women in Katherine Mansfield's short stories either hover on the edge of leaving the garden or actually walk through the garden gate into the world waiting for them outside. Some of the women have already left the safety of the garden behind and are leading a life in a more public environment.

Leaving a place and going somewhere is usually perceived as an act of transgression or liberation. I will in this chapter determine whether this applies to passing through the liminal space of the garden gate into the world on the other side of the walls of the garden. In other words, I will find out whether leaving the private sphere of home behind, and walking through the garden gate offers the women in Katherine Mansfield's short stories the freedom they are searching for, or not. There is, of course, a whole new world – a vastness of open space – full of new experiences and opportunities waiting to be discovered by the women, who have been confined into the private sphere of home,

outside the garden gate. The private sphere, however, provides safety and security for them and it is not so easy to leave a familiar place and walk into the unknown.

Linda Burnell in "Prelude" is associated with different images of travel and escape throughout the story. On the first morning in the new house she lies in bed and wishes "that she was going away from this house …in a little buggy, driving away from everybody and not even waving."(NZS, 109) "Prelude" is also filled with strong bird imagery – there are birds singing in the garden and images of birds inside the house - that signals a desire for escape and freedom. In the evening Linda stands in the garden looking at the aloe with her mother, and fantasises about leaving her suffocating life as mother and wife behind by sailing through the garden gates in a boat she sees in the aloe:

> As they stood on the steps, the high grassy bank on which the aloe rested rose up like a wave, and the aloe seemed to ride upon it like a ship with the oars lifted. Bright moonlight hung upon the lifted oars like water, and on the green wave glittered the dew. …
> She dreamed that she was caught up out of the cold water into the ship with the lifted oars and the budding mast. Now the oars fell striking quickly, quickly. They rowed far away over the top of the garden trees, the paddocks and the dark bush beyond. Ah, she heard herself cry: 'Faster! Faster!' to those who were rowing. How much more real this dream was than that they should go back to the house where the sleeping children lay and where Stanley and Beryl played cribbage. (NZS, 137)

With this epiphany Linda's "wild zone" reaches its peak in the garden. Linda and her mother have the garden all to themselves, and the absence of patriarchal authority figures enables the "wild zone" to form itself. Linda is able to liberate her thoughts and put her yearning for freedom into language. In her thoughts Linda is able to break through the patriarchal constraints and imagine "for herself …" , as Angela Smith has expressed it, "a traditionally male role, taking command of a ship and escaping into exploration of an unknown world, the dark bush; the dream is an alternative to the

journey she has reluctantly embarked on towards childbirth."[79] As the events of "Prelude" take place in New Zealand Linda's imagined escape has also colonial implications; Linda takes on the traditionally masculine role of entering and conquering unmapped virgin territory.

Even if the ending of "Prelude" leaves the faith of Linda and the wild zone open, it becomes obvious in "At the Bay" that the wild zone takes only shape in Linda's thoughts, but she never does anything concrete to change her situation in the direction she envisions in her thoughts. Leaving behind the life one is accustomed to is not so easy, however, and for pregnant Linda even more difficult. After the child is born Linda's situation remains as it is, and Linda's contemplation on her life in "At the Bay" – as Linda sits in the garden with her baby-boy – reveals that she is unlikely to ever leave her life behind even if she fantasises about it:

> Yes, that was her real grudge against life; that was what she could not understand. That was the question she asked and asked, and listened in vain for the answer. It was all very well to say it was the common lot of women to bear children. It wasn't true. She was broken, made weak, her courage was gone, through child-bearing, she did not love her children. It was useless pretending. Even if she had had the strength she never would have nursed and played with the little girls. (NZS, 191)

Linda's thoughts do betray that she has not completely accepted her life as a mother and wife, but she has resigned, because she does not have the physical or mental strength to leave. As Kate Fullbrook observes, "Linda is constantly aware of her imprisonment within a life that she partly wants and partly rejects." [80] Instead of realising her dream to travel and explore the world, to take the boat trip in China she contemplated taking with her father, Linda will remain where she is. The wild zone that began to formulate for Linda in "Prelude" does not reach its full capacity, but rather remains only in her

[79] Smith, Angela. *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf A Public of Two*. 1999, 99.
[80] Fullbrook, 77.

imagination. Linda's reversal of feeling for her baby-boy confirms this. At first she thinks that "I don't like babies", but then the boy goes in her mind: "´Don't like babies'? The boy couldn't believe her. ´Don't like *me*?'"(NZS, 191) and Linda is "so astonished at the confidence of this little creature"(NZS,192) that she surrenders. According to Sydney Janet Kaplan, Linda's "belief in the ultimate power of transcendence of the male gives this boy-child the love she had denied to her girl-children." Kaplan continues that

> it is, however, important to notice that Mansfield recognizes that the confidence Linda perceives in her infant son is not really in the infant himself (after all, the same behaviour must have been displayed by her infant daughters at one time) but in Linda's projection of it to him. Thus the confidence she sees in him will free this infant to grow up undivided, not infected by the self-hate that the girls absorb through their mother's rejection.[81]

In contrast to Linda Burnell, young Laura Sheridan does actually leave the garden in "The Garden Party". Unlike Linda, Laura has not dreamt of leaving; she is asked by her mother to take a leftover basket to the family of the workman who has been killed in an accident before the garden party. Laura is also in a very different situation in comparison to Linda as she is much younger and is only beginning to come to terms with the adult world. In other words, she is in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood. Leaving the garden is for naïve Laura, who has been this far protected from the world outside the garden gates, a maturation process as she has never experienced death and poverty, for instance. During the day of the garden party Laura comes in contact with working class people both in her own environment as well as in their own environment, and realises the falsity of the environment she lives in, a world in which the important things are your status in society and material possessions, and she is ashamed of her difference. Her internal struggle is one of identity; whether to imitate environmental influences or react in a way that is unique to her personality. She feels

[81] Kaplan, 217.

pity for the working class and is faced with the downside of society outside the garden gates. After having seen the dead man Laura returns to the garden and goes back to her sheltered life. As Gina Wisker has pointed out, "crossing the physical space between the partying family in the garden and the devastation of death and poverty across the rutted lane is a minimal but a significant journey for Laura".[82] Furthermore, when Laura goes to see the dead man she walks through a "gloomy passage" (NZS, 256), which symbolises her journey from childhood to adulthood.

The ending of the story reveals that a shift has taken place in her consciousness; when Laura returns home, she is unable to find the words to tell her brother Laurie of her experience:

> 'It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie – ' She stopped, she looked at her brother. 'Isn't life – 'But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood. 'Isn't it, darling?' said Laurie. (NZS, 257)

Laura is rendered speechless by the patriarchal society that has not offered women, or in this case a young girl, the words to talk about death. She does not find a way to express to Laurie what she is feeling, and resorts to familiar speech patterns that sound odd in this context. Laurie's answer reveals that he does not anymore really understand his sister, because she has ventured so far into a wild zone of her own.

In "At the Bay" Beryl is on the beach enjoying a beautiful summer day – she has left behind the safety of the garden, too, for a while, only to return later. The beach, also, much like the garden, is a liminal space, for, as Linda McDowell has pointed out, on the beach "the division between work and home is totally or partially disrupted" and the beach is "a space between land and sea", where "the boundary between nature and culture" is also fluid.[83] The freedom that the beach offers in contrast to the garden

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[82] Wisker, Gina. "Country Cousins: Negotiations Between the Town and the Country in Katherine Mansfield and Patricia Grace". *British Review of New Zealand Studies* 14: 37-59 2003/2004.
[83] McDowell, Linda. Gender, Identity & Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies. Polity Press, 1999. 166.

would, nevertheless, seem to be greater, as people are free from their constricting clothes and can wear bathing suits that reveal more. There are also no walls or a fence surrounding the beach, but the vast space of the ocean opens up in front of one's eyes enticing adventure.

The freedom offered by the beach is reflected in "At the Bay" by Beryl's behaviour. Even if Beryl's mother and other people at the bay disapprove of Mrs Kember, the New Woman, who smokes, "play[s] bridge every day of her life", or spends her time sun-tanning herself, does not "give a twopence about her house" and has no children (NZS, 186), Beryl chooses to spend time with her on the beach. Mrs Kember is one with her body and sexuality, and by complimenting Beryl's beauty and touching her she attempts to get Beryl to loosen up. Beryl is used to "the complicated movements of some one who is trying to take off her clothes and pull on her bathing-dress all at one and the same time"(NZS, 187); while Mrs. Kember stands "boldly in her torn chemise" (NZS, 188) and smokes a cigarette. The Victorian codes of propriety have been impressed upon Beryl, which is why she feels that she is being "poisoned by this cold woman", but "she long[s] to hear" (NZS, 188) what she has to offer her.

The vast unmapped sea, where the movement in space could be downward or outward, offers even more freedom than the beach. Anca Vlasopolos even suggests, that "the only world into which a woman can escape from patriarchally prescribed roles is the unseen world under the sea."[84] If this is true, it would seem that the freedom that the garden can offer women has its limitations, and thus a woman can never achieve complete freedom in a garden. It does offer women some freedom to express themselves, but the freedom will never be complete. The interpretation of the sea as the

[84] Vlasopolos, Anca. "Staking Claims for No Territory: The Sea as Woman's Space" In Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994) 81.

only space where women can find freedom, would suggest that only by leaving the garden women can achieve complete freedom.

Angela Smith has observed that "the bay is a threatening place for women and girls"[85], and that while the men and the boys boldly swim out to sea, the women and girls "show a gendered apprehension of the water". This apprehension is visible in Beryl's swimming: "[she] stood, her arms outstretched, gazing out, and as each wave came she gave the slightest little jump, so that it seemed it was the wave which lifted her so gently" (NZS, 188) ; while Mrs Kember, who is a very masculine woman, is the only one of the women who is not afraid of the water: "And suddenly she turned turtle, disappeared, and swam away quickly, quickly, like a rat" (NZS, 188). The anxiety the women and the girls experience can be interpreted as resulting from a fear of taking a step towards freedom that the sea represents. Mrs Kember has already taken this step, and has freed herself from the constraints of traditional femininity. Not being afraid of the sea, and plunging in boldly, would offer women freedom.

Similarly, in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) Edna Pontellier learns how to swim and discovers freedom in the sea. Edna experiences a similar awakening of body and spirit as the women in Katherine Mansfield's short stories. She, however, takes the steps about which Katherine Mansfield's women only fantasise: Edna neglects her social responsibilities as Mr. Pontellier's wife, sends her children to stay with their grandmother, moves out of her husband's house to a house of her own, begins to paint and takes a lover. Her new life does not, however, bring her the happiness and satisfaction, she thought it would, and so she returns to the sea, the place of her initial awakening. She takes the step to find freedom, but to her death seem to be the only choice available.

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[85] Smith, 166-167.

According to Antony Alpers it is typical for Katherine Mansfield to have her characters "inhabiting one space while observing another."[86] In other words, the characters stand in the liminal space of a doorway or at a window. These scenes speak of the promise of a new world or a division of self. There are two stories in which the female protagonists are standing at a window looking into the garden. Here the direction of the movement is opposite in comparison to the other stories I have discussed in this chapter; instead of leaving the garden the protagonist is on the edge of entering the garden. In "Bliss" Bertha Young only gazes at the garden in the daytime through the windows of the drawing room. In the evening when Bertha beholds the garden with Pearl Fulton, she does, however, open the windows, but never actually enters the garden. In a sense Bertha is letting the garden into the house, or vice versa, thus emphasizing the relationship between the house and the garden. The question that now remains to be answered is what would happen if Bertha entered the garden through the liminal space of the window, and left her position as an outside observer behind. Would it mean more confinement or would it give Bertha freedom? The answer to this question is not an easy one, because by entering the garden Bertha would most likely become one with nature thus also embracing her sexuality and her true self in the process, but it could, nevertheless, at the same time mean more confinement as the garden is an enclosed space surrounded by a wall. Judith S. Neaman's biblical interpretation of the ending of "Bliss" would appear to give one answer: "Bertha [would] only desire her husband and he [would] dominate her."[87] This interpretation would also mean that Bertha, like Eve, would be banished from the garden. In other words, Bertha's life will remain the same whether she enters the garden or not: she will never be free. The only

[86] Alpers, Antony. *Katherine Mansfield*. 53.
[87] Neaman, Judith S. "Allusion, Image and Associative Pattern: The Answers in Mansfield's 'Bliss'" *Twentieth Century Literature*, 32.2 (1986): 243.

difference is, that by entering the garden she could have tasted the forbidden fruit with her husband or Pearl; now she has only gotten a glimpse of it, but her desires will never be fulfilled.

Similarly, in "At the Bay" Beryl watches the garden through the window, and fantasises about a man in the garden. She, however, unlike Bertha, enters the garden space through the window of her room and meets Harry Kember, the handsome husband of Mrs Kember, on the edge of the garden, which reveals that Beryl is more in tune with her sexuality than Bertha, even though Beryl is younger than Bertha. When Beryl gives into temptation by entering the garden, Mrs Kember's voice echoes in her head: "'Oh, go on! Don't be a prude, my dear. You enjoy yourself while you're young. That's my advice.'"(NZS, 210) As earlier in the day with Mrs Kember on the beach, Beryl is both intrigued and repulsed by her husband.

When Harry Kember attempts to persuade Beryl to go for a walk with him outside the garden, she debates between staying in the garden and exiting through the garden gate with him. At first the meeting seems to Beryl like something out of her fantasies, and she is drawn to Harry Kember, but then she realises that it actually is nothing like it, and she backs away never leaving the garden. She has been dreaming and waiting for a lover, but when the moment of truth arrives, Beryl turns her back on it. This might be because Harry Kember is a married man or because Beryl is just afraid of what might happen if she let go of her inhibitions. Kate Fullbrook offers the explanation that Beryl is not withdrawing from "Mrs Kember's lesbianism nor Harry Kember's extramarital embrace"; it is rather "their being seducers, victimisers rather than lovers"[88] and "What she flees from is simultaneously her own desire and its fulfilment, and a victimisation that would distortedly enact the marriage she needs for personal validation."

[88] Fullbrook, 113.

If we consider Dean MacCannell's ideas about women in the garden, Beryl is a typical literary heroine, who "will often enter with a man, or men, other than her own husband. In the garden occurs an amoral play of sentiments and feelings, with the strictures of society represented by the garden wall and what lies beyond. The heroine does not always lapse morally, but if she follows society's laws while she is in her garden, she always does so for her own reasons and not because of any moral constraint."[89] In the light of this it could be said that Beryl actually turns away from Harry Kember, because of her own reasons and society does not have anything to do with it.

The wild zone that has been forming for Beryl collapses, as she turns away from Harry Kember and returns to the house. It can be said that Beryl is reaching for the wild zone, when she is in the garden with Harry Kember in "At the Bay", but the patriarchal values triumph in the end and Beryl does not end up having the passionate affair she so longs for with a married man, for she has been given only an unpleasant substitute for the man in her dreams. It is possible that Beryl realises that Harry Kember is not what she is looking for, or maybe she just does not want to surrender to her sexuality that is represented by nature outside the garden gate. For surrendering herself to Harry Kember would also mean exiting the garden gate. She would be out of the safe sphere of the garden, and vulnerable to the dangers outside the gate. In the end, Harry Kember, the intruder, is banished from the garden.

The women in the garden can be contrasted with the "independent" city women, who have left the safety of the private sphere behind, in some of the other stories. This leap into a more free space, nevertheless, has not brought with it happiness, and, as Sydney Janet Kaplan says, "one by one Mansfield's city women retreat into fantasy and

[89] MacCannell, 100.

isolation."[90] The women are surrounded by culture rather than nature, and in many of these stories there are artificial rather than live flowers. In some of the stories young women attempt to live on equal terms in the city with men, but they find themselves in rather dubious situations and are in the end victimised by predatory men: in "The Swing of the Pendulum" (1911) Viola is almost raped by a man; "The Little Governess" (1915) damages her reputation by entering the apartment of an older man; in "Pictures" Ada Moss, an unemployed singer, spends her evening with "a stout gentleman" (CS, 128) in order to pay the rent; and last but not least, there is the unmarried pregnant woman in "This Flower" (1919). All these women are disillusioned and lose their innocence.

Furthermore, as Sydney Janet Kaplan has observed, many of Katherine Mansfield's city women are affected by "an unrecognised, or at least undefined sexual restlessness", that "often is both a symptom of rebellion against confinement in stereotypically female spaces and a clue to the diction and rhythm of her prose in evoking women's responses to the city". Especially in Mansfield's later fiction there are "female character[s] rushing outside, or desiring to be caught up in the rapid movement of life in the London streets."[91] Good examples of this are Bertha Young in "Bliss", who is "turning the corner of [her] own street", and is "overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss – absolute bliss" (CS, 91) and Monica Tyrell in "Revelations" (1920):"Where was she going? Oh, anywhere. She could not stand this silent flat, noiseless Marie, this ghostly, quiet feminine interior. She must be out; she must be driving quickly – anywhere, anywhere."(CS, 193)

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[90] Kaplan, Sydney Janet. "'A Gigantic Mother': Katherine Mansfield's London" In *Women Writers and the City: Essays in Feminist Criticism*. Ed. Susan Merrill Squier. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 169.

[91] Kaplan, Sydney Janet. "Katherine Mansfield's London" In *Women Writers and the City*. Ed. Susan Merrill Squier. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 170-1.

In all, the women turn away from change and self-knowledge at the last moment. There is promise of change in the stories, but it appears that nothing ever happens in the end. The women are the ones who should make the change happen, but it seems unlikely that they ever do. The younger generation – Laura and Kezia – possesses more potential than their mothers' generation to break free from society's constrains.

4.3 Man in the Garden

Men and women are positioned differently in the world, and the relationship they have with spaces and places is, thus, different, too. As I have earlier in this thesis explained, these differences are the outcome of a structured set of inequalities that result in women's inferiority to and oppression by men in different places at different times. If we want to understand women's position as the subordinate 'other' to men, it is just as important to pay attention to men and masculinity as it is to women and femininity. Furthermore, as it was in Chapter 2.1 discussed, the beginning of the twentieth century did not only give rise to a crisis in femininity, but in masculinity too. Therefore, in order to come to the right conclusions about the women's relationship with the garden in Katherine Mansfield's short stories, it is necessary to look at men's relationship with the garden as well, as the connection men have with the garden is quite different from that which the women have with it, and it also affects the amount of freedom the garden can ultimately offer the women.

In the short stories of Katherine Mansfield there are both middle and working class men, who are connected with the garden. Most of the middle class men are quite contrasting figures and represent different aspects of masculinity: in "Prelude" there is

Stanley Burnell – the ultra masculine man to whom the garden is nothing more than a possession; in "At the Bay" Stanley is joined by Harry Kember, who is the handsome man intruding the garden (and has already been discussed in the previous chapter in connection to Beryl), and Jonathan Trout - the unmanly man. In addition to these men, there are the two who experience unease in the garden – Robert Salesby in "The Man without a Temperament" and the husband in "The Escape" – and last but not least, there are the working class men setting up the marquee in the garden of the Sheridans in "The Garden Party".

As it was discussed in the other chapters of this thesis the (enclosed) garden was essentially the sphere of women at the turn of the twentieth century, but men were generally the owners and protectors of the garden. In Katherine Mansfield's short stories the middle class male protagonists, such as Stanley Burnell in "Prelude" and "At the Bay", Harry Young in "Bliss" and Mr Sheridan in "The Garden Party", are the owners of a garden. Stanley Burnell's reflection on buying a bigger house and a bigger garden than the ones they had before reveals clearly that the garden is to him above all an investment or a possession: "'The thing that pleases me,' said Stanley… is that I've got the place dirt cheap…land about here is bound to become more and more valuable…"(NZS, 107). He continues his train of thought on the same subject the next morning: "He was enormously pleased. Weather like this set a final seal on his bargain. He felt, somehow, that he had bought the lovely day, too – got it checked in dirt cheap with the house and ground."(NZS, 109) The thoughts of Harry Young and Mr Sheridan are not revealed, but both of their gardens are talked of as status symbols in the short stories. There are also men, who, like the husband in "The Escape", Robert Salesby in "The Man Without a Temperament", Jonathan Trout and Harry Kember in "At the

Bay", as well as the workmen in "The Garden Party", are in someone else's garden, but their connection to that garden differs considerably from each other.

According to Elizabeth Augspach, it is, of course, possible for men to find solace and enjoyment in the garden as women do, but if they remain in it for too long they endanger their manliness. She continues that "the ladies in the garden are the reward for manhood, but not the means of achieving it."[92] In other words, men must constantly fortify their masculinity, and this can only be achieved by the means of an adventurous life, and cannot be accomplished in the garden. In the short stories of Katherine Mansfield the fear of losing one's manhood manifests itself as anxiety and unease men experience when they come in contact with the garden. In "The Man Without a Temperament" Robert Salesby is staying at a hotel somewhere in Mediterranean Europe with his wife Jinnie, because of her poor health. As it was mentioned in chapter 3.3, Jinnie enjoys spending time in the hotel garden. Robert, on the other hand, feels confined both to his sick wife and the garden and searches for escape on his long walks in the hills. He has been placed in a role and a situation that is untypical for a man: he is not satisfied with being tied down to one place by his sick wife and desires to leave. Robert's unease can be seen in the description of the garden:

> Every leaf, every flower in the garden lay open, motionless, as if exhausted, and a sweet, rich, rank smell filled the quivering air. Out of the thick, fleshy leaves of a cactus there rose an aloe stem loaded with pale flowers that looked as though they had been cut out of butter; light flashed upon the lifted spears of the palms; over a bed of scarlet waxen flowers some big black insects "zoom-zoomed"; a great gaudy creeper, orange splashed with jet, sprawled against a wall. (CS, 135)

As Eithne Henson expresses it, Robert's "suppressed hatred of his unnatural, constrained life in the Mediterranean resort is imaged by the exuberant exotic plants", that "evoke an almost post-coital disgust." She continues that "there is a disturbing excess of decadent vitality in the garden" that resonates in "the unexplained terror

shown by the little girls when 'The Englishman' comes upon them paddling half-naked." Henson also insists that "Here, the aloe, like the 'lifted spears of the palms', is uncomplicatedly phallic."[93] I agree with her – even though in "Prelude" the aloe was rather a balancing point between masculine and feminine – because here the "stem loaded with pale flowers" has masculine rather than feminine connotations. I agree with Henson to a point, for the description of the aloe is undoubtedly phallic on the surface, but it is not possible to totally erase the feminine connotations it has. As it was already in connection with the analysis on "Prelude" established, the aloe is a balancing point between the masculine and the feminine. Here, too, the aloe is flowering, but symbolises Robert's sexual energy that has built up, because he is unable to prove his manliness by conceiving a male heir with his wife due to her illness.

As both Eithne Henson[94] and Anne Holden Rønning[95] have noted, the Mediterranean resort with its garden is contrasted with Robert's memories of a happy life in London. There too they had a back garden, but it is covered in snow: "The lawn is covered with a wavy pattern of cat's paws; there is a thick icing on the garden table; withered pods of the laburnum tree are white tassels; only here and there in the ivy is a dark leaf showing…" (CS, 133) From this scene it could be interpreted that the men are happier in the garden when it is withered, dead and covered in snow.

Similarly, the husband in "The Escape" – a story about a married couple, who has missed the train and is now travelling in a carriage to another train station - experiences anxiety about the garden. During the journey the wife realises that her parasol has fallen

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[92] Augspach, 137.
[93] Henson, Eithne. "'The bright green streaks': Gender and the Natural World in Katherine Mansfield's fiction" In *Lectures D'Une Œuvre: Selected Stories de Katherine Mansfield*. Ed. Amar-Flood, Stephanie and Thornton, Sara. (Paris: Editions du temps, 1997) 97-98.
[94] Ibid, 98.
[95] Holden Rønning, Annette. "Katherine Mansfield, British or New Zealander – The Influence of Setting on Narrative Structure and Theme. In *The Fine Instrument. Essays on Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Paulette Michel and Michel Dupuis. (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989) 131.

out of the carriage, and she refuses to let her husband go looking for it. She rather insists that she must walk on her own to find the parasol, for she feels she will go mad if she does not escape from her husband for awhile. In this story the garden is described only from the perspective of the husband, because the wife does not see the garden as she has gone to find her parasol. When the husband stays behind in the carriage, he suddenly sees on the side of the road a garden with a tree growing in it:

> It was then that he saw the tree, that he was conscious of its presence just inside a garden gate. It was an immense tree with a round, thick silver stem and a great arc of copper leaves that gave back the light and yet were sombre. There was something beyond the tree – a whiteness, a softness, an opaque mass, half hidden - with delicate pillars. As he looked at the tree he felt his breathing die a way and he became part of the silence. It seemed to grow, it seemed to expand in the quivering heat until the great carved leaves hid the sky, and yet it was motionless. Then from within its depths or from beyond there came the sound of a woman's voice. A woman was singing. The warm untroubled voice floated upon the air, and it was all part of the silence as he was part of it. Suddenly, as the voice rose, soft dreaming, gentle, he knew that it would come floating to him from the hidden leaves and his peace was shattered. What was happening to him? Something stirred in his breast. Something unbearable and dreadful pushed in his bosom, and like a great weed it floated, rocked… it was warm, stifling. He tried to struggle to tear at it, and the same moment – all was over. Deep, deep, he sank into the silence, staring at the tree waiting for the voice that came floating, falling, until he felt himself enfolded. (CS, 201-202)

He experiences an epiphany that is very similar to the one Bertha has in "Bliss". At first the epiphany seems positive, but when the woman's voice reaches the man, his attitude changes and the experience turns into something negative.

Analysing this garden scene is more complex than in "The Man Without a Temperament", because Katherine Mansfield plays with gender roles in this story. When the couple is in private the traditional gender roles have been reversed: the wife is the articulate one, and the man is muted. The wife complains constantly and is not satisfied with anything her husband does. Everything that goes wrong is always his fault: "It was his fault, wholly and solely his fault, that they had missed the train"(CS, 196). The wife does not approve of the husband smoking in her presence either and

criticises him severely: "'I beg and implore you for the last time that when we are driving together you won't smoke. If you could imagine,' she said, 'the anguish I suffer when that smoke comes floating across my face….'(CS, 199)." The only response of the man is that he will not smoke, he forgot, and puts his cigarettes away. The final scene on the train reveals that in public the gender roles of the couple are actually quite the opposite, and the woman has reverted right into the role of the loving middle-class wife and everything she says to their fellow passengers revolves around her husband:

> 'Do not disturb yourself, Monsieur. He will come in and sit down when he wants to. He likes – he likes – its his habit.… *Oui, Madame, je juis un peu souffrante*.… *Mes nerfs*. Oh, but my husband is never so happy as when he is travelling. He likes roughing it … My husband … My husband…' (CS, 202)

The man, on the other hand, stands alone in the corridor. The voices from the compartment float to him, but he does not really hear them. He has slipped farther from others after his garden epiphany: "So great was his heavenly happiness as he stood there he wished he might live for ever." (CS, 202) Here, too, in the end commitment to marriage and safety win over a desire for freedom.

I agree with W.H. New in that Katherine Mansfield has probably pondered on the questions what would happen if a woman was given the ability to speak and a man was given silence. As New has pointed out, "The Escape" implies "that men, put into an apparently secondary, 'female', role, even given the creative power of silence, will transform it into an absolute, either on their own or by absorbing the structures of the language of power, and that women, given what seems to be the dominant role, and control over speech, are not so free from convention that power will not also limit them."[96] In other words, the man still has power even if he is silenced, but the woman is still stuck in the patterns of patriarchal speech even though she has been given a voice. W. H. New has also pointed out that the epiphany could be interpreted from the

[96] New, 109

perspective of the woman, because as "even though it does not happen directly to the woman, is framed by her language patterns, which are derived from those of conventional male literature.[97] In neither case the wild zone does not really open itself up fully. In the woman's case the ability to speak does not open up a wild zone for her, because she does not know how to communicate what she has to say through the dominant structures of language; and in the case of the epiphany the man/woman never enters the garden and fully embraces the experience, because he is afraid of what might happen if he actually took a step forward.

The male characters of "Prelude" and "At the Bay" – Stanley Burnell, Jonathan Trout and Harry Kember – not only differ from the husband and Robert Salesby in many ways, but also from each other. Here I will focus on Stanley and Jonathan, who are contrasted with each other, as Harry Kember was already discussed in the previous chapter in connection to Beryl Fairfield. Stanley Burnell is a very masculine man, who does not spend much time in the garden; he only rushes through it on his way to the office in the morning and on his way back to the house in the evening. He does not even notice the aloe in the garden in "Prelude" as the women do: Stanley and Pat, the handyman only dash in a carriage "through and up the drive and round the island, stopping at the exact middle of the verandah [sic]." (NZS, 121) This rushing through can be in the light of what was said earlier of men staying in the garden too long, be interpreted as a one sign of Stanley's desperate attempt to reinforce his manhood. Similarly, in "At the Bay" Stanley "[dashes] out of the house, and [swings] down the garden path." (NZS, 180) However, in "Prelude" Stanley does, however, envision walking in the garden with Linda on Sunday and "explaining to her at length what he intended to do at the office the following week" (NZS, 120), which indicates that he enjoys spending time in the garden with his wife and the garden is to him, too, a place

where he can rest on the weekends. This is something which is obviously allowed for a man after a week of hard work and reinforcing his masculinity.

In "At the Bay" Stanley with is contrasted the figure of the unmanly man, in the form of Jonathan Trout, the brother-in-law of Stanley's wife. Everything, even swimming in the morning, is a competition to Stanley, he is comparing himself to other men, and he has to be the first and the best at everything: "First man in as usual! He had beaten them all again." (NZS, 176) Jonathan, on the other hand, is the opposite of Stanley – a very unmanly man, who deviates from the conventional masculine role and is rather in touch with his feminine and artistic side. He does not like going to the office every day, he is somehow more artistic and flimsy and has a strange way of talking. In the eyes of society Jonathan is deviant and weak. When he comes upon Linda in the garden in the evening on his way to pick his children up, he is perfectly at ease in the garden:

> It was strange to think that he was only an ordinary clerk that Stanley earned twice as much money as he. What was the matter with Jonathan? He had no ambition; she supposed that was it. And yet one felt he was gifted, exceptional. He was passionately fond of music; every spare penny he had went on books. He was always full of ideas, schemes and plans. But nothing came of it all. The new fire blazed in Jonathan; you almost heard it roaring softly as he explained, described and dilated on the new thing; but a moment later it had fallen in and there was nothing but ashes, and Jonathan went about with a look like hunger in his black eyes. At these times he exaggerated his absurd manner of speaking, and he sang in church – he was the leader of the choir – with such fearful dramatic intensity that the meanest hymn put on an unholy splendour." (NZS, 205)

Jonathan and Linda are linked by their marginal position in society: Jonathan is an unmanly man and Linda the woman. It is Jonathan's stronger feminine side that allows him to enjoy the garden experience, and does not entirely prevent the wild zone from forming even though it usually does not surface in the presence of men. He is not afraid of loosing his manhood, if he stays in the garden too long. He would spend his days

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[97] New, 109.

there dreaming rather than at the office if he could choose. It is not possible to imagine Stanley chewing on a straw and lying on the grass. I agree with Gillian Boddy, that through Jonathan Katherine Mansfield illustrates what men might be like, if only they were given a chance, and were determined enough to free themselves from the role society has usually foisted upon them.[98] He is freer than Linda, as he does the things that give him pleasure, even though society does not approve of them. In a way, he is freer than any of the women. Yet, it is necessary to notice that he is a man, and even if he is frowned upon he does have more potential for freedom and movement in space than a woman in the same situation.

The relationship the workingmen have with the garden differs considerably from the relationship the middle class men have with it. The relationship differs also from that which both the middle class and the working class women have with the garden, although both women and working class men are in an inferior position in relation to the middle class men as they both are perceived as the other in the social hierarchy. The working class men are in a space that does not belong to them. They are also allowed, actually required to leave, while the middle class women are more or less required to stay.

[98] Boddy, Gillian. "Frau Brechenmacher and Stanley Burnell". In *The Fine Instrument. Essays on Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Paulette Michel and Michel Dupuis. (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989) 90.

5. Conclusion

The garden as feminine space in Katherine Mansfield's short stories has turned out a fascinating object of study. I focused on seven short stories, but also included other short stories to my analysis at points where I felt they could help me elaborate a particular argument.

My study is located within feminist criticism, which allowed me to choose the theories that were the most suitable for my analysis of the short stories, but it also draws from postcolonial studies, since some of the described events take place in New Zealand. There exists also a rich literature on gardens, which I have relied on in analysing Mansfield's short stories.

I began by introducing the cultural and theoretical background for my thesis. First, I defined the terms modernism and modernity, and discussed women's relationship, particularly Katherine Mansfield's relationship, with these terms in order to establish a cultural and social context for my analysis. Second, I explained what I mean by 'space' and how space is connected with time. Michel De Certeau's definition of space offered me a way to connect spatiality with literature. I also discussed the distinction between public and private spheres, because they were an important element in controlling women's movement in space at the beginning of the 20th century. Third, I focused on the nature/culture dichotomy and Edwin Ardener's wild zone theory.

In the analysis section of the thesis I put the theories introduced earlier into practice. First, I investigated the garden as a woman's space from different perspectives. The main focus was on how the different dichotomies are balanced in connection to the garden in the short stories; and what is the relationship of the individual women with the garden. The gardens revealed themselves to be a complex combination of the different

dichotomies – culture/nature, masculine/feminine, public/ private. The balance shifted between the different sides of the dichotomies to some extent, but it never really settled on either side, but rather remained in the middle. I did come to realise that the Englishness of the gardens was more dominant in the New Zealand stories, but the native features could not be contained at all times even if the settlers attempted this. Similarly, it became obvious that the women are freer in the gardens situated in the city than in the countryside, with the exception of "Bliss" where the garden is surrounded by a wall. Furthermore, the analysis on the public and private divide in connection to the garden revealed that the women have more freedom in the garden than in the house. Similarly, it was also established that class affects women's relationship with the garden, and that the wild zone can be opened up to begin the intermingling of the classes.

I also discovered that the women are associated with the garden in many different ways, and they find different things in the garden depending on their age and marital status. The garden offered the women a possibility to express their sexuality more freely, but they were not as free as they would have been in wild nature. When the women left the garden, there were differences on how much their freedom increased depending on the setting. The beach and the sea proved more free spaces than the garden, but freedom in the city proved a more complex matter. The city women had opportunities for building a more satisfactory life, but in the end they seemed to become the victims of predatory men.

The wild zone manifested itself mainly in the thoughts of the women, and allowed the women to break free from patriarchal society's constrains briefly. It, however, was always brought down usually when it was about to reach its full force, and as the endings of the stories do not really reveal what happens to the women, it is only

possible to read between the lines that the wild zone never opens up fully, and the women most likely never gain the freedom and happiness they long for.

In all, it is possible to conclude that the garden does offer the women in Katherine Mansfield's short stories more freedom than the house does, but this freedom is not complete. It really cannot be as the garden remains always to some extent a part of the private sphere, even though it is a liminal space between the public and the private. Maybe if the garden was some how separated physically from the house, it would be a space of more freedom for the women. The contradiction is in the end never really solved in the short stories in favour of either side of the dichotomy chart. There is also a variation between the different generations of women when it comes to finding freedom; the younger women and the children are the ones who have the most potential and possibilities to break free from the constricting gender roles when they grow up. The older women will most likely remain as they are, unsatisfied with their lives. All the women are fighting for freedom on their own without relying on anyone else for help, which probably why they never break free.

In order to come to the right conclusions about women's relationship with the garden I included also views on men's relationship with the garden. I came to realise that the relationships the two sexes have with the garden differ from each other considerably. For men the garden is a possession and a status symbol, they are afraid of loosing their manhood if they stay in the garden too long. It is, however, possible for a man to connect with the garden if he is in touch with his feminine side.

I think it would be fascinating to study the garden as a feminine space in the work of other writers. For example, *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* written by Katherine Mansfield's cousin Elizabeth von Arnim or would be a suitable candidate for such an

investigation. An equally fascinating task would be to study the wild zone further in other short stories by Katherine Mansfield.

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