

"I'm so keen upon all women having a definite future — are not you? The idea of sitting and waiting for a husband is absolutely revolting and it really is the attitude of a great many girls . . . It rather made me smile to read of your wishing you could create your fate — O how many times I have felt just the same. I just long for power over circumstances." -- Katherine Mansfield

- Expansiveness of interior life
- Opportunity in beauty for a simple life
- The way her characters in her writing are in exile and estrangement

Many modernist writers left their home countries and centred around artistic centres like Paris and London in the pre-war period—Midnight in Paris is a recent film that covers such an artistic community—but many of these writers, Mansfield and Joyce included, still wrote stories about their hometowns.

"I feel in the profoundest sense that nothing can ever be the same—that as artists, we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings." -- Katherine Mansfield

- Emphasis of unity - mood or desire to overthrow and castaway
- Conventional narratives - but need to be aware that Mansfield is easy to read but harder themes to identify

Mansfield's short stories develop over the course of time into 'slices of life' – glimpses into the lives of individuals, families, captured at a certain moment, frozen in time like a painting or a snapshot.

On the whole, a single 'main' event is revealed and developed, no case is presented for or against their actions or their life; they simply 'are'.

- Ordinary being made into something and the opportunity for an epiphany
- Pulling away from modernised imperative
- Morally or ethically right - doesn't pass by judgements
- Something in miniature to capture the whole life - getting something large from something small
- Mentions unmentionable things
- Express things that people wouldn't say
- Criticises conventional relationships, prejudice and small mindedness
- Doesn't make big judgements
- Implied in the language is the attitude toward the young couple - reveals how she says things without saying it

Other ironically subversive themes include her criticism of conventional relationships, together with a social critique of prejudice and small-mindedness, all of which is achieved through suggestion, through implication; no pronouncements are ever made, the characters, according to Gillian Boddy, "betray themselves, usually unwittingly, through their actions and words."

- Main character reveals her small mindedness. Implied not explicit.
- Modernist fragmenting - creating a world through modernised montages

Solitary characters narrate their interior monologues in one text; in others, as Edward Wagenknecht notes, '[Mansfield] had Dickens' ability effectively to "tag" a character through the description of some single characteristic action'.

- Obsession with the hat - articulating series of beliefs about the world

One of Mansfield's greatest strengths is **her ability to 'become' her fictional characters** and to depict with acute psycho-logical insight the workings of their minds, as well as delineating their physical attributes.

Mansfield's narrative voice speaks through one particular character after another, with no generalising authorial view or voice.

Mansfield uses numerous grammatical devices to develop her creativity, notably a variety of sentence forms, listed by Marilyn Zorn as, 'the rhetorical question, the exclamation, repetition, the abrupt shift in syntax signalled by the dash, the unfinished sentence [...and] the difference in male and female speech'.

Mansfield develops a mastery of the art of being brief; there is nothing extraneous in her stories. Imagery abounds, which develops into the use of recurring symbols, which unify all her work, 'similar to the "leitmotifs" of Wagner's music and Mann's fiction, whose repetition recalls each previous occurrence, and which unify the work in terms of its theme'.

- Numerous grammatical devices
- Brief - says things in very few words
- The need for fragmenting images - growing and accumulating with meaning
- Shows how she is engaging with modernism