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CINEMA AND THE SHORT STORY:
THE INFLUENCE OF CINEMA ON KATHERINE
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CINEMA AND THE SHORT STORY:
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By

Diane Sue Saylor

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ABSTRACT

CINEMA AND THE SHORT STORY:
THE INFLUENCE OF CINEMA ON KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S FICTION

By

Diane Sue Saylor

The emergence of the cinema in the early part of the twentieth century influences the aesthetic of the short story. Mansfield's short stories achieve multiple effects that break with the tradition of the "single effect" short story. Application of cinematographic aesthetics to her fiction through a textual version of camerawork and montage (editing) opens up the genre of the short story to allow for a complexity of plot and character that hitherto methods could not realize. Employment of these cinematic effects not only changes the structure of the story's form but also changes our understanding of what the short story may accomplish. As Sergei Eisenstein (an early Soviet director and theorist of the cinema) notes, these methods contribute to the "enormous breadth" of what may be achieved in the way of film (Eisenstein 212-13). They also contribute to expanding the potential of what a short story may communicate.

For Doug

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We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bring about an amazing change in our very notion of art – Paul Valéry, *Pièces sur L'Art*, "La Conquète de l'ubiquité" Paris

INTRODUCTION

Miss Ada Moss wakes up in her Bloomsbury boarding room to a parade of a fantastic images dancing above her bed: "A pageant of Good Hot Dinners passed across the ceiling, each of them accompanied by a bottle of Nourishing Stout." In their wake proceeds "A pageant of Sensible Substantial Breakfasts [that] followed the dinners across the ceiling, shepherded by an enormous, white, uncut ham" (Stories 393).[1] The images induced by Ada's early morning cold and hunger flash across the page like a reel of film projected onto a screen. The sequence from Katherine Mansfield's short story "Pictures" captures a gallery of pictures (as the title suggests) and projects them in a sequential display resulting in the illusion of animated motion. The story, inspired by a chance encounter with an aging actress with whom Mansfield (a sometimes extra and bit player in the then-new motion pictures)[2] had acted in the movies, conveys a cinema-like quality to the text.

Mansfield's story has an episodic quality that suggests scenes from a movie. As the story unfolds, the reader follows Miss Moss as she 1) dodges her landlady's demand for the rent, slips out to the local A B C for an inexpensive cup of tea (and leaves when told that the café is not yet open, but not before eavesdropping on the waitress and cashier's gossip about a new beau), 2) walks instead to Kig and Kadgit (a booking agent) where she fantasizes Mr. Kadgit will have a well-paying role for her, 3) leaves when

reminded by the charwoman that it is the weekend and the business is closed, 4) moves on to another casting agent (Biet and Bithems) where she waits with a chorus of other aspiring actors and performers, 5) again leaves when Mr. Bithem puts her off by telling her to "come back" later, 6) & 7) continues in like manner to inquire for work at the North-East Film and the Bitter Orange Companies, 8) has a good cry in the Square Gardens, and 9) finally consigns herself to the Café de Madrid where she convincingly plays the role of a faded actress-turned prostitute for a stout gentleman who puffs cigar smoke in her face and negotiates the inevitable sexual transaction – all within a handful of a few pages. Mansfield packs a great deal of detail into the recounting of Miss Moss's day, instilling it with both visual image and an array of emotion that runs a course through anger, hope, disappointment, despair, denial, and finally resignation. She does this with great economy of words.

Katherine Mansfield writes out of a tradition that dictates that the reader must be able to read the entire short story in one sitting, an amount of time that Edgar Allan Poe, an early theorist of the genre, sets at anywhere between half-hour to two hours (May 61). He writes that the story must be of "a certain degree of duration ...for the production of any effect at all" (May 69) but must not be so long as to interfere its "unity of effect or impression" (May 61) which is the hallmark of the well-written short story. The temporal parameters function to prevent the interruption by "Worldly interests" (May 61) which necessarily intervene in the reading of a larger work. Poe asserts the necessity for a sense of *totality* in the short story; the story must be able to stand alone as a complete work despite its brevity (May 61). According to Poe, the short story succeeds best when the author organizes his thoughts to communicate "a certain unique or single *effect*"

[Poe's emphasis] that renders a picture to the reader that conveys the thematic intention (May 61). Brander Matthews (another early theorist and author of "The Philosophy of the Short-Story") elaborates on Poe's definition by suggesting that this "single effect" is best achieved when the story limits itself to "one action, in one place, on one day ... [and] deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation" (May 73).[3] Mansfield clearly stretches the limits of what she conveys in her short fiction.

By following Miss Moss through the multiplicity of episodes and encounters and concomitant range of emotions that mark her day in the above example of "Pictures," Mansfield's short story achieves multiple effects that break with the tradition of the "single effect" short story. Application of cinematographic aesthetics to her fiction through a textual version of camerawork and montage (editing) opens up the genre of the short story to allow for a complexity of plot and character that hitherto methods could not realize. Employment of these cinematic effects not only changes the structure of the story's form but also changes our understanding of what the short story may accomplish. As Sergei Eisenstein (an early Soviet director and theorist of the cinema) notes, these methods contribute to the "enormous breadth" of what may be achieved in the way of film (Eisenstein 212-13). They also contribute to expanding the potential of what a short story may accomplish.

THE ART OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

In the beginning of the twentieth century, motion pictures revolutionized the way we look at the world. Early film-going audiences, unaccustomed to the concept of

moving images projected on a screen, ducked in their seats and screamed in terror as they watched short clips of trains rushing towards them. As audiences grew familiar with the new technology, they tired of these early novelty "views" and "actualities" which offered little more than simple visual representation of movement. The motion picture industry responded by producing story films which incorporated narrative, often adapted from prose fiction, into the action. This posed a challenge for the early filmmakers who faced technical issues in learning how to tell the story on the big screen while maintaining continuity of the narrative and plot. Through experimentation and innovation, they developed filmic styles and techniques, and along the way they created a new art form to make the leap from the page to the screen. Ironically, these same techniques which allowed movie makers to translate the written word into a cinematic language in turn influenced the very genre that necessitated their invention in the first place.

If the history of film records the history of a new art, then it must also record its influence on the creation of a new genre of short story – one that incorporates the new filmic aesthetics to lend definition to a new kind of *realism* showing movement rather than a single, static image – one that attempts to show the whole of life rather than only a part. This clearly manifests in the modern short story which incorporates both cinematic camera technique and montage into its form. Cinematography's impact on the content and formal elements of the story (which structure the narrative and influence on how we read the short story) transforms the relation between how the story is shaped and what it tells. Through the manipulation of image, style, language and structure, the cinema's influence alters the art of narration. An intertextuality with the cinema changes our notion of what constitutes a short story and correspondingly transforms how we go about

reading and interpreting it in terms of language and representation. These changes are particularly apparent in the innovations in the form and shape of the short stories of Katherine Mansfield, an influential writer and one of the key innovators of the modern short story.[4]

MANSFIELD'S "OWN INVENTION"

In a 1917 letter to her good friend and artist Dorothy Brett, Katherine Mansfield writes, "I don't feel anything but intensely a longing to serve my subject as well as I can" (Letters 1:331). She describes her method of writing: "What form is it? You ask. Ah, Brett, its [sic] so difficult to say. As far as I know its [sic] more or less my own invention. And how have I shaped it?" Mansfield does not directly identify her new technique, but rather she describes what inspires her – the New Zealand island where she was born:

> in the early morning there I always remember feeling that this little island has dipped back into the dark blue sea during the night only to rise again at beam of day, all hung with bright spangles and glittering drops – (When you ran over the dewy grass you positively felt that your feet tasted salt.)
>
> (Letters 1:331)

The passage employs a series of vivid images that calls to mind a cinematic quality that catches the transience of the moment "with something of its sparkle and its flavour" (Letters 1:331). She explains: "just as on those mornings white milky mists rise and uncover some beauty, then smother it again and then again disclose it. I tried to lift that mist from my people and let them be seen and then to hide them again" (Letters 1:331).

Her words depict a world in motion. In an effort to better "serve [her] subject," she is not satisfied to portray the landscape in a simple, static image, nor is she willing that her characters be so drawn. Rather, she shows life in all its movement – a living, dynamic sequence of moments. Life is in motion and that is how she depicts it in her writing.

By way of example, Mansfield verbally converts Brett's painting *Still Lives* from a static image of a bowl of fruit into something that exudes energy: "What can one do, faced with this wonderful tumble of round bright fruits, but gather them and play with them – and *become them*, as it were" (Letters 1:330). With language that inspires energy – fruit that *tumbles*, is *gathered* and *played* with – what is formally a *still* bowl of fruit suddenly transforms into something that evokes vivid action. What inspires Mansfield is a world in motion – its multiplicity of images. She writes later to Brett about a subsequent work: "Your still life sounds lovely & I like to think of your bottils [sic], all in a row...But I see *them* from the 'literary' point of view. They say summer & lunch out of doors and strawberries on a glass plate with gold specks on it" (Selected Letters 236-37). With her pen, Mansfield infuses inanimate objects with life and moment. The "bottlils" convey a change of season and location (now summer, now outside) by evoking sequential images of days gone by (or yet to come) as if a metaphoric camera focuses on this imaginary setting of time and place. By translating the representation of motion to a textual model, Mansfield succeeds in developing of a style of her own "invention."

That style involves writing characters that seem to *speak for themselves*. Mansfield writes to Richard Murry, her brother-in-law, about her continuing project to hone her technique:

> It's a very queer thing how *craft* comes into writing. I mean down to details. *Par exemple*. In 'Miss Brill' I choose not only the length of every sentence but even the sound of every sentence. I choose the rise and fall of every paragraph to fit her, and to fit her on that day at that very moment. After I'd written it I read it aloud – numbers of times – just as one would *play over* a musical composition – trying to get it nearer and nearer to the expression of Miss Brill – until it fitted her. (Hanson 113)

Mansfield *rehearses* her characters until they come to life resulting in a method of story-telling is more accurately described as *story-showing*. She writes: "I believe in technique...I don't see how art is going to make that divine *spring* into the bounding outline of things if it hasn't passed through the process of trying to *become* these things before recreating them" (Letters 1:330). Performance plays a key role in letting the characters (both human and *non*-) act out their parts. "When I write about ducks," she explains, "I swear that I am a white duck with a round eye, floating in a pond fringed with yellow blobs and taking an occasional dart at the other duck with the round eye, which floats upside down beneath me" (Letters 1:330). Though the incorporation of cinematographic aesthetics, Mansfield achieves what her husband, J. M. Murry, describes as "fiction that tries to let every character present herself or himself directly through word and action" (Story 16). This presentation implies movement, but it may also be conveyed through a lack thereof. Cinematographic effects which allow the story to play with motion, between animation and stillness, also allow the story to project a vacillating sense of subject and object.

We see this in the opening lines of Mansfield's story "Prelude." The story begins in medias res as if an imaginary camera recording the ongoing events suddenly switches on:

> There was not an inch of room for Lottie and Kezia in the buggy. When Pat swung them on top of the luggage they wobbled; the grandmother's lap was full and ... Hold-alls, bags and boxes were piled upon the floor. "These are absolute necessities that I will not let out of my sight for one instant," said Linda Burnell... (219)

Not included among these "absolute necessities" are two inert figures, Lottie and Kezia, who are lumped together with all the other discarded and unnecessary items. Aside from their names, no animating feature distinguishes them. They stand on the lawn as still and lifeless as if they were made of stone, no more alive than the raiment they wear: "all ready for the fray in their coats with brass anchor buttons and little round caps with battleship ribbons" (219). Motionless, they wait "Hand in hand [staring] with round solemn eyes, first at the absolute necessities and then at their mother" (219). If necessities *move* with the mother and non-necessities *remain*, then it is clear that Lottie and Kezia are relegated both in word and form to the same status of the chairs and tables that litter the lawn. Linda (their mother) notes the similarity between her children and the other surplus objects:

> We shall simply have to leave them. That is all. We shall simply have to cast them off," said Linda Burnell... she waved a white hand at the tables and chairs standing on their heads on the front lawn. How absurd they looked! Either they ought to be the other way up, or Lottie and Kezia

ought to stand on their heads, too. And she longed to say: "Stand on your heads, children, and wait for the store-man." (219-20)

The passage works subtlety by conflating character with setting and setting with character. That is to say the roles of each act in reverse: images of children remain immobile while tables and chairs stand on their heads. Kezia and Lottie act more like scenery than protagonists in a story. The two are tossed like "lump[s]" more than "child[ren]" atop the buggy where, like the other unsecured objects, they wobble, having no apparent volition of their own to brace and steady themselves (219).

The effect is transitory. As the scene continues, the girls come alive. Suddenly Kezia drops Lottie's hand and "dart[s] towards the buggy." Outside the frame of the imaginary camera, the buggy rolls off and sparks life into the girls, and Lottie raises a "wail" (220-21). The effect consists of a complex sequence of visual cues cut together in non-sequential order. If one follows the action frame by frame (again relying on the model of an imaginary camera shooting the events), one sees Kezia and Lottie in the first scene standing immobile and stone-like, in the second Kezia sprinting, and finally in the third scene, the "camera" cuts to the object of her pursuit – the buggy rolling down the road. The visual projection of the sequence of events represented in the text diverges from the real-time order of how they occur, which would begin with 1) the girls' inertia, followed by 2) the buggy rolling into motion, which in turn would spark 3) Kezia to chase after it. The transition from the children's stillness to their animation manifests through shifts in the *natural* order of time to a representation that keeps a continuous focus on the two girls for a longer duration. This increase in the amount of time they are centered on the textual screen emphasizes their presence. By manipulating the natural

order of the plot through the textual equivalent of cutting film and splicing it back (or montage – to be discussed in more detail later) to show a modified continuity of action, the narrative elevates the stature of the two girls from the domain of the object to that of the subject, and in a blink of the textual "eye," they come alive.

Using the models of a metaphoric camera or lens and montage to control the spatial and temporal composition allows Mansfield's fiction to "show" instead of "tell" the story. If as Anton Chekhov (an early influence on Mansfield)[5] notes, "An Artist must not be a judge of his people or of what they say, but only an impartial witness" (Hanson 34),[6] then the role of the author is, as Mansfield writes, "not so much to *solve* the question but to *put* the question" (Letters II:124). The aesthetic corresponds to a convention noted by Seymour Chatman, a theorist of both film and prose narrative, that in cinema the "camera depicts but does not describe" (Braudy 450). The strong visual component in Mansfield's work provokes readers to "see" the action and determine the meaning through the visual cues in the textual frame.

MANSFIELD'S TEXTUAL "CAMERAWORK"

The manner by which Mansfield's fiction accomplishes this effect can be characterized in cinematographic terms. Looking at subsequent passages of "Prelude" the reader discerns a sort of textual camerawork in action. Through such means, the story indicates both spatial and temporal movement by instilling a sense of building energy and motion. In the first sequence, the young protagonist of the story, Kezia, takes a long last look at her childhood home on the eve of her family's move to their new house:

> After tea Kezia wandered back to their own house. Slowly she walked up the back steps and through the scullery into the kitchen. Nothing was left in it but a lump of gritty yellow soap in one corner of the kitchen window-sill and a piece of flannel stained with a blue bag in another. (222)

The passage evokes a meandering sense of time and space that mirrors Kezia's nostalgic last walk through her house. The short simple sentences that record her progress as she makes her way into the kitchen begin to lengthen and become complicated with detail as Kezia slows her step and fixes her gaze on a couple of overlooked and discarded items. Her eyes linger over the bar of yellow soap long enough to discern that it is gritty. A piece of cloth of cloth is scrutinized to such an extent that Kezia determines that it in fact flannel and has been stained at some distant time with a blue bag.

The leisurely pace with which Kezia registers her surroundings down to the minutest details of the half-hidden cast-offs suggests an *internal camera* that roams with her during her walk and *records* whatever comes into her line of sight. The reader follows the exploration of the house through Kezia's eyes. Because we "see" through her point of view, we note little of her physical person (only a single glance at her hands in a window). Instead we get a textual replaying of what her mind's eye *films*, panning here for broad general views and lingering there to document more detail. In the passage above, our understanding of the proceedings comes entirely from this camera-like vantage.

Borrowing some terms from filmic language, the narrator here functions like a combination director/camera operator by controlling what appears in the mise-en-scene – the setting, characters and the disposition or "behavior" of these elements. By staging the

entire event for the textual camera, the narrator (just as the director) emphasizes certain impressions in the projected frame. It is important to point out that the frame does not project merely content; it also reflects a sense of time and interval. In addition to the formal composition of the frame (for example, the relation of character to setting), other factors, such as the length of film shot or the mobility of the camera work to establish a sense of time as well as place. That is to say that the art of cinema works in both temporal and spatial dimensions.

In film, the duration of the camera shot affects the audience's understanding of its content. The length of time an event remains onscreen may be manipulated in various ways, such as by modifying either the camera or the projector's drive mechanism. In the first movie cameras and projectors, which were operated by rotating a hand crank mechanism, the effect was easily accomplished by manually controlling the speed with which the film was shot or projected. As expected, the faster the operator winds the crank, the faster the shooting or projecting speeds and the shorter duration that the filmed event or object ultimately flashes onscreen. Conversely, the slower the speed of operation, the longer the interval the events or objects appear on the screen. To the audience, the resulting images register the illusion of a speeding up or a slowing down of the content of the frame. In the event that the camera or projector operator quits rotating the drive mechanism altogether, the projected onscreen motion stops entirely, creating a static photographic image consistent with the basic unit of film, the single still frame.

Alternatively, the camera operator can achieve similar effects by relying on long takes (shots that continue to record for an unusually long time before cutting and transitioning to the next shot or sequence). When the long take is combined with a

moving frame (where the *frame* is the view that results from the content that is projected onto the movie screen) through such cinematographic techniques as panning, tracking (when the physical camera moves, such as on a dolly), and zooming, the resulting visual frame presents a continually changing vantage that is comparable to shifts of point of view. Objects come into view, and they exit, imparting the illusion that they move both spatially and temporally relative to the textual frame. But when the *camera* lingers on a particular visual field (while continuing to *film*), the objects in that field appear onscreen for a longer the duration and consequently offer the viewer an increased opportunity to examine and scrutinize the contents of that frame. If the camera stops on an object at rest, it will remain so represented in the frame. However the means, be it through the slowing of the camera or projector speeds or by controlling the actual movement of the camera itself, the longer the object remains in the visual frame, the more attention it attracts.

A consequence of fixing this metaphoric lens on one spot is that it renders objects caught in its frame as inanimate and lifeless, much like the bar of soap and the discarded rag which lie inert and motionless in the window. The incorporation of a sort of textual *zoom lens* and the stilling of the metaphoric frame directs the reader's focus to the two discarded items. In the case of the soap and rag, this slowing down intensifies the focus on the two objects signaling their elevated importance to both Kezia and the reader. The passage also calls to mind a previous employment of this camera-like technique used on Kezia and Lottie that records them standing frozen like fixtures on the lawn. The two resulting "shots" draw visual parallels that associate the two girls with the two discarded

items left in the window sill. The use of cinematographic effects visually connects Kezia's sense of empathy with the other discarded items.

Conversely, incorporating physical motion into the filming process through shooting the film with the same methods discussed above may also convey an infectious sense of energy and life that attaches to objects that would otherwise appear inert and imparts on them a corresponding sense of motion. The movement that records the camera's gaze allows changes in perspective in the mise-en-scene that impart a sense of motion to the images that fall within the moving frame. "Prelude" employs an analogous effect. In the passage that describes Kezia's walk, the movement of the camera (figuratively aligned to record events from young girl's perspective) creates a sense of sympathetic motion to whatever passes through the frame. As the sun begins to dip lower on the horizon and the move to the new house is fast approaching, anxiety quickens pace of Kezia's gaze. An increasing sequence of images flash in front of her eyes – like the multiplicity of frames through which we view the motion picture – as she scans the room faster and faster, registering what she can before the sun sets. The images she projects register the moments that teeter between the static and lifeless of images of a soon-to-be abandoned past to the nervous excitement and energy of a highly anticipated move to an unknown future. Accordingly, the textual images waver between stillness and dynamism:

> The Venetian blind was pulled down but not drawn close. Long pencil rays of sunlight shone through and the wavy shadow of a bush outside danced on the gold lines. Now it was still, now it began to flutter again, and now it came almost as far as her feet. (222)

Pencil rays of light that quietly and inertly *shine* suddenly come to life and *dance* in shimmering, electrified gold lines. Then the flickering image stops. Then it begins again animating the mise-en-scene with energy and making the rays of sunlight *play* a part in the narrative.

As an author, Mansfield achieves what Vachel Lindsay describes as objective of a good director, which is to make "the scenery [act]" along with the actors (Lindsay 9). He describes the art to bringing life the normally inert object in terms of cinematography: the effect is best achieved when the director lets the object's "special attributes show themselves by gradually, reaching their climax at the highest point of excitement in the reel, and being an integral part of that enthusiasm" (Lindsay 144-45). At that critical moment, he continues, "Let the buildings emanate conscious life [until they] dominate the fancy" (Lindsay 144-45). He offers a variety of visual effects to impart this vital quality to the object: "[By] having its outlines waver in the twilight, by touches of phosphorescence, or by the passing of inexplicable shadows or the like" (Lindsay 144-45), the object is transfigured into what Lindsay identifies as "a fourth dimension" where "architecture-in-motion" captures "the human soul in action" and acts out "the heart of man" (Lindsay 12). Set into motion, the object becomes "a character in the play [of the movie]" (Lindsay xxii). Mansfield's narrative represents Kezia's ambivalence about her impending move through just such a cinematic display of light "fluttering" between stillness and agitation. The rays of light capture something of Kezia's excitement and spirit and act complicit in the telling of her story.

At the height of the moment, when dusk and the move to the new house is fast approaching, the camera's focus suddenly darts to the staccato "Zoom! Zoom!" of a blue-

bottle (an insect with a name that calls to mind Mansfield's invigorated "bottils") that "knocked against the ceiling" (222). Everything is energized. Previously inanimate and "off-camera" objects snap to life with recorded movement:

> the day flickered out and dark came. With the dark crept the wind snuffling and howling. The windows of the empty house shook, a creaking came from the walls and floors, a piece of loose iron on the roof banged forlornly. (223)

The house comes alive. Like the "furniture, trappings, and inventions" set into motion "to express the haunted mind" in the example Lindsay draws from D. W. Griffith's *Avenging Conscience* (Lindsay 7-8), Kezia's childhood home shakes, creaks, and howls forlornly in a textual manifestation of her fear. Like the furnishings and trappings set into motion in a movie, the house becomes animated.

In contrast, Kezia is "suddenly quite, quite still, with wide open eyes and knees pressed together" (223). The narrative correspondingly slows the pace. Words are repeated, parsed out slowly, and punctuated with commas to slow the reader. The girl who for the moment lends her point of view to direct the reader's gaze is suddenly paralyzed with fear – something the reader can anticipate by her growing anxiety and (increasingly) sluggish pace implied by her focus on a fixed point. As she stops to stare at the object that has captured her attention, she becomes glued to one spot (the window casing) where she mentally zooms in on the details of the soap and the cloth. Again, in the language of film, the effect results from combination of the textual equivalent of two camera techniques – the *close-up* and the *long take*.

As the textual *camera* that records Kezia's frozen gaze continues to roll, more "frames per second" are shot that remained focused on the single image. If that object is not naturally animated, such as the discarded soap, the slowing of the movement of the frame manifests in a slowing of the sympathetic motion of the content of that frame. As the camera speed decreases, the sequence that is recorded appears to move in slow motion. When the camera stops, (as it does figuratively in the above passage as a result of Kezia's fear), the corresponding momentum of the filmed object also stops making the it now appear fixed and inert. This complete elimination of movement of the frame also implies a corresponding stilling of the metaphoric *camera* that visually documents Kezia's progress through the house. Both the projected image and the vantage from which the view is shot are frozen in stasis and lose their vitality and sense of animation. Since the textual lens is supported by Kezia's point of view, her focus on the soap and rag draw attention to her own immobility.

Mansfield's fiction plays with the animation and in-animation of its subjects. If Lindsay's example of Sculpture-in-Motion describes the *bringing to life* the normally inert object, then the filmic effect he dubs "Painting-in-Motion" produces the opposite effect. Where camerawork and technique allow the still object to move, other filmic effects object-ify and still the human subject. Lindsay writes the actor "has intimate and painter's qualities in his acting, and he makes himself into a painting or an etching in the midst" of the action (Lindsay 6). These Paintings-in-Motion manifest as photographic stills with the characteristic of low relief sculpture (that is to say, retaining the shape and form of life but lacking any of the animating character). The effect resembles formal arrangements of people and setting, such as the photographic stills taken from a scene in

a movie to promote the film. Lindsay describes these "Paintings-in-Motion" as "rest the fevered and wandering eye" (128) for within the parameters of the frame they maintain their charm of low relief, or their serene composition" (Lindsay 128).

Kezia is caught in such a textual freeze- (or frieze) frame. Time seems to stop. No longer does she register a change in vantage. With her paralysis comes a stilling of the textual camera that records her both her progress and her point of view. Now, instead of describing the physical surroundings that lie within her line of sight, Kezia projects images constructed from her mind's eye of a house alive with movement. Now a phantom "IT" (a reflection of her "haunted mind" that, for the tense moments recounted, remains outside the range of the metaphoric lens) lurks "just behind her, waiting at the door, at the head of the stairs, at the bottom of the stairs, hiding in the passage, ready to dart out at the back door" (223). The textual camera darts between the different locations where Kezia imagines "IT" to be. The short choppy fragments (not full sentences) contribute to the sense of lens flitting from here to there without stopping for more than an instant. The reader has no time to discern detail with the rapidity of *camera* movement. The dark and ominous setting, already visually established by this point in the text, contributes to the growing sense of panic that makes it difficult to hold focus. With such lack of solid visual cues, the reader is willing to accept the presence of this unnamed and otherworldly menace as a manifestation of Kezia's fear.

The moment of tension reaches its climax when suddenly the action shifts, "'Kezia!' [Lottie] called cheerfully. 'The storeman's here'" (223). With the shift of focus, the tension breaks; the dark and gloom of the previous moment vanish and in their stead a cheerful brightness reanimates Kezia. In that instant, the metaphoric camera shuts

off and immediately restarts in a visual nudge that rouses Kezia from her immobility and allows her to finish the journey to her new home. In the process, the reader must make a mental transition between the darkness and threat of the unknown hiding in the house to Lottie's cheerful visage that marks a break in the narrative. The reader must bridge the two disparate scenes in a way that allows for continuity of plot.

MONTAGE AS A NARRATIVE METHOD

Eisenstein describes the similar situation faced by the early filmmaker D. W. Griffith when he proposed cutting a scene of a woman waiting for her husband to return and following it immediately by another scene of that husband stranded on a desert island. The consensus in the filmmaking community was "How can you tell a story jumping about like that? The people won't know what it's about" (Eisenstein 200). Griffith counters by pointing to the writing of Charles Dickens which routinely employs such breaks and jumps without compromising the reader's understanding of the flow of the story. Eisenstein points out that that just as the meaning of a sentence arises from the interaction of its individual words, cinematic meaning results from the dialectical interplay of shots (Eisenstein 236-37). Griffith takes what he observes in the nineteenth century author's narrative method and applies it to the cinema. The result is what he coins *montage*, borrowing a term from the fields of mechanics and engineering that describes the "operation of assembling the parts of a mechanism to make it work" (OED). Griffith recognizes that "simply stringing words together doesn't not produce intelligible discourse [any more] than simply stringing separate photographic shots together will ... produce intelligible works of visual art" (Braudy 1). Rather, the art comes from

combining the individual shots to create a scene, then a sequence, and ultimately a complete work (Braudy 1).

D. W. Griffith is credited with applying the concept of montage to film. He assembles a cinematic narrative by juxtaposing different shots (using the shots as parts of a puzzle or what Eisenstein calls a *montage cell*) to convey a *variety* of effects. Through cutting and ordering the shots or cells so that they are in visual apposition with each other, the film editor can produce two shots that show a "conflict in their emotional content (happy versus sad), in their use of illumination (dark versus light), in their rhythms (slow versus fast), in their objects (large versus small), in their directions of movement (right versus left), in their distances (close-up versus far shot), or in any combination thereof" (Braudy 2). A contemporary reviewer of one of Griffith's movies points out, "People who write the long and crowded novels that Dickens did...find this practice [of incorporating a 'break in the narrative, a shifting of the story from one group of characters to another group'] a convenience" (Eisenstein 205). Though useful to help organize larger works, this method is not traditionally associated with the short story as Mansfield finds it. She changes that by incorporating montage into her the narrative style.

Like other modernist writers, Mansfield experiments with language and image to create narrative structures that better convey a sense of the modern world. Walter Benjamin writes in his paper "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" that with changes in society comes "also a new kind of perception" which is reflected in the corresponding changes in art created by that society (222). Accordingly, writers, including those who work with the short story, look for models provide a more accurate

portrayal of the modern world which is no longer as straightforward as it once seemed. Artists such as Picasso evoke the sense of the new culture of characterized by movement, fragmentation, and multiple perspectives through cubist paintings. Writers like Gertrude Stein experiment with stripping language down to its bare essentials, such as in her short story "Ada," to convey a sense fragmentation and disorientation that results from a world shocked and devastated by modern technology, war, and pandemic disease. Authors begin seeking out new means to portray modern life on the page. The cinema provides one such model. With its cuts from one scene to another, it offers a structure that matches the mode of the times. The medium of the cinema is a ripe source of influence for short stories, and it is a model with which Mansfield, a prolific writer of the genre, is very familiar.

By 1915, *The New Age*, a literary magazine to which Mansfield contributes both short stories and reviews, begins to critically engage film as an art form. Vachel Lindsay publishes his seminal book *The Art of the Moving Picture*, the first major work to theorize what a contemporary reviewer calls "the greatest popular aesthetic phenomenon in the world" (Lindsay ix). Mansfield begins to mine her cinematic experience for material and method for her stories. She writes: "I have a lovely idea for a story. Yleski & his wife the children the cinema actor. Plays in Geneva" (Notebook 2:97). She draws on the cinema for an unpublished story of the same name and writes of her struggles to put to paper: "Got on slowly with Cinema, but badly. Sat on the divan & saw rather than wrote. Still it all was better" (Journal I:146). Even though she has little success with this particular piece (it is never published), the journal entry is significant in that it documents that Mansfield begins to look to the cinema for inspiration in her fiction.[7]

Other critics and theorists have explored the role of the new visual culture on fiction. Nancy Armstrong, in her book, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*, cites the influence of the then-new technology of photography on the coincident increase of imagery in the nineteenth century novel. She traces the ascendancy of the "power of visuality" (Armstrong 6) and theorizes how it gains its "authority in modern culture" through use of the photographic image – something that Frederick Jameson, she notes, proposes to do "by examining the emergence and development of popular cinema" (Armstrong 6). In his book *The Modern Short Story* H. E. Bates, the short story writer and critic records a conversation with the short story writer A. E. Coppard[8] where the latter suggests "short story writers could learn much from the cinema." He believes that writers could achieve "a sharp, pictorial impact" through the same system of "cuts, close-ups, fade-outs and brief swift shots" employed by filmmakers (Bates 124-25).

Bates also quotes Elizabeth Bowen's comment that the short story and film have "affinities" in that the two arts "of the same generation...have been accelerating together" and are free to experiment with technique and form (Bates 21).[9] In his biography of Katherine Mansfield, Antony Alpers notes Mansfield's short story "The Black Cap" employs abrupt transitions between scenes that resemble the effect of cinema. Though he acknowledges there would be no difficulty producing the story in film, he dismisses drawing any sort of connection between Mansfield's "acting for the movies" with the innovative stories she was writing at the time. He notes: "Since the films were silent it would be rash to assert that her experiences in that 'big bare studio' had anything to do with her *New Age* pieces" (Alpers 239-40).

But, it is equally rash to dismiss visual evidence that suggests the contrary. The use of cinematographic models allows a flexibility that enables Mansfield's fiction to capture a new sense of perception in multiple points of view and nonsequential plots. Construction of a textual version of montage creates a structure that permits a complexity in plot and character that the short story formerly could not achieve. Matthews writes the longer novel has the space to "give elaborate pictures of life in all its most minute details" (May 76), but the shorter story, to maintain its *unity of effect*, does not have that luxury. In the case of the story, Matthews writes, "the half is more than the whole" (May 76). Mansfield disagrees. From an artistic perspective, she does not want to be restricted to showing only a fraction of life. She writes: "Take the very best of [fiction]. Aren't [writers] still cutting up sections rather than tackling the whole of a mind?" (Hanson 114).

Ironically, it is what amounts to cutting up her story into parts through techniques of montage that Mansfield is able to accomplish the task she sets up for herself. This is not an "overambitious and vain" (to use Mansfield's own words) attempt to put too much into the short story and risk losing the narrative thread. By applying cinematographic aesthetics to the genre, particularly through the use of montage, Mansfield's stories are able to project much more onto the page than would otherwise have been possible and yet maintain the continuity of narrative demanded by the short form. Lottie's sudden and cheerful reappearance into the frame in the above passage of "Prelude" marks such a filmic shift in the narrative. The dark and menacing twilight of house yields to a cheerful, bright frame of Lottie standing at (and framed by) the door. The reader

recognizes the effect of the conflicting shots marks the transition in Kezia's life from the carefree days of her childhood to the bewildering world of adults.

MONTAGE IN MANSFIELD'S STORIES

In order to maintain the "unity of effect or impression" of a short story, Poe warns against creating "unnecessarily complex" plots "where the *dénouement* is awkwardly brought about by interposed incidents" (May 71-72). Unlike the novel, which because of its length may enjoy complex and multiple narratives lines, the short story, as Matthews notes, must remain "complete and self-contained, in order to reach an "effect of 'totality" or "unity of impression" from its single effect (May 73). Whereas the novel, he continues, may "of necessity be broken into a series of episodes" (May 73), the short story must remain concise. But, as Wallace Martin notes in his book *The New Age Under Orage*, the younger up-and-coming writers, like Katherine Mansfield, with their "preoccupations" of technique were poised to "supersede" and disregard the methods of the prior generation (62). Mansfield's stories contradict traditional models by weaving such complicating "interposed incidents" throughout the narratives.

The incorporation of montage into the text allows for a greater flexibility to juggle several narrative lines while maintaining the *unity of effect* due to temporal restraints on the form of the story. Mansfield divides longer stories such as "Prelude" and "At the Bay" and shorter ones such as "Spring Pictures" into numbered chapters that reflect multiple narratives. The latter story is divided into three seemingly unrelated episodes. In the first, the third person omniscient narrator pans across a street scene, follows an old hag peddling flowers, and continues to metaphorically stroll past street vendors selling

everything from toys and lettuce to dirty ribbons. The old woman keeps reappearing into the frame while the narrator turns again and to focus on a music store. The chapter/scene ends with a cinematic fadeout as sounds from the music store, the "piano, the violin and the flute [,] dribble into quiet," and the old hag peddling flowers reemerges one last time in the frame before evaporating in a set of ellipses: "Who will buy my violets? ..." (199). The fadeout introduces the subsequent chapter's shift to a first person narrator, a lonely woman whose only comfort is a ticking watch placed under her pillow. She relates her morning in the present tense, describing events as they occur. The third chapter moves the metaphoric camera back in a long shot across the river where a woman (too far away to recognize any features) cries. Is it the lonely woman in the room or someone else? The reader cannot be sure. The proximity of the episode to the previous one lends support that the two are related by an emotional bond. The juxtaposition through montage of the seemingly unrelated episodes connects them as part of a unified whole.

Similar models of montage may also relate the differing levels of consciousness within a single character. Mansfield's short story "The Child-Who-Was-Tired" incorporates several elements of filmic aesthetic in the opening line: "She was just beginning to walk along a white road with tall black trees on either side, a little road that led to nowhere, and where nobody walked at all, when a hand gripped her shoulder, shook her, slapped her ear" (91). When the girl opens her eyes, she is no longer on the road but in some distant bed with three other children. If converted to visual sequences, the plot looks like this:

1) A child walks along a tree-lined road

2) A hand grabs the child and slaps her ear

3) The girl is lying in bed with three other children

The reader is momentarily disoriented when the peaceful, sylvan landscape of the road suddenly cuts to the completely unexpected image of a hand grabbing the child's shoulder and slapping her ear. The effect mimics that of a film cut juxtaposing two different visual *shots*. Through such filmic means, the strike marks a narrative shift as the site of the action moves from the road to a bedroom conveying to the reader the shock of being awaken from a deep slumber. In a sense, the narrative *performs* the shock that registers the shift in perspective.

The sequence employs a combination of cinematographic *camera* maneuvers beginning with a long shot the pans across the landscape and records the far-off woods. The "textual" shooting distance (the measured space between the lens and the object in the frame) then suddenly jolts to a close-up where only a hand and the child's shoulder are visible. The paragraph ends with an extreme close-up of the child's ear as the hand strikes it. When the camera recedes again, the woods cede to the bed and the start of another day of non-stop work. The various *shooting distances* thus mark the transition between dreamscape of the child's reverie and the "reality" of her life. The filmic techniques that cause the textual frame to jump from one location to another contributes to the reader's disorientation and mirror the girl's own reaction at being so violently awaken. Like the girl, the reader must also become re-oriented to the new surroundings, and bridge the gap that represents the border between sleep and waking. Montage effects allow the reader access to deeper levels of consciousness.

It is during the early years of cinema that Freud and Jung introduce the concept of an *interiority* of the human psyche. Their theories in turn influence authors such as

Joyce, Woolf and Mansfield to experiment with new ways to project this interior consciousness. Through such techniques as stream-of-consciousness and interior monologues, writers convey the sense of inner thoughts, dreams, and multiple perspectives. Mary Ann Caws discusses the filmic representation of this nether-land of fantasy and imagination in her book *The Eye in the Text*. She cites Saint-Pol-Roux's[10] notion of how the movies spawn a "generation of energy, the expansion and even multiplication of the individual consciousness, and the interior illumination provided by visions" (Caws 174).

The first filmic representation of the inner consciousness employed a "dream balloon," which looked and functioned much like the speech bubbles in graphic cartoons. The character's mental thoughts were projected onto a white space that was superimposed near the character's head. Griffith modified the effect by employing montage so that cuts between shots conveyed the mental visions on a "full-frame mindscreen" (Mast 35). "The Child-Who-Was-Tired" incorporates such a visual thought balloon to convey the exhausted, young protagonist's dreams of peace and respite away from the toil of her day. Similarly, the "pageant of Good Hot Dinners" and the "pageant of Sensible Substantial Breakfasts" that parade across Miss Ada Moss's bed, play on the screen like Griffith's "mindscreen." These narratives convey deeper levels of consciousness by splicing disparate scenes and reassembling them in an order that projects the multiple perspectives of the human psyche. This borrowing of technique from the film – what Caws calls training the camera on "one lighted spot" (174) gives Mansfield a textual model to show the multiple perspectives coincident with varying levels of consciousness. Filmic techniques of montage provide the structure for the

transition between the two scenes. A sequence of different shots (the panning long shot to the extreme close-up) provides that visual shift that allows the reader to follow the narrative despite the cut. Indeed, it improves the readers' understanding by making them participants in the event. The instantaneous change from one shot to the next in first sentence of "The Child-Who-Was-Tired" passes along the effect of waking suddenly out of a sound sleep. The effect relies on visual cues established by the cinema.

Filmic aesthetics enhance narrative structure by setting a more complex temporal stage. *Parallel montage* may give the impression of concurrent action that is otherwise difficult to convey in film and print. D. W. Griffith introduces and names the concept that refers to the careful organization and juxtaposition of shot to another to impart a sense of disparate events happening at the same time.[11] "Prelude" offers a textual version of parallel montage in the sequence recording the Burnell family's first night in their new home. The fourth chapter is broken into four parts that describe the same time frame but from several different perspectives. As the members of the family trail off to bed, Beryl daydreams about an imaginary beau. Her thoughts taper off as she drifts into sleep: "A young man, immensely rich [...] The new governor is unmarried...There is a ball [...] Who is that exquisite creature [...] Beryl Fairfield..." The scene fades away and reopens on a conversation already in progress in Stanley and Linda's room: "The thing that pleases me..." and Stanley continues to ramble on about his hopes for the future. The close juxtaposition of the two shots and in medias res transition give the reader the sense that Beryl and Stanley express their hopes and aspirations at the same time. As Stanley and his wife settle into bed, he blows out the candle ending the scene with a voice that fades away: a "faint voice from the deep well" (230). The textual *lens*

reopens on a short series of images that appear without transition, one scene cutting into the next with no temporal boundary between them. Pat the handyman sleeps in "his little room behind the kitchen." "Honk, honk" comes from the Alice the servant girl. Kezia's grandmother, still awake asks, "What not asleep yet" and the tiny owls outside call out "More pork; more pork" to the sound of a distant "harsh rapid chatter: 'Ha-ha-ha...Ha-ha-ha" (230-31). There appears to be no significance to the order of events. One crowds into the other until the images fade out and the family goes to sleep. A temporal association lingers shading the characters with more than just simultaneity.

Montage also connects different object, characters and settings by aligning them with conflicting images. The Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein elaborates on Griffith's parallel construction of montage to convey an aesthetic known as *montage by attraction.* The term reflects the logic that the juxtaposition of two objects on the screen infects each other with a sense or meaning that is not normally associated with either. André Bazin describes how the effect works: "The meaning is not in the image, it is in the shadow of the image projected by montage onto the field of consciousness of the spectator" (Bazin 26). Eisenstein describes it through the example of his film *The Strike* in which he avoids "the overacting of extras...in the business of dying" by flashing bloody and gruesome images of cattle being killed and skinned in a slaughterhouse between scenes of gunfire and crowds falling instead (Eisenstein Reader 38-39). As he notes, the construction "assists the association" between the slaughter of the people and the cattle.

Mansfield's fiction offers a less grisly example of a textual version of montage by attraction in the opening lines from "Prelude." Tables and chairs which inherently have nothing to do with children develop an affinity to Kezia and Lottie when they are all

brought together in Linda's vision. Through juxtaposing the fantastic images of the two girls standing on their heads alongside the upturned furniture, the narrative imparts the same useless and superfluous characteristics of the discarded furnishings onto them. All associated images reflect inconsequential in Linda's eyes.

On a broader scale, montage by attraction explains the larger project of "Prelude" – a story that lacks a clear dénouement by traditional standards. The story ends with unresolved tensions still intact: Beryl will continue to pine away for an imaginary lover, Linda will continue to have a whole fleet of children, and Stanley will remain clueless of his wife's ambivalence bordering on antipathy for him. Eisenstein's aesthetic of montage provides the key to what connects these disparate episodes in this family's life. The reader may question what Linda has to do with the aloe or what Kezia has to do with headless ducks. The visual proximity of the characters to the objects "provokes" association (*Eisenstein Reader* 36). Linda imagines herself rowing "Faster! Faster!" (257) away from her family on the ship of the aloe that, like the pregnant Linda, will flower soon. Kezia who is learning what it is to live in the adult world becomes visually associated with the decapitated duck that pulses lifeblood from its neck in a fruitless effort to escape the inevitability of its fate. All the characters of "Prelude" busy themselves under an umbrella of futility. Even Stanley's personal confidence in the success of his life and marriage, manifest through his private thoughts, is undermined by what the reader observes of the inner thoughts of other members of the household. While he frets all day for forgetting to say goodbye to his wife, Linda goes about her day without casting a thought about his absence. Her indifferent "Hullo! Are you home again?" (243) belies his belief that she pines away for him during the day. Read

separately, the individual episodes draw simple character sketches. Read in sequence, they show a complex and moving picture of the dynamics of a modern middle-class family.

THE INFLUENCE OF FILM NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE ON THE SHORT STORY

Though Mansfield's fiction employs elements of cinematography to convey its story, its narrative necessarily differs from film narrative. Simply put, film relies on visual images to *show* the story whereas prose relies only on text. Short stories and fiction in general employ a narrator to participate in the telling by directing the point of view and offering commentary on the characters, setting, or events that transpire in the course of the plot. Although the prose narrator has the appearance of organizing the story by determining what to relay and what to withhold, it does not compose the story. Rather, the narrator is a construct of the narrative itself and as such plays a defined role in the telling of the story. Because the prose narrator employs a certain vocabulary and vernacular and style, it displays personality traits that often manifest in its commentary. In this manner, the narrator is said to have a *persona* or unique voice within the story.

In cinema, the camera generally takes the place of the prose narrator in the telling of the story by providing the point of view. The role of the cinematic narrator is therefore less defined. There are exceptions where the narrator is more prominent, such as in the early soundless films where story captions could provide a sense of a narrator or the voice over in later films, but for the most part the narrator is aligned with the camera in such a way that renders it negligible, and its presence is easily overlooked. The audience

sees the events onscreen limited through the perspective of one or more characters or through the "eyes" of an omniscient and unnamed presence that directs our gaze but otherwise does not participating in the narrative. The camera appears to project an objective view of events whereas the prose narrator is by necessity more intrusive.

Mansfield's stories frequently employ the less invasive narrator of film. From the first line of "Prelude," the source of the story's perspective is uncertain. As in film, the perspective appears to emanate from an omniscient narrator that directs its lens, but unlike the prose narrator, it remains unobtrusive nearly to a fault. The first line – "There was not an inch of room for Lottie and Kezia in the buggy" – refuses to clearly situate perspective. From whose point of view can it be seen that there was no room for Lottie and Kezia? For that matter, who and where are the two named characters? [12] The reader forms a mental image focused solely on the buggy, but from where that point of view emanates is unclear. "Linda Burnell could not possibly have held a lump of a child on hers for any distance" appears to come from Linda's perspective for not only can she determine what she "possibly" can and cannot do. Further, the choice of words, "lump" for a "child," suggests commentary aligns with Linda more than an omniscient narrator (as there is no reason to suspect the latter of *misopedy*). The term "lump" comes from Linda's point of view for only she manifests the maternal indifference evident in the pejorative word choice. The paragraph continues to follow events from Linda's perspective. The subtle manner of the declaration "These are absolute necessities" spoken with a voice "trembling with fatigue and excitement" offers an interiority that only she is likely to be privileged.

Yet, within a few lines, the point of view shifts: "Happily at that moment Mrs. Samuel Josephs, who had been watching the scene from behind her drawing-room blind, waddled down the garden path" (220). "Happily" for whom? This cannot possibly refer to Linda whose lack of concern about leaving her daughters manifests in her throwaway comment, "We will simply have to cast them off" (219-20). The only two who really benefit from Mrs. Samuel Josephs' approach and offer to take charge are the daughters, Kezia and Lottie, but they remain frozen and mute on the lawn. They are not yet an animated presence in the story. Still function more as setting than character; the girls are incapable of registering any point of view. "Happily" emanates from Mrs. Samuel Josephs' demeanor. Her amiable disposition infects the textual screen and momentarily changes the mood from one of disorientation to one of cheer. The effect is short-lived. The girls break the happy interlude by tearfully chasing after the departing buggy. As the source of the perspective shifts, the textual mood also shifts.

Through textual montage, the narrative employs a multiplicity of viewpoints that remains objective (if not indifferent like Linda) to the events. The narrator in "Prelude" functions as a camera lens scanning the textual field and recording its contents with minimal subjective commentary on its significance. One minute the reader glimpses Linda's interior vision of her daughters standing on their heads like the furniture, and the next moment the perspective shifts to Mrs. Samuel Josephs. Visually, it is as if a camera focuses on a frame that exposes the fanciful acrobatic images inside Linda's head and then suddenly snaps away to present the same scene form an entirely different perspective. This shifting, like the cuts and edits in film, is negligibly intrusive. Like the

cinema's camera, Mansfield's narrator does not attempt in an obvious manner to influence the reader's estimation on the unfolding events.

While no story rids itself entirely of a narrator, many of Mansfield's stories minimize its intrusion. "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," "The Black Cap" and "Common Round" [13] all utilize a script-like structure that includes little more than dialogue and the sparest of stage setting. In "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please" Mansfield makes prodigious use of ellipses mark the otherwise unaccounted passage of time (and distance) as two ladies ride a bus to the Boltons. The story begins with the first Lady catching up on local gossip with a friend whom she invites to sit next to her on the bus. They speak about a mutual acquaintance:

> *Lady.* [...] Her chauffeur's been called up. ...Ages ago. ... Killed by now, I think. (302)

The story records only half of the *dialogue* between the two women. Ellipses and punctuation record the gaps that presumably contain the friend's responses and contributions to the conversation. No narrator steps in to recount the friend's replies. The reader must surmise their content based on context in much the same way that the audience figures what happens between cuts in a film. Only silent visual cues – "?" or "..." or "!" – convey the unheard side of the story. The ladies near their stop:

> *Lady.* Oh, we're there. How extraordinary! I never should have noticed
>
> ...
>
> *Friend.* ...?
>
> *Lady.* Tuesday? Bridge on Tuesday?

Without the visual cue that a cut has taken place, the Lady's two lines read like *non sequiturs*. Punctuation and ellipses provide the transition that holds the narrative together.

Visually, the scene plays out as if the textual camera is trained on the first lady. Momentary flashes to the friend pick up an abbreviated sense of her reaction. But with no other visual clues provided by an outside source (such as a more involved narrator) to the identify her companion, the reader perceives only the smallest detail of affect. Visually, the effect is analogous to an extreme close-up with surprise registering only as "!" (perhaps a raised eyebrows), curiosity as "?" (a cocked eyebrow?) or outrage, as "!!" (a furrowed brow). The punctuation acts as brief and narrowly focused visual transition to record the temporal (and because the bus is in motion, also spatial) shifts in the narrative in a manner reminiscent of the effect of montage.

Mansfield's short story "The Black Cap" also employs abrupt transitions between scenes that call to mind the effect of montage. A series of textual cuts and edits connect the otherwise disjointed narrative. The first scene in the story, again in the form of a script, ends with a man and his wife at breakfast preparing for the woman's departure:

> *He*. My darling girl! This is like an exit on the cinema.
>
> *She*. (*letting her hands fall*). Very well. Good-bye. (*Gives a quick tragic glance around the dining-room and goes.*)

One can see the grand cinematic gestures that mark the textual cut to the next shot in a cab on the way to train station where the woman will meet her lover. The story breaks into distinct episodes, and all the breaks are structured around a cinematic style of montage. The long cab ride which features the woman's inner monologue of her

excitement darts suddenly to the image of "*An old man attempt*[ing] *to cross the road*" (307). The momentum of her amorous reverie shifts abruptly with the unexpected interruption. Her mood breaks and cues a shift to the subsequent scene at the train station. The story ends with the sense of a *fadeout* as the woman, who changes her mind about her paramour at the last minute, "*puts down her veil*" and finds herself back to the taxi to return to her husband (310). Camera-like effects again bridge the gaps that, with the absence of a clear narrator, might render the narrative disjointed and, as Griffith's critics suggested, hard to follow.

FILTERS, FRAMES, AND FLASHBACKS IN THE SHORT STORY

By minimizing the role of the narrator, Mansfield gives the reader the impression that her characters to speak for themselves, but, of course, this is an illusion. Fictive characters can never speak for themselves; there is always an author behind them. No matter how clear or pure the lens through which Mansfield tells her stories, a metaphoric camera still separates the reader from what is written on the page. The reader only "sees" what is projected onto the page. In other words, the reader, like the film audience, sees only the pictures framed by whatever controls the lens.

Frames, the basic element of the moving picture, play a frequent role in Mansfield fiction. Just as the borders of the cinematic frame define the mise-en-scene, Mansfield's stories employ windows and frames to set the physical parameters that limit what is visible in the textual screen and what is concealed. Beryl imagines how she looks from a vantage outside the window: "If I were outside the window and looked in and saw myself I really would be rather struck" (245). The view can be deceiving. Although the glass

pane promises transparency, in fact it only reveals what lies within the borders of its frame. The manner in which she mentally envisions herself calls to mind Lindsay's Picture-in-Motion; the frame of the window captures a still image but not an accurate representation of what lies outside the moment of that one static moment.

Further, the glass itself may distort the view. During Kezia's final walk in her childhood home she looks through the dining-room window: "[It] had a square of coloured glass at each corner. One was blue and one was yellow." The tinted glass functions as filter on a lens to distort perception. Kezia takes "one more look at a blue lawn with blue arum lilies growing at the gate, and then at a yellow lawn with yellow lilies and a yellow fence." Even her sister Lottie is changed as a result of the filtered glass (or lens) with which Kezia views the remnants of her childhood: "As she looked a little Chinese Lottie came out on to the lawn...Was that really Lottie? Kezia was not quite sure until she had looked through the ordinary window" (222). Yet even clear and untinted glass distorts by creating a spatial barrier between the spectator and what lies on the other side of the window frame. Kezia presses her hands "hard against the pane" and feels "the cold shining glass against her hot palms" (223). As the house darkens and she grows frightened, she wants to call out to her sister, but she cannot. The glass prevents sound from passing. Like the camera lens that physically separates the audience from the projected image, the windows mediate what the spectator may view.

Linda appears outside the kitchen the first morning after the Burnell's move. "Someone tapped on the window; Linda was there" (237). Beryl turns to look at her through the frame, but despite their proximity, Beryl cannot really see Linda. In a letter to her friend, Beryl writes, Linda is "as mysterious as ever..." (260). Windows, and their

associated frames, link the three main protagonists of the "Prelude" in a subtle montage of attraction. Only Beryl and Kezia , and Linda are described in reference to these frames. The conflicting characteristics of transparency and opacity that distinguish the windows also link the three protagonists in a manner that the reader registers on a subliminal level. For the sheerest of moments, Kezia recognizes something of this association as she plays with her Aunt Beryl's dressing table with the cat. She scolds the animal: "Now look at yourself," (263), and the "calico cat was so overcome by the sight that it toppled over" and ran from the room. Kezia's brief vision of her acting as a grown-up in the mirror of the dressing table frightens her and she too escapes: "tip-toe[ing] away, far too quickly" (263). What Kezia sees in the mirror's frame is a vision of the future that aligns her with both her aunt and mother.

Mansfield's fiction also manages temporal shifts through cinematographic models of montage. In "Je Ne Parle Pas Français" the first person narrator of the story, Raoul, employs such effects as flashback and flash forward to navigate between several time frames of narrative: the present (the time Raoul tells his story), the recent past, and a third and more distant past which in which Raoul's recounts his tale of Dick and Mouse. The story shifts facilely through the three levels of temporality through sudden breaks in the narrative that work like cuts in film. Raoul begins: "It was very quiet in the café. Outside, one could just see..." and he continues to embellish his account with descriptions of the neighborhood and the café, finishing with "... One would not have been surprised if the door had opened and the Virgin Mary had come in, riding upon an ass, her meek hands folded over her big belly..." (353). He immediately interrupts his story (within a story) with a flash back to the *present* (the time of his narration) with the

interjection: "that's rather nice, don't you think, that bit about the Virgin?" (353). All the visual images he establishes within his narrative disappear as the focus suddenly returns to the Frenchman. In a subsequent passage, Raoul again interrupts his account of meeting Dick and Mouse with his present time (and frequent) appeal for beverage: "Waiter, a whisky" (358). The narrative jumps forward and backward in an entirely disjointed manner in a manner reflective of flash forward and flashback.

Models of montage allow Raoul to perform the quick jumps and breaks that define his character. He continues rambling out his tale when again he interjects with lightning-like speed: "Flash! Went my mind. Dick has shot himself" (374). Raoul's thoughts run wild as he describes the scene of an imagined suicide: "a succession of flashes while I rushed in, saw the body, head unharmed, small blue hole over temple, roused hotel, arranged funeral, attended funeral, closed cab, new morning coat . . ." (374). Little if any narrative prepares the reader for the way Raoul jumps around, first in temporal frames and then in levels of consciousness, yet the reader does not lose the sense of plot. The resulting disjunction in narrative reflects a disconnected mind, for ultimately Raoul does not emotionally connect with either Paul (his friend) or Mouse (his charge after Paul leaves). As Raoul cloyingly admits, the model that allows him to slip and slide through differing time frames and levels of thought is "The direct result of the American cinema acting upon a weak mind" (352).

CONCLUSION

The "Short-story, far more than the Novel even, demands a subject" declares Brander Matthews; "A short-story in which nothing happens at all is an absolute

impossibility" (May 77). A mere fifteen years after he issues this decree, Katherine Mansfield is writing fiction that throws adherence to this older aesthetic to the wind and replaces it with a model which relies on minimal action, where characters go about their daily routines and nothing obvious seems change. Events rarely culminate in a resolution of the narrative tension or spark personal revelations that change the characters' perception of themselves or their situations. Nevertheless, change does occur. Mansfield's stories incorporate cinematographic effects that provoke subtle shifts that alter the *reader's* understanding of the characters and events. By creating a visual atmosphere whereby the reader *witnesses* events and observes characters in a *seemingly* unobstructed manner (such as mediated through an intrusive narrator), Mansfield's stories employ structures that encourage the reader to evaluate character and situation through their transparency and opacity – what they reveal and conceal of themselves. In doing so, Mansfield's fiction changes both our expectation of the story and the way we read it.

The incorporation of the model of cinematography into Mansfield's narrative breaks open the genre of the short story. If as André Malraux notes in his *Psychologie du cinéma* that "it was montage that gave birth to film as an art" (Bazin 24), then its influence on Mansfield's fiction transforms the genre of the short story into a new art form. Combining effects of montage and other techniques of cinematography provides the structure and tools that allow the stories a variety of different points of view and perspectives while maintaining a thematic *unity of effect*. The modern short story that emerges from the influence of film is a far cry from the "single effect" story Poe asserts is essential for a sense of totality. Though still subject to the temporal considerations that

mandate the work be short enough to be read in its entirety at one sitting, now the story develops a complexity of plot that hitherto was not possible. Associating disparate events and objects by juxtaposing them in effects of montage allows a cumulative effect that is central to understanding the point of "Prelude" and other similarly structured stories. Nothing momentous needs to happen, the characters do not need to experience a personal revelation or epiphany. It is enough that the reader understands that Kezia, Beryl, and Linda and their differing circumstances are all related through theme and technique – and all within the time allowed for the average film.

NOTES

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all quoted passages from Mansfield's short stories come from *The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (complete citation in the bibliography).

[2] Mansfield supplemented her income by playing bit parts in many movies during the years between 1915 and 1918 (Letters III:293). In a letter to Bertrand Russell in 1917 she describes her work as a film extra: "Tomorrow I am acting for the movies – an 'exterior scene in walking dress'" and on another occasion: "My last day with the 'movies'—walking about a big bare studio in what the American producer calls 'slap up evening dress'" (Letters III:293-94). Anne Estelle Rice, a painter friend of Mansfield, describes meeting her on the street one day and recalls her surprise at Mansfield's "strangely different" appearance. Mansfield explained her altered looks by recounting that "she had just jumped off the Battersea Bridge in order to be rescued by the hero of a film" (Boddy 59).

[3] "An expansion of an 1882 article in which Matthews sets himself forth as the first critic (since Poe) to discuss the short-story (Matthews contributed the hyphen) as a genre" (May 325). This version was published in 1901 and describes the short-story form just prior to Mansfield (and other modernist writers) entering the field.

[4] In her book *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction*, Sydney Janet Kaplan points out that T. S. Eliot includes Mansfield's short story "Bliss" along with D. H. Lawrence's "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" and James Joyce's "The Dead" as models to illustrate of the "dominant experimental tendency of contemporary fiction" (1-2) Mansfield is credited with influencing the work of many of her contemporaries and those who follow her, such as Elizabeth Bowen, Conrad Aiken, Dorothy Parker, Eudora Welty, and Carson McCullers. Though Virginia Woolf along with Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce is generally given credit for being one of the writers to first introduce "stream of consciousness" to modernist fiction, as Angela Smith notes in her book *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*, Mansfield begins using this method in her story "Feuille d'album" (published in 1917) and thus prior to Woolf's use of the technique which suggests that Virginia Woolf's writing style may well have been influenced by Mansfield. Based on a series of letters that Mansfield writes to Lady Ottoline Morrell and Virginia Woolf, Antony Alpers, in his biography of Katherine Mansfield, goes so far as to suggest that Mansfield played a pivotal role both in suggesting the "plot" and influencing the form of Woolf's short story "Kew Gardens" which marks the latter's venture into experimental fiction and "her departure form traditional ways of seeing" (cite). Whatever the case, even Woolf admits, "I was jealous of [Mansfield's] writing...the only writing I have ever been jealous of" (Kaplan 5). For a more in-depth discussion of Mansfield's influence on the transformation of the short story and its influence on others, see Katherine Anne Porter's "The Art of Katherine Mansfield" in *The Days Before* (pages 82-87) and Kaplan's aforementioned book *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* which provides a great overview of her transformation of the short story and its influence on both Mansfield's peers and subsequent writers.

[5] For a discussion of Chekhov's influence on Mansfield's fiction see Sydney Janet Kaplan's *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (pages 195-202) or H. E. Bates' *The Modern Short Story* (122-33).

[6] Chekhov's original quote found in *Athenaeum*, 18 April 1919.

[7] Lest there be any remaining doubts about the importance of the cinema in Mansfield's life, it is noteworthy that she names her cat Charlie Chaplin. This is the same cat who surprises her by depositing two kittens which she named April (for the month they were born) and Athenaeum (for the weekly journal of literature, science and the arts which J. Middleton Murry becomes editor and revamps and to which Mansfield contributes and perhaps an unconscious demonstration of how the *cinema* is involved in the birth of a new type of writing (Selected Letters 120).

[8] A. E. Coppard is a poet and short story writer who begins his writing career in 1919, notably subsequent to the time of Mansfield's innovations in the short story form.

[9] Original quote in Elizabeth Bowen; *Faber Book of Modern Stories* (Faber)

[10] Symbolist poet noted for his work with image

[11] For a more complete discussion of Griffith's innovative use of parallel montage consult Sergei Eisenstein's collection of critical essays (especially "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today) in the book *Film Form* cited in the bibliography.

[12] J. F. Kobler makes a similar observation in his book,*Katherine Mansfield: A Study of Short Fiction*, but he does not attribute the effect to the influence of the cinema. Rather he makes a lengthy argument to posit that Mansfield eliminates the role of the narrator in the story (Kobler 14-20).

[13] The aforementioned story "Pictures" is reworked from the original dialogue form of "Common Round."

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