



This work has been submitted to **NECTAR**, the **Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and Research**.

Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Katherine Mansfield and T.S. Eliot

Creator: Wilson, J. M.

Example citation: Wilson, J. M. (2015) Katherine Mansfield and T.S. Eliot. Paper presented to: *Katherine Mansfield and the 'Blooms Berries', Newberry Library, Chicago, USA, 28-30 May 2015.*

Version: Presented version

Official URL: <http://www.katherinemansfieldsociety.org/chicago-conference-2015/>

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/7579/>



Abstract: “Katherine Mansfield and T.S. Eliot”

Katherine Mansfield and T. S. Eliot had a friendly yet fraught relationship in which an initial mutual admiration turned into wariness. Their literary acquaintance began with the Bloomsbury Circle, and Mansfield’s enthusiasm for *The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock* which she read out at Garsington Manor in June 1917, saying: ‘that’s what I want modern poetry to be’, and ‘it is after all, a short story’. Later she saw his poetry as ‘unspeakably dreary’, while he formed the view that she was ‘a thick skinned toady’, and ‘a dangerous WOMAN’.

Eliot’s brief comments on Mansfield’s story ‘Bliss’ give some insight into his views of her work. This paper, however, aims to examine his modernism as a possible influence on her artistic practice (evident in allusions to ‘Preludes’, *Prufrock* and ‘Rhapsody on a Winter’s Night’), and the possible impact of his criticism and theories of art on her thinking (for example, her belief in the impersonality of the artist). Finally it will consider how the relationship has been taken up as a subject for fiction by New Zealand writer and critic, C.K. Stead, in his novels *The Secret History of Modernism* (2001) and *Mansfield* (2004).

Bio: Janet Wilson is Professor of English and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Northampton, UK. She has published widely on the literature and cinema of the white settler societies of Australia and New Zealand. Her current research interests are in Katherine Mansfield, postcolonial studies more generally, and diaspora writing and criticism including theories of the liminal. Recent publications are the “Introduction” to the co-edited volume, *Postcolonial Thresholds: Gateways and borders*. Special issue of *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 51.1 (2015); and “Veiling and Unveiling: Mansfield’s Modernist Aesthetics,” in *Katherine Mansfield; Masked and Unmasked*. Special issue of *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 32.2 (2014). She is Vice-Chair of the Katherine Mansfield Society, and co-editor of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*.

REFERENCES to Feuille DALbum

tortoise stove

‘Broken Doll ‘: a 1916 ragtime hit with James Tate and Clifford Harris recorded by the popular vocalist, Stanley Kirkby and Al Jolson

‘daisy in a field’: why come to Paris if he doesn’t wish to be noticed

Katherine Mansfield and T.S. Eliot

Mansfield and T.S. Eliot first met through their mutual friend, Lady Ottoline Morell at Garsington Manor on 3 December 1916 at a time when both were becoming part of the Bloomsbury circle. C.K. Stead who has written most on this relationship, points out that they were almost exactly the same age -- 28 years old—and as ‘colonials’, and outsiders to the English literary elite, they came to its literature and culture through continental intermediaries who wrote in another language: Mansfield through Chekhov and Eliot through Jules Laforgue.¹ Also in common was that being foreigners they had a capacity for self invention, and could quickly articulate a sense of displacement. ² Their acquaintance was intermittent - they met rarely and probably not at all after about 1920 -- but references to each other appear in correspondence with friends and Bloomsberries such as Ezra Pound, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Virginia Woolf, Violet Schiff, Dorothy Brett, and with their respective spouses JMM and Vivien Eliot. The ripples of antagonism and open hostility that appeared around 1920 — due seemingly to a sense of betrayal on her side, and to mistrust on his (and we cannot rule out professional rivalry)--- open up questions that have never been answered satisfactorily.³ Mansfield’s initial attraction, “I liked him very much and did not feel he was an enemy”,⁴ was overturned by her violent dislike of Vivienne upon meeting her on 14th May 1920. She wrote to Violet Schiff:

¹ C.K. Stead, “Katherine Mansfield and T.S. Eliot : A Double Centenary” in *Answering to the Language*, 150

² Robert Crawford, *Young Eliot: From St Louis to The Wasteland* (London; Jonathan Cape, 2015), 267.

³ C.K. Stead, ‘Battle of the Wasps’, *London Review of Books* (3 March 2011), 19-21.

⁴ Letter to Ottoline Morrell, 24 June 1917, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Vincent O’Sullivan and Margaret Scott, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984-2008): 1, 312 (hereafter referred to as *Letters* 1, and so on, followed by the page number).

The Elliots [sic] have dined with us tonight. They are just gone—and **the whole room is quivering** . . . I know its extravagant; I know [. . .] I ought to have seen more---but **I dislike her so immensely. She really repels me. She makes me shiver with apprehension . . . [. . .]. I am so fond of Elliott. [. . .] But this teashop creature**⁵ [. . .].

The violence of her reaction suggests she considered Eliot's marriage a betrayal of some sort (of what he meant to her?) . To make matters worse Vivien told her she had been to their flat before and Murry, in explaining the circumstances of this meeting, implied an attraction between them. Mansfield concludes bitterly: "I feel as tho' I've been stabbed".

Ironically, then from her initial sense that Eliot was not an enemy, Mansfield was from now on firmly situated as his and Vivien's opponent, as can be deduced from a letter he wrote to Ezra Pound about six weeks later: "I believe her to be a dangerous WOMAN: and of course two sentimentalists [speaking of JMM] together are more than two times as noxious as one".⁶ Vivien's highly strung fears and anxieties led her to see Mansfield as menacing, predatory; she wrote to Eliot, "Write to Schiff. . . . Must not let him fall into K.M.'s hands".⁷ The fierce dislike/hatred of Mansfield intensified, and exploded into what seems to be irrational hatred in 1922. Mansfield, tarnished by her friendship with Lady Rothermere, one of the financial backers of Eliot's new journal, the *Criterion*, when they were both at Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, was perceived as being an evil influence on Lady R. Vivien's fears that Lady R (whose response to the first issue had been negative on account of its dullness) would take away her patronage, prompted wild accusations, and Mansfield was demonized in fantastic terms as poisonous and crazy: Vivien wrote to Pound on 2 November 1922:

⁵ Letter to OO?? 14th May 1920, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984-2008): 4, 11 (hereafter referred to as *Letters* 1, and so on, followed by the page number).

⁶ DATE OF LETTER *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, vol 1: 1898-1922, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Houghton, rev. ed. (London: Faber, 2009): 473. Hereafter referred as Eliot, *Letters*.

⁷ 16 August, Eliot, *Letters*, p. 492.

She is now in that asylum for the insane called La Prieure where she does religious dances naked with Mansfield [who] she says 'is the most intelligent woman I have ever met.' K.M. is pouring poison into her ear (of course) for K.M. hates Tom more than anyone.⁸

Eliot was even more extravagant in denunciation, writing to Pound in 7 November that "[she] is not simply the most intelligent woman Lady R has ever met. She is simply one of the most persistent and thick skinned toadies and one of the vulgarest women Lady R. has ever met and is also a sentimental crank"⁹ using very much the same terms as Mansfield had in her denunciation of Vivien (vulgarest women/teashop creature), but going even further.

What provoked these hostilities seems to be a fundamental lack of trust in Mansfield and in particular, her masking of selfhood: in such a case any friendship would be possible only through complex negotiations of position. The literary relations between Mansfield and Eliot (by contrast to their personal ones) which can be inferred from echoes of, allusions to and comments on each other's work, have not so far shed much light on the matter. In this paper I want to consider the earliest stage of their relationship, in terms of Mansfield's reaction to Eliot as found in her engagement with the verbal and visual imagination of his early poems published in *Prufrock and other Observations* in 1917, and then focus on her 1917 story, first titled, "An Album Leaf" later called "Feuille d'Album", to suggest that she saw herself in dialogue with him and was possibly challenging his positions on art which would be developed [LATER] into his theories of the impersonality of the artist. In my reading, "Feuille d'Album" stands out as a literary encounter with Eliot's persona of "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock", as a kind of 'writing back' to his representation of masculinity, gendered relations, and the psychological inhibition in speech and action as represented in his famous poem. This feminine riposte, as the story may be called, opens with comments by various women on the 'impossible' nature of her

⁸ Eliot, *Letters*, p. 770. See the discussion in Crawford, *Young Eliot*, pp. 416-20.

⁹ Eliot, *Letters*, p.775.

protagonist (a prototype of Prufrock with his ambivalences, hesitation and social shyness) who remains detached from real life and impervious to their temptations, but the second half of the story shows, through representing his desire and dreams (through free indirect discourse), a motivation towards self-agency, to overcome the handicap of being inarticulate and tongue-tied which Eliot never grants to his hero; while the witty denouement takes the absurdity of his creation to a new level of vision. Mansfield's hero addresses the woman he has come to love through dream and fantasy: "Madame, you dropped this, And he handed her an egg" (CF 95?) – suggesting that unlike Prufrock's stuttering hesitation, words can be spoken even though the reality they point to is phenomenologically impossible. Can it be that Mansfield in 1917 was writing indirectly and allusively—as a gesture—in order to communicate beyond the boundaries of real life, as a correction to Eliot's arid, but comic vision of the individual's inability to signify, and his view of art as artifice? ?? If so what does this say about their personal relations which began to deteriorate after c 1919?

In order to approach this question one has to consider the ambivalence of Mansfield's responses to Eliot the man, evidenced in correspondence from about 1919 on, a period when as Sydney Janet Kaplan states both Mansfield and Murry "identified with the Romantics as a poetic and aesthetic theory".¹⁰ Mansfield recoiled from what she perceived as Eliot's ponderousness in self presentation seeing his social awkwardness as a pose or performance, just as Prufrock himself says: "there will be time/To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet"; for example, writing to Brett in 1922 she says, "He suffers from feelings of powerless. He knows it. He feels weak. It is all disguise. That slow manner, that hesitation, sidelong glances, and so on are *painful*", and again

¹⁰ *Circulating Genius: John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield, and D.H. Lawrence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010): 86. Kaplan shows how Murry later entered into a prolonged and famous debate between Romanticism and Classicism with Eliot.

in 1921 her attraction to him is mixed with reservations: “Tom is a rare and delightful being... but the bluff oppresses me”.¹¹ The idea of bluff/and its phonic counterpart ‘buff’ (as in the game blindman’s bluff – originally called buff—in the sense of push or nudge to the person wearing the blindfold) in considering Mansfield’s suspicion of counterfeiting and disguise in Eliot’s manner, provide a metaphor for my approach- that is, in writing “Feuille d’Album” as a response to Eliot’s modernist statement as articulated in “Prufrock”, she plays with Eliot’s bluff (exterior/guise) to present an alternative, namely she hints (in the form of a buff or nudge) that his poem’s underlying message – the hesitation about speech, the questioning of the self and relatedness to others -- can be displaced with a vision of art/life as rooted in organic vitality and spiritual wonder, even though the story’s comic, absurd ending, undercuts any idea of transcendence.

That Mansfield saw herself early on as in dialogue with Eliot’s imagination, and was stimulated by his way of looking at the world to think about art and aesthetics is apparent from details of her urban settings and landscapes in writing from about 1917, which show his fingerprint. Most famous is her description of the night scene near Hammersmith bridge after she and Eliot walked along the riverside having left together a dinner party hosted by Eliot’s friends, Mary and Jack Hutchinson, Writing to Ottoline Morell she says: “we walked past rows of little ugly houses hiding behind bitter smelling privet hedges: a great number of amorous black cats looped across the road, and high up in the sky there was a battered old moon.”¹² As C.K. Stead who has fictionalised this arresting visual account in his novels *The Secret History of Modernism* (2001) and *Mansfield: A Novel* (2004) which opens with an imaginative reconstruction of their

¹¹ *Letters*, 5, 75 and 4, 221.

¹² ? 24 June 1917. *Letters*, 1, 312.

conversation, .¹³ it seems to owe more to Eliot's poetry than to real life.¹⁴ The reference to "a battered old moon" recalls the moon as an "old battered lantern" in Eliot's "Conversation Galante":

I observe: "Our sentimental friend the Moon,
Or possibly (fantastic I confess)
It may be Prester John's balloon
Or **an old battered lantern** hung aloft
To light poor travellers to their distress".
She then: "How you digress".¹⁵

Verbal echoes of Eliot's early poems have been found in other texts : the poem, "Night Scented Stock" which Mansfield sent to Lady Ottoline Morrell in 1917, and the dialogue, "The Common Round", later revised as 'Pictures' both contain echoes of "Preludes" and "Rhapsody on a Winter's Night" (published in *Blast* in July 1915).¹⁶ But I suggest that her engagement with Prufrock goes much further than the allusions to these poems, in its involvement with and challenge to Eliot's psychological preoccupations .

Mansfield's acquaintance with "Prufrock" can be dated to 3 June 1917 when she read it aloud to the assembled company at Garsington,¹⁷ the first public reading by a female, according to Eliot's most recent biographer, Robert Crawford.^{18 19} where it "caused a stir, much discussion, some perplexity" [Bell]. For Mansfield, it clearly struck a chord, perhaps as a benchmark of a modernist poetic text (even though what she means by modern is not at all clear): in March 1921

¹³ C.K. Stead, *The Secret History of Modernism* (London: Harvill Press, 2001): 159-61 ; *Mansfield: A Novel* (London: Harvill Press, 2004): 1-11.

¹⁴ C.K. Stead, "Katherine Mansfield and T.S. Eliot", PAGE

¹⁵ T.S. Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (? 1917), PAGE. Hereafter referred to as *Prufrock*.

¹⁶ "The Common Round" was published in *The New Age* on 31 May 1917; and later revised as "Pictures" and published in 1919; See David Trotter, Sue Thomas and Sarah Sandley

¹⁷ *Letters*, 2, 318.

¹⁸ Crawford, *Young Eliot*, p. 278.

¹⁹ Clive Bell, *Old Friends* (London ? 1956), 122, records buying up several copies and distributing them to the guests . KM Letters, I, 313, n. 4.

she wrote to Sydney Waterloo; “that’s what I want modern poetry to be. Keats would have admired it” (WHERE) and in August 1922, declared to Violet Schiff that it was by “far and away the most interesting and best modern poem—It stays in one’s memory as a work of art”.²⁰ Echoes of the poem appear in a journal entry of August 1919: “Is that all, ... that is not what I meant at all”.²¹ But appreciation was also mixed with criticism, and she wrote to Virginia Woolf in 1919/20 after the publication of his second volume, *Poems*) about the aridity of Eliot’s verse, saying that “the poems *look* delightful but I confess I think them unspeakably dreary. How one could write so absolutely without emotion ... perhaps that’s an achievement” [REF]; such comments can be read in terms of her more general attack on the masculine tenor of much modernist writing then, especially its conceits of artifice and sterility, as typified by her image of those “dark young men—so proud of their plumes and their black and silver cloaks”.²² These views point to what would become a polarisation between Mansfield and Murray and Eliot and others (as would be cemented in the debate between the two men later on Romanticism and Classicism) : for as Kaplan notes, by 1918 – when she and Murry were fascinated by the romantics artists like Keats, as well Romanticism as an ideological and artistic aesthetic -- they were already on the edges of Bloomsbury and their relationship with Lady Ottoline’s Garsington circle was also deteriorating.²³

²⁰ Letter to Violet Schiff, August 1922, *Letters*, 5, 256.

²¹ *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, 2 vols, ed. Margaret Scott (Canterbury New Zealand: Lincoln University Press and Daphne Brasell Associates, 1997), 2, 83. Hereafter referred to as *Notebooks 1*, *Notebooks 2*. Stead comments that Prufrock’s reiterated lines come to represent her own state of mind, hovering on the brink of stories unable to press forward –Stead REF

²² *Letters*, 2, 318.

²³ Kaplan, *Circulating Genius*, pp. 87, 20.

Nevertheless Mansfield's comment to Virginia Woolf made in 1919, "I don't think he is a poet -- Prufrock is after all a short story"²⁴ may be read as less a criticism than an indirect allusion to her prose version of Eliot's text written in 1917. That an "An Album Leaf" was a literary response can be inferred from the fact that its composition and publication in 21 September 1917 make it most probably the first story she wrote after her Garsington reading of "Prufrock" in June.²⁵ She had spent most of the intervening months revising "Prelude", delivered for publication in October. A psycho-biographical approach shows that specific details can be associated with Eliot the man, suggesting she goes beyond the character of Prufrock to engage with that of his creator as the model for her character. By contrast to her other stories of 1917 [such as "Mr Reginald Peacock's Day" (pub 14 June), "The Common Round", revised as "Pictures" and "A Dill Pickle"] which are all set in London, Mansfield returns to France, specifically Paris (for the first time since "An Indiscreet Journey" written in 1915), reminding us that Eliot came to Paris from the USA in 1910 to study philosophy (Bergson and Laforge) at the Sorbonne; it is reinforced by the name of her excruciatingly shy and gauche protagonist, Ian French, which recalls her nick-name for Eliot as "French polish Eliott".²⁶ A famous artist, described as "very clever",²⁷ Ian French's frozen emotions are seen through images of cultural value, such as Mansfield would assign to an artist of Eliot's stature (rather similar to herself): the contents of his studio are arranged to form the pattern of a "still life" (CF 95);²⁸ this fusion of art

²⁴ DATE OF LETTER< Letters, VOL and PAGE

²⁵ It was published in *The New Age*, and revised and reprinted in *Bliss and other Stories* under the title "Feuille d'Album" in 1920.

²⁶ Letter to Ottoline Morrell 16 June 1917, *Letters* 1, 311.

²⁷ "Feuille d'Album", *The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1916-1922*, ed. Gerry Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012): 95. All future references will be included parenthetically in the body of the text as CF followed by page number.

²⁸ On Mansfield's views of still life, that one must gather "round bright fruits... and become them, as it were" see her letter to Dorothy Brett, 11 October 1917; *Letters* 1, 330.

and life, and the sequestering of his studio – kept “as neat as a pin” (CF 95) -- from all who wish to enter, recalls the fin de siècle, Wildean, art for arts sake aesthetics.²⁹ Finally the girl he falls in love with in his fantasy “was the only person alive who was just his age”, is possibly a coded reference to Eliot’s closeness in age to Mansfield (only 10 days difference) .

Ian French’s extreme shyness, inability to speak his feelings and proneness to blush with embarrassment make him a likely counterpart to Prufrock whose inhibition and tongue-tied neurosis stems from anxiety about how he would be perceived, mainly by women. Eliot’s technique, adapted from Jules Laforgue, is to use judgements by others overheard or imagined, in such a way as to inhibit the speaker,³⁰ and Mansfield’s female response consists exactly of those judgements, made by three different women, on the impossibility of getting to know this character. An optional title that Eliot considered for the poem was “Prufrock among the Women” (Crawford, 160), and Mansfield’s approach also recalls the poem’s refrain: “In the room women come and go/talking of Michelangelo” (“Prufrock”, PAGE). His resistance to their temptations and offers -- to mothering, to a nightlife, to physical intimacy--in other words his refusal to come alive emotionally and sexually, provokes their threefold choric response “hopeless” (CF, 93-94). If the first half of the story ‘plays’ on Eliot’s “bluff “ in the construction of Prufrock, showing from the female angle women’s responses to an inarticulate and emotionally numb male artist, then the second half constitutes the ‘buff’ – the nudge towards another angle of vision, an alternative view of life/art. The dethroning of Prufrock’s extreme self consciousness due to being tongue-tied and inability to formulate “some overwhelming question” as he wanders “half deserted streets” (“Prufrock”, p.) in Mansfield’s counterpart Ian French, begins by overturning

²⁹ ‘Feuille d’Album”, *The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1916-1922*, ed. Gerry Kimber and Vincent O’Sullivan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012): 95. All future references will be included parenthetically in the body of the text as CF followed by page number.

³⁰ Crawford, *Young Eliot*, p. 125

Eliot's imaginary urban wasteland. The change of direction is signalled by the narrator's ringing claim: "Really there was no need for him to go out" (CF 94-95). Ian French's vision occurs in response to the revivification and transfiguration of the natural world, "It had been raining -- the first real spring rain of the year had fallen—a bright spangle hung on everything and the air smelled of buds and moist earth" (CF, 95). As Anne Mounic points out in her reading of this story, the "two wings" of the window of the girl's house opposite imply a miraculous soaring of the imagination following the rain soaking the earth, while the daffodils the girl carries, the sight of which catapults him into love - as he enters the world she inhabits, also conveys a sense of wonder—all romantic images that suggest a kind of resurrection.³¹ The mini epiphany which follows takes the form of an extended 'transformative' metaphor [cf Eliot's technique of detaching images from their signifiers (Perloff) so they take on a different life as with the extended metaphor of the fog that turns into a cat] as his heart becomes an arrow of love, plunging into the flowerpot.

His heart fell out of the side window of his studio, and down to the balcony of the house opposite—buried itself in the pot of daffodils under the half-opened buds and spears of green (CF 95)

In the story's ending, the irresolvable dilemma of Prufrock, who could never bring himself to ask the overwhelming question, and who suffered cosmic distress at the fear of being laughed at, is transformed into what Andrew Gurr has described as "an extended joke".³² Prufrock's chronic dithering, hesitation and prevarication: "Should I, after cake and tea and ices, have the strength to force this moment to its crisis" (Prufrock PAGE). finds an answer in the anti-climactic statement: "Madame, you dropped this, And he handed her an egg" (CF 97).

³¹ Anne Mounic, "'And he handed her an egg': The Art of Memory in 'Feuille d'Album', Katherine Mansfield and Proust", *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 1 (2009): 35-52 (42-43).

³² Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature* (London; Harvester Press, 1981): 41-44.

IN CONCLUSION: There is no doubt that “Feuille D’Album” and its successor “A Dill Pickle”, which CK Stead claims represent the beginning of a new departure in Mansfield’s work, owe their achievement in no small part to her appropriation of several of Eliot’s radical stylistic innovations in his first volume of poetry.³³ Yet neither Mansfield’s obvious and covert borrowings nor her critical responses to Eliot’s endeavours, quite explains the mounting hostilities in the Eliot -Mansfield relationship after 1920. The fact that Eliot labelled her a “thick skinned ... toady” suggests he perceived Mansfield was as a false person, perhaps in reaction to the many masks that she wore, which she put on and took off according to the occasion (so therefore he saw her as ‘persistent’). His own Prufrock-like mask of being inarticulate, tongue tied and shy, was not only consistent (by contrast) but it corresponded to an important part of his public personality at that time of his life. Lady Ottoline, for example, said of him: he was “dull, dull, dull. He never moves his lips and he speaks in an even and monotonous voice”. Significantly Mansfield’s comment about him in 1922: “he is too serious about himself, even a little bit absurd [...] he wants kindly laughing at and setting free”,³⁴ is corroborated by another woman who knew him well. Mary Hutchinson, had a long-term close friendship with Eliot (she was Clive Bell’s lover) but found him a silent and tongue-tied companion. Speaking almost as one of the very same women who talk of Ian French in “Album Feuille”; she commented in an unpublished account: “Had I seen clearly, I could have been bolder, perhaps, stimulated his imagination, perhaps, given him experience, perhaps”.³⁵ Mansfield’s masks and guises, by contrast, never seemed to match with a ‘real’ self in this period before she herself gained acceptance as an artist, and therefore

³³ Stead, “Katherine Mansfield and the Fictions of Continental Europe”, in *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe: Connections and Influences*, ed. Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (London: Palgrave, 2015): 239.

³⁴ Letters, 5, 75.

³⁵ Crawford, *Young Eliot*, pp. 253, 267.

Eliot in presenting himself to the world through his “bluff”, may have become trapped in his own projected images of her bluff (her disguises), so they both existed in a kind of counter - transference with each other.

“An Album Leaf” was revised and published in *Bliss and Other Stories* in 1920, with its French title “Feuille D’Album”; but whether Eliot ever read it as a comment on his own life and art, and whether he ever read the later story, “The Escape”, which in C.K. Stead’s view is very likely about Eliot and Vivien, is not known. He remained dangerously unforgiving of Mansfield. The promised article on her work after her death never appeared and he damned her story “Bliss” with comments such as that it “lacked moral and social ramifications”, that its material was “minimum” and that its writing was “feminine”, terms that were swiftly taken up by Frank Sargeson, preeminent New Zealand story writer in the 1930s;³⁶ Sargeson used these adjectives to justify an assault on Mansfield which led to her being relegated to the margins of the New Zealand national literary tradition as it developed through the twentieth century, just as she was by the time of her death on the periphery of Bloomsbury and hence considered in the eyes of most critics, as being tangential to mainstream modernism.

³⁶ Published in *After Strange Gods* (London 1934), 35-36. See Pamela Dunbar, “What does Bertha Want?: A Re-reading of Katherine Mansfield’s ‘Bliss’,” in *Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Rhoda B. Nathan (New York, R.K. Hall, 1993): 128.

