

ECO-ILLUSIONS: UNCOVERING URBAN NATURE
IN THE MODERNIST SHORT STORY

by

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Abstract

A recurring theme in literary modernism is a feeling of alienation in the modern individual. Most critical readings of the modernist city have focused on urbanity as the main site of alienation thus far. However, this approach overlooks the great presence of nature in modernist descriptions of city landscapes. Due to the common impression that nature and city are binary opposites, urban nature is either perceived within cultural conventions of nature or within the context of the natural world. Both of these interpretations lead the reader away from a true understanding of nature as polluted and altered by the city space. Using selected short fiction by James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield, this thesis investigates the ecocritical value of illusory symbolism and characters' misperceptions of nature in cities of the Western World. During a moment of internal crisis or epiphany, characters often notice the nature in their surroundings, like the snow in "The Dead" or the pear tree in "Bliss". Other times, the narrator notes the character's distance from nature in relation to their immorality, like the obscured moonlight in "Two Gallants". However, the language of covering and blurring used to describe nature reveals its integration with the city. This thesis then proposes a third landscape of 'urban nature' in modernist short fiction with its own unique structure of meaning. I argue that the character is aware of this landscape, but applies false symbolism to nature in order to disguise their imperfect lives from modern society. In this way, emotional alienation exposes the city's alienation of nature in the early twentieth century. This study explores various features of society – namely social normalcy, marriage, and fame – that distances the modern subject from feeling connected to their sense of self, and by extension, to the natural world.

Lay Summary

A recurring theme in literary modernism is a feeling of alienation in the modern individual. Most critical readings of the modernist city have focused on urbanity as the main site of alienation thus far. However, this approach overlooks the great presence of nature in modernist descriptions of city landscapes. Using selected short fiction by James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield, this thesis investigates the false and misleading representations of nature in the city during the early twentieth century. More specifically, I propose the existence of a third landscape of ‘urban nature’ that holds a unique structure of meaning. I have situated my argument in ecocriticism, claiming that the separation of humans from the natural world causes this feeling of alienation when removed from their origins. Like the modern city dweller, nature in an urban environment has been sickened by both the physical and cultural pollution of modern life.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, C. Browning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Removing the mask from urban nature

In “After the Race” from James Joyce’s *Dubliners*, the narrator describes Dublin as such: “That night the city wore the mask of a capital” (Joyce 37). As both his and Katherine Mansfield’s work aims to depict modern life truthfully, the concept of masking – and of uncovering what has been hidden – appears in countless corners of their short fiction. Colonial cities mask themselves as capitals, urban city dwellers mask the imperfections of their lives, and the natural world masks the effects of the urban environment on its original form. While the city is certainly a dominant space in modernist writing, imagery of natural objects and landscapes appear constantly, both within and surrounding urban spaces. In most cases, characters perceive urban nature within an urban structure of meaning, but with the impression that nature remains unchanged in the city. This conception of nature represents both the natural world and urban nature falsely, solidifying a symbolic meaningless for characters in their struggles to find their own identity in an era of great modernization. Moreover, urban nature becomes an object that wears the mask of previous conventions of nature, despite its new form affected by the physical and cultural features of a city.

Within this inaccurate framing of the urban natural landscape, elements of nature stand out from the manmade parts of a city, rather than integrating with them. Likewise, Glen Love maintains that a great error made in anthropocentric scholarship is to view culture and society as “complex” and nature as “simple” (Love 206). By distancing oneself from this troublesome way of thinking, literary critics can join a more productive conversation within the realm of

ecocriticism about nature and the ecological future of the planet. Many – if not all – of the short stories included in this thesis represent certain aspects of nature as pure and flawless to contrast the complicated and deeply disturbed minds of the urban subject in the early twentieth century. These deceptive ideas of nature mirror the false accounts of characters' lives that inevitably come to light. Perhaps, then, there is a level of recognition on the modernist character's part that *their* complexity matches that of the natural world and that their reality is equally as flawed because they are products of nature. In this way, the binary often imposed on nature and culture breaks down and reveals a stronger connection than is typically acknowledged. These stories are useful to a current study in ecocriticism and green modernism because they expose the falseness of these conceptions and the barriers modern culture has placed between humans and nature. Semiotically speaking, they provide evidence for a third system of signs that is created when nature becomes amalgamated with a city. Joyce and Mansfield's narrators reveal the true shallowness of characters that represent urban and modern life, thus suggesting the detriment of cities on their inhabitants. The desire for comfort and convenience– which Love identifies as a central feature of urban anthropocentrism (205) – leads to harmful masks worn by humans and projected onto urban nature.

1.1 Joining the eco-conversation

Firstly, in his greatly influential book *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams provides invaluable insight into the history of rural and urban spaces in England. From pastoralism to the city's "great buildings of civilization" (Williams 5), he explores urban hubs and their surrounding countryside as inextricably related to each other historically, economically, imperially, and beyond. Since these spaces are both inhabited and maintained by communities of

people, Williams imagines a network of spaces fostered by human activity, rather than a comparison of city to wilderness. His contribution to environmental criticism, which predates the first wave of ecocriticism, is the societal interconnectivity and commonality of the two spaces, despite past tendencies to view them as opposing entities. In many of the texts I have selected for this thesis, there are strong dynamics of movement in and out of the city space from products of nature such as light, rain, and snow. *The Country and the City* has informed my analyses of this movement by imagining these natural objects in a relationship with urbanity.

Secondly, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* is a foundational text of the second wave of ecocriticism, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. In the introduction, Glotfelty defines the field as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” or an area of study with “an earth-centered approach” (Glotfelty xviii). Considering the ecocritical aim to stake nature as a focal point against the background of culture, Joyce and Mansfield’s work complicates this goal with their focus on human affect and deceptive nature symbolism. However, *The Ecocriticism Reader* insists upon the necessity of using literature about nature to address the growing concern of the current climate disaster and environmental crisis. Joyce and Mansfield’s short stories express the disoriented individual as a product of urbanization and modern life, which has distanced them from the natural world. Both writers place natural objects at the forefront of their descriptions of cities consistently. Their characters’ accounts of “that circle of unearthly light” (*Selected* 183) and “a shower of kindly golden dust” (Joyce 61) ultimately uncover accurate depictions of the state of nature when faced with both physical and cultural pollution.

Prominent ecofeminism scholar Donna Haraway has paved the way for recent

environmental studies, situating critical analyses of the Anthropocene or “Chthulucene” within place and land communities. Her claim that the current order of the earth is “sympoietic” – or made with and influenced by other things – is greatly informative to an ecocritical study of the modernist city: “It matters what worlds world worlds. It matter what stories tell stories” (Haraway 35). Urban environments are built on top of natural land, surrounded by sky, and inhabited by natural beings that created them; all manmade objects are produced from once natural materials. Therefore, although the common tendency is to distinguish nature and the city as separate entities, they really work in a sympoietic relationship where one can be greatly affected by the development of the other. For Haraway, to tell stories of damage and ruin in the natural world is to promote thoughtfulness in the Chthulucene. Her vision of “staying with the trouble” can be applied to techniques of modernism to represent the modern subject as alienated by its urban environment. One might apply this logic to urban nature as well, modeling a sense of weakened connectivity between the natural world and its beings.

Beyond the central realm of ecocriticism, this thesis has been informed by Indigenous knowledges of place in North America, particularly in my discussion of cities built on colonized land. Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson has written many articles on traditional Nishnaabeg knowledge ways and the importance of connecting one’s community and self to land and place. History, culture, and language of a particular Indigenous group are deeply bound to the land of their ancestors who founded the teachings of their people. She elaborates on this concept of being as a network of meaning woven together and dependent on each other, as opposed to the Western approach to the world of “decontextualized knowledge” (Simpson 11). Despite their childhoods living in colonized nations, Joyce and Mansfield’s approaches to

writing about their environments were firmly rooted in a Western epistemology and worldview. However, the concept of the interconnectivity of land and people is interesting to bear in mind in their use of nature against the city backdrop. The classic modernist representation of mental isolation and alienation of identity is often framed as a symptom of modernity. I will explore literary evidence that implies that the city space causes this feeling in its disruption of human nature's inherent link to natural land.

Due to its characters' conflicted and often symbolically skewed relationships with the natural world, modernism has not been a common literary movement in ecocriticism until recently. Joycean scholar Alison Lacivita identifies that modernist critics have focused on alienation and despair rather than relationships between humans and nature (Lacivita 6). She suggests that ecocriticism provides an opportunity to explore alienation as being in conversation with nature in modernist literature, which remains an underdeveloped topic (6). Further, Anne Raine deems Laurence Coupe's *The Green Studies Reader* unique in its ecocritical attention to modernism and its exploration of personal crisis in modern life. The bulk of modernist scholarship concerning the theme of alienation has remained within the context of urban environments and the effects of modernity on the city dweller, such as Andrew Thacker's *Modernism, Space, and the City* and Desmond Harding's *Writing the City*. This genre of study can be enriched by the consideration of the city dweller's separation from nature and even further, from their interactions with natural objects in the city. If we consider people to be inherently natural objects, a sense of removal and detachment from nature felt in the city greatly informs the reader of the perils associated with urban culture. In addition, Anne Raine's book chapter "Ecocriticism and Modernism" was inspirational in the development of my ideas for this

thesis. She elucidates the role of modernism in ecological thinking as “a productive questioning of conventional ideas about nature” (Raine 102). The complicated and often flawed relationship between modernist characters and nature contributes to the current discussion of reconfiguring environmental discourse.

1.2 The short story leaves room for nature

I have chosen to use short stories as my primary texts because of their ability to showcase a plethora of perspectives in a vignette style that is complementary to ecocritical thinking. In *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story*, Frank O’Connor notes, “the short story, like the novel, is a modern art form: that is to say, it represents, better than poetry or drama, our own attitude on life” (O’Connor 13). There is a quality to prose that provides a well-balanced level of description and captures an individual’s sense of urban life most concisely. In addition, O’Connor distinguishes the novel from the short story by claiming, “short story has never had a hero” in contrast with the often more developed nature of a novel’s protagonist (17). While affect is considerably central to modernist fiction, the lack of hero or extensive plot allows descriptions of natural objects and landscapes to occupy a greater space in the narrative. Perhaps there is no hero in the matter of modernization, which is under examination in Joyce and Mansfield’s short fiction.

Furthermore, the unique prose styles of Joyce and Mansfield, respectively, include elements that came to define the short story in modernism. They both experimented with other forms of writing – there is published evidence for Joyce and written indications in Mansfield’s journals– but there is a quality to their depiction of the city in the short story that is unlike any other form of modernist writing. Joyce’s style of writing differed significantly from Mansfield’s;

he viewed art as a structured replication of life, while she viewed it as a fluid continuation (Rydstrand 15). These differences in approach to their work certainly influence the function of the short story's form in their descriptions of nature in the city. Early critics of *Dubliners* such as Ezra Pound and Edmond Jaloux found that "the key to Joyce's achievement lay in his art of condensation and rigorous selection" (Hunter 30). His prose is easily digestible and outwardly simple – a language for his *Dubliners* – yet there is an immense degree of complexity that is squeezed into each story, lying below the surface of the writing. This style for Joyce, of plain phrases with intricate implications epitomizes the success of these vignette moments describing his great capital city. His simple language, then, was not for reader accessibility purposes, considering the growing attitude of "cultural elitism" toward the latter end of the Victorian era that was fostered through the refined "literariness" of the short story (34, 37).

For Mansfield, the style of prose produced in her short stories expresses her thoughts and achieves her 'uncovering of truths' in a special manner. Helen Rydstrand fleshes out her relationship with the form by saying, "it is [written] in prose rather than poetry, and though short, it is a complete work of art." (Rydstrand 116). The First World War was thought to have impacted her desire to depict the ordinary, in the face of such an immense disruption, and loss, of life (133). The short story is an ideal length to write about a normal day, while highlighting a moment of internal disruption or epiphany. In a way, Joyce's style of writing is representative of the rhythm of the modern city and of urban life, while Mansfield adopts a more spiritual rhythm that mimics the pace of the natural world. Nonetheless, both of these styles succeed in identifying flawed perceptions of urban nature in their own unique way. The "plotlessness" of the short story creates space for descriptions of the falling snow in "The Dead" and the pink light

of “Feuille d’Album” to become crucial moments for the reader.

1.3 Greening Joyce and Mansfield

There is no definite border between purely natural land and the city to trace during this period of urbanization, particularly due to the growth of suburbs in the later nineteenth century. For the sake of this thesis, however, one might imagine ‘the natural world’ to be land that remains predominantly undeveloped by society, where there are fewer cars, lights, and other infrastructure that causes pollution. Nature could be wilderness or possibly farmland and small townships. Joyce and Mansfield qualify well for this study because their personal histories reflect a similar middle-ground status of identity as the nature imagery under consideration in my thesis. Unlike writers such as Virginia Woolf, who was born into London society, Joyce and Mansfield’s relationships to cities were not formulated with an insider perspective. Not only were they both born and raised nearby to cities – in suburbs of Dublin and Wellington – their countries also share a British colonial heritage, both split between two identities. The suburb, which is a product of population growth in urban areas, stretches outward toward farmland and less polluted land. In their adult lives, Joyce and Mansfield lived in a variety of places, both frequenting great metropolitan cities such as London and Paris, and retreating to houses by the sea or in the countryside of Europe. Their experiences stem from an in-between sense of identity that is insightful in breaking down the binary of nature and city. The concept of barriers will appear, in relation to nature entering the city, throughout this thesis. The purpose of this term is not to identify city and nature as separate containers with defined borders and more so to consider certain elements of a landscape as markers of distance between natural and urban settings. Joyce and Mansfield understood these middle, less defined spaces well due to their

experiences in all three spaces.

In his introduction to *City Wilds*, Terrell Dixon describes the need to reframe our approach to nature in urban settings: “While we assume that the city is apart from nature, we ignore how the absence of firsthand, place-based knowledge of urban nature has shaped a culture in which urban environmental degradation is the norm.” (Dixon xi) Modernism is certainly not exempt from juxtaposing nature against the city, but its abundant use –and often misuse – of nature imagery draws attention to the unique ecosystem that is urban nature. In recent years, scientists have studied mycorrhizal networks of tree and plant communities, discovering that these complex connections “occur in all major terrestrial ecosystems” (39 Simard et al.). Mycelial networks facilitate communication among nearby plants and ensure the health and prosperity of an entire region. Considering these findings alongside Dixon’s claim, the city space intervenes in the cohesive nature of these networks, creating its own unique ecosystem that fragments and reroutes natural structures. One might imagine the underground layers of a city, where roots meet with concrete and where soil blends with sewage water. Joyce and Mansfield’s characters inform the reader of their experiences with this unfamiliar landscape by relating aspects of their environment to their emotional journeys.

1.4 Eco-psychology reveals the ‘third landscape’

Keeping the concept of networks in mind, Chapter Two of this thesis will consider perceptions and misperceptions of the natural object in the city. I will use semiotic theory to propose that urban nature has its own sign system, or set of related meanings. The masks worn by natural objects in these stories are conventions of nature from other contexts that lead to a false presentation of nature in the city. This framing will suggest a degree of awareness on the

characters' behalves of their use of false symbolism. For example, Rosemary's positive reaction in "A Cup of Tea" to the engraved tree on the box, contrasted with the "strange pang" she feels toward rainy London, hints at a landscape with its own structure of meaning. Chapter Three employs Susan Rowland's *The Ecocritical Psyche*, in which she situates Jungian theory of consciousness in her consideration of the human psyche as valuable to literary ecocriticism. She integrates into her argument Carl Jung's assertion that modernity is sick from a repression of the mentality that nature and human consciousness are inextricable (Rowland 33). This particular use of the term 'modernity' applies to the culture fostered in urban hubs of the Western world that I will investigate in this thesis. Similar to Rowland, I have chosen to maintain proximity with the human subject in my ecocritical analysis of urban nature, despite the tradition to veer away from anthropocentric thinking. The modernist short fiction narrator adopts a language that suggests a hidden awareness of the truth about urban nature. In relation to Dixon's claim, the characters do not assume "the city is apart from nature"; they use this common misconception to hide their own imperfections.

Chapter 2: “But the pear tree was as lovely as ever”:

Semiotic deception in the urban natural object

The meaning characters ascribe to natural objects in the city is of particular interest to this study because of Mansfield and Joyce’s goals to depict modern life truthfully and accurately. I would like to locate my argument alongside Judith Paltin’s concept of modernist nature as “productive deception” in order to prove the intentionality of these natural objects in modernist short fiction (Paltin 779). One might apply this concept to sexual desire in these stories to clarify its purpose. In both “Bliss” and “The Dead”, the main characters feel a strong desire for their partner during a period of denial of their underlying issues and before they discover their partners’ desire for someone else. Although the pear tree and the snow are never explicitly described as representations of the characters’ feelings, they are both dominant objects that remain throughout these scenes of epiphany. They appear pristine and untouched – and natural – but they are really polluted by the air and the streets of London and Dublin. The meaning that the characters might ascribe to these objects is in fact not at all the reality. However, this deception is productive because it is more representative of modern and urban life for the characters involved. Through the use of illusory symbolism, the characters mask the truth about their imperfect marriages or lack of sexual connection with their partner. I will employ the term ‘symbol’ in reference to the natural objects discussed in this chapter as a vessel for both deceptive and truthful meaning.

Further, Katherine Mansfield wrote in her 1918 journal, “I positively feel, in my hideous modern way, that I can’t get into touch with my mind” (*Journal* 80). The landscape of modern life overwhelmed her and caused a mental detachment between her body and her emotions.

Similarly, the characters in her stories attempt to relate to objects of nature in order to understand their modern identity, but the meanings they attach to them mislead the reader. There is a distinct instability of identity in regards to the self and to one's sense of place in the urban environment that derives from a false perception of nature in the city. A helpful way to identify these moments of instability in the texts is by using the semiotic theory of the sign. Charles Peirce asserts, "Every thought or cognitive representation, is of the nature of a sign", which then forms a system of connected signs relative to each other's meanings (Pierce 247). In this way, one can consider a third landscape of urban nature as a separate system of signs. Instead, characters attempt to describe urban nature from within the sign systems of the natural world and of urban culture, separately. I will also consider the implications of Mansfield and Joyce's colonial histories in the development of this illusory symbolism. More specifically, the natural object as a symbol parallels a sense of alienation felt by the urban colonial subject. In this way, the modern subject and urban nature create a semiotic screen between the modernist psyche and the reader. While the characters convince the reader of their perfect lives, perhaps they also attempt to convince *themselves* of this fact. Their underlying awareness of their own flaws implies their knowledge of the sign system of urban nature.

2.1 Illusory symbolism of the tree in "Bliss" and "A Cup of Tea"

The "productive deception" of urban nature reveals itself in Bertha's perception of the pear tree in Mansfield's 1918 short story "Bliss". This story is set in London, opening with the main character, Bertha Young, making her way home along the city streets to prepare for the dinner party she is hosting that evening. In the opening scene, she experiences a sudden burst of 'bliss' that the narrator describes, "as though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that

late afternoon sun” (*Selected* 175). This description establishes from the beginning the glowing quality of the natural world behind the landscape of the city. In this case, the sunlight is presented to the reader as a metaphor for her perfect bliss and her excitement for life. The reader is convinced of the validity of her bliss at this point in the story. Once she enters her house and finds that her daughter’s relationship with the nanny is closer than theirs, the metaphor begins to weaken. This light is mentioned again as a “fire in her bosom” (177) right before the narrator introduces the true object of Bertha’s emotional arc: the pear tree. In the initial description of the tree, the narrator makes note of “the jade-green sky” (177) behind it, signaling dusk. There is no longer any sun or light hovering over the city; the only remaining sunlight is being kept in Bertha’s bosom as she gazes out at the tree, retreating for a moment into thoughts of her own happiness and good fortune in life. However, the significance of this light for the reader evolves as the quality of the light changes from “a bright piece of ... sun” to a fire. The internalized light signals metaphorical passion and intensity in its comparison to fire that correlates directly with Bertha’s initial notice of the pear tree in the story.

Further, Bertha dresses like the pear tree for her dinner party in “A white dress, a string of jade beads, green shoes, and stockings. It wasn’t ‘intentional’” (178). The narrator never specifies the colours of the pear tree, but the reader can assume from the description that her outfit mimics it in essence. Though she claims to love her life living in London with her little family, Bertha identifies in a time of intense emotions with the tree in her backyard. She goes so far as to embody the energy of the tree in the colours she wears to her dinner party. The use of free indirect discourse in the latter sentence indicates the unreliability of Bertha’s symbolic interpretation of the pear tree. Her own voice appears in this part of the narration because of the

obvious insecurity in her sense of self to specify that her outfit's similarity to the tree is coincidental. The distance maintained in this scene between Bertha and the physical tree links her to a shallow, appearance-based comparison. The implication that she might resemble the pear tree in her green beads and silk dress neglects the reality of the pear tree in its true natural state and reinforces the value of image. Similarly, Miss Fulton's outfit is intriguing to this discussion because of its silvery material and its likeness to the moon. Around the time of Miss Fulton's arrival, the character of Eddie mentions to Bertha that the moon has risen in the sky, implying that the moon is now behind the pear tree. From there enters Miss Fulton – whose name happens to be Pearl – dressed in all silver. At this moment, the pear tree reenters Bertha's mind where she thinks, "it would be silver by now" (182); this phrase links the tree's colour to the moon and to Pearl's clothes. The silvery light she imagines over the pear tree parallels with the light she notices that seems to be coming from Pearl's pale fingers (182). The silvery light becomes representative of Bertha's passion and desire, or 'bliss', because it appears over the pear tree upon Miss Fulton's arrival. Further, the tree only remains relevant in the story because of its presence in Bertha's mind as a false symbol of perfection in her life.

When Pearl notices the pear tree through the window, the two women gaze at it together, "caught in that circle of unearthly light" (183) surrounding it outside. The moment the two ladies share is so intense and powerful for Bertha that the light she sees is unearthly in contrast with the city. By now, the impact attributed to this tree passes beyond a beautiful object of nature; it stands beneath a circle of light that leaves a suggestion of spiritual transcendence. Her perception of 'nature' is an "unearthly" and thus idealized image in contrast with the urban London environment. The protagonist's reaction to the pear tree manifests as an ironic reversal of

Romantic-era traditions, where she relies on the convention of the purity of nature to convince herself that her feeling of bliss is real. However, the modernist technique of free indirect discourse and other clues in the language of the story presuppose the falseness of this symbolism. The silvery light from the moon casts a veneer over the pear tree that emphasizes the perfection of the two ladies' dazzling view through the window. The overwhelming degree of emotion for Bertha in this scene projects onto the pear tree a sign system of romanticized, unrealistic nature.

In the final section of "Bliss", when Bertha discovers her husband is having an affair with Pearl, no light or colour is mentioned again in the story. Pearl acknowledges the beauty of the pear tree once more to Bertha, who looks at it again after her guest's departure, but she does not notice any light surrounding it this time. Bertha's feeling of bliss and her secure sense of self dissipates, while the tree remains "as lovely as ever" and "as still" (185). Her image of the tree as perfect – and therefore her misperception of what is "natural" – remains, even once the illusion she gave to the reader of her own life has shattered. Further, the added observation of the tree's stillness in its place beyond the window reinforces its role as an *image* of nature rather than an object. The reader can certainly interpret the tree as a symbol for the identity Bertha projects of herself to others of a young woman with a husband whom she loves and a close bond with her daughter. She appears beautiful and "as lovely as ever" even after she learns of her husband's infidelity. The true connection then, between Bertha and the tree, is the imperfection they share, despite the mask they present to society. Their purity is an outward appearance and image projected onto society that hardly reveals any true properties of their character. Much like Bertha and her husband lack sexual desire for each other, the pear tree's leaves are rough, its form asymmetrical, its branches breakable. Pearl Fulton's comparison to moonlight in her outfit

strengthens this assessment through the element of exposure. While the moonlight illuminates the pear tree in the nighttime, Pearl exposes Bertha's marital issues to the reader. Ultimately, the natural elements featured in "Bliss" do function naturally within the urban setting. They become members of a third landscape between manmade and organic of urban nature that has its own unique structure of signs and meaning. The extreme emphasis on the pear tree's purity and perfection in a Romantic-era sign system ultimately points to its *lack* of purity when faced with urban pollution.

Mansfield rarely made any concrete indications towards the possibility of autobiography in her work. However, it is clear in stories like "Bliss" that elements of characters reflect her personal concerns in life and observations of her loved ones, some of which have been noted in her personal writing (Magalener 414). Her short story heroines are not exact replicas of herself, but they tackle internal battles she may have felt living an urban life for many years. In fact, the evidence for small morsels of Mansfield is found less in her characters and more concretely in her descriptions of the natural world and specific natural objects. Some of the most important natural scenes in her work originate from her personal experiences with nature, many of which were documented in her journals and diaries. For example, one of her journal entries from 1915 describes an interaction she had with her brother, "Chummie" the last time she saw him. She illustrates their conversation in the garden of her residence in London at the time before he left to fight in World War One and was killed almost immediately on the battlefield (*Journal* 32). In the garden, there is an old pear tree that her brother notices when a pear falls to the ground and it reminds him of the pear trees in New Zealand. They reminisce about the happiness they felt in their childhood picking and eating pears, and Mansfield adds, "I felt that again – just now –

when we looked for the pear in the grass” (34). She also notes, “the round moon shines over the pear tree” (34) and “touches [the ivy] with silver” (35), painting this nostalgic scene with both happiness and sorrow. The siblings agree to return to New Zealand together after the war, which they ultimately never did. Although the tree generates fond memories of the natural landscape in New Zealand, it does not replace them; they both still wish to return to their homeland. This scene produces a very similar image to the pear tree in “Bliss” and the great amount of emotion Bertha associates with it. The window creates a sort of tableau where Bertha and Pearl remain removed from a true interaction with the tree that resembles the feeling of a memory. Perhaps this technique evokes a sense of “otherness” or removal felt by Mansfield in urban London society that she associates with the pear trees from home.

Similarly to Joyce, Mansfield’s relationship with urban life as depicted in these stories is critical and unfiltered, but it is not purely negative. Many of her most psychologically dismal stories were written about characters in small towns in New Zealand. The characters in her stories like Bertha Young seem to enjoy their surroundings and the energy of metropolitan life. However, they also struggle with many of the structural aspects of London society that apply pressure to one’s mental health. These are all experiences Mansfield lived, as expressed in her personal writing throughout various times of her short life. Mansfield made note of her own interactions with women of London society, stating, “I have nothing to say to ‘charming’ women. I feel like a cat among tigers” (10). The single quotation marks around the word charming imply that Mansfield noticed a degree of falseness in the women’s charm, which is perhaps what is reflected upon in Bertha and Rosemary’s perceptions of natural objects. Considering this detail, my argument that natural objects adopt a false persona in the city

expresses her feelings as an outsider and her ambition to uncover the truth about urban life. The natural object such as the pear tree in “Bliss” or the rain in “A Cup of Tea” *appears* unchanged but is internally alienated, like the urban individual amid a rapidly modernizing London.

Similarly to “Bliss”, Mansfield’s “A Cup of Tea”, first published in 1922, illustrates the London life of an upper class married woman, Rosemary Fell. In this story, Mansfield juxtaposes materiality and nature to comment on the protagonist’s identity within her elite class status. The opening paragraphs describe her luxurious shopping habits, referencing popular streets in London to identify the story’s city (*Selected* 362). In Andrew Thacker’s introduction to *Modernism Space and the City*, he writes, “Much of the experimental style of modernist writing has frequently been traced to the impact of the urbanization of consciousness, refracted through the particular qualities of the cities being considered” (Thacker 3). By naming several well-known streets, Mansfield identifies London as the specific city in question much more explicitly than she does in “Bliss”. Thus, the representations of consciousness in this story are direct reflections of London. In continuation of Thacker’s thinking, interactions with objects of nature in this story connect to the specific identity of London as a unique product of modernization.

The plot of “A Cup of Tea” begins by placing the protagonist, Rosemary Fell, at an antique shop browsing an expensive enamel box with a design of two figures under “a flowery tree” (*Selected* 363). The picture of the tree and the beauty of the box intrigue her, but ultimately its value is measured by money and she decides to think about it. Leaving the shop empty-handed, she notices the London weather: “Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad” (363). The reality of the natural world in contrast with the beautiful blooming

tree on the box introduces the theme of beauty in both nature and commodity. In this scene, she feels “a strange pang” at the sight of the rainy city in contrast to the “love” she felt for the enamel box in the store (363). The sublime feeling of pure nature produced by the tree on the box emphasizes the harshness of a rainy day in urban London. However, the tree as an engraving also draws attention to Rosemary’s lack of direct interaction with a flowery tree, similar to the function of the window in “Bliss”.

This scene reveals urban nature’s position within a third, semiotically unique landscape through Mansfield’s rich use of irony. The protagonist connects more deeply to an *image* of a tree that is so clearly unrepresentative of the reality of nature, while her reaction to the weather outside is of distaste. Even the narrator describes the electric lamps as saddened by the cold air and the rain falling on the city (363). Many modernists often portrayed “urban land as wasteland”, which reinforces the binaries of purity and contamination with the countryside and the city (Rubenstein 49). The rain in the city is polluted, which explains Rosemary’s preference for the tree on the box, an object from which she is completely removed. Firstly, the use of commodity and material beauty solidifies the romanticization of nature’s purity as false. Secondly, Rosemary’s strongly negative reaction to the rain implies that she approaches nature from within an inaccurate system of signs, rather than within the semiotic landscape of urban nature. At this point in the narrative, an engraving of a tree seems more representative of nature to Rosemary than the cold rainy evening that surrounds her.

The rain imagery anticipates Rosemary’s interaction with the poor woman on the street, Miss Smith, whom she brings home for tea. Miss Smith’s character allows Rosemary’s jealousy to be revealed when her husband comments on her beauty to trick Rosemary into forcing her to

leave. Mr. Fell references the state of the outdoors as “a beastly afternoon”, but shows no remorse for Miss Smith’s situation (*Selected* 367). Likewise, Rosemary’s generosity towards Miss Smith lasts until her insecurities about her beauty – a fact noted by the narrator at the beginning of the story – are provoked through the young woman. In the final passage of “A Cup of Tea”, the ‘natural world’ and human nature are the two parting images left for the reader. Rosemary tells her husband of the little box from the antique shop and asks for permission to buy it, “But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.” (369). As in “Bliss”, the technique of free indirect discourse reveals itself in this sentence, where the reader can imagine the phrase as Rosemary’s agitated thought. She then proceeds to ask her husband if he thinks she is pretty, which concludes the story. The impact Rosemary can make on society is not through her own natural beauty, but through the acquisition of beautiful things. For this reason, she values a version of nature that has been refined and reproduced by modern culture over a real natural object that she perceives as flawed, like her appearance.

Although the link between nature and human consciousness is not as obvious here as the pear tree in “Bliss”, the box reveals a new sense of ‘natural beauty’ that can only be achieved through manufactured goods. This beauty symbolizes a perfection that does not exist in human beings or in true nature. The notion of natural purity in commodity causes Rosemary’s misinterpretation of the dark and somber rain because she imagines an unrealistic image of nature through the box. She ignores the ironic connection of her personal life with the London rain, polluted by the city and modern culture. The afternoon sunlight in “Bliss” has a similar effect on Bertha, where her ‘bliss’ masks the negative parts of her life, like the sunlight entering an urban space. The reader is able to identify this deception because of the unreliability of the

characters identified through free indirect discourse, among other techniques. In this way, the use of erroneous natural symbolism establishes nature's role in the city as a member of a separate semiotic network of urban nature. Furthermore, "A Cup of Tea" qualifies under Thacker's use of David Harvey's "urbanization of consciousness" by centering rain as a common feature of London that becomes unique, in a sense, to that city. London as the city in question demonstrates "the interconnectedness between human life/history and physical environments" (Buell et al. 420) through the affluent modernist city dweller. Ultimately, Mansfield's use of trees as images in "Bliss" and "A Cup of Tea" identify Western modern *culture* as equally impactful on nature as the physical aspects of a city.

2.2 Urban nature as colonial palimpsest in "The Dead" and "A Married Man's Story"

London was regarded as a pinnacle of metropolitan life at the turn of the century. However, modernists also depicted the fear of modernity through the lens of other cities, some with colonial histories. Joyce's "The Dead" encapsulates the psychological effect of modernity with the snow over Dublin similarly to Mansfield's use of rain falling over Wellington in "A Married Man's Story". The colonial identities of these cities and the authors' connections to them influence the depiction of snow and rain as 'natural' objects. Ireland and New Zealand were both colonized by Great Britain; they are also considered First World countries with deep historical ties to culture of the Western world. Fredric Jameson describes the urban landscape of London in comparison with Dublin, claiming the Irish urban environment is "a space no longer central, as in English life, but marked as marginal and ec-centric after the fashion of colonized areas of the imperial system" (Jameson 60). Joyce and Mansfield grew up in suburbs of Dublin and Wellington, respectively, but both also lived in London and other major European cities for

large portions of their lives. Nonetheless, they were unequivocally tied to these cities that share a “radical otherness of colonial life, colonial suffering, and exploitation” (51) – cities that influenced their perception of urban spaces.

Each of the texts in Chapter Two of this thesis position nature imagery around a moment of epiphany related, in varying degrees, to the protagonist’s marriage; “The Dead” is no exception to this rule. However, the setting of the story at an Irish Twelfth Night – or Epiphany Eve – celebration in Dublin suggests an additional layer to Gabriel’s crisis of identity. The narrator describes snow on Gabriel’s hat and shoulders as he arrives at the house so that the reader imagines the snow falling from the beginning (Joyce 167). Prior to the culminating scene at the end, the exchange between Gabriel and Miss Ivors at the party establishes Gabriel’s identity to be linked to Ireland’s own identity as modernization began to accelerate in Europe. When Miss Ivors invites Gabriel to venture out to the Aran Isles with a group in the summer, he declines due to a previously planned trip to the Continent. In this discussion, she insists the trip would be an opportunity to reconnect with his people and his language in a rural and natural setting. Gabriel replies with, “...if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language” and reveals “I’m sick of my own country, sick of it!” (179). The scene ends with her whispering “West Briton” – a derogatory term used by Irish revivalists to refer to Irish people who favoured English culture and politics – into his ear, emphasizing a rift between Irish opinions on Ireland at the time. Although the nation had first been overtaken by the British Empire in the Renaissance period, it preserved a unique identity for many generations. The acceleration of modern technology and urban life seemed to create a more noticeable divide than ever between Irish identities. Britain projected an impression of British cities as more ‘modern’ and advanced than

colonial cities, despite Dublin's active role in modern technology and culture. Miss Ivors represents the movement to remove this façade of Irish culture imposed by imperial authority – a façade she believes Irishman like Gabriel support.

“The Dead” is arguably one of the most influential and highly regarded short stories of the Western world and certainly of Irish literature. This story is the longest, as well as the last, short story included in *Dubliners*. In his analysis of “The Dead” and Joyce's writing on Ireland, Irish studies scholar Kevin Whelan suggests that modernist literature was at the helm of the Irish literary surge because “the decentered subject of modernism resembled the colonial subject” (Whelan 62). The marked voice of the modernist character becomes an agent of empowerment to represent Irish culture as an oppressed and marginalized entity. Modernism was, therefore, a powerful tool for Joyce to represent Dublin and its inhabitants accurately and in a manner that emphasized their individuality from imperial spaces such as London. The common markers of modernism – disruption, paralysis, and alienation – could represent the complicated history of language in Ireland, alongside the struggle between native and colonized cultural identities. Dublin signifies a conglomeration of these complex identities for Ireland: of the natural and the technological, of Irish origins and of imperially imposed customs, of history and of modernity, among other considerations. The story also suggests a notion of ‘deadness’ that could be interpreted as a loss of cultural independence and vibrancy in colonized Ireland. Whelan, then, classifies Dublin's “radical otherness” described by Jameson as not only a colonial characteristic but a modernist one as well. Perhaps the concept of ‘deadness’ can also be applied to a loss of true unaffected nature in the urban environment. “The Dead” represents these intricacies of Dublin and of *Dubliners* with the image of snow.

Modernism was appropriate for the early twentieth century in Ireland because of its concern for the technological future. Gabriel presents as the ideal modernist character in many ways, but primarily because of his lack of certainty in his identity as an Irishman. The image of snow falling over Dublin becomes intertwined with his paralysis between the past and present of Irish identities. He feels the pull of imperial influence, claiming English as his language over Irish in his attraction to a modern lifestyle. The snow as a striking feature of the natural world in this story is most valuable because Gabriel notices it against the backdrop of Dublin as he grapples with his own past and present and less so because of its meaning to his character's moment of epiphany. However, his narrative as a colonial subject struggling with personal identity in the modern world directly situates an ecocritical reading of snow in the city within the context of colonialism. The snow creates a colour contrast as it covers the streets of Dublin and falls through the air, obstructing a clear view of the city's architecture. The stark whiteness of the snow among the city's dark silhouette emphasizes the action of "covering up" Dublin.

This prominent image – in addition to Gabriel's earlier interaction with Miss Ivors – prompts a consideration of modern Dublin as a palimpsest, where its pre-colonial history has been covered over by Britain's influence. Scholars have described cities, in modernism and beyond, as cultural and historical palimpsests related to "memory traces" (Huyssen 7). Along this line, the natural quality of snow links the idea of palimpsest seamlessly to colonial memory in this particular period of Irish history and modernization. The city itself covers over land that was once natural and untouched, much like the snow that is now polluted by the urbanized city. In addition, there is no mention of moonlight in relation to the falling snow as there is in the London scenes in "Bliss". Instead, the snowflakes themselves "are silver and dark, falling

obliquely against the lamplight” (Joyce 212). Each snowflake casts a silvery effect against the dark night until it hits the ground and joins the sheet of white over the city. Rather than natural light illuminating the seemingly natural snow, the narrator makes particular note of the lamplight and its interaction with the falling snowflakes. On the surface, the narrator presents the snow as representative of the natural world for the reader. The image of snow being “general all over Ireland” (212) suggests a union of land by an object that remains natural everywhere and is reminiscent of the Irish revival to which Joyce was generally opposed (Lacivita 43). The lamplight allows for this universally natural quality to be questioned by reminding the reader of the urban dominance of Dublin in the scene. Therefore, since the palimpsestic quality of the snow suggests a covering up caused by imperial rule, its status as truly natural becomes ambiguous.

Mansfield’s “A Married Man’s Story” adopts the image of rain as an object that covers and consumes the Wellington landscape similarly to Joyce’s snow over Dublin. Although the narrator does not overtly provide the setting of “A Married Man’s Story”, the unnamed protagonist flashes back to his wedding day at the Botanical Gardens in Wellington, which implies it is the city in which he presently lives (*Selected* 328). Thus, the protagonist qualifies as one of Whelan’s modernist colonial subjects due to his relationship with a sense of home and the outside world. The story is set entirely inside the protagonist’s house and is so isolated from the outdoors that he never sees a natural object in the scene; he merely imagines them. Since the blinds are closed, the reader can assume that he either saw the rain earlier or can hear it on the roof, as he simply notes, “Outside it is raining.” (323). The passage that follows illustrates the main character’s vision of standing in the rain outside where “it seems to me it must be raining

all over the world – that the whole earth is drenched” (323) and is then also consumed by the same rain that falls in Wellington.

While Mansfield certainly felt a lifelong attachment to her homeland – particularly in her latter years when she was too ill to travel back– she also sought to depict ‘home’ through diverse human identities and their relationships with various environments (Rudig 109). This detail is notable when comparing this text to “The Dead” and the technique of extending the city into other land with the rain and snow. It is unclear whether the rain would have returned at the end of “A Married Man’s Story” as does the snow in “The Dead”, since it is unfinished. The final sentence cuts off the main character’s long flashback into his life, so the reader can assume he would return to reality and perhaps notice the rain again, but there is no way of knowing for certain. There is evidence at the end that points toward a similar comparison of human and non-human life with the natural world, much like the ending of “The Dead”. The main character recounts a memory, saying, “I did not consciously turn away from the world of human beings; I had never known it; but I from that night did beyond words consciously turn towards my silent brothers” (*Selected* 335). The phrase “silent brothers” likely alludes to plant life and an emotional return to nature that he has since lost in his married life in Wellington. This passage, along with the introductory image of rain and its extension beyond the city, suggests a similar template to Joyce’s ending.

Both stories are set in cities with colonial histories, but they also extend outward beyond the urban space with Joyce’s snow covering all of Ireland and Mansfield’s rain covering the entire world, in the character’s eyes. This element is intriguing, considering the great destruction of natural lands caused by imperial powers during the colonization and modernization of these

nations. Colonial cities seem to be depicted as more obviously connected to other land than massive imperial cities such as London. In this way, colonial cities present as having an in-between state of identity that is similar to that of urban nature in these texts. Their identity relies, to an extent, on their imperial urban superiors. However, Joyce and Mansfield both make a point to expand this connection across other non-urban lands using rain and snow – objects with natural origins. Therefore, Dublin and Wellington contain the same *tertium quid* structure as the urbanized natural object because of their more explicit balance between two extreme binaries. Where urban nature lands between the natural and the artificial, colonial Dublin exists between Irish and British identities, hence the *tertium quid* structure. This tension causes a third city landscape that blends layers of identity, which is reflected through blurred images of “the wavering reflections of the lamps” (*Selected* 323) and the snow, “falling obliquely against the lamplight” (Joyce 213). Perhaps the specificity of this imagery points toward a desire to uncover what has been buried using a uniting natural force. The characters describe the snow and the rain as natural objects against the city without directly mentioning the effect of urbanity on their original state. They remain natural objects, but much like colonized cities, they have been altered, where their semiotic sign systems no longer apply. Perhaps the blurred effect of the imagery implies that the narrator and the characters are aware of this third ‘polluted’ landscape, which causes a sense of alienation in their lives.

Within this analysis, it is worth noting that Joyce and Mansfield were both white writers, which is more significant in Mansfield’s case living her childhood on the lands of Indigenous peoples of what is now called New Zealand. Nonetheless, she felt a colonial identity as “a stranger – an alien” in London: “And I am the little Colonial walking in the London garden patch

– allowed to look, perhaps, but not to linger” (*Journal* 106). This quote illustrates her feeling that Londoners had ownership over the natural objects in their city to which is clear she did not belong. Her diaries and many of her stories also indicate a strong connection to nature that originates from her childhood living in a rural suburb of Wellington (42). Likewise for Joyce, his vision to develop Irish literature and depict Ireland as a once culturally rich and independent nation involves descriptions of the vast natural landscapes outside of Irish city centers. The markedness mentioned by Fredric Jameson in relation to Dublin’s colonial status suggests that colonized cities – and their inhabitants – might undergo a different process of identity in the face of modernization than London or Paris. Nature may be more than simply an environmental tool in modernist literature but a decolonial one as well, bringing the true state of ‘urban nature’ to the forefront. Thus, the idea of colonial palimpsest created by both urban and natural layers reinforces the existence of a third landscape with its own system of meaning. In addition, in “A Married Man’s Story, the protagonist imagines “arriving in a strange city” where the downpour persists and describes the chaos of “dodging someone, swerving by someone else” through the rainy streets (*Selected* 323). Mansfield’s sense of place is connected to her native city where her identity is rooted, but she imagines it as a feeling that transfers into any urban environment visited by a colonial subject. Therefore, Mansfield’s lived experience of the markedness of colonial space contributes to characters’ interpretations of rain and snow as notable against their urban environment. However, the images of lamplight creating reflections in a “strange city” suggest this ‘othered’ connection to nature as a symptom of the colonial subject rather than their city alone. The theme of feeling like a stranger or outsider to one’s environment works on a colonial as well as a universally modern level in these texts.

Further, the protagonist's experience of the rain is never as physically consuming in reality as it is in his mind, much like the snow in "The Dead". The element of removed experience exhibited through the pear tree and the tree on the box reappears in these stories with the snow and the rain. Both Gabriel and Mansfield's anonymous protagonist are indoors when the snow or rain is falling; thus, they emotionally connect to it second hand. When Gabriel displays feelings of uneasiness, first with Lily, then Miss Ivors, and later with his wife, he has already escaped the snow and entered the Miss Morkans' house. When they all leave at the end, the snow has stopped falling and does not resume until Gabriel and Gretta are in their hotel room. Likewise with Mansfield's character, he knows it is raining without moving from his chair in the living room, where thoughts of his lack of passion for his wife and the tragedies of his childhood resurface. Even if he were to open the blinds and confirm it, he would still be looking through the window the way Gabriel does, demonstrating the theme of separation (Whelan 69). This technique matches the conventions of modernism to represent fragmented, alienated, and partially removed realities of colonial characters in modern life. Beyond this reading, the window also illuminates the separation between the symbolic meaning made by the character and the semiotic reality of the urban natural object in the scene.

2.3 Re-envisioning silence in the modern city

Finally, I would like to consider the themes of nature "covering up" and "reflecting" as connected to descriptions of sound in the two stories. The role of sound in the urban landscape projects a repurposed quality to it in relation to modernist conceptions of the city when a passage references both silence and death. Death as a concept unequivocally implies true silence of a body, which is interesting to compare with 'silence' in a city setting. In one of Katherine

Mansfield's diary entries during her time living in Paris, she imagines herself walking around the city and conversing with poet – and her friend – Rupert Brooke who had passed away earlier that year. In this scene, she says, “it's a game I like to play – to walk and talk with the dead who smile and are silent, and *free*, quite finally free” (*Journal* 28). Mansfield identifies the feeling of silence in the city through the absence of the voices of her loved ones, despite the urban noise that undoubtedly surrounded her. Brooke, who passed away during his time serving in the war, represents many wartime deaths during this period in Europe. In this way, silence acts as a mode of perception for the modern individual and their environment that was deeply associated with death and wartime.

“The Dead” is a compelling story to analyze within this context because of the function of snow falling over Dublin linked to death and silence. The narrator pays attention to sound throughout the story with music, conversation, and laughter, but noise occupies most of the setting until the guests leave the party. Kelly Sultzbach engages with the concept of silence and nature throughout her book *Ecocriticism in the Modernist Imagination*. She posits silence as a descriptive tool that creates space for nature's presence to be noticed more intentionally by the reader (Sultzbach 87). Her chapter on E.M. Forster pushes this argument into the realm of colonial writing and the pastoral in modernism: “postcolonial ecocriticism is instructive in its emphasis on the significance of silences in depictions of colonial landscapes and their voices” (70). The modernist writer's inclusion of sound applies to urban colonial landscapes as well because it draws attention to the natural object that can be often overlooked within the complexities of writing on colonial spaces. In “The Dead”, Gabriel begins to notice the lack of sound –or rather of voices and music – as they walk the city streets and hail a cab, noting, “He

was glad for [the cab's] rattling noise as it saved him from conversation" (Joyce 203).

Considering this line, the city must be quieter than the party if the cab's noise is distinct in contrast with the sound of a conversation. The early-morning Dublin setting after the evening's snowfall is still; the only prominent sound that remains until the end of the story is voices, primarily of Gabriel and Gretta. Finally, during the couple's discussion of Michael Furey in their hotel room, the snow begins to fall once more: "A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again" (212). The fact that Gabriel can hear the snowflakes tapping on the window implies the silence encompassing the characters and the scene. This absence of sound contrasts to a passage from Mansfield's story, where the character notes the "patter", "drumming", "gurgling", and "splashing" of the rain against the city (*Selected* 323). Perhaps the act of describing the *degree* of sound is what places emphasis on nature in the modernist city, bringing silence from the pastoral into the urban settings of Dublin and Wellington. Sound is ultimately another mode of identifying urban nature as altered and alienated by the urban landscape.

Chapter 3: Illuminating the city landscape:

Eco-psychology and urban perceptions of light

In this chapter, I will explore depictions of landscapes in the modernist city using Susan Rowland's book *The Ecocritical Psyche: Literature, Evolutionary Complexity and Jung* to frame the discussion. In the book, Rowland fleshes out the inherent link between humans and nature and the counterproductive ways in which their connection is often perceived as severed in modern society. Using Jungian theory of the psyche and "psychic nature", she argues for the inseparability of nature from human consciousness in products of the psyche such as language and meaning making. My analysis in this chapter will interact with the following question she poses: "is the retention of the culturally constructed binary 'nature or culture' necessary to remind ourselves of the uniquely destructive impact of humanity upon a planet earth that does not 'belong' exclusively to us?" (Rowland 4). Although the biological origins of humans connect directly to the natural world, the negative effects of the anthropocene age and increasing urbanization have caused the nature-culture binary to be an essential precaution. This idea may explain the modernist character's awareness of their romanticization of the urban nature they know to be imperfect, and even more so, polluted.

Within this context, Rowland posits Jung as an "ecocritic of modernity" (24). The book examines these themes through a diverse range of literary texts, from Shakespeare to Austen and beyond, but it does not touch on any modernist works. As Jung makes frequent use of metaphor and symbol in his arguments, the modernist tendency to distort meaning and manipulate symbolism complicates these methods. I would like to propose that Judith Paltin's "productive deception" of nature from Chapter Two reveals a modernist ecocritical psyche that unmasks

itself in characters' perceptions of city landscapes. Since Jung describes nature as an innately human quality that resides in an unconscious area of the brain where even language and culture can be considered products of nature, this approach remains nature-centric and thus ecocritical (23). This strand of Jungian psychoanalysis – which is based in the Western canon – evokes ideas from Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge of interconnected communities of living beings.

Much like Chapter Two, characters often observe qualities of their surrounding landscape before a moment of epiphany. Descriptions of clouds and light in the sky are never totally isolated from the architecture of the city below. In fact, some elements of the urban space – such as streetlamps – mimic objects of the natural world as recounted by city dwellers in the texts. In this way, one could consider a feeling of alienation in the modern city to be a product of people living in an unnatural environment. Moreover, Susan Rowland writes, “Ecocriticism researches and critiques our disastrous treatments of nature” (28). Mansfield and Joyce’s work contributes to this definition of ecocriticism by representing the natural landscape as warped and repressed by manmade effects of urbanity such as light pollution. The sunlight from “Feuille d’Album” invades Paris, painting the river and pedestrians pink, while the Dublin lamplight in the final passage of “Two Gallants” overpowers the moon entirely.

In this chapter, I will examine the concept of barriers in relation to landscape, light, and the ‘urban’ body in the modernist city space. Various light sources, namely the sun, the moon, and lamplight will provide a basis to investigate the following questions: What parts of the landscape does the modern city dweller perceive as natural? How does light in particular influence the urban subject’s understanding of the city in relation to their body and the outside

world? If we support Rowland's argument for ecocriticism that the human psyche is unconsciously natural and therefore has an inseparable connection to the natural world, the manmade and cultural qualities of a city become negative barriers. My proposal of a *tertium quid* landscape comes to fruition in the following short stories through images that blur the outer landscape into the city. The characters and narrators are aware of this landscape, which they subtly disclose to the reader by relating their surroundings to their personal journeys. Further, Joyce and Mansfield reference specific cities –Dublin and Paris – in the following stories by identifying their place names. I will consider the character's relationship with the city – as a local or as an outsider– and their respective observations of light on unique characteristics of the city in question.

3.1 “A slight darkening”: a modernist sunset over Dublin

“A Little Cloud” from *Dubliners* situates its protagonist in direct conversation with the image of sunshine entering Dublin and casting shadows on the city. In the introduction to this story, the protagonist, Little Chandler, sits at his writing desk, looking out the window: “The glow of a late autumn sunset covered the grass plots and walks. It cast a shower of kindly golden dust ... it flickered upon all the moving figures. ... He watched the scene and thought of life (Joyce 61). The scene sends him into a state of melancholic reflection, where he imagines the poetry books in his house, left unused, despite his passion for writing. The root of his sadness, then, lies in a missed opportunity to pursue writing because he chose to work and have a family. This sadness is a result of modern culture and society's standards of work and, more specifically, Dublin as a worker's city in contrast to creative hubs like London and Paris. The rays of the sun cover the entire scene outside his window, illuminating every aspect of the city, both positive

and negative. The use of “glow” and “golden dust” signify a *part* of the sun’s light entering the city, but more so the farthest tips of light. This detail implies the light has travelled a fair distance from its source, being impacted by the urban city as it enters. Little Chandler’s melancholic view of the scene from inside his office reflects this separation with the window as a more visible symbol for barriers. The sun’s rays cause him to think of his life, which is dependent on a society-based definition of success, leading to disappointment. Therefore, the light, although technically natural, is productively deceptive as wholly encompassing nature and by extension, warmth and happiness. The element of separation works on a dual level with the window separating Little Chandler’s body from the light as a separation of humanity from its origin. One might interpret this image as the narrator’s knowledge that this sunlight has entered a new semiotic space determined by signs of urban culture.

Directly following this moment, Little Chandler ventures out into the streets of Dublin when the sun has nearly set: “no memory of the past touched him, for he was full of a present joy” (61). The past, which provokes sadness, is partially removed from his life, much like the golden light he sees, but does not feel, through his window. However, he feels a surge of inspiration once the sunset is “waning” and he is left surrounded by the walls and streets of Dublin, which invigorates him. Little Chandler’s definition of success is grounded in his desire to be a published and widely recognized poet, which requires a system exclusive to urban settings. The quick-paced atmosphere of the city center in the evening is evocative of possibility in a manner that the golden sun could not provide for him. Along this line, I have mentioned Rowland’s case that in Jungian theory, language and culture are also related to the unconscious psyche, which is natural (Rowland 2). With this concept in mind, the art of poetry can be

considered a product of nature as well; the unnatural part is Little Chandler's desire to be popular and critically acclaimed, which derives from modern and urban attitudes and sign systems. This interaction with the darkening city space supplies the reader with information about the barriers – both visible and indiscernible – that distance the modern subject from their emotional instincts. I would like to suggest that Little Chandler interprets the “glow” and “golden dust” in the city negatively because he knows the sunlight belongs to the third landscape, which is semiotically urban. This reading allows for the passage's meaning to surpass anthropocentrism and present the fragmented state of nature in the face of modernity as an equally potent message.

The opening image also creates a compelling dynamic with the title of the story, “A Little Cloud”. Joyce establishes an image in the reader's mind of Dublin in the early evening, bathed in golden light and thus entirely illuminated by the setting sun. However, this “kindly golden dust” falls onto “untidy nurses and decrepit old men” (Joyce 61), suggesting a darkness to the Dubliners being surrounded by seemingly natural light. The narrator's description of the nurse's occupation and the implication that men who are old and therefore no longer working are obsolete and decrepit strongly links humanity to societal norms in this scene. The narrator's perception of the sunlight as “kindly” –paired with mystical words such as “golden dust” and “flicker” – evokes a pastoral and almost mythical sense to Little Chandler's view from the window. Compared with this image, the title implies “a slight darkening” (Eide and Mahaffey 166) of the scenery below that would presumably cast a shadow on the Dublin landscape. The text implies to the reader that such a cloud does not exist, at least in Chandler's line of vision, because the city streets are “covered” in light. Joyce makes a clear connection between the title and the main character's stature with the word “little”, hinting toward a notion of darkness

instilled by society. The description of the people outside as “untidy” and “decrepit” also signifies the possibility of people as clouds or shadows in the urban city space. The portrayal of sunlight as kindly suggests that humanity must return to the kind arms of nature to be happy, which is a misleading interpretation of the natural world as simple and serene.

Along this line, Vicki Mahaffey alludes to the speculation by some scholars and critics of the title’s reference to Dante and the lost soul (Eide and Mahaffey 168). Joyce’s comparison of the lost soul to the modern subject attaches the modernist theme of internal ‘darkness’ to the image of a cloud. Further, the contrast of the glowing evening against Dubliners’ lost aspirations Dante’s clouds emphasizes the impact of myth in this scene. Susan Rowland investigates myth and its usages to explain the relationship between nature and human consciousness. She explores the conflicting themes of connectivity in the Earth Mother creation story and separation in the Sky Father story – the latter more closely resembles Freudian theory (Rowland 34). Based on the Jungian belief that modernity has marginalized the Earth Mother myth and championed Sky Father’s separation of the psyche from the natural world, Rowland declares the nature-culture binary a product of modern life. She says, “Myths are nature speaking to culture”, implying that one must not separate products of the mind from the natural world (35). The mythological sense of psychic separation comes to fruition in Joyce’s allusion to Dante’s lost soul as a cloud separated from nature by the borders of Dublin. In fact, Jung pushes this idea further by describing “modernity as sick” from modern culture’s “othering” of Earth Mother (33). Within this logic, nature in the modern city *must* form a third landscape. The natural object has not *become* urban; it is simply sickened by both physical and cultural features of urban space.

Movement is another essential factor in this story’s depiction of the body in relation to

the city. Little Chandler's shift from sitting at his desk to swiftly walking through Dublin is literal, but it also alludes to his creative progress: "Every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own sober inartistic past" (Joyce 63). He imagines Dublin as a place of stagnancy and lack of artistic flare, whereas London possesses the tools to launch his career as a poet. By walking toward the pub at sunset where his London-dwelling friend Gallaher awaits him, he symbolically propels himself further into modernity, widening his distance from nature. He remains a lost soul and a hovering cloud because he masks his lust for success as a simple passion for writing. Thus, Joyce presents the city space as an environment that propagates the Jungian cultural 'sickness' of separation from consciousness. The use of colour in the sunset over Dublin puts an emphasis on the human body by distinguishing it against the glowing city and then camouflaging it once the sun has set. At the end of the story, in the darkness of night and after his meeting with the successful metropolitan Gallaher, Little Chandler's melancholy and regret resurface as he rocks his baby boy, stuck in place once more. His son, a product of nature, becomes a part of his melancholy and separation from his natural self, a hindrance to artistic progression.

Based on these conflicting scenes of movement, Little Chandler develops as a "simultaneous observer and inhabitant of his physical place" (Cusick 173) as seen through his internalization of light and shadow on Dublin. Cusick's classification of his character is intriguing to compare with Rowland's exploration of culture and the two conflicting Western myths of creation. Perhaps the "observer" portion represents the natural portion of culture in him of language, myth, and creativity. In that case, "the inhabitant of his physical place" points to the aspects of societal culture – namely popularity as success – that are unnatural and fostered by

urban life. One might compare Little Chandler with Bertha Young and the bliss she captures from the sunlight in London; she is an inhabitant of the London city streets and a distant observer of the pear tree, applying culturally constructed conventions to it that she knows are inaccurate. Nonetheless, it is the overall landscape of the city that creates this impactful image of light and dark, of *hopeful* and *hopeless*. The movement of the sunlight physically entering the city from outside blurs the lines between natural and urban, thus producing the *tertium quid* landscape influenced by a semiotic structure that combines organic and manmade signs.

3.2 Where streetlights meet sky: blocking out and welcoming in nature

Joyce employs the imagery of light as an extension of landscape in another story earlier on in *Dubliners* entitled “Two Gallants”. In fact, natural light – or rather the absence of it – is the first piece of imagery in this story. The narrator establishes the season as summer, in contrast to the autumn sun in “A Little Cloud”; the passage says, “The warm grey evening of August has descended upon the city and a mild warm air, a memory of summer, circulated in the streets.” (Joyce 40). In this case, the lack of direct sunlight during a season where sun is more common sets an intentional background for Dublin in the narrative. There is likely a film of clouds between the city and the natural light, rendering the landscape grey but not necessarily dark. Despite the barrier of the clouds, the outside air descends upon the city. In this passage, Joyce uses a classic technique – which he implements in a similar way in the final passage of “The Dead” – of repeating the word “warm” twice in the same sentence. This repetition accentuates the feeling of the air in the setting as warm, and therefore compressed downwards to circulate in the streets. Perhaps the warm air maintains the connection between outer and inner spaces by mingling with Dublin in lieu of the direct summer sun.

In this opening scene, the two main characters take no direct notice of the weather or the landscape, unlike *Little Chandler*. However, the narrator describes their surrounding environment in a very similar manner to the other story. The fact that the evening “descended upon the city” (Joyce 40) is an intriguing detail to compare with the sunset that “covered the grass plots and walks” (61). There is a very distinct language of invasion and immersion at play in these passages that differs from the snow in “*The Dead*” or the rain in “*A Married Man’s Story*”. In those stories, the snow and rain descending upon or covering the city remain identifiable and distinct from the manmade features of the city. The snow rests on top of the city and the rain creates puddles and a slick veneer over Wellington. Even though the light in “*A Little Cloud*” stands out in the scene, it only tints the city with light as opposed to veiling its features. Likewise with “*Two Gallants*”, the dulled quality of the light blocked by clouds exposes Dublin as it is, unchanged by exterior elements. These images of light as a cover function as a feature of the background rather than the focal point of the narrative. In this way, the narrator describes light as an integrated characteristic of the urban landscape. Light and/or sky play an active participating role by physically entering the urban space from a natural outer source. Joyce then blurs the conceptual boundaries between natural and urban by playing with light and its visual impact on Dublin. The act of “descending upon” or “covering” the city then points to a third category of landscape where aspects of the manmade influence the natural and vice versa.

Rather than contrasting natural light with darkness as in “*A Little Cloud*”, Joyce incorporates electric light into this landscape instead. In the same introductory paragraph as the “warm grey evening” in “*Two Gallants*”, the narrator takes notice of the lampposts lining the streets: “Like illumined pearls the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles upon the

living texture below...” (40). Firstly, the quality of the light emanating from the lamp is compared to the sheen of a pearl, a natural object, which sits on top of a “summit”, alluding to the peak of a mountain. The narrator does not directly specify that the lamps are a replacement for natural light, but the image of the glass orbs on the tall posts strongly mimic characteristics of a sun or a moon. Secondly, the tension between the glow of the lamps and the reiteration of the word “warm” throughout the paragraph is notable. Perhaps the glow of the lamps shining down “upon the living texture below” acts as a visual substitute for the light that often accompanies the warmth of a summer evening. This warmth is “mild”, matching the mild quality of the lamp’s pearly glow. Natural light is easily replicated in the city by the lamplight when a barrier of greyness lies between Dublin and the evening sky. Even so, there is never a clear-cut divide made between the organic and manmade due to the narrator’s comparison of the lamps to pearls. The city landscape is inseparable from the environment outside of its walls, where pearls become cultural simulacra, or simulations, of their original referent.

Another story from *Dubliners* that makes use of lamplight in the city is “Araby”, which appears much earlier on in the collection. The effect of these streetlamps is distinct from “Two Gallants” partially because the story takes place in the winter in Dublin. When the boys meet on Richmond Street to play, dusk has arrived and darkness is looming on the quiet street. Another variation between stories is the narrative point of view; “Two Gallants” has a third-person narrator like most stories in *Dubliners*, whereas “Araby”’s narrator is the main character writing in first person. Therefore, there is no proxy between his account of the environment and his personal narrative. The level of subjectivity is more direct and influences the degree of reliability as to whether it is an accurate account of Dublin life. The protagonist describes the light on the

street as such: “The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns” (21). The violet sky suggests that night has not quite fallen and therefore some natural light mingles with the streetlights. However, the softness of a violet shade of purple creates a background for the more powerful glow of the lamps at the forefront of the landscape. Joyce illustrates a similar scene as the introductory paragraph of “Two Gallants”, only in reverse. Rather than the grey evening descending upon Dublin, the streetlamps lift their lanterns toward the sky. The reader then imagines these manufactured orbs of light extending upward as if to merge with the evening sky. Manmade light mimics its natural counterpart in the ambience it provides the city setting, while simultaneously dulling the natural landscape and illuminating the immediate Dublin one. Even so, these passages also indicate that streetlamps and electric light sources do not entirely replace sun and moonlight for city dwellers.

Joyce’s recurring image of the sky joining with physical aspects of Dublin also alludes to the question of what *does* enter the city and what becomes a barricade for nature. Even when night falls onto Richmond Street and “light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas” (21) of darkness, the protagonist makes no mention of the stars in the sky or even the moon. Electric light from the lampposts and from inside the houses reach into the street and toward the sky. Michael Rubenstein posits that the urban subject at the turn of the century was more than aware that “urbanization came at the cost of the natural environment” (Rubenstein 52). This statement is in reference to light pollution, where the author points toward the idea of pollution without explicitly identifying it as such. Joyce does not overtly point to light pollution, but the image of a starless sky connecting at some point with the lights from the city implies as much. As Rubenstein maintains, the modern city dweller noticed the consequences of urban life in ordinary

activities such as playing on the streets at dusk. Further, there is a consistent lack of clarity in the landscapes of these stories, where light sources blend into one another obscuring their surroundings. This effect provides evidence that a third landscape of 'sickened nature' exists. The narrator in "Araby" describes an environment where the natural has been distorted by the urban, but not entirely replaced. Perhaps this scene in particular signifies a 'keeping out' of nature from the city, where the lamplight wears the mask of moonlight and distorts the urban subject's perception of outer nature. However, the protagonist is aware of the synthetic quality of this light, which matches his lack of emotional reaction to it.

Further, Joyce makes use of pathetic fallacy in relation to the blurring effect of light in both stories. For example, when the protagonist of "Araby" grapples with his feelings of unrequited love, he stares out the window of his house at the rainy street and notices the light from a lamp or a window in the distance. In this moment, he thinks, "I was thankful I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves..." (Joyce 22). The light obscures the character's vision of the city's landscape, creating a three-layered screen between them: the window, the rain, and the light. This image mirrors his wish to escape from the desire on which he cannot act and the paralysis of keeping one's emotions to oneself. There is a strong notion of containment in this description of veiling one's senses that is analogous to the images of the sky "covering" and "descending upon" Dublin. By that logic then, the Dubliner's relationship to nature in the city runs parallel to their understanding of morality and the city. Themes of obscurity and covering of nature uncover an ecocritical reading of Joyce due to their negative implications toward urban life and the Jungian sickness of modern culture. Nature integrates itself into the city and the deception of its unchanged appearance is relatable to these city-

dwelling characters. The protagonist's complicated emotions – love, lust, and disappointment – mirror the complexity of light and air pollution in the city landscape. Images of darkness are often an inability to see or lack of desire to see the truth, which is central to the urban subject as well as to the planet amid modernization. Perhaps Joyce alludes to this desire for ignorance, of wanting to remain in a place where manmade light mimics and blocks out natural light. This passage demonstrates that the third landscape is most suitable to the modernist city dweller in its creation of a mirage of pseudo-truth. The city dwellers' psyches grow and develop in tandem with their ecosystem, thus explaining the protagonist's desire to have his emotions hidden from him. Rowland's Jungian assertion that modernity is sick comes to light in this story's hatred for the expression of one's emotions. His desire and the existence of a natural evening light from moon and stars have been stifled in "Araby".

3.3 Corley's culture: the light of (im)morality

Comparable to this passage in regards to clarity and light is the recurring image of the moon in "Two Gallants". Although the story begins with greyness cast across the evening sky, both main characters individually notice the moon as they walk through the streets of Dublin. Corley's gaze is occupied by women walking by "...but Lenehan's gaze was fixed on the large faint moon circled with a double halo. He watched earnestly the passing of the grey web of twilight across its face" (43). This account of the moon paints it as reasonably distinct in the sky, but with a feeble amount of light carrying into the city. The addition of the word "faint" remains consistent with the "warm grey evening" from the beginning of "Two Gallants". Further down the page, Corley takes notice of it as well, in which case the narrator describes it as a "pale disc ... now nearly veiled" under which Corley "seemed to meditate" (44). A clear view of the moon

is vanishing slowly behind what the reader might assume to be clouds. In this scene, the word “veil” reappears as in “Araby” in relation to light and the character’s mental state. As Lenehan and Corley continue walking, they come across a harpist playing on the side of the road who, “plucked at the wires heedlessly, glancing quickly from time to time at the face of each new-comer and from time to time, wearily also, at the sky” (45). All three of these men evidently feel some form of connection to the moon, as they all watch it for an extended period of time. The moon as a light source is inherently natural, but its light has been dulled before reaching Dublin. It removes Lenehan from his conversation with Corley to reflect, it causes Corley to delve into a memory and “meditate”, and it projects the same weariness as the harpist. However, the faintness of the light suggests a weak connection and a greater distance between Dublin and the moon than with the sun in “A Little Cloud”.

Moreover, the effect of modern culture on the characters in “Two Gallants” and “Araby” becomes linked to these intricate illustrations of light by the end of the story. While Little Chandler desires artistic success, the characters in these stories fixate themselves on vanity and material wealth. The theme of materiality is particularly curious in relation to light in the urban environment and its religious symbolism for Joyce. Florence Walzl’s 1965 article on “Two Gallants” raises some points that are insightful in a discussion of religion and light in this story. By the end of the story, the moon has completely disappeared from the characters’ sight and has been replaced with light from a streetlamp, where Corley presents Lenehan with the gold coin to represent his victory with a girl. In this passage, the narrator calls Lenehan Corley’s “disciple” (51), paired with the image of Corley bathed in the light of the lamp. Walzl explains that the ringed moon that captures the attention of the men earlier in the plot represents the “heavenly

light” of God, which is replaced by the artificial light of the lamps to represent material wealth (Walzl 80). Therefore, the image of the moon being veiled marks the boys’ – but mostly Corley’s – choice to ignore his sense of morality and take advantage of the beautiful girl who shows him affection with money and material objects (78). The faintness of the moon gradually being covered by clouds into darkness indicates their moral weakness and a lack of commitment to religion. Subsequently, *The Ecocritical Psyche* designates religion as inherently natural, or that it is “the traditional mode of symbolizing the space between what is human and what is not” (Rowland 27). The distance of the moon and the absence of its light in the city – which Joyce clearly links to images of divine light – form an association between human morality and nature.

Unlike every other story discussed so far in this thesis, neither of the main characters in “Two Gallants” have an internal crisis or a moment of epiphany. Enda Duffy and Maurizia Boscagli explain that modernist epiphany often served to emphasize the extraordinariness of everyday life; Joyce paired this technique with religious symbolism to evoke a sense of “divine revelation and insight” (Duffy and Boscagli 14). In this way, the inclusion of religious allusion to light in “Two Gallants” underlines the absence of both epiphany and moral remorse. It equally demonstrates Joyce’s own relationship to religion as a cause of his skepticism toward modern life. He points directly to the effects of urban consciousness by framing natural light from outside the city as holy light. For instance, the moon – which is meant to represent the light of God and good morals – is ultimately overtaken by electric light, which better encapsulates the immoral nature of materiality. Therefore, by comparing the natural object to moral purity, Joyce implies its ‘intactness’ when nature remains outside of the city. When it enters, however, it becomes sickened by the urban and modern space, where the natural merges with the

manufactured. Although the moonlight never explicitly reaches Dublin, the opening image of the sky descending upon the city maintains a level of connectivity through the circulating air. This passage reminds the reader that even the sky and the moon as an outer backdrop influence perceptions of the city landscape.

Additionally, Lenehan and Corley relish in the modernity of the city as Irish flâneurs, navigating the Dublin streets as locals with confidence and ease (18). They represent energetic young men who thrive off of the temptation and excitement of urban life. Consequently, Corley never experiences an epiphany or recognition of his improper treatment of women, a behaviour that Lenehan encourages. Corley remains blissful and arrogant in his pursuit of material validation, covered in lamplight from the street in the final passage. This image implies that the urban environment encourages a degree of defiance against religious devotion and nurtures a materialistic sort of religion where Corley is the leader and Lenehan is his disciple. Perhaps, then, “Two Gallants” is unique from the other stories of this thesis because it maintains a clear separation between natural and manufactured light. Much like Corley makes no effort to mask his selfish ways or return to moral habits, natural light never really enters the city at all, ultimately blocked by clouds and washed out by lamplight. For these reasons, the connection between moral pollution and urban pollution in the light imagery is more undeniable than ever before. The air connects city and nature together, proving there can be no complete binary, but the natural elements of the third landscape remain a distanced background for the city. Corley’s lack of recognition of the flaws in his modern life emphasizes the lack of natural light entering the city throughout the story. The additional layer of the gold coin under the lamplight at the end suggests a triumph of modernity over nature in this overwhelmingly material gesture. The light

dynamic allows Joyce to define the ‘goodness’ of religion and spirituality as a natural product of the human psyche that has been repressed by modernity.

The topic of materiality applies to light in “Araby” as well, through the protagonist’s fixation on visual beauty. Joyce focalizes the protagonist’s idea of romance around physical beauty by classifying his thoughts of the girl as “her image that accompanied” (Joyce 21) him, rather than her smell, voice, or words. The young boy’s interest in the Araby bazaar begins because the girl he adores wishes she could attend, so he promises to bring something back for her (23). His intentions as a character are certainly more innocent than Corley’s in regards to women and love, but they are nonetheless rooted in an aesthetic value system. In his insightful explanation of thing theory in literary modernism, Bill Brown explains that a particular object can become a “mode of engagement with the city” that has the potential to “[transform one’s] relation to urban space” (Brown 10). This object can transcend mere symbolism for the sake of a story and become an influential presence in the character’s perception of urban life. The escape from symbolism described by Brown designates more validity to the modernist object and its reputation as an unreliable source of meaning. One such object for “Two Gallants” and “Araby” is the coin. The coin is an object that heavily influences the urban individual’s perception of the city because of its function as an agent to move through it. One requires money to take the train or a cab, to enter buildings such as the pub, the theatre, or the bakery, and to physically live in or near the city. One’s position in the economic network of a city determines one’s experience and understanding of it, both mentally and spatially. This value exists exclusively in human environments and increases in importance with the size and population of the space. While the act of giving the coin to someone else is what allows this system to function, Joyce’s characters

relish in the moments where they have the coin in their possession. The tangible and visual characteristics of it are significant to the characters in both stories and become involved in images of light and darkness.

The reader observes the protagonist's attention to money and objects more clearly upon his trip to the Araby bazaar. In the first sentence of the passage describing his journey to the bar, he specifies that he is holding a florin in his hand (Joyce 25). This detail creates a vivid picture of the coin moving through the city in his hand, rendering him an active participant in urban life. Once he reaches the bazaar, he pays a shilling to enter the building. Unlike Corley in "Two Gallants", however, the protagonist recognizes his predisposition toward vanity by the end of the story. While Corley remains illuminated by the lamplight in his material glory, the protagonist of "Araby" stands looking up towards the ceiling of the bazaar in total darkness. At the moment an anonymous voice announces a light has gone out, the protagonist notes, "I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket" (26). Despite the surrounding darkness, he continues to notice the presence of the coins in his pocket by touching them.

Within this absence of sight, the story concludes with the boy's epiphany: "...I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger (26). This final sentence ties in the imagery of visual beauty that appears consistently throughout the story. The language of "seeing" oneself and "eyes [that] burned" of vanity play into the image of light and darkness on Richmond Street in the opening passage. Although the story begins outside and ends inside, the light described in both scenes is electric light from the streets. Since the first paragraph of the story establishes a lack of physical beauty within Dublin and the protagonist cannot have the naturally beautiful girl he desires, his coins act as a replacement for

natural beauty by offering access to attractive objects. In the end, he surrounds himself with ‘things’ in the bazaar, but he cannot see any of them. The coin as a mode of engagement with the city forms distance between the character and nature, which creates a third landscape where urban nature is still nature, but it is no longer synonymous with the natural world.

3.4 Nature and the outsider: a cosmopolitan duo

Finally, using Katherine Mansfield’s 1917 short story “Feuille d’Album”, I would like to consider the role of the outsider as a means of comparison with nature in urban spaces. This story is unique in its representation because the protagonist –Ian French– is an outsider to Paris society, but the female narrator, who observes him from afar, is an active participant in it. Although one’s initial impression might be to locate a perception of the city through Ian French, the reader is really viewing it from the eyes of the narrator. It is reasonably safe to assume in *Dubliners* that if the narrator is not the main character, they identify as a local, or at the very least, Irish. However, such a dynamic and cosmopolitan city as Paris requires a more diverse representation of identity and place. Mansfield’s female narrator – who may or may not be local to Paris – marginalizes Ian French as a socially peculiar and enigmatic artist. In her mind, he qualifies as an outsider whose aloof behaviour is unusual to her social group. Although many of Joyce’s stories contain a narrator separate from the main character, the narrator of “Feuille d’Album” fabricates an imaginary narrative for Ian French of her romanticization of the outsider in Paris. Her role as narrator is vital to the story’s image of pink light as symbolically distorted by the influence of modern culture. Although Mansfield uses free indirect discourse to create the illusion of hearing the character’s thoughts, the reader is reassured by the first few pages of the story, which are clearly written in the female narrator’s voice, inventing identities for him with

her friends.

Paris is an ideal city to investigate imagination in urbanity because of the creative allure it possesses. The fact that Ian is a painter accentuates this allure, creating the ideal romantic image of him in the narrator's mind. As seen in "A Little Cloud", other quickly modernizing cities in the Western world "have never captured the imagination of writers and artists in the same way that Paris or London have" (Thacker 2). When Gallaher describes to Little Chandler his experience visiting Paris, he specifies that it is not the physical beauty of the city but its liveliness and cultural excitement that attracts people from all over (Joyce 66). Thus, the most appealing qualities of urban life are at the forefront of this story, in contrast to a more practical, utilitarian Dublin. Consequently, the narrator concocts a story of the socially introverted, unfriendly Ian French developing a romantic interest for the woman on a balcony he can see from his own balcony. When he first attempts to leave his home and wait for her to return, this image accompanies the scene: "There was a lovely pink light over everything. He saw it glowing in the river, and the people walking towards him had pink faces and pink hands" (*Selected* 133). The narrator identifies only the passersby and the river as painted by pink light, entirely disregarding the manmade parts of the city. In keeping with the main claim of *The Ecocritical Psyche* that humans are natural, the pink light, then, only illuminates natural objects in the city in this scene. The description of the light is a highly romanticized perception of nature in Paris, much like the narrator romanticizes Ian French's love life. In contrast to Little Chandler's perspective that the "kindly" sunset illuminates the negative features of Dubliners in the scene, the "lovely pink light" from the sun entering Paris latches onto its people, who remain lovely.

The passage also describes that Ian French "saw it glowing in the river" and the people

with pink features were walking toward him, not away from him, suggesting his integration into the Paris space. The positioning of Ian as an outsider to Paris and to cultural norms complements the language of “inside” and “outside” that is constantly attributed to discussions of nature and culture (Rowland 38). Modernist characters experience sunlight *inside* the city from an *outside* source. Ian’s role as a visitor to Paris, a stranger to its social circle, and an outsider to the story’s narration creates a similar feeling of ‘foreignness’ as urban nature. Even more so, the narrator’s idealization of Ian’s life conveys a similar ‘masked’ image of him, as does her description of the lovely pink light covering a river that is likely contaminated by the city. Ian’s status as a painter integrates him well into the creative Paris landscape, much like the river becomes a feature of Paris. Similar to many of the modernist characters discussed in this thesis, the narrator of “Feuille d’Album” projects a romanticized narrative of the “brooding English painter in love with his Parisian neighbour” for her own fruitless enjoyment. She depicts him as an outsider much like she portrays the ‘loveliness’ of nature in the city, despite her underlying awareness of the reality of the urban environment.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Selected short stories from the work of James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield demonstrate the common modernist trait of alienation as comparable to the state of nature in early twentieth-century urban environments. I have explored a consideration of urban nature belonging to a third landscape between urban and natural as a productive strategy to break down the nature-culture and country-city binaries. Through a range of analyses from individual natural objects in the city to images of light and landscape, this *tertium quid* environment reveals itself as a natural landscape sickened by a cultural and physical space far removed from its original. Modernist characters – that are participants of this environment – semiotically engage with urban nature, often causing a moment of epiphany. As these characters attach false symbolic weight to nature in the city, this thesis has proposed the characters' underlying awareness of this inaccuracy in meaning to conceal their own personal imperfections. For instance, the depiction of a tree as pure and flawless reveals the irony of a real tree as more relatable to Bertha and Rosemary's lives. I have argued that they are aware of this deceit from the beginning, much like Michael Rubenstein's claim that city dwellers at that time were well aware of the pollution in their city. A concern for this thesis as an ecocritical study was the degree of focus on human observations of nature in relation to affect. With the help of semiotic theory and Susan Rowland's Jungian approach to the psyche, I have argued for the necessity of the modernist character in identifying this concealed third landscape.

Based on my findings, I am hopeful that this research will move into other explorations of a landscape that blends nature and city. Several modernist texts – by Joyce and Mansfield but not exclusive to them – describe images of both countryside and suburbia in a character's train

travel between two cities. Mansfield's "The Little Governess", for example, isolates the character from nature in a fast-moving train from London to Munich and describes her observation of the land that divides one urban space from another. Similarly, Virginia Woolf's "Kew Gardens" prompts a discussion of containment in urban botanical gardens, and even more so the re-creation of a quiet, exotic garden just metres away from the whirring motors of automobiles on the London streets. How can one imagine this third inter-binary landscape within contexts where the natural is not so evenly integrated into the city, or vice versa? A continuation of similar research in green modernism is relevant to the development of current ecocritical theories, particularly within eco-psychology. The vignette structure of modernist short fiction is an effective tool to discuss breaking away from binary thinking that separates nature from the city and misdefines humanity and culture within this frame. Joyce and Mansfield uncover and reveal to the reader the many masks worn by people in the modern city, which ultimately leads to a conversation about the secret identity of urban nature then, and now.

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