"Metaphor and simile are fundamental to civilized speech". But their disadvantage is that they always say 'like' at the same time saying that the two things are after all not similar. The metaphor is compressed to achieve complete similarity in Spender's poem, "Not Palaces...":

Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,
Drinker of horizon's fluid line.

No doubt there is some initial difficulty in getting at what the poet intends to convey through the metaphors. But, once the habit is formed, the convenience of the compression is appreciated. The compressed metaphor becomes a symbol here. Symbol is different from image. An image clearly evokes the natural (material thing). But the symbol stirs the sub-conscious memories. It creates

the ripples like a stone dropped in clear water. "It is an outward device for presenting an inward state". 3

Symbolism in literature is an attempt to reach the reality of the transient objective world. Symbolists believe that the inner eternal reality can only be suggested: 'to name is to destroy, to suggest is to create'. Intensity and complexity are achieved by condensed syntax and clusters of images.

The symbolist tradition comes in handy to Katherine Mansfield in her attempt to evoke a literary form to speak the truth. She makes use of a number of symbols in her stories. The Symbols stand for various impressions that the people in and outside the story get. As a result, the writer is relieved from the burden of describing and directing (thereby curbing the vision of readers). Instead of limiting the vision, the symbols throw open various possibilities depending upon the

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culture of the readers and characters.

If the author involves the story in discourse, it suffers from prolixity. Naturally, symbols become the inevitable choice of an artist like Katherine Mansfield. Her symbols not only evoke the subjective responses of the reader but also contribute to the progress of the story:

....In a Mansfield story almost every detail has a symbolic as well as a narrative function. The details or images are intended to work in concert to create a mood or evoke a theme which is never directly stated. These oblique and indirect stories must thus be read with the same close responsiveness as a Symbolist or Modernist poem, if the full effect is to be realised.4

Katherine Mansfield never imposes her ideas on her art. Her effort is to take the reader to the reality and stir his senses to grasp it. She feels:

...reality cannot become the idea, the dream;

and it is not the business of an artist to grind an axe, to try to impose his vision of life upon the existing world. Art is not an attempt of the artist to reconcile existence with his vision; it is an attempt to create his own world in this world.  

Katherine Mansfield is influenced by her study of Arthur Symons's critical books. His symbolist theory helped her in extending the boundaries of prose expression. Baudelaire and Mallarme steered prose away from its innate structural tendency towards abstraction and analysis, towards a more compressive expressiveness. All the symbolists used words as conceptual counters. They exploited the physical properties of language like 'sound sense'. They try to reach the ideal of non-discursive expression. Katherine Mansfield does attempt the same in her "Miss Brill":

"After I'd written it I read it aloud - number of times just as one would play over a musical composition trying to get it nearer and nearer to the expression of Miss Brill - until it fitted her."

In "Violet" the narrator meets her friend Violet at a fountain. The narrator says that the faint noise of the water sounds like a half-forgotten tune "half sly, half laughing". Violet intervenes and likens it to 'weeping in the night'. The narrator contradicts that wonderful things 'don't weep' but 'sleep like tops'. The fountain stimulates a number of impressions in the people that watch it. The narrator, as the story reveals, is an established contradictor of established sayings. The story also has casual symbols like the "rug flying down", and a "jet of spittle".

"The faint noise of the fountain" is the symbol that becomes the epiphany towards the end of the story when the narrator accepts that it is laughing at her. The narrator is right, at the beginning of the dialogue with her friend, in saying that the fountain sleeps like a top during night. The feeling that we attach to the noise of the fountain is the feeling of the observer. When there is no observer, the symbol ceases to exist. As S.T. Coleridge puts it, "we receive but what we give" ('Dejection: An Ode').

Throughout the conversation the narrator feels
that the fountain is laughing at the predicament of Violet and her inability to understand and act in conjunction with the situation. But finally it becomes relevant to her own inability to understand the implications of the surroundings.

Now the noise of the fountain transcends the limits of its boundary. It becomes universal and laughs and weeps as per the relevance of the situation. It projects the subjective feelings of the observers.

Katherine Mansfield thus succeeds, in this early story, in correlating and compressing the discourse providing a relevant symbol to carry the resonances of the situation.

In "Millie" the murderer becomes the symbol of her imaginative motherhood. She sympathises with the murderer and accepts him as her surrogate son. Her motherliness overtakes her when she observes the murderer:

He was not much more than a boy, "A strange dreadful feeling gripped Millie Evan's bosom - some seed that had never flourished there, unfolded and struck deep roots and burst into painful leaf. (p. 585)
Millie becomes a universal symbol of unmothered woman. In fact "The Woman" at the store, Millie and Ole Underwood are symbols of extreme pathological states of mind. Millie saves the murderer. The other two actually commit murder. The course of the stories does not disturb the reader to accept their crimes. They become symbols of legitimate criminals viewed in their individual predicaments.

In "Something Childish But Very Natural" the "telegram" Henry receives at the end of the story stands for the empty nature of the love between Henry and Edna. Henry imagines a happy married life in an exclusive cottage. When the telegram turns out to be a folded white paper, it symbolises the ineffective nature of their companionship that fails to end up in the eternal tie of marriage.

In "The Wind Blows" the story is slight but it has a number of inter-related symbols. The wind, the music, the sea stand out as the major symbols in the story. As Mathilda wakes up she finds the house in a terrible disarray because of the wind. She could not bear to remain at home. She becomes as unruly as the
wind and does not listen to her mother.

Mathilda goes to her teacher's house which is securely closed and saved from the wild wind. The teacher's music offers solace. The music stands for the controlled nature of the wind. The teacher not only mastered the wind by closing all the doors but also mustered the music out of it.

Towards the end of the story the wild adolescent Mathilda finds the right companion in her brother who is also an adolescent. At the end of the story all the symbols coalesce as the brother and sister board the ship and master the sea in spite of the wild wind. They brave the sea as they are stronger by their harmony.

Thus the sea voyage combines all the symbols at the end of the story. If the symbols are decoded they yield immense possibilities. They become objective correlatives of the subjective feelings of the individuals.

In "Prelude" the principal symbol is the aloe. The fact that it generated diverse meanings speaks for the success of the symbol. After all, it is meant to do so.
Its function is to direct the readers to contemplate on the situation. Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr say the following on aloe:

In the full context of the story the aloe emerges most convincingly as an image of fundamental life-force itself, including sexual force in human life. It represents the essential will or energy behind appearance, which is why not all the characters of the story approach it, for not all are capable of penetrating to the deeper issues of life. Stanely Burnell, for instance and the bossy sister Isabel are excluded. In those who do approach the aloe, it arouses conflicting feelings. The young Kezia is struck especially by its aged and unlovely aspect. Linda is led by its appearance to focus instantly on the central issue in her life, the dread of having children. Yet both Linda and Kezia see something hidden in the aloe, the possibility of its flowering. The potential flowering of the aloe fore-shadows the 'flowering of self' which will occur for Linda in "At the Bay", in the moment when she forgets herself and discovers love for her son.7

Thus the symbol of aloe allows so many possibilities for the characters in the story and also for the readers. A.C. Chatterjee observes:

The aloe in "Prelude" serves as a mirror to Linda; at the same time it is also an emblem of her romantic longing to escape from reality. To her mother Mrs. Fairfield, the flowers of the aloe though rare are as true as its thorns. It symbolises her easy and impartial acceptance of both the curses and blessings of life. To Kezia, it is an object of awe and wonder. To the reader it affirms that even the most arid hearts are not incapable of love.

In "Bliss" the principal symbol is the pear tree in Bertha's garden. The fire in her house offers another symbol externalising her bliss. As the story opens, Bertha feels as if she has swallowed the bright piece of afternoon sun. The bright spot in her bosom becomes unbearable.

The pears make casual appearance among Bertha's fruits for the intended party. She observes the pear-tree in the garden. It is a tall slender pear tree 'in

Bertha observes it to be devoid of any bud or faded petal. Bertha thinks that it embodies her happy life. She observes it again with her new friend Pearl Fulton. Now, it looks like a flame, growing taller and taller as they gaze at it. It tries to touch the silver moon. The leaping fire in the drawing room and the blazing bliss in Bertha's heart reach the height of the moon as they observe the pear tree together. This leads to Bertha's desire for her husband, for the first time in her life. But he has already Pearl Fulton in his arms. Pearl leaves, appreciating 'the lovely pear tree'. When all the guests leave, Bertha observes the pear tree again. It is as lovely as ever and as full of flower and still unaffected.

The ring on Robert's finger in "The Man Without a Temperament" becomes an obsessive symbol of his slavery to his wife. He goes on turning the ring again and again. The symbol of the bird which has broken its wing becomes much more appropriate in the immediate context but the signet ring is the supreme that rules all others. The aloe becomes another symbol of his suppressed ego. The symbols in "The Man Without a Temperament" contribute to the nuances of slavery in marriage. Robert has to
abdicate even his watch while he goes out for a walk without his wife. When he returns his wife comments that he is late by three minutes. Thus she slavery of Robert is reinforced through a number of symbols in the story.

"Miss Brill" has a number of symbols. Towards the end of the story the fur, the predominant symbol in the story and Miss Brill become one and the same. They withdraw into their respective abodes. The fur for Miss Brill is a substitute for the society. It gives her the sympathy, love and understanding which are absent in Miss Brill's life. The damage of the fur refers to the "damaged soul of Miss Brill". She dons the fur to be more attractive to the guest visitors of the public garden. But she is shown her real identity by a young couple. When she returns, Miss Brill hears a wail from the fur as she puts it again into the box. It is the wailing of Miss Brill herself. The fur finally becomes the objective correlative of her grief over her false community with her 'garden visitors'.

The 'Orchestra' stands for gaiety and elation of Miss Brill. In fact the orchestra plays consistently.
It stands for the passions of Miss Brill that scale the precarious altitudes.

Ermine Toque shows the degeneration of many park visitors. Ermine is used to adore the judges robes standing for honour and purity. The irony is brought home when it is found on the prostitute.

The overtones of the theatre thrill Miss Brill. She not only enjoys the spectacular show of the theatre in the garden from her special seat but also feels elated that she has a part in the drama of the garden. Somebody must have noticed this. If she were to be absent the lapse should have been obvious. She becomes the actress - audience of the 'garden-play'.

All the symbols are placed in dark ignorance. Once the truth is told on the face of Miss Brill all the symbols assume their real identities and she is segregated back to her box with her damaged fur and soul.

The symbol of poison in Katherine Mansfield's "Poison" is considered unsuccessful. The entire story is considered a frame of unreliable language. Every word
that is mentioned means clearly the opposite of it. The symbol of poison occurs when Beatrice anxiously awaits her letter. She gives a discourse on the court proceedings over a trial of the alleged poisoner of his wife. Beatrice says that all the people in the court are willing to poison their spouses. She considers all the acts of love and affection as doses of poison.

When viewed in the context of the story, the motif of poison seems to be reliable. The only difficulty here is- whatever she says in the story has been total lies and it is not convincing as it comes from the unreliable character. The story can be considered a success in its own way. Even the discourse on the trial of poisoning has a ring of logic.

The tree in "The Escape" becomes a symbol of upholding the state of the man:

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

The man enjoys the woman's song but at the back of it the immanent impatient voice of his wife is likely to command him at any moment out of this trance he is established in. The tree remains a shade and shelter for his agitated mood but the sign of his wife's voice is not far off.
In "Pictures" the brown tailess cat greedily lapping up a splash of milk on the street at once symbolises the present situation of Miss Ada Moss and also forecasts the future—how she has to stoop down to the meaner level of prostitution for her livelihood. The hunger of Miss Moss and the impossibility of getting it quenched with her little money makes her veritable parallel to the cat. The greed, the speed, the timely change all speak forth to the end of Miss Ada Moss.

In "Sun and Moon" the little ice house made for the party stands for a beauty to be preserved for the children but their father becomes furious when they complain against the damage of the ice house during the party.

In "Je ne parle pas francais" there is concentration of a number of symbols. Raoul likens himself to a sharp-nosed dog moving about the helpless Mouse. He tries to deceive the concierge running down the stairs as a rabbit but she pounces upon him like a spider.

In "The Stranger" the primary symbol is the fire. The flames hurry over the coals. They stand for
the anxiety and impetuous nature of Mr. Hammond. He wants to occupy his wife like the flames on the coals. When he hears from his wife that a stranger died in her arms, all his desire drops. The fire goes red. Their room becomes colder. The dead stranger is like the dead fire. Death engulfs even the overwhelming desire of Mr. Hammond.

The doves in "Mr. and Mrs. Dove" become the symbols of the state in which the lovers are placed. Anne feels they would be like Mr. and Mrs. Dove if they marry. It is all right for the doves but she thinks it awful if it happens in real life. But she least realises that they are already the duplicates of Mr. and Mrs. Dove. Reggie follows whatever Anne says. Thus the symbol of doves become effectively realised in spite of the girl's care to avoid the situation of doves.

"The Voyage" has a number of symbols portraying the atmosphere of gloom at the wharf in Wellington. Slowly the gloom clears up to give way to the bright sunshine at Picton. The two places stand for grief and relief respectively. The death of Fenella's mother does not appear to affect the simple and small Pictöon Island.
Fenella passes from the gloomy household of her father to the secure and pleasant household of her grandparents. The transition in the story is carefully worked out by means of additional symbols like glimmering night and star studded sky.

The symbol that unifies the two parts of the story is Grandma's umbrella. It pecks with its swan's head at Fenella's shoulder as they hurry to ferry. On the voyage it has to be watched and guarded. It is only in grandma's home it can finally be rested. In the words of Cläre Hanson and Andrew Gurr:

It symbolises the answer to the question that came to her mind when she woke: "oh it had all been so sad lately. Was it going to change? She accepts the present moment as the large black text on grandpa's wall insists, and like the swan headed umbrella she settles confidently into her home."

The symbols in "The Voyage" exemplify the dual purpose of Katherine Mansfield's symbols. They contribute to the advancement and understanding of the context of

the story and also they stand for the subjective variations of the situation as symbols. They are both symbolic as well as situational. We may call "The Voyage" a typical Katherine Mansfield short story where the narrative and symbolic elements are naturally fused together.

The sea in "At the Bay" offers a pathetic paraphrase to the events of the story. It unifies all the standards of the story. Towards the end it offers the comprehensive comment on the entire action of the story:

'A cloud small, serene, floated across the moon. In the moment of darkness the sea sounded deep, troubled. Then the cloud sailed away and the sound of the sea was a vague murmer as though it waked out of a dark dream. All was still'.

(p.245)

"What did the sea say through its deep sound and vague murmer? Perhaps it said that both the cloud and the moon were parts of the same scheme of things and so were darkness and light. One had to accept both as it was not possible to accept the one and reject the other"10

"Thy Fly" with its complex symbolism has attracted the attention of many critics. The fly in the story stands for the life force. The dark deluge perpetrated by the boss refers to the war responsible for the death of his own son and perhaps, his friend's son too.

Besides the symbols, Katherine Mansfield makes use of a number of objective correlatives which take the position of parallel symbols affecting the main stream of action. The Black cap stands for the absurd nature of the lover with whom the woman plans to live. It enables the woman to have realization dawn on her. The gloves in "Dill Pickle" stand for Vera. The moment her lover leaves them, she understands that he does not have a place for her in his heart. "In each case, the physical object is correlated with the elusive feelings and abstract thoughts of the character. They are parts of the functional details of the stories, put to symbolic use. We find in them not merely patterns resulting from weaving sense impressions into the texture of thought, but a complete integration of subject and object". 11

11. Ibid., p.335.
Thus a study of Katherine Mansfield's use of symbols reveals that her symbols characterize and interpret her fiction by bringing about an identity between subject and object achieved by means of a subtle evocation of a mood or theme or a texture of thought. We can call them integrated symbols. As has already been pointed out, they form a special contribution to prose expression.