



From Flagrant to Fragrant: Reinventing Katherine Mansfield

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From Flagrant to Fragrant Reinventing Katherine Mansfield

by Gerri Kimber

The Priory. Here is the pine tree. Here the beech,
The flowerbed, the roof, the sad water of the pond ...
Oh Mansfield, was it really there that you went to die?
Was it there that you closed your eyelids for the last time?
Alas, how many regrets haunt the doorways of stone!¹

In this article I aim to show how a reputation and a personality can be adapted and altered with little effort through the falsification of documentary evidence, in order to create an almost entirely new persona—which is precisely what happened to Katherine Mansfield in France.

Mansfield's popularity in England remained controversial for many years due to her husband John Middleton Murry's early overexposure and severe editing of his wife's literary texts. Following her death, Murry collected together all her papers, diaries, letters, and unpublished stories, and gradually, over a number of years, created many volumes from these loose papers and notebooks—the detritus of a writer's life. This publication process generated a wave of protest among those who had known her. Murry's volumes tainted her reputation in England and produced a biased discussion of her work for many years. The French, however, were not burdened by the hoards of family, friends, and acquaintances of Mansfield that were lurking behind every cupboard door in England. Instead, they seized upon this pretty, young New Zealand writer, who, in their eyes, had died tragically on their own

soil and who had apparently written so charmingly about France and the French. Aided by Murry's selective editing, they more or less invented the persona of Mansfield still revered in France to this day. In particular, the early French critics grasped any salient biographical trifle in order to substantiate their growing hagiography—her beauty, her ill health, her supposed love of France and the French, her romantic yet doomed love affair with Murry, her search for the spiritual. But the fact remains that the writer they were slavishly promoting with very little critical dissent, bore only a passing resemblance to the figure known to her family and friends. The legend in France appeared to breed, fractal-like, into an ever-widening genealogy of links. Mansfield as a personality was reduced to little more than a literary pawn, outmanoeuvred by Murry's severe editing of her work and by the speculative, ideological conjectures of the French critics themselves. Indeed, those critics who attempted to oust this popular perception saw their viewpoints submerged by the huge wave of French critical opinion, determined to uphold this falsely created personality at whatever cost to historical accuracy. In addition, this critical opinion was almost exclusively a Catholic and reactionary one.

Without an understanding of the biographical facts, it is difficult to perceive just how far the French recreated Mansfield's personality. She was born Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1888. Following an education in England from age fifteen to eighteen, New Zealand seemed very dull. In 1908, she finally persuaded her parents to let her return to England to become a writer. Within three months of arriving in England, she became pregnant. When the father refused to marry her, she married a virtual stranger instead. Having second thoughts, she left him on her wedding night. Her exasperated mother arrived on a boat from New Zealand in May 1909 and transported her daughter to Bavaria, fearing she might be 'suffering' from possible lesbian tendencies, for which, at that time, a water cure—a German speciality—was deemed particularly helpful.² It is unclear whether her mother even knew Mansfield was pregnant, but in any case her mother was back on the return boat to New Zealand within a fortnight, and immediately upon her arrival she cut her wayward daughter out of her will. In June 1909, Mansfield suffered

a miscarriage. She did not return to England until January 1910, however, but in the meantime had several affairs, one of which resulted in her contracting gonorrhoea. The disease was not formally diagnosed until 1920, by which time it had become a severely debilitating illness masked by the symptoms of her tuberculosis, also contracted at this time. During two more difficult years in England, Mansfield underwent at least one abortion, changed her name from Kathleen Beauchamp to Katherine Mansfield, and eventually set up home with John Middleton Murry in 1912. Her life then settled to a more domestic, though still nomadic, existence. The pair married in 1918, following her divorce. Because of her tuberculosis, Mansfield was now spending more and more time in France on the advice of doctors—in total, three years of her life were spent on French soil. Three months before her death, she entered Gurdjieff's esoteric community at Fontainebleau, drawn by the spiritual philosophy of its founder. She died there on 9 January 1923, aged 34.

This then, in brief, is the person we are dealing with—a feisty, charismatic, intelligent woman who lived life to the full and who experimented with various ways of living. But throughout her life, her main *raison d'être* was always her writing. As stated in Pamela Dunbar's *Radical Mansfield*:

[She was] a daring and strikingly original writer. [...] [Her stories] contain provocative subtexts radically at odds with their lyrical surfaces. Mansfield emerges [...] as a groundbreaking Modernist—one who took account of the cultural concerns of her time [...] who devised ingenious techniques for rendering socially unacceptable insights into sexuality and the irrational aspects of the mind; and who profoundly influenced her friend the writer Virginia Woolf.³

Mansfield's Death Viewed in England

The weekly journal the *Nation and Athenaeum*, which had been edited by Mansfield's husband Murry until February 1921, placed an anonymous obituary in the 'Wayfarer' column on 13 January 1923, four days after her death on 9 January:

I deeply mourn the untimely death of Katherine Mansfield (Mrs. Middleton Murry). [...] [Her] spiritual excellence lay in

the reflective power of a mind that caught up a thousand rays of revealed or half-revealed consciousness, and gave them out again in a serene order and a most delicate pattern. [...] These gifts were joined to a great physical beauty, and, by reason of the sustaining power of a rare spirit, seemed to be little clouded by physical suffering, up to the hour when its bright light was extinguished.⁴

This obituary, undoubtedly written by a friend of Murry, is of primary importance in instigating and disseminating a legend that in France has continued to the present day. The sycophantic tone, the stress on Mansfield's spirituality, her beauty, her suffering and otherworldliness will be found in countless articles, biographies and memoirs of Mansfield in France, as this paper will reveal. This is where the hagiography begins—four days after her death, in an English journal then edited by her husband. A week later, in the same journal, another of Murry's friends, H. M. Tomlinson, continues the eulogising tone in a page-long memoir dedicated to Mansfield:

And she suggested the power—an illusion, possibly, created by her luminous pallor and her look of penetrating intelligence – of that divination which is supposed to belong to those not quite of this world. [...] She would listen without comment, and then tell the truth from her place above good and evil. [...] She stood between this world and the next, and saw our disillusionments and disappointments at the end of a long, clear, perspective. [...] Katherine Mansfield never once came down to flatter us. She remained aloof. She had no choice; she had been set apart by destiny, and was waiting.⁵

This same sycophantic tone is also to be found in many pages of the *Adelphi*, one of London's foremost literary journals, edited by Murry from 1923–1930. In the immediate aftermath of her death, Murry started printing several pieces of Mansfield's work in every issue, and this editorial policy continued for two years. As the months went by, the sycophantic line became ever more pronounced, the amount of space given over to the Katherine Mansfield publicity machine became ever greater, until even her closest friends and admirers turned away in disgust. As Murry's biographer Frank Lea remarks, Mansfield 'became the presiding genius of the paper—till even the friendly Bennett was forced to remonstrate, whilst with the unfriendly it became an article of faith that Murry was "exploiting his wife's reputation"'.⁶

As early as six months after these fawning English obituaries were printed, a more measured response to Mansfield's life appeared. Conrad Aiken wrote a review of one of these posthumous volumes—*The Dove's Nest*—in the *Nation and Athenaeum*, the same periodical in which Tomlinson's obituary appeared:

The stories in *The Dove's Nest* are not her best. [...] They merely deepen one's impression of the smallness and repetitiveness of Miss Mansfield's art. [...] She had discovered that she lacked the power and simplicity of the first-rate artist.⁷

Raymond Mortimer, writing in the *New Statesman* the week before, was of an equally dismissive opinion, stating:

Upon the thirty stories contained in *Bliss* and *The Garden Party* her rank as a writer of fiction must now always depend, and I cannot believe that her artistic reputation will ever stand higher than it does at present. [...] The peculiar characteristics of her art were her use of Tchekhov and her gift for seeing others as they see themselves. [...] There are moments [...] when his influence on English writers appears positively disastrous.⁸

These generally unfavourable reviews started the evolution in England of a dismissal of her work in general, and this negative opinion dominated, for the most part, English literary appreciation of her writing until the late 1950s. Thus in England, the seeds of an 'otherworldly' personality were never allowed to germinate, since her reputation was increasingly tainted by the fact that she was Murry's deceased wife. Over time, Murry became progressively more disliked in literary circles, and he was scathingly caricatured in Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* as Denis Burlap.⁹ As early as May 1925, writing in the *Nation and Athenaeum*, Huxley's aversion to Murry's hagiography of his dead wife was already evident:

Each of Miss Mansfield's stories is a window into a lighted room. The glimpse of the inhabitants sipping their tea and punch is enormously exciting. But one knows nothing, when one has passed, of what they are really like. That is why, however thrilling at a first reading, her stories do not wear.¹⁰

The main reason for Murry's literary ostracisation was precisely this overexposure of his dead wife's work and his aim to publish as much of her literary remains as the public could take, whilst at the same time editing out any material that he felt did not correlate with the image

of her that he was trying to portray. Murry's editorial stance remained more or less the same until his death in 1957. He made a good deal of money out of Mansfield's books; one does not have to be too great a cynic in order to view this production line of his dead first wife's literary remains as an easy money-making venture. It certainly paid for the upkeep on his next three wives.

There is no space here to discuss the development of the critical response to Mansfield's writing in England. Suffice to say that it was a measured response, with, as we have seen, the odd eulogy from close friends soon after her death, followed by more muted praise for her work, together with the ever-present snub to Murry for his role in her reputation. This attitude was summarised by Katherine Anne Porter in 1937:

The misplaced emphasis [...] [is perhaps owed] [...] to her literary executor [Murry], who has edited and published her letters and journals with a kind of merciless insistence, a professional anxiety for her fame on what seems to be the wrong grounds, and from which in any case his personal relation to her might have excused him for a time. Katherine Mansfield's work is the important fact about her, and she is in danger of the worst fate that an artist can suffer—to be overwhelmed by her own legend, to have her work neglected for an interest in her 'personality'.¹¹

Mansfield's Death Viewed in France

Murry, with his wide knowledge of French literature, had numerous contacts in French literary circles. As Frank Lea points out in his biography:

[In 1922] Murry made the acquaintance of most of the leading French men of letters, to whom he was already well known as the 'presenter' of Proust and Gide to the English public—Valéry and Charles Du Bos for example, who became his friends and life-long admirers.¹²

It was, however, to be two years after her death before French reviewers generally became aware of the name Katherine Mansfield.

The critic Louis Gillet, a Catholic, an anglophile, and a reader of the *Adelphi* was the first person to draw attention to Mansfield in France. Although the two men had not met, Gillet was aware of Murry's

literary reputation in France, and the fact that Mansfield was his wife made her an eminently suitable subject for literary discussion. As an antidote to the notoriety of such homegrown writers as Rachilde and Colette, the attraction of a saintly young literary role model for the literary and critical establishment in France was obvious. In her book *Masks of Tradition: Women and the Politics of Writing in Twentieth-Century France*, Martha Noel Evans discusses the narrator of Colette's *La Vagabonde*, who 'characterizes herself in contradictory but equally negative versions of the writer: the bluestocking and the whore'.¹³ She goes on to discuss a concept which she terms 'negative inclusion'; in other words:

The woman writer must come to terms with herself in relation to literary tradition not as an absence – which might in fact bestow on her a certain freedom of self-definition – but rather as a trivialized and distorted presence.¹⁴

Of course this theory also applies to dead as well as living female writers at a point in time when the literary establishment was overwhelmingly male and reactionary. The beginning of the twentieth century saw a Catholic literary revival in France, with religious thought becoming associated with literary works as a reaction against the Positivism, Naturalism, and Materialism of the nineteenth century. Richard Griffiths explains how, as the twentieth century progressed, a few of the writers associated with this revival, 'entrenched themselves more and more firmly in the most extreme positions'. This revolution, 'showed itself to be in this sense a reaction of the Right'.¹⁵ This reactionary, right-wing, Catholic revival would go on to have a lasting influence on a certain segment of French literary critics. The irony for Mansfield scholars is that she was one of the forerunners of twentieth-century Modernism, and yet the perpetrators of the Catholic revival were, for the most part, reacting *against* the Modernists. This chapter will demonstrate how Mansfield was taken up by the male, Catholic literary right, transmuted into a trivialised and distorted presence, and thereby 'absorbed into a hierarchical system of political organisation, defined in essentialist, oppositional terms'.¹⁶

Gillet's article, which appeared in *Revue des deux mondes* in 1924, is of paramount importance to the initial development of the Katherine Mansfield legend in France. It is an exploratory, subjective, highly

personalised review, which immediately takes the stance of idolising the artist in a romantically poetic way. Gillet seems not so much impressed by her art as by her life, which he views in an almost saintly light. He cites Murry as his biographical source: 'It is to her husband, Mr John Middleton Murry that I owe all of the biographical details referred to here'.¹⁷ Here, then, we find the origins of a cult, the first signs of Mansfield as literary icon:

She was a *woman*, through and through, a woman to the very tips of her fingernails, filled with a sensual warmth as well as a sensitivity and an adorable feminine purity, without ever engaging herself in moral issues. [...] There was nothing of the suffragette about her. She appears to have been a complete stranger to any social matters, born out of an innocent planet, before the state of sin and the monstrous iron age of modern industry. She was the product of a much more beautiful star and she radiated its ethereal atmosphere from her very being, right down to the gold dust of her hair.¹⁸

Its similarity in tone to the obituary by Tomlinson discussed above is remarkable.

There are at least ten false statements within the article, such as his stating that her hair was the colour of 'gold dust' when it was black, or that she barely managed to exist on a small allowance. She was not married to Murry in 1915, as stated, but in 1918. Although the statement that her final days were spent 'in an ancient house in Fontainebleau'¹⁹ is literally correct, it omits the fact that these days were spent in the company of Gurdjieff and his followers.

The emphasis in Gillet's article is on Mansfield as a quasi-angelic woman with the gift of genius, depicted using ethereal, feminine images and vocabulary. Gillet has not yet discovered her 'spirituality', which forms the basis for his next review in 1929. This first article, however, although full of praise for the young, dead writer, did not immediately bring Mansfield any general critical acclaim in France.

The second major article on Mansfield, published four years later, appeared in the more radical pages of *La Nouvelle Revue française* with the dramatist Gabriel Marcel as critic. Marcel, a hitherto professed agnostic, was baptised into the Catholic Church a month after his article appeared. He comments on the recent publication in England

of the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* and *The Letters* laying emphasis on the spirituality of her situation—notably her illness and the untimely death of her brother—and of her attitude to life: ‘to my mind, the priceless value of these books rests on their never-ending search for the spiritual’.²⁰ In highlighting this spiritual element, Marcel was echoing Murry’s editorial approach in England. Frank Lea states that the late 1920s were a difficult time personally and spiritually for Murry:

The coincidence of the economic Depression with [his second wife’s physical] decline, following that of the War with Katherine’s, had so enhanced his sense of the precariousness of existence that the notion of some occult ‘correlation between my personal condition and that of the world’ was to shape, or distort, his thinking for the rest of his life.²¹

In the light of his own personal reawakening to religion, Murry sought to show the spiritual, if not religious, side of his dead wife’s writings too. Griffiths notes, ‘we, who have become so accustomed to spiritual themes in the novel and in the theatre, both in England and France, can hardly realise what a revolution in literary taste this new trend illustrated’.²²

Gillet, of course, as the presenter of Mansfield to the French-speaking world has to give his interpretation of the *Journal* and *Letters*, which he does three months after the appearance of Marcel’s review. The article commences thus, after a silence of four and a half years:

There she is, it’s her, that radiant creature from paradise, who appears to us from afar, by that bay in the Pacific; [...] Eve, who we see rising, renewed from her morning bathe, as fresh as the light at the dawn of creation. Here are the letters, the relics of Katherine Mansfield.²³

The religious implications of the word ‘relics’, which he also used in 1924, sets the tone of the article; he also attempts to define Mansfield’s spiritual personality, giving it a Christian, and specifically, Catholic foundation. He speaks of this spiritual metamorphosis:

This progress is what fascinates in the *Letters* and *Journal*. These texts allow us to follow, on an almost daily basis, the hand of ‘grace’; they reveal an aspect of this soul which we hardly dared imagine, namely the importance accorded to the religious crisis in her life.²⁴

Gillet’s emphasis centres on the fact that, although she never actually embraced Christianity, nevertheless, Mansfield’s spiritual journey was

on a more refined, ethereal level than most professed Christians could ever hope to attain. Therefore, this same journey is to be upheld as an example worthy of our attention—and our adoration. Even her connection with Gurdjieff at Fontainebleau is now viewed as the final step in her peculiarly successful spiritual journey. The reverence accorded to Mansfield's life is now firmly established.

Reception of French Translations

However, Gillet and Marcel were still reading her works in English. Between 1928 and 1932, four of Mansfield's books were translated into French—two collections of short stories, *Bliss* and *The Garden Party*, plus *The Letters* and *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*. A much wider circle of critics are now able to help develop her burgeoning reputation in France, although the origins of her reputation remain in Louis Gillet's original concept of Mansfield, both as a personality and as a literary artist. As the only real French 'specialist' on Mansfield at the time of the French translations, he is asked to write the preface for *Bliss* (*Félicité*). It is his original article of 1924—now six years old—that he uses slightly abridged, and which naturally biases the majority of French readers towards the stance expounded within it. No one has any reason not to believe the facts Gillet presents. So far as the *Journal* and *Letters* were concerned, the critics had decided that Mansfield was an essentially spiritual writer, seeking hidden truths to explain the meaning of life. It is Gabriel Marcel who writes the preface to the *Lettres*.

Thus, in 1931, there are at least eleven articles devoted to Mansfield in French periodicals and newspapers—all with critical convergences. A collective examination of four of the most prominent articles reveals an interesting pattern of postulations, factual distortions, cognitive revelations, and similarities of subject matter.²⁵ Although, as stated earlier, four volumes of her writing had now been translated into French, the two volumes of stories are not reviewed at all. All four articles are reviews of the *Lettres* with only one mentioning the *Journal* as well.

Of the *Lettres*, Benjamin Crémieux states:

It's more than a book; it's a means of making direct contact with an adorable being full of brightness, spontaneity, nobility, and, in spite of her illness, vitality. Her fiction is that of a highly

gifted author, but there is nothing in particular to distinguish it, in spite of its special tone. One can take it or leave it. But the *Letters* are a different story.²⁶

Although the other reviewers are not so dismissive of Mansfield's fiction, nevertheless their general lack of interest in the stories would seem to indicate a certain symbiosis of thought. All four articles bear witness to the influence of Gillet and Marcel, with Gillet's stance predominating. His voice is, of course, present in the preface to *Félicité*, evidence for which is to be found in the vocabulary of the Crémieux extract above.

The other three articles seem to positively relish the chance to recount Mansfield's 'tragic' life story in their own words. G. P. Bertrand's offering is particularly interesting, for the wealth of highly exaggerated, colourful, and sometimes false detail splashed across its pages:

At age eighteen, her first moral crisis; her family calls her back to New Zealand. Her country of birth, viewed from London, seems no more than a prison, or even worse, 'an intellectual desert'. She does, however, return but soon revolts, leads for two years the life of a nomad, travelling through the interior of the island on horseback, until finally her parents give her back her liberty and a meagre allowance.²⁷

This notion of 'the life of a nomad' is laughable when one recalls that the months Mansfield spent in New Zealand prior to her return to England consisted of a busy social round of garden parties, concerts, and soirées as befitted one of the daughters of the chairman of the Bank of New Zealand. Gillet's coining of the term 'meagre allowance', which, as we know, was simply not true as Mansfield received a generous allowance, appears in two more of the articles—'her allowance was meagre',²⁸ 'a meagre allowance'.²⁹

All the reviews are an attempt to explain Mansfield spiritually; they elaborate on the spiritual journey she undertook as a result of her illness, her essential sincerity and goodness, in short, all the qualities that they claimed could be found in the *Lettres* and *Journal*. The fact that they should dwell on such things is, in large part, due to Murry's editing of the original texts, and his attempt to bring out the spiritual quality of his wife's writings, as mentioned earlier. Pierre Deffrennes, a Jesuit priest writing for the Catholic reader in a religious journal, follows the path already taken by Gillet in explaining Mansfield in

terms of her religious development. He feels that Mansfield's soul and mind are constantly at war—her soul embracing wholeheartedly the essential tenets of the Christian faith, while her mind constantly refuses to acknowledge any orthodox religious convictions. Of her sincerity, he says:

K. Mansfield's sincerity is perfectly integrated to a transcendental presence—whatever she might think—a presence which is pure, which gives life, which is joy, which in a word is God, whether one uses the term or not, with whom she aspires ultimately to be united.³⁰

None of the other articles develops the religious theme to this extent, but nevertheless, they all stress the essential purity of her art and her mind. Georges Jean-Aubry uses the adjective 'virginal' three times. He briefly mentions the stories, as does Bertrand, who, however, evades any discussion of her technique: 'There remains in her stories an indefinable charm which defies critical appraisal [...], the secret of which has died with her'.³¹ For Bertrand and the others, her *Lettres* offer a great moral example, portraying the highest form of spirituality; Bertrand concludes by saying that had she lived, she might have become the greatest prose writer of her generation.

Myth Continues Unabated

Nineteen thirty-three is an important year for the development of the legend with several more articles appearing. One in particular, by Denis Saurat in *La Nouvelle Revue française* merits discussion, since it describes in detail life in the Priory at Avon with Gurdjieff, and briefly mentions Mansfield's stay there: '[Orage] showed me the spot where Katherine Mansfield lived out her last days. An extraordinary place'.³² The tone is almost that of a mini-pilgrimage. The eulogising of Mansfield's life is swept along by this tide of critical opinion. Jacques Bompard's article in *La Grande Revue* marks the tenth anniversary of her death in sixteen pages of elegiac and sycophantic prose. Edmond Jaloux (who wrote the preface to the 1929 translation of *The Garden Party*) comments on a new translation entitled *La Mouche* incorporating a selection of stories from the posthumously published volumes *The Dove's Nest* and *Something Childish*.³³ He commences thus: 'When one talks of Katherine Mansfield, one must necessarily talk of her soul',³⁴ and

after a long elegiac discussion, concludes: ‘She gives all her imaginary characters a little of her own melancholy, her own fairy-like secret, her loneliness’.³⁵ Although he is discussing a new translation of her stories, he still manages to focus this article on Mansfield’s personality rather than her fiction. The year concludes with the apogee of hagiography in an article by Jean-Louis Vaudoyer in *Les Nouvelles littéraires* entitled ‘A Fairy Grave’:

A poetic soul reigns over the imaginary world created by Katherine Mansfield; she transfigures it, purifies it to the level of a disincarnation; transforming the most humble day-to-day characters and bathing them in the same light that Fra Angelico bathes his own chosen few at the gateway to paradise.³⁶

It becomes harder and harder for a dispassionate observer to understand how serious critics were writing articles such as the ones discussed above. But the legend in France surrounding the life and work of Mansfield allowed such extreme expression to seem natural and, indeed, correct.

The Mantz/Murry Biography

In 1933 *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* by Ruth Mantz and John Middleton Murry appears in England.³⁷ This is the first biography of Mansfield; it was translated into French in 1935 and titled much more appropriately, *The Youthful Years of Katherine Mansfield*, since the book only covers the years to 1912 and the beginning of her relationship with Murry.³⁸ For all biographical material after 1912, the authors refer the reader to the *Letters* and *Journal*, severely edited by Murry. Of her troubled life from 1908–1911, much is left unsaid, or else speculation on the part of Mantz replaces hard facts. The reader still has to rely on the *Letters* and *Journal*, in their expurgated form, in order to follow the last eleven years of her life. This is not a book to destroy myths, nor was it ever intended as such. I contend that it is this book, more than any other, that raises the stakes in the hagiography of Mansfield’s life in France—for which Murry is directly responsible.

The book is a sycophantic portrayal of an almost fictional character, so little does Mansfield, as portrayed in the book, resemble the Mansfield whose personality is suggested by her own writings. In the introduction, Murry plays down his role: ‘I do not really deserve the position of collaborator [...] but since my contribution has been rather

more than a mere revision [...] it has been thought best that we should share the responsibility for the work'.³⁹ The religious element is brought in almost immediately:

Such candour and transparence [*sic*] are the product of a long travail of soul—of an incessant process of self-purgation, of self-refinement into that condition of crystal clarity for which Katherine Mansfield unconsciously struggled and towards the end of her life consciously prayed.⁴⁰

Of her early misdemeanours and constant risk-taking, he writes, 'This is the voice of the Life within urging Man to yet more Life. This is the voice to which Jesus of Nazareth was himself obedient unto death'.⁴¹

Continuing the annexation of Mansfield to Christ, he argues:

What has Jesus to do with Blake, with Keats, with Katherine Mansfield? He has everything to do with them. They belong to his pattern. They are the life-adventurers, who turn from the wisdom of prudence and seek the wisdom of experience.⁴²

In mentioning Mansfield's name alongside such literary luminaries as Blake and Keats, and with Jesus Christ, Murry entwines her life with theirs, so that by the end of the introduction it is hard not to see Mansfield as a wholly religious writer whose journal was a consciously written spiritual undertaking. He goes further:

Katherine's little boat, Lawrence's small ship—fraught with the essential soul in its act of desperate choice—these, this (for it is one single thing, one single power, frail as a thread, yet of force to bind the universe and move the world)—this is God.⁴³

So, Mansfield's name is not just linked with that of Jesus, but also now with God. It is here in this short introduction that I believe 'Saint Katherine' undergoes her ultimate step to canonisation. Finally, adding weight and authority to his article, Murry plays his master card; it is he whom Mansfield married, he to whom she entrusted her life. The final sentence of the introduction ends thus:

'In spite of all', she wrote to her husband in a letter found among her belongings, to be opened only after her death; 'no truer lovers ever walked the earth than we were—in spite of all, in spite of all'.⁴⁴

Incorporating his own name into this saintly mix adds a certain patina and air of authority; she is telling him in that final letter how special their relationship was, and now he, in his turn, is telling the world.

After Mansfield's death, Murry underwent a spiritual conversion of sorts. As Frank Lea notes, 'Murry made at least four reputations—as an artistic and literary critic in his twenties, a religious in his thirties, a socialist in his forties, and a pacifist in his fifties'.⁴⁵ He goes on to explain how by the 1930s an opinion poll taken at Cambridge revealed Murry as 'the most despised literary figure of the time'.⁴⁶ By the 1950s he was 'either unmentionable or else forgotten'.⁴⁷ His crises of faith, coupled with his interest in the spiritual are marked by the publication of several religious volumes around this time, including *The Life of Jesus, Things to Come, and God: An Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*.⁴⁸ In 1938, he wrote *Heaven and Earth*, which was described by Philip Mairet as 'a collection of essays, assembled and amplified to substantiate the thesis that "ours is a Christian civilisation. The Christianity it implies is explicitly Pauline"'.⁴⁹

The early 1930s, as mentioned above, mark the nadir of Murry's reputation in England as a result of the merciless promotion of his dead first wife and also because of his personally-biased writing on D. H. Lawrence.⁵⁰ As Lea acknowledges, 'Both in England and France, the rise of Lawrence's and Katherine's reputations undoubtedly contributed to the decline of Murry's'.⁵¹ William Godwin also points out that 'Murry has not only been underestimated for his own contribution to literature, but has been adversely, even bitterly, criticised for not being the friend or the husband he should have been'.⁵² Murry wrote extensively on his relationship with Lawrence, though at the time of Lawrence's death the pair had had little contact for many years.

I have discovered a document purporting to be a biography of Murry, written in 1930 by Lawrence, under the pseudonym 'J. C.', likely referring to Jesus Christ. This 'biography', entitled *The Life of J. Middleton Murry*, privately printed, consists of one A4 sheet folded in half, with the title on the outside.⁵³ Opening the page, one finds the following information printed on the right hand side:

John Middleton was born in the year of the Lord 1891? It happened also to be the most lying year of the most lying century since time began, but what is that to an innocent babe!

This would no doubt have generated a good deal of mirth among the London literary scene at the time of its printing. Murry's newfound spirituality, together with the incessant promotion of his dead wife, was

more than Lawrence and most of his literary friends and acquaintances could stomach.

The rest of the Mantz/Murry biography, which ends in 1911, is novelistic in tone and subjective in content, taking its themes from Murry's introduction:

What had come to pass in those later days was her emergence out of the valley of the shadow of Experience into the Light of Innocence regained, and just as William Blake turned to the child world to find terms to express his wisdom, so Katherine Mansfield turned back to Karori.⁵⁴

With its language so reminiscent of Psalm 23, Ruth Mantz begins her biography of Mansfield. Throughout the biography, the language is the same: 'The mysticism which burned in her, later, with so fine a flame was then crudely flaring. She was drawn by the mystery of Christianity; a crucifix hung between the two Watts prints over her bed'.⁵⁵ The fact that this is a description of a young girl's room in a boarding school, the décor of which was none of her doing, is not a point to be highlighted in a biography such as this.

With a life described thus, sanctioned by no less a person than the subject's husband—with whom, by all accounts, she was deeply in love—it is no wonder that the reactionary Catholic-French press seize upon Mansfield with such gusto. This sanitised Katherine Mansfield is perfect for them.

Mythologising Continues

For those who would continue the delusion, 1934 proves a fruitful year. After five years of silence, Gillet's voice is once more the loudest of the year. He sees that his old postulations are still valid and his new article, again in *Revue des deux mondes*, notwithstanding the new biographical material furnished by the Mantz/Murry biography, is indistinguishable from anything he has previously written:

Her grave in the cemetery at Avon has become a site of pilgrimage and a token of alliance with English poetry. [...] Under the shadows of the trees at Fontainebleau sleeps this gentle dead woman, the pearl of Oceania. It is in these frozen days of winter, around the anniversary of her death at the feast of the Epiphany, when the barren tree prepares to resurrect itself, that we must come together and bring this young shadow back to life'.⁵⁶

The entire article is composed in this overtly adulatory vein. Gillet claims that the *Journal*, and more especially, the *Lettres*, has become essential bedside reading—‘A book to contemplate before sleep, a spiritual read for delicate souls’.⁵⁷ Of the promiscuous biographical events of 1908–1909, now in the public domain following the Mantz/Murry biography (though still heavily expurgated), he says:

She ‘lives dangerously’, she distances herself, if I may say so, from her parents, in order to gain her liberty, an event which occurs in several lives of the saints. [...] What befalls her is so cruel, we must spare ourselves the pain of discussing it.⁵⁸

His excuse for her actions? Her age: she was only twenty.⁵⁹ He constantly refers to her as ‘the little girl’ (*‘la petite’*)—an epithet that dates from the earliest of his articles. He has also not forgotten his earlier religious postulation: ‘It’s such a pity that Kathleen [*sic*] Mansfield’s biographers have shed so little light on [...] her religious education.’⁶⁰ For those people who had actually known Mansfield, statements such as the one above must have seemed laughable. In ‘Prelude’, a story that contains numerous implicit sexual innuendos, he finds only ‘charming impressions of a child-like piety, of gabbled night-time prayers and this sense of the miracle of the mysterious flower’.⁶¹ For Gillet, the *Journal* ‘shows us how art can bring us to religion’.⁶² He finally explains away her early promiscuity and removes any stain which may have sullied the image of the legend:

Why did we need to know all this? Why, why, recount so much cruelty? [...] Like a moon which waxes and wanes and reappears constantly intact and virginal after having been obscured by clouds and eclipses, so we will continue to admire in this crystal-like soul her invincible courage and—in spite of all—her purity.⁶³

In this article, Gillet is determined, at whatever cost to historical accuracy, to cling on to the vision of Mansfield which he himself was instrumental in creating, upholding her character as pure and saint-like. An anonymous article in *Le Figaro* of March 1935 contains a plethora of photos of Mansfield—reproductions from the Mantz/Murry biography with invented captions such as ‘This fairy-like creature’ and ‘It was then that she told him: “Murry, I love you”’.⁶⁴ It goes on to review the translated biography in a manner that we have now come to expect:

We love Katherine Mansfield as one loves characters in miracles or in fairy-tales. This young woman, whose sensibility stands exquisitely between the child-like and the eternal, remains, beyond the gates of death, the smile of our century.⁶⁵

Entrenchment and Solidification of Legend

As I have already indicated, the gradual emergence of new biographical material to challenge Mansfield's unblemished reputation is, depending on its quality, either absorbed into the reputation itself, or else rejected out of hand. This is certainly the case with the translation in 1941 of Murry's 1935 autobiography *Between Two Worlds*, with the catchy French title *Katherine Mansfield et moi*, meaning 'Katherine Mansfield and me'.⁶⁶ In the introduction, René Lalou makes an oblique reference to those who have accused Murry of helping to promulgate the legend of his dead wife in France, with a sympathetic stance: 'Is it really fair that we should condemn Murry because we find Katherine Mansfield irresistibly attractive; that here she is perceived as the heroine whilst he is merely the survivor?'⁶⁷ Murry no doubt had an eye on the potential reading public in France when penning this book; the frontispiece to the translation calls it '*une adaptation*'. Lalou states:

France worked on Mansfield like a stimulant for her creative powers. 'France may well have seemed insufferable to her; nevertheless it was there that she found her power of detailed vision': this last phrase of Murry's will resonate with every French citizen.⁶⁸

Here again we find that determined search for a connection between Katherine Mansfield and France being brought out sympathetically by a French critic.

Nineteen forty-six is a fruitful and busy year for Mansfield criticism in France, perhaps partly explained by post-war pressure on French writers in general to write with patriotic sentiment; this is not a time to be rocking any critical boats. H. Daniel-Rops publishes a book entitled *Trois tombes, trois visages*, which could be translated to *Three Bombs, Three Faces*.⁶⁹ Its three essays have as their subjects Rupert Brooke, Charles Du Bos, and Katherine Mansfield. The essay on Mansfield, 'Katherine Mansfield sous les feuilles mortes' ('Katherine Mansfield under the Dead Leaves'), gives an account of her time at

the Priory just before her death and is highly religious, sexist, and reactionary. On the beliefs of the Priory's inhabitants, he states, 'Yes, it is true that this heretical philosophy could bring nothing of any value to such an exceptional soul. [...] The choices made by women are rarely logical'.⁷⁰ The entire essay is composed in this vein. Conversely, at around the same time in England, commenting on the new publication of her *Collected Stories*, V. S. Pritchett writes the following:

When we take Katherine Mansfield's stories as they are, we see what original and sometimes superlative use she made of herself. Rootless, isolated, puritan, catty, repentantly over-fond? She made stories clear as glass. Isolated, she seeks to describe how people feel and think when they are alone.⁷¹

The difference between the two pieces could not be more marked and exemplifies the way Mansfield was regarded on either side of the Channel. Daniel-Rops concentrates on Mansfield's life; Pritchett concentrates on her narrative art. The former is subjective and adulatory; the latter matter-of-fact and objective in its praise.

New Biography of Mansfield

The first wholly independent biography—Antony Alpers's *Katherine Mansfield*—which appears in 1954 in England,⁷² containing much new material, is poorly received by the French press and sells less than a thousand copies in France when translated five years later in 1959.⁷³ The rest of the copies are remaindered. The author, Antony Alpers, wrote in 1985:

France simply wouldn't *have* it. [They] were appalled at the desecration of St. Katherine and this book was remaindered very soon ... F. Mauriac reviewed it in *Le Figaro*, but I don't think I saw any other French reviews.⁷⁴

There are in fact further reviews of his translation. René Daumière for example, wholeheartedly agrees with Mauriac's premise, that Mansfield's life is too precious a commodity to deserve a 'warts-and-all' biography.⁷⁵ After such a reaction, and others in a similar vein, it is not hard to understand why the translation of Alpers's biography sold so few copies.⁷⁶

It is at this point that the legend ossifies and then loses momentum, essentially remaining static to the present day. In 1979, a

new biography in French by Marion Pierson-Piérard appeared, entitled *La Vie passionnée de Katherine Mansfield*, with the subtitle, *mieux qu'un roman, une vie vécue* (*The Passionate Life of Katherine Mansfield: Better Than a Novel, a True-Life Story*),⁷⁷ followed in 1987 by the *Brève vie de Katherine Mansfield* (*The Brief Life of Katherine Mansfield*) by Pietro Citati.⁷⁸ Both are hagiographical in tone and content, following the style of earlier biographies by Mantz and others.⁷⁹ Claire Tomalin's 1987 biography of Mansfield, *A Secret Life*, was translated into French in 1990. The French book cover states, 'The image we have of Katherine Mansfield, as icon, without imperfections, [was] created by John Middleton Murry—of whom it can justifiably be said that he "boiled the bones of his wife in order to make soup"'.⁸⁰ The French publishers have recognised that this book contains important new biographical material, especially concerning Mansfield's early years, yet it passed without much notice.

In March 2006, Stock brought out a new expanded edition of Mansfield's stories. In the preface, Marie Desplechin states, 'Sometimes, I feel that Katherine Mansfield died too young to have really died at all. She remains suspended between heaven and us'.⁸¹ A full-page article in the newspaper *Sud-ouest*, reviewing this new edition, together with a large, digitally enhanced photo of Mansfield from 1913, is remarkable for the way it seems to take us back to the early days of Mansfield criticism, back almost eighty years to the hagiography and bias. André Maurois is cited, Louis Pauwels is mentioned, and 'John Middleton' [*sic*] is quoted as if he had just given an interview to the writer:

John Middleton recounts how, after the publication of the collection *Bliss*, which gave prominence to the story 'Prelude', she started to receive letters from ordinary people who loved her fiction and especially the character of little Kezia found in that particular story. 'She felt a certain responsibility towards those writers. She believed that she owed them in particular the truth and nothing but the truth. This preoccupation with what is true, the truth in what she was writing, the truth in her soul so that she felt worthy to express it, became the devouring passion of the last years of her life'.⁸²

It is hard not to contain a sense of disbelief when one considers that, as recently as 2006, critics in France are still peddling the same

distorted views that Murry and the band of French hagiographers were promulgating in the 1920s. We have come full circle, and appear to be back where we started.

Conclusion

My research into Katherine Mansfield's reputation in France has demonstrated how, after her death, the first French critics who took up her cause instigated a myth that has continued to the present day, leading to a serious misrepresentation of a popular literary figure and resulting in hagiography and a cult-like status. In fact, as I have argued, apart from the early months following her death, Mansfield never really had the same sort of posthumous reputation in England that she had in France, except the negative one of being Murry's wife. It was Murry who provided the details in his edited books of Mansfield's posthumous works, in his introductions to innumerable volumes, together with his own autobiography, which fed the information eagerly absorbed by so many French critics. The myth is built on a foundation of words that had a particular emotional bias in the essentially masculine French *esprit* of the day. Words like tragic, woman, child-like, tuberculosis, pretty, love, and death, together with Murry's exaggerated version of Mansfield's life, amount to a story that most people would only expect to come across in fiction.

The hagiography of a writer's life is a common occurrence, not solely confined to Mansfield. Franz Kafka, for example, with dates almost identical to Mansfield's (1883–1924), died young, unknown, and in pain after a protracted illness. Before his death he asked his best friend Max Brod to destroy all his manuscripts.⁸³ Not only did Brod disobey his request, but, as with Mansfield, posthumous books began to be published and then translated. Within a few short years of his death, Kafka had achieved fame throughout Europe. He was called a literary genius, a sage, a saint, even a prophet.

It is, of course, a risk for all critics that excessive praise and admiration is occasionally, with the passage of time, perceived to have been misplaced. Luckily, Kafka's reputation has stood the test of time, as has Mansfield's; nevertheless, the French critics' insistence on concentrating on just a few small aspects of her life and work has done

irreparable damage to her French persona. The ethereal spirituality and general 'otherworldliness' perceived by the French critics in Mansfield's writing ignores the constant echoes of darkness, bitterness, and especially the humour that informs her work. Their vision of a Mansfieldian prelapsarian world of fairies, parties, songs, and dolls' houses is far removed from the world Mansfield actually wrote about, which included the gassing of soldiers at the Front, the orgasm experienced by a school girl in a French class, together with compelling depictions of women's struggles for various kinds of liberty.⁸⁴ For Mansfield's band of obsessive fans in France, however, she is encapsulated as a soul whose apparently fey and melancholic personal writing expresses a super-sensitivity incompatible with the real world. Her reputation in France is not based on sober academic judgement, but on the more-fluctuating and less-controllable tide of personal and intuitive argument. The 1920s was a period ripe in France for a Mansfield figure to be launched, and the tide of this new-critical process carried her reputation to the limits of subjective, interpretative criticism.

The first French critical reviews, together with the translation of the Mantz/Murry biography, instigated a myth that has continued to the present day. These works form the basis for most subsequent discussion of Mansfield in France; there is one root, a base of 'knowledge'—an archive—from which information tends to be retrieved. This information has become solidified, leading to opposition to any alternative viewpoints. Thus it has become irrelevant whether the initial research was based on deliberate misrepresentation or accidental misunderstanding. These so-called 'facts' have been in the public domain for so long that they *must* be true. Homogeneity, in the case of Katherine Mansfield in France, has led to a serious misrepresentation of a popular literary figure, resulting in a cult-like status. Falsification, distortion, and omission are key themes in what we might call the repertoire of normative Mansfield hagiography, and anyone approaching Mansfield within the pantheon of French literature today will still find themselves negotiating this quagmire of myths and falsehoods.

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Endnotes

All English translations from the French are mine unless otherwise stated.

1. Dominique Renouard, 'La Tombe de Katherine Mansfield: En revenant de la tombe de Katherine Mansfield et du Prieuré', *Nouvelle Revue*, 161 (1938), p. 58. 'Le Prieuré. Voici le pin. Voici le hêtre, / Le parterre, le toit, l'eau triste des bassins ... / O Mansfield, pour mourir, c'est donc là que tu vins? / C'est là que tu fermas pour toujours ta paupière? / Que de regrets, hélas, hantent les seuils de pierre!'
2. Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century sexologists and doctors saw homosexuality as a degenerative disease to be treated and cured—a perception that only partially changed with the publication of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905. Mansfield's parents were in fact right to 'fear' that her daughter might have lesbian tendencies, though ironically she had conducted at least two lesbian relationships while living at home in New Zealand—with an old school friend, Maata Mahupuku who was a Maori princess, and Edie Bendall, an art school student. There are several references to her sexual feelings for Maata and Edie in her notebooks of 1907: 'Last night I spent in her arms, and tonight I hate her—which being interpreted meaneth that I adore her, that I cannot lie in my bed and not feel the magic of her body. [...] I feel more powerfully all those so termed sexual impulses with her [Edie Bendall] than I have with any men'. *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vols. 1 and 2, ed. by Margaret Scott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), vol.1, p. 99. 'Do other people of my own age feel as I do I wonder so absolutely powerfully licentious, so almost physically ill. [...] I want Maata. I want her as I have had her—terribly'. vol. 1, pp. 103–104.
3. Pamela Dunbar, *Radical Mansfield: Double Discourse in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), jacket notes.
4. Anon., 'A Wayfarer', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 13 January 1923, p. 575.

5. H. M. Tomlinson, 'Katherine Mansfield', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 20 January 1923, p. 609.
6. Frank Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 113.
7. Conrad Aiken, 'The Short Story as Confession', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 14 July 1923, p. 490.
8. Raymond Mortimer, 'The Dove's Nest and Other Stories', *New Statesman*, 7 July 1923, p. 394.
9. Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928). Like many of Huxley's novels, *Point Counter Point* has little actual plot. Much of the novel consists of penetrating personality sketches and long intellectual conversations. Denis Burlap is a facetious and hypocritical individual who idolizes, and thinks himself like, Saint Francis. In his biography of Murry, Frank Lea states, '[Murry] had been more outraged by Burlap than he cared to admit. His first impulse had been to challenge Huxley to a duel' (Lea, p. 159).
10. Aldous Huxley, 'The Traveller's Eye-View', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 16 May 1925, p. 204.
11. Katherine Anne Porter, 'The Art of Katherine Mansfield', *Nation*, 23 October 1937, p. 435.
12. Lea, p. 89.
13. Martha Noel Evans, *Masks of Tradition: Women and the Politics of Writing in Twentieth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 20.
14. Evans, p. 13.
15. Richard Griffiths, *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature 1870–1914* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), p. 4.
16. Evans, p. 17.
17. Louis Gillet, 'Katherine Mansfield', *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 December 1924, 929–42 (p. 932). '[...] son mari, M. John Middleton Murry, à qui je dois tous les renseignements qu'on vient de lire [...]']
18. 'C'était femme des pieds à la tête, femme jusqu'au bout des ongles, rempli d'une tiédeur sensuelle et en même temps de délicatesse, d'adorable pureté féminine, sans que jamais une seule fois l'auteur se mêlât d'aborder ces problèmes moraux [...] Elle n'avait rien de la suffragette. Elle paraissait née dans un astre étranger à la question sociale, sur une planète innocente, avant l'état de péché et le monstrueux âge de fer de l'industrie moderne. Elle semblait venir d'une étoile plus belle, et elle en conservait une

- atmosphère radieuse flottante autour de sa personne et dans la poudre d'or de ses cheveux [...].
19. 'une vieille maison a Fontainebleau'.
 20. Gabriel Marcel, 'Lettres Etrangères', *La Nouvelle Revue française*, 32 (1929), 268–73 (p. 270). 'Ce qui fait à mes yeux la valeur sans prix de ces livres, c'est l'approfondissement constant d'une certaine situation spirituelle [...].'
 21. Lea, p. 163.
 22. Griffiths, p. 357.
 23. Louis Gillet, 'Les Lettres de Katherine Mansfield', *Revue des deux mondes*, 1 May 1929, 213–27 (p. 213). 'C'est elle-même, c'est elle, la créature de paradis qui nous apparaissait là-bas, radieuse, au bord d'un golfe du Pacifique; [...] l'Eve, que nous voyions sortir toute neuve de son bain matinal, fraîche comme la lumière des premiers jours du monde. Voici les lettres, les reliques de Katherine Mansfield [...].'
 24. 'Ce progrès est le grand intérêt des Lettres et du Journal. Ces textes permettent de suivre presque jour par jour le travail de la "grâce", ils révèlent un aspect de cette âme que nous soupçonnions guère, l'importance qu'a eue dans sa vie la crise religieuse'.
 25. Benjamin Crémieux, 'Le Carnet de Benjamin Crémieux—Katherine Mansfield', *Annales politiques et littéraires*, 15 September 1931, pp. 243–44. Pierre Deffrennes, 'La Correspondance de Katherine Mansfield', *Études des pères de la compagnie de Jésus*, 209 (1931), 314–24. G. Jean-Aubry, 'Katherine Mansfield', *Revue de Paris*, 6 (1931), 57–71. G. P. Bertrand, 'L'Attitude spirituelle de Katherine Mansfield', *Cahiers du sud*, 18 (1931), 646–65.
 26. 'C'est plus qu'un livre, c'est une prise de contact direct avec un être adorable de fraîcheur, de spontanéité, de noblesse, et, en dépit de son mal, de vitalité. Son œuvre est celle d'un écrivain richement doué, mais c'est une œuvre entre les autres, malgré son timbre particulier. On peut l'aimer plus, l'aimer moins. Mais ces Lettres [...]. Crémieux, p. 243.
 27. 'À dix-huit ans, première crise morale; sa famille la rappelle en Nouvelle-Zélande. Le pays natal, vu de Londres, n'est plus pour elle qu'une prison, ou pire, "un désert intellectuel". Elle retourne, mais se révolte, mène pendant deux ans une existence nomade, parcourt à cheval l'intérieur de l'île, obtient enfin de ses parents la liberté et une maigre pension'. G. P. Bertrand, p. 651.

28. Jean-Aubry, p. 59.
29. Deffrennes, p. 315.
30. 'Celle de K. Mansfield est une sincérité parfaitement intègre à la face d'une présence transcendante—quoi qu'elle en pense—qui est pure, qui donne la vie, qui est joie, qui est Dieu en un mot, soit qu'on prononce ce mot ou non, à laquelle elle aspire de s'unir'. Deffrennes, p. 319.
31. 'Il reste encore dans ses nouvelles un charme indéfinissable qu'aucune critique ne saurait révéler. [...] Son véritable secret est mort avec elle'. Bertrand, p. 665.
32. Denis Saurat, 'Visite à Gourdjieff', *La Nouvelle Revue française*, 1 November 1933, pp. 686–98. '[Orage] allait me montrer l'endroit où Katherine Mansfield avait passé ses derniers jours. Endroit extraordinaire'.
33. Katherine Mansfield, *La Mouche*, trans. by Madeleine T. Guéritte and Marguerite Faguer, pref. by M. Guéritte (Paris: Stock, 1933).
34. Edmond Jaloux, 'L'Esprit des livres', *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 14 October 1933, p. 4. 'Quand on parle de Katherine Mansfield, il faut donc parler de son âme'. 'A tous [les personnages de son imagination], elle accorde un peu de sa mélancolie à elle, de son féérique secret, de sa solitude'.
35. Jaloux, p. 4.
36. Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, 'La tombe d'une fée', in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 4 November 1933, p. 2. 'Une âme de poésie règne sur le monde imaginaire que Katherine Mansfield a créé; elle le transfigure, l'épure jusqu'à la désincarnation ; métamorphosant les personnages les plus humbles de la vie quotidienne, et les baignant dans la lumière dont Fra Angelico baigne ses élus, aux seuils du paradis'.
37. Ruth Elvish Mantz and John Middleton Murry, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1933).
38. Ruth Mantz and John Middleton Murry, *La Jeunesse de Katherine Mansfield*, trans. by M. T. Guéritte, pref. by Jean-Louis Vaudoyer (Paris: Stock, 1935).
39. Mantz and Murry, p. 1.
40. Mantz and Murry, p. 2.
41. Mantz and Murry, p. 10.
42. Mantz and Murry, p. 11.
43. Mantz and Murry, pp. 12–13.
44. Mantz and Murry, p. 15.

45. F. A. Lea, *Lawrence and Murry: A Twofold Vision* (London: Bentham Press, 1975), p. 51.
46. Lea, *Lawrence*, p. 52.
47. Lea, *Lawrence*, p. 52.
48. John Middleton Murry, *The Life of Jesus* (London: Cape 1926), *Things to Come* (London: Cape, 1928), *God: An Introduction to the Science of Metabiology* (London: Cape, 1929).
49. Philip Mairet, *John Middleton Murry* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1958), p. 38. John Middleton Murry, *Heaven and Earth* (London: Cape, 1938).
50. As well as numerous articles on D. H. Lawrence, Murry also wrote *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Cape, 1931), *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Cape 1933), and *Love, Freedom and Society: An Analytical Comparison of D. H. Lawrence and Albert Schweitzer* (London: Cape, 1957). Of the Reminiscences, Mairet states, ‘The personal reminiscences occupy less than half the book. The rest comprises Murry’s answer to the attacks upon him which followed the publication of *Son of Woman*’. Mairet, p. 38.
51. Lea, *Lawrence*, p. 53.
52. Ernest G. Griffin, *John Middleton Murry* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 21.
53. D. H. Lawrence (‘J. C.’), *The Life of J. Middleton Murry* (privately printed, 1930). John Worthen, Emeritus Professor of Lawrence Studies at the University of Nottingham, confirmed in an email to the author that this document was written by Lawrence, under the pseudonym ‘J. C.’.
54. Mantz and Murry, *Life*, p. 17.
55. Mantz and Murry, *Life*, p. 185.
56. Louis Gillet, “‘Kass’ ou la jeunesse de Katherine Mansfield’, *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 January 1934, 456–68 (p. 456). ‘Sa tombe du cimetière d’Avon est l’objet de plus d’un pèlerinage et le gage d’une alliance avec la poésie anglaise [...] Sous les ombrages de Fontainebleau dort ainsi cette douce morte, la perle de l’Océanie. C’est en ces jours glacés d’hiver, en ces heures d’anniversaire, au temps de l’Épiphanie, quand l’arbre dépouillé prépare sa résurrection, qu’il faut aller nous recueillir et évoquer cette jeune ombre’.
57. ‘un livre de chevet, une lecture spirituelle pour les âmes délicates’. Gillet, ‘Kass’, p. 456.
58. ‘Elle “marche au canon”, elle enjambe, si je puis dire, le corps de ses

- parents, pour conquérir sa liberté, épisode comme il y en a dans certaines vies de saints [...] Ce qui suit est tellement cruel qu'on voudrait s'épargner la douleur d'en rien dire'. Gillet, 'Kass', p. 463.
59. Gillet, 'Kass', p. 464.
60. 'C'est dommage que les biographes de Kathleen Mansfield nous aient donné si peu de lueurs sur [...] son éducation religieuse'. Gillet, 'Kass', p. 466.
61. 'Des impressions charmantes de piété enfantine, de prières gazouillées le soir, et ce sentiment du miracle de la fleur mystérieuse'. Gillet, 'Kass', p. 467.
62. 'Nous fait comprendre que l'art aussi peut être religion'. Gillet, 'Kass', p. 468.
63. 'Qu'avions-nous besoin de tout savoir? Pourquoi, pourquoi tout dire, cruel? [...] Comme une lune qui croît et décroît et repaît toujours intacte et virginale après les nuées et les éclipses, nous continuerons d'admirer dans cette âme de cristal le courage invincible et—malgré tout—la pureté'. Gillet, 'Kass', p. 468.
64. Anon., 'La Vitrine du Figaro littéraire', *Le Figaro*, 23 March 1935, p. 5. 'Cette créature féérique'. 'C'est alors qu'elle lui dit: "Murry je vous aime"'.
 65. 'Nous aimons Katherine Mansfield comme on aime les personnages de miracles et de contes de fées. Cette jeune femme, dont la sensibilité se tient délicieusement entre l'enfantin et l'éternel, demeure au-delà des portes de la mort le sourire de notre siècle'. Anon., 'La Vitrine', p. 5.
66. John Middleton Murry, *Katherine Mansfield et moi*, trans. by Nicole Bordeaux and Maurice Lacoste, intro. by René Lalou (Paris: Fernand Sorlot, 1941).
67. 'Serait-il juste d'accabler Murry parce que Katherine Mansfield attire irrésistiblement nos sympathies, qu'elle est ici l'héroïne alors qu'il n'est que le survivant?' Lalou cited Murry, *Katherine*, p. 10.
68. 'La France agissait sur Katherine Mansfield comme un stimulant à sa puissance créatrice. "La France avait beau lui paraître insupportable, elle y retrouvait, disait-elle, son pouvoir de minutieuse vision": cette phrase de Murry ne laissera nul Français insensible'. Lalou cited Murry, *Katherine*, p. 15.
69. H. Daniel-Rops, *Trois tombes, trois visages* (Paris: La Colombe, 1946).
70. 'Il est bien vrai que cette pauvre hérésie ne pouvait rien apporter de valable à cette âme d'exception [...] Le choix d'une femme s'exprime rarement par la logique'. Daniel-Rops, 12–13.

71. V. S. Pritchett, 'Books in General', *New Statesman and Nation*, 2 February 1946, p. 87.
72. Antony Alpers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954).
73. Antony Alpers, *Katherine Mansfield: L'Œuvre et la vie* (Paris: Seghers, 1959).
74. Autographed letter from Antony Alpers to Gerri Kimber, 13 April 1985.
75. René Daumière, 'La petite fille qui retrouva son âme: Katherine Mansfield', *Paris-Normandie*, 10 July 1959, p. 11.
76. See also Gabrielle Gras, 'Katherine Mansfield', *Europe* (September 1959), 135–39 (p. 136).
77. Marian Pierson-Piérard, *La Vie passionnée de Katherine Mansfield* (Brussels: Éditions Labor, 1979).
78. Pietro Citati, *Brève vie de Katherine Mansfield*, trans. by Brigitte Pérol (Paris: Quai Voltaire, 1987).
79. See in particular Odette Lenoël, *La Vocation de Katherine Mansfield* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1946). Bernard Marion, *A la rencontre de Katherine Mansfield* (Brussels : La Sixaine, 1946). Roland Merlin, *Le Drame secret de Katherine Mansfield* (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1950). Elisabeth Morel, *Katherine Mansfield* (Paris : Club de la Femme, 1959).
80. Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: Une vie secrète*, trans. by Anne Damour (Paris: Bernard Coutaz, 1990). 'L'image d'une Katherine Mansfield iconisée, assainie, sans défaut, voulue par John Middleton Murry, son mari—dont on peut dire avec quelque raison qu'il fit "bouillir les os de sa femme pour en faire de la soupe"'.
8. Katherine Mansfield, *Les Nouvelles*, pref. by Marie Desplechin (Paris: Stock, 2006), p. 12. 'Quelquefois, je pense que Katherine Mansfield est morte trop jeune pour mourir vraiment. Elle est restée suspendue, entre le ciel et nous'.
82. Lionel Niedzwiecki, 'Une musique de l'âme', *Sud-ouest*, 26 March 2006, p. 10. 'John Middleton raconte qu'après la publication du recueil "Félicité" où la nouvelle "Prélude" apparaît en tête de volume, elle commence à recevoir des lettres des gens simples, qui aiment son œuvre et surtout la petite Kézia qu'on y rencontre. "Elle se sentit responsable envers ces lecteurs-là. A eux, elle devait la vérité, rien que la vérité. Cette préoccupation du vrai, du vrai dans ce qu'elle écrivait, du vrai en son âme afin qu'elle fût digne de s'exprimer, devient la passion dévorante des dernières années de sa vie"'.
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83. Max Brod (1884–1968) met Kafka at Charles University in Germany in 1902. They remained close friends until Kafka's death. Justifying his posthumous publication of material that his friend had asked should be burnt, Brod replied in the postscript to the first edition of *Der Prozess* (*The Trial*), 'Franz should have appointed another executor if he had been absolutely and finally determined that his instructions should stand'. Brod cited Kafka, *Der Prozess* (Berlin: Verlag Die Schmiede, 1925).
84. See, for example, Mansfield's 'An Indiscreet Journey', 'Carnation', and 'Life of Ma Parker'.