KATHERINE MANSFIELD: THE VIEW FROM FRANCE

Submitted by Geraldine Maria Kimber to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French, April 2007.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

........................................... (signature)
THESIS ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to assess the reason why Katherine Mansfield’s reputation in France has always been greater than in England. The thesis examines the ways in which the French reception of Mansfield has idealised her persona to the extent of crafting a hagiography. I ask: what were the motives behind the French critics’ desire to put Mansfield on a pedestal? How did the three years she spent on French soil influence her writing? How do the translations of her work collude in the myth surrounding her personality? Although several other scholars have discussed the Katherine Mansfield myth in France, this thesis is the first sustained attempt to establish interconnections between her own French influences (literary and otherwise), and the myth-making of the French critics and translators.

I have divided my thesis into six chapters. The first places Mansfield in the general literary context of her era, exploring French literary tendencies at the time and juxtaposing them with the main literary trends in England. The second chapter focuses on the writer’s trips to France, demonstrating the influence of the French experience on her life and works. The third chapter highlights specific French literary influences and how these manifest themselves in her narrative art. In the fourth, I explain the workings of the writer’s narrative art, so that when in the next chapter I study the translations via close textual analysis, it will become clear whether the beliefs and principles expressed in the original texts have been diluted during the translation process. The last chapter prior to the conclusion will follow the critical appraisal of her life and work in France from her death up to the present day, by closely analysing the differing French critical responses. The division of the thesis in this way will enable me to show how these various strands combine to create a legend which has little basis in fact, thereby demonstrating how reception and translation determine the importance of an author’s reputation in the literary world.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page and Declaration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Abstract</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Influences and Innovations</strong></td>
<td>16-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0: Introduction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1: Beginnings</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2: The <em>Fin de Siècle</em></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3: Decadence and Symbolism</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4: Modernism and its Roots</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5: Eliot and Laforgue</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6: Proust, Bloomsbury and France</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7: Joyce and Gillet</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8: The Modernist Short Story</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9: Katherine Mansfield</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10: Conclusion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Falling for France</strong></td>
<td>43-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0: Introduction</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1: Why France?</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2: Early French Influences</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3: France and Murry</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4: Relationship with Carco</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5: Descriptions of France</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6: Illness and France</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7: Influence of Murry</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8: Search for a Cure</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9: Nearing the End</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10: Death in France</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11: Conclusion</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Specific French Literary Influences</strong></td>
<td>84-112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0: Introduction</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1: Use of <em>Fin-de-Siècle</em> Techniques and Themes</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2: Mansfield and Baudelaire</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3: ‘Carnation’ and <em>Les Fleurs du mal</em></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4: ‘The Doll’s House’ and ‘Le Joujou du pauvre’</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5: Mansfield and Colette</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6: <em>L’Envers du music-hall</em></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7: Conclusion

4. Back to Basics: Mansfield’s Narrative Technique

4.0: Introduction
4.1: Mansfield as Innovator of The Modernist Short Story
4.2: Mansfield’s Personal Aesthetic Philosophy
4.3: Mansfield’s Narrative Technique
4.4: The ‘Nouvelle-Instant’
4.5: The Epiphanic Moment
4.6: Use of Literary Impressionism
4.7: The Incorporation of Symbolism
4.8: Sexuality as a Theme
4.9: Feminist Issues
4.10: Relationships
4.11: Portrayal of Children
4.12: Use of Humour
4.13: Sun, Moon and Sea Imagery
4.14: War and Death
4.15: Conclusion

5. Translating Katherine Mansfield

5.0: Introduction
5.1: Initial Editorial Bias
5.2: Translating the Letters
5.3: Translating the Journal
5.4: Narrative Technique in Translation
5.5: Use of the Action Verb
5.6: Translating Mansfield’s Punctuation
5.7: Idiolects, Modes of Expression and Humour
5.8: Use of the Narrator as Stylistic Technique
5.9: Translating In a German Pension
5.10: Translating the Poems
5.11: Conclusion

6. The Critical Trend: The Development of the Legend

6.0: Introduction
6.1: Mansfield’s Living Reputation
6.2: Mansfield’s Death Viewed in England
6.3: Mansfield’s Death Viewed in France
6.4: Reception of French Translations
6.5: First Signs of Disillusionment
6.6: Myth Continues Unabated
6.7: Irreverence Returns
6.8: Mythologising Continues
6.9: Hagiography Heightened Further
6.10: Fiftieth Anniversary of Birth
6.11: Further Attacks on Legend
6.12: Entrenchment and Solidification of Hagiography
6.13: Conclusion
Conclusion

Appendices: 283-296

Appendix A: Time Spent in France - Brief Chronology 283
Appendix B: Stories Written in France 285
Appendix C: Stories Set in France or Containing a French Influence 286
Appendix D: French Authors Read by Mansfield 287
Appendix E: Selected English /French Literary Chronology During Mansfield’s Lifetime 289
Appendix F: Publication Dates for English/French Primary Texts 292
Appendix G: Jean Delisle’s Characteristics of Literary Texts 293
Appendix H: Prominent Mansfieldian French Literary Critics 294

Select Bibliography: 297-316

Katherine Mansfield: Principle Works (in order of publication) 297
Principle Biographies in English 298
Critical Works on Mansfield in English 299
Other Works Consulted in English 300
Articles on Mansfield in English 307
Principle Works and Editions in French (in order of publication) 309
Principle Biographies in French 311
Critical Works on Mansfield in French 311
Other Works Consulted in French 311
Articles on Mansfield in French 313
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to acknowledge the enormous debt of gratitude I owe to Professor Malcolm Bowie, the supervisor of this thesis for two years, until ill health forced him to relinquish his role. In 2003, he encouraged me to resurrect a long-neglected M. Phil thesis which we had worked on together in the 1980s, once more offering to become my supervisor. The working title of the thesis was his idea and I have kept it, in tribute to him, for the submitted version. I looked forward to being able to present him with a copy of the final thesis, but, sadly, he passed away three months before its submission. Nevertheless, Malcolm’s supervisory guidance permeates every chapter and I hope he would have approved of the end result.

Professor Lisa Downing, also a former student of Malcolm’s, kindly took over the supervision of this thesis after his illness was diagnosed, and I am immensely grateful to her. Her sound advice and encouragement at every stage have been invaluable, and any meritorious sections of the finished thesis are undoubtedly a product of her erudition and analytical skills. It has been a rare privilege to have had two such brilliant scholars as supervisors.

The internationally renowned New Zealand critic, Professor C. K. Stead, CBE, ONZ, became a mentor and friend during the latter stages of writing this thesis and several sections bear witness to my discussions with him on the subject of Katherine Mansfield. Special thanks also go to Dr Ian Conrich, Director of the Centre for New Zealand Studies, Birkbeck, University of London, for invaluable advice and friendship.

Finally, I should like to thank Ralph Kimber and Annabel Kimber for their constant support and encouragement during the writing of this thesis.
ABBREVIATIONS

All page references to Mansfield’s stories in English are taken from the *Collected Stories* (London: Constable, 1945), and follow directly after any quotation. Unless stated otherwise, all page references to the stories in French are taken from *L’Œuvre romanesque de Katherine Mansfield* (Paris: Stock, 1955).

The following reference abbreviations are used as standard throughout the thesis:

**Primary Texts**

IGP  *In a German Pension* (London: Stephen Swift, 1911)

*Bliss*  *Bliss and Other Stories* (London: Constable, 1920)

GP  *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (London: Constable, 1922)

*Poems 1*  *Poems* (London: Constable, 1923)

*Dove’s Nest*  *The Doves’ Nest and Other Stories* (London: Constable, 1923)

SC  *Something Childish and Other Stories* (London: Constable, 1924)


L1, i, ii  *The Letters*, 2 Vols, ed. by John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1928)

NN  *Novels and Novelists*, ed. by J. Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1930)


### Principal French Translations


**FL1**  *Lettres*, trans. by Madeleine T. Guéritte, pref. by Gabriel Marcel (Paris: Stock, 1931)


**La Mouche**  *La Mouche*, trans. by Madeleine T. Guéritte and Marguerite Faguer, pref. by Madeleine T. Guéritte (Paris: Stock, 1933)

**PA**  *Pension allemande et nouvelles diverses*, trans. by Charles Mauron and Marguerite Faguer (Paris: Stock, 1939)


**Nouvelles**


**Principal Biographies**

**Alpers**


**Meyers**


**Tomalin**