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Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber, eds. *Katherine Mansfield & Continental Europe: Connections and Influences*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 282 p. ISBN: 9781137429964 (hb), £55; 9781137429971 (ebook). €83,62

- 1 This collection of essays is concerned both with the minutiae of Mansfield's travels and with the two-way intellectual travel between Mansfield and the Continent. Much of it is of rather specialist interest, but it is clearly not intended as *Mansfield For Beginners*; the introduction by Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber significantly refers to the volume as an investigation of a "hitherto rather neglected aspect" of the writer.
- 2 Maurizio Ascari's essay, "An 'utterly concrete and yet impalpable' Art: The Early Reception of Katherine Mansfield in Italy (1922-1952)," examines the impact of the posthumous publication of Mansfield's private writings, ranging in emphasis from Elio Vittorini to "Diotima," alias Amelia Della Pergola. Vittorini, who refers brusquely to Murry as Mansfield's "dummy of a husband," impatiently rejects any notion of bourgeois ideals and simultaneously regrets any lurch towards spirituality, while "Diotima" sees Mansfield as searching for Jesus without knowing it, and places her in a trio of prisoners which includes not only Gramsci but a prestigious saint.
- 3 Mansfield seems to have attracted a fair amount of this rather bizarre attention: Nora Sellei's essay on "Katherine Mansfield's Early Translations and Reception in Hungary" quotes a Hungarian critic, Antal Szerb, claiming that: "Her stories have no explanations. They are phenomena, and as all phenomena, they have no rationale for existence, yet they are as meaningful as a river at dusk." Janka Kascakova in "My dear,

incomparable, priceless, Katerina Mansfieldova' – The Reception and Translations of Katherine Mansfield in (the former) Czechoslovakia" reveals that the first full article on her works imagines her in heaven, belonging to a club called "The Circle of Pure and True Hearts."

- 4 In "'That Pole outside our door': Floryan Sobieniowski and Katherine Mansfield" Gerri Kimber argues convincingly for the continuing emotional importance of this relationship, while Mirosława Kubasiewicz puts the case for the "Meeting Points" with Stanisław Wyspiański. Delia da Sousa Correa explains Mansfield's attitudes to Germany in the context of German Romanticism. In one of the most interesting essays of the collection, Claire Davison considers Mansfield, Koteliánsky and the art of modernist translation. She quotes from a 1919 letter to Koteliánsky in which Mansfield urges the case for translating Russian literature: "I feel that Art is like a sick person, left all alone in a house where they are having a jazz party downstairs and we have at least something of what that sick person needs to be well again. Can't we thief up the back staircase and take it?" Yet she goes on to develop the issue of translation far beyond this plaintive and heartfelt plea by setting different versions by different hands, including Mansfield's and Koteliánsky's, side by side, illuminating as she does so what she identifies as key in Mansfield's writing: the revelation of the unknown as magically familiar.
- 5 In the best essay of the collection, Angela Smith's observations on Mansfield and Jean Rhys as travellers in Europe, the two writers are set against each other as colonial subjects who use their provenance from New Zealand and Dominica respectively in an oblique way. Smith chooses texts in which the central characters are not colonial subjects, but foreigners in France, offering attentive and analytical readings. Jennifer Walker in "The Beauchamp Connection" offers a meticulous summary of the various kinds of rapport between Mansfield and her older cousin Elizabeth von Arnim and their writing. Erika Baldt uses three Mansfield stories to examine their exploration of British and French identities, and, beyond that, the problems of stereotyping through appearance, and interrogates "Miss Brill," for example, as a potential cinematic experience. Kathryn Simpson in "'Strange flower, half opened': Katherine Mansfield and the Flowering of 'the Self'" uses Marcel Mauss's ideas of gift economies to unpack the significance of Eve's gift of her carnation in "Carnation."
- 6 Patricia Moran in "The 'dream of roots and the mirage of the journey': Writing as Homeland in Katherine Mansfield" opens with a quotation from a letter to John Middleton Murry in which Mansfield wonders, "Why haven't I got a Chinese nurse with green trousers and two babies who rush at me and clasp my knees – I'm not a girl – I'm a woman." Moran expertly interrogates the way in which this seemingly rather pitiful question is connected for Mansfield with concepts of exile and colonial identity, and is regarded by Mansfield herself with a certain amount of ironic detachment. This ties up intriguingly with the following essay, Janet Wilson's analysis of "Katherine Mansfield's Stories 1909-1914: The Child and the 'Childish'," which shrewdly tracks the development of an increasing engagement with female sexual identity.
- 7 As for C. K. Stead, he speculates that the importance of New Zealand in the stories would have continued to declare itself had Mansfield lived longer, in the concluding essay of a collection which brings together a multiplicity of aspects, mainly, as the volume's title indicates, arising from Mansfield's travels in Europe. It is necessarily a rather fragmented collection, supplying as it does, piece by piece, a jigsaw of

discoveries and recoveries. This means that it has the defects of its merits and the merits of its defects: it necessarily cannot supply any consistent and sustained analysis of the stories, which may disappoint some readers, but for readers who are already relatively familiar with the whole body of work it will provide useful and sometimes quirky insights.

AUTHORS

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Mary CONDE is Senior Research Fellow in the School of English, Queen Mary University of London, and has a special interest in the short story. She co-edited the *Open Letter* issue devoted to Alice Munro with Héliane Ventura, and her most recently published articles are on Munro and Rudyard Kipling.