

Katherine Mansfield: Inspirations and Influences

Jagiellonian University,
Krakow, Poland
5–7 July 2019

An international conference organised by the
Katherine Mansfield Society

Hosted by the Institute of English Studies,
Jagiellonian University, Krakow

Supported by Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia
Trnava University, Slovakia
The New Zealand Embassy, Warsaw
and the University of Northampton, UK

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Professor Kirsty Gunn
University of Dundee, UK

Further keynote speakers to follow

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

This international conference celebrates the diversity of influences which inspired acclaimed New Zealand modernist short story writer, Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923).

From her upbringing in Wellington, New Zealand, her schooling in London, and her return to Europe at the age of nineteen to begin her career as a writer, Mansfield's short life was inevitably influenced by the people she met, the many places she visited or lived in, paintings she saw, music she played or listened to, trends in literature and the books she read, and the burgeoning film industry which she experienced both as an actor and an eager spectator. For example, the French Decadent and Symbolist movements would both have a lasting influence on Mansfield's fiction. Indeed, echoes of, for example, the French symbolists, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde and the Decadents, are to be found in much of her prose writing. As Sydney Janet Kaplan argues,

Pater and Symons provided techniques that Mansfield would use later to uncover, at its deepest level, the culturally determined condition of women. By importing symbolist devices into realistic fiction, Mansfield exemplifies how the malebonded nineteenth-century aesthetes became absorbed into the twentieth-century feminist consciousness.

Most modern critics agree that Mansfield's own unique form of Modernism was not so much derivative of other contemporary writers but was rather a product of her symbiosis of late-nineteenth-century techniques and themes, as outlined above, for the most part introduced through her reading of Symons when her tastes and preferences started to take shape and she began, with the Symbolists and the Decadents as her dominant influences, to write the sort of fiction which was committed to the possibilities of narrative experimentation.

In the years following her death, Mansfield herself would become an inspiration for – and influence on – other writers, including Elizabeth Bowen, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, as well as the Patron of the Katherine Mansfield Society, author Professor Kirsty Gunn. Indeed, one of Mansfield's early biographers, Ian Gordon, writes, 'She had the same kind of direct influence on the art of the short story as Joyce had on the novel. After Joyce and Katherine Mansfield neither the novel nor the short story can ever be quite the same again'.

Suggested topics for papers might include (but are not limited to):

- KM and New Zealand
- KM and Russia
- KM and France
- KM and Poland
- KM and Bavaria
- KM and Switzerland
- KM and Symbolism
- KM and the fin-de-siècle
- KM and A. R. Orage
- KM and her contemporaries
- KM and World War 1
- KM and modernity/the modern
- KM and her literary legacy
- KM and music
- KM and film
- KM and fine arts

Abstracts of 200 words, together with a bio-sketch,
should be sent to the conference organisers:

Dr Janka Kascakova, Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia
Dr Gerri Kimber, University of Northampton, UK

Dr Władysław Witalisz, Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow

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Submission deadline: 1 February 2019.