



Katherine Mansfield: Last Things and Legacies

7-8 July 2023



*Portrait of Katherine Mansfield by Anne Estelle Rice, 1918.
Collection of Te Papa Tongarewa.*

Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus,
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington



*Te Herenga Waka VUW English Literatures and Creative Communication Programme
Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies
International Institute of Modern Letters
Katherine Mansfield House & Garden*



Symposium Timetable
Katherine Mansfield: Last Things and Legacies

Friday 7 July 2023		
Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington		
International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) Writing Workshops.		
Venue	RHMZ03	
10.00am to noon	Morning session: Discussion of Katherine Mansfield's fiction with Damien Wilkins and Kate Duignan. Discussion of Katherine Mansfield's non-fiction (journals, letters) with Harry Ricketts and Chris Price.	
1.00pm	Lunch break <i>Please note that lunch is not provided.</i> <i>There are several cafés in the surrounding area of Rutherford House.</i>	
1.00pm to 4.00pm	Afternoon session: Creative non-fiction workshop with Harry Ricketts and Chris Price. <i>Limit of 20 participants</i>	
Saturday 8 July 2023		
Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington		
8.30am	Registration Desk opens, Mezzanine Floor	
9.00am	Welcome on behalf of the University	
9.15am	Keynote speaker – Redmer Yska Camping Ground Confidential: Notes of a Romantic Biographer Lecture Theatre 1	
10.00am	Morning tea – Mezzanine Floor	
Venue	RHMZ03	RHMZ02
Chair	Jane Stafford	Anna Jackson
10.30am	Katherine Mansfield's Affinities with Louis Couperus – Heidi Thomson	Katherine Mansfield and Eileen Duggan: two poems – Peter Whiteford
11.00am	The 'Other Stories' in Katherine Mansfield's <i>The Garden Party and Other Stories</i> – Martin Griffiths	The Many Faces of Katherine Mansfield: 21 st Century Representations of Mansfield in the Arts – Cherie Jacobson
11.30am	5-minute break	
11.35am	An Ecofeminist Study of Katherine Mansfield and Xiao Hong - Jia (Joan) Qiong	'Being Katherine': Seeing the World through Katherine Mansfield's Eyes – Sherry Grant

12.00pm	“A fleeting, fragmentary vision”: Mansfield’s experience of train travel and its effect on her writing – Nicola Saker	Mansfield and dance – Jennifer Shennan
12.35pm	Lunch – Mezzanine Floor	
Venue	RHMZ03	RHMZ02
Chair	Cherie Jacobson	Peter Whiteford
1.30pm	‘Ole Underwood’ in the classroom – Amy Watling	Spirit Seekers: alternative religions and a changing Christian faith – Georgina White
2.00pm	Confronting Ambiguity: Reading ‘The Fly’ in a Middle-School Classroom – Sraddha Venkataraman	“Don’t send the book”: Katherine Mansfield on not reading’ – Jane Stafford
2.30pm	5-minute break to come together in RHMZ03 for next session	
2.35pm	Encountering Mansfield: A panel discussion with 2023 Te Herenga Waka VUW Honours students	
3.05 pm	Afternoon tea and walking time	
Venue	Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa National Library of New Zealand, 70 Molesworth Street.	
Chair	Jane Stafford	
3.40pm	Stories from the Alexander Turnbull Library’s Mansfield collection – Paul Diamond, Jess Moran, Fiona Oliver. Includes an opportunity to view a selection of curios, manuscript and published items from the collection.	
4.20pm	Return to Rutherford House	
	RHMZ03	
Chair	Peter Whiteford	
4.30pm	Katherine Mansfield and Being Elsewhere – Anna Jackson	
5.00pm	Closing remarks	
5.05pm – 6.00pm	Drinks function – Mezzanine Floor	

- Attendees may like to book for dinner at The Thistle Hotel (3 Mulgrave Street, Thorndon), the setting of the story ‘Leves Amores’.
See <https://www.thistleinn.co.nz/>
- 7.30pm. There will be a Katherine Mansfield Centenary Concert at the Queen Margaret College Auditorium (53 Hobson Street, Thorndon) at 7.30pm. The concert will feature poetry by Katherine Mansfield, music by Arnold Trowell, Frédéric Chopin, Edwin Carr, Michael Bell and Janet Jennings, performed by Meghan Carppe (soprano), Martin Griffiths (cello) and Sherry Grant (piano). Conference attendees are eligible for the concession ticket price of \$20. Tickets sold [online](#) or at the door.

Key Note Speaker



Redmer Yska

Camping Ground Confidential: Notes of a Romantic Biographer

How does a city make a writer? And why does that same writer, living abroad, barely stop running? What does a biographical search party for Katherine Mansfield look like? Redmer Yska reflects on a decade of researching and writing about this colonial millionaire's daughter, born in Haukawa (Thorndon) in 1888, died in Avon, France, a century ago this year. He produced two biographies: *Katherine Mansfield's Wellington, 1888-1903* (2017), and *Katherine Mansfield's Europe: Station to Station* (2023).

Redmer Yska is a Wellington writer and public historian. In the 1990s, he produced two books about NZ post-war youth culture: *NZ Green, the Story of Marijuana in New Zealand* and *All Shook Up, the Flash Bodge and the Rise of the NZ Teenager in the 1950s*. In 2001, Yska explored his identity as a Dutch New Zealander with *An Errand Of Mercy, Captain Jacob Eckhoff and the Loss of the Kakanui*. In 2004, Yska was commissioned to write a history of Wellington City: *Wellington: Biography of a City*. In 2008, he was awarded the National Library Research Fellowship to write a history of *Truth*. *NZ Books* reviewer Spiro Zavos called the resulting work, *NZ Truth: the Rise and Fall of the Peoples' Paper*, 'the best book about journalists and journalism in New Zealand I have read'.

Yska was the major recipient of a NZ History Trust Fund Award in 2014, allowing him to write *A Strange Beautiful Excitement: Katherine Mansfield's Wellington 1888-1903*. The book was longlisted for the Ockham NZ Book Awards. In 2019, a generous Creative NZ Arts Grant allowed him to research and write *Katherine Mansfield's Europe: Station to Station*.

Presenters Abstracts

Amy Watling

'Ole Underwood' in the classroom

One of Katherine Mansfield's earlier short stories, 'Ole Underwood', was published in 1913 in the periodical *Rhythm* and follows the main character through the early 20th century inner-city Wellington of Mansfield's memory. I will demonstrate how a deep examination of the context, content, and themes of this story can help unpack and illuminate the incoming Aotearoa Histories Curriculum areas of focus for Year 7-10 students. This rich story also introduces questions that can lead to disciplines such as information literacy, gender history, historical perspectives on justice and law, temperance, power imbalances, local history, and the analysis of creative writing. When was the Mt Cook Prison built and used? Who decided who went to prison and for how long? How was gender non-conformism perceived and reported on?

In late 2022, I partnered with Wellington High School and the Services to Schools team at the National Library to trial some session for Year 9 students to introduce key concepts embodied in 'Ole Underwood' which was set in the neighbourhood just below their school. To conclude my paper, I will share the positive and negative outcomes of this practical experiment.

Amy Watling [MLIS RLIANZA] is the Online Research Services Leader at the Alexander Turnbull Library. The Alexander Turnbull Library holds significant collections relating to Katherine Mansfield, the study of her work and her contemporaneous context. For many years Amy has enjoyed designing and delivering research visits to the Library for varied educational and community groups. During these visits we teach research skills and frameworks, walk people through how to use our services, and encourage them to use the collections to create new knowledge (or simply pass their assessments). Amy is currently investigating delivering engaging experiences for younger school students who are not entering into an individual research model yet.

Anna Jackson

Katherine Mansfield and Being Elsewhere

"I'll tell you what this life is like more than anything," Katherine Mansfield wrote to John Middleton Murry from Fontainebleau in October 1922, "It is like Gulliver's Travellers [sic]. One has, all the time, the feeling of having been in a wreck & by the mercy of Providence got ashore...somewhere. Simply everything is different." And then – like Robinson Crusoe – she describes, in detail, the daily routine in all its minute details including the breakfasting on coffee, butter, bread, gorgonzola cheese and quince jam and eggs.

Katherine Mansfield was like one of Gulliver's travellers all her life, always living elsewhere, more and more so in the later years as she tried to outrun the tuberculosis she was so close to dying from in October 1922. In this paper I want to look at the differences she encounters, the strangeness and dreamlike qualities travelling gives to a life, and also the ways of making a home in a new life, from eating quince jam to writing letters, inspecting sheep and ordering shoes from London. I am interested in the way strangeness and routine, satire and realism, wreckage and providence structure her short stories and other writing.

Anna Jackson, Associate Professor in English at Te Herenga Waka/Victoria University of Wellington, is a poet and fiction writer as well as an academic who has written chapters and articles about Katherine Mansfield's journals and letters, as well as contemporary verse and visual biographies of her life by Nina Mingya Powles, Helen Rickerby and Sarah Laing.

Cherie Jacobson

The Many Faces of Katherine Mansfield: 21st Century representations of Mansfield in the Arts

In Nina Mingya Powles' 2016 poem 'If Katherine Mansfield were my best friend', Powles brings Mansfield into the present day, reflecting, "She would teach me how to apply winged eyeliner / in a moving vehicle." This paper looks at how Mansfield has been represented in various artforms over the past ten years, using case studies to explore how writers, painters, performing artists and designers have engaged with Mansfield's life and work to present her to contemporary audiences.

Cherie Jacobson is the Director of Katherine Mansfield House & Garden. She has a BA Hons in English Literature and a Master of Museum & Heritage Practice from Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. Cherie has a background in the arts as a theatre maker, producer and venue manager, and has worked as a researcher, writer and curator in the heritage sector for organisations such as Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Bay Heritage Consultants. She has recently contributed chapters to *Making Space: A history of New Zealand women in architecture* (2022) and articles to *Heritage* magazine.

Georgina White

Spirit Seekers: alternative religions and a changing Christian faith

The room was filled with a presence, and I knew I was not alone – that I never could be alone any more, that the universe beyond held no menace, for I was part of it.

(John Middleton Murry, *To the Unknown God: Essays Towards a Religion*, 1924)

In 1923, soon after Katherine Mansfield's death, her bereaved husband John Middleton Murry had a spiritual epiphany. For the first time in his life Middleton Murry experienced mysticism: he felt his own spirit was one with the universe. As scholar Alex Owen records, he then 'spent the next three decades trying to express his convictions'. Owen takes this life-changing event as the stimulus for an investigation into mysticism in post-war Britain. In her article "The 'Religious Sense' in a Post-War Secular Age" (2006), Owen finds that while the First World War 'hastened the decline of organised Christianity [...] different manifestations of spirituality were everywhere evident'. In her view 'this unconventional religiosity harked back to the pre-war period and bore little relation to anything the churches had to offer'. This may well be the case in Britain but in New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries so-called 'alternative religions' – Theosophy, spiritualism, mysticism, and the occult – were often explored in relation to a changing Christian faith. Spiritualist 'evidence', mystical experiences and the extraordinary powers of Madame Blavatsky's 'Mahatmas' could be seen to support newfound Christian belief in the immanence of divine spirit. With examples from my case study Hawke's Bay, I depict what historian David Nash has termed a very 'fluid religious landscape' – a place where men and women, Māori and Pakeha, simultaneously researched multiple currents of religious thought, to figure out for themselves how to reconcile science and Christianity, to counter the 'materialism' of their age, and to test and affirm their faith in spirit.

Georgina White is in the final year of her PhD in history. Her doctoral thesis takes a deep dive into Havelock North's occult temple Whare Ra and the creative, spiritual life of Hawke's Bay from the 1880s to the 1920s. Her revised thesis will be published by Massey University Press in 2024. This project builds on the exhibition Georgina curated in 2015 for MTG Hawke's Bay: 'Dr Felkin and the forerunners: visions of utopia', which won the Museums Aotearoa Award for Best Exhibition Under \$20,000. A grant in 2016 from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage enabled Georgina to travel to the UK and Australia to research public and private collections there. Before embarking on doctoral research, Georgina has worked as a curator in history at Auckland War Memorial Museum, MTG Hawke's Bay, and the National Library.

Heidi Thomson

Katherine Mansfield's Affinities with Louis Couperus

Katherine Mansfield and the Dutch novelist Louis Couperus both died in 1923, and in this paper I focus on some affinities between Mansfield's and Couperus' writing. Mansfield reviewed a number of Couperus' novels in 1919 and 1920 for *The Athenaeum*. Couperus' novels had been sensitively translated into English by Couperus' former schoolfriend, Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, who also organized Couperus' 1921 trip to England where he was celebrated for his work. Couperus' work was arguably more appreciated in England than in his native Holland at the time. His rejection of an explicit moral agenda and his narrative technique broke taboos which Calvinist Holland may not have been ready for. Both writers shared a colonial legacy which surfaced in their work, and both wrote about the sense of fatal destruction underlying seemingly civilized family dynamics. In particular, I will discuss Mansfield's reviews of *Old People and the Things that Pass* (*Athenaeum*, 12 December 1919) and of *The Books of the Small Souls* (*Athenaeum*, 18 June 1920). These reviews suggest that Mansfield also read the first volumes of Couperus' *Small Souls* books. My aim is to highlight Mansfield's astute critical understanding of Couperus' unflinching creative vision and the possible influence of his work on Mansfield's final stories.

Dr Heidi Thomson is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at Te Herenga Waka. She has published extensively on British Romanticism. She is a native speaker of Dutch and has read widely in Dutch literature, including the novels of Louis Couperus. For a record of publications, see: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9698-9313>

Jane Stafford

"Don't send the book': Katherine Mansfield on not reading"

I don't want any more books at present of any kind' Katherine Mansfield wrote to John Middleton Murry on 16 October 1922. 'I am sick and tired of books and that's a dreadful fact. They are to me like sandwiches out of the [Mad] Hatter's bag'. 'Don't send the book' she instructed her companion Ida Baker a week later. 'Why should you? I don't want any books at present.'

Mansfield moved, at first temporarily, into Le Prieuré, George Gurdjieff's spiritual community in Fontainebleau-Avon, on 19 October. She had, she wrote to her friend to S.S. Koteliansky, undergone 'a kind of private revolution'. It had been 'in the air for years with me'. To Murry she asked, 'Do you like that old mechanical life at the mercy of everything? And just living in one little tiny corner of yourself?' 'I want to learn something that no books can teach me,' she wrote, 'and I want to escape from my terrible illness'.

It is clear in the final months of her life Mansfield saw herself as 'en voyage', pursuing 'my new truth'. But why was this new phase of her life vehemently bookless, and did she conceive of it in some way as necessitating a rejection of literature? A reader as well as a writer from her earliest years, a professional and frequently acerbic reviewer in literary journals, a notable figure in the cut and thrust of London literary life – all these personae seem in contradiction to the final role she constructed for herself.

Jane is a Professor in English Literature. Her chief area of research is colonial literature, the networks, influences, and adjustments of the global literary world during the long nineteenth century, from the Romantics to the modernists. She has recently completed a study of the ways in which Robinson Crusoe was read in colonial New Zealand. At present she is working on an aspect of Katherine Mansfield's 1907 Urewera Notebook as well as developing a project on a group of English women poets writing in and about India at the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Jennifer Shennan Mansfield and Dance

Aspects of dance imagery referenced within Katherine Mansfield's stories -- *Bliss* (1918) and *Her First Ball* (1921) -- will be discussed, and contrasts drawn with writings about dance in several issues of the journal, *Rhythm* (1911-1913), of which she was assistant editor and later co-editor. An unexpected Wellington link will be made to the central role that dance was accorded at the Gurdjieff Institute where Mansfield spent her last days. Reference will be made to Ira Nadel's book, *Katherine Mansfield and Russia*, [CUP 2017/18] as well as to Rachel McAlpine's play, *The Dazzling Night*, a Noh play [1998].

Principal focus will be on the ballet, *Bliss*, choreographed by Patricia Rianne for Royal New Zealand Ballet [1986], to music composed by Richard Sisson, with design by Janet Williamson. Video excerpts of the ballet will be included in the presentation.

Jennifer Shennan is a Wellington-based independent dance history scholar and writer. Following her MA in Anthropology at University of Auckland, she has authored books on dance traditions of Maori, Tokelau and Banaban people, and is active in teaching and performing dances of the European Renaissance & Baroque repertoires. Her performance and book reviews appear on the website of Dr. Michelle Potter, *On Dancing*. Jennifer is interested in all aspects of dance that have links to New Zealand history, society, art and literature.

Jia Oiong An Ecofeminist Study of Katherine Mansfield and Xiao Hong

Katherine Mansfield was introduced to China by Chinese poet Xu Zhimo (1897-1931). While studying at Cambridge University, Xu visited Mansfield in London six months before her death. In 1923, Xu composed a melancholy eulogy to mourn Mansfield and translated eight of her short stories into Chinese, leading to a wave of popularity in reading Mansfield among the Chinese readers. Nearly a century later, while reading Mansfield, I experienced a similar aesthetic pleasure as reading works of Chinese writer Xiao Hong (1911-1942). Living roughly in the same era of the modernist movement, these two women writers bear striking similarities in life experiences and creative talents.

This comparative study of Mansfield and Hong adopts an ecofeminist lens to analyze the oppression of anthropocentrism and patriarchal ideology on animals and women in the Burnell sequence and Hong's novel *Tales of Hulan River* (1940). It also explores the intricate human-nonhuman interactions in both authors through an ecofeminist reinterpretation. By connecting human and nature in corporal forms, new materialism aims to negate the supremacy of the anthropocentric mindset, hence urging men to confront the social and environmental crises wreaked by their hubris. In this age of anthropogenic environmental crisis and human/species oppression under the patriarchal system, it is of great significance to reconsider the human-nature interdependence. Though Mansfield and Hong lived in an age when ecofeminism was unheard of, their works convey a fundamental ecofeminist consciousness. They both tell stories about oppression and foretell a future of interconnections across species and gender, which is beyond their time and transcends differences of country and culture. Coinciding as it does with the 80th anniversary of Hong's death in 2022 and that of Mansfield's 100th anniversary in 2023, this research serves as a commemoration of these two women writers as well as an effort for cultural exchange.

Jia is a Chinese university lecturer teaching English fiction and Aesthetics and currently, a PhD candidate in Creative Writing at Massey University. Her PhD thesis combines a critical component of an ecofeminist study of Katherine Mansfield and Chinese writer Xiao Hong as well as a creative component of a collection of short fiction. Her life is connected with both authors via place. Like Xiao Hong, Jia grew up in north eastern China, and lived temporarily in Japan. She earned an MA in Philosophy of Art and Literature in the UK at University of York, and at present is studying for my doctorate in New Zealand. This combination of local inheritance with foreign natural and cultural

stimuli makes her the person she is today and she intends to engage in a mental conversation with Mansfield and Hong to create a collection of short fiction on female bildungsroman in local and trans-spatial environments.

Martin Griffiths

The 'Other Stories' in Katherine Mansfield's *The Garden Party and Other Stories*

Katherine Mansfield's so called "New Zealand Stories" from her last book *The Garden Party and Other Stories* have received a lot of attention lately, particularly in the context of the recent (2022) one hundredth anniversary of the latter book. They are rightly considered some of the finest works by the New Zealand-born author. However, stories from the same collection, such as "Life of Ma Parker", "Miss Brill", and "Daughters of the Late Colonel", which contain elements of a specifically New Zealand colonialist psyche (in so far as they represent the outsider or oppressed), are worthy of further attention from the New Zealand perspective. Elements of these stories are borrowed from other authors, ones that Mansfield was aware of and influenced by when she was either still in New Zealand or recently living in Wellington. The practices of parody and pastiche, to which Mansfield was exposed through her friendship with Wellington teacher Millie Parker and London writer Beatrice Hastings, extended to a method of improvisation such that elements of the original 'tune' are hard to identify. In this way "Life of Ma Parker" incorporates appropriated elements of the works of Charles Dickens – whose works were theatricalized by Mansfield when she was still at school in Wellington – in an innovative but covert manner. By contrast, structural features of the New Zealand stories, such as "At the Bay", have their genesis in a European aesthetic, one that, while uniquely Mansfield's own, is a distillation of her experience as a cosmopolitan writer, and music-lover, living in Europe.

Martin Griffiths is a Hamilton-based cello teacher and examiner for the New Zealand Music Education Board and principal cellist of Opus Orchestra (NZ), as well as guest member of *NZ Barok* and founding member of *Vox Baroque Ensemble*. His presentations of "Katherine Mansfield, Cellist" include the 2019 Katherine Mansfield conference in Krakow, Poland and the "Mansfield & Music" exhibition at the Katherine Mansfield House and Garden, Wellington, 2022. Martin has written articles for *Katherine Mansfield Studies* (Vols 12, 13, 14 & 15), *Turnbull Library Record* (2022), and *Tinakori* (2019).

Nicola Saker

"A fleeting, fragmentary vision"

Train travel was, to the 19th and early 20th century, a technological disruption to the norm that has its equivalent in the digital revolution of the 21st century. Katherine Mansfield, who embraced new technology and absorbed it into her life and writing practice, was a frequent traveller of trains. There was a stage in her life when she had 26 addresses in two years which can fairly be regarded as living in a state of almost perpetual motion. Readers of her short fiction and biographies about her recognise this quality and that it was, in part, underpinned by the extraordinary amount of time she spent on trains. This most peripatetic of writers found in train travel solace, inspiration, motivation, adventure, a literary stylistic technique and material for her short fictions, several of which wove train journeys into their context: "Journey to Bruges" (1911) "Something Childish but very Natural" (1914) "The Little Governess" (1915) "An Indiscreet Journey" (1915) "Je ne parle pas français" (1918) "The Escape" (1920) and "Marriage à la Mode" (1921). She used train travel as a thematic device and adopted its rhythms and visual qualities into her literary technique.

This paper demonstrates the powerful connection between Mansfield's experience of train travel and its effect on her writing not in one story or one writerly technique but in many: as a setting; a plot device; a technique using the visual equivalent of a stream of consciousness and a way of injecting urgency and rhythm into her story by context and sound. An anxiety exists at the centre of the travel experience: timetables, connections, misinformation to name some of its manifestations. For Mansfield, hovering above this is its enduring ability to charm her with the potent promise of escape and renewal.

Nicola Saker is the editor of the “The Katherine Mansfield Cookbook” and “Woman in Love: Katherine Mansfield’s Love Letters”. She is also the author of many articles about Mansfield, including “The Other Lives of Katherine Mansfield” (North & South magazine, January 2023). Nicola has delivered papers at KMS conferences in 2012 (“Behind the Mask – the story of an exhibition”), 2013 (“Bookends: the beginning and end of KM’s life”) and 2015 (“A performer in the pure air of Bloomsbury”). She is the President of the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Society.

Peter Whiteford

Katherine Mansfield and Eileen Duggan: two poems

At first glance, there might seem to be few connections between Katherine Mansfield and her younger contemporary, Eileen Duggan, despite occasional critical efforts to link them within a tradition of women’s writing in New Zealand. The differences between the two women, in their lives and in their writing, are striking. In spite of those marked differences (and there must have been much in Mansfield’s life that conflicted severely with Eileen Duggan’s values), Duggan wrote about Mansfield on a number of occasions and with considerable sympathy. One interesting connection between the two can be found in their youthful responses to two remote and controversial Polish figures – the writer Stanislaw Wyspianski and the Marxist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg. In this paper, I will consider Mansfield’s “To Stanislaw Wyspianski” and Duggan’s “Rosa Luxemburg”, noting the very different circumstances of their composition, and suggesting what might have appealed to each of the poets in the subjects they chose to write about. Given the focus of the conference, I will deal primarily with Mansfield’s poem.

Sherry Grant

‘Being Katherine — Seeing the World through Katherine Mansfield’s Eyes’

In this presentation, Auckland based concert pianist, cellist and poet Sherry Grant will analyse some of Katherine Mansfield’s most renowned poems and share her own experience writing poetry inspired by Mansfield’s poetry, short stories and letters. Sherry will also discuss the musicality in Mansfield’s poetry and examine it from a haiku poet’s point of view. A professionally trained cellist, Sherry identifies with Mansfield’s dreams and struggles in life. With this in mind, multimedia concert series ‘Catch 23’ where Sherry performs 23 solo piano pieces by 23 NZ composers matched by 23 NZ artworks in at least 4 countries and her poetry book ‘Being Katherine’ have been created to celebrate Katherine Mansfield’s centenary in 2023. www.artsinfinitypress.com/catch23. As author of ‘Being Katherine’ and artistic director of the upcoming International KM100NZ Festival in November 2023, Sherry will discuss the key components of the festival, and how she plans to integrate the various art forms, as well as how the event will be promoted internationally. www.artsinfinitypress.com/beingkatherine

Sherry Grant is a Taiwan-born New Zealand concert pianist, cellist, award-winning poet, author, journal editor and festival organiser. She performs as solo concert pianist and with Taïoro in North America (2022), Thailand (2023) and within NZ. Sherry is artistic director for International KM100NZ Festival (November 2023) to celebrate Katherine Mansfield’s centenary. This is the 4th international festival she’s organised since 2019. www.artsinfinitypress.com/km100nz.

Author of ‘Bat Girl’ and ‘Being Katherine’, Sherry edits ‘Haiku Zoo Journal’, ‘Raining Rengay’ and ‘Nonaku Poetry’, hosts international poetry workshops and performs monthly concerts online with her 9-year-old daughter Zoe Grant. This mother-daughter duo plans to inspire a billion people around the world with their music and poetry. www.linktr.ee/sherrygrant

Sraddha Venkataraman

Confronting Ambiguity: Reading “The Fly” in a Middle-School Classroom

How do we introduce a tolerance for ambiguity in literature to thirteen-year-olds? This paper reflects on the experience of teaching Katherine Mansfield’s “The Fly” to grade 8 students from an international school in Bangalore, India. Most short stories chosen for middle-school curriculum

serve to consolidate understandings of literary devices and techniques. This paper shows how “The Fly” goes further - operating as an ideal text to prepare students for encountering multiplicity in literary interpretation in their academic career. The paper presents a brief history of the texts the class had studied prior to “The Fly”, as well as a summary of the different literacies of the class. Discussion moves then to the methodology followed in leading the class through the complex, multivalent symbolism within the short story, and the challenges the text posed to standard teaching methods employed at this school level. The paper closes with a consideration of the educational benefits of familiarizing middle-school students with ambiguity in literature.

Sraddha Venkataraman is a PhD candidate at the Victoria University of Wellington, writing on expressive silences in the poetry of Keats and Clare. She holds a BA(Hons.) and MA from Durham University. Prior to her doctoral studies, she taught middle and high school English literature and language in Bangalore, India.



**Victoria University of Wellington English Literatures and Creative
Communication Programme**



**International
Institute of
Modern Letters**

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o Te Ao



**Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington**