

hesitate! Risk! Risk anything! Care no more for the opinion of others, for those voices. Do the hardest thing on earth for you. Act for yourself. Face the truth'.<sup>46</sup>

In *The Book of Tea*, Okakura describes how:

[t]he organisation of the Zen monastery was very significant [...] the most respected and advanced monks were given the more irksome and menial tasks. Such services formed a part of the Zen discipline and every least action must be done absolutely perfectly. Thus many a weighty discussion ensued while weeding the garden, paring a turnip, or serving tea. The whole ideal of Teatism is a result of this Zen conception of greatness in the smallest incidents of life.<sup>47</sup>

At Gurdjieff's Institute, this was exactly the regime on offer. Orage, for example, could be found digging a vegetable patch in frozen ground, and Mansfield wrote to Murry, not long after arriving, on 23 October 1922, 'At present the entire Institute is devoted to manual work, getting this place in order, out and inside. Its [*sic*] not of course work for the sake of work. Every single thing one does has a purpose, is part of a system'.<sup>48</sup>

Many Mansfield scholars have speculated as to the reasons why Gurdjieff allowed Mansfield to join his Institute when it was obvious she was dying. In the end, it was probably an act of charity for which he received little recognition. There is no other reason to account for his choice in allowing someone with only weeks to live to enter the Prieuré, knowing that the death of a famous English writer at his Institute, so soon after its opening, would certainly not aid his cause in any way – indeed would lay himself and his institution open to denigration. As Ouspensky said, many years later, 'G. was very kind to her, he did not insist upon her going although it was clear that she could not live. For this in the course of time he received the due amount of lies and slanders'.<sup>49</sup> Two of his followers were medically qualified doctors so there could be no doubt as to the true state of Mansfield's health. Claire Tomalin also agrees: 'All the evidence suggests that he was behaving kindly towards a woman who was clearly dying; there was little question of any cure being offered'.<sup>50</sup>

Mansfield's initial impressions of Gurdjieff were mixed: 'Mr Gurdjieff is not in the least like what I expected. Hes [*sic*] what one wants to find him, really. But I do feel *absolutely confident* he can put me on the right track in every way'.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, by November 12, she was writing:

Here, I confess, after only five weeks, there are things I long to write! Oh, how I long to! But I shall not for a long time. Nothing is ready. I must wait until la maison est pleine. I must say the dancing here has given me quite a different approach to writing. I mean some of the very ancient oriental