

dances. There is one which takes about 7 minutes and it contains the whole life of woman – but everything! Nothing is left out. It taught me, it gave me more of woman's life than any book or poem. There was even room for Flaubert's *Cœur Simple* in it.<sup>52</sup>

Ouspensky, another resident at the Prieuré, was touched 'by the striving in her to make the best use of even of these last days, to find the truth whose presence she clearly felt but which she was unable to touch'.<sup>53</sup> Olga Hinzenberg was one of the principals in Gurdjieff's 'sacred dances', and one of those chosen by him to give Mansfield support. She wrote of Mansfield's arrival in 1922:

She stood in the doorway of our main dining-room and looked at all and at each with sharp, intense dark eyes. They burned with the desire and hunger for impressions. She wanted to sit down and eat with all the students, but someone called her to a different dining-room. [...] I told Gurdjieff what a lovely face she had and how much I liked her.<sup>54</sup>

At Mansfield's invitation, Murry came out to Fontainebleau to see her on 9 January 1923. That same evening, she suffered a massive haemorrhage and died. She is buried in the communal cemetery at Avon, near Fontainebleau, a few feet away from Gurdjieff himself, and, in a strange twist of fate, next to the railway line carrying trains from Paris to the Mediterranean; how many times, unwittingly, must Mansfield have sped past the spot where she would ultimately be buried.

After her death, many people who had known her were swift to condemn the Institute and its adherents, some even whilst she was actually there. For example, Vivian Eliot wrote to Ezra Pound in Paris, in reply to his request to know the whereabouts of Lady Rothermere, 'She is now in that asylum for the insane known as La [*sic*] Prieuré where she does religious dances naked with Katherine Mansfield'.<sup>55</sup> D. H. Lawrence's judgement on the affair sums up the general view of the literary establishment at that time: 'I have heard enough about that place at Fontainebleau where Katherine Mansfield died, to know it is a rotten, false, self-conscious place of people playing a sickly stunt'.<sup>56</sup> Her early biographers and critics were mystified by her decision; Ian Gordon, for example, claims that '[t]he final scenes of faith-healing under the guidance of a crazy Russian [...] can hardly be the basis of a fair judgement either of her real quality or of her view of life'.<sup>57</sup>

In 1924, Orage himself wrote an article in which he tried to explain Mansfield's adherence to Gurdjieff's teaching at this time:

Some months before she went into the institute at Fontainebleau she told me that she could not read any of the stories she had written without feeling self-contempt. 'There is not one', she said 'that I dare show to God.' It therefore