

Poles Apart? Eileen Duggan and Katherine Mansfield

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Abstract

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, 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 article, I 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.

Someone said to me not long since, 'But do you really like Katherine Mansfield?' As if encouraging me to give a truthful answer no matter what London and its gods had said. And the question came almost as a shock for I had taken my Mansfield so much for granted that it had not occurred to me that such loyalty might be considered an exotic rather than a home growth. And since then I have heard literary New Zealanders, men and women whose taste in literature is usually excellent saying in their own way, 'But do you really like Katherine Mansfield?'¹

These are the opening words of an essay on Katherine Mansfield published in the *NZ Artists' Annual* of 1931. The focus of the article is partly on Mansfield's prose, but it has more to do with her life and character as they emerge from her Journals and Letters;² indeed, although the article is not formally a review, it might well have been written to serve that purpose. The article itself makes interesting reading (in an otherwise dreary and sometimes offensive publication) and provides a sympathetic response to Mansfield and her work, but it is little noted in Mansfield criticism.³ Despite it having been overlooked, however, there are a number of aspects of the article that make it of interest and deserving of greater attention.

We may note, for a start, the date of its publication—1931—and see it as part of the limited early reception of Mansfield, and more particularly, part of the early response to that version of Mansfield—"sealed in porcelain", as Antony Alpers expresses it in his biography—that had been presented to the world by John Middleton Murry.⁴ But while the article clearly speaks of a longstanding positive response to Mansfield—indeed, it takes such a response for granted—it equally records, with some surprise, an undercurrent among New Zealand readers that is at best ambivalent about Mansfield's achievement, and that is troubled about whether or not she can be admitted as a New Zealand writer. It alerts us, in passing, to the continued and growing anxiety in the 1930s and later about questions of a national literature and the nature of a local voice.

However, for the purposes of this article what interests me in particular is the identity of the author—Eileen Duggan. Duggan was born half a dozen years after Mansfield and outlived her by almost fifty years, and although for a short time she enjoyed a considerable reputation as a

poet, nationally and internationally (indeed, in some quarters the names of Mansfield and Duggan were treated as of comparable status), that reputation declined very considerably from the late 1930s and she is now scarcely read at all: a marginal (indeed, at one point actively marginalised) figure in the history of New Zealand poetry.⁵

Duggan's warmly appreciative response to Mansfield is not confined to this article; several other items were published in New Zealand and abroad, and a number of additional unpublished pieces are extant in her papers.⁶ They cannot be said to constitute a serious body of critical writing, being much more occasional in nature than that would suggest, but they are consistent in their positive estimation of Mansfield's art and contain some perceptive observations. Duggan earned a modest living through a mix of journalism and belle-lettrist essays and reviews, but in 1930s New Zealand there was little other critical writing being practised. Nevertheless, taken as a whole they provide a fascinating glimpse of the response of one New Zealand woman writer to another. Despite that shared position as women writers within the New Zealand tradition, the differences between the two are striking.

Eileen Duggan was born into an Irish Catholic family in the small and struggling farming community of Tuamarina, midway between Picton and Blenheim. The schooling she received there would hardly have compared with that of Katherine Mansfield, but it was good enough to take her on a national scholarship to Victoria University College, Wellington, from which she graduated with a Master's degree in History, and a significant reputation as a fine classical scholar. Whereas Mansfield found Wellington narrow and confining, and could not wait to escape it and return to London, Duggan spent most of her adult life in the city she grew to love (one poem acknowledges "all my heart is in this windy city" *Selected Poems* p. 62), living a modest and private life. Mansfield travelled widely (if not always happily) in Europe, but Duggan never left New Zealand, having turned down the offer of a trip "home" to Ireland because she felt committed to this country.⁷

Nor are the differences confined to such circumstances: Duggan remained unmarried throughout her life, a devout Catholic who wrote (among other things) a weekly column for a local Catholic paper for almost fifty years, together with numerous historical essays and pamphlets—features that are at a considerable remove from the world Katherine Mansfield inhabited, and from what might in modern jargon be called her "lifestyle choice" (reviewing a Mansfield biography in *The Guardian* (online), Hermione Lee noted "the nomadic life, the complicated relationships with other women ... the edgy intimacies with writers such as Virginia Woolf and DH Lawrence and the confused, reckless sexual experiments and mistakes").⁸ One cannot imagine that Duggan would have approved of some elements of Mansfield's life, although neither would she have taken a prurient interest in that lifestyle. Reflecting on Murry's *Between Two Worlds*, she wrote: "It is an idiosyncrasy of the moderns, as pathetic as it is embarrassing, to imagine that mankind is interested in their sex-experiences and Murry associated so long with Lawrence that he failed to see how naïve was the assumption".⁹ Murry and Lawrence in one fell swoop.

Equally, we could point to significant differences in their literary styles. Where Mansfield was experimental and became a prominent modernist writer, Duggan retained an allegiance to the Georgian lyric tradition within which her voice had first developed, preferring for the most part to write in traditional verse forms. She certainly kept abreast of modernist directions in poetry, but found it formless and obscure, and was dismissive of the technical laziness of what she called "the free-verse phalanx" (p. 23).

It is clear, nevertheless, from Duggan's essays, published and unpublished, that she held Katherine Mansfield in the highest regard, describing her in one as "our greatest writer" (p. 121) and in another affirming that her "crystal prose ... is world famous" (p. 125). She acknowledges that Mansfield had advantages and opportunities not available to all, but insists that her reputation is made by her genius, not by those opportunities. Moreover, the regard she has for the quality of the prose is matched by an emotional appeal born of the tragedy of Mansfield's life: "I cannot pass a certain house in Tinakori Road without a stir of pain for the girl who they say lived there as Cassie Beauchamp. It is a far cry from Tinakori to Fontainebleau where from the nettle, danger, she plucked the flower, safety" (pp. 128–29).

What becomes equally clear is that one of the qualities Eileen Duggan admires in Mansfield is that of dedication—the word she signals in the title of another essay as "the Artist's Discipline".¹⁰ That essay begins with a set of reflections on the poetry of W. B. Yeats—reflections rather than analysis—in which Duggan describes him as "the impenitent romantic" and suggests that when "in deference to the times, the metaphysician ousted the lyrist in Yeats, it deepened rather than destroyed that sense of dedication which exalted him" (p. 116). That sense of dedication (for which discipline seems to be an alternative term) runs through the remainder of the essay, as something to be admired in Yeats and equally in Constance Markievicz, whose letters are also discussed in the essay. "Art", Duggan wrote elsewhere in an essay on New Zealand poetry, is not "dependent on national symbol. It is dependent only on a mysterious thing that some folk call conviction, others passion, others ecstasy" (p. 121). But there is no vague belief on her part that passion or ecstasy alone will create a writer. As the article on Yeats makes clear, there is an equal requirement for a lifelong commitment, at whatever cost: "No poem of his is trite or flaccid, though the effort dried the sap out of his veins" (p. 118). Passion might be essential, but so too is the imperative to write honestly and with integrity and discipline.

Duggan applies the same criteria in her estimation of Mansfield. Comparing her in a newspaper article with Charlotte Brontë, Duggan suggests that though they are not alike in style, they are in "grit and observation. Both set their teeth and determined to be writers. ... To both, work was a passion".¹¹ It is not the momentary inspiration, or not that alone, that makes the writer, but the long, relentless and isolated hours of writing and reflecting, often in the midst of poverty and illness.

The same quality of dedication is exemplified in the life of another woman who obviously appealed to Duggan—Rosa Luxemburg,¹² who is the subject of a poem included in Duggan's first volume, the unpretentiously titled *Poems*.¹³ Here, too, Duggan's sympathetic response to Luxemburg might seem a surprise to those accustomed to think of her only as the author of conservative Georgian lyrics with a decidedly local focus or of religious verse. Rosa Luxemburg (sometimes known as "Red Rosa" or "Bloody Rosa") was a very prominent active participant in the Russian revolution, co-founder with Karl Liebknecht of both the German Communist Party and the Spartacus League (Spartakusbund). Imprisoned at different times in Russia and in Germany, the Polish-born revolutionary featured frequently in New Zealand newspapers between 1906 (when she was incarcerated in Russia) and her violent death in January 1919 at the hands of the Freikorps, controlled by Gustav Noske.¹⁴

Although the poem is included in Duggan's first volume, it had been published almost eighteen months earlier, in a short-lived monthly newspaper, *The Democrat*. Indeed, it seems to have been written explicitly for the first number of that journal—it appears prominently on the second page, over the initials "E. D.", with the inscription "For The Democrat"—but it is not

possible to know whether the initiative to write on this subject was Duggan's or whether she was responding to a specific request. That she had completed the poem so soon after Rosa Luxemburg's death, however, is worth noting: Luxemburg died in mid-January, and the journal in which the poem was published appeared on the 1st of August.¹⁵

Few details are available about *The Democrat*. The front page contains the information that it was issued by the Democrat Printing & Publishing Co, McBride Street, Dunedin, but neither the paper's proprietor nor editor are identified. The paper's determined and unambiguous support for the Labour movement and for the Labour party are clear from an unsigned column on page two which serves to declare its political position: "The Democrat comes into existence at the most critical period that has faced Labour in this country for a generation." The author is clear that the paper's goal is to assist in the election of a Labour Government (a general election was due in December of that year) that would defeat the "two gangs of Tories", and equally clear that the paper "has not been started to create a new schism in Labour". The call to arms that is sounded here, and the articulation of the key issues faced by "workers" sits directly opposite Duggan's poem, giving greater prominence to the poem's political dimension.

It is also difficult to ascertain how long *The Democrat* survived, as few copies now remain. Eight are held in the Hocken Library, covering the period from August 1919 to January 1921; three are catalogued in the Turnbull Library, the last of which was printed in August 1921.¹⁶ Subtitled "A Monthly Journal of Labour, Art, and Literature" (which had changed by August 1921 to "A Monthly Journal of Principles and Politics") and announcing on its first page that it "stands for government for the people by the people", the newspaper takes its place alongside a number of socialist publications of the period, with a focus on labour issues, workers' rights, national and international politics, freedom of the press, and issues pertaining to Irish nationalism.

It may well have been that last subject that encouraged Duggan to write for the paper, given the focus on Ireland that is found in *Poems* (although it is also worth noting her regular contribution to other journals and newspapers that addressed workers' rights from a standpoint informed by Catholic principles of social justice).¹⁷ In a Preface to *Poems*, James Kelly, the Editor of the *N. Z. Tablet*, commended the poems to "Irish readers" as "a pledge ... that our Greater Ireland beyond the seas has preserved the traditions of the old land and that young hearts beat here, as warmly as at home, for the cause that is dearer than life to all of us".¹⁸ As Frank McKay notes, the cause Kelly refers to "was that of Sinn Fein, which ... aimed at total separation of Ireland and England" (p. 7). McKay goes on to link the poem to the deteriorating relationship between Ireland and England seen especially in the notorious actions of the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries in 1920 and 1921, and suggesting that for Duggan Rosa Luxemburg "was made of the same stuff as the Irish heroes from Robert Emmett and Wolfe Tone to Padraic Pearse" (p. 8). It does indeed seem likely that Duggan's admiration for the "Marxist martyr" (p. 8) can be linked to those who fought for Irish independence, but the poem was written before the events McKay refers to. Eileen Duggan responded earlier and more readily to the self-sacrificing dedication of Rosa Luxemburg.

The poem explores a very simple contrast between the active political life that Rosa Luxemburg led and the more traditional, domestic life of a woman, particularly a young mother, imagined in an idealised setting:

For some the shuttle leaping in the sun,
Laburnum leaves above the quiet door,
And song that drips like water, cool and slow,

And when the hands are still and day is done,
The swaying crib upon the firelit floor,
Ah how could you those gentle things forego?

The admiration that Duggan feels for Rosa Luxemburg is seen most clearly in the following stanza, which apostrophises the revolutionary's "wild heart" and "wild voice" that feel for and speak on behalf of "those whose lips are dumb ... Whose feet ... must stumbling fall, / Whose hands must ... toil":

Wild heart that beat beneath its tattered shawl,
Wild voice that broke upon its ceaseless cry
For those whose lips are dumb beneath the sky,
Whose feet beneath the stars must stumbling fall,
Whose hands must turn in toil until they die!
Which is the nobler task? God knows, not I.

Duggan's own instinctive sympathy for the working poor and the voiceless, which can also be seen in other of her poems, no doubt prompts the respect and admiration she feels for Luxemburg. "Ad Sororem", from the same volume, is similarly responsive to the "love of halt and lame" shown by the latter poem's addressee. In "Rosa Luxembourg", it is the "wild heart" that is singled out and admired; in "Ad Sororem", it is the "grand soul", but in both it is the selflessness, the "pitiful clean heart" of the poem's subjects that compels Duggan's esteem. Moreover, in the case of Rosa Luxemburg, it is not just the dedication and passion of her beating heart, but the fatal self-sacrifice with which she acts that commands respect, seen in the "tattered shawl", the "voice that broke upon its ceaseless cry" and finally in the "broken bones".

In its final stanza, the poem returns to what Rosa Luxemburg has chosen to forego:

For you no threaded spool, no singing time,
No young bees flying through laburnum boughs,
No little rolling head upon the breast

and concludes with a prayer that is at the same time an affirmation that Luxemburg's political activism is divinely inspired:

May He who set the storm between your brows
Pity your broken bones and give them rest.

By a curious coincidence, Katherine Mansfield—whose dedication to art so inspired Eileen Duggan—was also drawn to the fate of a prominent Polish figure, the writer and artist Stanislaw Wyspianski (1869–1907), to whose work she had been introduced by Floryan Sobieniowski. Just as Duggan was with Rosa Luxemburg, Mansfield was sufficiently moved by what she knew of Wyspianski's work and his tragic fate to write about him in verse, although hers was not occasioned by the subject's immediate death, as Duggan's had been. Unlike Duggan's poem, which has occasioned almost no critical response, there has been considerable interest in Mansfield's, both in its own right and perhaps even more for the circumstances of its composition and publication.

"To Stanislaw Wyspianski"¹⁹ first appeared in English in a limited edition in 1938, but had been published some years earlier, in somewhat unusual circumstances in a Polish translation by Sobieniowski.²⁰ There is much that remains unclear about the relationship between Mansfield and Sobieniowski. Most critics have tended to agree with Mansfield's own comment

that he was “a rather dangerous fraud”,²¹ but a more sympathetic view has recently been advanced by Gerri Kimber, who acknowledges, nevertheless, that the absence of material evidence remains a challenge for biographers: “Supposition and guesswork must necessarily replace hard facts” (p. 59).²²

Whatever the strength of their relationship when they were together, she was certainly distressed by his re-appearance in her life in London and by his ongoing presence and intrusion into her life with Murry.²³ In 1920, she was willing to expend a considerable sum of money to redeem letters she had written to him, determined, as she expressed it to Murry, not to put up with “that Pole outside our door”.²⁴ His predatory behaviour towards her and Murry and their acrimonious relationship may well have contributed to the latter’s decision to omit the poem from the selection he published in 1923. However much she came to resent Sobieniowski (with what she believed to be some justification), it is to him that she owes her knowledge of Wyspianski’s work and he may well have encouraged her to write the poem. Vincent O’Sullivan notes that “he encouraged her to read Russian writers, especially Chekhov, and was indirectly responsible for her finest poem, ‘To Stanislaw Wyspiansky’”.²⁵

As histories of Polish art and literature affirm, Wyspianski was an important and influential figure—Milosz describes him as “the reformer of the Polish theater”—in what is known as the Young Poland movement.²⁶ That influence was achieved in a relatively short career: Wyspianski died at the age of thirty nine, his literary career lasting no more than ten years.²⁷ The public response to his early death—“he was mourned everywhere. His funeral turned into a demonstration of public sorrow” (Krzyzanowski, p. 23)—no doubt contributed in some way to the early acclamation of his work, and Sobieniowski’s championing should be seen in that context; but it remains true that Wyspianski is amongst the foremost of twentieth-century Polish playwrights: “the death of Wyspianski meant an irreparable loss for Polish art and culture” (*ibid.*).²⁸

Jeffrey Meyers has suggested that “the poem is more about Katherine Mansfield and New Zealand than about the Polish playwright, of whom we learn very little” (p. 339); Kubasiewicz, by contrast, considers that “Mansfield draws a powerful picture of the Polish artist in her poem” (p. 85), which perhaps moves too far in the opposite direction. While it is true that Mansfield does not include any biographical detail (which is scarcely the role of elegy), Meyers’ comment is somewhat misleading. It is not necessary here to look in detail at Wyspianski’s work or career, but there are elements within the elegy that suggest Mansfield had a more than passing acquaintance with some of his central ideas, and Meyers appears to give too little attention to these aspects of the poem.

Czeslaw Milosz quotes Leon Schiller’s reflection on Wyspianski that “on the stage he solved the most personal problems, and they were always national problems” (p. 354), and later in a comment on Wyspianski’s *Acropolis* Milosz observes how “mythological deities, Greek heroes, and Polish personalities of the past communicate with each other before the play ends with the sunrise and the triumphal entry of Christ, who rides in a chariot; he is identified somewhat with Dionysus” (p. 358). Krzyzanowski has a somewhat different reading of the Christ figure in this play, linking him rather to Apollo than to Dionysus:²⁹

He ended his pageantry with a powerful scene of resurrection. Christ, the martyred Redeemer, appears here not in the usual form we know from the Gospels and the established religious tradition. He turns into the triumphant, youthful Apollo, the Greek god symbolizing the powerful victory of life over death. The Christ-Apollo

symbol may be called the highest achievement of Wyspianski the thinker (pp. 29–30).

At several places, Krzyzanowski also stresses the importance of the figure of Death in Wyspianski's art, arguing that "the conflict of ... Life and Death [is] the crucial point in the art of Wyspianski" (p. 26). So prevalent are the images that Krzyzanowski can describe the conflict as "an obsession, or a complex, in the Freudian sense of the word" and offer the slightly peevish observation that "the annoying recurrence of this gloomy motif is responsible for the frequent charges of pessimism" (p. 26).

Those charges of pessimism do not appear in the commentary of Charles Kraszewski, who locates Wyspianski within the field of Polish Monumental Drama, "a theatrical tradition that widens the stageable area to include the world of the dead, of eternity" (p. 8). He too notes the strange pageantry of *Acropolis*, which he calls an "unusual magical-realist play ... entirely populated by the statues and embroidered figures of Wawel Cathedral, who come alive during the night stretching from Holy Saturday into Easter Sunday" (p. 8).³⁰ Echoing Leon Schiller, Kraszewski suggests that Wyspianski is "most interested in exploring the mythical essence of his nation" (p. 10).

Taken together, these comments summarise a number of aspects of Wyspianski's work that seem to be reflected in Mansfield's elegy, or that might have informed its composition. These include: the deliberate engagement with—even championing of—national issues and national predilections; the dialogue with and between figures from the past, and the sense of a nation's history that these two motifs, taken together, imply; the recurrent awareness of Death, and the ongoing sense of a struggle with Death, and between Life and Death; and the presence of a Christ figure who is something other than the traditional figure of the Gospels.

The identification of Wyspianski as a national hero, as one who engages heroically with issues of national importance is suggested in the manner in which he is addressed—saluted as "magnificent warrior" and "man with the name of a fighter"—and issues of nation and history are very much to the fore. As Kubasiewicz comments, "Mansfield praises Wyspiański as a spiritual leader of an enslaved nation ... [he] was a man of action and so Mansfield's address to him as a 'warrior' is fully justified" (p. 85).

The other motifs emerge most obviously in the closing of the poem, with its attention to the personified figure of Death, and its contrast between the ways in which Heracles and Christ achieve mastery over death:

But the dead—the old—Oh Master, we belong to you there;
Oh Master, there we are children and awed by the strength of a giant;
How alive you leapt into the grave and wrestled with Death
And found in the veins of Death the red blood flowing
And raised Death up in your arms and showed him to all the people.
Yours a more personal labor than the Nazarene's miracles,
Yours a more forceful encounter than the Nazarene's gentle commands.

The poem's formal indebtedness to Walt Whitman has been noted elsewhere and is most readily seen in the long lines and the abandonment of traditional metrical accentual-syllabic verse. Given that Mansfield had written relatively little verse prior to this, she handles the sprawling Whitmanesque line with an accomplished sophistication. Whitman's influence can also be seen in the confident positioning of the self in the opening lines:

I, a woman, with the taint of the pioneer in my blood,
Full of a youthful strength that wars with itself and is lawless,
I sing your praises, magnificent warrior; I proclaim your triumphant battle.

and it also lies behind the use of repetition. While the poem does not employ the kind of syntactical parallelism that Whitman inherited from the Hebrew Bible, the use of anaphora is certainly reminiscent of his style:

From the other side of the world,
From a little island cradled in the giant sea bosom,
From a little land with no history.

Meyers' comment quoted above that "the poem is more about Katherine Mansfield and New Zealand than about the Polish playwright" (p. 339) does, however, respond to the contrast that is at the heart of the poem; or rather, the contrasts, for the poem turns on a series of apparent binaries. There is first the opposition of hemispheres and the remoteness of New Zealand that is implied in the poem's opening line; there is the contrast of size, and seemingly linked to size as well as to youthfulness is the contrast between a land that has "no history" and one that is rich in history, albeit "a long and painful history" (Sobesto, p. 64); there is a contrast between light and dark, between the personified forces of Life and Death; and an implied contrast between the levity of this little, undeveloped land and the gravitas suggested in "the tapestry woven from dreams of your tragic childhood". So pronounced are these oppositions that even the "fine and sweet water" of New Zealand's mountain springs and rivers is presented not as a blessing but as an impediment to knowledge of truth.

Complementing those contrasts as a structuring device is the use of personal pronouns. The "I" who sings the praises of Wyspianski, may have "the taint of the pioneer in [her] blood" but otherwise seeks to dissociate herself from the land and its people who (in a comment that reveals her privileged upbringing) "have had nought to contend with". The phrase "My people" might seem inclusive, but the speaker quickly moves to dispel that notion, to distance herself from them: "What would they know ... How could they know ... They would tear in their stupid hands". Finally, the poem offers a collective, if unspecified, response—"we belong ... we are children ... we cry and proclaim". The poem affirms that the proclamation comes "Across these thousands of sea-shattered miles", leading a reader to imagine the speaker is responding on behalf of herself and her "people", but the apparently inclusive plural pronoun is an illusion; there is nothing really to counter the images of the first part of the poem which are deeply critical of the "little land with no history", and of its shallow ignorant people with "stupid hands" and "childish laughter".

The image of this acclamation being voiced "Across these thousands of sea-shattered miles" brings us to the question of Mansfield's *locus scribendi*. The poem is written as if from New Zealand, and this fictional position is endorsed by a note Sobieniowski added to his translation of the poem: "the lines suggest that the poem was conceived during her residence in New Zealand—probably at the time of Wyspianski's death in 1907" (Meyers, p. 339).³¹ It is possible that the author of the note has simply taken a too-literal reading of the poem, but Meyers is right to be sceptical when he notes that "there is no evidence Mansfield had ever heard of him before she came to Wörishofen" (*ibid.*). This is also the opinion of Kubasiewicz: she could not have heard about him in New Zealand or later in London, as Wyspiański's name and work at the time and for many years after, was more or less restricted to his Polish homeland (p. 84).

Kubasiewicz does not provide any evidence for her claim, but such evidence as can be gathered from New Zealand sources confirms that there was no credible opportunity for Mansfield to have heard of Wyspianski or of his death, or to have become acquainted with his work. No English translations of his work existed until the early 1930s, and the German translations Sobieniowski mentions were only published after Mansfield left New Zealand. When he died, she was travelling in a remote part of the North Island, from Rangitaiki to Kaingaroa, Te Whaiti, inland Urewera and Waiotapu,³² but even had she been in one of the larger cities it seems unlikely she would have heard of him. The earliest New Zealand newspaper reference I have discovered in the period that mentions Wyspianski occurs in the *Otago Daily Times* in July 1908, after Mansfield had left New Zealand for good. Nor is this surprising: the New Zealand that Mansfield (with an admittedly jaundiced viewpoint) describes in her elegy seems unlikely to have had much interest in contemporary Polish theatre.

Mansfield's poem was thus first presented to the public in unusual circumstances—in translation, in a relatively obscure Polish magazine, accompanied by a brief essay that misrepresented both the author and the circumstances of its production. After her death, it was omitted from the collection that John Middleton Murry rushed into print, somewhat surprisingly, given his desire to print so much of her unpublished work, and his determination to establish her as a poet (see O'Sullivan 1988, p. ix). Eileen Duggan's poem, by contrast, had a rather smoother path to publication, although that too raises some interesting questions. Included in her first, undated volume of poetry around the end of 1920, it had appeared almost eighteen months earlier in a short-lived political journal supporting the Labour Party, where its placement imbues the poem with a decidedly political character. Each of the poems was written at an early stage of their respective author's careers, but in each case the poetic form already displays features that were to become characteristic of the writer. The free verse Mansfield adopts can be seen as part of her general alertness to modernist directions that would emerge in the following years, whereas Duggan's preference is much more traditional. She works within a formal pattern of three six-line stanzas, in iambic pentameter, rhyming abcabc; and that preference for traditional forms remained throughout her career.

Setting aside their many differences, it is fascinating (albeit something of an odd coincidence) to see these two New Zealand writers responding so positively in verse to the death of a prominent Polish figure whom they had never met and of whom they knew relatively little. Mansfield has relied on what Sobieniowski has told her of Wyspianski and his work, and to some extent her response must therefore be indirect, or even derivative. Eileen Duggan, on the other hand, has responded intuitively and directly to the news reports of Luxemburg's death. What each of them recognises, though, is the life of dedication that they see in their respective subjects. It is that quality which commands their respect, and prompts their poetry.

¹ Eileen Duggan, "Katherine Mansfield," *The NZ Artists' Annual* (1931): 12.

² John Middleton Murry had edited *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1927) and *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1928). For a detailed critique of his presentation of the journal and later scrapbook, see Philip Waldron, "Katherine Mansfield's Journal," *Twentieth Century Literature* 20, no. 1 (Jan. 1974): 11–16.

³ Roger Robinson, in "Mansfield, Katherine (2)", in *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Melbourne and Auckland: Oxford University

Press, 1998), 341, describes Mansfield as “at best a qualified national icon” and remarks that she “had little connection with early New Zealand writing, which accorded her little recognition”. He makes no mention of this essay.

⁴ Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 388.

⁵ That marginalisation has been described in several places. See Stuart Murray, *Never a Soul at Home: New Zealand Literary Nationalism and the 1930's* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998); Lawrence Jones, *Picking Up the Traces: the Making of a New Zealand Literary Culture 1932-1945* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003); Michele Leggott, “Opening the Archive: Robin Hyde, Eileen Duggan and the Persistence of Record”, in *Opening the Book. New Essays on New Zealand Writing*, ed. Mark Williams and Michele Leggott (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995), 266–293.

⁶ For details of the other material on Mansfield, see the note in Eileen Duggan, *Selected Poems*, ed. Peter Whiteford (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1994), 153. Quotations from Duggan’s work are from this volume unless indicated otherwise.

⁷ For biographical details here see Frank McKay, *Eileen Duggan, New Zealand Writers and Their Work* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1977) and Grace Burgess, *A Gentle Poet: A Portrait of Eileen Duggan* (Carterton, New Zealand, privately published, 1981).

⁸ Hermione Lee, “Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller by Kathleen Jones – review.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/feb/12/katherine-mansfield-kathleen-jones-review>. [Accessed 10 June 2020.]

⁹ Duggan’s “The Character of Middleton Murry” provides a review of his autobiography. It remained unpublished in her lifetime. See *Selected Poems*, 129–32.

¹⁰ The essay is reproduced in *Selected Poems*, 115–119. It was originally published in *America* 61, Issue 9 (June 10, 1939): 210–11.

¹¹ Eileen Duggan, “Personalities Compared. Katherine Mansfield and Charlotte Bronte,” *The Press*, April 18, 1936, 17. Available at Papers Past, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19360418.2.123>. [Accessed 15 July, 2020.]

¹² Her name often appeared in local newspapers as ‘Luxembourg’, as it does in Duggan’s poem.

¹³ In *Selected Poems*, 1921 was suggested as the probable date of publication. However, the volume was reviewed in the *Maoriland Worker*, the *New Zealand Times* and the *Grey River Argus* in late December 1920, indicating publication in the closing months of that year.

¹⁴ Accounts of the deaths of Karl Leibknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and the suppression of Spartacus can be found in Paul Frolich, *Rosa Luxemburg. Her Life and Work*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940), 332–3 and J. P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 772–6.

¹⁵ An advertisement in the *Maoriland Worker* (July 9, 1919, 3) suggested publication had been planned for the 1st of July rather than August.

¹⁶ The copies in the Hocken run in six consecutive months from August 1919 to January 1920, then separate copies for August 1920 and January 1921; those in the Turnbull are the first number (August 1919), one for March 1920, and finally one for August, 1921. Inside the last of these is included a stray bi-fold from July 1921. It is clear, however, from the general production standards and the size of the journal, that by August 1921 the paper was in decline.

¹⁷ Duggan wrote other pieces that were also published in *The Democrat*: of the extant numbers, November 1919 included a poem “The Man Away” (p. 2) and “A Sketch” (p. 7), and March 1920 included a column comparing Woodrow Wilson and the Russian Emperor Alexander (p. 17).

¹⁸ James Kelly, “Preface” in Eileen Duggan, *Poems* (Dunedin: N.Z. Tablet Co., s.d, [1920]), n.p.

¹⁹ “To Stanislaw Wyspianski”, *Poems of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Vincent O’Sullivan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 30.

²⁰ Sobesto suggests the translation is inaccurate, serves Sobieniowski’s own “romantic sentiments about national liberation” and contributes to the “mythologization of the artist”. She also details other translations of the poem into Polish. Joanna Sobesto, “A Favour To Polish

Literature.' Katherine Mansfield's Links with Poland," *Przekładaniec*, Special Issue, "Translation History in the Polish Context" (2019): 63–80. doi:10.4467/16891864ePC.19.004.11262. Originally published in Polish in *Przekładaniec*, vol. 37/2018, 143–160.

²¹ Quoted by Jeffrey Meyers, "Katherine Mansfield's 'To Stanislaw Wyspianski'," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 24, no. 3 (1978): 337–341, 339.

²² Gerri Kimber, "'That Pole outside our door': Floryan Sobieniowski and Katherine Mansfield', *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe. Connections and Influences*, ed. Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 59–83, 59.

²³ For differing views of the relationship, see Meyers and Kimber. For an overview of some of the Polish studies of the poem and of their relationship, see Sobesto.

²⁴ Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*. 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984–2008), vol. 4, 30.

²⁵ Vincent O'Sullivan, "Mansfield, Katherine (1)", *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*. ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Melbourne and Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998), 358.

²⁶ Czeslaw Milosz, *The History of Polish Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 351.

²⁷ Julian Krzyzanowski, "Stanislaw Wyspianski (1869–1907)," *The Polish Review*, 2, no. 4 (1957): 23–32.

²⁸ Sobesto provides a more qualified account of Wyspianski's reputation (67, fn. 3), but see also Kubasiewicz who notes that forty thousand people gathered at this funeral, drawn by the fact that "he spoke in the voice which his generation recognised as its own". Mirosława Kubasiewicz, "Katherine Mansfield and Stanisław Wyspiański – Meeting Points", *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe. Connections and Influences*, ed. Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 84–98, 85.

²⁹ The Apollonian reading seems preferable. A recent translation by Charles Kraszewski notes the play "comes to an apocalyptic end with the glorious irruption of Christ/Apollo onto the scene". Stanislaw Wyspianski, *Acropolis. The Wawel Plays*, trans. Charles S. Kraszewski (London: Glagoslav Publications, 2017), 5. More importantly, the text explicitly mentions Apollo in the context of the Resurrection at the finale.

³⁰ It should be noted, though, that neither Mansfield nor Sobieniowski could have seen a production of *Acropolis* by this time. Although reading copies were available, the play did not have its stage premiere until 1926 (Kraszewski, 10).

³¹ Note, however, that Sobesto, quoting Weintraub, attributes this error to the publisher rather than to Sobieniowski (64, fn. 1).

³² The most detailed itinerary of Mansfield's journey is now provided in Katherine Mansfield, *The Urewera Notebook*, ed. Anna Plumridge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). See pages 53–60 for the period relating to Wyspianski's death.