Mansfield was the author of five collections of short stories, two of which were published after her death. The volumes published in her lifetime were: *In a German Pension* (1911), *Bliss, and Other Stories* (1920), and *The Garden Party, and Other Stories* (1922). Her husband, John Middleton Murry, supervised the publication of posthumous volumes in 1923 and 1924. Mansfield is a major short-story writer, and her canonical status has been made firm by her position as a woman writer, a colonial writer (she was born in New Zealand and lived there until 1903, leaving the country permanently in 1908), and as a woman with a colorful biography played out against the background of the early twentieth-century cosmopolitan avant-garde.

*In a German Pension* contains a sequence of stories satirizing contemporary German mores, stories from which Mansfield sought to distance herself later in life. *Bliss, and Other Stories* includes the long autobiographical story “Prelude,” set in New Zealand, and published separately by the Woolfs in the Hogarth Press in 1917. “Je ne parle pas français” was also first published privately, and then in a cut form in *Bliss*. The narrator, Raoul, is a French writer, promiscuous, bisexual, and cynical. The action plays out in the bohemian demi-monde of Paris, involves homosexual infatuation, and is centered on tensions between English and French mores. *The Garden Party, and Other Stories* contains some of Mansfield’s best-known fictions. “The Daughters of the Late Colonel” is a complex study of the consequences of patriarchy on two middle-aged women, the eponymous daughters of a dominating father. Like many of Mansfield’s stories, the story material is limited and the text is an evocation of character, mood, and place. Among Mansfield’s most anthologized stories is “The Garden Party,” the title story from her 1922 collection. It is an evocation, largely through free indirect and free direct speech and thought, of a young girl’s consciousness on the splendid sunshiny day of a garden party. In the course of the story she learns of the death of a young man in the poor houses near to her own family’s grand home. Her encounter with death – for she visits the man’s family with bounty from the garden party – is utterly ambiguous (“Isn’t life, she stammered, ‘isn’t life . . .’”), and, despite its slender frame, leaves the reader to think about the complexities of youth, pleasure, curiosity, idealism, responsibility, death, and social divisions. The ambiguity of experience is central to Mansfield’s work, illustrated well by the story “The Stranger” (1922), about as good a study of a complex marriage as one can get, which is discussed in Part 5 Key Works.