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Aspects of a Minor Literature in Katherine Mansfield's New Zealand Stories

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Abstract
While Katherine Mansfield spent the most important years of her career – approximately the 1910s – at the centre of the flourishing modernist movement, she still produced several stories which are set in her native New Zealand. Observing Mansfield as an author who was at the time in many ways on the margins of English literature, this paper approaches her New Zealand stories from the theoretical framework offered by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of a 'minor literature'. Our analysis of eleven short stories identifies those elements that arguably contribute to describing these New Zealand stories as a minor literature. The identified elements, which are illustrated with numerous examples, include onomatopoeic effects of the texts, narrative ruptures/gaps, the intrusion of dreamwork or oneiric states in the narrative discourse, the imagery and perspective of children and animals, and frequent use of (unattributed) free indirect discourse. The combination of these elements deterritorializes the language of Mansfield's New Zealand stories and endows them with a political and collective value, as well as the revolutionary literary impulse, thus making them a proper example of a minor literature. *(примљено: 12. фебруара 2024; прихваћено: 2. априла 2024)*

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1. Introduction

One of the most innovative modernist authors, Katherine Mansfield (born Kathleen Beauchamp), moved from her native New Zealand to Europe at the young age of 19. The finality of the move could only be appreciated in retrospect as she was unable to return to her home country for the remaining 16 years of her life. This long journey across the world, which took place in 1908, acquired a nearly mythical significance in Mansfield's life and left her permanently homesick. On the other hand, it allowed her to be at the centre of the developing modernist movement, associate with, influence and be influenced by the authors such as Virginia Woolf or David Herbert Lawrence. While "she often felt herself an 'alien,' an outsider in the realms of Literary England" (Tarrant-Hoskins, 2014: 5), modernism was largely focused on the experiences of migrant writers and an exchange of ideas across nations (Wallace, 2011: 212). It was precisely Mansfield's position of an Anglophone "alien" in English literature that enabled her innovative approach to the short story. Bearing this in mind, this paper aims to analyse some of Mansfield's stories set in New Zealand, approaching them from the theoretical perspective of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of a 'minor literature'. The applicability of this theoretical framework has not gone unnoticed. As Aimee Gasston writes:

> What Deleuze and Guattari would describe as 'deterritorialization' is implicit to the modernist short fiction that Mansfield developed; it manages persistently to evade dominant social codes in retaining plurality of voice (with its roaming, nomadic subjectivity) and subject (children, the countryside, animals, objects [...]). Mansfield's short story was a stomach that could pick up what might be indigestible to other genres, and which participated in a type of engagement and incorporation that did not baulk at the unpalatable. (Gasston, 2013: 25)

What the present analysis aims to achieve is identify and classify those elements – features of style or narrative devices – of Katherine Mansfield's so-called 'New Zealand stories' through which these stories function as examples of a minor literature and thus deterritorialize the major language in which they are written. A similar and highly insightful analysis, i.e., a Deleuzian reading, has been conducted by Ali Salami and Razieh Rahmani (2018), who define the following deterritorializing features of literary fiction: defiance of signification, neutralisation of sense, asyntactical language, phantasmagorical and absurd tales, quizzical jokes, silly songs, and asubjective free indirect narration. The present analysis will focus on Mansfield's impressionistic use of onomatopoeia, narrative ruptures, oneirism and dreamwork, children and animal imagery, and free indirect discourse – as deterritorializing strategies of a minor literature. Additionally, the analysis of Mansfield's New Zealand stories will benefit from some biographical references since her motivation for writing about New Zealand was – especially in the later years of her life – rather personal.

2. Of Minor Literatures

A minor literature is, according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "that which a minority constructs within a major language" (1986: 16). Its distinctive features include "a high coefficient of deterritorialization," intrinsic relationship with politics inasmuch as "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics," and a collective value, which entails that:

> if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility. (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 17)

Katherine Mansfield can arguably be considered as multiply marginalised – outside her primary New Zealand community (including family), which is rendered fragile by its very distance from England and Europe, and an outsider in the European social circles to which she aspired, by virtue of being an immigrant, a woman, bisexual, or incurably ill with tuberculosis.[1] During her first sojourn in London, when she attended Queen's College as a teenager, she "instantly fell in love with London, its history, its literary traditions, its anonymity, its cosmopolitan cultural mix," simultaneously enjoying – because it was an attribute of a unique identity – being, "as one of her tutors called her, 'a little savage from New Zealand.'" (Jones, 2021: 309).[2] Originating from and continuing to permanently inhabit one of these numerous margins, her writing potentially disturbs the order of literary – as well as cultural and social – norms by deterritorializing language, which takes two principal directions. Language can be deterritorialized through artificial enrichment, which includes the use of symbolism, oneirism, hidden meanings, esoteric connotations, etc. (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 19), or through the opposite, conditionally speaking impoverishment, which "kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 22). As Deleuze and Guattari argue in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, language is not "the unitary system of linguistic constants and universals," and there is a process of variation "intrinsic to language, which manifests as a relentless and intrinsic division of language into myriad 'minor' languages or voices" (Evans, 2008). Whereas a major (established) literature "follows a vector that goes from content to expression," a minor (revolutionary) literature "begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterward" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 28). Its expression "must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sproutings," and a broken form requires the reconstruction of the content which is also inevitably "a rupture in the order of things" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 28). Minor literatures do not

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1 According to the 1986 television documentary on Katherine Mansfield, she was forced to leave the house she rented in Ospedaletti, Italy, on account of her condition; the owner subsequently burned the furniture and sent Mansfield the bill (Stretton, 1986).

2 Kathleen Jones quotes from Mansfield's *Notebooks*.

necessarily originate from small communities such as the English community in New Zealand – the quality of being minor refers more to the style of writing than the background of the author – but the extraordinariness of Katherine Mansfield's entering the European and English literary scene of high modernism does indicate a rupture in the well-established order of literary hierarchy. It is for this reason that the present analysis focuses on those stories of this "little savage" that are set in New Zealand. The particular state of the respectable Beauchamp family "measuring themselves against [...] English values" while living in Britain's farthest colonial outpost "created a fractured identity" (Jones, 2021: 308), which is reflected in the broken forms and discrepancies between the content and its expression in Katherine Mansfield's stories.

Before leaving for London in 1908, Mansfield wrote stories set in London, her "landscape of the mind" at the time (Stafford, 2021: 89), but it was in the first years after she moved permanently to England that she started writing about New Zealand and produced the first group of the New Zealand stories. These included "The Woman at the Store," "Millie," "Ole Underwood," and "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped," all of which were published in 1912 and 1913 (though written probably around 1910) in the journal *Rhythm*, edited by Mansfield's future husband John Middleton Murry. As her life was rather tumultuous during these first "European" years – she suffered an abortion and a traumatic stillbirth, entered into marriage that *de facto* lasted only one day and had several intense affairs subsequently – she was presumably "embarrassed [...] of much of her conduct during this time" and therefore destroyed most of her letters, diaries, and other personal documents dated to the years 1909 and 1911 (Kimber, 2019). Additionally, she did not allow these stories to be republished, and it was only after her death that John Middleton Murry included them in the posthumous collection *Something Childish but Very Natural* (Stafford, 2021: 94). A very important step in Mansfield's building of the New Zealand narrative occurred in 1915, when following the death of her beloved brother Leslie Heron in a military accident in France during World War One, she started working on an earlier rather long draft titled "The Aloe," a tale of the life of a New Zealand family. The draft was published in 1918 as "Prelude" and republished in Mansfield's 1920 collection *Bliss and Other Stories*, alongside another New Zealand story, "The Wind Blows." These were followed by a series of stories in the 1920s with the same setting (and sometimes also characters) – that of the colonial New Zealand of Mansfield's childhood: "The Voyage," "Her First Ball," "The Garden Party," "The Doll's House," and "At the Bay." All the listed stories are referred to in the analysis that follows, in respect of how they employ onomatopoeic effects, narrative ruptures, oneirism and dreamwork, children and animal imagery, and free indirect discourse, forming a unique literary expression that corresponds to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a minor literature.

3. Onomatopoeic Impressionism

As an element of style, onomatopoeia leaves the territory of language as a system of arbitrary symbols and attempts to move closer towards the reality

of things these symbols represent. Onomatopoeia can frequently be found in Mansfield's stories. A famous example is found in "Prelude": "In the garden some tiny owls, perched on the branches of a lace-bark tree, called: 'More pork; more pork.' And far away in the bush there sounded a harsh rapid chatter: 'Ha-ha-ha... Ha-ha-ha.'" (Mansfield, 2006: 15). The excerpt offers insight into the perspective of Kezia, the youngest child in the upper middle class Burnell family, immediately after the family have moved from their Wellington home into a beautiful though isolated house in the country, six miles from the city. The house itself stands on the margins of both the city and the bush, and the entire story, which merely records the thoughts and impressions of the Burnells and Fairfields (Linda Burnell's mother and sister) during their first days there, is based on the Beauchamp family's move to Chesney Wold cottage in Karori near Wellington when Katherine Mansfield was five. Like Kezia, Mansfield was the third daughter, so Kezia is commonly considered as her alter ego, in this as well as the other stories that feature the Burnell family ("The Doll's House" and "At the Bay"). Young Kezia's adjustment to the new land- and soundscape is accompanied by narrative deterritorialization, conceived as an attempted imitation of the sound of an owl native to New Zealand, 'Morepork' or 'Ruru'. The same sound is repeated in the story "Her First Ball," where eighteen-year-old Leila, who is attending her first ball, recalls the sound of baby owls she might be listening to instead of the band had she stayed in her country house. In addition to recurring characters, such recurring motives also stress the collective value that a minor literature has as it "finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 17). However, the actual sound this bird produces is more similar to its Mâori name, Ruru. In an act of deterritorialization, the narrative renders the bird's echo through its name in the language of the settler Burnell family – English, thus creating an effect of estrangement in which the sound cannot be easily recognised by English readers outside New Zealand.

More striking examples of onomatopoeia are those in which the entire narrative reflects sounds through both individual words and syntax. Such examples can be found in "Ole Underwood" and "The Wind Blows." Both narratives are based on the movements of the protagonists and focalisers (Ole and Matilda respectively) for several hours through the familiar Wellington landscape. Old Ole, a former sailor, walks away from the prison building, passes through a house and a yard, enters a pub, approaches a Chinamen's store, and ends up at the docks; teenager Matilda moves through the house, goes to her music teacher and back, and finally for a walk with her brother (whose nickname Bogey is the same as that of Mansfield's brother Leslie), which similarly ends in the harbour. What these protagonists do is not the flaneurial soaking up of their surroundings – their walks are represented as series of swift movements and brief encounters with particular places, and it appears instead that it is the surroundings that soak them up, the wind tossing them from one location to another. This is additionally indicated by the structure of sentences. For instance, in "The Wind Blows" there are unsystematic repetitions

of words, word classes, dashes, alongside the alteration of short and long sentences and alliteration of fricatives, which might be indicative of the sound of the wind: "Suddenly – dreadfully – she wakes up. What has happened? Something dreadful has happened. No – nothing has happened. It is only the wind shaking the house, rattling the windows, banging a piece of iron on the roof and making her bed tremble." (Mansfield, 2006: 81). Language is deterritorialized in the first part of the excerpt through its attempt to represent the unmediated sound of the wind, while the last explanatory sentence briefly places it in its proper territory – the wind is crucial to the story as Wellington is infamous for being the windiest city in the world. When Matilda is having her piano lesson, the room of her teacher Mr. Bullen is described as a cave, being the only place where the wind does not reach – and it is only here in the narrative that a glimpse is given into something bothering the adolescent Matilda, though whatever it might be remains unsaid – she merely cries. More sentences imitating the wind soon follow in the narrative: "She won't. She won't. She hates Mother. 'Go to hell,' she shouts, running down the road. [...] she can hear the sea sob: 'Ah!... Ah!... Ah-h!'" (Mansfield, 2006: 82), until finally "[t]he wind carries their voices – away fly the sentences like narrow ribbons." (Mansfield, 2006: 84). The Wellington wind ultimately leaves Matilda and Bogie unable to speak, whereby this inability to express themselves makes them displaced or deterritorialized. In the significant scene which ends the story, the brother and sister see a ship departing from the harbour with two people standing on the deck. Creating yet another effect of estrangement, Matilda begins to speak:

> Look, Bogey, there's the town. Doesn't it look small? There's the post office clock chiming for the last time. There's the esplanade where we walked that windy day. Do you remember? I cried at my music lesson that day – how many years ago! Good-bye, little island, good-bye... (Mansfield, 2006: 84)

In this curious twist, Matilda and Bogey are now the people on the deck, and Matilda regains the ability to speak only when she looks at Wellington from a spatial and temporal distance. While Matilda's liminal age between childhood and adulthood makes her position precarious, in the case of Ole Underwood it is his crime and the years he spent in prison that make him a social outcast. In other words, both Wellington-wind-tormented protagonists are perceived as strangers, and the only "way out" Ole sees is leaving the land and getting on board a ship. Unlike Matilda, whose narrative through onomatopoeic effects creates the impression of her anxiety and restlessness, possibly sadness, Ole creates the impression of aggression and madness, which is represented through the alliteration of plosives (in addition to fricatives):

> 'Ah-k!' shouted Ole Underwood, shaking his umbrella at the wind bearing down upon him, beating him, half strangling him with his black cape. 'Ah-k!' shouted the wind a hundred times as loud, and filled his mouth and nostrils with dust.

> Something inside Ole Underwood's breast beat like a hammer. One, two – one, two – never stopping, never changing. He couldn't do anything. It wasn't loud. No, it didn't make a noise – only a thud. One, two – one, two – like some one beating on an iron in a prison, some one in a secret place – bang – bang – bang – trying to get free. [...] The mad wind smelled of tar and ropes and slime and salt. [...] And he stared up at the wharves and at the ships with flags flying, and suddenly the old, old lust swept over Ole Underwood. 'I will! I will! I will!' he muttered. (Mansfield, 2006: 474, 476)

Ole Underwood's voice is articulated like the sound of the wind – Ole *is* himself the "mad wind" – but what he says resists signification – what "something" or "it" refer to is impossible to express – and therefore deterritorializes the narrative. There is no place for him in Wellington and virtually the only sentence, however incomplete, he manages to produce is caused by the sight of ships. Ole stutters, but more importantly to the deterritorializing effect, the entire narrative stutters through its onomatopoeic effects. As Deleuze claims, "[c]reative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium" (1997: 111). Both "Ole Underwood" and "The Wind Blows" can in these terms be described as Deleuzian rhizomatic texts, decentralised narratives with numerous paths and many points of entry (or view), whose greatest enemy is signification (Deleuze/ Guattari, 1986: 3), which makes them deterritorializing and thus pertinent to a minor literature.

4. Ruptures in the Narrative

Ole Underwood still does not verbalise what he will do. Readers can only assume that he is at the end of the story about to commit another murder, which will likely take him back to prison and the familiar inarticulacy, the wind-like "Ah-k!" from the opening of the story. In this story, as well as in the others, the most important elements are left unsaid. Young Laura Sheridan in "The Garden Party," after visiting the poor neighbouring family and seeing the dead man's body laid out, can only utter a few syllables: "'Isn't life,' she stammered, 'isn't life –' But what life was she couldn't explain." (Mansfield, 2006: 210). In "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped," an important story in the New Zealand narrative because it deals with a white child's encounter with the Mâori, it is evident that two Mâori women take little Pearl to their community, but the child's perspective – Pearl being the single focaliser – leaves their reasons and consequences unexplained:

> They looked and looked at her and then they talked to each other, waving their arms and clapping their hands together. Pearl began to laugh. [...] The dark woman laughed, and again they talked to each other with funny words and wavings of the hands. (Mansfield, 2006: 438)

While some words are spoken, they are not represented in the narrative. The mediation of the story through the little child allows for the deterritorialization of the language through creating a narrative gap, a hole or a rupture in which an important element of the story is left open for readers' interpretation (Iser, 1974), or through what Jane Stafford in relation to Mansfield's early New Zealand stories calls "the disturbing inarticulacy" of the characters who are "unable to produce any kind of meaningful linguistic response" (2021: 95, 96). The police who appear at the end of "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" are not even named as the police; they are "[l]ittle men in blue coats – little blue men came running, running towards her with shouts and whistlings – a crowd of little blue men to carry her back to the House of Boxes" (Mansfield, 2006: 441). This is evidently Pearl's impression, and the reader is aware of the fear which she expresses with a shriek – but without any articulate utterance.

The above-described last scene of "The Wind Blows" also forms a narrative gap, a structural rupture in narrative space and time, though the impression it creates is one of phantasmagoria, which can deterritorialize language by enriching it. Matilda's focalisation changes from observing herself and her brother as strangers on a departing ship into observing her hometown and her past as the stranger on the ship. Time has obviously passed in the brief second in which this shift occurs, but how much time, or where and why the siblings are going – remains unverbalised and open to interpretation.

Narrative space and time are similarly broken in "Millie," where in the first part the eponymous focaliser (a presumably middle-aged character) finds a young murderer hiding in her garden while her husband is out with the other townsfolk in search of him. The story abruptly shifts in the second part, when Millie and her husband are raised from their bed by unusual sounds – the sounds of that same young murderer escaping from their shed. It is indicated that Millie let the young man hide there, as she showed some tender feelings for him earlier. However, this remains a mere indication or assumption – the exact act of hiding the murderer is not expressed in the narrative. Additionally, the nature of her tender feelings is also left open to interpretation: "[s]he didn't know what was the matter with herself that afternoon. She could have a good cry – just for nothing – and then change her blouse and have a good cup of tea." (Mansfield, 2006: 483). Like Matilda in "The Wind Blows" or Laura in "The Garden Party," Millie is either going through a crisis or coming to a significant realisation about (her) life. Similarly, the most important event in "The Voyage" – the death of young Fenella's mother, which is the cause of her moving from Wellington – is only hinted at by a supporting character: "'Poor little motherless mite!' said the stewardess. And grandma was still telling the stewardess all about what happened when Fenella fell asleep" (Mansfield, 2006: 265). More examples are found in "Prelude": "[t]hat was a consolation, certainly, but there was something at the back of Beryl's mind, something she did not even put into words for herself" (Mansfield, 2006: 21) – and immediately Beryl Fairfield runs away singing about birds, whereby song becomes another act of deterritorializing verbal

communication, with which she does not feel comfortable.[3] Yet another interesting method of deterritorialization by avoiding verbal expression and leaving ruptures in the narrative is found in "Millie" and "The Woman at the Store." Both stories describe houses filled with pictures, and whatever it is that their characters cannot express in words is indicated visually. Millie's wall is decorated with the print *Garden Party at Windsor Castle*, featuring the typical "emerald lawns" of England, ladies and gentlemen with parasols, Union Jacks, and "the old Queen" (Mansfield, 2006: 483). On the dressing table there is her own wedding photo, featuring "some fern trees, and a waterfall, and Mount Cook in the distance" – New Zealand's highest mountain (Mansfield, 2006: 483). The juxtaposition of these two images inside Millie's home reveals its strangeness. Her New Zealand home covered with images of England shows her displacement, which results in deterritorialization, i.e., her inability to express her feelings. As the setting suddenly shifts in the second party of the story, so do Millie's feelings for the young boy – she now wants him to be caught, but she still cannot articulate what she feels and why, and she only shrieks instead: "she laughed and shrieked and danced in the dust, jigging the lantern. 'A – ah! Arter 'im, Sid! A – a – a – h! Ketch him, Willie. Go it! Go it! A – ah, Sid! Shoot 'im down. Shoot 'im!'" (Mansfield, 2006: 486).

The woman in "The Woman at the Store" is so deterritorialized that she does not even have a name. The walls of her house are similarly covered in the pages of old English periodicals, Queen Victoria's Jubilee being the latest number (Mansfield, 2006: 466), although she lives in the outback with not a soul miles around.[4] There is only her six-year-old child, a girl who draws pictures all day long[5] but is silent. The woman cannot articulate her feelings: "'Oh! I don't mean only the spuds and the kid – I mean – I mean,' she hiccoughed – 'you know what I mean, Mr. Jo.'" (Mansfield, 2006: 470). The reader does get the impression that what she means is loneliness and isolation, but there is something more disturbing at the core of the

3 Another illustrative example from "Prelude" is the maid, Alice, who "was a mild creature in reality, but she had the most marvellous retorts ready for questions that she knew would never be put to her. The composing of them and the turning of them over and over in her mind comforted her just as much as if they'd been expressed" (Mansfield, 2006: 34-35). There are neither questions nor answers; existing solely in Alice's mind they are utterly deterritorialized in the sphere of human exchange and communication.

4 As Stafford notices, in "The Woman at the Store" and "Millie" "the incoherence of the characters' reality is counterpointed by the irony of the walls of their houses" (2021: 23). While pictures such as *Garden Party at Windsor Castle* were "a common colonial practice" as well as "a metaphor of belonging and estrangement," there is in these stories "also a nascent sense of 'New Zealand' as a form of national identity in each house's décor": in addition to the fern trees and Mount Cook in Millie's house, the woman's store has a picture of New Zealand prime minister Richard Seddon (Stafford, 2021: 25).

5 These pictures are described as "[t]he creations of a lunatic with a lunatic's cleverness. There was no doubt about it, the kid's mind was diseased. While she showed them to us, she worked herself up into a mad excitement, laughing and trembling, and shooting out her arms" (Mansfield, 2006: 471). The child's "lunacy" is represented as her inability to speak; her language is that of laughter, trembling, and gesticulation, and it resembles the description of Millie at the end of her story. The first-person narrator in "The Woman at the Store" and the character called Jim are also gripped by what the narrator describes as lunacy; after just one afternoon at the place where the woman lives, they start behaving "like two children let loose in the thick of an adventure, laugh[ing] and shout[ing] to each other" (Mansfield, 2006: 472).

story, something which remains untold but is drawn by the child: "'Mumma,' she yelled. 'Now I'm going to draw them what you told me I never was to – now I am.'" (Mansfield, 2006: 471). What she draws is "the picture of the woman shooting at a man [her missing husband] with a rook rifle and then digging a hole to bury him in" (Mansfield, 2006: 473). With these brutally simple words, neither embellished nor impoverished, the narrative gap is bridged to a large extent and the narrative itself reterritorialized as it relates the horror of the woman's life.

5. Oneirism and Dreamwork

While onomatopoeic effects and narrative ruptures indicate deterritorialization by impoverishment as they avoid explanations or designations, several of Mansfield's New Zealand stories are enriched by oneirism or dreamwork. Oneirism refers to a state of the conscious mind which resembles a dream or hallucination. Its presence in literary texts can easily be associated with magical realism. Dreamwork, on the other hand, is the work of the unconscious mind which transforms realistic content into dreams. The latter can appear in a narrative text as an element of the story, whereas the former is more frequently an element of discourse, i.e., it refers to the way in which the story is told (cf. Walsh, 2012). At the beginning of "The Woman at the Store," the first-person narrator relates:

> We shambled on. I half fell asleep, and had a sort of uneasy dream that the horses were not moving forward at all – then that I was on a rocking-horse, and my old mother was scolding me for raising such a fearful dust from the drawing-room carpet. (Mansfield, 2006: 465)

In this case, the content of the dream is summarised, that is, the narrator paraphrases events that happened not in reality but in a dream. The horse she is riding becomes a childhood toy, and the dusty road is transformed into the dusty carpet in her home. The line dividing the real and the unreal is thus blurred, the narrative itself defamiliarized, and deterritorialization takes effect inasmuch as what is narrated is the *un*real. In the later stories, Mansfield develops dreamwork further. In "Prelude," Linda's dream forms a more integral part of her daily life:

> 'How loud the birds are,' said Linda in her dream. She was walking with her father through a green paddock sprinkled with daisies. Suddenly he bent down and parted the grasses and showed her a tiny ball of fluff just at her feet. 'Oh, Papa, the darling.' She made a cup of her hands and caught the tiny bird and stroked its head with her finger. It was quite tame. But a funny thing happened. As she stroked it began to swell, it ruffled and pouched, it grew bigger and bigger and its round eyes seemed to smile knowingly at her. Now her arms were hardly wide enough to hold it and she dropped it into her apron. It had become a baby with a big naked head and a gaping bird-mouth, opening and shutting. Her father broke into a loud clattering laugh and she woke to see

> Burnell standing by the windows rattling the Venetian blind up to the very top. (Mansfield, 2006: 15)

The dream is narrated without any mediation, and it is only in the final lines of the excerpt that the line separating it from reality is dissolved, as the "clattering laugh" of Linda's father becomes the rattling sound of the Venetian blind. The importance of dreams is additionally stressed in "Prelude" by Alice, who keeps a "dirty, greasy little book, half unstitched, with curled edges" next to the dishes in which she is preparing food (Mansfield, 2006: 34), which turns out to be a dream interpretation book. Alice's devout commitment to the book is the detail which serves as a signpost to the readers: interpreting Linda's dream is the only indication in the story that she is pregnant. The narrative of "Prelude" resists representation by turning elements of its story into dreamwork. Linda's story in particular is transferred in this way, and she seems to constantly linger on the border between dream and reality. In one of the final scenes, she is in front of the house with her mother, watching the huge aloe tree – the most important though never unambiguously explained symbol in the story:

> 'Do you feel it, too,' said Linda, and she spoke to her mother with the special voice that women use at night to each other as though they spoke in their sleep or from some hollow cave – 'Don't you feel that it is coming towards us?' [...] She dreamed that she was caught up out of the cold water into the ship with the lifted oars and the budding mast. Now the oars fell striking quickly, quickly. They rowed far away over the top of the garden trees, the paddocks and the dark bush beyond. Ah, she heard herself cry: 'Faster! Faster!' to those who were rowing. (Mansfield, 2006: 38)

In a dreamlike, oneiric state, which is stressed by the special voice she uses, Linda imagines the aloe tree as a ship carried by a wave approaching them. Her own voice is detached from her and belongs to another realm altogether: she can hear her own cries, and they are indeed represented through direct speech, though they are never uttered. Oneirism is thus in this story contrasted with narrative ruptures and onomatopoeic effects described earlier inasmuch as it represents events and speech that do not actually take place – ruptures and onomatopoeia, on the other hand, do not represent those that do take place. The imagery of the excerpt above might be linked to that of "The Wind Blows," where Matilda during her piano lesson feels as if she were in a cave, in a different world filled with music, where the noise of the Wellington wind cannot reach her. Linda's estrangement from reality is through dreams and dreamlike states to which she resorts in her attempts to escape the life she, as readers eventually find out, detests.

6. Becoming-child, Becoming-animal

The importance of children-focalisers in Mansfield's stories has already been stressed. It is especially in her later and more autobiographical stories that the

return to her own childhood (through Kezia's perspective) stands as a kind of homecoming, a journey through time instead of space towards her native New Zealand (cf. Wilson, 2011). Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between childhood memories (which have a reterritorializing function) and a childhood block, or the becoming-child, which is "the strict contemporaneousness of the adult and the child" (1987: 164). As the opposite of a childhood memory, becoming-child has a deterritorializing function. Accordingly, children in Mansfield's stories do not grow logically into adults (Matilda in "The Wind Blows" exists simultaneously as a teenager in the harbour and an adult on the deck) but instead coexist "with us [adults], in a zone of proximity or a block of becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that carries us both off – as opposed to the child we once were, whom we remember or phantasize" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1987: 294). Mansfield's stories particularly focus on becoming-child when they offer children's perspective or give children voice. They speak in a deterritorialized language: "'We've got a nuncle and anaunt living near our new house,'" says Kezia during her ride towards the new house in "Prelude," "'[...] He's got a ram. He has to feed it with a nenamuel teapot and a glove top over the spout" (Mansfield, 2006: 10). While she is arguably trying to regain the territory of home by relating stories about her family, her displacement at this particular moment is visible in the (childlike) language she uses. Even in the days following their move to the suburbs, Kezia and her sisters continue to explore and adjust to their new surroundings through children's language and games. The day after their father brings a pineapple as a gift for pregnant Linda (an event which might easily be someone's childhood memory), the girls play family, moving away from reterritorializing memories towards deterritorializing becoming, a world that exists only in their imagination:

> 'Yes, I've brought both my twins. I have had another baby since I saw you last, but she came so suddenly that I haven't had time to make her any clothes yet. So I left her... How is your husband?'
> 'Oh, he is very well, thank you. At least he had a nawful cold but Queen Victoria – she's my godmother, you know – sent him a case of pineapples and that cured it immediately. Is that your new servant?' (Mansfield, 2006: 28)

In a different game the same three sisters play with their cousins Pip and Rags in "At the Bay," all children become animals:

> 'You can't be a bee, Kezia. A bee's not an animal. It's a ninseck.' [...]
> The game proceeded. Mooe-ooo-er! The bull was terrible. He charged over the table and seemed to eat the cards up.
> Bss-ss! said the bee.
> Cock-a-doodle-do! Isabel stood up in her excitement and moved her elbows like wings. (Mansfield, 2006: 186, 187)[6]

6 "At the Bay" additionally features Florrie, the "talking cat," whose thoughts are directly expressed twice in the

Like children, animals are also minoritarian, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 291), and such "becoming-minoritarian exists only by virtue of a deterritorialized medium" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1987: 292), which is in this case the language – in its onomatopoeic impressionism and childlike talk. Whereas reterritorialization in the form of a childhood memory "yells 'Father! Mother!'" the childhood block "is elsewhere, in the highest intensities that the child constructs with his sisters, his pal, his projects and his toys" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 79). The Burnell children seem indeed utterly detached from their parents – Kezia and Lottie are left to travel alone to their new house, a neighbour takes care of them, and it is their grandmother who welcomes them on arrival and puts them to bed – and other stories also abound with seemingly or actually parentless children. Pearl, for instance, does not think of her mother once as she leaves with the Mâori women, and Fenella in "The Voyage" has lost her mother – she is virtually an orphan, "the most deterritorialized and the most deterritorializing figure" (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 79). Fenella is also being displaced from Wellington to Picton, and throughout "The Voyage" she watches over her grandma's umbrella, whose "handle, which was a swan's head, kept giving her shoulder a sharp little peck as if it too wanted her to hurry" (Mansfield, 2006: 260). Animal imagery permeates the story: there is a little boy in the harbour who looks like a baby fly, Fenella's grandmother has spider-like steps, and her grandfather in Picton looks like a very old bird (Mansfield, 2006: 260, 264, 267). To become an animal is a sort of escape – from the harsh reality in Fenella's case – which children can easily construct (Deleuze/Guattari, 1986: 12). As Deleuze and Guattari further claim, it is to children the crossing of a threshold in which "[t]here is no longer anything but movements, vibrations" (1986: 13). Fenella indeed is impressed by the movements of the ship and the waves on her overnight crossing, and so is Kezia by the movement of the coach that takes her and Lottie to their new home, or Pearl by the moving body of the Mâori woman who carries her. It is arguably through this motif of crossing a threshold and the related animal imagery, especially in the later stories such as "The Voyage" or "At the Bay" (first published in the 1922 collection *The Garden Party*) that Mansfield herself achieved her voyage back, into her childhood and to New Zealand – the voyage which her illness made impossible in real life.

7. Free Indirect Discourse

The narrative technique Mansfield most often uses to convey the perspective of children is free indirect discourse. Characteristic of modernist fiction – James Joyce's short stories in *Dubliners* stand as an exquisite example – free indirect discourse is one of the most distinctive features in Mansfield's stories. It is the crossing of a narrative threshold, wherein "the objective, indirect story from the camera's

story (Mansfield, 2006: 166, 192). There are numerous other examples of animal imagery in the New Zealand stories. For instance, Kezia says in "Prelude," as she is riding towards the new house, "I hate rushing animals like dogs and parrots," only to be greeted in the house by hundreds of parrots on the wallpaper (Mansfield, 2006: 10, 11). Her first encounter with her new home therefore leaves the impression of discomfort and non-belonging.

[narrator's] point of view and the subjective, direct story from the character's point of view" are merged into a specific third voice, each contaminating the other (Deleuze, 1989: 148). It is the "third voice of the *well-socialized individual*" (Moretti, 2007: 82) or "imperceptible discourse that is attributed to no-one" (Mansfield, 2015: 71). Speaking of the cinema which uses free indirect discourse, Deleuze refers to it as 'novelesque' (1989: 178), emphasising Bakhtinian polyphony and dialogism as the core of narrative writing. More importantly, because it is attributed to no one in particular and includes at least two voices in a single expression, free indirect discourse operates *collectively*, in that characters express themselves through the narrator and vice versa, and can therefore be interpreted as a proper narrative strategy for a minor literature. Through free indirect discourse, "we are left with an anonymous or pre-personal voice dispossessed by any fixed subject, a deterritorialized, mutated, confused, and contaminated language" (Salami/Rahmani, 2018: 151).

While all Mansfield's stories are rich in free indirect discourse, here it might be appropriate to look into several examples which focus more specifically on the New Zealand setting. An excerpt from "At the Bay" presents the summertime seaside (which Mansfield at that point of her life could visit only vicariously during her stays on the French and Italian riviera):

> Underneath waved the sea-forest – pink thread-like trees, velvet anemones, and orange berry-spotted weeds. Now a stone on the bottom moved, rocked, and there was a glimpse of a black feeler; now a thread-like creature wavered by and was lost. Something was happening to the pink, waving trees; they were changing to a cold moonlight blue. And now there sounded the faintest 'plop.' Who made that sound? What was going on down there? And how strong, how damp the seaweed smelt in the hot sun... (Mansfield, 2006: 180)[7]

Linguistic features of free indirect discourse are prominent: the repeated use of "now" and rhetorical questions, alongside the extra-linguistic characteristics such as the reference to the senses in the final sentence. There is, however, no character in this segment of the text to whom a half of this discourse might unambiguously be attributed (Kezia interferes with direct discourse two paragraphs later). It might therefore be assumed that it belongs to no one, as Charlie Mansfield describes it, or in Franco Moretti's words, to the (anonymous) well-socialised individual. It might even be suggested – and left open to further research – that it belongs to the author herself, or the author as she was while she lived in New Zealand. The excerpt in any case shows that free indirect discourse can free "signs from any single origin"

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7 The opening of the story offers a similar oneiric asubjective free indirect discourse, also describing the sea: "It looked as though the sea had beaten up softly in the darkness, as though one immense wave had come rippling, rippling – how far? Perhaps if you had waked up in the middle of the night you might have seen a big fish flicking in at the window and gone again..." (Mansfield, 2006: 165). Free indirect discourse is marked by "how far?" as well as the imagery and senses in the last sentences.

and thus effect deterritorialization (Colebrook, 2002: 116). Moreover, the group of characters to whom any free indirect discourse can potentially be attributed is more or less the same in "At the Bay" and "Prelude," while the same characters from a similar milieu also appear in "Her First Ball" and "The Garden Party." This milieu is that of colonial Wellington and its surroundings, the setting which is "English without being English," in which the Burnell family adjust to their new home – as we see through free indirect discourse – in the same way that the English adjust to living in New Zealand (Stafford, 2021: 95). Essential to their deterritorialization expressed through free indirect discourse is precisely the fact that their experience of difference and plurality is (physically and spatially) detached from any centrality that might be provided by an English setting. Thus in "Prelude" one of Linda's oneiric states is given in the form of free indirect discourse (marked by "now"):[8]

> In a steamer chair, under a manuka tree that grew in the middle of the front grass patch, Linda Burnell dreamed the morning away. [...] Now she sat on the veranda of their Tasmanian home, leaning against her father's knee. And he promised, 'As soon as you and I are old enough, Linny, we'll cut off somewhere, we'll escape.' (Mansfield, 2006: 177, 178)

In her new home, Linda attempts to reterritorialize her body and her experience of life through (recurrent) reminiscences of her father and her childhood spent elsewhere. But reterritorialization fails as in her memory Father promises escape. She resorts to her past as a safe haven, only to realise that the prospect of escape, displacement, deterritorialization was inherent in it. Manuka is significantly indigenous to New Zealand, which firmly places Linda Burnell within defined geographic coordinates, while free indirect discourse allows her mind to wander. Kezia too on her first day in the new house roams around the yard and contemplates (her free indirect discourse introduced by "did not believe" in the first sentence):

> She did not believe that she would ever not get lost in this garden. [...] there were so many little paths on either side. [...] The little paths here were wet and clayey with tree roots spanned across them like the marks of big fowls' feet. (Mansfield, 2006: 21–22)

The garden itself resembles the Deleuzian rhizome, a non-hierarchical network in which all elements are interrelated and which deterritorializes by rejecting any idea of a centre, while it is additionally represented (through Kezia's eyes) by means of animal imagery. While free indirect discourse in "Prelude" and "At the Bay" offers insight into the inner lives of various characters, there are obvious elements that

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8 As Phanida Simaporn observes analysing Mansfiled's use of free indirect discourse, "'Prelude' presents a community of women" (2017: 129). This might be brought into connection with yet another minoritarian practice – that of becoming-woman, whereby the deterritorializing Deleuzian effect of Mansfield's stories could be further strengthened.

connect those of Linda and Kezia, as well as Beryl – different women who find it difficult to harmonise their restless thoughts and wishes to be elsewhere with their immediate surroundings.

8. Conclusion

It is significant that all the elements analysed as indicative of the status of Katherine Mansfield's New Zealand stories as a minor literature can be found in nearly all of her stories. While many of them can also be found in Mansfield's stories which are not set in New Zealand, this particular combination of impressionism through onomatopoeic effects, narrative ruptures, oneirism and dreamwork, children's perspective and animal imagery, and free indirect discourse seems to be formative to Mansfield's unique New Zealand narrative. These elements thus participate in building the collective value of this narrative, which is one of the main characteristics of a minor literature: through recurring characters, motives, and images, as well as by means of sharing these elements, Mansfield's New Zealand stories provide a fictional universe of colonial New Zealand, which stands on the margins of various fictional universes of English literature by the very virtue of the "strangeness" it offers. The stories thus, in Deleuzian terms, offer the possibility of expressing a different community, consciousness, and sensibility. Another major characteristic of a minor literature, its politicalness, is also found in the fact that the lives of all the characters who occupy this universe is shaped by their circumstances in the distant colony. While explicit political motives can be seen in the pictures on the walls in "Millie" and "The Woman at the Store," the political also shapes Matilda's, Linda's, or Beryl's desire to escape the surroundings they arguably perceive (just as Mansfield herself did) as provincial, or Pearl's experience of being kidnapped. Finally, deterritorialization takes effect through the specific use of language, which attempts to avoid symbols, signs, or signification by approaching more closely the thing itself through creating onomatopoeic impressions, or else resists representation through narrative gaps and interpretation through oneirism. Deterritorialization also operates by providing multiple entries to the narrative through free indirect discourse, itself detached from any single voice, and creating a network of fluid perspectives and images, which emphasise impressions and the expression rather than the content, leaving the latter broken, disordered, and fragmented. It is also significant that a minor literature refers in effect to the revolutionary impulse of any literature, regardless of where it comes from, and it is perhaps precisely in this quality that we may observe the importance of the novelty and extraordinariness of Mansfield's writing in the context of literary modernism and beyond.

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Sažetak

ASPEKTI MANJINSKE KNJIŽEVNOSTI U NOVOZELANDSKIM PRIPOVETKAMA KETRIN MENSFILD

Iako je Ketrin Mensfild provela najvažnije godine karijere, okvirno drugu deceniju 20. veka, u samom središtu modernističkog pokreta, koji je tada bio u punom jeku, ipak je napisala i nekoliko pripovetki čija se radnja dešava na njenom rodnom Novom Zelandu. Posmatrajući Ketrin Mensfild kao autorku koja se u to doba višestruko nalazila na marginama engleske književnosti, u ovom radu pristupamo njenim novozelandskim pripovetkama iz teorijske perspektive koju pruža koncept 'manjinske književnosti', koji su definisali Žil Delez i Feliks Gatari. Kroz analizu jedanaest pripovetki identifikuju se oni elementi koji potencijalno doprinose opisivanju ovih novozelandskih pripovetki kao manjinske književnosti. Identifikovani elementi, koji su ilustrovani brojnim primerima, obuhvataju onomatopejsko dejstvo teksta, narativne prekide ili praznine, upliv snevanja ili oniričkih stanja u narativni diskurs, slike i perspektive dece i životinja, kao i čestu upotrebu (nikome pripisanog) slobodnog neupravnog diskursa. Kombinacija ovih elemenata deteritorijalizuje jezik novozelandskih pripovetki Ketrin Mensfild i obogaćuje ih političkom i kolektivnom vrednošću, ali i revolucionarnim književnim impulsom, usled čega one postaju prikladan primer manjinske književnosti.

Ključne reči:

Ketrin Mensfild, novozelandske pripovetke, manjinska književnost, deteritorijalizacija, onomatopeja, narativni prekidi, onirizam, deca, slobodni neupravni diskurs