

## **Indiscreet Journeys: Rewriting Katherine Mansfield**

Davide Manenti

A comparative study of the practices of writing, editing and translating sheds new light on the concept and process of rewriting. In turn, understanding the dynamics of rewriting unveils the interplay among those practices. This article discusses issues of rewriting through the ‘afterlife’ of one of Katherine Mansfield’s notebooks.

Key words: rewriting, Mansfield, editing, translation, retelling, memory

Une étude comparative des pratiques d’écriture, d’édition et de traduction permet de jeter un nouvel éclairage sur le concept et le processus de réécriture. À son tour, la compréhension de la dynamique de la réécriture nous dévoile comment ces pratiques interagissent entre elles. Cet article aborde différentes questions relatives à la réécriture partant de « l’après-vie » d’un des cahiers de Katherine Mansfield.

Mots clés : réécriture, Mansfield, révision, traduction, raconter, mémoire

In this paper I explore the process of rewriting embedded in writing, editing and translating. As case study, I use the ‘afterlife’ of one of Katherine Mansfield’s notebooks. I will emphasize the different motives behind each rewriting, but also the analogies underlying their structures and strategies.

Since the seminal work of André Lefevere, translation has been considered a telling example – indeed, “the most recognizable type”<sup>1</sup> – of rewriting. According to Lefevere, rewriting is ruled by “very concrete factors that are relatively easy to discern as soon as one decides to look for them, that is as soon as one eschews interpretation as the core of literary studies and begins to address issues such as power, ideology, institution, and manipulation.”<sup>2</sup> However, the concept of rewriting proposed by Lefevere leaves some questions unresolved. Methodological issues – particularly the vagueness of his terminology and some inconsistencies in his analyses – have been highlighted by other scholars.<sup>3</sup> Here I want to scrutinize the very notion of rewriting proposed by Lefevere. While it has been claimed that he approached translation (and other types of rewriting) “with the sort of analytical

sophistication that is usually reserved for original composition,”<sup>4</sup> in his model rewriting is nonetheless understood as a practice distinct from the practice of writing. His investigation, in fact, “deals with those in the middle, the men and women who do not write literature, but rewrite it.”<sup>5</sup> Lefevere argues that, especially in our days, the “non-professional reader increasingly does not read literature as written by its writers, but as rewritten by its rewriters.”<sup>6</sup> Despite his valuable critique of the Romantic notion of original, Lefevere makes a clear-cut distinction between writing and rewriting.

This distinction, however, does not hold – and the case studies he uses do not support his argument. For instance, Lefevere interprets Anne Frank’s ‘auto-editing’ of her diary as an example of rewriting performed for personal and literary reasons. I would argue that in this case rewriting – especially in its literary form – is very much part of the writing process. Who can say, along the creative journey of a writer, where writing ends and rewriting begins? Leaving aside the theoretical tenets of deconstruction for whom there is no writing *ex-nihilo*, we could simply maintain that rewriting is a crucial dimension of the overall writing process, and all the more so for the “men and women who write literature.” This assumption seems to be well-established in contemporary translation theories, as illustrated by recent investigations exploring creative aspects in translation and translating aspects in writing.<sup>7</sup> To put it in Lefevere’s terms, rewriting deals with “those in the extremes” as much as with “those in the middle.”

If rewriting is the common denominator underlying distinct practices, then a different definition of it is warranted. I would suggest that rewriting ought to be understood as a form of textual intervention variously performed in writing, editing, and translating. Examining each of these practices enhances our understanding of how rewriting works; at the same time, examining the process of rewriting can make us aware of how these practices interact.

I will now turn to a particular section of one of Mansfield's notebooks in order to describe the ways in which the writer employed it to write one of her stories. I will then compare this writing process with Murry's editing of the same material for the publication of the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (1927). Finally I will evaluate the Italian translation of Murry's version. Beyond the different motives and the different outcomes resulting in writing, editing and translation, is it possible to locate and theorize a 'common ground' underlying each of these practices?

### **Like an Elopement**

Katherine Mansfield's notebooks were not (or not so much) the on-going record of her inner life, but her workshop as a writer. They were the repository of her own experiments with style, the place where she archived countless 'preludes' of stories: beginnings, germinal plots, character outlines, vignettes, literary exercises – stepping-stones towards fiction. Sometimes Mansfield's jottings provide insights into her personal experiences; yet, even these 'diary entries' were often treated by Mansfield as literary occasions rather than withdrawals into self-contemplation. Some diary entries concerning her health problems are illuminating: "*Lumbago*: This is a very queer thing. So sudden, so painful. I must remember it when I write about an old man";<sup>8</sup> "and my sciatica! Put it on record, in case it ever goes, what pain it is. Remember to give it to someone in a story one day."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Katherine Mansfield was "a writer first and a woman after"<sup>10</sup> in every single drop of her ink.

Now, the events of Mansfield's life from late 1914 to February 1915 are well-documented in her journal entries. Her relationship with John Middleton Murry is not smooth, and from across the English Channel someone else is sending passionate letters to her: Francis Carco (1886-1958), a writer whom Murry himself had introduced to Mansfield in 1912. Mansfield is haunted by Carco's "warm sensational life."<sup>11</sup> She gets her photo taken to be sent to him,

reads his last novel, and tries to talk to Murry about her correspondence, but he refuses to take the affair seriously. At times, thinking about her relationship with John “Jack” Murry, Mansfield appears to be torn between love and disillusion: “I had such a longing to kiss Jack and say Goodbye Love.”<sup>12</sup> From the thirteenth of January, “Jack has got his own room.”<sup>13</sup> The day after, Mansfield receives a letter from Carco, once again asking her to join him in France. “This is going to be a very difficult business,”<sup>14</sup> Mansfield notes. The war zone was in fact forbidden to women. Nonetheless, Mansfield summons up her courage: on the sixteenth of February she is in Paris and three days later, deceiving the French Army Officials, she reaches Gray.

Mansfield leaves generous traces of this adventure in one of her notebooks.<sup>15</sup> On the twentieth of February, a Saturday morning, waiting for her “dejeuner”, she jots down her thoughts on the “queer night”<sup>16</sup> she has just spent with Carco. Her heart feels heavy. She is frightened that something might happen to him because of her visit (“I cant bear to think of him in prison”).<sup>17</sup> Besides, she starts to doubt her emotions: “I don’t really love him now I know him, but he is so rich and so careless – that I love.”<sup>18</sup> The notebook also contains two draft letters – one addressed to “Jaggle” Murry, the other to Frieda Lawrence. In the former, Mansfield describes the “awful moments”<sup>19</sup> of the trip, and the way in which she “dashed off like the wind” with Carco in a faded cab, toward a “large white house.”<sup>20</sup> In the latter, not much is added. Once again, Mansfield lingers on her “dreadful adventures,”<sup>21</sup> and briefly concludes with the image of “le petit soldat joyeux et jeune.”<sup>22</sup>

Next there is a longer entry, in which she gives an accurate account of her journey, dwelling on the description of places she saw and the people she met, the arrival in Gray, her meeting with “F.” Carco, the furtive kisses she exchanges with him in the cab, and their tearing away to the white house: “it was like an elopement.”<sup>23</sup> Shut alone in their room, the lovers finally

press “against each other a long long kiss.”<sup>24</sup> They have dinner and then lock themselves in their room again:

A whole life passed in the night: other people other things, but we lay like 2 old people coughing faintly under the eiderdown, and laughing at each other and away we went to India, to South America, to Marseilles in the white boat & then we talked of Paris & sometimes I lost him in a crowd of people & it was dark & frightening, & then he was in my arms again & we were kissing.<sup>25</sup>

Even such an autobiographical account is charged with the voltage of fiction writing. Indeed, Mansfield left France for England after four nights, disillusioned as a lover but with good copy for her work. In fact, the trip to Gray would represent the autobiographical background of “An Indiscreet Journey,” a 1915 story published posthumously in 1924. The plot of the story was Mansfield’s own experience, which she elaborated into a fictional narrative. Significantly, she minimized any explicit reference to the relationship between the character of the woman travelling to the front and her French lover, the “little corporal.” This choice might be interpreted as a case of self-censorship, but Mansfield’s intention, I would argue, was more sophisticated.

### **Crossing (out) the Line**

Part of the appeal of the fictional story rests in the tension between background and foreground, between what is deliberately left untold (the main purpose of the trip – the elopement) and what is profusely told (the description of the journey itself). The anonymous female narrator travelling in the war zone is officially visiting her aunt, but the reader infers the true motive of her journey by deciphering several clues dropped throughout the story. The girl wears a Burberry trench-coat, which is described as the “perfect and adequate disguise,” “the sign and the token of the undisputed venerable traveller.”<sup>26</sup> Her clandestine attitude is suggested to the reader when she faces the police at the Metro and the two colonels at her

arrival, or when she resists the nosy lady seated opposite her in the train carriage. Her anxious behaviour emerges when she rehearses the part of the niece: “ah, *mon Dieu* – I had forgotten the name of my uncle and aunt again! Buffard, Buffon – what was it? Again I read the unfamiliar letter in the familiar handwriting.”<sup>27</sup> Camouflage is corroborated by a narration that hints rather than tells: the characters are nameless or have their name replaced by an epithet – “St. Anne,” the “seagull,” the “bayonet,” “God I” and “God II.”

Also, the story is clearly set in France, but the toponyms (Gray and Châteaudun) are replaced by the letters X and X.Y.Z.. The dominant figure of speech, right from the beginning, is the simile: the comparison of one thing with another indicates the narrator’s escape to a different – fictional – level, opening a window on the narrator’s unreliability.<sup>28</sup> At the end of the first section of the story, the two lovers are shut alone in a room. At this point a less gifted writer could have reused the manuscript material of the love scene and lingered on it; instead, Mansfield wraps the scene up with a simple, sly innuendo: “Down went the suit-case, the postman’s bag, the *Matin*. I threw my passport up into the air, and the little corporal caught it.”<sup>29</sup> The passport – the object that symbolizes the threatened identity of the girl – is now in safe hands: nothing else is added; everything is understood by the reader.

All these elements contribute to a sophisticated narrative where everything is simultaneously told and untold. Mansfield focuses her fiction on the journey itself rather than on the purpose of it, a strategy that seems to stem from and develop an observation contained in the notebook: “The curious thing was that I could not concentrate on the end of the journey.”<sup>30</sup> The narrator swings between display and displacement, showing and concealment, holding onto the details of her journey to divert attention from her personal and hazardous situation as a character.

This strategy is confirmed by the ways in which Mansfield rewrites her journal entries and translates them into her fiction. The following comparison of similar passages from the notebook and the short story offers some examples of this rewriting (the bold face is mine):

<i>The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks</i>	<i>An indiscreet journey</i>
<p>A little boy very pale <b>running</b> from table to table taking the orders. [...] The little boy poured me out a glass of <b>horrible black</b> coffee. (Vol. II, p. 10)</p> <p>In the porch an old man arrived with a <b>panier</b> [<i>sic</i>] of brown <b>spotted</b> fish. Large fish – like the fish one sees in glass cases swim through forests of beautiful pressed seaweed. ... the old man stood humbly waiting for someone to attend to him, his cap in his hands – as though he knew that the life he represented in his <b>torn jacket</b> with his basket of fish – his peaceful occupation – did not exist any more [<i>sic</i>] &amp; had no right to thrust itself here. (Vol. II, pp. 10-11)</p> <p>We arrived at Gray &amp; one by one like women going in to see we slipped through the door into a hot room completely <b>filled</b> with 2 tables &amp; two colonels, <u>like colonels in comic opera</u>. Big shiny grey whiskered men with a touch of burnt red in the cheeks, both smoking, one <b>a cigarette with a long curly ash hanging from it</b>. He had a ring on his finger. Sumptuous &amp; omnipotent he looked. I shut my teeth. I kept my fingers from trembling as I handed the passport &amp; the ticket. <b>It wont do, it wont do at all</b>, said my colonel, &amp; looked at me for what seemed a long time in silence. His eyes were like 2 <b>grey stones</b>. He took my passport to the other colonel who dismissed his objection, stamped it &amp; let me go. I nearly knelt on the floor. F. terribly pale. He saluted, <b>smiled</b>, and said turn to the right &amp; follow me as though you were not following. (Vol. II, p. 11)</p> <p>When we came out stars were shining, through wispy clouds, and a moon <b>hung</b> like a candle flame over <b>the ponte</b> [<i>sic</i>] <b>church spire</b>. (Vol. II, pp. 11-12)</p>	<p>A little boy, very pale, <b>swung</b> from table to table, taking the orders, and poured me out a glass of <b>purple</b> coffee. (p. 441)</p> <p>Suddenly in the doorway I saw someone with a <b>pail</b> of fish – brown <b>speckled</b> fish, like the fish one sees in a glass case, swimming through forests of beautiful pressed sea-weed. He was an old man in a <b>tattered jacket</b>, standing humbly, waiting for someone to attend to him. A thin beard fell over his chest, his eyes under the tufted eyebrows were bent on the pail he carried. He looked as though he had escaped from some holy picture, and was entreating the soldiers' pardon for being there at all. (p. 442)</p> <p>It was a hot little room completely <b>furnished</b> with two colonels seated at two tables. They were large grey-whiskered men with a touch of burnt red on their cheeks. Sumptuous and omnipotent they looked. One smoked <b>what ladies love to call a heavy Egyptian cigarette, with a long creamy ash</b>, the other toyed with a gilded pen. Their heads rolled on their tight collars, like big over-ripe fruits. I had a terrible feeling, as I handed my passport and ticket, that a soldier would step forward and tell me to kneel. I would have knelt without question. 'What's this?' said God I., querulously. He did not like my passport at all. The very sight of it seemed to annoy him. He waved a dissenting hand at it, with a '<i>Non, je ne peux pas manger ça</i>' air. 'But <b>it won't do. It won't do at all</b>, you know. Look, – read for yourself,' and he glanced with extreme distaste at my photograph, and then with even greater distaste his <b>pebble eyes</b> looked at me. [...]</p> <p>Terribly pale, with a <b>faint smile</b> on his lips, his hand at salute, stood the little corporal. I gave no sign, I am sure I gave no sign. He stepped behind me. (pp. 443-444)</p> <p>Outside, stars shone between wispy clouds, and the moon <b>fluttered</b> like a candle flame over a <b>pointed spire</b>. (p. 449)</p>

Mansfield rewrites her raw jottings according to the narrative strategy I have described. Verbs, nouns, adjectives and images are meticulously altered with the purpose of further enhancing the visual representation of things and actions. “To run” turns in “to swing.” The “horrible black coffee” is shaded to “purple coffee.” The “panier of fish” is changed to the more precise “pail of fish,” and the adjectives “spotted” and “torn” are replaced with the less common “speckled” and “tattered.” The “cigarette with a long curly ash hanging from it” is revised into “what ladies love to call a heavy Egyptian cigarette, with a long creamy ash.”<sup>31</sup> The “2 grey stones” eyes of the colonel are rendered as “pebble eyes.” The “smil[e]” of Francis becomes the more plausible “faint smile” of the little corporal. The cursory records of dialogues in the notebook give way to a vivid dramatization. The moon does not simply “hang” in the story, but “flutter[s].”

I would argue that “An Indiscreet Journey,” like many other Mansfield’s stories, is not simply the result of an actual process of rewriting – based on previous material – but also a story *about* rewriting: a story that problematizes the fine line between reference and representation, between a diary entry and its literary reflection, a story enacting a writing strategy that exemplifies very specific issues at the heart of the rewriting process.

### **Editing for the Plot**

After Mansfield’s death in 1923, her private papers and notebooks were ‘reused’ for the publication of the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* in 1927.<sup>32</sup> The text was edited by Mansfield’s husband and literary executor, John Middleton Murry, who wanted to promote and control the growing literary fame of his wife. Murry also wanted to protect his own reputation, somewhat tarnished by Mansfield’s criticism of him in her diary entries. These motives can be easily worked out by collating Murry’s version with Mansfield’s manuscripts,

which are now available in Margaret Scott's transcription, published in 1997 as *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*.

In Genette's terminology, Murry's editing process can be read as excision performed by amputation (a "single massive excision")<sup>33</sup> and by trimming ("multiple excisions disseminated throughout the text").<sup>34</sup> In addition to this, Murry occasionally altered Mansfield's text, watering down compromising remarks about him and other people and making the text consistent with the 'revised edition' of his wife's life.

Glaring examples of this process can be found in how Murry edited the Gray episode. The first journal entry (the twentieth of February) and part of the second entry (namely the paragraph containing the love scene with Carco) are cut out. The letter to Frieda Lawrence is introduced as "An unposted letter written in the diary"; her name, which Mansfield mentions in the body of the letter, is replaced with the words "my dear."<sup>35</sup> The recipient of the second "unposted letter" was "Jaggle" (a *nom the plume* for Murry). Like the more recurring "Jack," Jaggle is disguised by the initial "J." In her letter Mansfield tells Murry about the "white house where he had taken a room for me." As Gerri Kimber points out, in his edited version "Murry had written 'where *they* had taken a room for me' [...]. The use of 'they' implies a much more impersonal, innocent reason for a journey and is much less difficult to explain than the word 'he,' with its attendant notion that Mansfield is a 'femme seule.'"<sup>36</sup>

In other passages of Murry's version, the name of Francis disappears under an unknown "he." Murry further censored the text by editing out any allusion to Mansfield's relationship with Carco. Besides the twentieth of February entry and the 'love scene' of the second entry, he also excised the ending of Frieda's letter (with the image of the "petite soldat joyeux et jeune") and other compromising details (Carco's loving words and the mention of the lovers' kiss in the cab). In the *Journal* Mansfield's 'reportage' ends with the words "It was like an elopement."<sup>37</sup> The simile appears in the manuscript as the amused remark of someone who

was actually experiencing an elopement,<sup>38</sup> but in the *Journal* the same words leave the reader quite puzzled. Why did Mansfield go to France? Who was the man she met at the front and what was the nature of their relationship? Not a single word is given by the editor to address these legitimate questions. The journey to Gray was *like* an elopement, but one is led to conclude that it was not actually one.

The suppression of the context and the consequent foregrounding of the diarist's isolated voice appear to be a distinctive feature of Murry's editing strategy. The journal entries that precede the 1915 journey to France are filled with unflattering remarks about Murry and other people; these remarks were painstakingly removed in the editing process, as the following example illustrates:

<i>The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks</i>	<i>Journal of Katherine Mansfield</i>
Spent another frightful day. Nothing helps or could help me except a person who could guess. And Jack is too far absorbed in his own affairs poor dear to ever do so. Also, he doesn't consider the people within his reach, psychologically speaking. As long as ones mood isn't directed towards or against him hes quite unconscious an unsuspecting. Very sane, but lonely and difficult for me to understand. Saw Campbell and talked L.S.D. Went for a walk & had some vague comfort given by some children and the noise of water, like rising waves. (Vol. I, pp. 282-83)	Spent another frightful day. Nothing helps or could help me except a person who could guess. Went for a walk and had some vague comfort given by some children and the noise of water like rising waves. (p. 12)

These two versions project two very different 'implied authors.' From the text edited by Murry, Mansfield emerges as a solipsistic, delicate young woman, with a melancholic temperament, who finds some consolation in children and in the noise of water. The manuscript version, on the contrary, reveals an observer focused on other people rather than on herself, an observer endowed with a rare degree of perception. The psychological portrait of Murry is briefly but shrewdly sketched. Moreover, the text of the manuscript contains a

recurrent element in Mansfield's notebooks that is often suppressed in the edited *Journal: L.S.D.* The acrostic stands for 'librae, solidi, denarii' and means 'pounds, shillings, and pence' – that is to say, money. This example shows how the textual trimming of Murry's editing was functional to the image of his wife he was adamant to portray.

Although the motives of Murry's editing were different from the artistic motives underlying Mansfield's writing, I would argue that common ground can be found in the tension between display and displacement that underpins both practices. What can be preserved or highlighted, and what can be downplayed or discarded? What is the foreground of the story and what should be left in the background? How can a certain meaning be effectively displayed? How can it be silently displaced? In my opinion, these questions apply not only to Mansfield's (re)writing strategy but also to Murry's editing. Now selecting and arranging Mansfield's entries, now excising and censoring the text, now disguising and concealing what her wife had written, Murry presented to readers the narrative of "a complete and graceful *persona* as a writer, true in the essentials, but over-rarefied."<sup>39</sup>

Narratives about Mansfield have continued to flourish over the years. Curiously, Francis Carco became one of the perpetuators of Mansfield's sentimental legend in France.<sup>40</sup> To this widespread narrative other critics – and especially biographers – have opposed what may be called a counter-narrative. "Once upon a time a sensitive soul was born in New Zealand," writes Brigid Brophy, "took the name of Katherine Mansfield and came to Europe, where she wrote evocative fragments, loved delicately, and died young – technically of pulmonary tuberculosis but really because life was too gross for her... Fortunately, this banal person never existed."<sup>41</sup> By using the clichés of a story, Brophy alludes to the ironic fortune of the great story-teller: the fate of being 'retold' by someone else. Consciously or otherwise, the narrative drive has ruled – and continues to rule – the rewritings of the life and work of the elusive Mansfield. Narrative responds to the reader's desire for meaning ("la passion du

sens,” as Barthes would call it);<sup>42</sup> yet, narrative is also the simplest and most effective way of controlling meaning – to the extent of erasing it. Indeed, the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* is the visible record of a meaningful life and the invisible record of its detention.<sup>43</sup>

If rewriting is the response to a narrative drive, then the rhetoric of Murry’s ‘fiction’ comes to bear special consequences for its readers. So what about the relationship between editing and translation – the “most intimate act of reading”?<sup>44</sup>

### **Translating ‘Mansfield’**

Mara Fabietti’s Italian translation of the *Journal* – entitled *Diario* and published by Corbaccio in 1933 – can be read as a diluted version of the original text.<sup>45</sup> The inside cover already sets the mood of sentimentality for the reader: the book is included in the “Sezione Scarlatta,” a series conceived by the publisher for “Romanzi d’amore, intimisti e psicologici.”<sup>46</sup> This peritextual signal reflects the interpretation of Mansfield put forward by contemporary Italian criticism. However, such an interpretation was indubitably based on the image of Mansfield that Murry set out to promote. This explains why the translator’s strategies followed and even enhanced the editor’s strategies. Indeed, the sentimental and intimate overtones of Mansfield’s text, magnified by Murry’s editing, are taken even further by Fabietti. Sometimes, Mansfield’s figurative images – those accurately copied by Murry – are spelled out in the translated text, and their poetic strength is watered down into affected observations. Similarly, idiosyncratic punctuation is further rationalized – in the same direction of Murry’s editorial choices – and the fast, sometimes disrupted rhythm of Mansfield’s jottings is rearranged in a plain, loose form. It should be noted that Fabietti did not have access to Mansfield’s manuscripts (which became available to scholars only after Murry’s death), and so her translation must be evaluated against Murry’s version.

Let us take a closer look at how Mansfield’s journey to France is given to be read in this Italian translation. As mentioned earlier, Murry’s version in the *Journal* leaves the reader rather puzzled about Mansfield’s trip to France. Nonetheless, it is still possible to figure out that it was “like an elopement,” translated by Fabietti as “[s]embrava una fuga.” The Italian word “fuga” is a general term, corresponding to the English “escape.” It does not necessarily imply a romantic affair. This latter implication is thus completely lost in Fabietti’s translation. Another significant shift can be observed in the letter to Frieda. In the source text Frieda’s name is replaced by Murry with the anonymous “dear,” which is translated into Italian as “mio caro.”<sup>47</sup> In English, “dear” can be either feminine or masculine, according to the gender of the person to which it refers. The selection of the masculine gender in the translated text makes it likely that Fabietti interpreted the text as a letter to Mansfield’s partner – and the only partner of Mansfield mentioned in the *Journal* is “J.” Murry. This is a plausible interpretation given that Fabietti only had Murry’s text at her disposal. However, the result of this interpretation is that the words originally written for Frieda Lawrence now sound like the words of a caring spouse, according to the sentimental dominant of the target text:

<i>Journal of Katherine Mansfield</i>	<i>Diario</i>
But I am so happy I must just send you a word on a spare page of my diary, dear. (p. 24)	Ma son tanto felice, che non posso far a meno di mandare a te, mio caro, qualche frase su una pagina disponibile del mio diario. (p. 42) [But I’m so happy, that I cannot help but send you, my dear (man), some phrases on a spare page of my diary.] <sup>48</sup>
We shall see each other some day, won’t we, darling? (p. 24)	Ci rivedremo pure un giorno o l’altro, non ti pare, mio carissimo? (p. 43) [We will see each other one day, won’t we, my dearest (man)?]

In the letter to Murry, the expression “J. dearest” is translated simply as “carissimo.” The “J” of Jaggle disappears from the page. This choice seems to further enhance the process of disguise enacted in Murry’s editing. It also supports the hypothesis I put forward earlier: it would have been pointless to name someone whose identity can be inferred from the context. The Italian translator possibly assumed that Mansfield was writing again to “Jaggle” Murry. These apparently small changes lead to a distorted view of the historical Mansfield and of her troubled relationship with Murry at this particular point in her life.

Furthermore, in Fabietti’s translation, Mansfield’s prose undergoes a general embellishment – a process that profoundly alters the diarist’s voice. In the following passages, the description of soldiers and men is considerably refined:

<i>Journal of Katherine Mansfield</i>	<i>Diario</i>
It was full of soldiers sitting back in the chairs and swinging their legs and eating. The men shouted through the windows. (p. 25)	La stanza era piena di soldati, seduti impalati sulle loro seggiole; facevano dondolare le gambe e mangiavano. Lanciavano saluti attraverso le finestre. (p. 44) [The room was full of soldiers, stock-still in their chairs; they would swing their legs and eat. They waved their greetings through the windows.]
The soldiers laughed and slapped each other. They tramped about in their heavy boots. (p. 26)	I soldati ridevano e scherzavano tra loro. Se n’andavano intorno con gli scarponi pesanti. (p. 45) [The soldiers laughed and cracked jokes among them. They walked around in their heavy boots.]

And embellishment, often, is pure rewriting. For example, when Mansfield describes Carco who “merely *sang* (so typical) ‘Follow me, but not as though you were doing so,’”<sup>49</sup> Fabietti translates it as: “*Cantò* semplicemente l’arietta ben nota: ‘Seguitemi, ma non ve ne fate accorgere [He simply sang the well-known arietta: ‘Follow me, but without being noticed].’”<sup>50</sup> The circumspect French corporal is made to sound like an Italian opera singer.

Another deforming tendency to be observed in Fabietti’s translated text is clarification, which leads to serious mistranslations. Consider this passage:

<i>Journal of Katherine Mansfield</i>	<i>Diario</i>
<p>The last old Pa-man who saw my passport, ‘M. le Colonel,’ very grand with a black tea-cosy and gold tassel on his head, and smoking what lady novelists call a ‘heavy Egyptian cigarette,’ nearly sent me back. (p. 24)</p>	<p>L’ultima persona che ha visto il mio passaporto, “il signor colonnello”, quasi, quasi, non mi lasciava passare. Era un tipo di vecchio papà, molto imponente nella nera giacca da casa e col suo berretto a nappina dorata in capo; egli fumava ciò che le romanziere definiscono una “forte sigaretta egiziana”. (p. 43)</p> <p>[The last person who saw my passport, Mr Colonel, very nearly sent me back. He was the ‘old-dad-type,’ very imposing in his black housecoat, and his cap with golden tassel on his head; he was smoking what female novelists call a ‘heavy Egyptian cigarette.’]</p>

“Pa-man” – a familiar expression originally used to describe Arthur Beauchamp (Mansfield’s grandfather), and which “seems to mean a cheerfully feckless character who is always the first to make a joke of his own deficiencies”<sup>51</sup> – is translated here as *vecchio papà* [old dad] and elsewhere as *uomo straordinario* [extraordinary man].<sup>52</sup> The “tea-cosy” – the metaphor used by Mansfield to describe the hat of “M. le Colonel” – is not only neutralized but also incorrectly understood as *giacca da casa* [housecoat]. The humorous undertones that the use of French expressions (“M. le Colonel”) brings to the text are nullified when translated into Italian. Furthermore, the Italian text is visibly longer than the English one: the swiftness of Mansfield’s jottings is heavily stretched and slowed down by Fabietti’s embroidered syntax. The rendition of rhythms and punctuation – an aspect that Mansfield considered “inferentially difficult”<sup>53</sup> – also reveals the dominant traits of the target text. Consider, for example, the translation of this passage:

<i>Journal of Katherine Mansfield</i>	<i>Diario</i>
But once fed with my suit-case and our two selves, it dashed off like the wind, the door opening and shutting, to his horror, as he is not allowed in cabs. (p. 25)	Appena caricata la mia valigia e saliti noi stessi nel veicolo, esso si mosse come il vento; la portiera s'apriva e si chiudeva con grande ansia di lui, perché non aveva il permesso di viaggiare in carrozza. (p. 44) [As soon as my luggage was loaded and we got into the vehicle, it moved like the wind; the door would open and shut to his anxiety, because he was not allowed to drive in a coach.]

The translator replaced the comma with the semicolon, restraining the rhythm of the text, which is further weighed down by the switch from the present tense in the English text (“he is not allowed”) to the past tense in the Italian version (“non aveva il permesso”).

It is interesting to compare the punctuation of the edited and translated texts against Mansfield’s original notebook: “But once fed with my suitcase and our two selves it dashed off like the wind – the door opening and shutting, to his horror, as he is not allowed in cabs.”<sup>54</sup> Where Murry chose to use a comma and Fabietti a semicolon, Mansfield had opted for her signature dash – particularly appropriate to *show* the ‘dash’ of the action described.

The overuse of the exclamation mark in both the edited and translated texts is another sign of how profoundly the author’s voice has been adulterated. Mansfield used it moderately in her notebooks and fiction. In editing her journal and stories, Murry quite often replaced a full stop or a dash with an exclamation mark. The result is that where Mansfield’s text sounds intensely detached, the edited version sounds intensely emotional, even girlish. The Italian translation further emphasizes this aspect by adding *ad libitum* even more exclamation marks, as this excerpt from the letter to Frieda demonstrates:

<i>Journal of Katherine Mansfield</i>	<i>Diario</i>
<p>But, my dear, it's such wonderful country – all rivers and woods and large birds that look blue in the sunlight. (p. 24)</p> <p>Oh, I have so much to tell you I'd better not begin. We shall see each other some day, won't we, darling? (p. 24)</p>	<p>Oh, mio caro, che paese meraviglioso! Tutto fiumi e boschi e grandi uccelli, che sembrano azzurri nella luce del sole. (p. 43)</p> <p>[Oh, my dear (man), what wonderful country! All rivers and woods and big birds, which look blue in the sunlight.]</p> <p>Oh! Avrei tanto da dirti; è meglio non cominciare neppure. Ci rivedremo pure un giorno o l'altro, non ti pare, mio carissimo? (p. 43)</p> <p>[Oh! I had so much to tell you; I'd better not begin. We will see each other, one day or another, my dearest (man)?]</p>

All these examples of translation strategies are quite consistent with the publisher's series, with contemporary Italian appreciations of Mansfield, and with the way in which her husband's editing portrayed her.

The tension between foreground and background at the heart of the rewriting process is exemplified by translation, which always implies an act of interpretation – that is to say, the selection of a form and a meaning and the simultaneous discarding of other forms and other meanings. Some of Fabietti's choices seem to have been influenced by the persuasive and invisible rhetoric of Murry's editing, confirming the interplay between two different types of rewriting.

## Conclusions

Using Katherine Mansfield as a case study, I have argued that rewriting cannot simply be understood as a process that sits “in the middle” of writing and reading. As Mansfield's story “An Indiscreet Journey” illustrates, writing is indeed rewriting and, as Genette pointed out, “the practice of rewriting is built upon (and in its turn reinforces) a practice of reading.”<sup>55</sup>

More specifically, my argument is that rewriting is always poised between processes of display and displacement, and that the displacement of meaning potentially leads to its final deletion. In conclusion, an exploration of rewriting is not simply an epistemological journey: it is also an ethical one. To unveil the rewriting of a text or of a life – to witness its afterlife – is always an attempt to solve the paradox of memory: what has been preserved or retained is also what has been lost or suppressed.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems. Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999), pp. 124-129; Dimitris Asimakoulas, "Rewriting," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, eds. Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 241-245.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator Studies Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> See in particular the papers collected in *The Practice of Literary Translation: Constraints and Creativity*, eds. Jean Boase-Beier and Michael Holman (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, ed. Margaret Scott (Canterbury: Lincoln University Press and Daphne Brasell Associates, 1997), Vol. II, p. 319.

<sup>9</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 323.

<sup>10</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Collective Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, eds. Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Vol. IV, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. I, p. 285.

<sup>12</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, pp. 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, pp. 1-12.

<sup>16</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 9. The missing apostrophe in this and other passages represents Mansfield's *usus scribendi* in her notebooks as faithfully transcribed by Scott in her edition.

<sup>18</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, pp. 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 10.

- 
- <sup>23</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 11.
- <sup>24</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 11.
- <sup>25</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 12.
- <sup>26</sup> Katherine Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, eds. Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), Vol. I, p. 439.
- <sup>27</sup> Katherine Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," p. 442.
- <sup>28</sup> Some examples from Katherine Mansfield's "An Indiscreet Journey" include: "She is like St. Anne" (p. 439); "I jumped out of my pyjamas and into a basin of cold water like any English lady in any French novel" (p. 439); "trees ... grouped together like negroes conversing" (439); "the echoing stairs ... like a piano flicked by a sleepy housemaid" (p. 439); "their heads rolled on their tight collars, like big over-ripe fruits" (p. 443); "the village houses ... like a company of beggars perched on the hill-side" (p. 445).
- <sup>29</sup> Katherine Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," p. 445.
- <sup>30</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 10.
- <sup>31</sup> The particular of the "Egyptian cigarette" is taken from the letter to Frieda Lawrence and slightly changed in the story.
- <sup>32</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1927). In 1954 Murry published the "definitive edition" of the *Journal*, where he restored many of the passages he had left out in the 1927 edition. In this paper I consider only the first edition because of its historical significance: it was this version that launched the myth of Katherine Mansfield – a myth that lasted well beyond the so-called definitive edition.
- <sup>33</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 229.
- <sup>34</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests*, p. 230.
- <sup>35</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, p. 24.
- <sup>36</sup> Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), p. 145.
- <sup>37</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, p. 27.
- <sup>38</sup> In this particular case the simile does not represent a movement from reality to fiction – as the other instances of simile in "An Indiscreet Journey" seem to suggest – and this is why it was not reused in the story.
- <sup>39</sup> Ian Gordon, "The Editing of Katherine Mansfield's *Journal* and *Scrapbook*," *Landfall* 13 (1959), p. 69.
- <sup>40</sup> See Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield*, pp. 198-99.
- <sup>41</sup> Brigid Brophy, *Don't Never Forget: Collected Views and Reviews* (London: Cape, 1966), p. 255.
- <sup>42</sup> Quoted in Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 19. The dynamic narrative model offered by Peter Brooks can be employed to describe many examples of rewriting. Brooks understands the narrative plot as a metonymic chain that simultaneously unpacks and leads to a metaphoric meaning. The editing of the *Journal* works in these terms: it is the intentional quest for a metaphoric meaning (the 'same-but-different' portrait of Mansfield), which in turn rests on a metonymic, textual adjustment.
- <sup>43</sup> A recent example of this dual nature of narrative can be found in the latest biography of Mansfield: Kathleen Jones' *Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller* (London: Penguin, 2010). The cover blurb claims that this book, "gives a vivid portrayal of Mansfield correcting previous misinterpretations." The gripping narrative structure of the book, however, is

---

sometimes achieved at the expense of reliability. In the discussion of the Gray episode, for instance, Jones cites – without distinction – from Scott’s edition of Mansfield’s *Notebooks* and from “An Indiscreet Journey.” The fine line between the document and the fictional account is thus blurred to the extent that, in the endnotes, a passage from “An Indiscreet Journey” is incorrectly assigned to the *Notebooks*.

<sup>44</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Politics of Translation,” in *The Translator Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 370.

<sup>45</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Diario*, trans. Mara Fabietti (Milano: Corbaccio, 1933). Fabietti also translated the 1954 ‘definitive edition’ of the *Journal*, now out of print. Fabietti’s 1927 version, with a few editorial changes, was republished in 2002 by Robin and reprinted in 2011.

<sup>46</sup> “Scarlet Section”; “Romance, Intimist and Psychological Fiction.” A more fitting series would have been the “Ultramarine Section” where diaries are published.

<sup>47</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Diario*, p. 42.

<sup>48</sup> This back translation and all subsequent back translations are mine.

<sup>49</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>50</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Diario*, p. 43.

<sup>51</sup> Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *Diario*, p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, eds. Vincent O’Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), Vol. IV, p. 119.

<sup>54</sup> Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*, Vol. II, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests*, p. 230.

## Bibliography

ALPERS, Antony. *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

ASIMAKOULAS, Dimitris. “Rewriting.” In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. Eds. Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 241-245.

BOASE-BEIER, Jean and Michael HOLMAN, eds. *The Practice of Literary Translation: Constraints and Creativity*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1999.

BROOKS, Peter. *Reading for the Plot. Design and Intention in Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

BROPHY, Brigid. *Don’t Never Forget: Collected Views and Reviews*. London: Cape, 1966.

GENETTE, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

GORDON, Ian A. “The Editing of Katherine Mansfield’s Journal and Scrapbook.” *Landfall* 13 (1959): 62-69.

---

HERMANS, Theo. *Translation in Systems. Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999.

JONES, Kathleen. *Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller*. London: Penguin, 2010.

KIMBER, Gerri. *Katherine Mansfield. The View from France*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008.

LEFEVERE, André. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

MANSFIELD, Katherine. "An Indiscreet Journey." In *Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, Vol. I, pp. 439-451.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Diario*, trans. Mara Fabietti. Milano: Corbaccio, 1933.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*. Ed. John Middleton Murry. London: Constable, 1927.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*. Ed. Margaret Scott. Canterbury: Lincoln University Press and Daphne Brasell Associates, 1997.

SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Politics of Translation." In *The Translator Studies Reader*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. New York: Routledge, 2004.

VENUTI, Lawrence, ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.