

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE ALTERED EFFECTS

The Oxford University Press adaptation by Rosalie Kerrr preserves the original traits of Mansfield's selected short stories at a high degree. The themes and basic literary techniques: plotlines, characterization, points of view, setting, symbolism, and irony, are faithfully kept, although slight changes of the language style can be found as discussed in Chapter 3. The language modification to cater for the new target audience creates altered effects: more accessibility, less sophistication, less interactive quality, and less emotional intensity.

More Accessibility

Lexical, syntactic, and figurative complexity, as well as length, can obstruct the readers. In the adapted texts, such reading hindrances are reduced. The text, therefore, becomes more approachable. Two qualities which contribute to accessibility of the texts include brevity and clarity.

1. Brevity

In the original version, the author's artistic arrangement of literary techniques to present the themes can make the text complicated and full of details or statements that require interpretation. This can be a disadvantage for inexperienced readers who may be intimidated by the length as well as details which may seem irrelevant at first glance. In the adapted version, the reteller minimizes details, mostly through deletion and interpretive restatement. This shortens the texts, bringing the readers faster to the core. The reduction of each retold story varies, depending on the reteller's judgment on what to be kept. The table below shows the percentage of the reduction of six stories compared with the original length.

Title	Original Version	OUP'S Level 5	Reduction
The Garden Party	5,408(100%)	4,649(86%)	14%
The Doll's House	2,790(100%)	2,395(86%)	14%
The Woman at the Store	4,041(100%)	2,312(57%)	43%
The Little Governess	5,891(100%)	3,447(59%)	41%
Her First Ball	2,582(100%)	1,978(77%)	23%
Millie	2,191(100%)	1,805(82%)	18%

According to the table, about 40% or nearly half of two stories, “The Woman at the Store” and “The Little Governess” disappears. Such a great decrease results from their heavy loads of difficult elements as well as ornaments. It is interesting that even though the original text of “The Garden Party” is shorter than that of “The Little Governess,” the simplified version of “The Garden Party” is longer. This is because the former story is in general more approachable to the target audience, as the story evolves around a child’s experience. On the contrary, “The Little Governess” deals with life in another culture (Europe) and adult’s matters.

Through abridgement, the stories become more compact. Two stories chosen for discussion are “The Woman at the Store,” and “The Little Governess.”

In “The Woman at the Store,” despite 40% off, the adapted version can still present the theme of isolation and loneliness with its shocking ending. The deletion are colloquial expressions, some details and the narrator’s dream already discussed in Chapter 2 and 3, a complicated adult’s stuff relating to the sexual overtone of the story.

In “The Little Governess,” the reduction covers mostly elements which support the little governess’s judging others by appearance. In the adapted version, this is kept with much less elaboration. The reduction makes the story more compact and approachable as seen in the following two examples.

The first example is the minimized details on the protagonist’s judging of the old man from his appearance.

Careful to see that he was not looking she peeped at him through her long lashes. He sat extremely upright, the chest thrown out, the chin well in, knees pressed together, reading a German paper. That was why he spoke French so funnily. He was a German. Something in the army, she supposed—a Colonel or a General—once, of course, not now; he was too old for that now. How spick and span he looked for an old man. He wore a pearl pin stuck in his black tie and a ring with a dark red stone on his little finger; the tip of a white silk handkerchief showed in the pocket of his double-breasted jacket. Somehow, altogether, he was really nice to look at. Most old men were so horrid. She couldn't bear them doddery—or they had a disgusting cough or something. But not having a beard—that made all the difference—and then his cheeks were so pink and his moustache so very white. Down went the German paper and the old man leaned forward with the same delightful courtesy: “Do you speak German, Mademoiselle?” (179)

Really, he looked so nice, sitting there, so straight-backed and neat, reading his German newspaper. Some old men were horrible, but he...He put down his newspaper. ‘Do you speak German, Mademoiselle?’ (48)

In the adapted version, the little governess's stream of consciousness as she observes the old man's manners, physical appearance, as well as clothing, and her judgement is much reduced. The reteller only presents the core part of the text “he was really nice to look at” and some small details suggesting her admiration. This helps make the readers get to the important point at once.

The second deletion is the scene at a café which discloses the little governess's rejection of a gypsy band because of their ugly looks.

After lunch they went to a café to hear a gypsy band, but she did not like that at all. Ugh! such horrible men were there with heads like eggs and cuts on their faces, so she turned her chair and cupped her burning

cheeks in her hands and watched her old friend instead Then they went to the Englischer Garten. (186)

After lunch they went to the English Garden. (53)

The protagonist's disgust of the gypsy's appearance and admiration of the old man support the theme of the misjudgement from appearance. However, this is also deleted for the sake of brevity which is important for less advanced readers. Yet, as these details have their function, the deletion has an impact on the retold version.

2. Clarity

Text adaptation can facilitate reading by eliminating obstacles such as unfamiliar expressions, poetic language, or ambiguous texts as elaborated in Chapter 3, these are treated carefully through several strategies to make the intended points clear. As seen, the modifications are quite discreet, occurring only where they are really necessary such as in the cases of foreignism, cultural specifics or those requiring literary interpretations. The clarity achieved through this process is, therefore commendable as the text still appears quite authentic. Besides the reteller's skill, we may attribute this success to the fact that the book is for a relatively advanced readers, being a collection of stage-five fictions. Such readers, presumably, can handle some literary texts if properly selected and prepared.

Less Sophistication

Sophistication implies knowledge of life complexity. Sophisticated texts often hint at dark motives, or hidden sides of life. To understand them, one needs to decipher the given clues. A sophisticated text gives observant readers a chance to have a closer look at the characters' inner world through their verbal expressions, characters' interactions, or descriptive suggestions. That is how Mansfield subtly portrays her characters. In the adapted version, a few of these delicate hints disappear as they may be considered beyond the target readers' interest, resulting in a decreased degree of sophistication. Below is an example from "The Doll's House."

“Wicked, disobedient little girl!” said Aunt Beryl bitterly to Kezia, and she slammed the doll’s house to.

The afternoon had been awful. **A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman’s Bush, he’d come to the front door and ask the reason why!** But now that she had frightened those little rats of the Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming. (390-391)

‘Bad, disobedient little girl!’ Aunt Beryl said bitterly to Kezia, and she closed the doll’s house with a bang.

Aunt Beryl had been having a terrible day, but now that she had got rid of those little animals the Kelveys and shouted at Kezia, she felt a lot better. She went back into the house singing (15).

The original version suggests that Aunt Beryl’s being upset is caused by a threat—her hidden affair will be exposed by her secret lover. The irony here is her calling the generous and innocent Kezia “wicked, disobedient” while trying to keep her really “wicked and disobedient” behaviour secret. The ironic revelation of her concealed life gives a sharper glimpse of her character: a heartless woman, appearing to uphold social rules while hiding her own more serious misconduct, a typical Victorian hypocrite. The omission of this part in the retold version decreases its sophistication.

In the adapted version of “The Woman at the Store,” the readers’ chance to learn more about the protagonist’s motive is similarly restricted when her husband’s maltreatment of her is not given.

“Now listen to me,” shouted the woman, banging her fist on the table. “It’s six years since I was married, **and four miscarriages.** I says to ’im, I says, what do you think I’m doin’ up ’ere? **If you was back at the Coast I’d ’ave you lynched for child murder.** Over and over I tells ’im—you’ve broken my spirit and spoiled my looks, and wot for—that’s

wot I'm driving at." She clutched her head with her hands and stared round us. Speaking rapidly, "Oh, some days—an' months of them—I 'ear them two words knockin' inside me all the time—'Wot for!' but sometimes I'll be cooking the spuds an' I lifts the lid off to give 'em a prong and I 'ears, quite suddin again, 'Wot for!' Oh! I don't mean only the spuds and the kid—I mean—I mean," She hiccougged—"you know what I mean, Mr Jo."

....

"Trouble with me is," she leaned across the table, "he left me too much alone. **When the coach stopped coming, sometimes he'd go away days, sometimes he'd go away weeks, and leave me ter look after the store. Back 'e'd come – pleased as Punch. Oh, 'allo,' 'e'd say. 'Ow are you gettin' on? Come and give us a kiss.' Sometimes I'd turn a bit nasty, and then 'e'd go off again, and if I took it all right, 'e'd wait till 'e could twist me round 'is finger, then 'e'd say, 'Well, so long, I'm off,' and do you think I could keep 'im? – not me!"** (558)

The woman was shouting. 'Six years I've been here,' she told us, 'and it's broken me, living here. I told him, it's broken me, taken away everything I had. Left me with this kid and nothing else. Trouble is,' she went on, 'he left me alone too much. He'd go off for weeks, leave me all alone here. He'd never stay long.' (70)

The original story presents what the woman suffers, not only loneliness, but also his abuses which causes her miscarriages—hinting at his inhumanity which motivates the murder.

Although sophistication helps widen the readers' experience, the reteller limits herself to only what the readers really need to know, the basic storyline. The omission of some details, therefore, decreases some of the character's psychological depth.

Less Interactive Quality

Mansfield leaves some space for the readers to fill in with their imagination or to interpret. This includes indirectness and innovative figurative language. In the adapted texts, the reteller's attempt to decrease text difficulty often diminishes the readers' opportunity to respond to the texts on their own, as seen in the following restatements.

To make sure that target readers get the underlying meaning of the text, the reteller often interprets for them, leaving little to the readers' imagination. An example can be seen in "Pictures" when Miss Moss's purpose of going out is made straightforward.

“You silly thing,” scolded Miss Moss. “Now what’s the good of crying: you’ll only make your nose red. No, you get dressed and go out and **try your luck**—that’s what you’ve got to do.” (121)

*‘You silly thing,’ said Miss Moss. ‘It’s no good crying. You’ll make your nose all red. Come on! Get dressed, and go out and **find a job**. That’s what you’ve got to do.’ (36)*

The idiomatic expression “try your luck” is clearly spelt out: to find a job and get money for her living. In the adapted version, the interpretation makes the text clear and straightforward.

Another example is in “The Garden Party” when what is harmful for the Sheridan girls in the poor’s area is directly specified.

When the Sheridans were little they were forbidden to set foot there because of the revolting language and of **what they might catch**. (254)

*When the Sheridan children were little they were not allowed to go near the cottages, in case they heard bad language or caught **some awful disease**. (24)*

The indirect expression “what they might catch” is euphemism requiring the readers’ filling in what is left unsaid. The reteller’s interpretation “some awful disease” is specific and concrete. Yet, looking at the original version, we may wonder whether the expression implies some other unwanted things rich people may object but don’t want to specify as well.

In “The Doll’s House,” the degree of interactive quality also decreases when the reteller succinctly concludes the Kelvey children’s thought.

And the only two who stayed outside the ring were the two who were always outside, the little Kelveys. **They knew better than to come anywhere near the Burnells.** (385)

*The only two who stayed outside the circle were the two who were always outside—the Kelveys. **They knew they were not wanted.** (9)*

In the original version, the author indirectly suggests the little Kelveys’ avoidance to confront the rejection by the Burnell children. To find the exact meaning, the readers need to look at the context which echoes their friends and teachers’ discrimination against the Kelveys. To simplify this process, the reteller plainly concludes, “They knew they were not wanted.” The suggestiveness that requires a little more interpretation, therefore, disappears from this adapted text.

Likewise, in “The Garden Party,” the simplified version reduces the readers’ involvement as seen in Jose’s comment on Laura’s attempt to stop the party.

“You won’t bring a drunkman back to life by **being sentimental**,” she said softly. (254)

*'You won't bring a drunk workman back to life by **stopping a party**,' she said softly. (24)*

The concept of "being sentimental," of course, needs to be interpreted according to the context first. Here, it refers to Laura's idea of cancelling the party because of her neighbour's death, motivated by her sensitivity and utmost sympathy for the poor neighbours. The reteller's replacement of the original words by "stopping the party" is an attempt to make the abstract concept concrete so that the readers can grasp the point. But by offering the restatement, the text becomes less interactive.

Besides implicit statements, figurative language, part of the author's prominent style, also demands readers' imaginative experience for full appreciation. Yet, this is another area which is modified in the retold book. An example is in "The Woman at the Store," when the detail about the protagonist's husband is deleted:

*"...The husband was a pal of mine once, down the West Coast – a fine, big chap, **with a voice on him like a trombone....**" (556)*

'...I used to know the husband well. A fine big fellow....' (68-69)

In fact, the simile "like a trombone" which is used to compare with this man's voice, gives a vivid impression of a booming sound like that made by the trombone. It also suggests the man's character as being loud and imposing, all relevant to what he is supposed to be in the story. The deletion of this simile, therefore, is a loss of the originally intended impact.

Being aware of the readers' limited reading ability, the reteller sacrifices some of the author's subtle suggestive elements as well as remarkable images for the sake of clarity, and sometimes, brevity. Unfortunately, some of the subtle nuances of meanings as well as interactive quality of the text are lost in this process.

Less Emotional Intensity

The reteller of the adapted book works with many restrictions, especially reasonable length, words and expressions of specified types and levels and relatively simple literary devices. These restrictions can decrease some emotional intensity in the retold work. For example, in “The Doll’s House” which concerns the middle class’s discrimination against the poor, the elements which highlight the rich’s bad treatment are slightly minimized in the adapted texts. The way Aunt Beryl scolds Kezia and chases the poor children is more striking in the original than in the adapted version.

“How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard!” said her cold, furious voice. “You know as well as I do, you’re not allowed to talk to them. Run away, children, run away at once. And don’t come back again,” said Aunt Beryl. **And she stepped into the yard and shoed them out as if they were chickens.** (390)

‘How dare you bring the little Kelveys into our garden!’ she said to Kezia, in a cold, angry voice. ‘You know as well as I do that you aren’t allowed to talk to them.’ (15)

‘Run away, children, run away and don’t come back!’ she said to the Kelveys. ‘Off you go immediately!’ (15)

As this story criticizes the practice of class distinction, the readers can sense the air of discrimination in the original where the lady “shoed” the poor children out “as if they were chicken.” Although it is somewhat comic in tone, readers cannot miss the sharp irony implied as discussed in Chapter 2 and under “Less Sophistication” in this chapter. This intensifies the emotional impact missing in the adapted version.

In “The Garden Party,” the contrasted images of the rich and the poor’s dwellings give a similar mixture of comic and pathetic effects.

That really was extravagant, for **the little cottages were in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house.** A broad road ran between. True, they were far too near. **They were the greatest possible eyesore and they had no right to be in that neighbourhood at all. They were little mean dwellings painted a chocolate brown.** In the garden patches there was nothing but **cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans.** The very smoke coming out of their chimneys was poverty-stricken. **Little rags and shreds of smoke, so unlike the great silvery plumes that uncurled from the Sheridans' chimney.** (254)

*That really was silly, because **the Sheridans' house was on a hill, and the cottages were right down at the bottom of the hill.** There was a wide road between them. True, they were still much too near. They were not suitable neighbours for people like the Sheridans.*

*The cottages were ugly little brown things. Nothing but **rubbish** grew in their gardens. Even the smoke coming from their chimney looked poor and mean (24).*

Both versions depict the different positions of the two classes: the poor “in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house....” with a broad road “running between.” The pitiful condition of the poor is more highlighted in the original version: the poor’s houses were “the great possible eyesore.” They are “little, mean” and painted in “chocolate brown” relating to filth of the impoverished community. This makes the readers feel sorry for their miserable lives. In their garden, there are “nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans,” (The opposite of the Sheridan’s garden which on that particular day of the party is full of gorgeous roses, canna lilies, a music bands, etc.). Even the smoke from the chimneys suggests their different standards of living. “Little rags and shreds” describe the smoke from the poor’s chimneys to convey their pathetic condition. On the contrary, the smoke from the Sheridan’s chimney is said to be “the great silvery plumes,” an image suggesting extravagant ornament of the luxury class. In the adapted version, the

visual image is minimized, leaving only a very brief description of the garden and the smoke. The adapted version, therefore, lessens the readers' sympathy.

A more extensive comparison of the original text and the adapted counterpart will show more clearly the reduced emotional effects of the latter. A case in point is "The Little Governess," one of the longest stories of the nine under this study, which is cut down to only about 60% of the original length. The narrative theme is in fact aged-old: a young lady on her first long journey and a dangerous old man in the guise of a "fairy grandfather," the motif reminiscent of "Red Riding Hood." Instead of the woods, however, the modern young protagonist travels in the foreign lands which are fascinating as well as bewildering.

To let the readers share this feeling, the author overwhelms readers with both foreign words, French and German, as well as very long paragraphs in which there are description of scenes, characters' thoughts and actions or conversations between two people, all in the same paragraphs. We can find many which are about 40-55 lines each. It is different in the adapted text. As mentioned before, all foreign words are deleted or translated. In conversation, each person's speech appears in a separate paragraph. As a result, the foreign experiences are less perplexing and more manageable in the retold version.

Images and the suggestive power of the author's selected words also contribute greater emotional intensity. In the two passages below, we can detect the differences.

She was happy again. The chocolate ice-cream melted—melted in little sips along way down. **The shadows of the trees danced on the tablecloths**, and she sat with her back safely turned to the ornamental clock that pointed to twenty-five minutes to seven. "Really and truly," said the little governess earnestly, "this has been the happiest day of my life. I've never imagined such a day." In spite of the ice-cream her grateful baby heart glowed with love for the **fairy** grandfather.(187)

She was happy again. The ice-cream slipped down beautifully, and she sat with her back to the clock that pointed to twenty-five minutes to seven.

'Really and truly,' she said, 'this has been the happiest day of my life.' Her grateful baby heart was full of love for her dear old grandfather. (53)

As discussed in Chapter 2 under “Irony,” the original text has very striking ironies, especially in the word “the happiest day” and “fair grandfather.” The author’s ironic tone is lessened in the adapted version in which the word “fairy” is changed into “dear old.” Besides, the image of the shadows of the trees dancing on the tablecloth which serves as a foreshadow of the approaching bad event is also deleted. This results in a decrease of another emotional impact.

A further example is the little governess’s visit to the old man’s flat. We can see that although in the adapted version the reteller keeps very close to the original text, a few images and words with certain connotations are left out together with their suggestiveness.

The passage was quite dark. “Ah, I supposed my old woman has gone out to buy me **a chicken**. One moment.” He opened a door and stood aside for her to pass, a little shy but curious, into a strange room. She did not know quite what to say. It wasn’t pretty. In a way it was **very ugly**—but neat, and, she supposed, comfortable for such an old man. “Well, what do you think of it?” He knelt down and took from a cupboard a round tray with pink glasses and a tall pink bottle. **“Two little bedrooms beyond,”** he said gaily, “and a kitchen. It’s enough, eh?” “Oh, quite enough.” And if ever you should be in Munich and care to spend a day or two—why, there is always **a little nest—a wing of a chicken**, and a salad, and an old man delighted to be your host once more and many many times, dear little Fräulein!” He took the stopper out of the bottle and poured some wine into the two pink glasses. His head shook and **the wine spilled over the tray**. It was very quiet in the room. She said: “I think I ought to go now.” “But you will have a tiny glass of wine with me—just one before you go?” said the old man. “No, really no. I never drink wine. I—I have promised never to touch wine or anything like that.” And though he pleaded and though she felt dreadfully rude, especially when he seemed to take it to heart so, she

was quite determined. “No, *really*, please.” “Well, will you just sit down on the sofa for five minutes and let me drink your health?” The little governess sat down on the edge of the **red velvet couch** and he sat down beside her and drank her health **at a gulp**. “Have you really been happy today?” asked the old man, turning round, so close beside her that she felt his knee twitching against hers. Before she could answer he held her hands. “And are you going to give me one little kiss before you go?” he asked, drawing her closer still. (187-188)

The passage was quite dark. ‘Ah, I suppose my old woman has gone out to buy me a chicken.’ He opened a door, and shy but curious, she went into a strange room. She did not know quite what to say. It wasn’t pretty, but it was neat, and, she supposed, comfortable for such an old man. “Well, what do you think of my little home?” He took a bottle and two pink glasses out of a cupboard. ‘If you ever want to spend one or two days in Munich, there will always be a place for you here, and an old man ready to look after you.’ He poured some wine into the pink glasses, and his hand shook a little as he poured. It was very quiet in the room.

She said, ‘I think I ought to go now.’

‘But you will have a little glass of wine with me—just one tiny glass before you go?’ said the old man.

‘No, really no. I never drink wine, or anything like that.’ And although she was afraid she was being awfully rude, she was quite determined. ‘No, really, please.’

‘Well, will you sit here by me for five minutes while I drink your health?’

The little governess sat down on the edge of the sofa and he sat beside her and drank. ‘Have you really been happy today?’ asked the old man, and he sat so close to her that she could feel his knees against hers. Before she could answer, he took her hands in his. ‘And are you going to give me one little kiss before you go?’ he asked, pulling her towards him. (53-54)

Here, again, the original narrative is crowded within a long paragraph which gives the readers an impression of uncomfortable proximity which goes well with the setting (dark passage leading to a small, “very ugly” flat) and the old man’s repulsive approach. The same effect cannot be found in the retold text which is spread into six paragraphs with each speaker’s words separated.

The images in the original passage are unified to highlight a distinct sexual threat to the young victim. First of all the old man directs her attention to “two little bedrooms”, inviting her to his “little nest” (the word “nest” can refer to a hiding place where unpleasant things are done), and here, she sat on “the red velvet couch” which connotes a bed of sensual pleasure. The spilling of wine suggests a downfall or a move beyond the limit of those involved. In his “little nest,” besides, the winged creature may be “a chicken”, or rather, only “a wing of chicken,” which may represent the young victim he can have “in a gulp.” With these rich connotations of the form and images, the emotional impacts are strongly and vividly established. As the form as well as all these images do not exist in the adaptation, its disadvantage on this point is obvious.

Being compact and clear, the retold version of Mansfield’s short stories serves its purpose of accessibility to less advanced readers. On the other hand, it does not fully challenge readers to make their own interpretation, nor offer very sophisticated outlook of life. Furthermore, with textual reduction, some literary devices, especially images and choice of suggestive words, are gone together with their emotional impacts. Yet, as a whole, the adapted text still keeps the essence of the author’s work.