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Domestic Settler Colonialism in Katherine Mansfield's 'Old Tar' and 'The Garden Party'

Abstract: Focusing on the domestic ideals of settler colonialism, this essay provides an analysis of Katherine Mansfield's representations of house and home in several of her New Zealand short stories. The first part of the essay considers Mansfield's use of Gothic tropes to represent settler-Indigenous spatial relations in the story 'Old Tar' (1913), suggesting that the dread-tinged colonial house challenges settler colonial ideas about land-tenure and inheritance. The second part of the essay discusses the development of second-generation settler identities, analysing Mansfield's representations of class in the context of settler spatial relations in 'The Garden Party' (1921). The essay's broader claim is that 'Old Tar' and 'The Garden Party' challenge the domestic ideals of settler colonialism by showing the unpleasant realities of settler patriarchy and the racialised, gendered, and class-based underpinnings of second-generation settler sociability and culture.

Keywords: Katherine Mansfield; 'The Garden Party'; 'Old Tar'; settler colonialism; domesticity; colonial Gothic; second-generation settler culture

“ Haven't you got any Houses in Boxes? ”, the settler child protagonist asks her Māori hosts in Katherine Mansfield's 'How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped' (1912), “ Don't you all live in a row? Don't the men go to offices? Aren't there any nasty things? ”.¹ Pearl's questions reveal her mental model of 'home' as predictable repetitions that enclose women and children, porously permitting the arrival and departure of men, and charged by a perceived atmosphere of unpleasant roughness: of 'nasty things'. Pearl's initial decision to leave her home with the two 'dark women' is accompanied by assumed familiarity and curiosity, 'wondering what they had in their House of Boxes' (Pearl, p. 286). Pearl's questions later in the story register her surprise at the existence of alternative, unfamiliar domestic arrangements with different architectural, social and environmental ideals. When Pearl first sees the sea, for example, she cries out, “[w]hat is it, what is it? ”, but this is transformed into delight when she dips her feet in: “ Oo, oo! [. . .] Lovely, lovely! ” (Pearl, pp. 287-8). Pearl's surprise and delight take on meaning not just as a settler's romanticised idealisation of Indigenous environment and culture, but also as a gendered and racialised repudiation of the type of middle-class domesticity suggested by the 'Houses of Boxes' she invokes.

Scholars have addressed the significance of the domestic environments that recur across Mansfield's work, but the particular domestic themes that appear in her New Zealand writing remain understudied.² 'How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped' encapsulates key themes of Indigenous spatial relations, criticism of the ideals of imperial domesticity, and children's relative but limited freedom to move between

homes of different socio-cultural values. Yet it is not Mansfield's only New Zealand story to do so. This essay considers the socio-cultural relations and processes depicted in Mansfield's New Zealand houses, suggesting that they are part of a challenge to the discourses of settlement and the construction of settler community values.³ More specifically, it argues that Mansfield challenges the ideals of the colonial home and family through uneasy representations of questionable land-tenure and inheritance, and through settler children characters, who look to women of other classes and cultures for ideal representations of home that are aligned with security and love. In a detailed reading of 'Old Tar' (1913), I analyse Mansfield's critique of spatial relations between settler men and Indigenous land, arguing that Mansfield's use of colonial Gothic tropes, particularly the motif of the house, challenges settler entitlement and subverts the settlement discourse's ideal of domestic colonial family life by illuminating its unpleasant realities. The last part of the essay offers a reading of 'The Garden Party' (1921), along with some reference to 'The Doll's House' (1921), in the context of the child rescue discourse, focusing on attempts by second-generation settler children to navigate the more fluid social boundaries that were emerging in early twentieth-century New Zealand. I argue that Mansfield's story queries the possibility of reciprocal socio-cultural and racial relations and explores the local limits of second-generation settler affiliation as an imagined national community.⁴

Houses and homes: Domesticity, the Gothic, and child rescue

The frequency with which houses appear in Mansfield's New Zealand short fiction suggests their importance as places that encode familial and cultural relations. A variety of dwelling types feature in her twenty-nine short stories set in New Zealand, including houses, cottages, bungalows, huts, and 'shell-like' homes. Most often, the main setting is a box-type house like the ones referred to by Pearl Button, with other sorts of domiciles mentioned as comparisons.⁵ For example, in 'The Garden Party' scenes move between a two-storey settler house and clusters of 'little cottages'.⁶ Rarely does the main domestic setting deviate from the middle-class settler house. A notable exception is 'The Woman at the Store' (1912) which, the narrator specifies, takes place in a *whare*. Mansfield's untranslated use of a Māori word for 'house' or 'dwelling' is striking given that she infrequently included Māori language words in her fiction. 'The Woman at the Store' does not feature Indigenous characters, but the use of the Māori word suggests a geographical location beyond the established settler village communities with place names like 'Hawk Street, or Charlotte Crescent', which draw the attention of Lottie from 'Prelude' (1917).⁷

Mansfield's colonial New Zealand households extend beyond primary architectural structures to include gardens, paddocks, fences, gates, avenues, roads, paths and boundary markers. In her domestic Antipodean stories, features of the landscape function as property boundaries, making explicit the spatial aspects of troubled settler-Indigenous relations that emerge through Indigenous responses to settler struggles for land. As Edward Said has emphasised, contests for land were as much disputes over power, culture, and knowledge as they were conflicts over geography.⁸ In the context of settler colonialism, where land is the primary field on which the reproduction of imperial culture is played out, domestic social relations extend beyond the house to include the land. Jason Rudy discusses the significance of this in his analysis of the Australian landscape in poetry produced by 'native' or colonial-born writers, underscoring the importance of communal, as opposed to individual, social identities for the success of the project of settler colonialism:

to invoke community was, in colonial poetry of the [nineteenth century], to indicate success: triumph over a hostile environment, the founding of a new homeland. To speak as an individual, as a voice manifest most clearly as an individuated lyric, was most often to fail: to fall victim to the landscape, to remain in a position of existential dread or uncomfortable ambivalence.⁹

While Rudy is mainly concerned with the work accomplished through poetry in colonial Australia, his comparison between communal and individual settler invocations of the landscape is useful for conceptualising the dynamism of Mansfield's fictional domesticity and for thinking through settler-Indigenous spatial relationships that themselves hinge on distinctions between individual and communal forms of home-making.¹⁰ Erin Mercer, analysing Mansfield's colonial Gothic specifically and Australasian Gothic more broadly, has suggested that settler colonial landscapes replace the architectural sites of the European Gothic as the site of complex threat, as these landscapes resist being tamed and remain involved with 'the oppression of Indigenous populations similarly capable of responding in a hostile manner to European settlement'.¹¹

A number of Mansfield's New Zealand stories feature settler houses in ways that foreground settler-Indigenous spatial relations. In 'Kezia and Tui' (1939), a settler child visits familiar Māori households; 'How Pearl Button was Kidnapped' imagines a settler child as a guest in unfamiliar Māori communities; and 'Prelude' and 'Old Tar' both feature settler men who boast about how the land on which their houses stand had been Māori-owned, acquired 'dirt cheap', 'off Ole Puhui'.¹² These stories challenge the notion that settler ownership of the land is resolved, instead emphasising ongoing and contested negotiations over land and offering a counter narrative to patriarchal settler domesticity.¹³

If a reworking of the Gothic genre allowed Mansfield to engage with the past through the discourse of settlement and inheritance, the child rescue discourse allowed her to engage with the future as concerns about the management of the statutory rights of children overlapped with the conception of metropole-colony relations as akin to parent-child dynamics.¹⁴ Penny Russell has theorised an overlap between notions of domesticity and the discourse of child rescue in the context of settler colonialism in nineteenth-century Australia, arguing that:

[t]he home as a spatial, material entity, its enclosed, protective spaces filled with the domestic paraphernalia of civilisation, seemed designed to mark the security of possession and of moral and social entitlement. But in so many ways, the colonising, civilising agenda disturbed the very illusion of refuge on which it crucially depended.¹⁵

Reflecting fears about the effect of environment on civilisation, the child rescue discourse was haunted by images of 'lost' children who disappear from colonial families and are deemed at-risk in the largely 'unknown, unbounded, unscribed and [. . .] imagined [colonial] land'.¹⁶

In this regard, all settler children at a geographical remove from the centre of imperial civilisation, not just 'lost' ones like Pearl Button, are potentially at risk of having colonial cultural standards dissolved. As Russell argues, while racial anxiety provided imaginative fuel to stoke fears about white children 'lost' among 'Black'

and ‘Indigenous’ society, growing social anxieties in the late nineteenth century also suggested that ‘the child of poverty, neglected and perhaps abused, was lost in a moral rather than a physical wilderness, deprived of opportunities to acquire the social rules and attachments that would lead to both docility and success’.¹⁷ In other words, the child rescue discourse was motivated by the fear that settler children who were exposed to and associated with ‘others’ would become uncivilised. Thus, a child born into poverty, just as much as a child taken in by Indigenous society, could provoke fears of civilizational degeneration.

As part of their role in becoming civilised subjects, Mansfield’s settler children learn values from settler elders. In ‘The Doll’s House’, when Kezia invites the shunned Kelvey children into the garden to play with her popular new toy, Lil Kelvey ‘gasps’: “‘Your ma told our ma you wasn’t to speak to us’”.¹⁸ This informal, often domestically-located, education takes place within the context of a settler community that shifts but does not dismantle hierarchical boundaries that reproduce oppressions. The learning of settler children therefore often appears as incomplete. In ‘How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped’, Pearl expresses fear that she will be chastised for her unpolished manners. Preparing to eat a peach she had been given, Pearl ‘sat on her petticoat as she had been taught to sit in dusty places’ but when the fruit juice spills down her dress she exclaims ‘in a very frightened voice to one of the women, “I’ve spilt all the juice!”’ (Pearl, p. 287). Based on her understanding of settler etiquette, Pearl’s fear of being rebuked by an elder for her impropriety is proven unwarranted in this scene: “‘That doesn’t matter at all,” said the woman, patting her cheek’ (Pearl, p. 287).

Mansfield’s female settler characters, in a challenge to imperial cultures of domesticity, look in two directions—across both class and race divides—to test out affinities with other women, not so much out of a politics of anticolonialism but out of a rejection of imperial housekeeping and gendered models of domesticity.¹⁹ Her male figures, on the other hand, often focus on unsettling questions relating to land-tenure and patrilineal inheritance, thus simultaneously reinscribing and disturbing the idea of gendered separate spheres. In each case, settlement and enclosure is aligned with domesticity in ways that both recognise and elide Indigenous culture and sovereignty, marking out the cumulative manner with which effects of imperial domesticity overlap with categories of race and gender.

‘The big white nest’: A dreadful inheritance

‘Old Tar’, an important early story in Mansfield’s oeuvre, deals with settlement history in New Zealand, incorporating elements of the colonial Gothic mode and illuminating settler discomfort with an inheritance gained from ancestral usurpers. Among the story’s colonial Gothic motifs are the eerie bush, untranslatable ‘sounds’, and a ‘strange voice’ (Tar, pp. 343-4), which provoke fears of isolation and racial otherness in Old Tar. The story of a settler dream-turned-nightmare, ‘Old Tar’ is set in the remote interior and begins with a memory from Old Tar’s early boyhood of Sunday mornings with his father:

on the great green shoulders of Makra Hill [. . .] Behind them was the new road leading to Wadesville, and a further drop to the township, Karori; but all that was hidden, and might have been the length of days away. (Tar, pp. 340-1)²⁰

Located at a distance from established settler villages, yet connected by the road, removed from populous areas, not yet part of the isolated but residential frontier backblocks, the setting is initially depicted as empty: ‘There was nothing to be seen to left or right of them but other hill-tops bounded by dark, high masses of bush’ (Tar, p. 341).²¹ Although, at first, there appears to be ‘nothing’ in this place, on closer inspection the masses of foliage in the form of ‘fairy trumpets’ and the ‘laughing’, ‘stealthy, quiet’ sea coalesce into a fleeting Romantic tone while the boundaries ‘through the fence’ and by ‘dark, high masses of bush’ (Tar, p. 340-1) interject a hint of the eeriness to come. The landscape projects an uneasy sense that the wilderness beyond the domestic paddocks enclosed by a ‘barbed-wire fence’ (Tar, p. 340) exceeds settler control: the fence appears to keep the bush, understood to be the domain of Indigenous people, demarcated.²²

In ‘Old Tar’, Indigenous ownership of the land is recognised at the very moment the property is bequeathed to the settler son, which has the effect of querying the legitimacy and endurance of settler ownership:

‘[M]y Pap bought this from the Maoris [sic] – he did. Ye-es! Got it off Ole Puhui for a ‘suit of clothes an’ a lookin’-glass of yer Granmaw’s.’ My stars! He had an eye! Larst thing the ole man says to me was – ‘James,’ ’e says, ‘don’t you be muckin’ about with that bit of land top of Makra Hill. Don’t you sell it. ’And it on,’ ’e says, ‘to you an’ yours’.
(Tar, p. 341)

The father’s explanation of the title’s origin frightens the boy who questions the place’s value: “‘Wot — all this?’” cried the little boy, frightened, clutching the hill, as though he expected it to jump away with him on its back’ (Tar, p. 341).

The boy’s reservations about his inheritance fade fast in the face of elaborate fantasies of a future grand house on the hill. The reappearance of the weight of inheritance, and its questionable reproductive potential, coincides with the death of the father as Old Tar, now in his fifties, hastens to bring his domestic vision to life. On the night before his family is due to see the finished house, Old Tar has a dreadful existential crisis. As evening arrives, the house seems to absorb and reflect the eerie qualities that were long-ago associated with the land’s isolation, except now there is more menace and the house is endowed with the perception of sight: ‘The big white house, with all its hollow eyes, glared at Old Tar’ (Tar, p. 343). The house’s scowl echoes the lamenting landscape: ‘and then he heard the wind, very slow, snuffling round the house like a lonely dog: “Ooh Hee! Ooh Hee!” it sounded’ (Tar, p. 343). Despite the incomprehensible sounds of the wind, Old Tar interprets them: “‘A rare, sad noise,” thought Old Tar, shaking his head to it. “Sounds as if it’d lost something an’ couldn’t find it again”” (Tar, p. 343). The inarticulate sound, for which only one explanation is posited, is interpreted by Old Tar as “‘Lost for evermore””, stirring ‘strange, uneasy ripples’ in his previously ‘quiet heart’ (Tar, p. 343). Old Tar’s fear unsettles and disorients him: ‘Sitting by himself like that, he felt queer and frightened, somehow. “Ooh Hee! Ooh Hee!” sounded the wind, rattling the window sashes. “Tain’t like it used to sound up here,” he thought. “Taint like it was in the old man’s time”” (Tar, p. 343).

Old Tar’s overwhelming fear in this place is not a new experience, as he was frightened when his father first told him the hill would be his legacy. The intergenerational dimension of inherited settler-Indigenous spatial relations, once forgotten in the frenzy to develop the land, reemerges. Overcome with a sense of

estrangement, Old Tar plunges into icy awareness, horrified at the realities brought about by his housebuilding and, by extension, the settler project:

Old Tar stepped back from the house and looked up at it. He saw in the dusky light the pits the workmen had dug in his hill. He saw the great trampled patches the timber piles had made, and he saw, between him and the sea, the white house perched, the big white nest for his wife and her brood on top of the hill. As though he saw it for the first time. Old Tar muttered in a strange voice, ‘Wot’s it doing there – wot’s it for?’ and ‘Oh, Lord, wot ’ave I done – wot ’ave I done, Lord?’ A long time Old Tar stood there, while the dark shifted over him and the house paled and stretched up to the sky. His feet seemed to freeze into the cold grass of the hill, and dark thoughts flew across his mind, like clouds, never quiet, never breaking. (Tar, pp. 343-4)

In contrast to the experiences described by Rudy of nineteenth-century Canadian settlers, for whom the complex process of land-clearing emboldened settlers to feel in possession of the land, Old Tar struggles to resolve his sense of dispossession even while he seems to understand his dilemma as an existential one: “‘wot’s it for?’” (Tar, p. 343).²³ When Old Tar rhetorically asks, ‘wot’s it for’, it conveys the settler crisis of (un)belonging in which the creation of a collective story that legitimises settler authority to determine the future of the state is entangled with a narrative of nativisation based on connection to land.²⁴ The craters and crushed landscape, direct consequences of the timber piles generated to build the house and enclose the cleared land, evoke a devastation magnified by the house’s projection of monstrous desolation, undermining the home as a safe and secure place to ‘nest’ (Tar, p. 344). A deathly whitening of the landscape, depicted through an accumulating vocabulary of ‘light’, ‘white’, ‘clouds’, ‘pale’, ‘cold’, ‘freeze’, and ‘ashen’, (Tar, pp. 343-4) accompanies Old Tar’s unutterable realisation. The voice of the landscape is translated, but the existential questions it raises in Old Tar are unsatisfactorily answered and remain unresolved.

In transferring European Gothic to the outposts of the colonial periphery, Mansfield represents home-building in the colonies as analogous to the colonial process of settlement, representing the empire as a white nightmare for Old Tar. The fear in the story converges around the settler’s realisation of himself as usurper and suggests that the cost of inheritance is much higher, and less attractive, than the price by which the grandfather gained the property. ‘Old Tar’ registers a feeling, articulated by Rudy in relation to a different, Canadian settler context, of ‘internalized belatedness, a feeling of coming late to the game, of recognising one’s distance from the original’.²⁵ In Mansfield’s description of spatial relations between male settlers and the land in ‘Old Tar’, part of the cost of settler inheritance includes dealing with the ongoing reality that ownership of land remains a contested issue. Mansfield challenges the discourse of settlement and inheritance through the tropes of the colonial Gothic, clearing space for gestures of new affinities.

‘[O]ne must go everywhere’: Second-generation sociability

Several of Mansfield’s stories, including ‘The Woman at the Store’ and ‘Millie’ (1913), challenge the discourse of the child rescued from the ‘wild’ of both Māori hospitality and settler poverty. Expanding Roslyn Jolly’s arguments that ‘How Pearl

'Button was Kidnapped' is a class-based social critique of ideas about guardianship, the rest of this section focuses on Mansfield's engagement with class in the context of the child rescue discourse and Mansfield's postulation of a vernacular second-generational settler identity.²⁶ 'The Garden Party' and 'The Doll's House' are two late stories that bluntly declare their intention of examining 'absurd class distinctions' (Garden p. 403) in the context of multigenerational colonial families.

Set in a rural village, where scenes move between a lively, 'warm' (Garden, p. 404) middle-class home and the 'little mean dwellings' (Garden, p. 408) of the workers' cottages, 'The Garden Party' follows sensitive young Laura as she awakens to the materiality of differences. Initially ensconced within the safety and comfort of her domestic bubble, Laura's blissful, partial awareness of life's transience is unsettled when she fails to persuade her family to cancel their party due to the death of a local worker. Her mother suggests Laura delivers leftovers to the bereaved, positioning Laura to venture further than she has ever gone before into the social life of the cottages and to experience a shocking epiphany of impermanence in the context of class awareness and uneven experiences of domesticity.

The theme of intergenerational disagreements over cross-class relations surfaces early in the story. When a more experienced workman in charge of party installations guides the naive Laura in deciding where to set up the marquee, he insists that the canopy should stand in a conspicuous place "where it'll give you a bang slap in the eye, if you follow me" (Garden, p. 402). Laura's interiorised thoughts reveal that she has been socialised to class differences: 'Laura's upbringing made her wonder for a moment whether it was quite respectful of a workman to talk to her of bangs slap in the eye. But she did quite follow him' (Garden, p. 402). Her girlish romanticisation of the working class seems an extension of socialised class differences, as she soon after considers her preference for having workmen as friends 'rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper', drawn to '[t]he friendliness of it', and even fancying herself 'just like a work-girl' (Garden, p. 403).²⁷

Laura's sense of the porosity of class affinity is nonetheless contained by the spatial relations of the village, which serve to re-inscribe class differences through segregated dwellings and mobility practices. The road, for example, serves as the boundary between the gardens of the house where Laura lives and the grid of workers' cottages:

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' chimneys. Washerwomen lived in the lane and sweeps and a cobbler, and a man whose house-front was studded all over with minute bird-cages. (Garden, p. 408)

As spatial boundaries marking off settlers from 'others', the barbed-wire fence and bush of 'Old Tar' are here replaced by, but equivalent to, the broad road and the mean cottages. The poverty of the village compared to the affluence of the house with the garden party is a source of displeasure to Laura and her brother, who are at least

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somewhat familiar with the workers' living areas: 'But since they were grown-up, Laura and Laurie on their prowls sometimes walked through. It was disgusting and sordid. They came out with a shudder. But still one must go everywhere; one must see everything. So through they went' (Garden, p. 408). For the children, 'walking through' is both a pastime and an ideological lesson in reproducing class boundaries, enacted geographically through the embodied experience of walking and traversing the landscape boundaries, leaving readers to question the extent of Mansfield's critique of that high Victorian pastime of 'slumming'.²⁸

As Russell points out in an Australian context, as colonialism progressed, the value system of second-generation settlers was characterised by, on the one hand, a continuation in the belief of civilising frontier life as a primary objective and, on the other hand, a celebration of a suite of new values that increasingly accrued status as national characteristics.

[F]reedom from snobbery, fluidity of social boundaries, an open, frank and natural demeanour and impatience with meaningless rules of etiquette were claimed as peculiarly Australian qualities, robustly contrasted with the effeminacy, particularity and reserve of 'English' manners.²⁹

Viewed from the perspective of changing social values, it is the workmen's candid way of speaking that appeals to Laura and casts the boys who visit to dance and dine in a stuffy light. Mansfield queries the extent to which the second-generation is free from snobbery, contrasting Laura's humility to both her mother's 'cold' and her sister's 'hardened' replies when Laura implores them to call off the party for fear that the noise and merriment of the party-goers will be a sign of disrespect for their grieving neighbours (Garden, pp. 408-9).

Laura's familial relations check her impulses regarding how and whether to properly show her sympathy as she moves between unanimous cues from her family members that the party must go on and her separate, inner compulsion to make an urgent gesture of unity with the widow. Laura's sensibility is divided between following her immediate family's determination to carry on with the party, determining 'then it was bound to be all right', and observing a cross-class affiliation with 'that poor woman and those little children, and the body being carried into the house' on the loss of their patriarch: 'But it all seemed blurred, unreal, like a picture in the newspaper' (Garden, p. 409). Determined through an imagined sense of the settler community constructed through the printed newspaper, Laura's experience of being pulled in two directions suggests the messiness of the divides between generations, genders and classes in the movement towards the development of a national consciousness. Social egalitarianism, a characteristic that becomes associated with the development of national consciousness, has a relationship to the constraints of the settler colony's spatial relations.

Explaining why the Burnell children of 'The Doll's House' attend a socially heterogeneous school, for example, the narrator explains:

It was the only school for miles. And the consequence was all the children of the neighbourhood, the Judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the store-keeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together. Not to speak of there being an equal number of rude, rough little boys as well. But the line had to be drawn somewhere. It

was drawn at the Kelveys. (Doll's, p. 416)

In constructing a new national identity, settler colonialism rearranges the spatial meaning of metropolitan boundaries (along colonial New Zealand's frontier, the relatively vast distance between settlements determines the necessity of class mixing in schools), while also reinforcing the notion that boundaries are necessary, if arbitrary. There is no critique of the belief that class lines must be drawn, although the selection of the Kelveys as targets is a matter of group discretion.

Russell argues that, while national characteristics developed in ways that pushed and pulled at settler generational, class and gender identities, 'the chasm of consciousness that divided an Indigenous from a colonising identity was effectively erased from public discourse, and an unresolved anxiety about the failures of the civilising project was papered over with buoyant, celebratory nationalism'.³⁰ Mansfield's fiction seems somewhat to defy this, as several of her short stories set in New Zealand deal with intergenerational settler culture and depict relations between settlers and Indigenous people (for example, 'Prelude' and 'Kezia and Tui'). In 'The Garden Party', however, there is just the slightest register of the settler anxiety that Indigenous forms lurk in the landscape, flickering into view when Laura discomposedly rushes out of the wake, finding 'her way out of the door, down the path, past all those dark people' (Garden, p. 413). The emotional residue of this scene is one of heightened self-consciousness. However, in contrast to an acute class consciousness which occupies her mental energy and motivates her action throughout the story, Laura's racialised awareness is muted. There is perhaps in this scene a subtle interplay between working class and Māori people in Laura's consciousness. Yet, if the crux of the story rests in Laura's consolidation of awareness of class identity, any such alliance remains necessarily opaque as an overt sensibility would threaten Laura's coherence of identity.

Laura, disoriented in a moral wilderness of class-manners and agonised with self-consciousness about the velvet ribbon on her hat in the midst of the worker's wake, is rescued by her brother Laurie who steps 'out of the shadow' to scoop her up and console her, admitting that their mother had been 'getting anxious' (Garden, p. 413). Although Laura gives a general impression of her experience, reporting "It was simply marvellous", she is unable to explain her epiphany: "Isn't life –" (Garden, p. 413). 'Marvellous' is one descriptor for Laura's experience of viewing the dead man and being overcome with a sense that he was at peace, 'wonderful, beautiful', referring to him as a wonder, as 'this marvel' (Garden, p. 413). Laurie's sympathetic expression, "Isn't it, darling?" (Garden, p. 413; original emphasis), does not provide any explanation to complete Laura's ellipses but flattens Laura's recent knowledge of how class inflects death as an uneven experience.

These stories 'found their inner compulsion in my wish to respond to your work': Mansfield's writing within the tradition of 'Māoritanga'

If the child rescue discourse addressed the difficulty of being both British and civilised in a colonial setting, Mansfield's challenge to it posits the potential for and limitations to the development of an alternative (and 'native' in Rudy's terms) identity. Mansfield's imagined gesture of affiliation from a second-generation settler across imperial hierarchies remains incomplete. Her position as a settler writer gives her a privileged understanding of the settler's dual experience of colonisation constructed by imperial/periphery and settler/Indigenous relations, yet the discourses and genres

manipulated to critique imperial middle-class values often seem to impede a fuller or more involved critique of the structures of settler violence, just as her depiction of land-tenure and inheritance is both uneasy and belated.

At the same time, Mansfield's stories gesture towards the possibility of new forms of social organisation and understanding. In *Dear Miss Mansfield* (1989), a collection of postcolonial stories told from the perspective of Māori communities, Māori Aotearoa/New Zealand writer Witi Ihimaera explains that his stories 'found their inner compulsion in my wish to respond to [Mansfield's] work'.³¹ These stories position Mansfield not only as a New Zealander but as a writer within the tradition of 'Māoritanga' or Māori-ness. In highlighting dual colonialisms, that of the imperial centre/colonial periphery as well as that of the settler/Indigenous, these stories see Mansfield as anticipating decolonial impulses. Thus, Mansfield's nascent but incomplete challenges to the insufficiencies of settler colonialism are developed, expanded and carried forward. Mansfield's stories stop short of depicting an anticolonial commitment to repairing the mutual responsibility to care for one other, but her gestures test out new class and race affiliations and are important links in the tradition of building collaborative movements from the awareness of multi-issue identities.

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Notes

¹ Katherine Mansfield, 'How Pearl Button was Kidnapped', in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), Vol 1, *The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, 1898-1915*, pp. 285-88 (p. 288). Further references to this story are given after quotations in the text.

² On Mansfield and the domestic see Aimee Gasston, 'Phenomenology Begins at Home: The Presence of Things in the Short Fiction of Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 32 (2014), 31-51; Rishona Zimring, 'Mansfield's Charm: The Enchantment of Domestic Bliss', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 4 (2012), 33-50. For an important intervention in understanding Mansfield's New Zealand domestic aesthetic see Saikat Majumdar, 'Katherine Mansfield and the Fragility of Pākehā Boredom', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 55 (2009), 119-41.

³ Further insight into Mansfield as a New Zealand writer can be found in Ian Gordon, 'Introduction: Katherine Mansfield: The Wellington Years, a Reassessment', in *The Urewera Notebook*, ed. by Ian A. Gordon (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978), pp. 11-30; Lydia Wevers, 'How Kathleen Beauchamp Was Kidnapped', *Women's Studies Journal*, 4 (1988), 5-17; Bridget Orr, 'The Māori House of Fiction', in *Cultural Insitutions of the Novel*, ed. by Deidre Lynch and William B. Warner (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 73-95; Mark William, 'Mansfield in Māoriland: Biculturalism, Agency and Mis-reading', in *Modernism and Empire*, ed. by Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 249-74. For key criticism of Mansfield as a colonial modernist writer see Janet Wilson, "'Where is Katherine?': Longing and (Un)belonging in the Words of Katherine Mansfield', in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 175-88; Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber and Delia da Sousa Correa, eds, *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)Colonial* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Elleke Boehmer, 'Katherine Mansfield as Colonial Modernist', in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 57-71. Readings of Mansfield's fiction in the context of colonial ethnography include Saikat Majumdar, 'Katherine Mansfield and the Fragility of Pākehā Boredom', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 55 (2009), 119-41; Rebecca Ruth Gould, 'The Aesthetic Terrain of Settler Colonialism: Katherine Mansfield and Anton Chekhov's Natives', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 55 (2019), 48-65.

⁴ Edward Said describes filiation as the relations held together by ties at the personal and worldly level, and affiliation as the relations that change filial bonds into forms that nurture professional and political intelligence that can create imagined communities on local, national and transnational scales. Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁵ Katherine Mansfield, 'The Voyage', in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield* ed. by Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), Vol 2, pp. 372-79 (p. 378).

⁶ Katherine Mansfield, 'The Garden Party', in *Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Kimber and O'Sullivan, Vol 2, pp. 401-14 (p. 408). Further references to this story are given after quotations in the text.

⁷ Katherine Mansfield, 'Prelude', in *Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Kimber and O'Sullivan, Vol 2, pp. 56-93 (p. 60). Further references to this story are given after quotations in the text.

⁸ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 93.

⁹ Jason R. Rudy, *Imagined Homelands: British Poetry in the Colonies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), pp. 132-3.

¹⁰ Settler colonialism in Australia and New Zealand are distinct and unique structures that nevertheless share some commonalities in terms of literary traditions, as other scholars have pointed out. In relation to Mansfield studies, Erin Mercer has argued that Mansfield's Gothic writing can be viewed as both part of the European tradition and as part of a regional Australasian tradition developed by writers publishing in local Australian and New Zealand publishing forums. I draw on Rudy's distinction between the communal and individual identities invoked in nineteenth-century Australian poetry not in order to make the claim that colonial New Zealand writing replicated a pattern, but rather by way of conceptualising Mansfield's challenging representations of domesticity.

¹¹ Erin Mercer, 'Manuka Bushes Covered with Thick Spider Webs': Katherine Mansfield and the Colonial Gothic Tradition', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 32 (2014), 85-105 (pp. 91-2). Mercer argues that Mansfield's engagement with the Gothic mode is 'most evident' in three stories 'Ole

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Underwood' (1913), 'Millie' (1913), and 'The Woman at the Store' (1912), which Lydia Wevers (1988) analyses in terms of their colonial mode of writing.

¹² 'Kezia and Tui' was first published posthumously in Katherine Mansfield, *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1939); Mansfield, 'Prelude', p. 66. Katherine Mansfield; 'Old Tar', in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University), Vol 1, pp. 340-4 (p. 341). Further references to this edition of 'Old Tar' are given after quotations in the text.

¹³ Anna Plumridge points out that 'Mansfield was accustomed to a Māori presence in her own privileged social world [. . .] [her] experience was with an atypically wealthy set of Māori who were successful participants in Pakeha society, but the camping trip drew her through communities whose attitudes to a Pakeha presence, and modes of living and working, were markedly dissimilar'. Katherine Mansfield, *The Urewera Notebook*, ed. by Anna Plumridge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 5.

¹⁴ Swain and Hillel trace the child rescue discourse from its origins in Britain to its dissemination in Australia and Canada from 1850 to 1915 as a discourse that constructed children in negative and racialised ways in bids to raise money. Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire. Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia, 1850-1915* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010). In her article on the counter-imperial Indigenous networks that connected early nineteenth-century Sydney with Pacific history, Tracey Banivanua Mar touches on how both The Native Institution, an early attempt by Australian settlers to relocate Indigenous children away from their parents, and Marsden's Māori Seminary in Port Jackson, intended for, among others, Nga Puhī children from the Bay of Islands, quickly 'merged into a more general and racialised civilising experiment'. Tracey Banivanua Mar, 'Shadowing Imperial Networks: Indigenous Mobility and Australia's Pacific Past', *Australian Historical Studies*, 46 (2015), 340-55 (p. 352).

¹⁵ Penny Russell, "'Unhomely Moments": Civilising Domestic Worlds in Colonial Australia', *The History of the Family*, 14 (2009), 327-39 (pp. 328-9).

¹⁶ Russell, p. 335.

¹⁷ Russell, pp. 336-7.

¹⁸ Katherine Mansfield, 'The Doll's House', in *Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Kimber and O'Sullivan, Vol 2, pp. 414-21 (p. 419). Further references to this story are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁹ For an early analysis of the concept of the culture of domesticity and the construction of the ideal nineteenth-century woman according to values of purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity in nineteenth-century American periodical culture see Barbara Welter, 'The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860', *American Quarterly*, 18 (1966), pp. 151-74. For a historical study of how New Zealand settlers reconstructed domesticity see Claire Toynbee, *Her Work and His: Family, Kin and Community in New Zealand 1900-1930* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1995).

²⁰ Possibly, the setting for the story is Markara Hill. When she was four years of age, Mansfield moved with her family six miles west from Tinakori Road, Wellington to the outskirts of the capital and a new home, 'Chesney Wold', in the village of Karori. Bordering the western perimeter of Karori is the hilly locality of Makara, which does have road access to Karori, which extends to Cook Strait/Tasman Sea. Although most of Mansfield's landscape references in 'Old Tar' are to the sea and timber, it suggests a possible Māori place name although the suspension of an exact translation is perhaps more evocative than a definitive one. Kimber and O'Sullivan point out that this place is often pronounced as Mansfield spells it in 'Old Tar' (Tar, p. 344). *Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, Vol 1, p. 3

²¹ 'Backblocks' is a regional term used to refer to a backcountry thinly inhabited by settlers in New Zealand. Angela Smith uses the term in her introduction to Katherine Mansfield, *Selected Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. xvii; p. xviii. On popular literature of the backblocks in the first half of the twentieth century, see Jane Stafford, 'Romance in the Backblocks in New Zealand Popular Fiction, 1930-1950: Mary Scott's *Barbara Stories*', in *Popular Fiction and Spatiality: Reading Genre Settings*, ed. by Lisa Fletcher (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 61-78.

²² Referring to the construction of settler 'wilderness', Mar argues that '[t]he production of wilderness [. . .] participated in the erasure of Indigenous social spaces, manufacturing untouched nature, in order to preserve it'. Tracey Banivanua Mar, 'Carving Wilderness: Queensland's National Parks and the Unsettling of Emptied Lands, 1890-1910', in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, ed. by Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2010), pp. 73-94 (p. 76).

²³ Rudy, p. 121.

²⁴ On settler unbelonging in an Australasian context see Sheila Collingwood-Whittick, *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007); Bridget Grogan, 'The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature', *English in Africa*, 35 (2008), 195-8. In a different context, and in order to develop arguments about indigeneity and labour, Shona Jackson discusses the development of Creole belonging in Guyana in Shona Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

²⁵ Rudy, p. 117.

²⁶ Roslyn Jolly, 'Children of Empire: Rereading Katherine Mansfield's "How Pearl Button was Kidnapped" (1912)', *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 16: 2 (2017), 86-107.

²⁷ On Mansfield and the working class see Charles Ferrall, 'Katherine Mansfield and the Working Classes', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 32 (2014), 106-20.

²⁸ As a popular phenomenon, 'slumming' emerged in the 1880s and 1890s in London's East End motivated by a mix of curiosity, touristic amusement, philanthropic, moral and religious impulses. Scholarly studies on this late Victorian practice include: Keith Gandal, *The Virtues of the Vicious: Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane, and the Spectacle of the Slum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); as well as Emily Cuming, "'Home is home be it never so homely": Reading Mid-Victorian Slum Interiors', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 18 (2013), 368-86.

²⁹ Russell, p. 338.

³⁰ Russell, p. 338.

³¹ Witi Ihimaera, *Dear Miss Mansfield: A Tribute to Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp* (Auckland, New Zealand: Viking, 1989), p. 10.