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TONYA BLOWERS

TO THE IS-LAND: SELF AND PLACE IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

That an individual's story might represent or mirror the nation's is a phenomenon that novelists and memoirists have been elaborating for some time. The central character of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai, shares his birthday, August 15, 1947, with 'the very instant' that India gained independence: their fates are aligned and Saleem's individual story is allegorical of the nation's. Saleem laments, 'I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country' (Rushdie 1982, 3).

What is the relationship between an individual's story and a nation's story: to what extent are narratives of self and place inextricably linked? Using New Zealand writer Janet Frame's three volumes of autobiography as case study, I here trace examples of a sense of self that might be related to, or put in an illuminating juxtaposition with, the historically problematic sense of national identity of New Zealand. Indeed, the popularity of Frame's autobiographies in her own country, their positive international reception and Jane Campion's award-winning film interpretation can, to a degree, be put down to the collusion of Frame's 'puzzling' out of her identity with New Zealand's struggle for a national identity.¹ This, in turn, can be related to the more general phenomenon of the postcolonial and/or settler's ability and difficulty in carving out an 'independent' identity.

To the Is-Land

Frame's first volume of autobiography (1982) is titled *To the Is-Land*:

'I read a story, To the Is-Land, about some children going to an Is-land.'

'It's I-land,' Myrtle corrected.

'It's not,' I said. 'It's Is-Land. It says,' I spelled the letters, 'I-s-l-a-n-d. Is-land.'

'It's a silent letter,' Myrtle said. 'Like knee.'

In the end, reluctantly, I had to accept the ruling, although within myself I still thought of it as the Is-Land. (41)

In visually mis-pronouncing the word, Frame opens it up for a rich mine of meanings. The deliberate and repeated visual mispronunciation of the word 'island' as *is-land* is particularly fortuitous as a metaphor for exploring the links between personal and national identity as evidenced in the narrative of autobiography, encouraging the reader to take on board simultaneously the compound sense of island as the space where identity ('I'), place ('island'), and being in time ('is') coincide.

To the I-Land

The correction of 'I' to 'is' is to slide from the first-person pronoun, that primary indicator of identity and authority to the third person form of the verb 'to be'. This slippage is in fact central both to structural linguistics and the study of autobiography and marries the categories explored by Emile Benveniste, in his *Problems in General Linguistics*, 'of person and temporality, pronouns and tenses in narrative' (see Marcus 1994, 190). Benveniste distinguishes between the enunciation and the enunciated; between the act of speaking (the utterance) and what is said (the uttered). This is in fact, to distinguish the two 'I's of autobiography: 'the subject of the enunciation (the present "I" of the narration) and the subject of the utterance (the "I" whose history is being recounted and who exists at a temporal as well as ontological distance from the narrating self)' (Marcus, 190). This slip from timeless (because overseeing) enunciatory subject to enunciated other situated in time, is a slippage which aptly describes the process of writing autobiography. As soon as the author writes 'I' she is simultaneously describer and described, subject and other, I/ she. Furthermore, the 'I' of autobiography is always simultaneously the 'is': the written 'I', whilst ostensibly being a retrospective account of the self, is being created in the moment of its writing, it is the present state of being.

What is most intriguing is that Frame's mispronunciation of the word is the phonetically logical one: if we had never seen the word written down, only heard it, we would have no reason to presume the silent 's', and without the 's', the word might very well have a different significance for us. 'I'-land is suggestive of John Donne's 'no man is an island'. In that phrase, island resonates with I-land: solitary, independent, ('unitary', 'autonomous') the epitome of the male self read into the canon of Western autobiography. The morpheme 's' changes everything.

To the IS-Land

Frame rehearses the sense of 'is-land' as present tense and state of being throughout the autobiographies. The second chapter of *Is-Land* is a brief account of her family's history before she came into the world:

[O]n 28 August 1924, I was born, named Janet Peterson Frame, with ready-made parents and a sister and brother who had already begun their store of experience, inaccessible to me except through their language and record, always slightly different, of our mother and father, and as each member of the family was born, each, in a sense with memories on loan, began to supply the individual furnishings of each Was-Land, each Is-Land, and the hopes and dreams of the Future. (13)

Frame here clearly states that the *is-land* is the present and she simultaneously draws our attention to the unreliability or variability or subjectivity of recounting past events and the impact of various separate lives on each person's interpretation of their own life. This state of being in the 'is'-land can be negative: time is arrested so that there is no sense of movement, change or hope. Such is the sense of 'is'-land that Frame and her fellow patients experience in Seacliff, the psychiatric hospital: 'Many patients confined in other wards of Seacliff had no name, only a nickname, no past, no future, only an imprisoned Now, an eternal Is-Land without its accompanying horizons, foot or handhold, and even without its everchanging sky' (Frame 1984, 69).

We wonder whether the *Is-land* is not merely the present but could perhaps be linked to that sense of 'Quick now, here now, always' in Eliot's *Four Quartets*, that spiritual 'still point' where 'here and now cease to matter', where:

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present. (*Burnt Norton*, ll.9-10, 13)

Even more powerfully then, *Is-Land* carries a sense of being, of certainty, of identity finally realised.

Finally, the collapse of 'I' into 'is' is a summary of the aims of Frame's autobiography: to find a home, or, to appropriate the Maori, a *turangawawae* ('a place

to stand, a sense of belonging, a home marae').² In Maori language and culture, having a home is an essential constituent of belonging; and a sense of belonging translates as (national) identity. Time, in fact, collapses into space: island becomes is-land, resonating with Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's analysis of postcolonial literatures in *The Empire Writes Back*:

In much European thinking, history, ancestry, and the past form a powerful reference point for epistemology. In post-colonial thought, however, as the Australian poet Les Murray has said, 'time broadens into space.' [Postcolonial literatures] deliberately set out to disrupt European notions of 'history' and the ordering of time. (34)

Ashcroft elsewhere comments:

The crucial ambivalence of postcolonial history lies in the fact that Time and Space become inseparable. Many postcolonial writers [...] convert images of time into images of place in order to permit the reader to "see through the language of time." [...] The importance of the link between time and space to settler cultures is the experience of *spatial dislocation* which disrupts the smooth trajectory of sequential history. Place becomes the traumatic site of cultural reconstruction which involves a conflict with many inherited assumptions, including a received sense of historical time. (1996, 209; emphasis added)

To the ISLAND

In the slippage 'I/is' is encapsulated both the notion of Frame herself as an island (I-land) and the literal meaning of the word island which can refer to both New Zealand and Britain. The phrase 'to the is-land' begs the question, towards which island?: Britain (the colonial mother country) or New Zealand (birthplace/ home)? Indeed, this composite identity has often been underscored by (colonial) commentators in reference to the geographical and temperate similarities (even 'island mentality') that the two countries share (see McGeorge 1983). The ambiguity of the referent 'island' forces a sense of movement in either direction: *to* the island, yes, but also *from* the island. This to-ing and fro-ing underscores the uncertainty of the point of departure (the origin), and the desired point of arrival (the homecoming). In this sense then, 'to the island' captures both the nation's and the individual's problematic search for an identity: the movement towards the geographical and

cultural island is synonymous with a movement towards autonomous identity (to the I-land).

As Ashcroft et al. explain in *The Empire Writes Back*, there is a 'special post-colonial crisis of identity' which is 'the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place' (8-9). This sense of displacement, of being in the wrong place, is described as one of the dominant metaphors employed by postcolonial writers of fictional literature. While no country can be described as straightforwardly 'postcolonial', there are certain 'structures of feeling' that New Zealand, for example, as a dominion settled by white Europeans, can be seen to share with other settler/dominion countries (Australia, Canada). Settlers typically migrate great distances to lands geographically and temperately very different from their own, bringing with them a vocabulary which has been developed to describe the flora and fauna and experiences inherent to the mother tongue of the mother country. This vocabulary is inadequate for the new land, where animals, trees, birds and places have to be named (typically with the imported names from home). There is a constant misfit between name and place, an overwhelming sense of the difference of the new place from the old and the settler's subsequent sense of displacement. The notion of 'home' is itself highly ambiguous: first and second generation New Zealanders still refer to Britain as 'home'. Frame's father surprises her by referring to her first trip to Europe as 'going home' (Frame 1983, 188-9). Indeed, a New Zealander either 'at home' or overseas is neither here nor there. As New Zealand poet Allen Curnow expresses it in the much-quoted lines from his poem 'House and Land' (in O'Sullivan 1976, 115):

... what great gloom
Stands in a land of settlers
With never a soul at home.

This homelessness is combined with an odd feeling of homesickness, a bizarre sense of nostalgia for a place never visited but which is prevalent in every aspect of the culture. Third generation 'pakeha' New Zealand historian and biographer Michael King describes 'an appetite to visit the places to which I was connected but had never seen.' This longing for 'home' can only be satisfied by going to Europe and the first sense on arrival is one of recognition:

And there, suddenly, was England; and equally suddenly, a sense of excitement. Subdued light, spacious parks, rivers with punts, hedgerows, and then row upon row of terraced houses; each aspect known to me from film, television, books, or hearsay, and yet each revealed with the full freshness of first sighting. In spite of all my preconceptions, my stern patriotism [for New Zealand], the feeling

was one of *deja vu*. [...] It was odd to be in a foreign country in which so much was already known to me. (King 1988, 158).

However, as so often in autobiographies by New Zealanders, the 'Big OE' (Overseas Experience) is a fundamental turning point on the journey to self-identity, which here is synonymous with national identity. It is the ultimate confrontation with the mother country, the so-called origin, that finally enables a New Zealander to relish their difference: 'I felt more, not less, a New Zealander. I became more deeply conscious of my roots in my own country because I had experienced their absence' (King 171). Throughout the three volumes of Frame's autobiographies, home/place is a crucial signifier of belonging, closely associated with a sense of self and identity. Gaston Bachelard in his *Poetics of Space* has suggested:

On whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being [...]. There is ground for taking the house as a tool for analysis of the human soul. [...] Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed." Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms" we learn to "abide" within ourselves. (1964, xxxvi-ii; emphasis added where underlined)

Frame herself makes the link between house and intimate being when she describes an 'adolescent homelessness of self' when she 'entered eagerly a nest of difference which others found for me but which I lined with my own furnishings; for, after all, during the past two years I had tried many aspects of "being"' (1982, 136).

Frame also talks of literature, in a broader sense, needing a home. She remembers the year 1945 as special not only because of the war and the bomb but 'two or three other events bringing those dreamed-of planets and stars within the personal world of myself and many others in New Zealand.' These events were 'the publication of *Beyond the Palisade*, poems by a young student at the University, James K. Baxter, *A Book of New Zealand Verse* edited by Allen Curnow, and a collection of short stories edited by Frank Sargeson, *Speaking for Ourselves*'. On reading this literature, Frame is shocked to discover that 'there was such a creation as New Zealand literature; I chose to ignore it, and indeed was scarcely aware of it. Few people spoke of it, as if it were a shameful disease' (1983, 67).³

Frame goes on to describe the thrill of reading about a landscape she could recognise, had lived in,

[in] poems about Canterbury and the plains, about 'dust and distance,' about our land having its share of time and not having to borrow from a northern Shakespearian wallet. I could read, too, about the past, and

absences, and objects which only we could experience, and substances haunting in their unique influence on our lives. (1983, 68)

Frame's experience of cultural displacement is by no means unique. Again, in King's collection, *Pakeha*, many of the contributors mention this 'dissonance between what I read on the page and what I "read" in person as somehow a defining sense of being Pakeha' (Dann, 48). This perception might more generally be recognised as the 'double vision' endemic to the postcolonial condition: having to read your own identity through the recorded and venerated experiences of others that are often diametrically opposed to your own.⁴ New Zealand poet Lauris Edmond explains:

I did not wonder at all that none of their scenes were visible, that in fact outside my window the sun shone on paddocks, not meadows or fields, that the dark green New Zealand bush, *pohutukawa* and *rimu* mixed with pine and *macrocarpa*, all evergreen, was not at all like the copses and dingles of the English woodland. Christmas trees were made to look like snow-covered firs, while the summer sun blazed outside, and we stuffed ourselves with the unseasonably hot and heavy edible icons of roast lamb, mint sauce, roast potatoes, green peas and plum duff (in which we had earlier hidden the sixpences and threepences that were to clink miraculously on to someone's pudding plate) (Edmond 1993, 73).

Poignantly, Pat Rosier, co-editor of New Zealand's feminist magazine *Broadsheet* tells how Frame's first novel had the same impact on her that Sargeson's writing had on Frame:

As a young adult I read Janet Frame's *Owls Do Cry*. Here was a real, serious book - literature even - that was set here, in New Zealand. [...] I recognised so much: the way they dressed and talked; the father worked in the railways like mine; people outside the family were strange and mysterious, as I experienced them. Here in print was life with moods, atmospheres and places I knew. Reading *Owls Do Cry* was a revelation that showed me glimmers of my own *colonial identity confusion*. I was in 'my place', but it was a place that hadn't counted, hadn't figured in the world of books that enriched my life. (Rosier, 1988, 107; emphasis added)

In the first and only edition of Sargeson's (1945) *Speaking For Ourselves*, his Foreword reads thus:

Apart from two or three exceptions, all the writers represented in the book are New Zealanders living in their own country. And that is to say they are living in a country which so far can't exactly be described as over-generous in its encouragement of its own writers. Nor do I need to remind readers that our population isn't very large. And in such circumstances it is surely quite remarkable that so many writers exist, who can achieve what I may perhaps be allowed to describe as a very decent competence in the craft of modern short-story writing.

John Thomson comments that Sargeson's collection was the first anthology of New Zealand short stories, collecting writers 'for their fellow countrymen and not exploiting the country's exoticism for the benefit of English readers' (1991, 625-6). Frame's reaction to the collection is revealing: 'The stories [...] overwhelmed me by the fact of their *belonging*. It was almost a feeling of having been an orphan who discovers that her parents are alive and living in the most desirable home - pages of prose and poetry' (1983, 68; emphasis added). This metaphor is complex: the stories belong, they have a place. Without an accepted canonical / Leavisite tradition, they were homeless. But then the subject of the metaphor changes almost unconsciously, imperceptibly: it is the author who is the orphan, not the literature. Janet Frame has been looking for her 'place' as a New Zealand writer, seeking an identity and a family, a place for her ideas to 'come home to'.⁵

The need for New Zealand literature to find a home is paralleled by Frame's search as an author for both a physical home and home for the literary muse. In her first attempt to get her work published while in London, Frame disguises herself as a West Indian writer:

I was much influenced by West Indian writers and, feeling inadequate in my New Zealand-ness (for did not I come from a land then described as 'more English than England'?) I wrote a group of poems from the point of view of a West Indian new arrival and, repeating the experiment that Frank Sargeson and I had made with the *London Magazine* when I pretended to be of Pacific Island origin, I sent the poems to the *London Magazine* with a covering letter explaining my recent arrival from the West Indies. The poems were returned with the comment that they were 'fresh, original' [but] did not quite come up to the standard of English required.

She explains this as: 'In a sense my literary lie was an escape from a national lie that left a colonial New Zealander overseas without any real identity' (1985, 28-9).

Towards the end of her final volume of autobiography Frame is in a dilemma. Should she stay in London where she has made literary and publishing contacts, where she has received expert counselling at the Maudsley and the liberating disclosure that she had never suffered from schizophrenia, or should she return to

New Zealand, the place of her birth but where she has experienced great personal hardship including the tragic deaths of two sisters and her own eight-year long incarceration? She is prompted into a decision by the news of her father's death: she is the sole executor of her father's estate, her epileptic brother having been made legally incapable of handling the affairs of the property. She decides to return to New Zealand, realising that her reasons for leaving New Zealand in the first place were not literary ones (as they were for many previous New Zealand writers who could not get published even within their own country). Frame retrospectively declares that she left the country in order to re-construct an identity for herself. Having been through all the necessary steps to establish this identity she concludes that the time is right to 'come home', New Zealand being her ideal literary base:

Europe was so much on the map of the imagination (which is a limitless map, indeed) with room for anyone who cares to find a place there, while the layers of the long dead and recently dead are a fertile growing place for new shoots and buds, yet the prospect of exploring a new country with not so many layers of mapmakers, particularly the country where one first saw daylight and the sun and the dark, was too tantalizing to resist. Also, the first layer of imagination mapped by the early inhabitants leaves those who follow an access or passageway to the bone. Living in New Zealand, would be for me, like living in an age of mythmakers; with a freedom of imagination among all the artists because it is possible to begin at the beginning and to know the unformed places and to help to form them, to be a mapmaker for those who will follow nourished by this generation's layers of the dead. (1985, 165-6)

This passage is reminiscent of a similar perception of her native Canada made by Margaret Atwood:

Canada is an unknown territory for the people who live in it [...]. I'm talking about Canada as a state of mind, as the space you inhabit not just with your body but with your head. It's that kind of space in which we find ourselves lost.

What a lost person needs is a map of the territory, with his own position marked on it so he can see where he is in relation to everything else. Literature is not only a mirror; it is also a map, a geography of the mind. Our literature is one such map, if we can learn to read it as *our* literature, as the product of who and where we have been. We need such a map desperately, we need to know about here, because here is where we live. For the members of a country or culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity. Without that knowledge we will not survive. (1996, 18-19)

That the writer is 'mapmaker' is particularly suggestive, outlining shapes and contours, representing the real at the same time as 'making' something new, providing a means of navigating the country, finding a way to its heart, representing identity. The first map of a country is its first image and while it is now clear that mapping is by no means such a precise and objective science, the first map contains so many more possibilities than any subsequent: you have no idea what it will look like, it provides access to a place no one has seen from above, visually, as a whole, before.

Frame could have even been thinking of one of New Zealand's first mapmakers, Samuel Butler, the nineteenth-century British literary critic, novelist and painter. E.S. Schaffer describes Butler's early excursions into the New Zealand landscape and his subsequent mapping of what he found there:

The best known of his maps is undoubtedly that of Erewhon, the imaginary country, the utopia, 'nowhere' spelt (nearly) backwards, in the novel of that title (1870). This map is not wholly imaginary, however, but is let into and superimposed on the real map of New Zealand at the time (1861-64) he went out to the colony as a sheep farmer and carried out explorations in order to stake out a claim for land. Butler himself is given credit in New Zealand exploration literature for having extended the mapping of the new country, and having come very near to discovering the major pass across the country, Arthur's Pass. (1988, 511)

Butler's 'imaginary' map of Erewhon is based on the Rangitata Valley in the North Island, 'the "feigned" features depart as little as possible from the actual, and the routes as little as possible from Butler's own travels' (Schaffer, 513).⁶ However, once Butler goes 'over the range' and begins to describe and map a second range of mountains, he visualises an actually unexplored New Zealand. Butler maps his utopian nowhere on a land that he has physically explored but then goes on to imagine a landscape beyond the confines of his own explorations.

In Butler's imposition of an imaginary landscape on a landscape he actually explored (effectively blanking out the physical space that is New Zealand), Frame's expression 'Europe was so much on the map of the imagination' takes on a fresh resonance. The challenge for Frame is both to 'map' New Zealand, describing and outlining its features, marking out the possible terrain and to 'put it on the map', contributing to that first layer of imagination:

I knew that I must have been one among thousands of visitors to London who had stood by the withered sedge, remembering Keats, experiencing the excited recognition of suddenly inhabiting a living poem, perhaps reciting it from memory, and then, as if rejecting a worn-out gift, with a sense almost of shame, banishing the feeling, then, later,

going in search of it, reliving it without judging, yet aware that too often everyone must tread the thousandth, millionth, seldom the first early layer of the world of imagination. Yet only the first day and night on earth could ever be thought of as the first layer on which the following secondary makers wove the shared carpet that in the peculiar arithmetic of making allows no limit of space for the known and unknown works of past and present and those, unfashioned, of the future. Looking down at London I could sense the accumulation of artistic weavings, and feel that there could be a time when the carpet became a web or shroud and other times a warm blanket or shawl: the prospect for burial by entrapment or warmth was close. How different it appeared to be in New Zealand where the place names and the landscape, the trees, the sea and the sky still echoed with their first voice while the earliest works of art uttered their response, in a primary dialogue with the gods. (1985, 27-8)

The unmapped physical space that is New Zealand is then also the space where images resonate with their original intensity, where language functions in a kind of Edenic arcadia where everything is heard and understood for the first time, not worn out with interpretation and repetition. But this mapping, this naming, is also the means by which, as Paul Carter so memorably suggests in *The Road to Botany Bay*, Imperial history inscribes its empirical roots/routes. It is to recognise the power of language to write over (to effectively erase) the space that has been inhabited for centuries before the (contested) first European landfall: it is, in fact, in Carter's words, a 'map-made emptiness' (1987, xxi). He elaborates further: 'By the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with a history. And, by the same token, the namer inscribes his passage permanently on the world, making a metaphorical word-place which others may one day inhabit and by which, in the meantime, he asserts his own place in history' (1987, xxiv).

TO the Is-Land

The title of the second chapter of *To the Is-Land*, lengthens the preposition *to* in the book's title and becomes, 'Towards the Is-Land', thus emphasising a sense of movement but also simultaneously non-arrival, perpetual motion: 'those who have suffered [seasickness] will know, the abiding dream is for the ship to stop moving, for the sick passenger to be put ashore at some island, any island, any land that happens by as if land ever happened by in search of a lone castaway' (1985, 15). This can be linked to Elspeth Probyn's notion of 'belonging':

It seems to me that the processes of belonging are always tainted with deep insecurities about the possibility of truly fitting in, of even getting in. [...] Belonging is an inbetween state. [...] While belonging may make one think of arriving, it also marks the often fearsome interstices of being and going, of longing, of not arriving. (1996, 40)

The final destination of our lives is not a fixed point: it is the journey itself, the movement towards that point that is significant: indeed, the journey is the autobiography.

But Frame also sees her destination, her arrival point as writer, as the world of the imagination: 'All writers - all beings - are exiles as a matter of course. [...] Their work is a lifelong journey towards the lost land' (1985, 166). The Is-Land she is working towards, where she has the most exhilarating sense of 'finding her true self', is the world of fiction, the timeless, spaceless place of the imagination, a place you can never arrive at, only move towards. Home for Frame is not a physical space but an imaginary, literary one: 'Now that writing was my only occupation, regardless of the critical and financial outcome, I felt I had found my 'place' at deeper level than any landscape of any country could provide' (1985, 167). She explains: 'it was my insistence on bringing [the world of literature] home, rather than vanishing within it, that increased my desire to write, for how else could I anchor that world within this everyday world where I hadn't the slightest doubt that it belonged?' (1982, 148). In her fictional writing we see how Frame succeeds more and more in 'bringing this world home'. We see how she has made fiction her home. Any suffering becomes material for fiction and therefore a way of supporting and overcoming circumstances and the sense of not belonging, of being outside, that she often feels. When she first arrives in London to find the hostel she had carefully booked from abroad has no record of her letter (and therefore *no place* for her), her panic subsides when she thinks of the importance of 'the perennial drama of the Arrival and its place in myth and fiction'. She is proud to be able to place her own experience and subsequent interpretation among them, having 'the thrilling sense of being myself excavated as reality, the ore of the polished fiction' (1984, 19).

Rosemary Marangoly George has concluded that 'if "roots" are a conservative myth, then all homesickness is fiction' (1996, 199). Her use of the word fiction here might suggest that homesickness itself is a fallacy, a mistaken longing/ weariness for a place that does not exist (Nowhere/ Erwehon). But also, put another way, *all fiction is homesickness*. Writing fiction is the journey that will bring the writer home.

Just as telling her story has provided Frame with an identity, so, it has been argued, the only way for a once colonised nation, or a nation once tied to the Mother country, to forge its own identity is to start telling its own story, the stories of its inhabitants: definitively here and not there, writing *back* and not *to* the Empire. In this sense then, perhaps 'to the island' refers to the to-ing and fro-ing between the North and South islands of New Zealand.

Acknowledgement

Some of the material in this article was previously published as 'Metaphors of Place in New Zealand Writing' in *AngloFiles* (Journal of the Danish Association of Teachers of English) 112, May 1999; special issue on Canada and New Zealand, pp. 61-65.

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Notes

- 1 A term used by Michael Billig and cited by Stephanie Taylor and Margaret Wetherell in 'Doing National Construction Work: Discourses of National Identity', *SITE* 30 (1995), 69-84.
- 2 The translation is Michael King's in *Being Pakeha*, pp. 210-212.
- 3 It is interesting that Frame should immediately liken the marginalisation of her country to the marginalisation of her illness. Indeed, Margaret Atwood has described the postcolonial/ settler sense of being neither here nor there as a condition of madness: 'A person who is "here" but would rather be somewhere else is an exile or a prisoner; a person who is "here" but *thinks* he/she is somewhere else is insane' (Atwood 1996, 18).
- 4 Dorothy Jones uses the apt phrase 'double vision' in 'The Antipodes of Empire', p.82.
- 5 I have extracted this notion from Frame's comment earlier in the same volume: 'A state of restlessness can be infectious and any departure from an artist's planned routine can be a trigger to anarchy as the ideas, looking in, find nowhere to come home to' (1985, 81).
- 6 Schaffer, p.513.

GREG O'BRIEN

SAT UP AND WATCHED GO BY

The river watched the road
go by,

stood still as a menagerie
flooded the ridge—

one person's sow, another's
paradise duck. Now only

invisible traffic takes
the river road.

Terraced, palaced
like the music

of Palestrina—a finely placed
sense of the tragic,