TRAUMA AND RECOVERY IN JANET FRAME'S FICTION

by

JENNIFER LAWN

BA(Hons), The University of Otago, 1989
MA, The University of British Columbia, 1991

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of English)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

.....

.....

.....

.....

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 1997

ABSTRACT

Focusing on four novels by Janet Frame in dialogue with texts by Freud, Zizek, Lacan, and Silverman, my project theorizes trauma as the basis for both an ethical and an interpretive practice. Frame's fiction develops a cultural psychology, showing how the factors of narcissistic fantasy and the incapacity to mourn contribute to physical and epistemic aggression committed along divides of ethnicity, gender, and linguistic mode of expression. Employing trauma as a figure for an absolute limit to what can be remembered or known, I suggest that reconciliation with whatever is inaccessible, lacking, or dead within an individual or collective self fosters a non-violent relation with others.

I begin by querying the place of "catharsis" within hermeneutic literary interpretation, focusing on the construction of Frame within the New Zealand literary industry. With Erlene's adamantine silence at its centre, Scented Gardens for the Blind (1964) rejects the hermeneutic endeavour, exemplified by Patrick Evans' critical work on Frame, to make a text "speak" its secrets. My readings of Intensive Care (1970) and The Adaptable Man (1965) address inter-generational repetitions of violence as the consequences of the failure to recognise and work through the devastations of war. The masculine fantasy of totality driving the Human Delineation project in Intensive Care has a linguistic corollary in Colin Monk's pursuit of the Platonic ideality of algebra, set against Milly's "degraded" punning writing. In The Adaptable Man, the arrival of electricity ushers in a new perceptual régime that would obliterate any "shadow" of dialectical negativity or internal difference.

The thesis ends with a swing toward conciliation and emotional growth. The homosexual relationship depicted in Daughter Buffalo (1972) offers a model of transference, defined as a transitional, productive form of repetition that opens Talbot to his ethnic and familial inheritance. Working from within a radical form of narcissism, the novel reformulates masculinity by embracing loss as "phallic divestiture" (Kaja Silverman).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Books by Frame

AB An Autobiography. New York: Braziller, 1991.

AM The Adaptable Man. New York: Braziller, 1965.

CP The Carpathians. Auckland: Century Hutchinson, 1988.

DB Daughter Buffalo. New York: Braziller, 1972.

EA The Edge of the Alphabet. New York: Braziller, 1962.

FW Faces in the Water. New York: Braziller, 1961.

IC Intensive Care. New York: Braziller, 1970.

LM Living in the Maniototo. New York: Braziller, 1979.

ODC Owls Do Cry. 1957. New York: Braziller, 1960.

PM The Pocket Mirror. New York: Braziller, 1967.

SG Scented Gardens for the Blind. New York: Braziller, 1964.

SS A State of Siege. New York: Braziller, 1966.

YF Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room. New York: Braziller, 1969.

Books by other authors

RF The Ring of Fire: Essays on Janet Frame. Ed. Jeanne Delbaere. Aarhus, Den.: Dangaroo, 1992.

SE The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1957.

NOTE ON EDITIONS

For the sake of consistency and availability I have used American editions wherever possible, given that Braziller reprinted Frame's fictional and poetic oeuvre from Owls Do Cry to Intensive Care during the 1980s and early 1990s. I use the earlier Braziller reprints with caution, however, considering Frame's comment in "Departures and Returns" (1982) that she was "surprised and horrified to find" that when her earlier works were printed in the United States (presumably by Braziller) many of her words had been "'translated' into American English, often with little knowledge of the original meaning" (91-92). Frame does not specify which texts were affected. There is much bibliographic work to be done on the substantive differences between the various editions of Frame's fiction; at stake is the political question of cultural difference asserted through linguistic particularity. Frame insists that the words of New Zealand writers should not be wrenched out of shape to accommodate hegemonic cultural interests:

> We want our words. If I write of a bach by the sea I do not want it to be turned into a bungalow or cottage or mansion. If we write of a tangi, we mean just that: a tangi. This absorption, even within one's own country, of another culture means a form of imprisonment for able-bodied words which languish and could die exiled from the literature, never having the opportunity to work within it and enrich it. How much more magnified this imprisonment and exile may be in a world-setting, when countries high in literacy and publishing opportunities, reinforced by an abundance of exported films, can almost vacuum-clean, overnight, another culture and language. ("Departures" 92)

Where relevant, I have used a footnote to indicate substantive variations in quotations from Frame's early works, Owls Do Cry and Faces in the Water.

Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room was published under the title The Rainbirds by W. H. Allen (London, UK.) and Pegasus (Christchurch, NZ).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to all those who have contributed to this project. I particularly thank my thesis director, Margery Fee, for her energy and encouragement, and my committee members, Bill New and Michael Zeitlin, for their detailed, trusting, and efficient attention to my work. Tessa Barringer, Colleen Cowman, Vanessa Finney, Andrew Gurr, Catherine Kirkness, Dorothy Lane, Anne Maxwell, Susie O'Brien, Erin Soros, Janet Wilson, and Mark Vessey generously allowed me to read unpublished manuscripts. Ruth Brown and Janet Wilson instructed me gently in the protocols of personal footnotes. Susan Ash, Ruth Brown, Imogen Coxhead, Kasey Cummings, Jocelyn Harris, Alan Horsman, Lawrence Jones, Kevin McNeilly, Gina Mercer, and Shelagh Murray responded to my sometimes arcane requests for information with cheerfulness and expertise. Rachel Lawn, Owen Lawn, and Lois Lawn gave scholarly and emotional support. John Burns was a computer whiz. Karen de Jonghe, Stephen Milnes, and Linda Moore helped miscellaneously. Gaik Cheng Khoo, Janice Fiamengo, Marian Gracias, and Gabi Helms proof-read with flair. Rob Mills did my dishes. Erin Soros read the entire manuscript in one go. Alex Hart saved me literally hundreds of hours of work with his extraordinary generosity in lending his Frame papers and allowing me to touch a letter signed by herself. Financial support was provided by a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship and two Teaching Assistantships held at the University of British Columbia.

Extra special thanks and love--
to Janice Fiamengo, Liz McCausland, and Peter Wilkins: editors, therapists, bons vivants;
to my parents, for their love and support;
to Sara, for calling.

Permissions

Introduction

There seems no better way to open this study of trauma and recovery in four novels by Janet Frame than with a corpse and a mystery. Here is the scene, then. A small white house on an island in the far north of New Zealand. In one of the bedrooms lies a body, a dead woman, Pakeha, middle-aged. A broken window. A cold stone in the corpse's hand. Nearby a newspaper with the words "Help help" scrawled across it in red, and with a nonsense poem in place of news. Talk on the island about prowlers, louts, an "element" of trouble in the local community.

How did she die? What does the note mean? Where is the prowler now?

How will you know?

***

This is the world of Janet Frame that my thesis will inhabit. Something terrible has happened; there has been a death. There are no witnesses, at least no-one, dead or alive, prepared to tell. Clues are rampant, provocative, puzzling, indecipherable, just beyond the reach of comprehension. As a reader you feel strung between wanting to discover the mystery, and knowing that you can't go back to that place that was there before. Caught between an impossibility and a necessity: I can't go back--I must go back.[1]

My project situates itself in the multiple paradoxes surrounding trauma as the object of memory, as a model for a theory of reading, and--most broadly--as the basis for a mode of

[1] This paradox rephrases (but does not reverse) Samuel Beckett's formulation, "I can't go on--I must go on."

epistemology. In its ethical and political contexts, trauma demands that the unspeakable be spoken, witnessed, exposed, or pronounced, without being violated. It asks for a return to what cannot be retrieved, and challenges me to know that which cannot be known, or ought not to be known. Trauma is an "event" that cannot be experienced as such, because it takes place beyond the usual capacity of cognition to register, organize, and manage sense impressions. Trauma is an extremity of experience, and yet it is increasingly considered central to the experience of individual and collective history, narrative, selfhood. As Ian Hacking has noted, one of the characteristics of Western thought in the late twentieth century is the emergence of the idea that "what has been forgotten is what forms our character" (qtd. in Antze and Lambek 65).[2]

Frame's fiction acknowledges pathologies of memory, while also repudiating nostalgic desires for the absolute recovery of whatever has been lost. One must return to the site of loss, but this return must be carefully negotiated--an injunction which applies to a community, a nation, or a culture as much as to an individual, a survivor, or a reader. My chapters will therefore pick their way between competing forces of dispersal and return, amputation and wholeness, repression and catharsis. Throughout I will regard Frame as a critic of dominant Western epistemology, a theorist of memory, and an analyst of societal struggles for power. I will suggest further that Frame's novels have heuristic value: they "school" their readers in their own interpretation, or rather, in the boundaries of interpretation. Literary interpretation, too, may be an act of memory, one which also bumps up against trauma, alterity, the limits of knowledge.

---

[2] In "Memory Sciences, Memory Politics" (1996), Hacking briefly traces the genealogy of what he terms the "doctrine of forgetting" (68), which "has changed the very idea of the spiritual self, the soul" (68). Although the definition of "trauma" had shifted from the realm of the physical to that of the psychological as early as 1885 (Hacking 76), it is only recently that belief in the formative effects of forgetting has become so widespread and commercialized in Western culture. Factors contributing to this effloresence of the forgotten include an urgency among cultural historians and artists to hear the testimonies of the now-aging survivors of the Holocaust; feminist insistence on the reality of childhood sexual abuse and its devastating sequelae; and the emergence of the psychotherapy of victimization as a growth industry in 1990s North America.

But for now, back to the scene of the crime in the small white house in the far north of New Zealand, where literary detectives have for some time been dusting for fingerprints.

A State of Siege

My introductory tableau is the closing scene of Frame's novel A State of Siege (1966), and the corpse is that of Malfred Signal, the middle-aged artist recently arrived on the island of Karemoana. Literary critics, searching for clues as to why and how Malfred died, have sifted through the novel's literary, geographical, cultural, and historical allusions. Monique Malterre, for instance, turns to the domains of the mythological, the metaphysical, and the theological for clues. Perhaps the stone in the dead woman's hand is the philosopher's stone of "true knowledge and eternal life" (Malterre 122). Or perhaps Malfred holds the stone promised to the spiritual elect, according to the Book of Revelation:

> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;
> To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Rev. 2.17; qtd. in Malterre 122).

As for the words written on the newspaper, Malterre adds, "Malfred alone is able to grasp the full meaning of these words as she alone can understand the poem" (122). Malfred, however, is dead. The materialist critic Ruth Brown also appeals to theology, albeit reluctantly, in reading the final tableau of A State of Siege as "a sort of resurrection" in which "Malfred dies, but someone lives to write a poem" in a "resurgence of the artist" that is "a matter of faith rather than of reason" (Brown, "Sociable Frame" 55, 56).

Other critics have followed psychoanalytic leads. Mark Williams proposes that "[t]he nonsense words speak Malfred's unconscious. Malfred . . . reads in the inscription the repressed memories of parts of her prior life too painful to confront directly" (42-43), and

Judith Dell Panny argues that the "deliberately cryptic" language in A State of Siege "befits a novel concerned with repression" (I Have What I Gave 97). The final poem, which Panny interprets as a reference to the flight of a flock of birds, typifies the concealing, allegorical language which she finds pervasive in Frame's fiction.

Another critic reads the ending of A State of Siege as a warning posted to the reader, cautioning against invasive forms of interpretation. "Any reader who imposes a final meaning," writes Dawn Danby, "is a kind of prowler, unhappy to be excluded, ready to break windows to find out what's going on inside" (105-106). Gina Mercer reverses this scenario, preferring to locate herself as reader not outside but inside the textual "house": "I want to situate myself as a companion to Malfred Signal. I wish to signal that, like her, I too am in a state of siege. I am besieged by a host of prowling meanings, which approach me from different angles, offering a variety of revelations" (Janet Frame 103).

One of the questions which set me off on my own doctoral sleuthing is: how do these critics know? The question is not rhetorical. How do they know? By what interpretative assumptions and procedures do they propose to answer the mystery of the trauma which befell Malfred, whether murder, suicide, or death by unknown cause (mythology, private apocalypse)? The three topoi established by Malterre, Brown, Williams, and Panny--theology, detection, and psychoanalysis--set the parameters for my reading of Frame's fiction; they put down the hermeneutic boundary pegs, so to speak, for my own ranging over four of Frame's novels, Scented Gardens for the Blind (1964), Intensive Care (1970), The Adaptable Man (1965), and Daughter Buffalo (1972). Psychoanalysis, spiritual interpretation, and detection are hermeneutic exercises to the extent that each of them coalesces around a central secret and strives to replicate or uncover a prior but forgotten or occluded state of mind. These modes of investigation "progress" through reversal, reaching back in time in search of an originary motivation, intention, or state of mind. They are also hieratic discourses that Frame's novels will parody and critique as not only governed by an impossible teleology but also fundamentally violent and patriarchal.

Frame's novels work against the lure of the secret that they themselves set up. As seen in the critical responses to the deathly tableau at the end of A State of Siege, the "answer" to the mystery seems very close, available to anyone who studies the clues carefully enough, yet infinitely far away, centred in some other even more mysterious and absent consciousness--"Frame" herself, God, perhaps even Dr. Freud. In a 1983 interview with Rosemary Vincent, Frame commented on the pleasure she derives from this sense of "beyondness":

> For me, one of the fascinations of writing a book is in the coding of what is written to describe what is not written. I like to think of the contents of a book as a signpost to a world that is not even mentioned. ("Alone on a River of Words" 9)

How can a "world" be "signposted" but not "mentioned"? What is the difference between these two modes of reference, given that a fictional world always exists in a virtual space, is always placed "somewhere else"? Perhaps Frame is characterising literary writing by what Jacques Lacan calls "revelation" rather than "expression" (Seminar Book I 48-49), "revelation" being for Lacan the mode of the language of the dream, necessarily indirect, displaced: the meaning of the dream is never what it states itself to be. Like the dream, the signpost (I have in mind the unassuming AA fingerposts that dot the New Zealand road system) signifies, "something is not here." The signpost says: what you are looking for is over here (in this direction), but it is not precisely here; it is elsewhere, and you are not there yet. The place of the signpost is not yet the place that is sought, so that the person who reads the signpost must be both in the right place (on the right track) and in the wrong place (not yet at her destination)--to say nothing of the questions of what (if anything) is written on the signpost, whether it is legible, whether it has been defaced, and whether it points in the right direction.

The "contents of a book" may not be what they claim to be, or better, may not be where they seem to be. There is a further complication, however. If Danby's interpretation of the

ending of A State of Siege has any force, the reader who correctly interprets the "signpost" set up by the text, or its "signals," understands that the novel's content is more akin to a "no trespassing" sign at the gate than a welcoming mat on the doorstep of some essential meaning. Ironically, the "inside" reader of the textual signs knows not to attempt an "inside" reading, knows not to "break windows to find out what's going on inside." Hence the "lure" of the secret: the secret is not where you believe it to be, and believing that you have it is a sure sign that you actually don't. Danby seems to have taken her own reading to heart by not publishing any further articles on Frame's work (to my knowledge), thereby avoiding any risk at all of trespass against Frame.

The purest, most adamantine secret represented in Frame's fictional worlds occurs in Scented Gardens for the Blind (1964). Nobody--not the characters, not the reader, not even Erlene herself--knows why Erlene doesn't talk. Scented Gardens involves a "second-order" secrecy in which the fictional scenario--three characters trying to construe the secret of a young woman's silence--mirrors the situation of hermeneutic literary interpretation. Erlene is to Dr. Clapper as Frame is to those critics, most notably Panny and Patrick Evans, who believe that there is a fundamental and ultimately nameable mystery, possibly autobiographical, underlying Frame's fiction. In that part of his criticism which is psychoanalytically influenced, Evans reads Frame's fiction as equivalent to a symptom, both revealing and covering up an unresolved psychic conflict traceable back to traumatic events in Frame's life. The "no trespassing" signs set up by Frame's texts--and by the writer herself, who has resisted Evans' attempts at biographical research--are for Evans evidence of defence mechanisms which deceive the author as well as the critic as "analyst." In I Have What I Gave: The Fiction of Janet Frame (1992), Panny shows an overwhelming desire to pin Frame's textual puzzles to some overarching explanatory apparatus in the assiduous hunting down of references to Christian and classical sources. This hermeneutic orientation toward the secret, as characterised in Scented Gardens and practised by Panny and Evans,

fixates on the secret with the intention of removing its opacity and hence obliterating it altogether.

I too am fascinated by the phenomenon of secrecy in Frame's fiction, though I have tried to avoid understanding secrecy as a "wall" between the reader and the "meaning" of the work so much as an object of study in itself. There are diverse protocols of secrecy, so to speak, and diverse kinds of secret, with implications concerning interpretive expertise, ownership of meaning, and longing or aggression directed toward the person deemed to know the answer. I will be asking in subsequent chapters whether hermeneutic interpretation requires a death for its sustenance--whether the critic (or character) motivated by hermeneutic principles needs to wall off meaning to claim the triumph of calling it back into presence--or whether it leaves death in its wake--whether "interpreting successfully" in hermeneutic terms is akin to Alwyn Maude's project of "kill[ing] successfully," that is, without trace (AM 150). Perhaps the secret is not ontologically "there" in Frame's fiction but rather manufactured by those for whom it becomes a compulsion.

That said, my method will involve hermeneutic procedures defined neutrally as the study of how meaning comes about through texts. Like Danby, I privilege certain figures, phrases, or scenes as clues to the interpretation of the novel in which they occur. A "fission theory" of reading operates in Milly's splitting of the linguistic atom in Intensive Care, for example, and I propose a "photology" of reading in The Adaptable Man's photographic motif. But, again like Danby, I suggest that these textual "signs" mark the boundary limits of cognitive understanding. Ironically, Frame's novels can be made intelligible by seeing in them a refusal of absolute intelligibility; at best one remains an intimate outsider to her work.

More specifically, then, my thesis rejects, not hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, and theology per se, but the hermeneutics of the nameable secret, the psychoanalysis of absolute catharsis, and the theology of presence. There is no denying that Frame relishes the cryptograms, word puzzles, and arcane allusions that send interpreters scuttling off to dictionaries and encyclopedias. To give an example of Frame's ingenuity, the name "Istina

Mavet" apparently combines the Serbo-Croatian word for "truth" with the Hebrew word for "death."[3] Such wordplay continually reminds readers that any "wall" deemed to enclose the presumed kernel of textual meaning is no more than--and no less than--a wall of paper (Frame, EA 129), a wall composed only of writing. But the desire to tear down these walls, to decode the puzzles, can lead to a hollow sense of triumph over the text--hollow because ultimately lonely, despite the shimmering promise of communion with the author's original state of mind:

> The critic, thinking he [sic] has made a discovery, resigns himself with bad grace to accepting the possibility that the poet has neither consciously nor unconsciously willed what the analyst has only assumed. He resigns himself badly to remaining alone with his discovery. He wishes to share it with the poet. But the poet, having said all he [sic] has to say, remains strangely silent. One can produce any hypothesis about him: he neither accepts nor rejects it. (Starobinski 123)[4]

The critical discourse that most yearns for immediacy between authorial intention and readerly cognition makes its own desire impossible.

Despite their lure of the secret name, Frame's novels argue more strenuously against any attempt to obliterate the secret, to recover every repression, to account for every trace. Human survival, for Frame, ultimately depends on regarding people as signposts to an elsewhere which cannot and ought not be invaded. It is at this point that the psychoanalytic methodology which I favour meets ethics, the acknowledgement of the limits of what another subjectivity--text, character, literary figure--can be for me. The density of the other

---

[3] Frame included this detail in a letter to Patrick Evans ("Muse" 1); Panny treasures the information as a "rare revelation" (I Have What I Gave 28). Istina Mavet is the narrator of Faces in the Water (1961; the first name is spelt "Estina" in the prefatory pages of the Braziller, Women's Press, and Avon editions of the novel).

[4] The source of this quotation is Jean Starobinski's "collaboration" with Saussure in Words Upon Words: The Anagrams of Ferdinand de Saussure (1979). Starobinski is commenting on Saussure's lifelong quest, recorded in 99 notebooks, to find the secret names couched in classical Latin and Greek verse.

does not merely consist of layers of transparency that can be peeled back to reveal the "truth" of the other; knowledge hits against an absolute limit, which is not the refusal but the very possibility of communication. The "no trespassing" boundary line becomes reconfigured as a shared limit by which a work is

> offered, that is to say presented, proposed, and abandoned on the common limit where singular beings share one another. . . . When the work is thus offered up to communication, it does not pass into a common space. Let me repeat: only the limit is common, and the limit is not a place but the sharing of places, their spacing. (Nancy 73)

Frame's novels for me are theoretical fictions elaborating the imperative that Derrida (following Levinas) announces in a "powerful and formidable ellipsis: the relation to the other, that is to say, justice" ("Adieu" 7). The responsibility of self to other will play itself out in the pages to follow in the relation between critic and "Frame" (chapter one); between man and woman, "human" and "animal," public and private, state and citizen, mathematician and poet (chapter two); between the domestic and the alien, human and God, murderer and ghost (chapter three); between oneself and one's ethnic history, and between oneself and oneself (chapter four).

The Labyrinth and the Minotaur

Of the three master narratives informing my research, psychoanalysis has turned out to be the most influential, bridging the discourses of detection and theology while overlapping with each of them.[5] The mode of psychoanalysis I pursue--and help to create--is a

[5] Psychoanalysis has commonly been linked with both theology and detection. For commentary see, for example, Peter Brooks, "Fictions of the Wolf Man: Freud and Narrative Understanding" in Reading for the Plot 264-85; Zizek, Looking Awry 60-68; the opening chapter of Lacan's The Four Fundamental Principles of Psychoanalysis; Lacan and Theological Discourse, edited by Edith Wyshogrod, David Crownfield, and Carl A. Raschke (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1989); and Philip Rieff's The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

psychoanalysis of society theorised through Frame's texts, themselves in dialogue with Freud's oeuvre. I also invoke the palatable version of Lacan that has percolated through the interpretive filters of North American commentators Shoshana Felman, Joan Copjec, Jane Gallop, Slavoj Zizek, and Anthony Wilden, among others. This mode of psychoanalysis is hospitable to paradoxes of distance and proximity, inside and outside, aggression and attraction, the evident and the arcane, the present and the past, the quick and the dead. Most importantly, it offers a discourse of the "not all," a self-reflexive and dialectical means for analysing the interplay of opacity and disclosure between self and other. To read Frame's fiction through trauma is to work within the limits of "sensory failure" (Kermode, Genesis 14), to recognize that "in all transmissions of the traumatic, there is always a part 'that is not transmissible'" (LaCapra, "Shoah" 241, quoting Claude Lanzmann).[6]

The clinical evidence for repression, including traumatic repression, is at best controversial in psychiatric research,[7] but this point is irrelevant for the purposes of socio-cultural analysis, because what may fail empirically as a medical model can nonetheless hold force as a basis for ethics. To insist upon the principle of the unconscious then becomes, not a question of accurately modelling the mind, but a political safeguard against abuses of power. There are many ways to refuse to speak, ranging from prohibition and religious observance (avoidance of blasphemy) to failures of memory and failures of language. There are also responsibilities of secrecy: the necessity of acknowledging the secret as a limit point, and the necessity of recognising and working through pathologies of secrecy--recognising how secrecy correlates with repression, neurosis, psychosis; how an

---

[6] See further the comment in Scented Gardens that "each person's life contains one message which never reaches its destination" (49).

[7] This field of psychiatric research is highly politically charged given the current debate about the reliability of adult memories of childhood abuse recovered in psychotherapy. For a critical review of research see Joel Paris' editorial in the May 1996 Canadian Journal of Psychiatry and his two articles in the same volume. Paris' principal conclusion concerning trauma and memory is that there is "little evidence that normal memories can be repressed" and "no evidence that trauma makes repression more likely" ("Part I" 201).

entire society can keep a traumatic experience secret from itself, even as an open secret; how a secret can take active force even when thought to be safely tucked away out of sight.

I do not meant to suggest that ethics consists simply in telling the difference between "normal" and "pathological" modes of repression, as one might teach a child the difference between "good" and "bad" kinds of secrets. The two modes of secrecy are not binary opposites, nor is one the negative of the other. Rather, each is nested within the other. A pathology of secrecy--"repression" in a popular and pejorative sense--stems from the refusal to embrace a secrecy that is already an internal limit. This "secrecy" relates to that which cannot in principle be known, and may be termed "repression" in a metonymic sense, standing for any form of internal incoherence that cannot be brought into harmony with the rest of a structure.

The refusal to speak may preserve some vibrant force, some immensity, that would be killed by the verbal act of denomination. But it is not always desirable that silence should maintain life. In a different scenario, the refusal to speak preserves something that ought to be dead but is not quite. Trauma consists equally in the impossibility of remembering and the impossibility of forgetting. The trauma survivor may not bring the circumstances of the precipitating event to memory, but his or her bodily symptoms will register the continued force of what ought not be there. Hence the double hook of trauma: absolute loss accompanied by inappropriate preservation. This topic leads quickly to Freud and his successors Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, but Frame is no less accomplished a theorist of memory and death. As Zoe Bryce approaches England in The Edge of the Alphabet (1962), the narration surveys an internal topography of the mind, layered in fire, water, ice, earth, and air:

> But as the ship approaches harbor troubling thoughts rise once more to the surface, float in all their ugliness and vulgarity, like drowned bodies; they demand to be retrieved, identified, labeled, put in cold storage until a suitable top-hatted moment crowned with flowers may bear them to a place of permanent burial. Permanent?

> Discounting the archaeological zeal of dreams and memories which uncover the deepest graves. Burning them--shall we cremate the recovered bodies of our thoughts and scatter them in a ceremony of solemn faces to what is called "the four winds"--the four corners? I know of people who have cremated their thoughts, paying high fees; who have rented a niche in the wall of their minds as a token resting place, and then scattered the ashes into the "four winds"; the same ashes have returned to them, volcanic and burning, like pellets of shot flung in their face and their eyes, blinding them for the rest of their life. (165-66)

The problem of the death of memory, like that of the death of a person, is always also a problem of disposal. As my chapter on Daughter Buffalo discusses, dying is a durative process, beginning prior to the moment of physical death and continuing long after it, as those who loved (and hated) the deceased gradually release their moorings of emotional attachment. Or, to rearrange metaphors, one might say that the bereaved subject gradually assimilates his or her loss as the earth slowly assimilates (or digests) the rotting corpse as ashes and dust. The sense impressions evident to consciousness as thought also, routinely, fade away, though, like the image of the deceased person, they may never be absolutely beyond the range of recall through memory.

But the dying of sense impressions can be disrupted by the same forces which disrupt the dying of a person; memory does not always have a legal burial place. Where trauma has occurred, sense impressions and thoughts have been cut off--not duly registered and dispatched, but murdered: they have been repressed in the sense of being violently placed beyond conscious recall. Such "thoughts"--again the term is vague but provisionally necessary--rise to the "surface." This does not mean that the thoughts become present to consciousness, but rather that they assiduously attempt to do so. Concepts that the passage from The Edge of the Alphabet refers to in terms implying conscious awareness--"thought" and "memory"--can more helpfully be understood within Freudian terms as precisely those images which pathologically cannot be returned to conscious thought (cannot be

remembered) and which therefore exert pressure on consciousness, finding partial outlet in the form of symptoms and "substitute formations" such as jokes and parapraxes.[8]

In each elemental sphere of this psychic topography, something refuses to die and lie still. Whether in cold storage, earth, or fire, these "thoughts" remain alien, active, energetic, unpredictable. A quick-fix cremation evidently will not suffice: unresolved memories, like unextinguished ashes, can be spiteful, vengeful, still hot after many years. How, then, to kill off these not alive, not-yet-dead thoughts so that they do not return? Conversely, and what amounts to the same thing: how to bring the thoughts back to life so that they can be confronted and then killed off again, with all the correct rites necessary for a "permanent burial," if such is possible? This is the problem tackled by the practice of psychoanalysis. To avoid being "captives of the captive dead" (Frame, EA 302), that which has been repressed must be brought back to "living" memory to be killed off properly the second time around, removed from the psyche in a psychotherapeutic process which Freud likened to the surgical excision of "small fragments of necrotic bone" ("Analysis" 218). But during the course of his career Freud changed his mind about the nature of the remembering which psychoanalysis ought to induce. The trajectory from cathartic reproduction of a traumatic event, to repeating and working-through, traced in "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through" (1914), provides one of the organising principles of this thesis. Chapter one considers the theme of catharsis in Patrick Evans' criticism and its refusal in Scented Gardens; chapters two and three follow the repetitions of violence that follow from failures to mourn war in Intensive Care and The Adaptable Man; and chapter four studies Talbot Edelman's movement from repetition of an inherited trauma to a form of reconciliation through homosexual love in Daughter Buffalo.

---

[8] See Freud, "Repression" (1915): "So far as we know at present, it seems probable that . . . it is not the repression itself which produces substitute-formations and symptoms, but that these latter constitute indications of a return of the repressed and owe their existence to quite other processes" (93). Repression in itself is part of the normal functioning of the psyche; it is only when repression comes under threat that symptoms come into play.

In "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through," Freud reviews decisive developments in his therapeutic methodology. He describes three phases of technique, which are further divisible into two categories: the "old" cathartic method and the "new" cure by psychoanalysis. Freud abandoned the cathartic method in 1896, rejecting the use of hypnosis as tainted by suggestion, in contrast to the more rigorous "discipline" of psychoanalysis proper. Of the three terms of the title of Freud's paper, the second two, "repeating" and "working-through," belong to psychoanalysis proper, while the first, "remembering," initially seems anchored to the cathartic method, only to enter into a kind of semantic drift later in the essay. Freud notes that each of the three techniques shares the aim of "fill[ing] in gaps in memory" (which is not necessarily the same as "remembering") and "overcom[ing] resistances due to repression" (148). I will retain "remembering" as a general term, reserving the phrases "absolute remembering, "outright remembering," "reproduction," or "abreaction" for the cathartic mode.

In his earliest formulation, Freud upheld the possibility that a therapeutic technique could succeed in "bringing directly into focus the moment at which the symptom was formed, and in persistently endeavouring to reproduce the mental processes involved in that situation" (147). The important word here is "reproduction" in memory: a prior, determinate event could be played back, as if on a video screen, in the analysand's mind. This "event" would take place in the "psychical field" (153) and would not, in contrast to the phenomena of repetition and transference, be experienced by the analysand as a "piece of real life" (152). The two times involved, past and present, were recognisably distinct: "[t]he patient put himself [sic] back into an earlier situation, which he seemed never to confuse with the present one" (148). Nonetheless the cure by hypnosis remained ineffective unless accompanied by abreaction, the release of "affect strangulated by repression" (156). The key verbs for the cathartic method: the patient remembers, reproduces, focuses, abreacts.

The recovered-memory debate has brought the cathartic method back into controversy. Abreaction remains pivotal in some contemporary forms of psychotherapy, most

conspicuously those methods influenced by Judith Herman's Trauma and Recovery (1992). According to Herman, a cure will not be achieved without the full experience of repressed trauma in all its emotional intensity, recounted in chronological narrative fashion; furthermore, cure is not effected unless the event remembered is truthful in the sense that it actually happened.[9] While this emphasis is valuable in countering arguments that the symptoms of sexual abuse arise from fantasy alone, this requisite truth-quotient of cathartic memory also parodies the Enlightenment will to truth (Lambek and Antze xxvii), and quickly leads to juridic questions of guilt and falsehood.

I may seem to have strayed from Frame's texts, but the psychotherapeutic context helps explain why the factors of truth, catharsis, avoidance, and deception characterise discourse molding Frame as a literary figure. Chapter one of my thesis studies these interlinked phenomena, with a particular focus on Patrick Evans' interest in the interrupted mourning which he finds in Frame's first short story collection, The Lagoon (1951), and on his later hints that Frame should "come out" as a victim of (imputed) childhood sexual abuse. My analysis takes into account the factor of transference, which in a literary context concerns the pragmatics of reading: the relations between reader, implied reader, text, implied author, and author. I ask whose "catharsis" is at stake, and who or what the agent of analysis is: does the reader read the text, or does the text read the reader? Evans suggests that Frame writes toward a personal catharsis of the tragic events which she suffered as a young woman and perhaps as a child, but these terms of catharsis could equally be reversed; Frame as object to be known and Frame as subject who knows seem to be two faces of the same problematic. Perhaps the reader motivated by hermeneutic principles seeks to achieve

---

[9] Herman walks a fine line between "truth" as a constative (factual) virtue and as a rhetorical strategy based on the political value of personal testimony. For a fuller critique see Ruth Leys, "Traumatic Cures" (1996) 123. Although I have aligned Herman's therapeutic practice with Freud's early technique, Herman also insists on the importance of working through trauma, with the goal of integrating rather than exorcising it (Trauma and Recovery 181). Many of the essays collected in Antze and Lambek's Tense Past extend and modify Herman's influential methods.

"abreaction" by completing the narrative which Frame continually just fails to write: the denomination of the exact circumstances of her traumatic experiences.

I have as yet considered only the early phase of Freud's technique as characterised in "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through." Quite apart from any questions of effectiveness, the cathartic method seemed to offend Freud's sense of the work ethic: catharsis seemed too quick, too easy, too instant to be true. Both analysand and analyst would have to work harder than that. Freud's second development contains residual elements of the cathartic method to the extent that it retains the focus on "the situations which had given rise to the formation of the symptom" (147), though Freud also specifies an interest in "the other situations which lay behind the moment at which the illness broke out" (147). However, the analysand is to work (playfully) by free associating verbally, while the analyst is to work at interpreting the associations. Freud presents as his mature formulation a revised "division of labour" (147) by which the analyst focuses on the present moment of the analysand's free associations, looking to uncover the defences themselves rather than the circumstances of the originating trauma. The analysand then will spontaneously relate the forgotten situation. The key verbs here: the analyst studies the surface of the analysand's verbal representations, recognises the resistances, and makes them conscious to the analysand; the analysand free associates, repeats repressed material by acting it out rather than remembering it, transfers affect, works-through the resistances uncovered by the analyst, and--eventually--verbalizes the missing situations and connections. Chapters two to four of my thesis will tackle the phenomena of "repeating" and "working-through" as elaborated in Intensive Care, The Adaptable Man, and Daughter Buffalo.

As described by Freud in "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through," psychoanalysis focuses treatment more on the act of remembering than on the object of memory, and necessitates a longer series of steps and a more intricate temporality than the earlier cathartic method. In psychoanalysis the remembering is overtly structured within the intersubjective domain of the analytical situation; what is "discovered" within this arena is

no longer presumed to be independent of the dynamics (identifications, modes of ambivalence, attraction, or aggression) occurring between the analyst and the analysand. The analysand must enter into a series of repetitions, which are both a necessary part of remembering and a blockage to it; the exit from repetition is through the medium of the transference, itself a transitional mode of repetition.[10] And where the cathartic method presumed a pure reversal in temporality terminating in an encounter with the precipitating trauma, psychoanalysis insists upon a mixed temporality in which the past becomes a function of the present moment of the analysis. The time of the analysis is that of the future perfect, continually moving toward "the yesterday within the tomorrow" (Frame, CP 11).

Intensive Care presents male characters--and later, an entire society--caught within the mode of compulsive repetition, unable to achieve transference. Freud envisaged repetition in analysis as a series of displaced repetitions of the affect attached to the repressed material: "the patient does not remember anything of what he [sic] has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" ("Remembering" 150). What is repeated is "everything that has already made its way from the sources of the repressed into his manifest personality--his inhibitions and unserviceable attitudes and his pathological character-traits" (151), experienced by the analysand as "a piece of real life," which "cannot always be harmless and unobjectionable" (152). The compulsion to repeat induced by treatment brings the analysand through a necessary passage of danger, albeit in a controlled situation: the

---

[10] In the broadest sense, "transference" designates any actualisation of unconscious wishes, by which "infantile prototypes re-emerge and are experienced with a strong sense of immediacy" (Laplanche and Pontalis 455). I use the term more specifically, to denote the transfer of such wishes onto the figure of the analyst in any interaction analogous to the psychotherapeutic context (a relation between two characters in a novel, for example, or between reader and text). Whether affectionate or hostile, the transference "confer[s] a special authority upon the analyst" (Laplanche and Pontalis 460). As a form of "acting-out" of libidinal impulses, the transference is a blockage to remembering and a form of defence against the treatment (Freud, "Observations" 166; "Dynamics" 104). Nonetheless I regard the transference as a marked or transitional form of repetition, one that can move the treatment forward by "making the patient's hidden and forgotten erotic impulses immediate and manifest" ("Dynamics" 108) and hence easier to identify and work-through.

analytic situation provides a "playground" for the compulsion, "by giving it the right to assert itself in a definite field" and so display its own mechanisms to the analyst (154). But Intensive Care offers no such "playground": never acknowledged by generations of masculine-identified characters, repetition maintains its grip.

The Freudian subject inhabits a synchronicity of temporalities, in which the past sticks fast to the present (Frame, AB 191-92), though what that past entails is a function of the subject's ongoing interactions with other consciousnesses. The past is never simply past; memories, dreams, inherited traumas may infiltrate, dislocate, usurp one's experience of "now." What is not immediately present to consciousness is not necessarily absent from the psyche, and what seems absent is not necessarily removed. This point would be a banality were it not for the fact that in Intensive Care and The Adaptable Man violence erupts from any attempt to enforce a temporal singularity of the mind. Tom Livingstone inhabits his past to the exclusion of his present: in his fantasies he is still lying in the sun as a young wounded soldier, opening his eyes to his "doll" Nurse Ciss Everest; in his nightmares he is caught within recurring images, sounds, sensations of battle, "stuck and over and over like a burning spinning and hurt record" (Frame, ODC 30). The eugenic régime of Human Delineation attempts to inhabit its own projected future in a movement of "absolute abstraction--annihilation of the present--apotheosis of the future" (Novalis, qtd. in Asendorf 17-18).[11] Alwyn Maude strives for absolute psychic contemporaneity in his refusal to be haunted. In each case, that which the character aligns with the material realm--Ciss Everest's aging, Milly Galbraith's autism, Botti Julio's ethnic otherness--must be obliterated in favour of a pure temporality, a pure abstraction.

With its multiple puns on the transfer of knowledge and of goods, Daughter Buffalo theorizes the nature of the transference necessary to achieve a cure, and illustrates what

[11] Asendorf quotes Novalis's letter to Hegel of 26 January 1799. The full (albeit elliptical) quotation reads: "Absolute abstraction--annihilation of the present--apotheosis of the future--of this actually better world, that is the core of the injunction of Christianity." The theological implications of Human Delineation will be developed in chapter two below.

"reconciliation" with "repressed material" might involve (Freud, "Remembering" 152). Through his encounter with Turnlung, Talbot enters into the uncovering of the defences disavowed in Intensive Care and The Adaptable Man. The course of my thesis will therefore be something like that of a successful analystic treatment. But what does "reconciliation" involve? What exactly is repressed? And how does death come into play? To begin to move toward answers--to be further developed in subsequent chapters--I will briefly return to the problem of the dead-alive "thoughts" that refuse to stay in their graves, that lie preserved in cold storage, or that stay hot like cinders for many years. I should also come clean about a psychoanalytic genealogy that has so far remained "encrypted"--invisible, or at least unacknowledged, yet active--in this introduction: Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), Abraham and Torok's appropriation of its terms in The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy (trans. 1986), and Derrida's foreword to The Wolf Man's Magic Word, "Fors," a creative engagement with Abraham and Torok's text through explication, elaboration, and the interweaving of voices between the three theorists. What follows is by necessity a condensed introduction to an intellectual dialogue built upon, and added to, by Frame's own work. It will eventually lead to a model of subjectivity influenced more by Lacan than by Freud, in which an irretrievable "traumatic kernel" founds the subject. Whereas Freud "never abandon[ed] the view that the ideal of the treatment is complete recollection" (Laplanche and Pontalis 459), I will suggest that "reconciliation" consists in coming to terms with one's "inner cut," with the very impossibility of remembering.

In "Mourning and Melancholia" Freud distinguishes between two kinds of loss, the "normal affect" of mourning (243) and the pathology of melancholia, an entrenched state of mourning. Freud figures the mourning process as a form of digestion in which the bereaved subject internalizes the lost object, the better to absorb the shock suffered by the ego. Mourning creates a time-lag, by which the ego gradually pulls back into synch with the reality of loss:

> Freud suggests that the subject in mourning simply converts the lost love object into an identification, in effect becoming the object that it can no longer have. This becoming is itself a form of having: mourning prolongs the hallucinatory belief in the existence of the object by giving it a certain shelf life inside the ego. (Fuss 37)[12]

The transitory "fullness" achieved through identification with the lost object enables the eventual assimilation of an emptiness, an absolute loss. By contrast, melancholics take their own ego as the compensatory object of identification, only to direct toward their selves the aggressive and reproachful pole of the ambivalent love that they felt toward the lost object. Freud speculates that this transformation of an object-loss into an ego loss may stem from a narcissistic object-choice on the part of the melancholic, so that "[t]he narcissistic identification with the object then becomes a substitute for the erotic cathexis, the result of which is that in spite of the conflict with the loved person the love-relation need not be given up" (249). Furthermore, in melancholia something always remains withheld from consciousness, not only because the site of struggles over ambivalence is the unconscious (257), but also because the melancholic cannot specify what has been lost, even though it may be clear who has been lost (245).

In melancholia the ego splits. An object-loss becomes transformed into an ego loss, and "the conflict between the ego and the loved person [becomes transformed] into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification" (249). As in the case of mourning, the melancholic brings another object into his or her self to avoid the forced abandonment of a libidinal position: "by taking flight into the ego love escapes extinction" (257; see also 244). This inextinct, dead-alive form of ambivalent love is intransigent, making the ego "rage" against itself (257). In trying to protect itself against loss the melancholic ego swallows loss, so to speak, as a kind of self-consuming internal

---

[12] Daughter Buffalo plays on the consumerist image of the "shelf life," and its twin phrase, "on the shelf," through imagery of stocked larders and supermarket shelves.

black hole: the loss remains intact in the subject as an "open wound" that "[empties] the ego until it is totally impoverished" (253). The problem of trauma is precisely the problem of the internalized loss that cannot be digested, the loss that refuses to die or be killed off (257).

In The Wolf Man's Magic Word Abraham and Torok reconfigure the terrain of the ego split by melancholia. They offer an image which is not so much a psychic topography as an architecture, picturing the ego as a cathedral, or some public forum, with a crypt divided off from it. The crypt is a space within a larger, more public space, yet separated from it by stairs and passageways which filter entrances and exits. The crypt hides and protects, both keeping a secret "safe" and concealing the violence that inaugurated the secret as such: "what is at stake here is what takes place secretly, or takes a secret place, in order to keep itself safe somewhere in a self" (Derrida, "Fors" 68/xiv).[13] For Abraham and Torok, the crypt encases a forbidden word, lodged in the subject's ego like the alien undead; the subject cannot express that word but only reveal it through a "dictionary" of puns stemming not from the taboo word, but from synonyms of the lateral meanings of the taboo word.[14] The psychoanalyst works to piece together the deceiving linguistic repertoire of the "cryptophore"--the analysand--to denominate the forbidden word and from it devise a narrative of unspeakable, intra-familial childhood pleasure that until then has been "entombed in a fast and secure place, awaiting its resurrection" (Abraham and Torok, "Poetics" 4).

---

[13] In page references to Derrida's "Fors," I use arabic numerals to refer to Barbara Johnson's translation published in the Georgia Review (1977), and roman numerals to refer to the version reprinted, with some minor variations, in The Wolf Man's Magic Word. Where there are variations between the two translations I have quoted from the version appearing in The Wolf Man's Magic Word.

[14] For example, the Wolf Man's nightmare involving a sky-scraper suggests the verb "to scrape" (tieret) in Russian. One of the "allosemes" (variant meanings) of tieret is "to rub," leading the analysts to a term in one of the forbidden sentences making up the Wolf Man's verbal crypt: "Sis, come and rub my penis" (Magic Word 16-22, 70).

Abraham and Torok make an effort to systematize the terminology denoting the two modes of taking an other within one's self that differentiate mourning and melancholia. Revising terms that were used interchangeably by Freud, Abraham and Torok characterise mourning by "introjection" and melancholia by "incorporation." In the former case, the Self brings in an other as a means by which the Self "advances, propagates itself, assimilates, takes over" (Derrida, "Fors" 70/xvi). In the latter case, something foreign enters the body from outside and remains distinct, alien. Introjection is a normative feature of subject development, not limited to the process of mourning: "We understand Ego as the sum total of its introjections and define introjection as the libido's encounter with a potentially infinite number of instruments for its own symbolic expression" (Magic Word 4). Incorporation in particular belongs to the order of fantasy, to the extent that it has a preservative function, protecting the ego against the incursions of reality-testing. Incorporation takes place at the limits of introjection, coming about precisely when introjection fails.[15]

I have taken up the image of the crypt selectively and with caution, given that much of my thesis disputes other aspects of Abraham and Torok's methodology in The Wolf Man's Magic Word. For all their detailed attention to the words in a text, Abraham and Torok address themselves to a question that is ultimately as unanswerable as "how many children had Lady Macbeth?"[16] Much of The Wolf Man's Magic Word is devoted to settling one of

---

[15] For more detailed discussion on introjection and incorporation, see Derrida, "Fors," 70-72/xvi-xvii and passim; Rashkin 169-70. Rashkin summarizes Maria Torok's writing on the two concepts as follows:

> She [Torok] explains introjection as the process by which libidinally charged objects are gradually included within the Ego, thereby enlarging and enriching it. . . . Incorporation, by contrast, occurs when the process of introjection is blocked by conflictual desires. The inaccessible object of desire is then installed or in-corporated as a "fantasy" within the body and hidden from the Ego. (Rashkin 169-170, n15)

[16] L. C. Knights uses this question as the title to his 1934 article urging against reading Shakespeare's characters as "real people" who have lives extending beyond the terms given by the text. However, what is "in" the text, or "given" by a text, is precisely the point under dispute between differing schools of interpretation. See Esther Rashkin's defence of her discussion of characters' "secrets" in Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative (1992): "the text . . . calls upon the reader to expand its apparent parameters to include scenarios that are rhetorically, semantically, phonemically, cryptonymically, and symbolically inscribed within it" (7-8).

Freud's unresolved cases, that of the Wolf Man, precisely by the method shown in Scented Gardens to be impossible: the denomination of the "key" word that, in the context of the psychoanalytic session, "unlocks" the repressed material and, by the same action, releases the analysand from its grip. Abraham and Torok briefly discuss the point that theWolf Man cannot be "saved" outside of the operation of the transference within the analytic session, and that in fact any such "cure" is self-directed: "An irresistible force pulls us: to save the analysis of the Wolf Man, to save ourselves" (qtd. in "Fors" 81/xxiv). Nonetheless, in claiming to have found the magic word, the "Open Sesame" that exposes the Wolf Man's long-kept secret (Magic Word lxxi), Abraham and Torok lean toward the kind of esoteric sociality that I have tried to resist in my own readings of Frame's novels. For all its ingenuity, creativeness, and intrigue, The Wolf Man's Magic Word brings to my mind Starobinski's comment, quoted above (page 8), concerning the loneliness of the critic kneeling before the tomb of the dead poet, praying for his or her interpretation to be confirmed or denied.

Abraham and Torok's strengths, for me, lie in their poetic imagination, their metaphorical rather than methodological power. The crypt as a spatial figure is suggestive and productive in picturing a "place" for the living dead in Frame's fiction, both within and beyond the sphere of familial relations. Within the complicated architecture of dark stairways, enclaves, vaults, and tombs that only seems to become more disorienting upon re-reading Abraham and Torok's text, itself an intricate set of verbal passageways, a dominant impression comes to mind: there is a hollow, airless, sealed, secret place, a "place of silence," comprehended within another place but separate from it. The crypt is "preserved as foreign but by the same token excluded from a self that thenceforth deals not with the other, but only with itself" (Derrida, "Fors" 72/xvii). This tomb is sealed off--inaccessible to the work of mourning--and yet for the same reason it is a form of "opening," an interior

puncture. Within it, a potent force of still life, untouched, inert, and vigorous, that generates an enveloping miasma of deceptive symbols. [17]

In the context of The Wolf Man's Magic Word this heterogeneous inside registers a pathology, condemning the cryptophore to maintain in a state of repetition the conflicting forces that hold the repression in place. But what if this foreign interior is the condition of subjectivity itself? The crypt may then figure a "negative kernel" or internal incoherence that cannot be overcome by the subject, what Zizek calls the "real of your symptom," in which "you must recognize the ultimate support of your being" (Looking Awry 137). This is the inalienable yet alien part of the subject, "in me more than me" (Lacan, Four Fundamental, chapter 20), proper to me yet beyond me. It is inaccessible by principle, rather than as the result of a repressed conflict between a drive and a prohibition. Following such a model, the goal of analysis becomes, not the full expression of the unspeakable by dragging it out of the crypt into the daylight of truth, but rather a reconciliation with an interior impossibility.

What intervention might ethics take within this scenario of a foreignness that is both inside and outside the subject? Does psychic health require individuals and communities to become "happy melancholics," bearing their interior gap as a form of illness that is chronic yet manageable? The image may seem comic, but it is not inaccurate. The point that my thesis works towards is a belief that the subject's relation to whatever is inaccessible, lacking, or dead within correlates with his or her relation to others. The model of the psyche one chooses is by necessity also a choice in the domain of ethics. In remembering another, which is also a mode of loving and a mode of knowing, the subject is caught within an impossible set of circumstances. To mourn completely amounts to an act of violence, because the lost object is interiorized totally and ceases to be other. But even in maintaining the foreignness of the other, incorporation fails to enter into "the very relationship with the

[17] The phenomenon of the crypt therefore belies Malfred Signal's comment in A State of Siege that the words "still life" are "incompatible" (SS 146-47).

other to which, paradoxically enough, introjection is more open" ("Fors" 78/xxii) (see also Derrida, Ear of the Other 58; Fuss 39). This oscillating dynamic of closeness and distance governs the gestures at knowledge analysed in my thesis: how Aisley Maude knows God; how Alwyn tries to know his own mind; how literary critics try to know "Frame"; how Dr. Clapper, Vera, and Edward try to know Erlene; how Talbot tries to know the "death secret." Each character must take a position--whether of denial, acceptance, confrontation, or negotiation--with the phenomenon of alterity in the most intimate sense.

My thesis therefore follows the course of a successful analysis, moving toward an apreciation of the homosexual relationship in Daughter Buffalo as an exemplary narcissism--which is also exemplary incorporation, and exemplary haunting--based on "the love of self as other in separation" (Derrida, qtd. in Berger 635). Having been blocked from the process of mourning Talbot remains haunted, encrypting his grandfather as the unsettled ghost of another consciousness, time, and place. The challenge for Talbot is to deactivate the dead-alive force of his grandfather's remains by accommodation, rather than by an exorcism doomed to futility. Talbot must become able to "lodge" encrypted material in his ego. Notice the active verb: the crypt is no longer "lodged" in the sense of being stuck, but rather the subject gives it lodging or housing, as Talbot "lease[s] part of [his] life and memory" to Turnlung and Sally his dog, to assure them the "sanctuary" in death that is the closing word of Frame's novel (DB 212). In part, then, my thesis is about learning to give room to one's own "concrete ghosts" (Harris 95).

Frame and Social Critique

Put most schematically and diagnostically, the dominant terms of my four chapters will be catharsis, neurosis, psychosis, and transference, respectively. But labelling the mental states of fictional characters and, by extension, the societies they inhabit, is only marginally useful in itself, without further contextualising psychopathology within social and discursive relations and taking seriously the claim that Frame's texts issue nothing less than "a

challenge to Western civilization" (Malterre 120). Orienting Frame's work towards cultural studies necessitates a critical method flexible enough to meet the eclecticism of the novels themselves. The observations on time, fantasy, secrecy, death, and memory found in Frame's texts contribute not only to the disciplines of the psyche--psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, as well as literature and theology[18]--but also to other modes of knowledge production that disavow their own dream-roots: mathematics, physics, eugenics.

It seems redundant to insist that Janet Frame is a woman of ideas, given that in critical and popular reception of her work she has never been regarded as anything but. As a friend from Portobello put it after a small survey of the women in her bookclub circle, Frame is seen as "a brilliant writer" but one whose books are "sometimes difficult to read--too academic perhaps?" (letter from Imogen Coxhead, 10 December 1995). However, in much critical discourse on Frame's work, vague tributes to the author's otherworldly genius have substituted for thoughtful engagement with the ideas sparked by her texts. To some extent Frame has encouraged the "otherworldly" construction of herself through her autobiographical writing and her public persona, in which she represents herself as shy, naive, impractical, devoted to the world of the imagination, and disengaged from social activism.[19] With the growth of feminism and post-colonialism in the study of New Zealand literature in the 1980s and 1990s it has now become almost de rigueur for critics to state Frame's contestation against the "means of oppression" (Mercer, Janet Frame 1) while

---

[18] In using the word "contribution" here I have in mind the title of Kenneth Bragan's paper, "Janet Frame: Contributions to Psychiatry," published in the New Zealand Medical Journal (1987). Frame's texts also appear as recommended reading in nursing programs in New Zealand and Australia. On 24 October 1995 the CBC current affairs radio program "As It Happens" broadcast an interview with Wendy Moyle, Co-ordinator of the Bachelor of Nursing Program at Griffith University, concerning the use of An Angel at my Table as part of the curriculum, designed to encourage compassion in nursing training.

[19] My favourite commentary on Frame's lack of cosmopolitanism appears in A. L. McLeod's review of An Angel at My Table: in the second volume of her autobiography Frame (in McLeod's words) "admits her general naivete of lesbianism, masturbation, homosexuality, and European literature" (qtd. in Finney, "What Does" 204n14).

acknowledging that this subversion takes place in abstract terms.[20] Carole Ferrier, editor and compiler of The Janet Frame Reader (1995), comments:

> Despite the high level of philosophical and metaphysical reference and speculation that can be read into Frame's work, its richness also partly lies in its subtle engagement with political questions that arise in the course of material existence in the world, issues such as those of gender, sexuality and race. (Ferrier, "Afterword" 214)

Nonetheless, Ferrier chooses to organise the extracts from Frame according to the psychological categories of "memories," "dreams," and "reflections" (following the title of a book by Jung), rather than selecting headings along the lines of, say, "sexism," "hegemony," or "ideology."

I address the matter of Frame's public persona in chapter one, and ask, throughout the thesis, how the categories of "memory," "dream," and (especially) "reflection" might correlate to the gendering of conceptual systems in Western epistemology. Although I have not signposted this particular track of my thesis at every turn (or perhaps because I have only "signposted" it), each of my chapters shows how ways of knowing map onto a gender grid, both within the fictional world of each novel and in the interpretive apparatus surrounding "Frame" as a cultural phenomenon. In this regard my work carries on the initiative established by feminist critics such as Tessa Barringer, Vanessa Finney, Shona Smith, Carole Ferrier, Susan Ash, and, most significantly, Gina Mercer, who finds in Frame's fiction a critique of binary epistemology separating masculine and feminine ways of knowing (Mercer, Janet Frame).[21]

---

[20] For more detail see Lorna Irvine's survey of criticism on Frame and Margaret Laurence, Critical Spaces: Margaret Laurence and Janet Frame (1995).

[21] In "Trapped in the Looking-Glass" (1994), a review of Mercer's Janet Frame: Subversive Fictions, Barringer suggests that Mercer's book--despite its evident intentions--ends up reproducing the masculine-feminine binary that Frame's work critiques. According to Barringer, Mercer slips into biologism by assuming a natural link between female anatomy and "the feminine." Furthermore,

My readings pay little attention to female avengers, witch-novelists, or female artists as heroes in Frame's texts.[22] In fact, scarcely any women appear in the chapters which follow. Masculinity, male characters, and male critics take centre stage in my project. I manage to read Erlene's silence in Scented Gardens for the Blind in masculine rather than feminine terms, as a "phallic blot" rather than a "lack," "gash," or "hole" in the text; I therefore sidestep the more familiar claim that "the silent woman in [Scented Gardens] is a metaphor for the phenomenon of the erasure of women's experience" (Fletcher 65) and that Erlene embodies the logical conclusion of "the idea that the only good woman is a silent woman" (74).[23] Matters hardly improve in chapter two, which opens with an analysis of Tom Livingstone's dream of murdering his wife and marrying his wartime "doll" Ciss Everest. I then map Tom's legacy of violence as it spirals down through the generations of his male descendants-in-dream, Colin Torrance, Colin Monk, and the entire apparatus of the eugenic régime of Human Delineation. One female character, Milly Galbraith, appears in my reading, but as nothing more substantial than a remainder, a mere persistence of matter interrupting a masculine metaphysical system. Chapter three skips the gynocentric potential

---

Mercer tends to champion the position of the marginalised feminine as wholly regenerative, thereby downplaying the terror of occupying the space of the outside:

> While Mercer criticises male critics for the way they seek to "penetrate" and "know" Frame, she can be seen in her own way to have appropriated Frame's textual body. For Mercer it is a case of identification and projection which, while intending to valorise "the (feminine) otherness" of Frame's texts, inadvertently masks the differences that exceed her identification. (Barringer, "Trapped" 4)

[22] On the female artist as hero see Ash's 1988 article "Janet Frame: The Female Artist as Hero," a Jungian reading of A State of Siege. On the "witch-novelist," see Mercer's reading of The Adaptable Man (Janet Frame 91-92).

[23] These opinions are voiced in Beryl Fletcher's novel The Word Burners (1991) by Julia, who is lecturing on Scented Gardens for a Women's Studies class in an unnamed New Zealand university. Caught up in her disintegrating marriage, her equally rapidly disintegrating ideals about feminist pedagogy and university administration, and her repressed lesbianism, Julia finally turns her comments on Scented Gardens into a self-fulfilling prophecy by ritually drowning herself. Ash argues that provincial New Zealand society placed female artists, including Frame, in a double bind concerning speech and silence: "when the poet speaks she is deemed schizophrenic; when she is silent, asserting her 'nowhereness,' she is incarcerated in mental institutions" ("Female Artist" 182-83). See further Barringer's Kristevan reading of Scented Gardens, "Powers of Speech and Silence" (1993).

of Unity Foreman and her literary hi-jinks, Muriel Baldry and her uxorial ennui, and Greta Maude and her middle-aged emptiness, to pursue instead the abstract topic of the novel's metaphysics of light in relation to Alwyn Maude's psychopathology and Aisley Maude's theological musings. And my commentary on Daughter Buffalo dispenses with Mother, Lenore, and poor Sally the dog as easily as Talbot seems to himself.

Feminist activism will make no impact on patriarchy, however, without a revolution in men--or, more precisely, without a redefinition of masculine subjectivity. Because "masculinity impinges with such force upon femininity," "[t]o effect a large-scale reconfiguration of male identification and desire would, at the very least, permit female subjectivity to be lived differently than it is at present" (Silverman 2-3). Feminism as a debate about the role and rights of women and the status of femininity remains ineffectual without a reciprocal movement toward self-interrogation, response, and responsibility on the part of men. If men are the "problems" in the novels I read in this thesis, they also provide their own "solution"--or at least, Frame provides it for them--through the dephallicized narrative of masculine inheritance found in Daughter Buffalo. The ideal put forward in this text is not so much a world without women, as a world in which men do not rely on women--or, more abstractly, the masculine does not rely on the feminine--for self-constitution and self-validation. In their intricate choreography of gift-giving and receiving, aggression and mutuality, Turnlung and Talbot offer glimpses of a reformulated masculine subjectivity, one which acknowledges the limits of its own desire.

The terms and parameters of my conclusions concerning gender and epistemology will be context-specific, for a mode of thinking or acting that functions as masculine in one situation may be differently coded in another. Here are two examples which arrange themselves around the binary of presence and absence, the first concerning the reception of Frame's autobiograpy, published in three volumes in 1982, 1984, and 1985, and the second concerning Aisley and Alwyn Maude in The Adaptable Man. In "'A Simple, Everyday Glass': The Autobiographies of Janet Frame" (1993) Mercer argues that Frame--together

with her marketing advisors, no doubt--targeted the "considerate, accessible, friendly and unthreatening" autobiographies toward female readers, who duly swarmed to buy the books and view Jane Campion's film adaptation of Frame's life (43). Male critics were more apt to be suspicious (45). These details will be elaborated in chapter one; the important point for now is that the reception of the autobiographies loosely aligns a "present" Frame with female reader response and an "absent" and deceptive Frame with male reader reponse, although in both forms of literary reception the "Frame" being constructed is feminine: a sisterly feminine in the case of reception by women, and a deceptive, coy feminine in the case of reception by men. The Adaptable Man complicates this polarity. The attempt to achieve absolute presence of consciousness will be associated with a vicious and overweening masculinity in the person of Alwyn Maude. In yet another shake of the gender kaleidoscope, in the same novel Reverend Aisley Maude eventually intuits the presence of God as a feminine force, immediate yet radiant and dispersed. Such shifting permutations and allegiances of gender among characters and critics advise against slapping broad-brush claims about gender and epistemology over Frame's entire oeuvre.

That said, I will insist on the validity of labelling certain forms of knowing and being "masculine," provided always that the masculine is understood to have a conventional rather than necessary correlation to the biological male. In particular, I will argue, in reading Intensive Care and Daughter Buffalo, that violent paradigms of subjectivity based on recovery and recognition are typically masculine but open to revision. While Intensive Care strongly correlates phobic subjectivity with both maleness and masculinity, Daughter Buffalo shows male characters creatively engaged in alternative forms of desiring and identification. To explain this point I would like to turn to Susan Schwartz's intelligent article, "Dancing in the Asylum: The Uncanny Truth of the Madwoman in Janet Frame's Autobiographical Fiction" (1996), in which Schwartz constellates psychoanalytical concepts important to my own project but stops short of making the claims about gender which her own findings call for.

Deriving her terms from Lacanian psychoanalysis, Schwartz argues that the figure of the madwoman in Faces in the Water and Owls Do Cry stands for the truth of subjectivity in general:

> For Frame, the fragmentation of the subject made so painfully visible in the institutionalized madwoman signifies the truth of the divided subject. The madwoman is representative of the ontological fragmentation that the sane, in misrecognizing themselves as whole, refuse to see. (113)

The truth of those who believe they are "whole" or sane paradoxically lies outside their selves, in the madwoman who is denied that illusion of wholeness for herself and whose fragmented reality is in turn disavowed by the sane. Schwartz proposes that "the process of subjectivation can be understood as an effect of the desire to see and to be seen" (115), through a dialectic between the seeing eye, aligned with the imaginary, and the unseeing gaze, aligned with the symbolic:

> At the level of the imaginary, the eye institutes the split between the ego and the mirror reflection in which the subject misrecognizes herself. But the seeing eye is under the auspices of an unseeing symbolic gaze. This is the gaze of the Other that one does not see in the mirror, the gaze as signifier of that which is lost, the negative kernel around which the subject is constituted. The gaze of the Other is opaque. (115)

To illustrate the incapacity of the gaze to confirm the subject's existence, Schwartz quotes the dance scene from Faces in the Water, in which Dr. Steward refuses to affirm Istina Mavet's sanity:

> There's Dr. Steward, he's watching me, he's seeing that someone has asked me to dance, that I'm not a wallflower, he's seeing that I'm well, that I needn't be in Ward Two spending all day shut in the dayroom or the yard or the park; he's deciding about me. Deciding now. (Frame, FW, qtd. in Schwartz 123)

But Dr. Steward "does not see Istina; he does not differentiate her from the other patients dancing in front of him" (Schwartz 123). To preserve his own identity he must continue to refuse to endow sanity upon her, for to acknowledge her sanity would be to accept that this alien being is just like himself. Istina represents a potentially traumatic "extimate" part of Dr. Steward, a "little piece of the real," exteriorized from Dr. Steward's inner lack, which must be psychically warded off.

The example of the madwoman and the Doctor demonstrates that in the process of subject development "some look always goes unreciprocated" (Copjec 43), though the nature of this failure is not complementary between two people occupying differential positions of power. Both Istina and Dr. Steward seek confirmation of their sanity through the gaze and both are denied that assurance, though on different terms. At an imaginary level, in the register of identifications, Istina finds her gaze reciprocated between herself and the other "mad" characters but closed off between herself and Dr. Steward. Istina is refused the identity that she seeks in the gaze of the sane. She has imagined Dr. Steward to be the being without lack who can guarantee her own wholeness. Those who are sane, however, look to the mad for the confirmation of difference, for assurance that the mad can be visibly demarcated from the sane; they find instead an intolerable, uncanny similarity to themselves. Dr. Steward misperceives himself as whole and turns away from the traumatic truth of his own lack represented by the figure of the madwoman. In both cases, the "promise that there is another present who will recognize the subject's existence" (Schwartz 124), proper to the imaginary, fails before the insistence of the symbolic that the subject is essentially desiring, unhoused, ungrounded, incomplete. If I have understood Schwartz's condensed argument correctly, the madwoman and the Doctor function to each other as symbolic signifiers of a real lack, signifiers of "that which is lost, the negative kernel around which the subject is constituted" (Schwartz 115). Another way of figuring this relation might be to suggest that

the subject can encounter its interior "crypt" as an "extimate kernel," exterior to the subject and utterly intimate with it at the same time.

Schwartz stops short of aligning the dialectic between the eye and the gaze with gender positions, although as a feminist reader the correlation seems obvious to me, perhaps dangerously so. By choosing the scenario of a male doctor's disavowal of a "mad" female patient as a representative example of subject-formation, Schwartz implies, but never states overtly, that the position of the madwoman and that of the Doctor are typically feminine and masculine, respectively. While both characters are caught within the imaginary register, their relation to the eye and the gaze are quite different: Istina wants to take in an identification with the Doctor, while Dr. Steward wants to repudiate any identification with Istina. She feels that she would be whole if only the Doctor returned her gaze; he feels his wholeness threatened by her likeness to himself and thus refuses to recognise her. To extrapolate Schwartz's argument in rhetorical terms, the madwoman here is a "figure" in two senses. She is a metaphor or condensation of the truth of subjectivity: the truth of "his" full subjectivity is another's less-than-subjectivity; he "is" what she is not. I am tempted also to read the position of the madwoman as a metonymy of all forms of disavowed "otherness" in Frame's work, such as that of the hysterical girl (Scented Gardens for the Blind), the autistic woman (Intensive Care), the Italian refugee (The Adaptable Man), or the homosexual and the Jew (Daughter Buffalo), though to do so would risk erasing the local specificities of these novels.[24]

Though I am fascinated, intrigued, haunted myself by the uncanny figures in Frame's fiction, my own study will focus on the masculine term in this ultimately violent dialectic of subjectivity. A key intertext for my readings is Ovid's story of Narcissus, which circulates

[24] See further Barringer's "Trapped in the Looking-Glass." Barringer accepts Mercer's use of "'le féminin' in its broadest sense of disruptive energy as a common denominator in the symbolic network that connotes all forms of repressed 'otherness'" (4). While acknowledging that the study of one mode of "otherness" can inform other modes, however, Barringer also cautions against the temptation to conflate all forms of marginality with the feminine.

through chapters two, three and four, shaped and modified by the interventions of Frame, Freud, Lacan, and Spivak. The first part of my reading of Intensive Care, focusing on the Livingstone dreamers, will constellate masculine subjectivity with specularity, identity, fantasy, spatiality, and the mirror world of the imaginary in which the fantasm of wholeness must prevail over every threat of castration or loss. The second part of that chapter will pursue this fantasy in semiotic terms, contrasting the ideal formalism of Colin Monk's mathematics with the materiality of Milly's punning writing. Spivak's analysis of the Narcissus myth in "Echo" will be important here, in its insistence that the uncanny operates through textual traces: Milly as supposed madwoman can be destroyed but her traces--her ashes, her text, her voice--will continue to scar Colin Monk with their alienating force. In chapter three I will propose that Alwyn's project in The Adaptable Man is precisely to obliterate this trace of otherness, the haunting face of the immigrant he has murdered; essentially Alwyn aims to obliterate his own unconscious. Finally, Daughter Buffalo extends Freud's theory of narcissism by introducing a radical temporal split into the spatial scenario of mirror-identification. By loving Turnlung on the verge of death, Talbot embraces his mirror image not as a guarantor of self-identity, but as the embodiment of those parts of himself that he has wished would die: his ethnicity, the traumatic past of his family, the element of homosexual desire in his sexuality. The novel envisages a dialectical mode of subjectivity based on mutual interdependence, rather than exclusivity, between lack and plenitude.

Three Uses of Secrecy

> I am writing a story about a girl who is not me. I cannot prove she is not me.
>
> (Frame, "Jan Godfrey," The Lagoon 96)

Raconteur, big-game hunter, Raider of the Lost Ark, "critical paparazzo," arbiter of truth, bloodhound and roving mongrel. Patrick Evans' alternately aggrandizing and abasing self-depictions indicate why the most prolific critic of Frame is also the most controversial. Evans is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Canterbury, where he specializes in New Zealand literature. To date, he has published eleven articles devoted to Frame's work, including the after-dinner address delivered at the Association of New Zealand Literature's first conference in 1992, published under the title "The Case of the Disappearing Author" in 1993.[25] Evans has also produced two books on Frame's life and oeuvre, one critical review of An Angel at My Table, Jane Campion's film version of Frame's autobiographies, and the well-received Penguin History of New Zealand Literature (1990), which includes observations on Frame's significance within New Zealand letters. Evans is known among Frame scholars for his tendency to peg his literary interpretations to details of Frame's life, which he has "doggedly" traced--according to his own self-ironizing representation--by ranging through Frame's home territory in search of anecdotes from those who know her. In "The Case of the Missing Author" Evans considers that he has come close to touching the "ark" of Frame's personality and creativity (17). He has even suggested that Frame wrote her autobiographies to shut him up: "[i]t has always been my vanity to think that the entire autobiographical project was a process of retrieval for her of a past that had been sullied by my own doggy sniffings and scribblings over the years" ("Case" 17).

---

[25] I have quoted the phrases "critical paparazzo" and "my own doggy sniffings" (below) from "The Case of the Missing Author" (16, 17).

Evans' frank admissions of puzzlement and obsession in pursuing Frame's texts--and Frame as text--intrigue me. Here is an academic, a professional critic, who displays the naïveté of the lay reader: he bypasses literary form in the pursuit of subject matter and latches on to something other than the craft, technique, and professionalism which the artist herself values.[26] Evans ponders the questions which underlie public fascination with Frame: "Why is Frame such a genius?" and "Did all those horrible things really happen to her?" The answers Evans arrives at lead him into discussions of writing and neurosis, interpretation and authority, and "inside" versus "outside" readings of a text. The biographical trajectory in Evans' criticism--which is by no means the only theme in his extensive work on Frame--starts with the centrality of death in Frame's fiction. In "Alienation and the Imagery of Death" (1973) Evans advises that death is the "heart of [Frame's] writing," the "common denominator of all her work," and that "Janet Frame has never attempted to hide it from us" (294)--the negative implying that somebody once paranoically suspected some kind of hermeneutic cover-up. In "Farthest from the Heart: The Autobiographical Parables of Janet Frame" (1981) Evans traces this pervasive theme in Frame's writing to her unresolved grief following the drowning deaths of her sisters in 1937 and 1947. "The Muse as Rough Beast," which appeared in the Christchurch arts journal Antic in 1986, gives a confessional, self-ironizing, and self-defensive account of his fact-finding mission to Oamaru in 1975 to research the biographical portion of his contribution to the Twayne World Authors Series, Janet Frame (1977). In this article the notion of "oedipalism" first appears, directed specifically at the conflict between Frame's father and

---

[26] My comment paraphrases one of Jane Gallop's observations on Freud's appreciation of art in his essay "The Moses of Michelangelo":

> Freud has a strong attraction to subject matter, and that attraction is in some way forbidden and embarrassing. It is what marks him as a lay [sic] rather than a connoisseur. Freud finds himself attracted not to what the artist values but to something else, like when you find yourself strongly attracted to a man's body, even when you are supposed to admire him for his mind. (Thinking Through the Body 137)

her brother (9). In "Filming Fiction" (1990) and "The Case of the Missing Author" Evans implies, but never states, that Frame was sexually abused by her father or brother.

Although Evans--more accurately, Evans' persona--has a strong presence in his later essays, I wish to return his critical oeuvre, with its focus upon secrets and silence, to a self-reflexivity which is not personal (not an analysis of the critic's psyche) but discursive-- that is, oriented toward the institutional contexts which produce Evans' work yet are suppressed by it. For the purposes of my thesis, Evans' work exemplifies hermeneutic criticism, with its attempts to return to the originary event or state of mind generating Frame's fiction. Just as the name "Frame" as author function does not stand for the individual writer but for a set of postulates and expectations,[27] the name "Evans" will function in this chapter as a metonymy for a set of critical protocols and procedures. Evans asks himself the question, "what is Frame's 'aboriginal secret,' the private wellspring of her creativity?" ("Farthest" 38). My answering questions are, "what is the necessity for secrecy in literary interpretation? What purposes might such secrecy serve?"; not "what is the answer?," but rather, "what are the uses of secrecy?" My discussion of the interplay between mystery and meaning will interlace two case studies, the "problem" of Evans' hermeneutic criticism and the central "problem" of Frame's most secretive novel, Scented Gardens for the Blind: the silence of Erlene. [28]

Ironically enough, Evans' biographical focus aligns his work thematically with a trend toward the study of childhood abuse in feminist literary criticism and biography--and Evans and feminism are strange bedfellows indeed, as will become evident later in my discussion. [29] There is no doubt that much of Frame's writing is autobiographical. Furthermore, Frame

---

[27] See the section entitled "Reading Frame" below.

[28] Frame rejects the generic classification of "novel" for her longer fiction, preferring to call Scented Gardens a "fable" ("Noted N.Z. Writer is 'Inspired by People'"). I will retain the term "novel" for its versatility in describing a genre without clear boundaries, a genre which can encompass diverse genres.

[29] For a recent example of feminist biographical criticism addressing sexual or physical abuse in the life of a woman writer, see Louise A. DeSalvo, Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on her Life and Work (Boston: Beacon, 1989).

may possibly have been abused in childhood, given the extremes of anxiety, panic, withdrawal, and feelings of utter aloneness in early adulthood that she describes in An Angel at My Table, the second volume of her autobiography. But these speculations become an act of textual mastery when represented as a linchpin around which Frame's oeuvre and public persona would cohere and fall into place. Already the idea is gaining currency that Tom Livingstone in Intensive Care has sexually abused his daughters Naomi and Pearl: Panny argues that the first part of the novel unravels a "pattern of sexual abuse" ("Hidden Dimensions" 63), an interpretation furthered by Carole Ferrier in her reference to "[a]nger about sexually abusive fathers [in Janet Frame's fiction]--as in Intensive Care where Tom Livingstone takes on for his daughter the colossus-like qualities of Sylvia Plath's Daddy" ("Afterword" 214). Sexual abuse risks becoming the "impression point" of Frame's life and art, the principle which generates and orients all of the remaining elements, the point "around which the whole gestalt [of a work of art, or an oeuvre] must be articulated" (Kermode, Genesis of Secrecy 16).[30]

Evans gestures toward the appreciation of an emptiness, an irreducible mystery, or an impossibility at the very centre of Frame, but extinguishes the potential of this living principle. He does not "read the wound" (Hartman 549), but rather is driven blasphemously to name it and designate it as a historical event:

> Perhaps this is one of the crimes of the psychoanalytic critic: blasphemy. Blasphemy, not only in a Christian context but in a larger context where it means putting into words something terribly powerful that is demeaned and reduced by being spoken. (Gallop, Thinking Through the Body 147)

To the extent that Evans takes the stance of the "subject-supposed-to-know"--one who ought to be "powerfully superior to the work of art, . . . [with] the ability to divine and analyse that

[30] Kermode here paraphrases Wilhelm Dilthey's concept of the gefühlter Eindruckspunkt; see further Kermode 147n4.

which the art work is not able to express" (Gallop 144)--he ought not merely gape in reverential awe before Frame's riddling profundities, but must also set about impiously dismantling their mystery. However, the frustration, self-defensiveness, and crankiness evident in Evans' most recent pieces, "Filming Fiction" (1990) and "The Case of the Missing Author," seem symptomatic of a reader who feels he ought to master a text by divining its aboriginal secret and who boldly claims to have discovered that secret, but who all the while suspects that he has somewhere missed the main point.

Three Uses of Secrecy

Fantasy--in its narrow sense, as an imagined role-playing with oneself as protagonist--is probably implicit in all literary critical modes of interpretation. In Evans' work it is foregrounded, particularly in his three most recent pieces on Frame, "The Muse as Rough Beast," "Filming Fiction," and "The Case of the Disappearing Author." Three of Evans' self-dramatizations interest me in particular: the spiritual insider, the psychoanalyst, and the detective.[31] The first figure emerges in Evans' theological readings of Frame's early novels and sketches as parables. The second occurs in Evans' loosely defined Freudianism: in his belief that creativity springs from tragedy and that Frame writes for personal therapy, in his hints at the mechanisms of repression, and in his coy references to "oedipalism" within Frame's family. Evans ferrets about in the unconscious of Frame's texts, one might say, as

---

[31] I leave aside the sexual implications of Evans's writing, which evoke the scenarios of pedophilia (Evans loitering about the children's playground and the local dairy ["Muse" 1]) and stalking (the journalist lurking in the bushes outside Frame's home ["Muse" 14]). It's possible that Evans introduces these images and other sexual figures deliberately to goad feminist response; Gina Mercer, for one, takes the bait in her critique of Evans's "penetrative" literary hermeneutics (Janet Frame 230). Evans's self-irony anticipates such critique, as the following passage from "The Muse as Rough Beast" suggests:

> [At the centre of Frame's autobiography], as her fiction has made increasingly apparent, is that old, old frustration that in the end words will not crack open and reveal reality as raw and as fresh as an egg yolk, a frustration that becomes the reader's, and ensures that a critic who plunges in looking for the embryo ends up with egg on his face. (7)

To the extent that Evans presents himself as the hermeneutic critic writ large, his writing also invites my elaboration of it.

he ferreted about in the back rooms of the Oamaru Mail while researching the biographical chapters of his book Janet Frame ("Muse" 2). This search for clues to provide a coherent narrative of past events also characterizes the dramatization of the critic-as-detective. To use categories defined by Slavoj Zizek, Evans starts his investigations as a classical detective and ends up as a hard-boiled detective: he sets out initially to perform his side of a business contract in a circumscribed project (the Twayne World Authors Series volume), but soon becomes embroiled in a set of disturbing insinuations which prompt him, as he sees it, to fulfil an "ethical mission" (Looking Awry 60-63).

Disciple, psychoanalyst, and detective engage in three different protocols of reading. Each figure presumes that the signs before him are riddling and indirect in reference. Each seeks to translate the incoherent signs presented to the senses into a coherent narrative apparent to the understanding. The biblical exegete, for example, reads beyond the literal level of the parable to find an allegory of the way to the kingdom of heaven; the psychoanalyst hears in the analysand's narrative the distortions wrought by unconscious primary processes; the detective winnows out the false clues strewn by the guilty party. In each case material signs (words, clues) function as "signpost[s] to a world that is not even mentioned" (Frame, qtd. in Mercer viii). Each personage hypothesizes the existence of a hidden but potentially accessible kernel of knowledge which the enveloping textual shell contrives to conceal. Each anticipates a final disclosure which will terminate the narrative: for the believer, the revelation of the four last things and an encounter with the godhead; in the psychoanalytic account, the designation of the psychic trauma and the integration of that trauma into the analysand's consciousness through transference; in the detective story, the name of the murderer.

Death activates each role. The detective responds to a literal death, a murder. The psychoanalytic critic probes a psychic death, in which a portion of memory has shut down to preserve the subject's consciousness from a traumatic scene or forbidden fantasy. The spiritual insider equally tries to recover an absence: he or she must glean words spoken by a

transcendent entity but transmitted by the distorting medium of a sage, a sybil, a prophet, or a revealed god who has since been crucified and removed from the material plane.

Although Evans' self-dramatizations are certainly not identical in every respect, there is a functional continuity between the spiritual insider, the psychoanalyst, and the detective which allows one role to substitute for another. The roles succeed one another and proliferate precisely because none of these methodologies will ever attain that elusive essence of "Frame" which Evans projects before him. I will suggest later in this chapter that Frame's texts, and Frame as text, not only resist Evans' probing, but also stage the very impossibility of arriving at the end of the rainbow, the kernel meaning or secret. But the reception of Frame as an essential "mystery" has not been universally shared by readers and critics, particularly following the feminist embracing of the 1980s version of Frame presented in the autobiographies and in Jane Campion's film adaptation of Frame's life.

Reading Frame

> There is a remarkable taboo around Janet Frame, a remarkable desire to protect her from enquiry. (Evans, "Case" 16)
>
> [Frame's] fresh exploration of her childhood and life opened up my own, stimulating many painful and funny memories that somehow under Janet's courage and beam of honesty no longer seemed so bad or so embarrassing. (Jane Campion, director of <u>An Angel at My Table</u>, qtd. in "Filming a Trilogy" 6)
>
> There has been a tremendous goodwill towards this production [<u>An Angel at My Table</u>]. I think the script is extraordinary and I feel lucky that we have such good material to work with. But on all levels, there has been an amazing willingness to contribute, I think because it's about Janet Frame. (Bridget Ikin, producer of <u>An Angel at my Table</u>, qtd. in Clement 13)
>
> "An Honest Record." (title of Frame's 1991 interview with Elizabeth Alley)

Janet Frame has increasingly become the subject of popular mythology in New Zealand letters since the publication of her autobiographies and the success of Jane Campion's film based upon them. Frame's landmark birthdays, at the ages of sixty and seventy, were celebrated by followers of her work;[32] the Association of New Zealand Literature devoted its first conference entirely to Frame. Owls Do Cry has long been canonical in the English curricula of New Zealand high schools and university courses in New Zealand Literature, and Frame's works appear regularly in the reading lists for tertiary-level courses in Postcolonial Literature and Women's Studies in many countries. [33] A "Bluffer's Guide to Janet Frame," by Iain Sharp, has even appeared in the New Zealand literary gossip magazine Quote Unquote (1994). "Now you can amaze any dinner party with your intimate knowledge of [Frame's] entire oeuvre," advises the rubric to the article.

---

[32] Evans recalls "attending [Frame's] sixtieth birthday celebrations in Oamaru in 1984, where the centrepiece in a display of her writing was a letter regretting that she couldn't be there" ("Case" 15). Frame's seventieth birthday was recognised by a special tribute at the 1994 New Zealand Writers and Readers Week, subsequently broadcast by Radio NZ on 26 August 1995, and by the publication of a Festschrift edited by Elizabeth Alley, The Inward Sun: Celebrating the Life and Work of Janet Frame (1994).

[33] Kite, the newsletter of the New Zealand Literature Association, ran a series of brief articles detailing the development of New Zealand literature as a field of study in New Zealand universities; Owls Do Cry is mentioned in a number of these articles as a canonical text in the 1960s, in part because it was one of the few New Zealand novels consistently in print. In Kite 1 (Dec. 1991) Patrick Evans controversially claims that New Zealand Literature was "invented" by Winston Rhodes at the University of Canterbury in the 1930s (8). Lawrence Jones's article on the belated introduction of New Zealand literature at the University of Otago appears in Kite 2 (June 1992): 4-5. In Kite 3 (Nov. 1992): 4-8, Bill Pearson states that the University of Auckland introduced "the first sustained series of lectures in New Zealand literature in any university in the country" in 1956 (4). William Broughton writes about Massey University in Kite 4: 3-4 and Kite 7 (Dec. 1994): 13, and John Thomson does the write-up for Victoria University of Wellington in Kite 7: 13-16. Owls Do Cry was taught in a half-paper in New Zealand Literature offered at Massey from 1965 to 1971, subsequently expanded into a full-year course. In personal correspondence Professor Alan Horsman noted that Owls Do Cry was taught as a supplementary text at Otago in 1969, for stages one to three; it was not until 1976 that Professor Lawrence Jones taught the first New Zealand literature course (an Honours paper) at that unversity. Frame's first novel would have been readily legible as a poetic and allusive variation on a familiar Sargesonian theme, the critique of a sexually repressed, inarticulate, and materialistic bourgeois puritanism from the stance of a true-seeing but isolated individual. In his Kite article Bill Pearson mentions lecturing on A State of Siege (1966), though he can't remember in what year.

Clearly, Frame has become a public figure among the New Zealand middle-class, if I have placed Sharp's audience correctly; she is someone whom one feels one ought to know something about. I use the term "figure" advisedly, not only to designate a talented person who stands out against the ground of the ordinary public, but also in a rhetorical sense, describing a word or phrase which signifes more than its immediate, literal terms. The name "Janet Frame" functions more like a description, a guarantee, or a status than the mere designation of a legal person. In other words, it has become possible to ask not only "who is Janet Frame?" but also, following the brilliant title of Vanessa Finney's paper delivered in 1992, "what does 'Janet Frame' mean?"

The phenomenon of Frame takes place in a tangle of names. Frame's parents named their second daughter Janet Paterson Frame (AB 10), although the child subsequently went by the name of Jean. In 1973 Frame changed her legal name to Janet Clutha but continued to publish under the signature "Janet Frame."[34] Frame's "real" or given name became her pseudonym. By conventional literary critical usage, the name "Janet Frame" is a metonym for all the works written by the woman whose legal name is Janet Clutha. Yet, as the following ostensibly tautological quotation from Evans suggests, there is a further refinement to be made. Evans writes: "[t]hat sense, for me, the living quality of her writing, distinguishes her best work; it is what makes Frame Frame" ("Case" 12). Evans repeats the name "Frame" as if the two word tokens in his sentence did not share the same referent. It seems that "Frame" refers not only to the signature appearing on Frame's texts, but also to an essential idea, a "living quality," a soul or life-principle. This Frame-of-Frames denotes the author-function of Frame, to use Michel Foucault's terms: it is the "principle of a certain

---

[34] See Evans, Janet Frame 14 on the date of Frame's change of name. The Clutha is a river which flows through Central Otago and Southland in the South Island of New Zealand. Finney points out the symbolism of Frame's choice of name:

> Janet Frame has made an explicit part of her own self-representation the distance between her identity and history as a "real" person (fluid and dispersed like her namesake the River Clutha) and her author figure and function (literally, a "frame"). A history of "Janet Frame" can only be a history and an interpretation of her public figure, a discursive object, a name. ("Speaking" 6-7)

unity of writing," the expectation of a constant level of quality, from which divergences in the author's oeuvre are to be "resolved, at least in part, by the principles of evolution, maturation, or influence" (Foucault, "What is an Author?," Textual Strategies 151). For Evans that principle lies in the impression that Frame's work speaks personally to its readers and "[offers] a new experience each time it is approached, as if it were an organism rather than a static work of art" ("Case" 12).

Evans recognises that literary mythologization occurs to meet the needs of those who place the symbolic capital of Frame into circulation. In "The Case of the Disappearing Author" he asks, "what does [Frame's canonization] tell us about ourselves and what we need?" (12; "we" here seems to designate Frame's devotees). Frame has become a text "which we help to write, creating as we do so the version of her we want to have" (20). Evans suggests that Frame's reticence facilitates the projection of readers' desire onto her texts, a reticence belonging both to Janet Clutha, renowned for her shunning of public events, and to the autobiographical gestures which he finds in fiction published under the name of Frame:

> By guarding from us the details of her past, she mystifies them in a way that intrigues us; she provides us with a blank space on which we are able to read whatever we wish. This is a writer who at all times is moving away from us, leaving a vacuum which we fill with what we desire her to be. ("Case" 18-19)

Evans' piece appears in the same special issue of the Journal of New Zealand Literature as Vanessa Finney's "What Does 'Janet Frame' Mean?," an article which leads me to suggest that Frame's Cheshire Cat antics are more the effect than the cause of Evans' critical desires. Evans does not find a taboo, a meaningful blank space, at the centre of Frame but rather creates one to meet his own needs, which I understand to be the needs of the interpretive discourse by which he speaks: it is the "secret" or blank at the centre of the text that continually rejuvenates the practice of hermeneutic criticism, guaranteeing hermeneutic

generativity. Finney's paper gives a genealogy of this "absent" version of Frame, showing it to be as tendentious a construction of Frame as any other.

Finney dates the beginning of a shift in the public definition and reception of Frame from the publication of the first volume of the autobiography, To the Is-Land (1982). Prior to this time, journalists and interviewers frequently described Frame in terms emphasizing her shyness and eccentricity (borderline madness), depicting her as a disappearing genius, a "disembodied presence," whose mind wandered off to "that world" while her body lodged reluctantly in "this world" (Finney, "What Does" 194). Until the 1980s Frame not only played along with the construction of this otherworldly self but even cultivated it. In a 1970 interview with Claire Henderson, entitled "Artists' Retreats," Frame emphasises her own retreat from sociality: "I'm not sure I see life at all. What I do see is life within. . . . I'm rather unconscious of things around me, in a way" (13). Most famously, in an autobiographical essay first published in Landfall in 1965, Frame wrote, concerning the period of her life following her graduation from Teacher's College in Dunedin:

> As it was becoming impossible for me to reconcile "this" and "that" world, I decided to choose "that" world, and one day when the Inspector was visiting my class at school I said, -- Excuse me, and walked from the room and the school, from "this" world to "that" world where I have stayed, and where I live now. (Frame, "Janet Frame" 31)[35]

To some extent, then, Frame has encouraged the representation of herself, not as an intellectual woman engaging critically with her culture, but as "a kind of female Peter Pan figure, unable or unwilling to 'grow up,' and with a limited experience of life" (Ferrier, "Afterword" 213). This latter figure is the disappearing Frame to which Evans' criticism clings. As Mercer, Finney, and Smith have shown, however, the construction of Frame as

[35] On "this" world versus "that" world in Frame's fiction see the structuralist-influenced articles by Lawrence Jones ("No Cowslip's Bell") and Peter Alcock ("Frame's Binomial Fall"). Evans names the two biographical chapters of the Twayne volume Janet Frame "Life in 'This' World" and "Life in 'That' World." For a Foucauldian critique of the dichotomy see my "Docile Bodies."

an inhabitant of "that world" functions as a containment strategy undermining the political incisiveness of her work. In "Still Suppressing . . . : Reviewers and Daughter Buffalo" (1987) Smith argues that "the political relevance of Frame's work has been ignored or even dismissed because we choose to doubt the author's sanity" (38), a syndrome which is scarcely alleviated by the ostensibly positive representation of the madwoman as a "seer," "visionary," "conjurer," or "sorcerer," all terms which smugly maintain the "treasured dichotomy" between "them," the mad, and "us," the sane (Smith 39).

Four versions of Janet: Janet Frame with actors Karen Fergusson, Alexia Keogh, and Kerry Fox. Photograph by John Maynard.

Both Finney ("What Does 'Janet Frame' Mean?") and Mercer ("A Simple Everyday Glass") suggest that Frame made efforts to revise her image through the publication of her reader-friendly autobiographies and the accompanying press releases.[36] Finney reports that following the publication of An Angel at My Table in 1984 Frame's status had progressed--sort of--to that of a "good fairy" (200) apt to present any number of public "selves." By the

[36] See further Tessa Barringer, "Framed: The Autobiographies" (1993) Barringer elaborates Frame's statement in "An Honest Record," her 1991 interview with Elizabeth Alley, that she wrote the autobiographies out of the "desire really to make [herself] a first person" ("Honest Record" 155).

publication of the third volume, The Envoy from Mirror City (1985), Frame was rewarded with reviews recognising her as a presence, literal and symbolic. Finney quotes as examples Shelley Cox's description of Frame as "clearly a happier and more whole person," and Tony Reid's impression of "a friendly, reserved but assured presence" (201). Laura Jones, the screenplay writer for "An Angel At My Table," found Frame "just right. She had a very strong physical presence and I liked her enormously" (qtd. in McLeod, "Dark Angel" 38).

The three volumes of Frame's autobiography not only succeeded as a public-relations exercise, but they also brought the aspect of gender to the forefront. As Finney notes, Frame's direct references to specifically female experiences such as menstruation made gender an inescapable factor for reviewers and readers ("What Does" 197). It is no coincidence that one of the first pieces of Frame memorabilia to be marketed in New Zealand was a tea-towel, an everyday, practical object usually found in the kitchen, the traditional site of female authority of experience. Furthermore, the publication dates of the autobiographies coincided lucratively with the blossoming of the women's book market in New Zealand.[37] Both locally and internationally, Frame found a new market in women

[37] Feminist anthologies published during this general time period include: Private Gardens: An Anthology of New Zealand Women Poets, ed. Riemke Ensing (Dunedin: Caveman, 1977); Yellow Pencils: Contemporary Poetry by New Zealand Women, ed. Lydia Wevers (Auckland: Oxford UP, 1988); Kiwi & Emu: An Anthology of Contemporary Poetry by Australian and New Zealand Women, ed. Barbara Petrie (Springwood, NSW: Butterfly, 1989); The Exploding Frangipani: Lesbian Writing from Australia and New Zealand, ed. Cathie Dunsford and Susan Hawthorne (Auckland: New Women's, 1990); and Sevensome, ed. Vivienne Plumb and Paola Bilbrogh (Wellington: Calliope, 1993). Criticism on women's writing and the images of female characters in New Zealand literature include Heather Robert's Where Did She Come From?: New Zealand Women Novelists, 1862-1987 (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1989), and Heather Murray's Double Lives: Women in the Stories of Katherine Mansfield (Dunedin: U of Otago P-John McIndoe, 1990). Keri Hulme's the bone people won the Booker Prize in 1985, to the triumph of its original publishers, the SPIRAL feminist collective. The nationwide Listener Women's Book Festival first took place in 1989, and The Book of New Zealand Women/Ko Kui Ma te Kaupapa, a biographical encyclopedia, was published in 1991. Gordon McLauchlan's article "Where Have All the Men Gone?" (New Zealand Herald, 17 Aug. 1996, sec. 7, 6) indicates that the predominance of women as both writers and purchasers of novels in New Zealand has continued into the mid-1990s.

Feminist appropriation of Frame's work in particular is evident from the London-based Women's Press publication of The Janet Frame Reader (ed. Carole Ferrier, 1995) in addition to a number of Frame's works, including the autobiographies. Phoenix has published a miniature paperback edition

readers who felt encouraged by the relative accessibility of the autobiographies, with their sense of an encounter with a generous-minded, sensitive, living author; as author Rosie Scott states, "it's like meeting a friend to read [Frame]" (qtd. in Ferrier "Preface" 11). Mercer has accurately described the autobiographies as "considerate, accessible, friendly and unthreatening," a "very necessary, warm, and comforting garment in which to wrap [Frame's] life" ("Everyday Glass" 43, 44). Mercer's intuition is confirmed by the fact that the autobiographies are recommended as the easiest introduction to Frame's oeuvre in the New Zealand Book Council's pamphlet, "Bookenz: A Traveller's Guide to New Zealand Books." The catalogue for the Workers' Educational Association Book Discussion Scheme--which grew exponentially during the 1980s and 1990s, with a predominantly female membership--recommends An Angel at My Table (listing the other two volumes of the autobiography as further reading), together with Owls Do Cry and (less predictably) Living in the Maniototo.[38]

Ikin and Campion appeal to this sense of a shared, personal relationship with Frame in the quotations which I have used as epigraphs for this section. This loving, generous, open-hearted Frame even seems to have acquired the status of a Good Cause, one which prompts people to donate their "tremendous goodwill" to aid its promulgation in the film. Ironically, it was the act of re-appropriating herself, of claiming control over her own story, which most thoroughly created Frame as public property, as stock open for purchase by the general public, especially women: in Frame's life-story many women recognised the potentialities and limitations of their own lives.[39] In his tributes to Frame, Evans finds affinity with her as

---

of four stories from The Reservoir as part of a series which literally puts Frame on the shelf beside George Eliot, Mary Shelley, Olive Schreiner, Katherine Mansfield, and other canonized women writers writing in English.

[38] The WEA Book Discussion Scheme started in 1975 with 25 groups. As of 1995, the membership had grown to 325 groups, with women making up approximately 94% of the membership. I am grateful to Shelagh Murray, co-ordinator of the Book Discussion Scheme, for these statistics.

[39] I too have caught myself in the process of trying to make Frame's story my own. In explaining to a friend why I chose Frame as the subject of my PhD thesis, I mentioned that she and I were both born in Dunedin. It was not until after the conversation that I realized that I had forgotten my own birthplace. Frame was born in Dunedin; I was not.

a fellow New Zealander and South Islander: "which of us," he writes, "is able now to drive through Oamaru without knowing that they pass through her Kingdom by the Sea?" ("Case" 19-20). Women readers can claim the further affinity of gender, a bond which seemed so powerful in the heady 1980s. And women did bond over the film, if conversations with my mother Lois and my grandmother Jessie Wiseman are anything to go by. When I inquired about Frame's health in a phone conversation with my mother in April 1996 Mum replied, "rumour has it that she's ill, but you never know with Janet"--as if "Janet" were a personal friend of my mother's.[40] And after seeing the film Grandma--who was always proper and discreet about any matter remotely connected with bodies--told me out of the blue that the film was flawed by a historical inaccuracy concerning menstruation: commercially-made menstrual pads were readily available and very cheap, she felt, even for women living in poverty, as Grandma was during the years when the first part of the film is set.

While female readers were gathering around this hearth of comfort, this frank, open version of Frame, male critics were less gushy. Evans and two other male literary critics, Keith Garebian and Peter Simpson, viewed Frame's autobiographies with suspicion (see Mercer, Janet Frame 227-32). In "Filming Fiction" Evans also attacks Campion's film version as a "screen memory" diverting attention from the founding trauma of Frame's art, which Evans insinuates to be childhood sexual abuse. Evans pursues a pun on "screen," though he does not actually use the term "screen memories," which I have introduced from Freud's article of the same name (1899). Starting from the seemingly logical premise that only important experiences in a person's life would be remembered for long, Freud wonders why childhood memories are, in fact, often insignificant and why important experiences are often forgotten. He concludes that such memories function like a dream, screening off some other memory. One memory diverts attention from another, suppressed, memory of an intolerable event or circumstance. To paraphrase his argument in this context, Evans

[40] About the only connection that my mother has with Frame is that Mum was reading Owls Do Cry while breastfeeding me, or so the story goes.

suggests that "screen memories" are the usual but pathological mode of popular film, which cannot be too bleak without risking sales to an audience eager for a comic tale of redemption. Evans suggests that for the sake of sales Frame's "screen" life-story prettified the harsh aspects of Frame's autobiographies: "the damning attack on New Zealand society in the first novel [ODC], the exposure of life in our psychiatric hospitals in the second [FW], the simple unrelieved bleakness of the third [EA]" (14). The film sets up a rose-coloured screen, like the one which Flora Norris draws up "for greater privacy" before telling Daphne of the death of her mother (ODC 181): "the audience's attention [is] skilfully deflected from the original purpose of the structure to the surface of things, to the screen at the end" ("Filming Fiction" 14). The redemptive Frame promoted by the film--the Frame who had been through the hell of a patriarchal psychiatric system and survived to indict it, the accessible, inspiring Frame--is the fake product of a marketing strategy, an "icon," "the euphemized symbol of a sanitized self" ("Filming Fiction" 17). Having "made it [his] task to familiarise [himself] with the trivia of Frame's early life" (15), Evans can see through the screen; he is the only "inside" reader of the film. Ironically, the true disciple, the one who recognises the false signs from the true, is the one who rejects the author's redemptive capacities.

By contrast, women readers have responded to Frame's life story by constructing a protective circle around Frame, a "Hands Off Our Janet" attitude.[41] Mercer writes that she has not read any negative reviews of the autobiographies written by women (Janet Frame 230), and the vast majority of articles and theses on the autobiographies are by women. Mercer herself has kept the faith by not publishing the results of her research into Frame's manuscripts, which she undertook before March 1991, when Frame embargoed her literary typescripts held in the Hocken Library until fifty years after her death. In the appendix to Janet Frame: Subversive Fictions Mercer states her intention to respect Frame's wishes for

[41] I borrow this phrase from the title of Ruth Brown's article "Hands Off Our Jane!" (1994), which tells of how the conservative literary establishment in England rallied to repel Edward Said's postcolonial assault against Jane Austen.

privacy and lists only information which is already available through publication elsewhere, except for certain minor details which Mercer "feel[s] able to mention" (291; Mercer does not specify her criteria for inclusion).

As evidenced by the contrasting epigraphs to this section, there are at least two different Frames: the occult, veiled Frame and the inviting, "beaming" Frame; the secret Frame and the Frame from whom no secrets are hidden; the absent Frame, "nowhere and everywhere" (Evans, "Case" 20), and the incarnated, human Frame; the Old Testament Frame and the New.[42] Campion and Ikin warm to the latter image, while Evans vacillates between a Frame who seems to speak for him and a Frame who maintains a knowing, infuriating distance from him. This latter stance can be traced back through a theological strain still operative in hermeneutic literary criticism; it will help to circle back to Foucault's "What is an Author?" (1969) to expand this point.

Foucault states that early Christian protocols for authentication of religious texts remain active in the contemporary notion of the author as a principle of stylistic unity (151).[43] The author-function stands as "the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning" (159) because it governs every literary interpretation according to requirements of consistency in style, thematic design, quality, and correspondence with the author's sociohistorical

---

[42] The discussion following Andrew Gurr's presentation of his paper "NOT Living in the Maniototo" at the Institute for Commonwealth Studies in London in 1996 foregrounded two further polarised versions of Frame: the arch prestidigitator of language always one step ahead of her readers and the slightly mad yet likeable friend-of-a-friend from down the road. According to personal correspondence from Ruth Brown, the audience at Gurr's paper was divided as to whether the many spelling errors in Living in the Maniototo were "subtle devices" for the reader to puzzle through or simply a case of poor copy-editing.

[43] Foucault incorrectly cites Saint Jerome's De viris illustribus as the source for the four criteria governing the attribution of texts. In fact Foucault's statement of the four principles inaccurately summarizes a twentieth-century commentary on Jerome's text. Mark Vessey's "The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature" includes the following detail: "Although a footnote in the 1977 version of ["What Is an Author?"] refers to Arns, Technique . . ., Foucault's source is in fact an article . . . by K. K. Hulley in Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 55 (1944): 87-109 at 105-109" (507n31).

I quote here, and at other points in this chapter, from the version of "What is an Author?" published in Textual Strategies, edited by J. V. Harari (1979).

circumstances. But Foucault also notes that any attempt to remove the author as a touchstone for meaning does not remove the theological dimension of literary interpretation:

> To admit that writing is, because of the very history that it made possible, subject to the test of oblivion and repression, seems to represent, in transcendental terms, the religious principle of the hidden meaning (which requires interpretation) and the critical principle of implicit significations, silent determinations, and obscured contents (which gives rise to commentary). To imagine writing as absence seems to be a simple repetition, in transcendental terms, of both the religious principle of inalterable and yet never fulfilled tradition, and the aesthetic principle of the work's survival, its perpetuation beyond the author's death, and its enigmatic excess in relation to him. (144-45)

A Barthesian crowing over the death of the author mistakenly equates "killing" with "getting rid of" (AM 149): the killing off of the author does not eradicate his power but rather augments it.[44] Foucault points instead to the hermeneutic generativity of the absent or removed locus of meaning. While literary interpretations are bounded by rules, the hidden meaning assumed by those rules guarantees a boundless number of interpretations. If an interpretive community holds hidden meaning to be both inviolate and vast, then no single interpretation can ever be confirmed as incontrovertibly correct and adequate, that is, commensurate with the secret.

Any literary approach which purports to recover a pre-existing meaning has a special dependence upon death and absence, drawing attention away from the present moment of the act of reading to focus on a meaning that has "gone" from the text and has to be recalled. This principle helps explain Evans' preoccupation with morbidity, not only as a thematic preoccupation but also as a function of the process of literary canonization. Eerily, Evans announces Frame's premature death in "The Muse as Rough Beast": "I felt intimidated," he

[44] I am not sure exactly what critic or theorist Foucault targets in this passage. References to "writing" (écriture) in the sentences preceding it seem to indicate that Foucault is challenging Derrida, but if so, he has misunderstood Derrida's attentiveness to the workings of the trace put into force by absence.

confides, "by the difficulties of writing about someone whose past seemed as obscure as if she had died centuries ago" (1). And in response to Frame's anger at his biographical intrusions,[45] Evans writes, without apparent irony, "[w]e all know that most writers would do anything to be embalmed in a literary critical work that is part of a world-wide series: Frame, it seems, would do anything to avoid it" (2, emphasis added).[46] Evans not only sets Frame among the dead, as T. S. Eliot recommends for the appreciation of literary talent (Eliot 7), but actually pronounces her dead. Ironically, to achieve immortality the author must die. Or, more accurately, she must be killed off: the literary detective becomes the murderer. For Campion and Ikin, Janet Frame's story is accessible and down-to-earth, easily transposed to the popular medium of film. For Evans, who is in the business of interpretation rather than transposition, Frame's writing must be distorted, otherworldly: that is, cryptic, a communication from beyond the grave.

Theological Hermeneutics

---

[45] In a letter to Evans following the publication of his bio-critical book Janet Frame, Frame suggested that Evans is "[o]ne of the Porlock people, maybe?" (qtd. in "Muse" 2). Evans comments:

> The invasion of privacy that comes with 'fame' is something we would all feel cautious about, but the reference to the artistically destructive visit of Coleridge's blunderer from Porlock means something different from that. It implies a special, magical attitude towards the world that surrounds the artist, and a possessiveness about one's own experience that makes it communicable only by oneself . . . . ("Muse" 2)

Victor Dupont notes in his "Editor's Postscript" published in the journal Commonwealth (1974-75) that Frame has threatened litigation against anybody who refers to her former state of mind as sick or disordered. Dupont advises readers seeking biographical information to "go to Janet Frame herself" (176). Frame informed Dupont that "even her own autobiographical article, Beginnings, published in the New Zealand review LANDFALL (March 1965) must be used with precaution" (176).

[46] See further the heading of an article in the Oamaru Mail of 17 October, 1984: "Janet Frame Set For Posterity." Although Frame at the time was only "60-odd" according to the correspondent, the heading seems to usher her into her grave. Writing and the proper name both share the characteristic of surviving after the death of the body with which they are associated:

> To be dead means that no profit or deficit, no good or evil, whether calculated or not, can ever return again to the bearer of the name. Only the name can inherit, and this is why the name, to be distinguished from the bearer, is always and a priori a dead man's [sic] name, a name of death. What returns to the name never returns to the living. (Derrida, Ear of the Other 7)

H. Winston Rhodes first mooted a theological reading of Frame when he introduced the genre of parable in "Preludes and Parables: A Reading of Janet Frame's Novels" (1972). He finds the "shaping and modifying power" of Janet Frame's imagination in

> her gift for parabolic utterance and the remarkable ability she displays in developing, diversifying and co-ordinating associated parables, whether these are limited to a phrase, repeated in a refrain or expanded in such a way that they give rise to further parables, ultimately achieving what might be called a parabolic unity. . . . Janet Frame's distinctive characteristic is that she depends far more on the inter-relation of parabolic fragments to provide structural unity and a pattern of values, than she does on formal plot, human relationships and character in action. (137-38)

Rhodes casts about for a generic classification which will help bemused readers adapt to a "taste that is new" (137) and illuminate a textual universe which seems clouded with irrelevant details, absurdities, obscurities, and false leads. Ironically, the generic filter which most sharply illuminates significance is also one which demands obscurity: a parable is a simple, realistic narrative which reveals another truth not immediately apparent within the narrative details, a truth which can only be referred to indirectly.

Rhodes' sweeping definition of parable reduces his insight to the general advice that the best interpretation of Frame's texts is to assume that they require interpretation; he adverts readers to an occulted, abstract, and spiritual level of the text which is presumed by the generic classification he imposes. But he leaves unexamined the hermeneutic implications of introducing a term derived from Christian theology, the paradigmatic example of the parabolic mode being Jesus' teachings, with their orientation toward the "future, toward last things, toward the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and how to get there" (J. Hillis Miller 32). Parables look towards the last day, when the "canvas [will] be unrolled and God [will] show the Reason Why" (Frame, SG 117). Yet the kingdom of heaven will not admit all. One of the functions of parables is thus not simply to point the way to heaven, but also to ensure that the right kind of person will get there.

Evans finds an analogy between the spiritual insider--the member of the elect who correctly interprets the parable--and the insider reader of Frame. Such a reader would be attuned to the hidden secrets of "the novel of the 'visionary élite,'" a generic label Evans coins to describe the literary works of Frame and Patrick White ("Alienation" 296). Elsewhere Evans refers to the "successful" reader of Scented Gardens as one "admitted . . . to an experience not available to all," an "initiate" able to read through textual "disguises and tricks, whose job is to conceal the same sensibility and experiences as [in Frame's previous fiction] and then reveal them to a select few" ("Farthest" 39,40). Evans' project is to find some entrance into Frame's texts, as if they were some internal space, like a club, which denies entry to all but those who carry the right card. To use the opposition established by Frank Kermode in The Genesis of Secrecy (1979), Evans squarely situates himself within a hina theory of parable: that is, within the view that parables are told for the purpose of mystifying the populace and excluding all but the elect--those who already have eyes to see--from their kernel of meaning.[47]

Frame's Scented Gardens for the Blind provides its own commentary on the usefulness of parable as a heuristic device in the interpolated story of Cousin Albert which Uncle Blackbeetle tells Erlene (173-88). In terms of genre Albert's story lies at the intersection of fable, parable, and tragedy. Albert lives in a sheep field in a foreign country, perhaps England. He is an assiduous dungbeetle who provides conscientiously for his wife and three children. His downfall begins when his sense of the transcendent coincides with his awareness that dung falls from the sky:

---

[47] The alternative theory of parable, named the hoti school by Kermode, holds that such narratives democratise the Word by making an abstract relation concrete and thus, in principle, open to all. The terms hoti and hina derive from two conflicting interpretations of a passage occurring in the Gospel According to Mark: "And he [Jesus] said unto [his disciples], 'Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That [hina] seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand" (Mark 4: 11-12, King James version). The hoti school emends the hina ("in order that") of the Greek text to hoti ("because") (Kermode 28-32 and passim).

> Sitting there in the grass all day, watching and waiting, my cousin had time to consider the question of gods and distance, and because at the same time he also considered the fact of dung being dropped from the sky, he united the two questions in his mind and gave himself one answer . . . . (175)

Albert determines to wait for a miracle, for the fall of the gigantic dung ball to end all dung balls. He abandons his regular dung-collecting and waits. Eventually there drops an immense ball of dung. After embracing his treasure, Albert drags it home, where it lodges in the doorway behind him. Albert finds no welcoming hearth, but only the dessicated remains of his wife and three children, who starved while awaiting Albert's return. Albert decides to keep his treasure nonetheless, and while he is heaving it into his house the dung rolls on top of him and crushes him to death.

Here we have an enigmatic teaching, passed on from a mentor figure, Uncle Blackbeetle, to a disciple figure, Erlene. The tale concerns the unexpected consequences of revelation: Albert's prayers for proof of the godhead are answered, not by an apocalypse which would unite him with his god, but by a further sign, the ball of dung, which brings death rather than eternal life. Uncle Blackbeetle does not conclude the tale with an aphoristic moral, although he quotes his Cousin Silverfish's warning about "the danger of being imprisoned and murdered by the object of one's love" (188). It is not difficult to suggest other possibilities for a moral: "Your immoderate desires will crush you"; "If you fix your eyes on heaven what you love on earth will be taken away"; or "What you desire as gold is ultimately worth shit."

It appears that, unlike parable proper as defined by J. Hillis Miller, the tale of Albert Dungbeetle contains a definable kernel of meaning easily detachable from the shell of the story, its narrative details. Yet the relation of kernel to shell applies not only to the relation between the moral of the tale and the tale itself, but also to the relation obtaining between

the tale and the context in which it appears.[48] Given that something falls from the sky in both Albert's tale (dung) and the story of Vera Glace (a bomb), what clue does the inset narrative give for the interpretation of the larger narrative? Albert's story turns out to be an anti-parable, an ironic mode which offers the promise of revelation while simultaneously undercutting it. The parable is based on a performative contradiction: its revelatory moment denies the very possibility of ultimate fulfilment. The parable is a revelation of the danger, if not the impossibility, of revelation. The "spiritual insider" to such a text gains, not access to the kingdom of heaven, but initiation to the knowledge that the kingdom of heaven has an aftermath and that the search for it will destroy those you love as well as yourself. The fable which Vera hoped would "fall like a gentle cloak from the sky" (13) goes down like a lead balloon.

Evasion

Evans posits a taboo at the centre of Frame's work, which he intends to uncover, in the apparent belief that "lies"--deliberate evasions--inevitably coincide with "secrets" and "silence." Frame's texts are characterised, he writes, by "avoidance," by the "skilled creation of lacunae," by "gestures at implied knowledge"; "[t]here is a secret here, she seems to be saying, and I am going to share it with you. But at the very same time the very same texts take her away from us, concealing her with their apparent verisimilitudes" ("Case" 18). Frame's texts gesture at something--an experience or event, Evans would say--which must remain unspeakable. Yet, as Evans notes elsewhere, Frame's texts also shed their secrets with disarming openness. For example, Uncle Blackbeetle himself baldly states the phrase which Evans finds crucial to the understanding of Frame: Death is the "common denominator" (SG 172). There it is, right out in the open, directly expressed. As Lauris

[48] In fact the story of Albert Dungbeetle is doubly embedded: it occurs within the diegetic level (chapters 1-15), which may be further embedded within an extradiegetic level (chapter 16). Other interpretations of the narrative layering in the novel are possible; see the section below, entitled "Fantasy Space."

Edmond has written, Frame has a tendency to state the obvious, an "urge towards over-explicitness, a desire to define what has already been manifested in action or character" (10). So perhaps after all, Frame's narratives only appear to be hina narratives; really they are hoti narratives, and hermeneutic readers who seek the heart of her texts fail precisely because it is too obvious, too accessible. Perhaps the exclusionary secret to the deep interpretation of Frame lies on the surface. How does it come about that Frame's texts can speak plainly, yet remain silent?

This dialectic between speech and silence emerges in the final two paragraphs of Evans' after-dinner speech, "The Case of the Disappearing Author":

> It [the symbiosis between Frame and her reading public] gives her writing that distinctive quality I found when I first read it as a teenager, the capacity to reach into our lives and speak for us. . . . And, balancing this, there is that other capacity I have tried to talk about, her ability to offer herself as a text outside her own texts, a text which we help to write, creating as we do so the version of her we want to have: the writer as post-modernist, the writer as gameplayer, as imposter, as ventriloquist, the writer as crafter of language, and, supremely, I think, the writer as victim, representative sufferer of all the blows that may be suffered in a society like ours but which may not be spoken about. This last is for me the most potent of her roles, the one upon which we most eagerly fasten because it seems to give a voice to the greatest of all taboos in our society, the one which forbids us to speak about the family violation of children.
>
> Ladies and gentlemen, it is in her capacity to do these things, to seem to open up her own life to us even as she reaches deeply into our lives, to be nowhere and everywhere, that Janet Frame seems to me to have vaulted clear of her fellows, to have distinguished herself most signally from all our other writers, and to have come closest to investing meaning in that complex and evanescent term, "greatness". (19-20, emphasis added)

Frame's texts "speak for us": they express the essence of what it is to be a New Zealander. They "speak for us" because her secret is also ours. Yet her texts do not speak, they merely represent "what may not be spoken about." Yet again, she "gives a voice" to a taboo--and

yet she doesn't speak after all, because she can only express the impossibility of expression. Evans concludes the penultimate paragraph by finally naming the taboo he refers to--couched within a prepositional phrase within a dependent clause--then immediately skitters off to his conclusion, with its flurry of clichés and one too many superlatives. One is left wondering who the "disappearing author" of the title is, Frame or Evans himself, who enacts a rhetorical hit-and-run at the close of his address by playing the card of sexual trauma and then dancing out of the room.

The paradox of speaking silence crops up in other pieces by Evans. In "'Farthest from the Heart'" he writes that "[t]he atmosphere of [Frame's] work is almost unrelievedly dark; its texture thick with imagery and allusion; its plots full of deceits engineered to trick the reader; its significance half-stated and often obscure, as if the process of writing has not fully released the impulses which have brought it about" (31). According to this conception Frame writes for therapy to overcome the grief of a personal tragedy, in the hope that "the word [proves] mightier than the pain" ("Muse" 3). Frame attempts to exorcise ghosts, Evans alleges, by a process of authorial ventriloquism, aiming to "abolish what was actual and painful simply by putting it into the mouths of people who never existed" (3), that is, by transposing the experience of loss to fictional characters. The model which Evans invokes is implicitly cathartic: starting from a position "where the meaning is felt but never explained," Frame can relieve her trauma by revisiting it, naming it accurately, and thereby discharging the pent-up affect attached to the repressed memory.

To paraphrase Evans according to my understanding of his thesis, Frame's writing is the track she leaves behind as she ventures into the maze of her past experiences, each work published successively within chronological time drawing her further backwards in memory time, perhaps eventually to encounter the minotaur of primal trauma and there release it or kill it. This journey is simultaneously one from fiction to autobiography, from fantasy to reality, in which the alleged horrible experiences of Frame's life are no longer projected onto fictional characters but called home to Frame's full consciousness. Upon which moment,

presumably, her writing-as-symptom will cease, having brought to symbolization the unspeakable horror which generated it--the flow of her writing petrified into stone the instant it faces the monster.

Evans' reading is not inconsistent with comments made by Frame about her own art. The entry on Frame in the World Authors 1950-1970 encyclopedia quotes her:

> I write from obsession, habit, and because I have a thorn in my foot, head and heart and it hurts and I can't walk or think or feel until I remove it. When I was a child and I used to ask my father why he worked, I could not understand the answer he gave--"To keep the wolf from the door." I understand now, though it's a different kind of wolf that writing keeps at bay and the writer has no hope of keeping it from the door: the important task is to stop it from getting in! ("Frame [Clutha] Janet [Paterson]" 488)

This 1975 description of the writing process as a form of emotional self-protection for the writer anticipates the same theme in Living in the Maniototo (1978), in which Mavis acknowledges that writing can be a means of "turn[ing] away from, avoid[ing], the possibility and responsibility of feeling, by going at once to another, a private fictional world" following the death of her friend Brian (LM 235; see further Ash "Female Artist" 181). Yet the wolf analogy suggests something other than "avoidance," with its overtones of disapprobation. It seems imperative to the writing process both that the wolf should insist at the door and that it should never arrive inside. Here again is the spatial image of inside and outside, but the roles have been switched around: what is most "central" to the writing process--something horrible, hungry--must nonetheless be kept "outside," withheld from the consciousness of the writer.

Frame's writing approaches the "wolf"--that which both threatens and generates the writing--asymptotically, continually deferring the final unveiling which Evans desires. For example, Evans sees in The Lagoon (1951) a kind of emotional dance by which Frame draws near to the presumed central tragedies of her life, the drowning deaths of her sisters

Isabel and Myrtle, only to retreat again: "[s]he cannot avoid mentioning the topic, . . . yet she cannot bring herself to mention it fully" ("Farthest" 35). Considered as a whole, the stories gathered in the collection follow a "rigid system" of evasion, a complex of fragments which never combine to show the full picture:

> if the location of Isabel's death is confronted--the beach--then the loss is either suffered by someone else or is less than a loss of a sister. If the doomed sister is mentioned openly (as in "The Secret," where the threatened girl bears the name of Frame's older drowned sister, Myrtle), then the point of the story is that she is not going to die, after all. At no point do we find the death behind her fiction faced squarely, and at no point can we sense her retreat completely from it. (35)[49]

To set out Evans' system schematically, a fully expressed or autobiographical narrative would state (a) the correct name of one or both of Frame's deceased sisters (Isabel or Myrtle); (b) the correct location of death (swimming baths, beach); (c) correct kinship relation (sister of protagonist); (d) correct kind of loss (death--absolute loss); and (e) loss suffered by the correct kind of character (a young woman; an elderly man, such as Turnlung in Daughter Buffalo, does not qualify). Full expression, autobiography, the end of deceit, and a cure would all occur simultaneously if only Frame could write a short story containing a + b + c + d + e.

Evans assumes an indirection in signs, yet maintains a fantasy of full representation achieved by means of textual signs. He makes the narrative details of Frame's text cryptic by assuming that they refer, in a jumbled, gestural, incomplete way, to the supposedly more coherent circumstances of Frame's life; at the same time he presents this cryptic element as transitory, a by-way to a direct confrontation with loss. Frame's life-story is deemed to be a

---

[49] By a terrible coincidence, Frame's younger sister Isabel drowned in Picton in 1947, some months after Frame first drafted "The Lagoon." In that story the narrator learns the family secret, that her grandmother murdered her husband by drowning him in the lagoon in Picton. See Mercer, Janet Frame 288-89 for evidence of the date of composition. This chronology affects the details of Evans's autobiographical reading but not his principal thesis, that Frame writes to exorcise haunting memories of personal tragedy.

stable set of circumstances independent of its textual representation (whether autobiographical or fictional); the signifier (Frame's stories) is simply misaligned with its signified (Frame's life). Once Frame achieves a denotative, one-to-one correspondence between text and life, the former will dissolve into the latter. However, Frame's catharsis is blocked by her refusal to give the events of her life their proper name in her fiction.

At a later point in the same article ("'Farthest From the Heart'") Evans turns to the short story "Keel and Kool," also collected in The Lagoon. Mr. and Mrs. Todd picnic by a river with their daughter Winnie and her friend Joan, some time after the death of their oldest child, Eva. The girls play, but Winnie looks to the sky and watches a seagull fly over: "I'm Keel, I'm Keel it seemed to say. Come home Kool come home Kool. Keel Keel. Winnie felt lonely staring up into the sky" (24). Winnie argues with Joan, who runs off, and the story ends with a description of the seagull, "as white as chalk, circling and crying Keel Keel Come home Kool, come home Kool. And Kool would never come, ever" (27). Evans suggests that the onomatopeic phrase "Keel and Kool" is a pun, a code for the words "killed and cooled": "the gull flies above the girl as an ostensible emblem of the frankness of her despair and the completeness of her loss, but, as it does, its voice draws attention to a secret loss, of someone who has been killed and cooled--someone dead but, so to speak, frozen in memory" ("Farthest" 37).

In his reading of "Keel and Kool" Evans narrows his focus from the narrative constituents of plot and character to a semantic operation at the level of the word. The pun designates a psychic mechanism by which Eva has been dispatched to a state of living death in Winnie's memory. The words "keel" and "kool" thus operate at two removes from their signified: "keel" and "kool" have a phonic resemblance to the words "killed" and "cooled," which in turn have a metaphorical relationship, based on resemblance of function, to a psychic mechanism (memory is a freezer for the dead). The words "keel" and "kool" form a compact example of what Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok term a "cryptonymy": a set of

words whose ostensible links conceal a further, less obvious principle of association. Such words are indeterminate because incomplete:

> Whereas normally we are given meanings, the analyst is given symbols. Symbols are data that are missing an as yet undetermined part, but that can, in principle, be determined. The special aim of psychoanalytic listening is to find the symbol's complement, recovering it from indeterminacy. (Abraham and Torok, Wolf Man's Magic Word 79)

Thus the onomatopeic nature of the words "keel" and "kool," suggesting a seagull's cry, diverts attention from their underlying message, which the literary critic must designate to rescue them from indeterminacy.

In "'Farthest from the Heart,'" Evans proceeds from the thesis that Frame writes as part of her mourning process, to a focus on repression, which in later criticism will lead him to posit sexual trauma in the author's life. Evans argues that Frame blocks her own catharsis through unending "verbal puzzles"; she refuses to state her grief as such and so remains both "damaged" and "creative":

> However far from us in time the damaging but creative experience moves, the damaged creator seems to remain essentially the same, setting up verbal puzzles that repel the casual reader but draw the initiate down through layers of language to a truth which is always the same, to the death which, as the black beetle of Scented Gardens for the Blind says, is the common denominator of all things. ("Farthest" 40)

Thus the unspeakable sentence "My sister is dead" has either been fragmented (the elements of the sentence can be found in the Lagoon stories, but not in the correct combination) or linguistically transformed by principles of semantic and phonic resemblance based on the associative chain: dead--killed (keel)--preserved in memory--frozen--cooled (kool). According to Evans, Frame's grief continues--as evidenced by her continued writing about death--because her memory cannot thaw into denotative language, but only express itself

indirectly in puns and fragments. Here the scenario is that of a blocked mourning, but Evans' turn toward the semiotic tracing of a buried thought segues, in some of his subsequent essays, into an interest in the pre-eminent model of repression, the repression of unspeakable desires or traumatic experiences. Having described repression as a feature of Frame's texts, Evans then draws himself into the further development of the narrative which the theory seems to require.

***

Frame knew long ago about the power of the taboo, the centering secret. In Scented Gardens for the Blind we find a character who sits, like a closed text, in silence and darkness, yet who bears the promise of significance upon being brought out into the light, opened, and read. Erlene's silence is a message--silence signifies as powerfully as words--which cannot reveal its own meaning except to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Three characters in the novel, Vera Glace, Edward Glace, and Dr. Dick Clapper, attempt by idiosyncratic methods to divine Erlene's secret, to make it speak, and thus, perhaps, to make her speak. Scented Gardens, in other words, proleptically stages Frame's own literary institutionalization as a taboo-ridden figure buried under a flurry of hypotheses and interpretations. The Veras, Edwards, and Dr. Clappers of academe loom around the text, vying for its recognition, as the leering adults once clustered around the infant Erlene:

> Erlene remembered that when she was very small and learning to walk, there were wooden bars, like a cage, set up around her, and her mother and her father and her grandfather stood outside the cage and stared at her. They were so tall. Their mouths dribbled with saliva, and their shadows pounced . . . . The faces moved, and the shadows moved with them, and words came out of the faces, sharp, commanding words, "Walk to me, Erlene, walk to me, walk to me." (SG 225)

"Talk to me! Talk to me! Talk to me!," hermeneutic critics coax, wanting to believe the "conventional prosopopeia" that texts "speak" to readers. But Scented Gardens turns out to be an object lesson in the failure of this acroamatic model of literary interpretation:

> [w]e try to call this process [the subject-object relationship between reader and text] a dialogue, or claim, using a conventional prosopopeia, that texts "speak" to us. But the animating metaphor in this is all too obvious. It betrays the fact that while we feel that books are alive, we cannot find a good model, a way to picture that. The more we try to animate books, the more they reveal their resemblance to the dead--who are made to address us in epitaphs or whom we address in thought or dream. (Hartman 548)

What can readers "hear" in a novel of sensory failure such as Scented Gardens? How might a reader address Scented Gardens "in dream"?

Fantasy Space

Scented Gardens for the Blind consists of two parts. Chapters one to fifteen are focalized in turn through Vera Glace, her silent daughter Erlene, and her estranged husband, Edward. The final chapter comprises the second part of the novel. This chapter has omniscient narration, and it repeats narrative details from the first part of the novel, but in shuffled or distorted form. A woman sits silently in a room, but her name is Vera Glace, not Erlene; she is sixty, not young, and she sits in a mental hospital, not in a house. This silent Vera is attended, as is Erlene, by the psychiatrist Dr. Clapper.

This two-part structure is usually read as the irruption of reality into fantasy: upon encountering the final chapter the reader realises that chapters one to fifteen are not the principal narrative level but are rather an embedded narrative, the fantasy of another character who conflates the characteristics of two of the figures generated by her own imagination, bearing the name of Vera Glace and the silence of Erlene. Chapter sixteen would enact a shift from an internal perspective of Vera's mind to an external view of her as a patient, a shift from a split self to a unity, from illusion to reality, from falsity to truth, from darkness to light, and from readerly immersion within a story to the knowledge that such immersion was brought about by verbal trickery. Such at any rate are the conclusions

to be drawn from the following descriptions of the structure of Scented Gardens, based as they are upon divisions between fantasy and reality, deception and truth:

> these three [Edward, Erlene, and Vera] are presented . . . as the reader discovers in the final chapter, deceptively. . . . They are allotted five chapters each, until the sixteenth and final chapter, when the "truth" about Vera Glace is revealed to the bewildered reader, who then feels the need to re-read the text in order to understand it in the light of this revelation. . . . The site of the entire novel up to this point has been inside [Vera's] mind. (Mercer, Janet Frame 75, 76)

> But in the last chapter, the illusion which has sustained the novel for fifteen chapters is removed as it is revealed that Vera Glace is a former librarian . . . (Evans, Janet Frame 103)

> [W]e have been tricked into believing that [the novel's] one character, an old mute mental hospital patient called Vera Glace, is three people. . . . [O]ld Vera . . . has changed herself imaginatively into a child . . . . (Evans, "Art of Life" 378-79)

> In the sixteenth and last chapter of the novel the point of view suddenly switches over to the "normal" world, and we understand that the three "characters" [Vera, Edward, Erlene] have no objective existence, that they are phantoms occupying the diseased mind of Vera Glace, a sixty-year old inmate in a psychiatric asylum. (Delbaere, "Beyond the Word" 97)

The governing trope of the novel, then, would be dramatic irony, signalled by Dr. Clapper's words to the newly appointed psychiatrist: "God knows what dreams they hold inside them, what secret silent dreams lie like irremovable stones at the bottom of their minds, mixed with the sediment of their lives! If only we knew!" (247). The dramatic irony would consist in the reader's superior access to the contents of Vera's "secret silent dreams" compared to that of the two professionals.

Yet the text itself challenges--or at least, fails to confirm--the binaries upon which these conventional interpretations are based. I will start with the banal but important point that

the notions of "illusion" and "reality" are relative to the peculiarities of Frame's fictional world and are not to be gauged against the ordinary-world inferences operative in realist fiction. The final scene of Scented Gardens, occurring in a psychiatric ward around the time that a nuclear bomb destroys Britain, is bizarre enough; it is simply less bizarre than the prospect of a young woman conversing with a beetle. Frame familiarises the strange as well as estranging the familiar. Nor does the final chapter bring any relief: I doubt whether any reader, upon arriving at chapter sixteen, sighs, "thank God it was only a dream!" The structure of Scented Gardens can rather be likened to the Gary Larson cartoon in which a man wakes up, startled and distressed, to find himself in a dormitory within a fiery cavern. The man in the bed next to his offers comfort: "Go back to sleep, Chuck. You're just having a nightmare--of course, we are still in hell." The final chapter dashes Vera from the nightmare frying-pan, so to speak, to the real-world fire of the psychiatric ward and nuclear annihilation.

But, finally, there are no awakenings depicted in the fictional world of Scented Gardens and hence no sure foundation for gauging where invention, imagination, illusion, and fantasy end. This point can be illustrated by comparing the structure of the novel with a very similar narrative pattern which Zizek names "retroactive fictionalization": "events progress in a linear way until, all of a sudden, precisely at the point of catastrophic breakdown, we find ourselves again at an earlier point of departure. The path to catastrophe turns out to be only a fictional detour bringing us back to our starting point" (Looking Awry 17). Zizek offers as an example Fritz Lang's film Woman in the Window. Typically, such narratives open with a scene which is repeated at the end, with the events sandwiched in between retrospectively recognised as fantasy taking place between two points of reality.[50]

[50] Although retroactive fictionalization does not necessarily govern the structure of Scented Gardens as a whole, a clear example of the technique occurs in chapter nine. The point of departure for the fantasy is the moment where Edward stands at Georgina Strang's door (131); the increasing surreality of his supposed conversation with her reaches the point of "catastrophic breakdown" when Georgina Strang's syntax dissolves into one long run-on sentence broken by the ludicrous question, "Are you a market-research interviewer or the Minister of Communications?" (142). The narration

Readers who interpret the final chapter of Scented Gardens as a shift from an internal to an external reality implicitly introduce the narrative paradigm described by Zizek: that is, they mentally situate the figure of Vera dreaming in the psychiatric ward at the beginning of the text. But in fact, the novel offers no such opening scene. The textual landmarks which might peg out the demarcation between reality and fantasy do not appear in the novel, for fantasies do not respect boundaries; they "move in and take over territory, and, like words, set up their form of dictatorship" (SG 119). There is no sure indication that chapters one to fifteen are the mental projection of Vera and not one of the other characters. It is possible, for example, that Dr. Clapper, not Vera, dreams the first part of the novel; after all, he has recently "experienced some disturbed nights, troubling strange dreams which persisted during the day" (248). Or the novel may not consist of two narrative levels but merely one, with the final chapter focalized through Vera (perhaps as a dream), according to the alternating pattern established in the first fifteen chapters. Or Vera may have written the entire novel, given that she writes as she waits for Erlene to speak (67 and passim). It is not possible to confirm who owns fantasy in the novel; any of the characters may suffer from it, and fantasy inhabits even the staff of the psychiatric ward, devoted to the scientific project of driving out the strange hauntings of the mad. Rather than a structure of supersession by which the "reality" of chapter sixteen uproots fantasy, we find a two-way infusion in the parallels between the two parts: a domestic home becomes analogous to a psychiatric ward, with all its guardedness and suspicion. This ambiguity between "reality" and "hallucination" contributes to the never fully expelled sense of menace within the narrative, an effect which Zizek describes as a "swarm" of "perverse and obscene implications" (Looking Awry 90) emanating from a repressed, prohibited domain.

***

---

then explicitly announces the end of Edward's fantasy by explaining, "[h]e had been standing there for ten minutes, imagining his interview with Georgina Strang" (142).

I have suggested that Scented Gardens presents a microcosm of the literary critical reception of the enigma Frame; relations of analogy link together the novelistic characters who try to plumb Erlene's secret, the psychiatrists who try to cure Vera, the literary critics and reviewers who try to sift Scented Gardens for the Blind, and the followers of New Zealand letters who try to read Frame. At each level there is the expectation of some ultimate disclosure which turns out to be beyond comprehension: somehow a sensory failure has intervened, a failure to see the light, to hear the text speak, to follow the right scent, to remember every detail in its fullness. And like the haunted psychiatrist Dr. Clapper, even the most empirically-minded literary investigator--in fact, especially this genre of literary critic--is subject to fantasies and desires which may transform, clash with, enhance, or block a text. With this analogy in mind I return to the most recent of Patrick Evans' critical self-dramatizations, that of the detective who has taken on "The Case of the Missing Author." Taking Evans at his word, I ask: how might Scented Gardens comment on the process of detection, literary or otherwise? What kind of detective novel might Scented Gardens be?

The Death of Speech

In Scented Gardens we find a murder but no corpse--or at least, no body that has died in a physiological sense. What we do read about is the death, presumed murder, of Erlene's speech. We find Erlene's inert body, like that of a dead person, left in a darkened, morgue-like room. Erlene is not dead in a physical sense, but her body performs the structural function of the corpse in a detective novel, organizing and arranging the attention of the remaining characters in the novel and "bind[ing] a group of individuals together" (Zizek, Looking Awry 59). These characters are brought together by a disturbance: the incoherence of a speechless body which is presumed to know the circumstances of its own linguistic murder yet will not tell. Guilt, suspicion, aggression, and secrecy are pandemic throughout the novel; even the newly appointed psychiatrist assures Dr. Clapper, "Don't worry. She won't incriminate you. She won't point you out as the guilty party" (SG 251). As in a

detective novel, the reader and the characters themselves expect some final unveiling which will reveal the "proper beginning" (Zizek, Looking Awry 58) and exonerate the murderous desires of all by pronouncing guilt upon a single party. The detective, like the literary critic, sets out to construct a coherent narrative that explains the clues and restores coherence to the disrupted order of the fictional world.

The events of Scented Gardens--mostly "events" of speculation, memory, and intrigue rather than actions per se--circle about the blunt fact of Erlene's silence, announced by Vera in the opening paragraph of the novel: "[a]ll sounds have been amplified since my daughter lost her power of speech" (9). This incongruous detail wrenches awry an otherwise banal domestic scene, a mother and daughter sharing a house while Father is away on business; the reader is prompted to wonder not only, "what is wrong with this picture?" but also, "what is wrong with this sound?" A sense of menace emerges: something is rotten in the bungalows of small-town New Zealand. In a traditional or classical novel, Erlene's silence would belong to the domain of what D. A. Miller terms the "narratable": those instances of "disequilibrium, suspense, and general insufficiency from which a given narrative appears to arise," a state which "can only be liquidated along with the narrative itself" (D. A. Miller, Narrative ix, 3). But the lack which precipitates the situation depicted in Scented Gardens is of a different order: it is a traumatic, necessary gap in symbolization which is not dispelled at the close of the text.

The idea of a "gap in symbolization" is not to be equated with Erlene's problematic accession from the realm of the Imaginary to that of the Symbolic in Lacanian terms; my reading takes a synchronic "slice of time" rather than the diachronic account which Tessa Barringer cogently presents in her essay "Powers of Speech and Silence."[51] Erlene's silence

[51] Barringer analyses Erlene's anticipated re-entry into language as the "focus of the . . . action" in Scented Gardens ("Powers" 75). Both Erlene and Vera are caught in liminal spaces between two silences, between the semiotic, which is received by socialized subjects as nonsense, and the symbolic, which represses the primal, corporeal drives of the pre-oedipal state. With the intervention of Dr. Clapper the bond between Erlene and her mother comes under pressure, but Erlene resists the name-of-the-father and refuses the gendered position offered to her by the

ruptures the symbolic field because it is a sign which does not take a stable place in a cohesive network of other signs. Nor do I suggest that Erlene's silence does not mean at all, that it blankly signals the absence of signification. On the contrary, her silence signifies excessively: it has too many possible signifieds, some of them contradictory. Here is a rough sketch of the semantic field surrounding the possible reasons for Erlene's silence in Scented Gardens:

A. Voluntary silence
— miserly (hoarding words 28)
— attention seeking (coyness, wilfulness, perversity); cruelty (putting people to all this trouble, endangering and confusing them 13)
— death (demonstrating "our ultimate dependence on silence" 49; also 223)
— regeneration ("all true begetting is from silence" 49)
— surliness (wilfulness, perversity)
— anger, offense, hurt ("having the pip" 10)
— arbitrariness, purposelessness (nothing to say, no point 31; just doesn't think speech is important 87)
— indifference, non-recognition, coolness, callousness (e.g. 87-88)
— omnipotence ("You think you are omnipotent, beyond words, beyond the need to walk up to people and speak" 223)
— comfort (lack of desire or need to speak); plenitude, fullness; holier-than-thou, knowing, infuriating ("She seems so infuriatingly self-contained as if there were never any need to speak" 152)
— resistance, wilfulness, perversity, contrariness ("withholding information" 193)
— keeping a secret ("We're going to tell each other secrets, aren't we?" 167)
— evasion, deception, guilt
— fear of opening mouth (in case people ash gets in)

B.1. Involuntary silence: ontogenetic

---

symbolic. And despite the text's "thetic break" into chapter sixteen, which seems to anticipate the successful emergence of the symbolic, Vera too refuses to re-enter that order: her final grunt "liberates the semiotic from its incarceration in the ice and stone regulation of the symbolic by refusing to repress and deny her foundation in the primary processes of the chora" (86). The semiotic has been frozen for so long that it takes the apocalyptic heat of an atomic bomb to free it.

— under blackmail ("Erlene must be prevented from telling the truth about me" 13)
— forbidden to speak ("They will not let me speak" 101; "not allowed to speak any more" 82).
— under a spell or curse
— guilt
— symptom of trauma; repression; psychological harm
— insanity ("the silence of the insane" 113)
— physical inability to speak (no tongue; suffocation, choking)
— has been cast by a god (226)
— accident (234)

B.2. Involuntary silence: phylogenetic
— trans-personal: historical evolution, larger cause, necessity; Erlene as Chosen One; instrumentality ("[Why had] Erlene been chosen to represent the terrible silence which theatened mankind? Who had chosen her?" 113)
— futuristic ("Who knows that Erlene has not strayed into the future?" 118)

Erlene's silence, which signifies nothing in particular and yet too much, "sticks out" from the other narrative details: it cannot be integrated unambiguously into any causal chain of events or system of meaning. It is, to use Zizek's terms, the phallic blot which "vertically doubles" all narrative events, loading them with significance:

> the "phallic" element of a picture is a meaningless stain that "denatures" it, rendering all its constituents "suspicious," and thus opens up the abyss of the search for a meaning--nothing is what it seems to be, everything is to be interpreted, everything is supposed to possess some supplementary meaning. The ground of the established, familiar signification opens up; we find ourselves in a realm of total ambiguity, but this very lack propels us to produce ever new "hidden meanings": it is a driving force of endless compulsion. (91)[52]

[52] Zizek uses a visual image to describe this "phallic" effect. He takes as a paradigmatic example the anamorphic "blot" in Holbein's painting "The Ambassadors." Holbein's painting depicts two noblemen in fine array, but a shadowy white blob in the foreground of the picture troubles the eye, "denatures" the scene. Something doesn't quite "add up." When viewed from the correct angle the

By this process, Erlene's silence doubles the possible significance of every narrative detail evident in chapters one to fifteen of Scented Gardens; not only does the reader assimilate these quirky details in their own terms, but he or she also asks: "and what does this point tell us about why Erlene stopped speaking?" Is the fact that Vera drowned a sack full of kittens when she was younger somehow connected with Erlene's silence (76)? What about the passages which Vera devotes to her father, what does he have to do with it? What of Edward's eleven-year absence from the family home? Or should we look to the geographical setting for clues, perhaps Erlene's silence results from some dreadful revenge of the murdered New Zealand bush? Normal chains of cause and effect have snapped; any event could connect, unpredictably, with any other. Put another way, there are only chains of signification in the novel: freed from that one signified which would fix their relation, the many possible meanings of Erlene's silence displace each other without terminus. The entire universe of the novel becomes psychologized, teeming with possible significance, full of signs, auguries, and portents, a disorienting zone in which Dr. Clapper's psychiatry takes place as merely one superstition among many.

The pieces of Scented Gardens cannot be keyed into each other to form a coherent picture: the denaturing "blob" of Erlene's silence persists. We sense that some horror has been repressed beneath this domestic New Zealand scene, some event which must remain unspoken yet which grounds the obsessive and perverse behaviour of the novel's characters, so that "what we actually see becomes nothing but a deceptive surface beneath which swarms an undergrowth of perverse and obscene implications, the domain of what is prohibited" (Zizek, Looking Awry 90). Something seems to have been buried alive, some unseen entity which, like Erlene, exists in a state of living death, something which pulses beneath the surface of the narrative details and quickens the characters' superstitions:

---

blob can be deciphered as a skull, and the whole picture becomes refocused as an ironic comment on the vanity of earthly riches.

> I [Vera] began a furtive seeking for cures. I listened on corners to the folk doctors. It was useless to tell myself that I had been educated and was therefore not superstitious, when grief, panic, bewilderment, acting like a sponge had seemed to absorb my knowledge and reason as if they were but temporary stains upon the fabric of feeling. (SG 11)

Erlene's silence functions as an "extimate kernel," to use Zizek's oxymoronic phrase. In my understanding, the "extimate kernel" signals one of the properties of the "little piece of the real" (Zizek, Looking Awry 33) which breaches the cohesion of a symbolic system. The notion of the "kernel" signals the belief that Erlene's silence holds some key or secret code, some core principle or meaning. Yet the "extimate" position of the kernel guarantees that it remains outside comprehensibility, beyond any coherent network of signification; it founds the system of representations, yet remains outside it. The "problem" of Erlene's silence is paradoxically both beyond understanding, and yet central to it. The desire of Vera, Dr. Clapper, and Edward, together with would-be interpreters of the novel as a whole, is to solve this problem. But desire lives by the principle that it ought never be extinguished, for "by obtaining the object, we lose the fascinating dimension of loss as that which captivates our desire" (Zizek 86). Erlene's silence is the necessary mystery which fuels hermeneutic potential and maintains the position of Erlene, and, by analogy, Frame-as-Erlene, as fantasy-space for critical speculation.

This oscillation between desire for an object and the fear of losing that desire helps explain why Vera and Dr. Clapper urge Erlene to speak yet also want her to remain silent. Erlene's silence invigorates them, gives them their mission. This self-contradictory dynamic of desire emerges in the ambiguity of Dr. Clapper's sharp exchange with the newly appointed psychiatrist in chapter sixteen:

> "Yes, strange, strange," [Dr. Clapper] said. "Glace is quiet, sheep-like; she is fed and toileted at intervals, her sleep is unbroken. We can't get a thing out of her."

> "She won't speak," he added, rather sharply.
> The newly appointed psychiatrist looked at him thoughtfully. (248)

The sentence,"she won't speak," performs several possible speech acts, capturing in one sentence Dr. Clapper's fear, reproach, and menace:

> (i) constative statement of observable fact (she does not speak)
> (ii) prediction of future events (she will continue not to speak; "will" here purely a function word, an auxiliary verb).
> (iii) statement recognising Vera's volition ("she will not speak," "will" here retaining the semantic element of "volition"--Vera refuses to speak).
> (iv) threat, either to Vera (if I have anything to do with it, you won't speak) or to the newly appointed psychiatrist (his onus is to ensure that Vera does not speak). Equally a command.

Any desire for Erlene's speech shown by the characters is self-directed and self-interested: they do not wish Erlene to speak for her own sake, but rather as a proof of love for them. Their desire, in other words, is also a demand, directed at something other than its immediate object. Vera, Dr. Clapper, and Edward compete not only to find the account of Erlene's silence that chimes with its actual causes, whatever they may be, but also to attract Erlene's attention and recognition.

But of course, the silent figure at the centre of Frame's novel does speak in the end:

> Dr. Clapper frowned. It seemed unintelligible, but he moved nearer to catch the new language. He heard it clearly.
> "Ug-g-Ug. Ohhh Ohh g. Ugg."
> Out of ancient rock and marshland; out of ice and stone. (252)

Here is one of the most profound and unredeemed examples of bathos in Frame's oeuvre.[53] Vera's grunt is a giant step sideways, or even a reversion, when a leap forward is anticipated in the novel's "evolutionary theme of the long struggle of human beings to emerge from darkness into light" (Rhodes 139). Far from bringing light, Vera's grunt merely ushers in another order of darkness, another unsymbolizable kernel; it merely swaps one "little piece of the real"--Vera's silence--for another little piece of the real, another order of silence.

The Haunted Critic

Finally, no character in the novel finds the answer to the "problem" of Erlene's silence; none secures the position of the detective who pieces together the clues or the psychoanalyst who peels back the layers of the trauma. The textual universe at the end of Scented Gardens remains a world in which "everything might have a meaningful bearing"; there has been no "repudiation of meanings" customary at the close of the classical detective novel (Miller, Novel 34).[54] But this finding does not mean that no "subject-supposed-to-know" emerges, no-one who might, "by his very presence, [guarantee] that the chaos will acquire meaning" (Looking Awry 176n11). Erlene herself takes on this role, not because she knows why she is silent--she doesn't[55]--but because the other characters presume that she does know: "[t]he

---

[53] Some critics manage to find signs of hope in this grunt. Mercer seems to follow Delbaere-Garant in viewing a return to the primal swamp as preferable to "a forward movement [of humanity] which can only lead to the cliff of total extinction" (Mercer, Janet Frame 83; see also Delbaere-Garant, "Divided Worlds" 710-11). Evans even optimistically suggests that at the end of the novel "the ancient Vera Glace utters the grunts that begin the evolution of a new, healing language" ("Art of Life" 379). Admittedly, my reading of the grunt as bathos entails a form of logocentrism on my part, which might be precisely the attitude which the novel mocks: my refusal to see the "return to the swamp" as any kind of advancement may merely reveal how enmired I am myself in the rationality of the sentence.

[54] The full quotation from Miller's The Novel and the Police (1988) states: "Though the detective story postulates a world in which everything might have a meaningful bearing on the solution of the crime, it concludes with an extensive repudiation of meanings that simply drop out" (34).

[55] Nothing in the text confirms for sure that Erlene does not know why she is silent, but neither is there any positive indication that she does know. Erlene seems to believe she is under some prohibition ("Why has it all happened, that I am not allowed to speak any more?" 82), but she adds, using a semantically indeterminate modal verb, that she "cannot" speak:

'subject supposed to know' is an effect of transference and is as such structurally impossible in the first person: he [sic] is by definition 'supposed to know' by another subject" (62).

Scented Gardens thus overturns the dynamic of "analyst" and "analysand" set up by Evans' hermeneutic criticism. Evans sets out, like the analyst, to state a truth that the author repeatedly gestures at yet shies away from. He sees through her "curious and almost neurotic desire to manipulate the reader" ("Farthest" 38). This is the role of the analyst-as-classical-detective, the analyst who denominates the "content" of Frame's unconscious: Evans suspects some originary trauma generating Frame's texts and responds by coaxing the author to own her past and truthfully "express" her story. But in the very act of coming before Frame as the bearer of secrets--as Vera, Edward, and Dr. Clapper come "before" Erlene to make her speak--Evans enters into a transferential relation with the authorial figure, in which he takes the role of the patient, not the analyst:

> The text has for us [literary critics] authority--the very type of authority by which Jacques Lacan indeed defines the role of the psychoanalyst in the structure of transference. Like the psychoanalyst viewed by the patient, the text is viewed by us as 'a subject presumed to know'--as the very place where meaning, and knowledge of meaning, reside. (Felman,"To Open the Question" 7)

In the case of Frame and the "spiritual élite of suffering individuals" represented in her fiction, this transferential relation converts an "other"--silent woman, crazy woman, any marginalized figure--into an "Other," one who knows us better than we know ourselves, who sees without being seen and hears without being heard, who can read our secrets and "reach into our lives" (Evans, "Case" 19). In the relation of interpretation, Evans knows the truth about Frame; in the relation of transference, Frame knows the truth about Evans but--

---

> Then she remembered that she could not speak.
> I cannot speak, she said [sic]. They will not let me speak. What will happen to me if I cannot speak anymore, all my life? (101)

crucially--withholds it.[56] By virtue of his or her fascination with hidden significations, the critic driven by the hermeneutic urge to dispel mystery places "Frame," perceived as a consciousness behind the novels, in a position of power. Like the disciples who failed to construe Jesus' parable of the sower (see Kermode 47), the hermeneutic critic dooms him- or herself to feel left out of the loop when confronted with the cognitive blockage presented by an Erlene, "haunting [ghost] of the analyst's own deficiency" (Abraham and Torok, "Poetics" 4).[57]

In negotiating my own critical response to the themes of trauma and secrecy surrounding Frame I have asked myself the same questions posed by Shoshana Felman: "how should we read? How can a reading lead to something other than recognition, 'normalization,' and 'cure'? How can the critical project, in other words, be detached from the therapeutic projection?" (What Does 40). I might as well start by admitting that Frame's novels have fascinated me since reading Owls Do Cry in sixth form. I still have the essays I wrote for Miss Blair, having carted them across the Pacific as the academic equivalent of a photograph album. "'We all carry some kind of mark . . . because we are all branded in our lives.' Discuss." "The epilogue is designed to universalize the themes of Owls Do Cry. Discuss (a) the themes; (b) their wider implications as worked out in the epilogue." I wrote my BA honours essay on the same novel. And I write now literally "before" Frame's name, multiplied many times on the spines of her works lined up on my desk, protective and

---

[56] This relation will be repeated in Intensive Care between the autistic diarist Milly and the mathematician Colin Monk. See the opening section of chapter three below.

[57] A candid example of hermeneutic frustration can be found in Norbert H. Platz's essay "Janet Frame's Novels and the Disconcert [sic] in the Reader's Mind" (1991). Platz runs Owls Do Cry, Scented Gardens, and Living in the Maniototo through Michael Riffaterre's two stages of reading, a primary "heuristic" and "linear" reading, and a second "retrospective," "retroactive," and "hermeneutic" reading. Platz finds in each case that the hermeneutic reading does not satisfactorily resolve the interpretive puzzles set up by the heuristic reading (it doesn't matter how many times you read Scented Gardens, you will never discover why Erlene remains silent). Platz regards the process of interpreting Frame as a "showdown between text and reader" (414) from which the defeated reader emerges "feel[ing] inferior to the text" (425). "I can't possess the text [Scented Gardens], and yet, for all its elusiveness, its disturbing features still haunt me" (423).

daunting. It would be ridiculous to suggest that I have not spent all these years searching for some kind of interpretive treasure. Nonetheless I have tried to avoid reading Frame's texts as pure resistance to be overcome or as the intermediate terrain to be left behind en route to the purer meaning which is "signposted but never mentioned." Scented Gardens has been an exemplary text because the bottomlessness of its secret paradoxically makes it a text without secrecy. In Scented Gardens

> [t]here is something to be said which one cannot say: it's not necessarily scandalous, it may be quite banal--a lacuna, a void, an area that shrinks from the light because its nature is the impossibility of being brought to light, a secret without secrecy whose broken seal is muteness itself. (Maurice Blanchot, qtd. in Derrida, Ear of the Other 73)

Erlene's muteness is, so to speak, muteness all the way down--and if there is no possibility of "openness" then its binary opposite, "secrecy," can hold no force. What remains is a lacuna which is categorically unrecoverable--not a secret but a fundamental lack. What's the secret? There ain't no secret, that's the secret.

"Reading the wound," as Hartman advises, occurs when the hermeneutic analyst/critic comes to own his or her own loss: the fact that it is not only impossible, but also ethically undesirable, to designate the "terrible point of loss" which seems to generate writing for many of Frame's novels and characters.[58] Criticism must not take as its only goal the location, excision, and suturing of the presumed "cause" of Frame's disturbing writings; such criticism falls, like the metaphorical snow upon Daphne's shaved head, "criss cross criss cross to darn the believed crevice of [Frame's] world" (ODC 205). In part, my reaction against hermeneutic critics such as Panny, Evans, and (I would argue) Abraham and Torok stems from an issue of rhetoric: there is some degree of hubris in claiming to have found the

---

[58] The phrase "terrible point of loss" occurs in Living in the Maniototo:

> No one told him [the would-be writer] that his want should fill the world,
> that to write you have to be at the terrible point of loss,
> and stay there, wanting to write, wanting in, not out. (72)

generating secret of a text. The larger issue at stake concerns these critics' commitment to presence, exercised through the endeavour of exorcising the trace, "that which prevents everything's being given at once" in the domain of meaning (Copjec 54). That said, I do not want to shy away from the overwhelming force of loss and trauma in Intensive Care, The Adaptable Man, and Daughter Buffalo, though my analysis will address these factors at an inter-generational and societal level rather than as a function of individual pathology. In Intensive Care, World War One is presented as an unresolved trauma setting off a series of compulsive repetitions in each successive generation--a loss which is manifest everywhere in the novel as an open secret.

Recovery

Men in a war
if they've lost a limb
still feel that limb
as they did
before

He lay on a cot
he was drenched in a sweat
he was mute and staring
and feeling the thing
he had not.
(Suzanne Vega, "Men In A War")

Early reviews of Intensive Care bring to my mind the image of a cluster of laboratory biologists prodding at an unfamiliar life form. Reviewers describe the text as "unshapely" (Reid 258), "incoherent" (Corbett 566), "dense, dreary, incoherent" (Vince 119), "sprawling and invertebrate" (Moynahan 4), and perhaps even too disjointed to be "organic" at all (Davis 8). The novel's composition is not rigid or muscular but dispersed and slack, like jelly or ectoplasm. Lacking a central spinal column, the novel compromises its message: "[s]omewhere along the way the meaning and force of whatever Miss Frame is trying to say gets [sic] lost" (Easton 29).

And yet Intensive Care is highly cohesive, claustrophobically so, through its relentless repetitions at multiple levels of the text and the fictional world represented in it. At the level of the word there is the string of phonic equivalences based on the phonemes /k/, /l/, and /n/: Culin Hall, Colin Torrance, Colin Monk, culling, killing, clean, clear, "the kitchen, Culin, kiln, the furnace" (65). In character representation, the novel's fascinating women--Ciss Everest, Peggy Warren, Lorna Kimberley, Milly Galbraith--share the same uncanny deep violet eyes. Each character in the novel's male lineage--Tom Livingstone, Leonard Livingstone, Henry Torrance, Colin Torrance, Colin Monk--is wrapped up in a shroud of

dream. Waves of violence mount from one generation to the next. Images recur of autumnal decay, blood on snow, cropped limbs, still water in deep pools.

Given that repetition is one of the fundamental "operative principles" of literary design (Brooks 123), the compositional forces of Intensive Care are highly synthesised. For me, insistent repetition makes the novel the most compelling to read in Frame's oeuvre: repetition draws me into the text, allowing "the ear, the eye, the mind to make connections, conscious or unconscious, between different textual moments, to see past and present as related and as establishing a future that will be noticeable as some variation in the pattern" (Brooks 99). Repetition makes each textual development strangely familiar, each new turn of language similar to preceding material but different from it. The result is a web-like text, each part connected to every other part, with threads of panic and terror radiating outwards from the opening words.

How can a novel be cohesive yet incoherent? If the reviews of Vince, Easton, Moynahan, Corbett, Davis, and Reid are representative, a high proportion of readers will find Intensive Care at best difficult to read and at worst "impossible to decipher" (Vince 199). Despite the novel's highly patterned network of images, tropes, alliterations, and repetitions of plot elements it is still possible for reviewers to wonder: "But what does it all add up to?" (Corbett 566), and: "[w]hat Miss Frame means by recounting all this grief and gore is obscure" (Easton 37). The repetitions in the text do not seem to serve any overarching message or objective; they have no evident "sum" meaning.

Their search for crustacean ideals of form negates the insight which these reviewers have glimpsed but dismissed, that the power of Intensive Care lies in its conflicting forces and energies; form fascinates those who "no longer [have] the force to understand force from within itself" (Derrida, Writing and Difference 4). The most appropriate metaphor for the novel is not so much that of a body, however spongy and formless, but of the mind--not the mind of Janet Clutha or even Janet Frame, conscious or unconscious, but a dynamic psychoanalytic model of the mind. This is the methodology proposed by Peter Brooks in

Reading for the Plot (1984), involving "the superimposition of the model of the functioning of the psychic apparatus on the functioning of the text" (112). In chapter one I took a similar course by reading the silent Erlene as a figure for the "traumatic kernel" which founds a symbolic system yet remains inaccessible to it. In Lacanian terms Erlene is the inexpressive manifestation of the "real" of Scented Gardens. By contrast the "mind" of Intensive Care seems more directly influenced by the Freudian theory of the psyche as a dynamic system. The novel can be read as a mass of "textual energies" which remain in constant tension with each other. In particular I will suggest that the novel cannot "add up" because its plot tendencies mirror two fundamentally irresolvable psychic dynamics. Two modes of return cut across each other throughout the novel: a reproduction and a repetition, a return "to" and a return "of" (Brooks 99), with the latter continually interrupting and displacing the former.

Consider one set of returns in Intensive Care, based on the attempt to re-establish an ideal state, to return to a previous situation perceived to be better than the present. Tom Livingstone returns to England to search for his wartime girlfriend, Ciss Everest, cherishing a timeless image of her as his youthful nurse. When he discovers that she is now a cancer-ridden old woman he kills her to obliterate any evidence contrary to his fantasy image. Tom's fantasy is paramount: it is most "real" to him, while reality itself seems dream-like. Colin Torrance returns to New Zealand from Australia to try to re-establish his sexual relationship with Lorna Kimberley; when she refuses him he shoots her, her parents, and himself dead. In part three of the novel the eugenic Human Delineation régime imposes a program to return New Zealand to its New World mission as a social laboratory, a controlled experiment in social engineering. The H.D. project desires to close grand historical cycles through a double temporal movement: both a movement forwards, retrieving humanity from its allegedly degenerate present state, and a movement backwards, in the attempted recuperation of a projected national origin.

There is another set of returns in the novel which are not cyclical so much as periodic, like red lights flashing intermittently through the novel. I have already mentioned the repetitions of phonemes and images. On a larger scale, War repeats itself over successive generations--not historically-differentiated wars but the same generic "War, any war" (3) pulsing through World War One, World War Two, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, World War Three.[59] War in turn repeats itself on the domestic "front."[60] For Tom's daughter Naomi--herself continually repeating dreams and images of her childhood--"the War had gone away from the Western Front, it was home, at home in our house on Eagle street" (26), carried in with all her father's props of the First World War, the gas mask, the first-aid kit, the boots. For Pearl, Tom's other daughter, the War inflicts itself upon the battered children that she meets through her part-time job as a social worker for the "Battered Children's Society":

> And now there was her work among the battered children, among bruises, broken limbs, burns where the flame had been applied deliberately, scars that could not be explained away by protecting, loving parents, children shocked dumb with such an air of inward defeat like members of a beaten army that they had made the move of such an army, retreating across no-man's land to a place inaccessible to the enemy--battered child after battered child and no tears came to Pearl. (101)

Unlike Tom's return trip to England to seek out his wartime dream, and unlike the evolutionary drive motivating H.D., these punctual manifestations of the War have no evident end-point or purpose: they suggest blind pulsation, an energy working <u>through</u> the characters and their social spheres, rather than intentional effort.

---

[59] Gertrude Stein: "It is funny about wars, they ought to be different but they are not" (11).

[60] See Herman's <u>Trauma and Recovery</u> (28-32 and passim) on the parallels between "domestic" violence within the home and violence perpetrated by the State, by terrorists, or by war; the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are very similar in each case and the treatment in counselling psychology, according to Herman's methods, follows the same basic principles.

"No tears came to Pearl"--the line hints at some causal relation between traumatic repetition and a failure to acknowledge and mourn the root "War" haunting the text. Pearl insists that "[h]er past, Naomi's past, [is] done with, dead, dead, dead, dead" (100), but her four-fold denial only ends up feeding the contemporary force of the past for her; the repetition "act[s] as its own advertisement" (Frame, SS 114), reinforcing the proposition that it attempts to negate. Pearl's "cover-up" of the past mirrors her father's evasions, evident in his conversation with Peggy Warren, who probes into his earlier marriage and his war-time experiences:

> "Did Eleanor [Tom's deceased wife] ask you about the War?"
> "The War's over I tell you."
> "Did she care about it, Tom, what it did to you?"
> Tom's voice was sharp. "What do you mean, what it did to me?"
> "Did she care?"
> "Of course she cared."
> "What happened between you and Eleanor to make it how it was all those years?"
> "I never told you how it was with us."
> Peggy shrugged. "You wiped her out as long ago as the First World War." (85-86)

It is because the War is too close for Tom that it has to be warded off so vehemently. Tom maintains silence about all the things he fears--the War, women, loss--but the images of war which slip into the edges of his dreams betray the continued operation of his fears and the repression of affect.[61] Unable or unwilling to remember his disturbing experiences--

---

[61] Tom is not wracked by repeated images, hallucinations, dreams, and re-enactments of war to the same extent as Naomi, who of all the characters in Intensive Care seems to suffer most from traumatic repetition: the repressed trauma of the father is visited in magnified form upon the daughter. Tom has no nightmares, though intimations of war sneak into his dreams either as far-off gunfire (47, 50), or in oblique, displaced forms (the silent sheep waiting for slaughter at the freezing works [42, 47, 50]; the "home fire" which Tom keeps burning as a furnaceman at the cement works [45]). Naomi expresses what Tom represses, "working through" violent emotional experiences by symbolizing them in language, whereas Tom literally "acts out" violence by murdering Ciss.

For discussion on the novel's hints that Tom has sexually abused Naomi see Panny, "A Hidden Dimension in Janet Frame's Fiction" (1993).

including the emotional nullity of his former marriage--Tom is "obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of . . . remembering it as something belonging to the past" (Freud, Pleasure Principle 39). The War for Tom--and for the generations which succeed him--remains "a sore that does not heal" (IC 33).

The two forms of return in Intensive Care oscillate between two modes of "recovery": recovery as the retrieval, recuperation, or reproduction of a fantasmatic ideal, and "re-covery," the denial or "cover-up" of traumatic experiences and the consequent repetition of that trauma through nightmares, compulsive behaviour, and physical violence. The former is a pleasurable form of return, based in narcissistic fantasy; the latter is disturbing, nightmarish, daemonic. But repetition stymies recovery-as-recuperation. "All dreams lead back to the nightmare garden" (5): all attempts to recover the "dream" of a fantasized wholeness founder with the return of the "nightmare," the insistence of the repressed.[62] Nor can the text--or its reader--go anywhere to escape this dynamic. "Hovering ambiguously between the idea of reproduction and that of change, forward and backward movement" (Brooks 99), both forms of return are ultimately temporally static. H.D. will forge a future which is to replicate a pure time of the past, but that future is to be exempt from seasonal cycles, human memory, and grief--a psychically dead time, a continual present. But traumatic repetition is no better, marking time with nothing other than the endless repetition of a prior event--a continual past. The turbulence between these forces of repetition never resolves itself--hence reviewers' complaints that for all the "intensity" promised in its title Intensive Care can never "add up," "amount" to anything, or achieve quiescence. The novel shuttles ceaselessly within a limited zone, an "inescapable middle" (Brooks 100). "Where are we now?" (Corbett 566).

[62] I am grateful to Peter Wilkins for explaining this dynamic succinctly: "we can't return, because something keeps returning to us."

Historical Trauma

What are the consequences of identifying the "creature" encountered in Intensive Care as a mass of conflicting energies? What do those male characters who seek a "return to" believe they have lost? How exactly does the compulsion to repeat interrupt the desire to return? How do the male fantasies of parts one and two of Intensive Care relate to the fantasy of the total social body pursued by the H.D. régime in part three? Intensive Care presents the concatenation of forces of return as an explosive mixture in the recent history of Western "civilization." Of Frame's eleven full-length novels to date, Intensive Care is one of the few to refer to historical events, mentioning or evoking a litany of twentieth-century slaughters: World War I, World War II, the Manhattan Project, the Holocaust and other eugenic programs, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the numerous twentieth-century American occupations and invasions of sovereign territories suggested by the presence of U.S. soldiers in part three of the novel--to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of women killed by their male partners in global domestic violence over the same time period. In Intensive Care "Miss Frame makes George Orwell look like Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" (Cheney 6), displaying War as the disastrous consequence of a masculine subjectivity constellated with specularity, identity, fantasy, spatiality, and the mirror world of the imaginary in which the fantasm of wholeness must prevail over every threat of castration or loss.

In chapter two of Male Subjectivity at the Margins (1992) Kaja Silverman studies ten post-World War Two American movies in the context of a phenomenon which she terms "historical trauma."[63] Bridging the individual and the social psyche, the concept of historical trauma elaborates the psychic principle underlying Intensive Care's shuttling

[63] Silverman's discussion includes William Wyler's "The Best Years of Our Lives" (1946), which resonates particularly with Intensive Care. Three US soldiers--including Homer, a double amputee--attempt to settle back into civilian life in Boone City, USA. Two characters in the movie share the same names as characters in Intensive Care, Peggy and Milly. Unlike the novel, however, the film allows for reconciliation of loss. In a moving scene Homer bares the amputated stumps of his arms to his girlfriend, who tenderly dresses him for bed. No such unveiling and "dressing" of the wound, psychic or otherwise, takes place in Intensive Care.

between the wartime Front, the domestic "Front," and the "battle" against "animal" degeneracy in the third part of the novel. Silverman writes,

> "historical trauma" may seem something of an oxymoron, since it uses an adjective connotative of the public sphere to qualify a noun conventionally associated with the psychic or physiological shock suffered by an individual person. I am, however, relying upon that phrase to describe something which exceeds our usual categories. By "historical trauma" I mean a historically precipitated but psychoanalytically specific disruption, with ramifications extending far beyond the individual psyche. To state the case more precisely, I mean any historical event, whether socially engineered or of natural occurrence, which brings a large group of male subjects into such an intimate relation with lack that they are at least for the moment unable to sustain an imaginary relation with the phallus, and so withdraw their belief from the dominant fiction. (Silverman 55)

Most importantly for my discussion of Intensive Care, Silverman emphasises the disruptive force of historical trauma, which can "interrupt or even deconstitute what a society assumes to be its master narratives" (55). The paradigmatic syndrome of historical trauma is traumatic neurosis, marked by recurring dreams that "have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright" (Freud, Pleasure Principle 30). In clarifying the sometimes convoluted and conflicted logic of Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Silverman rightly concludes that traumatic repetition remains "beyond the pleasure principle": it provides no "yield of pleasure" and disallows mastery or "binding" of the painful memory or event on the part of the subject.[64]

---

[64] See Silverman 56-62. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920) Freud notes his own unwillingness to be "shaken in [his] belief" that dreams perform a pleasurable, wish-fulfilling function (31), despite the apparently contrary evidence of traumatic neuroses such as those suffered by World War One soldiers. Silverman clarifies, and insists upon, Freud's distinction between "those neuroses which are motored by a repressed desire, and are hence obedient to the pleasure principle, and those which are produced in response to an external event which reactivates an earlier trauma" (Silverman 60). This second kind of neurosis, which is "in the final analysis synonymous with the death drive,"

The "dominant fiction" interrupted by historical trauma concerns the reservoir of normalizing "images, sounds, and narrative elaborations" (Silverman 54) "imbibed" in the development and maintenance of the human subject (3). At the level of the individual psyche, trauma undoes the protective mechanism of the ego, whose job is to maintain through fantasy (or "fiction") the subject's sense of itself as a bodily container sealed defensively against the void which founds it as a social being (Silverman 4-5). When repeated at a society-wide level, "historical trauma" unbinds the ideological function analogous to the ego, the dominant fiction, which regulates "our imaginary relation to the symbolic order" (55). Silverman particularly targets the dominant fiction of conventional masculinity, the "commensurability of penis and phallus" (15), which can undermine the potency of conventional masculinity as much as bolster it: because of its "ideological alignment with mastery," masculinity "is particularly vulnerable to the unbinding effects of the death drive" (61). Simply put, the more a guy has to live up to, the more he has to lose when he fails; the masculine is that which has something to lose, and that "something" is everything to masculine identity. In historical trauma the masculine subject feels the thing he has not: "robbed of the illusion of presence," he is "brought into a profoundly unpleasurable contact with lack" (Silverman 61).

Put most bluntly, Intensive Care is about castration--a term I have been reluctant to use because of its taint of vulgar Freudianism, spoofed by Frame in her autobiography. Frame writes of her naïveté and superiority when returning home to her family from first-year university:

> I could now say to members of my family, "That's rationalisation, that's sublimation, you're really frustrated sexually, your super-ego tells you that but your id disagrees."
>
> Mother blushed when I said the word "sexually." Dad frowned, and said nothing except, "So that's what you learn at University and Training College."

"turns upon the dissolution of the ego or moi--upon the death of that through which the subject imputes identity to itself" (61).

> I explained to my sisters the significance of their dreams, how "everything was phallic." (AB 160)

It would not be a terrible exaggeration to say that in my reading of Intensive Care everything is phallic, though castration goes beyond the "vulgar" question of morphology to become the basis of a sexist ideology. The phallus does not "look" like anything, least of all a penis; rather the phallus takes place as a function, an anxious guarantee or protection. Traditional masculinity catches itself in an impasse of its own making: a male who equates the terms maleness-masculinity-possession of penis-possession of phallus only sets himself up for his own impotence fears, from the sheer physical fact that the penis cannot live "up" to the ever-potent phallus--a double bind which leads him into a "sometimes desperate search for the other through whom the man can have his position as the possessor of the valued/desired organ confirmed" (Grosz 118). Traditional masculinity shores up its point of vulnerability by proclaiming its omnipotence all the more vociferously--hence Zizek's aphorism: "the phallus is the signifier of castration" (Sublime Object 157). Castration anxiety signals the place of the man who feels that he always has something to lose, but who nonetheless upholds the phallus as a talisman against the return of what he has already lost through the traumatic experiences of war.[65]

Masculinity for Silverman is not characterised by fantasy and specularity so much as by the denial of the mirroring function inherent to subjectivity and sexual desire. Subjectivity for all genders is inseparable from fantasy through the process of primary identification: whereas the "I" of the unconscious (the je) is "devoid both of form and of object," the formation of the ego furnishes this pure lack, this "desire for nothing," with an object, the first of which is the self's own bodily image (4). "Fantasy thus conjures forth a fictive object for a fundamentally a-objectal desire. It translates the desire for nothing into the desire for

[65] It would be tedious to enter any further into the "penis/phallus" debate here. For further reading see: Grosz 115-46; Gallop, Thinking Through the Body 133-56 and Feminism and Psychoanalysis 15-32; Irigaray, This Sex 86-105; Silverman 15-51.

something" (4). The conception of one's self as a "body container" distinguishable from other objects is the first of the subject's flights from lack.[66] Although the features of primary identification, "receptivity, specularity, and narcissism," represent "constitutive features of all subjectivity," masculinity in particular is "predicated upon their denial" (363) through its reliance upon a second set of "incorporations" in subject development: symbolic identification, achieved in the case of boys through the castration complex and the positive Oedipus complex which resolves it (7). In being acculturated into traditional masculinity boys go through a double set of cover-ups: the imaginary furnishes the little boy with a sense of the body as a container, whole in itself, while the symbolic elevates the penis to the status of a guarantee against lack. In Frame's oeuvre, the antidote to this double-whammy of denial does not arrive until the publication of her next novel, Daughter Buffalo, with its radical reconfiguring of specularity in masculinity.

The relevance of war trauma to parts one and two of Intensive Care is evident enough in depictions of physical as well as psychic "missing limbs," but the metanarrative of amputation also spills over into part three of Intensive Care, which extrapolates the Livingstone legacy of castration anxiety, fantasy, and narcissism into a futuristic dystopia. The H.D. régime casts New Zealand society as enduring a regressive state of insufficiency, suffering from a social "wound" which is to be violently cauterized through the elimination of all those labelled "defective." The mode of dream which Human Delineation pursues is that of wish fulfilment: the realization of the ideals of a total social body, a flawless language, and the full manifestation of national destiny. In this projection, the colony is to

---

[66] Silverman later explains the apparently confused temporality of her account of subject development. In the introduction to Male Subjectivity at the Margins Silverman seems to put the cart before the horse by claiming that the symbolic lack brought about through the subject's entry into language is "plugged" by an event (or more accurately a scenario) which is deemed to "take place" prior to the infant's acquisition of language. Silverman invokes Jane Gallop's proposal that the mirror stage functions within the temporality of the future perfect, "com[ing] into play retroactively, from a subsequent moment. . . . Secondary identification thus in a sense precedes primary identification" (Silverman 20-21). Fantasies layer upon fantasies: the fantasy of the bodily ego is in turn a retrospective fictionalization projected by the acculturated subject. See further Gallop, "Where to Begin?" in Reading Lacan (74-92).

outdo the coloniser by returning to the path of the "just society" from which the colonising nation has strayed. More subtly, in juxtaposing Milly's idiolect against Colin Monk's obsession with numbers, Intensive Care makes a formal argument against the evolutionary desire for a return to presence in semiotic terms. Colin Monk's private fantasy--expressive of an Enlightenment ideal--pictures mathematics as the perfect language of instrumental rationality, bearing the promise of pure denotation, universality, and the accurate expression of truths free from the corroding effects of time. Mathematics promises to be the linguistic equivalent of the "total body" of the masculine imaginary.

The eugenic project of Human Delineation is therefore gendered masculine, not because those who implement it are male, but because H.D. has a masculine relation to fantasy at a conceptual level: fantasy is what "screens off" trauma, concealing "something quite primary, something determinant in the function of repetition" (Lacan, Four Fundamental 60). As the culmination of modernity's "civilizing" drive, H.D.

> does not test, but realizes our fantasies; it does not put us in touch with Fate (the real), but protects us from it. The social subject is thus pictured as "a kind of prosthetic God," whose fantasmatic, artificial limbs substitute for the inferior, natural ones Fate bestows. (Copjec 40)[67]

H.D. fails to produce the prosthetic society, however, because the "fantasy" of mastery cannot be extricated from the "nightmare" of uncanny, compulsive repetition--a conflict foreshadowed by the first line of the novel, which announces the dream only to undermine it by repetition. I start (again) here, "in the dream in the dream"--bearing in mind Lacan's

---

[67] Copjec quotes the phrase "prosthetic God" from Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents (1930). What Freud in that text calls "Fate" Copjec rephrases as the Lacanian real. My chapter on The Adaptable Man will pick up on the technological capacities of postmodernity, which endows the subjects of modern cultures with "a fantasmatic body and fairytalelike powers": we have "telescopes, microscopes, cameras for eyes; microphones, radios, telephones for mouths; ships, trains, cars, and planes for legs; and all of these instruments-that-extend-our-grasp for arms" (Copjec 40).

designation of the unconscious as "precisely the hypothesis that one does not dream only when one sleeps" (Lacan, qtd. in Felman, What Does 91).

Tom's Dream

In chapter nine of Intensive Care Tom Livingstone falls asleep on the sofa at home in Waipori City, New Zealand, and has a dream (40-54). The dream transports him to his former employment as a boilerman at the cementworks. In the dream Tom fears that he will be laid off because the company has bought a machine to supplant his function, but on this dream-morning the manager smilingly hands him a hammer and watches approvingly while Tom smashes the machine. Tom's self-abasing wife arrives bringing the lunch she had forgotten to pack for him; irate at her negligence, he murders her by pushing her into a slurry pool of liquid cement. Tom completes an afternoon's work and walks to the bus-stop past the freezing works, where the sheep awaiting slaughter bring memories of war to his mind. Then, still in his dream, Tom remembers that his marriage to Eleanor was all a nightmare; in reality he had been married all along to a woman named Ciss Everest, and parented two beautiful daughters, May and Ciss junior, with her, and "[t]hat was how it was and how it had always been. He put his hand across his eyes and wiped away a terrible dream" (47). Tom dreams that he has woken up, but in actuality the dream continues with Tom's return home from work to spend a peaceful evening with his family. Over the breakfast table the next morning Tom and May swap dreams: Tom, "articulate as always" (49), recounts his dream of a sylvan dance, and May tells her dream of journeying from underground to seek light. The real-life Tom then wakes up on the sofa.

In this dream-world Tom is married to Ciss; he has dreams which he shares with his daughter; and he has nightmares of having fought in the war and of having married a woman called Eleanor. It is Tom's dream-nightmare which corresponds most with the details of his actual life: he did marry a woman named Eleanor, who has since died (4), and he is a World War One survivor. Tom's war-time sweetheart was the English nurse Ciss Everest who in

actuality is now dead, having been smothered by Tom in the Recovery Unit of an English hospital, Culin Hall. Tom's dream thus progressively strips away the regrets of his actual life: his marriage of attrition, his fears of redundancy, the trauma of his war-time experiences, his estrangement from his two daughters Pearl and Naomi, and his memory of an elderly, pain-cramped Ciss Everest.

Multiple levels of latency operate in the account of Tom's dream. Tom remembers nothing of the dream when he wakes up, "the corners and shadows of sleep darkly inaccessible" to him (54). Readers, however, are given the entire narrative of the dream. The contents of the dream are manifest to us, at least relative to Tom. Readers could, in turn, conjecture about further latent levels, though my interest in the dream centres on its relative coherency and the multiple embedding of the dreams within the dream within the dream. Tom's dream could be characterised more narrowly as a fantasy, according to one of the definitions that Freud suggests:[68]

> On the one hand, [fantasies] are highly organised, free from self-contradiction, have made use of every acquisition of the system Cs. [Consciousness] and would hardly be distinguished in our judgement from the formations of that system. On the other hand they are unconscious and are incapable of becoming conscious. Thus qualitatively they belong to the system Pcs. [Preconscious], but factually to the Ucs. [Unconscious]. Their origin is what decides their fate. ("The Unconscious" 190-91)

Tom's dream is "highly organised" and "free from contradiction." The dream presents a narrative of the "day-in-the-life-of" variety; the principal break in the narrative, in which Tom jolts himself out of his "terrible dream" of having married Eleanor, does not disrupt this sequence but repeoples the domestic scene which Tom, in his dream, comes home to. This dream is relatively coherent compared to the dreams of other characters in Frame's

---

[68] Laplanche and Pontalis survey the difficulties of translating and interpreting Freud's term "Phantasie" and explain the various connotations of the spellings "phantasy" and "fantasy" in English (314-18). The definition of "fantasy" which I develop follows just one line of Freud's multifarious usage.

oeuvre, such as Toby's dream in chapter twenty-two of Owls Do Cry, which presents a series of puzzling and seemingly unrelated images.[69] Tom's dream could pass as a product of the conscious domain of the psyche. Nonetheless he is not conscious but asleep when the dream takes place, suggesting that the images and desires presented in his dream are inimical to consciousness in some way.

Freud goes on to insist that although fantasies may pass as conscious, they can never pass into consciousness; ultimately, fantasies are tainted by their origin in the unconscious, which dictates that they cannot be integrated into the subject's reality. Freud employs a racist analogy to explain how fantasies can simultaneously draw on both the conscious and unconscious domains of psychic experience:

> We may compare [fantasies] with individuals of mixed race who, taken all round, resemble white men, but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other, and on that account are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges of white people. ("The Unconscious" 191)

Freud's analogy shunts unreason, deriving from the unconscious, off onto the "coloured races," who cannot be white no matter how convincing their appearance upon first glance. Similarly, Tom's dream presents itself in the external form of conscious expression, as a coherent narrative, even though the desire which the dream expresses wells up from the "dark" regions of the unconscious. This unconscious origin ensures that the desire to murder his wife and marry Ciss never comes to Tom's reflexive self-awareness. In the other scenes of the novel, he never consciously or directly articulates his hatred of Eleanor or the depth of his longing for Ciss; as for his dream, he does not remember it when he wakes up. Tom's desire must remain unconscious, not strictly because it is murderous and thus forbidden, but rather because his murderous desire is so strongly cathected.

---

[69] I single out Toby's dream because it has been analysed according to Freudian principles by Howard McNaughton in "Abjection, Melancholy, and the End Note: The Epilogue to Owls Do Cry" (1993). McNaughton's essay addresses the whole text of Owls Do Cry as dream-work.

Tom's wish-fulfilment operates in at least two different modes in his dream, making the violence of his fantasy doubly horrific. The embedded structure of the nightmare-within-the-dream enacts a two-fold murder. Tom's dream first brings Eleanor back to life, so that Tom can have the pleasure of killing her. The dream then offers Tom's psyche the further satisfaction of foreclosing Eleanor's existence altogether, shifting to a domestic scene in which Eleanor never existed at all. She is first removed, then obliterated. Tom in his dream can have his cake and eat it too, so to speak, and not suffer from the indigestion of guilt, qualms, or disturbing memories. Tom's fantasy therefore moves sequentially from one kind of wish-fulfilment--the removal of the perceived obstacles to his happiness--to a second, purer kind of wish-fulfilment in which those obstacles never existed at all. From the perspective of the second level, the first is a "terrible dream," despite the pleasure which it offers Tom's psyche, because it involves having to take action to achieve one's desire. On the purer level of fantasy, Tom experiences no desire at all in the psychoanalytic sense, for there is no disjunction between "want" and "get": what Tom in his waking state desires--to marry Ciss--has always been reality in his most embedded fantasy state. Furthermore, what Tom perceives as his "terrible dream"--everything described in his dream up till the words "Ah, he remembered"--does not provide complete satisfaction because it leaves behind traces of memory. After shoving his wife into the slurry pool and completing an afternoon's work, Tom walks by the sheep at the freezing works on his way to the bus-stop, troubled by the "nothingness in their smooth-surfaced eyes" which brings to mind "the dread, dreary silence that came after battle when the cries and the still-booming guns and crackling gunfire still sounded, yet in a separate listening world from the dull used silence" (47).

Even pleasurable violence leaves a traumatic residue to be retroactively expunged and replaced by a narrative of domestic bliss. "Ah, he remembered. That was how it was and how it had always been" (47). This fantasy is distorted from reality not because it is unrecognisable, but precisely because it presents details in excessive clarity. In his deepest fantasy--in the dream in the dream--Tom's world is free of war, whether between nation and

nation, man and machine, husband and wife, or father and daughter. Life is simple, anxiety-free, and immediately gratifying. His daughters recognise and respect him, and they "never married, as naturally they wanted most of all to be near their father" (49). The buses run according to schedule, dinner is on time, the children go to bed when told, and even the minor perplexity of a crossword puzzle presents no difficulty, for Tom in his fantasy "[solves] all the clues without a dictionary and without asking for help" (48). The fantasy-Tom has no fear, no memory, no blocks to happiness, and no psychic or physical wounds.

To speak of "dream" in the context of Intensive Care is to evoke all of the overlaying levels of dream which I have identified. The dream" in Frame's novel encompasses the physical act of having a dream while asleep, but it also describes the "dreams" or future projects which people imagine; it includes nocturnal dreams and day-dreams; it covers sweet dreams as well as nightmares, fantasies of murder as well as fantasies of perfect happiness. The dream in Intensive Care is multifarious, internally contradictory, and enticing.

Private Dreams

The capacity to be consumed by dream runs in Tom Livingstone's family. His bachelor brother, Leonard, fantasizes that he remained in Europe after the war, married a French bride, and raised a smiling family on a Mediterranean island; but Leonard becomes "separated from the dream" (67) and his fantasy turns into a sour vision of injustice and decay (65-67). Tom's daughter Naomi, dying in a Northern Hemisphere hospital,[70] fantasizes a golden childhood in which she wins out over her rivals for her father's attention: her sister Pearl is peremptorily disappeared (109), and the young Naomi then innocently

[70] The difficulty of situating Naomi stems from the fact that the "I" of her chorus-like observations does not necessarily correspond to her self; being a writer, she is entitled to seize all points of view. Naomi lies in a Recovery Unit watching squirrels (14), which places her in the Northern Hemisphere; some of her body parts have been amputated, implying cancer (54, 100). Pearl states that her sister "hasn't much longer to live" (202).

murders her mother without recrimination, for "the psychologists said that a child of ten had no moral judgment or responsibility and lived a life that was, strange to say, largely unconscious" (110). Pearl, Tom's daughter, has an altruistic desire to provide aid to the Battered Children's Society (100); her gratification consists in self-renunciation for a social cause. Pearl's husband Henry Torrance has an escapist fantasy of buying a schooner and sailing away from his middle-aged wife and the suburban trap (96 and passim). Colin Torrance, son of Henry and Pearl, first imagines and then enacts his sexual fantasy by deserting his wife May and their three children and running off to Melbourne with the nineteen-year-old office girl Lorna Kimberley.

The ongoing pun on "transformation" throughout Intensive Care locates the mythological roots of the Livingstone dreams in Ovid's Metamorphoses, particularly the story of Narcissus. In fantasy life transformations occur at will: a bullying schoolmaster turns into a chrysanthemum (68); a fat wife becomes a sleek schooner, "shining blonde" (106); a gormless office girl becomes a "droopy rosebud" in the eyes of her lover (173). The world moulds itself to the subject's will, and wishes come true the instant they are thought: "In the dream in the dream/want was get/wished-for absence was death" (94). The world must reflect the subject's desires. At best, the result for human relations is the weary solipsism suggested by Naomi's description of her marriage to Alfred Whyborn: "I thought . . . that each of us was carrying load upon load of personal treasure to the common pool, a kind of emotional acclimatization venture, but when I looked in the pool I saw nothing but my own face, and he saw his own face" (12-13). At worst, the violence of mirror-structuration plays out its logical conclusion in the physical violence of Tom Livingstone and Colin Torrance, men who murder the lovers in whom they cannot see themselves ideally desired.

Freud names the realm of "want is get" "primary narcissism," an infantile state prior to ego development, in which a baby believes in "the omnipotence of thoughts," perceiving itself to be "the centre and heart of creation" ("On Narcissism" 32, 48). The state is

characterised by megalomania: the infant's will is unrestrained, and "the laws of nature, like those of society, are to be abrogated in [the infant's] favour" (48). Despite learning to negotiate societal restrictions, the developing subject never wholly abandons primary narcissism, which emerges in watered-down or displaced forms in adult sexuality: "the human being has originally two sexual objects: himself and the woman who tends him, and thereby we postulate a primary narcissism in everyone, which may in the long run manifest itself as dominating his object-choice" (45). Freud then labels "anaclitic" the mode of loving of the masculine lover who, like Tom, falls for the woman who tends him, reserving the domination of primary narcissism in the adult male for the type of the homosexual.[71] Colin Torrance's obsession with Lorna features the self-abasement and idealization of the love-object which Freud also attaches to anaclisis (Freud 45). Casting all his desire onto Lorna, Colin endows her with power over his emotional state. His blandishments towards her become inextricable from a concern for his own self-preservation, for "a man close to the woman he loves counts her heartbeats because his own life depends on them" (IC 44). After a brief bask in the flattery of Colin's attention, Lorna then rejects him to return to her parents, as if his intense longing had scarcely touched her at all (173-74).

Tom and Colin, through differing psychological routes, both pursue women whom they idealize to the extent that the image they project becomes reality for them. For these two characters, fantasy functions as the "support that gives consistency to [their] lives," the "frame of coordinates" enabling them to live their lives as "meaningful" (Zizek, Looking Awry 154). Fantasy becomes the prop of reality and even supplants it, just as the fantasy-doll Ciss Everest takes on the fullness of flesh for Tom as a young soldier while his wife, Eleanor, condenses into a mere image, itself "dissolved many months ago by the chemical action of spilled blood" (3). Similarly, Colin Torrance's capacity for dream has visceral effect, even prior to meeting Lorna Kimberley. When he wakes up from a dream, the

[71] See chapter four, below, for discussion of Freud's ambivalence concerning the status of homosexual desire and the ultimate impossibility of maintaining a distinction between the "narcissistic" and the "anaclitic" lover.

circumstances of the dream seep into his waking life: "the people in his dream had density, lightness, and with a thrust of feeling could leave dents or red marks on his skin where their love or hate touched him; those who died [in his dream] were shatteringly dead and could not be pieced together on his waking" (168). Like the omnipotent child of Naomi's fantasy, Tom and Colin seem to experience an inner world which is, "strange to say, largely unconscious" (110).

Because such entrenched fantasies do not "stand against" reality but rather infiltrate it, actuality cannot provide a check or correction to the dream. Indeed, if the real situation differs from the fantasy narrative, it is reality, and not the fantasy, which must be violently altered to achieve a fit. With Lorna, Colin Torrance first constructs an elaborate scenario of youthful, impetuous "Billboard Love,"[72] and then reifies this fantasy as existing independently of his desire. Lorna's decisions and actions are anomalous and unreal to Colin to the extent that they do not match the dream. The inherent violence of this "consoling play of recognitions" (Foucault, "Nietzsche" 153) is realized when the "mirror" speaks refusal, as Lorna turns Colin Torrance away, or when it does not reflect truly, as the elderly Ciss Everest does not match the picture of the nurse who tended Tom as a young soldier.

Mirror structuration develops out of fear of loss on the part of the masculine subject in fantasy and produces only further fear for the feminine objects of his desire, with an extreme asymmetry in the kinds of fear motivating each party: men such as Tom fear something abstract, such as loss, humiliation, or the resurfacing of traumatic memories; women such as Lorna fear for their lives.[73] To understand why it is that Tom and Colin kill the women they

---

[72] "Billboard Love" is the title of a song by the American vocal trio Uncle Bonsai.

[73] In her article "The Men's Movement of Choice" (1992) Kathleen Carlin discusses the practical value of encouraging men to understand how they ground their sense of control in women's compliance with their wants and interests. Carlin works with physically violent men, and bases her group therapy on the necessity for men to hear women's point of view, for "in telling our own stories, women stop functioning as mirrors of men's centrality" (123). She notes that the men in her groups "experience this act as life-threatening; they are driven back upon themselves. The ground on which they stand and have their being is shaken" (123).

adore, we need to attend in further detail to the dialectic of fear and desire which grips both men.

Tom's story opens with an idyllic scene of tenderness, but right from the start something is awry; the fairy-stories, the mythologies are mixed up. At the opening of chapter two Tom as a recuperating soldier wakes in the sun:

> He was lying outside on a rug on the grass where they had carried him, and the English nurse, Ciss Everest, sat beside him holding a blue and gold flower-printed sunshade over him. He looked up at her dark hair knotted like a black-shining button at the nape of her neck, and her deep violet-colored eyes, and all afternoon he lay watching her move among the wounded. She was not conventionally pretty. . . . Her mouth was big. When she opened it he had a pleasantly dreamy sensation of being swallowed into softness. He wanted to kiss her. (2)

Tom is less a masculine Pygmalion caressing his dream-statue into flesh than a feminine Galatea waking to see her lover's face blotting out the sun; less an Oberon than a Titania, falling in love with "the first person he had seen on waking from his drugged sleep" (IC 4). It is when Tom wakes up in a physiological sense that he begins to dream in the sense of entering fantasy. Most importantly, this opening scene figures the lack of control which Tom has over his fantasy: he is caught between constructing a memory of Ciss as he would like her to be, and the necessity to his fantasmatic subjectivity that this "image" should recognise him. Yet the elements which make the romance topos of the soldier and the nurse endearing--the soldier's helplessness, his pleasure in being attended to--flip easily into an aggressive claim for attention and resentment at the nurse's power to deny it.[74] The primary narcissism based on omnipotence, in which Tom's ego encounters the immediate

[74] In "Female Sexuality" (1931) Freud refers to both actual and fantasied "seduction" of infants by caregivers in the bourgeois family (379, 386). See further Jane Gallop, Feminism and Psychoanalysis 144-46; Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather (New York: Routledge, 1995) 84-90. On soldiers' fantasies of the chaste nurse see Klaus Theweleit's chilling Male Fantasies, volume one (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987); for a more amicable variation with an inter-racial twist see John Ruka Broughton's play Nga Puke (Wellington: Aoraki, 1992).

gratification of his desire in his surroundings, quickly warps into a maddening reliance upon the woman who reflects his desire, Ciss Everest, "the only person who understood" (3). Violence then becomes an act of assertion, a re-assumption of control and independence against the smothering ministrations of the nurse.

Forty-seven years elapse between Tom's departure from England after the war, and his return there following Eleanor's death. During the period of separation from Ciss, Tom had "tried to preserve it all so painstakingly" (22): he had set the memory of Ciss beyond time and change as a buffer against the pain of loss. With the image of Ciss intact he lived out his marriage in New Zealand believing he was merely deferring the moment of final recovery, return, and reunion with the object of his passion:

> He had thought of her for so many years with love and longing. He'd made her his shrine where his praise and his blame could be set, and time had so sanctioned for him the certainty of her perpetually remaining a shadow that her reappearance had the effect of toppling the pillars of love surrounding her and exposing their foundations of fear and hate and youthful uncertainty. (18)

When Ciss Everest, dying of cancer in the Recovery Unit, no longer recognises Tom, his desire flips into anger, for his fantasy-prop threatens to be removed:

> Rage came over him that a woman who had spread so wide in his world, for so many years that she had sucked up his life as the sun sucks up the sea and all the streams and rivers, should be lying so near him and yet make no sign to him. (18)

In anger, not pity, he smothers her as, in his mind, she has engulfed him. Ciss' memory had been the prop of his existence, both in the sense that his fantasized memory of her had sustained his reality without her, and in the sense of his expectation that she would remember him. As Naomi acutely comments in one of her letters to her dead father, "because Ciss Everest did not recognize you and thus denied your existence you killed her

to escape annihilation" (55). He returns to New Zealand with a sense that something has been set straight: "whatever it was, agent or fact, it succeeded in smoothing the tracing paper, putting dream and reality edge to edge, the two in harmony" (32). By murdering the aged Ciss, Tom makes the world consistent with his desire: reality is relegated to the state of tracing paper aligned to the deeper "real" of Tom's desire.

The Narcissus intertext becomes explicit in the story of Colin Torrance. Some time after Lorna has left him, Colin dozes in the park beside a slow-moving stream. He dreams of the death of his wife and children and of Lorna's willing return to him, and in his dream

> He bent to kiss her [Lorna], looking deep into her still-open eyes and a cloud of confusion came over him and he felt the blood draining from his face. He became aware that he was leaning over the water, staring at the floating willow leaves. His flesh felt as if it were coated with ice. (191)

In Colin's mind he is not Narcissus, searching for his own reflection in Lorna, but an inert body "being sucked into her presence as if he were a plant leaning over a treacherous pool" (168-69). By this self-rationalization Colin disowns his solicitations and protestations of love by displacing agency onto Lorna, whom he imagines as a seductress with the power to remove Colin's last "small square of reality" (169). He both invades her territory and feels invaded by her, "out of his mind," no longer his proper self, fearing that "if he did not take some action he might shrink and disappear, Lorna had such power to annihilate him" (174). Colin takes violent action to reassert control over his own body as well as Lorna's.

Colin is the archetype of Freud's "anaclitic," masculine lover, who lowers his own self-esteem by casting forth excessive object-libido. Such a man loves too much and unwisely, invariably choosing a woman who will hold herself aloof ("On Narcissism" 45-46). Freud omits, or at least downplays, the humiliation and aggression bound up with such love when it is not requited. Colin has exposed his desire and hardened it into an all-or-nothing absolute. His emotional and psychological reliance upon Lorna's regard points out the

delusion of his "awareness of Lorna's lack and his own plenitude" (172), a perception which preserves his self-propriety by recoding her deliberate rejection of him as a foolish misunderstanding of the degree to which her being is incomplete without his presence. This self-justificatory psychological process flips his need for her into her need for him. His own longing to be intact is externalized in the image of the seagull who attracts Colin's "concentration of hostility" as he returns, alone, from Melbourne to New Zealand:

> It flew farther away and then sank down a funnel of the wind to skim and splash over the surface of the water and ride there, full-breasted, dipping and rising in the little hollows of the waves as if within the wilder ocean it had discovered its own personal tide and thus was able to secure itself against seas and men. A rush of fury made Colin want to strike it from its fortunate nest, to scatter it into the wilder buffeting seas. That would teach it, he thought. That would teach it there's no immunity. (178)

A creature of the air, the seagull is empowered by its body, not enmeshed in it. It flies at will, and skims the water but is not engulfed by it.

Colin Torrance differs from Tom Livingstone in the extent of his self-consciousness. Knowing that he is born into a family of dreamers, Colin is wary of his own will, fearful that his reason will be swept into the stream of genetic inheritance. He has heard of his grandfather's "impossible wartime romance" (170), but, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, Colin's fear of repeating his grandfather's infatuation induces the very behaviour that he tries to ward off. He barricades his reason against the insistences of passion and desire; he futilely tells himself that "nothing is truly possessed that has life or the promise of life" (195).

> He tried to reason. He cared for reason. He was a calculating man, he could add and subtract, divide and multipy columns of figures and get the correct solution and know it was correct. He had a wife and family. . . . [Y]et even as he tried to persuade himself that this was so he knew it not to be: love (and hate) transformed

> all, including the lover, to the realm of the extraordinary. Now he might just as well have been any of the men in history who suffered from the obsessions of loving. He had no voice to speak of it but they spoke for him, their speaking searched his most private thought and desire. (176-77)

Colin Torrance falsely sets reason against passion, never imagining that faith in reason might be an unreasonable loyalty, or that the acknowledgement of unreason will best allay its distractions.

Colin's violence emerges precisely from his absolute belief in the might of reason over passion: he must annihilate Lorna because, in his mind, she is the irritation that sets his reason askew. Yet to do so is also to remove his pool of self-recognition; to kill her he must kill himself. He does so, first in fantasy, and then in actuality. By an exquisite irony he receives the recognition which he desired in life only after his death: the police call in his next-of-kin to identify the body and "[t]hey [Pearl and Henry] identified Colin. May identified him. Warm in triple identification he lay dead but alive, named in memory" (203).

Public Dreams

In part three Narcissus governs an entire society. The agents of Human Delineation promise the New Zealand public an eternal state of happiness, to be achieved by obliterating the "animals" who do not reflect back the perceived fullness of those who claim human status. Colin Monk writes:

> I believed in happiness as an expansion of being, not in the prolonged painful contraction that had been man's condition of heart as he suffered and was suffered by the exiles, the outcasts, the pitifully deformed, diseased, inefficient; the idiot pools that gave back no reflection to the searching sky. (231)

The "idiot pools" are to the perpetrators of Human Delineation what Ciss and Lorna were to Tom and Colin: an other who refuses recognition to the self. To the mindset of H.D. the animal must be absolutely alien, incapable of becoming human, and yet at the same time it embodies what man risks becoming through the loss, dilution, or contamination of his sovereign reason. It is similarity, and not difference, that H.D. wards off.[75]

As a conceptual system Human Delineation draws arbitrary lines across the continuum of beings; it cuts patterns out of the whole cloth of phenomena in the world. It does so according to a basic strategy of eugenicist movements, by creating two or more different species where previously one was assumed. Ernst Haeckel, the founder of the Monist League, explains the principle: "[t]he morphological differences between two generally recognized species--for example, sheep and goats--are much less important than those . . . between a Hottentot and a man of the Teutonic race" (qtd. in Lerner 25). According to Haeckel, it would be rational to categorize Hottentots and Teutons as separate species; the fact that sheep and goats differ not only in species but also in the broader category of genus only intensifies Haeckel's point. His statement carries the further implication that it would be even more unnatural for a Hottentot to breed with a Teuton than it would be for a sheep to breed with a goat. By analogous logic the Human Delineation policy judges a mental defective to have more in common with an animal than with a full human subject in the measure of intellectual capacity. Where one species was formerly assumed (Homo sapiens), two are now found (human-animals and humans proper). Implicit in this vertical ranking of species is a belief that evolution is progressive and that the perfection of the species Homo

[75] See Susan Schwartz's analysis of the Doctor's refusal to recognise the sanity of the madwoman, discussed in the introduction to this thesis. The Doctor turns away his gaze to avoid a confrontation with the madwoman's humanity, which would threaten his self-perceived wholeness. While the madwoman's humanity consists in her desire to be fully human, the "idiot pool" infuriates because it does not seem to have its own desire--it does not seem to desire the gaze of the one who looks. The Animal/Human dynamic thus reverses that of the Madwoman/Doctor: the idiot pool ends up becoming the Other in whom those who claim humanity seek confirmation.

sapiens is its end-point or purpose.[76] Yet at the same time, under Human Delineation, the status of "human" becomes an achievement or an endowment rather than a natural category or a given.[77]

The deformed, the diseased, the inefficient threaten the purity of reason by their hybrid nature. Human Delineation insists upon an absolute binary between human and animal, rational and irrational; yet those labelled "animal" are dangerous precisely because they insist on acting like humans. Just as the racist mindset excludes people of mixed race because of their origin, despite their broad resemblance to white men, the defective seems to pass as human, but ultimately betrays his or her fatal flaw, the crack of unreason. The knife cuts both ways: if a defective can pass as human, how can humans be entirely sure that they have no streak of animal in them? The identification and excision of the animal within becomes of utmost importance to the "invited guests" in the New World of Human Delineation.

***

I have referred to the "perpetrators" and "agents" of Human Delineation without yet naming them, precisely because the attribution of blame is no simple matter. The century-long chronological sweep of the novel brings historical and structural forces into play, for generations have prepared the way for H.D.--not only generations of dreamers like the Livingstones, but also the generations who built an agricultural economy in New Zealand based on the slaughter of animals and the mass deforestation of the land. Human Delineation will bring "the blossoming of an economy based on primary products, where

---

[76] A question addressed to "Quirks and Quarks," the CBC popular science radio program, exemplifies this teleological and anthropocentric thinking. The caller asked, "why haven't apes evolved into humans?"; the answer included the point that both species, apes and human, are fully "evolved" according to the particular demands of their differing environments.

[77] While the allied nations united in condemning the racist National Socialist program to eliminate Jews from Europe, many of them were quietly implementing devastating eugenic projects of their own. For a history of eugenics in Canada in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, see Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990). For an account of eugenics in New Zealand, see P. J. Fleming's MA thesis, "Eugenics in New Zealand" (Massey University, 1981).

primary meant human animal" (214), and people will be pruned and felled in a natural extension of the "pioneering spirit of long ago" (220). A place has already been carved out for Human Delineation by existing economic and conceptual structures, for the life of any given generation is not "contained only within its span," but also bears "responsibilities towards yesterday and tomorrow" (168).

Colin Monk first learns of the proposed Act when the government calls him from Waipori City to the capital, Wellington, in the sleepy haze of the summer holidays. There he is introduced to the concept of Human Delineation, sworn to secrecy, and induced to undergo a series of brainwashing "Sleep Periods." Colin writes that in the days prior to the Sleep Periods, he and the other scientists chosen to implement Human Delineation "walked as in dreams where every movement is an effort; pursued, we could not escape; our clothes, lead-lined, wound like shrouds about our bodies, tightening their web and weight" (215). The first Sleep Period, which was "deep, dreamless, and lasted, we were told, for three days," dispels that waking nightmare: "I remember waking refreshed, secure, happy. I sang a jingle, 'Happy and Free with H.D.,' as I showered" (215). This brainwashing follows a similar logic to Tom's dream, described at the outset of this chapter. Once Tom's desires begin to be fulfilled in his dream he believes himself to be waking up progressively. When the cement factory manager hands Tom a hammer to smash the new machine, Tom "blink[s] his eyes, close[s] them, and open[s] them again" to ensure that he is is not dreaming (43); later in his dream Tom believes that he has woken up and that the new machine and his wife Eleanor were only "a terrible dream" (47). Tom is most firmly embedded in his dream--most firmly enmeshed in the real of his desire--when he no longer believes that he is dreaming. By the same principle, I would suggest that Colin Monk is most firmly embedded in the dream of totality when he no longer believes that he is dreaming, that is, when he wakes up from the Sleep Period which dispels the sense of waking dream he experiences prior to it. Colin Monk realises the desires of Human Delineation while dreaming in a figurative sense: the Sleep Periods deactivate Colin's ethical and compassionate instincts so

that, like a sleepwalker, he becomes an agent for the ideological work of Human Delineation.

The Prime Minister sells Human Delineation to the populace by invoking one of New Zealand's founding dreams, its long-standing self-representation as a social laboratory, proclaiming, "[l]et it never be said that New Zealand does not lead the world in social legislation" (250). New Zealand must uphold and renew its colonial heritage, in the tradition of the nineteenth-century British settlers who dreamed of building an ideally rational society, a "better Britain of the South."[78] New Zealand was not to be a version of Britain so much as the recovery of Britain, the realization of what Britain ought to have been. Upon the perfection of the "New World" ushered in by Human Delineation (221, 264), the colonial process will reverse and the remainder of the world will "convert to H.D. after the New Zealand experiment ha[s] been studied and the methods improved and refined" (219). The colonial cycle will complete itself, with the deadly essence of British colonialism preserved and nurtured in New Zealand like a hothouse flower, to be returned in full bloom to a devastated Europe.

Human Delineation thus presents itself as the apocalyptic closing of a historical cycle, "building a new world out of the ashes of the old" (264). Deciding Day will parallel the Day

---

[78] Lawrence Jones' "Versions of the Dream: Literature and the Search for Identity" (1989) surveys the theme of the "dream" of social justice in New Zealand literature in English, from Sarah Raven's poem about the early Canterbury settlers, their "utopian visions dreaming" of a Just City where they would live "as brothers all" and of a Pastoral Paradise where they would "feed [their] woolly flocks in peace" (1856), to Kerewin Holmes's dream of a New Zealand where "the land is clothed in beauty and the people sing" in Keri Hulme's the bone people (1984) (187). In New Zealand literature and cultural criticism, see further: C.K. Stead Smith's Dream (1970), and Bill Pearson's classic manifesto of the malcontent, "Fretful Sleepers: A Sketch of New Zealand Behaviour and Its Implications for the Artist" (1952). In "The Provincial Dilemma, 3: New Zealand as Vietnam" Patrick Evans notes that Bill Pearson, like his literary predecessor John Mulgan, "insisted that 'The New Zealand Dream' was itself a corrupting force, a source of social upheaval and conflict" (10).

On the myth of the "scientific colonization" of New Zealand and its eugenic imperatives see Sinclair 314. Sinclair discusses E. G. Wakefield's design to replicate an idealised rural British class structure in New Zealand without transplanting the industrialism, poverty, and unemployment of the homeland (57-61, 91-100).

of Judgment, when the unworthy will be forcibly ejected and a Heaven of rationality and uniformity will envelop the earth,[79] and Human Delineation will end the fallen state of subjection to time, memory, mortality, and the vicissitudes of natural human reproduction. The "broken circle that lets the difference flood in" (27) will be cemented back in place in the return of history to the same after a long diversion through difference. The government public relations campaign situates Human Delineation within the plan of an immense historical progression aligned with natural processes, as Hugh Craig, one of Colin Monk's colleagues, enthuses: "[t]he formation and melting of ice, the shifting of a mountain, the youth and senility of a volcano; and now the separation of Man from Animal" (332). The paradox that human intervention should be necessary to bring about a supposed inevitability is raised by Colin's counter, "I never heard of an Act which decreed that ice should melt and mountains move" (333).

"The Future" occupies a shifting, ambiguous space in H.D. rhetoric: the Future is implacable, necessary, and inevitable, yet its birth needs to be induced through the implementation of H.D. Through a displaced theology, instrumental rationality acquires the status of Necessity formerly attributed to God; the elevation of efficiency and convenience as absolute good things abdicates agency to technology, and the Future itself becomes a belief system, alluring and terrifying, hurtling towards individuals and catching them in numb panic, like rabbits in the headlights of a truck. Milly refuses this accelerated temporality in her curt exchange with the blandly malevolent Reverend Polly, who is consoling Milly over the felling of the Livingstone pear-tree:

---

[79] Mark Williams' chapter on Frame's fiction in Leaving the Highway, entitled "Janet Frame's Suburban Gothic" (30-56), includes a fascinating acount of the influence of the Christadelphian faith of Frame's mother (31-34). Frame's habit of using language to discover "the wonder and terror that lie within the actual," rather than in some transcendent realm beyond the body, is typical of the Christadelphian sense of the spiritual within the commonplace (32); Christadelphian doctrines of "mortalism, apocalypse, election, resurrection, [and] literalism" also appear regularly in Frame's oeuvre (32).

> "Such is life," the minister said to me when the tree was cut down and silly old yaws truly was grieving. "The reed cut down in the wind. The blossom perished. Such is man."
>
> "It's a tree not a reed," I said.
>
> "Metterfaw, Milly." (317-18)

Milly rejects, not only the centuries-long time frame by which a tree could be likened to a reed, but also Reverend Polly's rhetoric, through the morphemic spoonerism "metterfaw" (producing "fetter" and "maw" when the first letters of each morpheme are reversed). Milly's time is not the accelerated, suprahuman temporality of H.D.'s "political cosmology" (Fabian 152) but rather "time pinned human" (ODC 11)--a homogeneous, chronological time without revolution or apotheosis--a time which does not subordinate actuality to a transcendent future.

The circularity of H.D.'s reproduction of an idealised past-in-future shows its affinity with the hermeneutic drive introduced in chapter one of this thesis. H.D.'s push forward to the past (or back to the future) to reinstate New Zealand's original mission of social purity ends up being only another repetition of a metanarrative of recovery which Jean-Luc Nancy terms "myth" itself:

> Comprised within the very idea of myth is what one might call the entire hallucination, or the entire imposture, of the self-consciousness of a modern world that has exhausted itself in the fabulous representation of its own power. Concentrated within the idea of myth is perhaps the entire pretension on the part of the West to appropriate its own origin, or to take away its secret, so that it can at last identify itself, absolutely, around its own pronouncement and its own birth. The idea of myth alone perhaps presents the very Idea of the West, with its perpetual representation of the compulsion to return to its own sources in order to re-engender itself from them as the very destiny of humanity. (46)

Where the hermeneutic literary critic strives, at least ostensibly, to pronounce the secret of another--the "secret" of Frame's life, say, or her creativity, or one of her works--the West

directs this hermeneutic energy onto its own "secret," its own self-difference, seen in Intensive Care in the alien form of the animal within the human.

Enlightenment dreams of control, autonomy, universality, and unmediated self-replication form the cultural matrix generating H.D. But like the Livingstone dreamers, the proponents of the Enlightenment in Intensive Care cannot control the fantasy: their vision of returning to the closed wall of Eden warps into a "nightmare garden" (5 and passim) rank with fear, suspicion, and putrefaction. But how exactly does the nightmare come to infest the fantasy? How do the colliding forces of return--the reproductive "return to" and the repetitive "return of"--manifest themselves in the H.D. project? The next step is to focus on one particular problematic of part three, a problematic of communication systems: the rivalry between mathematics and natural language. The fantasy of a society free from pain will be transposed into the fantasy of mathematics as "the language that assures a perfect communication free of noise" (Serres xxiii), a language analogous to H.D. as well as instrumental to it. Mathematics presents itself as the alpha and omega of communication systems, the origin and the end-point of linguistic "evolution," but it will falter under the insistence of what is material, unassimilable, and uncanny in Milly and her writing.

Descartes' Dream

Philip J. Davis and Reuben Hersh open their account of mathematics and modernity, entitled Descartes' Dream (1986), with this anecdote:

> The modern world, our world of triumphant rationalism, began on November 10, 1619, with a revelation and a nightmare. On that day, in a room in the small Bavarian village of Ulm, René Descartes . . . had a vision. It was not a vision of God, or of the Mother of God, or of celestial chariots, or of the New Jerusalem. It was a vision of the unification of all science. (3)

Descartes, so the story goes, then dreamed three dreams, the third of which "pointed to no less than the unification and the illumination of the whole of science, even the whole of knowledge, by one and the same method: the method of reason" (Davis and Hersh 3-4). However apocryphal, Descartes' dream allegorizes the fantasy-structure which lies at the basis of modernity's "triumphant rationalism" and plays itself out in the algebraic dreams and nightmares of Colin Monk.

By name and occupation, if not genetic descent, Colin Monk continues the line of the Livingstone clan. He shares the same first name as Colin Torrance, and, as a mathematician, follows a literary lineage of characters whose occupations are progressively "cleaner": Tom Livingstone is a boilerman, Henry Torrance a bank clerk, and Colin Torrance an accountant. Tom imagines his grandson Colin Torrance's occupation as

> Such a clean occupation. No mess to wipe away after working with figures; no leaping and threatening and changing mood and color and temperature like a flame in a furnace; no need to confine figures in a cage and wear an eyeshield to examine them; oh no they stayed where they were put. No mess at all. No sickness in numbers--broken legs, lungs legs [sic], wombs removed. Oh no, now there was something to clean up. And ah! The world was getting cleaner and cleaner, and everyone wanted it that way. Who wanted blood and hair on the weapon after the murder? (32-33)

Colin Torrance himself is proud of numbers, "the cool calm calculators that never spilled blood or accumulated pieces of flesh and skin" (178). Colin Monk soliloquizes his desire for cleanliness with the vaudevillian explicitness of a stage villain:

> Working with numbers, I have a feeling of cleanness, and when my children recite the moon story, the distances, angles, temperatures, I despair that words will ever catch up again. How I admire the immunity of numbers, their untouchability, their inaccessibility; every moment they shine, newly bathed, concealing, never acknowledging the dark work they do. (217)

Given Colin Monk's reference to the category of the "loyal" mathematician (IC 213) the question arises: loyal to what credo? How might the protocols, methodologies, and semiotics of mathematics be implicated in the fantasy of totality? What other modes of knowledge might be squeezed out in the ongoing mathematization of the world since Descartes' time? And how does dream weave its way into this most logical and abstract of human achievements?

How we know has a history and a politics, yet this basic post-structuralist point has filtered only slowly into theories of mathematical reasoning. Brian Rotman explains in Ad Infinitum (1993) that mathematics has presented itself as a transparent mode of knowledge whose goal is to discover or recover ontological truths; this Platonic model has guided the practice of mathematics in Western cultures. Platonic mathematics rests upon a truth-based epistemology which surmises smooth transitions between ontology, reference, sense, and epistemology. In other words, a mathematician reasoning within this model assumes that his or her objects of study pre-exist the practice of doing mathematics, that they can be discerned and identified, that their properties can be described, and that these descriptions can be tested for their accuracy and truth-value (Rotman 18-21 and passim).[80] Platonic mathematics is founded on abstraction, by which "[m]athematical objects . . . seem to exist in an external, objective reality" (Richard Preston, qtd. in Pickover 250).[81] Numbers seem

---

[80] As a statistician charged with "a statistical study of the wounded, the dead, and the survivors" following "the devastation of the North Island" (213), Colin Monk takes human bodies as his objects of abstraction. His mathematical specialty is quintessential to the "actuarial" founding of the modern state (Copjec 173): with the rise of democracy and individuation the population began to be subdivided and counted. Copjec adds,

> The statistical accounting of citizens resulted in their normalization by assigning to each citizen a value that was merely the translation of its relation to the others. The modern social bond is, then, differential rather than affective; it is based not on some oceanic feeling of charity or resemblance but on a system of formal differences. (173-74)

[81] The quotation, from a 1992 article in The New Yorker, continues:

> Numbers seem to exist apart from time or the world. Numbers might exist even if the universe did not. Pi may even exist apart from God, in the opinion of some mathematicians, for while there is reason to doubt the existence of God, by their way of thinking there is no good reason to doubt the existence of the circle.

omnipotent in their ideality, their permanence over the transient objects of the phenomenal world. The "apprehension of the abstract form" demands an equally idealised form of communication free of "cacography":

> If the mathematician becomes impatient, it is because he thinks inside a society that has triumphed over noise so well and for such a long time that he is amazed when the problem is raised anew. . . . The subject of abstract mathematics is the "we" of an ideal republic which is the city of communication maximally purged of noise. (Serres 68)

Milly's punning, "inefficient" language therefore endangers the "ideal republic" of H.D. as much as her autism.

By contrast, a discursive or constructivist theory folds mathematics back into the cognitive domains which it claims to exclude as illogical: aesthetics, rhetoric, ideology, discourse, invention, fantasy. From this perspective mathematics creates or produces its objects of study rather than "finding" them as in the Platonic model. To perceive mathematics as a discourse is to investigate the kinds of mental operations it enables and the kinds which it fails to recognise. It is to study mathematics as a "human institution" as Davis and Hersh envisage, echoing Vico, to evaluate the collusion of the method of mathematical abstraction with the murderous fantasy of wholeness grounding Human Delineation, and to expose the permutations of desire in reason.

What does it mean to state that mathematics is a form of language? To phrase the issue in semiotic terms, mathematics consists of a limited number of unmotivated signs which signify relationally. More precisely, mathematics draws upon two semiotic systems, both the formal code of numerical, functional, and algebraic signifiers, and the code of natural language, consisting of words and sentences. Rotman describes these two different modes as "the Code" of formal, "rigorous" mathematics, and the "metaCode" of informal mathematics, the "imprecise domains of heuristics, motivation, examples, intuition, and the

like" (Rotman 73). The Code consists of imperatives ("multiply items in w") and is devoid of indexical expressions such as deictics or tensed verbs, indicating spatial or temporal points relative to the subject (Rotman 70). In other words, the syntax of the Code offers no means of situating the subject in his or her context. Even the pronouns "his" and "her" are misleading, for they imply an embodied and gendered subject, whereas the Code presents the subject as existing outside of "the time or place, the cultural, social, or historical moment, the physical circumstances or psychological reality in which such signifying takes place" (73).

Rotman's analysis of mathematical language identifies three semiotic agents activated by the process of "doing mathematics," parallel to the three semiotic subjects of natural language proposed by C. S. Peirce. Rotman uses the term "Person" to describe the speaker of informal mathematics, a subject who "has full immersion in history and in the cultural subjectivity coded by the 'I' of natural language that permeates the metaCode" (Rotman 74). The reader or writer of formal mathematical texts is the "Subject" in Rotman's terminology, but this semiotic entity does not have "subjectivity" in the sense of self-awareness or self-reflexivity, for the Code which the Subject manipulates contains no "I" by which the Subject may describe itself (other than the limited case of inclusive imperatives such as "let us consider, prove, define x"). The Subject has elements of both corporeality and abstraction: it has consciousness and comprehends mathematical signifiers as meaningful (unlike a computer), yet it also functions as an idealization of the Person. While the Person exists in time and is thus fallible, the Subject is assumed to be "free of error, misreadings, boredom, fatigue, memory loss, and misperception, insofar as these affect the reading/writing and manipulation of Code determined signs" (102). A third semiotic entity, the Agent, performs the exclusive imperatives given by the Subject ("count the elements of M," "reverse all arrows in D," "integrate f," "add p and q"). The Agent is completely disembodied, being an automaton, such as a computer, which iterates signifiers mechanically; in contrast to the physical and cognitive limits of the Person, and the cognitive limits of the Subject, the

Agent's operations are "unrelated to energy needs or spatio-temporal location or the effects of noise" (93). The Agent can perform operations which, compared to human capacities, are impossibly long, or which involve the processing of an impossible amount of information.[82]

According to Rotman, a series of truncations, a "principle of amnesia," governs the transition from Person to Subject to Agent: "[b]aldly, the move from Person to Subject is organized around the forgetting of indexicality, and the move from Subject to Agent around the forgetting of sense and meaning" (91). In Intensive Care the cognitive limitations of the Subject are evident in the pun on counting and accounting running through the novel. Following the war in the North Island Colin Monk's job was to make a statistical study of the dead and wounded, but his entrance into the semiotic position of mathematical Subject in this task precluded the narrativization and self-interrogation available to the Person--and to the survivors:

> Even a loyal mathematician may confess that the quickened senses of the survivors could perform calculations with a computer's accuracy, writing into the solutions a complex tally that no computer had been programmed to make; and equations that would make a mathematician weep, unable to solve them: thousands of faceless wounded, equal rivers of tears plus deserts of tearless anguish. (213-14)

---

[82] In an analogy which is suggestive for my own argument about the inextricability of fantasy and reason in Colin Monk's mathematical desire, Rotman likens the relationship of the three semiotic agents to the tripartite structure of dreaming. Not only is the project of "pure" mathematics a dream, but the act of formal reasoning in itself is dream-like:

> The hierarchy of semiotic agencies here, from imagined Agent to imagining Subject to indexically conscious Person structuring a thought experiment is isomorphic to that on which any dream rests: the Agent maps onto the figure dreamed about, the Subject the dreamer dreaming the dream, and the Person the dreamer awake, consciously interpreting and recognizing the dream. (78)

Despite introducing the factor of dream (and hence the unconscious), Rotman expressly avoids a psychoanalytic account of the repression of the body in Platonic mathematics, on two grounds. First, he finds Freudian analysis limited in that it deals with the dynamics of an individual psyche rather than a cultural practice. Second, Ad Infinitum focuses on the concept of infinity, philosophically associated with the realm of God. To contest the unity of the individual subject in a disembodied mathematics therefore misses the point, which attaches more pertinently to the "death of the deity who can [count endlessly]: a question of Nietzsche, then, rather than Freud" (Rotman 193n50).

Colin Monk could count the dead, but he could not account for them; he was bound up within the processes of formalist thinking which can ask how and how many but not why and who (see Davis and Hersh 287). The Human Delineation project endeavours to shunt human memory into the mechanical "memory" of the Deciding Day computer, which is no memory at all because it is without affect; Colin Monk's effort to remember, through his narration in part three, works towards stealing this amnesiac memory back and returning it to flesh.

Rotman's semiotic account of Platonic mathematics helps us to see why Colin Monk, at least at the outset of the Human Delineation plan, believes numbers to be immune and inaccessible: formal mathematics represents itself as untouched by the contaminations of time and place introduced by the supposedly less adequate signifying capacities of the metaCode and natural language. Promising a flawless Subject and a ghostly Agent able endlessly to iterate signifiers, Platonic mathematics offers escape from physicality. It offers a subject position consonant with the narcissistic fantasy driving Human Delineation, a fantasy which would smooth out the carbon paper between ideality and reality to make the social body conform to the orderly world of Numbers. Colin Monk enfolds himself within the formal purity of a numerical system as if to shelter from the vicissitudes of human mortality and imperfection. Like his forbears in fantasy, he partakes of the lightness in numbers:

> Henry [Torrance] and Colin [Torrance] moved like snake-thin deadly shadows in and out of doors, up and down streets, up and down neat columns of figures, balancing budgets, canceling feelings and accounts; shadows thin, they almost became transparent with the world showing through them as if they were moving pictures of ghosts . . . . (98)

Mathematical reasoning requires each step of a proof to be both necessary and sufficient: while the solution may have a remainder the process itself is without remainder, a clean procedure, with no matter out of place--truly the separation of Man from Animal corporeality.

***

So far, I have restricted my discussion of the semiotics of Colin Monk's mathematics to a synchronic perspective, theorizing the glimpse of immortality which Platonic mathematics offers to its practitioners. I have not yet considered Colin Monk's paean to numbers in the historical context of Human Delineation, which represents itself as an exemplary moment in the evolutionary perfection of all human institutions, including that of language. According to the believers the redundancy of natural language is already well under way: Colin Monk "despair[s] that words will ever catch up again" with numbers (217), and Colin Torrance "had a strange idea that words were 'over,' 'done with,' just as a day or century is over, that numbers were the language" (178). Within this eschatology of mathematical semiotics, words are a maladapted species destined to fall away before the pre-eminence of the mathematical Code, as if words were somehow a transitional phase through which numbers must advance.

The Apocalypse of Numbers

> In the New Jerusalem, people speak FORTRAN or BASIC.
> (Davis and Hersh 15)

We know from Tom Livingstone's dream and from Colin Monk's induction into Human Delineation that one can wake up from a dream only to enter fantasy. When Descartes woke up from his three dreams of the unification of science, he embarked upon a fantasy of universality centered on the adaptability of analytical reasoning to all branches of science; mathematics would be the linchpin, the common element. Such a methodology called for the development of a dependable and accurate language, a formal and artificial sign system

free from the polysemy of natural languages, with all their diversity. Many seventeenth-century thinkers took up the challenge, most notably Leibniz, whose numerical characteristica universalis was to produce "a universal method whereby all human problems, whether of science, law, or politics, could be worked out rationally, systematically, by logical computation" (Davis and Hersh 7).[83] Like a computer programming language, the universal characteristic would operate on the atomistic principle of denotation, by which a single signifier invariably attaches to a single signified, irrespective of context. Ambiguity would become extinct, as would the problem of translation between natural languages.

The universal characteristic was to be a truly democratic language, easy to learn because its structure would replicate the natural order of things: "its characters [would be] well related according to the order and the connection of things" (Leibniz, qtd. in Hagège 78). The universal characteristic would be more "natural" than the natural languages. Even a peasant could reason in this ideal language, because complex ideas would be broken down into their constitutive, generative elements:

> the most complex ideas could be as easily expressed as the largest numbers, because an order would have been established among all possible human thought similar to that prevailing naturally among numbers, and the whole language could be learnt in a few days. (Cohen 52)[84]

The artificial language would serve as "an instrument of discovery and demonstration" (Cohen 50), so perfect in its representation of the objects of investigation that human error would be all but erased.

---

[83] For a concise overview of seventeenth-century attempts to contrive the universal characteristic see Jonathan Cohen, "On the Project of a Universal Character" (1954). The project "became a commonplace from Descartes's time onwards" (52). The assumed connection between literal meaning and the investigation of truth conditions continues in the twentieth century in the endeavour of logical positivism.

[84] In his later speculations Leibniz imagined the universal characteristic as a mathematical system by which the most essential concepts would take on the values of prime numbers, which could then be "multiplied" into complex concepts.

For the philosophers and scientists of early modernity universality was to be the alpha and omega of the evolution of language, returning humanity to a pre-Babel state of mutual comprehensibility. An interim period of linguistic imprecision and confusion--which always seems to be the present time--is a regrettable necessity. Mathematics was conceived to be the originary language, being universal in the literal sense of being proper to the universe. To perfect the mathematical description of physical relations was to make God's book increasingly legible, as Galileo in his tract The Assayer explains:

> [p]hilosophy is written in this grand book--the universe, which stands continually open before our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and to read the alphabet in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics. (qtd. in Rotman 14)

By striving to decipher the hand of God, the discipline of mathematics seeks to reproduce His mind. The secular Enlightenment merely displaced theology to the extent that it maintained the perception that "the world is mathematical" (Davis and Hersh 233) and thus attributed the absolute self-sufficiency of God to mathematics: "what runs the world is mathematics. What is mathematics? What runs the world" (233).[85] Colin Monk's elevation of mathematics in Intensive Care therefore carries with it "all the alluvia of its history" in modernity (Derrida, Writing and Difference 82), so that--to continue the metaphor--we find in Frame's novel flakes from a vast conceptual lode.

Writing systems can be viewed as technologies--as labour-saving devices which advance civilization by enlarging both personal and cultural memory and thus "free[ing] attention and consciousness" for the work of reason (Derrida, Of Grammatology 286).[86] Human

---

[85] Davis and Hersh's Descartes' Dream includes a chapter entitled "Platonic Mathematics Meets Platonic Philosophy of Religion: An Ethical Metaphor" (231-39), from which this quotation and the one previous to it is taken. The chapter tests out the degree of commensurability between the conception of numbers in Platonic mathematics and the attributes of God as set out by the Jewish Platonist philosopher Philo.

[86] In an article entitled "Writing: The Invention and the Dream," included in a contemporary collection of essays about the alphabet and the brain, Claude Hagège demonstrates the continuing

Delineation is promoted as "the greatest convenience of modern times . . . a labor-saving device more to be praised, more wonderful than all the housekeepng inventions of peace and war: the vacuum cleaners and the bombs" (IC 338). If New Zealand under Human Delineation is to become "the Comfort Station of Civilization" (222), linguistic waste is to go down the toilet, so to speak, together with the pitifully deformed, the diseased, and the inefficient. The ideal language must be clean--no mess, no matter out of place. It must maximize abstraction and minimize reliance upon matter. To understand why alphabetic words don't cut it as a linguistic mode for the Human Delineation project we can turn to another Enlightenment thinker, J.-J. Rousseau.

In the progression of language mapped by Rousseau in his Essay on the Origin of Languages, the alphabet is the most advanced writing system to date, the most recent to emerge in a historical development from speech through pictograms and ideograms. The development of the alphabet follows a structural logic aligning mankind ever more closely with the objects of pure reason: "In proportion as . . . enlightenment spreads, the character of language changes; it becomes more precise and less passionate; it substitutes ideas for sentiments; it no longer speaks to the heart but to the reason" (249). But a word does not produce unmediated access to the concept which it signifies; instead--at least as experienced in a phonocentric culture--it deviates through speech. Written words require "hearing," to the extent that they are presumed to represent--or, more accurately, analyse--speech.[87] By contrast, "mathematical signs do not code, record, or transcribe anything extramathematical: mathematical items evoke and mean what they mean, what they are to signify, directly and

---

force of an idealist conception of writing by expressing the belief that "whatever the virtues of spoken language, it is through writing that humanity is best able to express an age-old dream: the dream of a release from nature, from the material tissue, from one's own constraining existence." (79)

[87] The alphabet differs from other writing systems in this capacity: "[i]n effect, alphabetical writing seems to present speech, and at the same time to erase itself before speech" (Derrida, Positions 25). Nonetheless "there is no purely phonetic writing, and . . . phonologism is less a consequence of the practice of the alphabet in a given culture than a certain ethical or axiological experience of this practice" (25).

not as intermediates for something else" (Rotman 25). In other words, at the terminal point of an idealist linguistic teleology language speaks neither to the heart nor to the reason, but rather does not speak at all. A formal language based on mathematics would thus usher in "the pure death of speech" (Derrida, Of Grammatology 304).

For Derrida the formalization of writing in mathematical notation bears ambivalent value. Because algebraic signs are both unmotivated and nonphonological they have special possibilities in the conception of a non-phonocentric writing system, for "it is enough to look in order to calculate" (Of Grammatology 304). On the other hand, mathematic notation remains deeply embedded in the Enlightenment project of "unequivocal translatability" (Derrida, Positions 20), both in the sense of the universal comprehensibility of a privileged sign system and in the sense of a mimetic match between this language and the physical operations of the world. The mathematical code is metaphysical not because it is supposed to "erase itself before the plenitude of living speech" (25), but because it endeavours to erase itself before the concept, the signified, itself. In its efforts to achieve universality and pure denotation, an idealized formal language such as mathematical notation reduces the "signifying expense" to "almost nothing" (Of Grammatology 285): the mathematical Code economically encapsulates physical relations in a formula and tidily requires that every step in an equation be necessary and sufficient. Rousseau's apparently linear progression from voice to analytical written language turns out to be a circular movement from one form of presence--the maximal effacement of written language before the living voice--to another--the maximal effacement of written language before the ideal world of concepts. The tracing paper between human knowledge and the way the world "is" would be smoothed out via the common denominator of mathematically describable relations.

Splitting the Alphabet

Human Delineation presents itself as the realisation of the dream of totality, the bringing to life of an ideal model of linguistic and civic rationality. There is a snag in this fantasy,

however: Colin Monk's expertise in addition and subtraction, synthesis and analysis, situates him at the crux of the paradox that wholeness must be achieved by splitting. H.D. plans to construct the social "body" through abstraction and analysis, followed by the elimination of the parts deemed discordant. The process of introducing Human Delineation was divided into phases (IC 214), and for several years prior to the legislation, government agents had been busy zoning the land, numbering the population, and coding human and animal characteristics (216). Human Delineation abstracts from the wholeness of an individual's history or personality a limited number of categorised qualities. From the perspective of totality, the solution to a sum, a subtraction, or a division must always be one, but to achieve the final "solution" of unity requires the dissolution of what is sentimentally perceived as the commonality of humanity, or the fullness and diversity of a person's experience.

Although I have implied that Milly's spelling stands against the idealized Code of Platonic mathematics, in fact Colin's preferred language and Milly's abnormal spelling both show an interest in formalism and splitting. Colin cannot discount Milly as his pure opposite. He has something in common with her, despite her Animal status, so that he is susceptible to the cutting force of her "diamond-shaped views" (333). To elaborate upon this point I will develop a familiar theme in Frame criticism, the protest of art and poetry against the juggernaut of instrumental reason, but I cannot cast the scene as a manichean clash between aesthetics and science, or the imaginary of "that" world versus the normalizing reality of "this" world; the one cuts into the other.

A metalinguistic commentary on the function of Milly's puns occurs in part two of the novel. Leonard Livingstone, Tom's brother, has been diagnosed with lung cancer and sent home from the hospital to die. As Leonard walks through the trees to his cottage the narration comments:

> Sycamore trees, pine trees, the big Livingstone pear tree might remain through centuries uncircled by human language. Unvoweled, unconsonanted, unexclaimed, a man must soon die. Even the alphabetical atom may be subdued by the hydrogen

> atom, unless those who work with language, unless people who speak, learn also to split and solve the alphabet. (166)

This passage offers a set of instructions for reading the "nuclear" politics of Milly's semiotic play. The hubris of contemporary physics lies in its effrontery of splitting the unit whose very name means "indivisible." Milly's "special spelling" (243) enacts a counter-enormity by splitting the word and making it ambiguous, no longer isolable as an atom of pure denotation. Human existence is somehow bound up with the expressiveness of natural language, or at least with the alphabet, for "unvoweled, unconsonanted, unexclaimed, a man must soon die." Frame seems at her most humanistic here, upholding poetry ("splitting and solving the alphabet") as the lifeblood or soul of a "man." But it is not a humanistic or signified-driven poetic practice which the passage espouses; rather, the commentary insists on the materiality of words, the arrangement of letters on the page. That which is most "animal" in natural language from the perspective of a progressivist and idealist semiotics, the "material tissue," becomes the guarantor of "humanity."

The figure of the alphabetical atom therefore asserts a politics of form: it announces an aesthetic project which homeopathically sets stylistic practices--the splitting of the alphabet--against modernity, characterised by a rationalizing drive and, finally, by the possibility of nuclear conflagration. To split and solve the alphabet by recombining its elements in unconventional ways requires input of energy beyond mere working with language or speaking, and in turn creates a living energy which opposes, as fire against fire, the deadly energy of radiation.[88] The literary critic is challenged to produce this energy by working

[88] The word "solve" includes among its dictionary meanings the sense "dissolve"; the homonymic prefix "dis-" can act both to negate and intensify the meaning of the word to which it is attached. To "solve" can mean to "break down into constituent units," but it can also imply the opposite manoeuver, that is, the integration of joining together of constituent parts, as in the idiom "to solve a puzzle or mystery": it is through first defining and then piecing together the elements of a mystery that it can be "solved," that is, made to disappear. According to this latter interpretation of "solve" the phrase "to split and solve" would parallel the two means of generating nuclear energy, fission and fusion.

hard both with and against Frame's language, by splitting sentences and words off and bombarding them with linguistic and rhetorical analysis.

Whether punning language actually charges up the readers of Intensive Care in any impassioned way is another question. To some readers Milly's special spellings come across as cutesy and gimmicky, and a number of reviewers bristled at them: at best they found the punning "unconvincing," at worst "baby-talk [which] in itself is of little interest," "laborious," "gratingly cute," "more ingenious than profound," and "merely sentimental and grossly repetitive."[89] Despite her recent deification in New Zealand letters Frame isn't beyond reproach, and it's fair to ask whether Milly's alphabetic fission might not produce more heat than light. As Derrida mentions in an interview, one ought not "take dross for gold every time that an emergence, rupture, break, mutation, etc. is allegedly delineated" (Positions 51). Puns in particular have a burden of proof against them, for they have a reputation of being a low form of wit, sometimes explicated and described by scatological analogies.[90]

Keeping in mind the possibility that Frame's artistic alchemy might have failed her, I want to take a close look at just one example: the word "democracy." My choice of this word is strategic; it is not simply one pun among many, but rather is foregrounded by

---

[89] The epithet "unconvincing" is quoted from Evans, Janet Frame 184; "baby-talk" from Ian Reid; "laborious" from A. B. Wood (qtd. in Mercer, Janet Frame 167); "gratingly cute" from Easton; "more ingenious than profound" from Davis. The full quotation quotation from Moynahan is as follows:

> [Milly's] report is couched in spelling reminiscent of "Daisy Ashford" and reminds me of those revolting "Uncle Eph" advertisements for Raymond's department store in Boston that were the plague of my youth; but its contents are merely sentimental and grossly repetitive. (4)

Apart from noting that Frame should not be held responsible for whatever perverse and unpredictable childhood memories might be occasioned by her novel, I would highlight the importance of "grossness" and "repetition" to my own discussion of Intensive Care.

[90] The subtitle of the anthology of essays edited by Jonathan Culler, On Puns: The Foundation of Letters (1988) alludes to Jonathan Swift's spurious derivation of "pun" from the Latin word "Fundum, a bottom" (qtd. in Culler 1). Avital Ronnell capitalizes on scatological possibilities in her essay on the Rat Man, included in the same volume ("Le Sujet Suppositaire: Freud and Rat Man," 115-39).

repetition and irony, by its high degree of connotativeness, and by its relevance to political concerns, both fictional and historical. The word "democracy" first occurs in its conventional spelling in Milly's diary: "the world has to be clean for democracy" (244); "the task of building the western world safe for democracy" (243); and in an exchange between Milly's parents, Decima and Ted:

> My father put his arm around my mother.
> "Don't worry Decima. At least we live in a democracy."
> "A democracy!" (239)

Milly later writes that "the Prime Minister kept reminding us of our duty to dim-mock-crissy" (264) and that "prime ministers and presidents often talk of freedom and demockracy" (320). The special spellings redistribute the morphemic structure of "democracy," which combines the Greek words demos, "people," and krateein, "to rule," with the derivational morpheme -y. The spelling "dim-mock-crissy," by contrast, segments the word into four morphemes, which spell out the etymologically unrelated words "dim" and "mock," and imply connections with "crassness" and "hypocrisy". Her spelling creates a homophone where none was before.

The pun yokes signifiers on the basis of phonetic similarity of signifiers, thereby producing the "semantic shock" of unexpected analogy between signifieds (Tony Tanner, qtd. in Redfern 20). Perhaps the pun on democracy means that the practice of democracy does not meet up with the ideal it upholds (the practice mocks the theory); or perhaps the principle of democracy contains an inherent hypocrisy (the concept of "democracy" mocks itself). At any rate, we know that Intensive Care was drafted in a country which, at the time, was bombing Vietnamese civilians in the name of democracy to support an undemocratic South Vietnamese government.[91] We also know that Intensive Care is set in a country

[91] In 1954 the South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem, with the support of the United States, refused to hold the general elections agreed upon at a negotiation held in Geneva. This refusal was among the events leading to the massive United States military presence in Vietnam from 1965 to

which was effectively an elective dictatorship prior to the introduction of proportional representation in 1996, with a strong tradition of party-line voting and a single legislative chamber unconstrained by an entrenched constitution.[92]

Yet it is not the political critique enacted by Milly's punning which bothers critics and readers. There is something about the form and technique of punning itself which seems indecent, cheap, indecorous; puns seem to be "affronts to taste, floutings of efficiency" (McLuhan 125). None of the reviewers who recoiled from Milly's puns objected to the extensive word-play in Intensive Care on words such as "transformation," "solution," "accounting," or "recovery" itself, polysemous words which have been "worked" sufficiently to earn the more respectable label of "motif" or even "theme." Indeed, from a certain dismissive conception of the pun Milly's spelling may even replicate the narcissism and megalomania of the Livingstone dreamers and of Human Delineation. This is the pun as nothing more substantial than

> free play, the complacent and slightly narcissistic relation to language, the exercise of virtuosity to no profit, without economy of sense or knowledge, without any necessity but that of enjoying one's mastery over one's language and the others. (Derrida, "'He that would pun'" 18)

1973. As a tangential point, the Human Delineation jingle "Happy and free with H.D." is metrically reminiscent of President Lyndon Johnson's 1964 campaign slogan, "All the way with L.B.J." On Frame's residence in the United States at the time of drafting Intensive Care see Evans, Janet Frame 14.

[92] "Democracy" has become such a multiply-coded term that it can be upheld as a banner slogan for communitarianism ("the will of the people," "the grass roots"), individualism ("one person one vote"), one-party rule (effective in New Zealand for many years), and--potentially--fascism (I have in mind not only Intensive Care but also Theodor Adorno's comment, "[i]t has frequently been remarked that should fascism become a powerful force in this country [the United States], it would parade under the banners of traditional democracy" [qtd. in Rose 69]). Frame's fiction hardly endorses majority rule, given the satire in the early novels directed against the Teresa Harlows, Aunt Normas, Pat Keenans, Dunedinites, and other great normalizers of puritan society. Intensive Care attacks democracy to the extent that it has become synonymous with an apathetic "respect for the agreed law" (IC 340).

The pun is a conflicted zone of formal practice, redundant and irrational from an idealist account of language, yet--as we will soon see--with surprising overlaps with that key term of Human Delineation, efficiency.

Milly's spelling is phonetic to the extent that it represents the peculiar intonation patterns of her own voice: she has a drawl which induces even Colin Monk to alter his spelling when he recounts his first meeting with her:

> "I'm Milly Galbraith. I'm dull-normal.
> She pronounced it doll-normill.
> . . .
> She pouted and smiled.
> "Pleased to meet you, Mister Monk. How is your wife?"
> She pronounced it--whife--blowing on the first two letters like someone blowing on soup to cool it. (224)

In this sense Milly's spelling seems more phonocentric, more self-effacing before the plenitude of her living speech, than standardized orthography. Yet in this very deviation from the norm Milly's language asserts the material presence of the written signifier through the technique of defamiliarisation: while her spelling is true to the ear it seems foreign to the eye, which catches on the unaccustomed alphabetical representation (or analysis) of sounds.

If, to follow Roland Barthes, the Doxa (or ideology) is "current opinion, meaning repeated as if nothing had happened" (122), then we have to say that something happens in the semiotic process when a word is strategically misspelt; something happens on the way to the signified, you could say. What "happens" is a loop back from written to phonic to written signifier: the mis-spelt but correctly heard signifier recalls the conventionally spelt written signifier, so that the signified (the concept of democracy) comes to attach to two signifiers. Milly creates a homophone where none was before, but it is a homophone which, in its production, changes the nature of the signified. The result is both a double vision and

a double hearing, for the special spelling comes to contaminate the word: after reading Intensive Care, do you hear "democracy" with a "k"?

Milly's foregrounded writing system does not simply erase itself before speech, yet its punning effect is dependent upon sound, and yet again you have to see her words perceptually in order to "see" cognitively. Milly's spellings noiselessly introduce noise into a communication system that relies upon the smooth transfer of meaning:

> Communications sciences and modern biologies are constructed by a common move--the translation of the world into a problem of coding, a search for a common language, in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange. (Haraway 164)

In a totalitarian or democ(k)ratic régime devoted to the clearest, most efficient use of language--the minimal deviation through the signifier to the signified--Milly's attention to the materiality of words sets off a series of declining slippages between categories: non-standard script; redundancy; impeded reading; inefficiency; error; unreason; regression; "nature, the material tissue, one's own constraining existence"; animal. Milly's language may be inconvenient but, as Peggy Kamuf has written, the criterion of convenience should always be interrogated by the question, "convenience for whom?" (xvii).

Yet my conclusion that Human Delineation abhors homonymic language because of its inefficiency, its resistance to coding, takes into account only half the story. From another point of view puns are too efficient, combining two or more signifieds in one signifier. A pun, too, can be a "labour-saving device" which "conserves energy, space and time" (Redfern 26); the pun is machine-like in its capacity to "relate elements with the least motivation" through the "artificial memory" of the "mechanical repetition of the signifier" (Ulmer 170, 181):

> the letters/phonemes of the word itself . . . are set free to generate conceptual material mechanically (without the intention or presence of the subject) by gathering into a discourse terms possessing these letters (often using the pun or homophone). (Ulmer, "Puncept" 182)

The speed at which a reader "gets" Milly's puns rivals the calculating speed of Colin Monk's beloved computer, because the pun functions by simultaneity rather than atomization and sequentiality: "unlike physics, in which two bodies may not occupy the same space, language is a material in which the same names are capable of supporting several mutually exclusive meanings simultaneously" (Ulmer 165). The pun's simultaneity constitutes the greatest epistemological challenge to Human Delineation, with its adherence to the Aristotelean principles of non-contradiction and the excluded middle.

Under a punning system a word can sound the same as another, but mean something other than is initially apparent; it can "pass" as an innocent word and yet convey a subversive meaning to those who have the "ear" to hear otherwise. As Milly suggests, a word, meaning, person, or time may be hybrid without being recognised as such:

> if you think I paint a grim picture of what will happen, then I can only say that you who are reading this are lucky not to be living in the time I write of. Do not be deceived--you may be living in it and not know, because two times can live together and the one doesn't know that the other time is living because if you're in one time whatever would make you want to think there is another there going on through the light of day and the dark of night? Is your world my world? (IC 240)

As my colleague Peter Wilkins puts it, people are like "walking puns," combining in one entity the appropriate and inappropriate meaning, the Human and the Animal. No matter which "face" is showing, the proper or the improper, there is always more than meets the eye. We know from the plot of Intensive Care that there were some surprises in classification. Milly's parents Decima and Ted were exterminated together with their daughter (335), whereas their elderly neighbour Dora Nightshade survives to become the

manager of one of the Taeri factories (255, 341). From their outward appearance no-one predicted their final classification, nor could anyone be certain that once classified Human they might not slip back into the zone of the Animal by betraying some as yet unknown weakness. The proponents of Human Delineation discover that the "two times live together," the Animal situated both spatially and temporally within the zone of the Human.

Always at risk of falling back into the Animal, of giving way to it, the Human has already been inhabited by the Animal. The Animal can be incinerated out on the Taeri Plains, but what is Animal in the Human cannot definitively be made "plain." Defectives are everywhere, to borrow a slogan pertaining to that other invisible, impossible binary, homosexuality versus heterosexuality. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick claims that such invisible or "unstable" binaries excite paranoiac repudiation all the more strongly as "sites that are peculiarly densely charged with lasting potentials for powerful manipulation" (10; see also 75), but the stronger point made by Intensive Care is that no binary is entirely "visible" in the sense that the dominant term of the binary can ever free itself from the trace of the other. The fear of becoming Animal proves that the Human has always already been "recruited": the susceptibility invalidates the binary. Like homophobia, though, Human Delineation has a genocidal logic, for the assured elimination of "defectives" would require the elimination of the "normal" people who produce them. Milly, so evidently defective under Human Delineation, brings her parents' Human status into doubt: "the animal in man could not be subdued, and had the Government kept to its original plan the so-called human race might have been exterminated" (IC 342).

"The impulse of the species toward its own eradication must not . . ., however, be underestimated" (Sedgwick 130). This is an important point for my reading of Intensive Care as a protest against the abstracted and phobic subjectivity on which modern sociality is based. The novel proposes, not a morality, but a survival-based ethical imperative: at stake is not a prim rejection of pleasure or self-centredness as such, but a call to the reader to recognise the dynamics of narcissistic fantasy--or more specifically, to recognise that the

denial of being "in" such fantasy is central to masculine subjectivity. I have suggested that the forces of totality in sexual relations, state politics, and instrumental rationality have been deadly in Western culture, not because they are infused with fantasy, but because they have disavowed their reliance upon the dream. War within the family, within the State, and between nations is compelled to repeat until the fantasy of the total social body is brought to consciousness and reconfigured.

Freud--the version of Freud that I have chosen to work with--situates fantasies in the unconscious: despite the superficial resemblance of fantasies to conscious material, their origin in the unconscious "decides their fate" of being unable to "pass" into consciousness (Freud, "The Unconscious" 191). For Freud, fantasy is what has to be warded off. For Lacan--again, one version of Lacan-- fantasy performs the warding off function: situated in the register of the imaginary, fantasy wards off the real, that which repeats. The two definitions emphasise differing localities in a psychic topography, but they are not contradictory in the context of Intensive Care. What has to be warded off from consciousness is the fact that fantasy is what wards off the real. We are back to Silverman's account of the "double-whammy" of denial characterising masculine subjectivity. But Intensive Care refuses to shut off the anxiety brought by what repeats, not only by refusing closure, but also by producing the effects of anxiety that it depicts.

Hoop Net

Since first drafting this chapter I have found Intensive Care the most insistent of Frame's novels, the one I keep returning to. This chapter has absorbed and occupied me more than the others; it is the longest, and has been the hardest to revise, the most niggling. It stands as a reference point for the next two chapters, on the failure of haunting in The Adaptable Man and on the achievement of transference in Daughter Buffalo. In both chapters I come back again to Intensive Care to refine my interpretation, adding still futher nuances and explanations. I still feel--"still," at the point of submitting my thesis--that I have not said

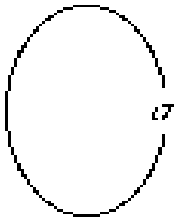
enough about the novel, an anxiety which has not struck me to the same extent with the other three chapters.

Another way of making this point is that Intensive Care keeps returning to me. It performs what it represents, catching me as critic in the hoop net of desire. Colin Monk's placenessness in the last few pages of the novel--his sense that "the present had split, like the earth beneath [him]" (339)--is also that of that reader; I recall the "where are we now?" of Corbett's review. I find myself bound up in a paradox of my own making: in describing the design of the novel as a circle which cannot close, I entrap myself between the two impossibilities of return and repetition that I have established.

Strangely, the critical neurosis which Intensive Care sets working in me stems from the novel's relative accessibility. The lure of Intensive Care is that, to my mind at least, it is more amenable to formulation than Frame's other novels. One of my committee members, responding to an earlier draft of this chapter, asked why I did not write to the points of resistance in Intensive Care. The answer is that after multiple readings of Intensive Care I do not find it as challenging, as persistently incomprehensible, as other works by Frame. It is this sense of access, not blockage, which enmeshes me in the "so close but yet so far" logic of desire. In contrast to the unorthodox narcissism of Turnlung and Talbot in Daughter Buffalo, the male characters in Intensive Care approximate caricatures, casebook studies, of Freudian psychological states. The layering of analogies also seems clear to me in Intensive Care: analogies between the narcissism of the infant in Freudian psychoanalytic theory and that of the violent masculine lover; between the desire of the lover and the more dispersed desire of a hegemonic social order; between the mathematician and the dreamer; between the poet and the physicist. I found relations of mutual reinforcement linking the search for a common language, the repudiation of the material realm, and the Enlightenment desire for mimetic correspondence between the grammar of knowledge and the grammar of the world. Keeping in mind that analogy suppresses difference by foregrounding similarity, my reading risks the symmetry and proportion, the singularity of measurement, which

founds Human Delineation itself. But the more I write about the novel, the more I suspect that I resemble Colin Monk, looking for symmetries and finding only repetition.

The logic of the "so close but yet so far" is that of Lacan's schema of the hoop net proposed in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis (144). The hoop-net has two elements, a nearly complete ellipse and a lower-case letter "a" situated neither completely inside nor completely outside the ellipse. It is impossible to tell whether the



little "a" is what needs to be removed to allow the closure of the circle, or whether it actually facilitates closure, functioning like an electrical conductor conveying current across the gap in the ellipse, or like a bung stopping off a barrel.

The schema of the hoop net suggests the multiple impossibilities confronting the dreamers in Intensive Care as well as the disoriented readers of the novel. I would align fantasy with the ellipse itself; fantasy is that which encloses. Inside the ellipse is that which must be protected: in the Lacanian vocabulary, the imaginary. Outside the ellipse stands that which threatens imaginary integrity: the real. In terms of Intensive Care, the ellipse designates the impulse toward recovery--desire as the return of one's own desire, say, or history as the recuperation of the origin, or denotation as an uninterrupted flow of meaning. For the Livingstone dreamers and their heirs the real to be expelled belongs to the realms of matter, temporality, the feminine.

But what of the in-between space? Is the little "a" a piece that has leaked out from the inside, or a piece that has leaked in from the outside, or something else? Lacan says that the little "a" flickers; it appears and disappears in the gap of the ellipse, there and not there. The little "a" is a piece of uncertainty, without a positive presence. As a signifier, the little "a both stands in for what is missing (the referent), and indicate its absence. Fantasy consists

in the belief that the "a" is what completes the ellipsis and thereby closes the field;[93] it is what the person caught within fantasy imputes to him- or herself. Fantasy takes the little "a" to be the phallus, an imaginary possession that guarantees wholeness but can always be lost. The object can therefore function as a "bung" to the imaginary, but only to the extent that it does not reveal this function to the subject in fantasy.[94] By contrast, on the side of the real the little "a" performs a persistent interruptive function. It keeps coming back. It haunts, as Milly spitefully returns to Colin Monk, not only in the form of the sweet stench that wafts through the final pages of the novel, but also in memory, renewed every time her diary is read:

> perhaps that is what people do when they die, to get their own back, they start taking up room in other people, they spread everywhere and are bolky and although they're dead and still, all the living people have to get out of their way and curl up in corners in a very cramped position with their growth strangled by what should not be there . . . (300).

From the point of view of the ego the little "a" as an interruption is also "what should not be there," but the grammatical structure of the phrase indicates the impossibility of the wish it expresses: to insist that something ought not to be there presumes that it already <u>is</u> there.

---

[93] See Copjec 175 (emphasis in original):

> <u>The modern phenomenon of statistics, of counting people, would be impossible (i.e., one could never convert a disparate array of persons within the empirical field into categories of persons) without the addition of a nonempirical object</u> (Lacan calls this the object <u>a</u>) <u>that closes the field</u>.

[94] Schwartz makes a similar point by quoting Foucault on the case of the "perfect stranger," one whose "strangeness does not reveal itself" (qtd. in Schwartz 119). The effect of the uncanny stems from the flickering effect of the little "a," which cannot be encountered as such but may nonetheless make its presence (and absence) felt. It is for this reason that Colin Monk can never meet his double, Sandy Monk, though he can be disturbed by the sense that Sandy ought to be there, or ought not to be there (see pages 140-411 below). Milly and Sandy therefore have a Calvin and Hobbes interaction: Sandy can appear to Milly only in the absence of Colin Monk, just as the comic strip character Hobbes comes alive for Calvin only when his parents are out of the room.

In the flickering of the little "a" the moment of "possession" or self-constitution for the masculine subject can equally be the moment of dispossession: the expulsion of ghosts through mathesis and other symmetrical schemes of the mind takes shape as fantastical compensation for violent alienation from the real, and the very determination to protect against ghosts makes a ghost of the subject. [95] In terms of the logic of mirrors the murder of Milly has left Colin phantom-like, wandering, unable to "find a place to be" (339). Milly was not, as expected, one of the "idiot pools" incapable of reflecting another's humanity (231), so that upon her death Colin, like a phantom, can no longer see his own reflection in the mirror of humanity that Milly had in fact held up to him. It is not only Milly but also Colin Monk who becomes one of the "concrete ghosts of mankind" in the wake of Human Delineation (Harris 95).

***

I have suggested that Intensive Care is disturbing because it skids along a series of displacements--the repetition of unresolved aggression in each generation--without arriving at transference, the repetition which ends repetition. The dynamic of the novel allows no passage beyond an incessant friction between return and repetition which is never encountered--never perceived as an obstacle--let alone worked through. The Adaptable Man steps off this chain of displacement by presenting World War Two as qualitatively different from the wars which preceded it: symptomatic of the era of remote communication,

---

[95] Intensive Care's ecological theme is a case in point: scientists and psychologists team up to produce artificial weather to "provide a variety of weather experience" (219), and so "ease the agony of the loneliness of beings separated from animals and vegetation and earth and the forces and guardians they had named Gods" (220). On the primacy of the will to convenience and avoidance of pain see Harold Fromm's essay "From Transcendence to Obsolescence: A Route Map" (1978). Fromm quotes a letter from a woman who resists his concerns about atmospheric pollutants by asking a question evidently intended to be rhetorical: "Do we destroy our economy: eliminate many necessities of life; go back to living in tents for the sake of clean air?" (37). Fromm points out that the "necessity" to which she refers "is a mental stance, a wish, that in fact is inimical to the survival of the body that would make it possible to continue to fulfill the wish" (38). "The world exists for me," Fromm's correspondent seems to say, but it is not the self-centredness of this position that needs to be critiqued so much as the constitution of this all-important "me": as a disembodied entity the transcendent "me" may bring about the obsolescence of "us" all.

World War Two changed the "face" of war precisely by introducing long-distance warfare and so changing the nature of the face-to-face encounter. It is therefore not the "same" war that repeats in The Adaptable Man, but the variation is scarcely an improvement: characters in The Adaptable Man bury the trauma of war even more deeply than do those in Intensive Care, replacing the dominant figure of Intensive Care, the neurotic, with the figure of the psychopath.

It is only in my discussion of Daughter Buffalo that I will find a conciliatory sequel to Intensive Care. The later novel realises the challenge to the "dominant fiction" glimpsed at, but finally disallowed, in Intensive Care. Daughter Buffalo allows an extended meditation on the ethical call for the masculine subject to "give over," as the idiom goes: to "give over" a cycle of repetition--break out of it or desist from it--the masculine subject must give something "over" in the sense of transferring property; he must dispossess himself. And by tendentiously reading a "happy ending" into Daughter Buffalo, with its transformation (not repetition) of affect, I will bring about an end to my own critical neurosis--the potentially interminable process of writing a thesis.

No Telephone to Heaven[96]

> We stood in a ring on the lawn holding hands while someone turned the handle [of an electrical charger], and sick and sweaty with anticipation we waited for the shock. The point was not to let go, to hang on while the tremor passed through you and on down the line.
>
> That's what I find in Janet Frame. She generates a current I part-love, part-fear. She is part of the circle.
>
> She holds our hands.
>
> And she doesn't let go. (Farrell 126)

> Reach out, reach out and touch someone.
>
> (Bell Telephone advertising slogan)

I must open this chapter with a confession: I do not feel "touched," let alone grasped or clutched, by The Adaptable Man. Compared to the claustrophobia of Scented Gardens for the Blind and the compulsiveness of Intensive Care, The Adaptable Man leaves me emotionally disengaged. Amid the enthusiasm surrounding Frame's work it seems scandalous to admit this experience; it's as if the readerly Reformation has passed me by, as if I have refused Frame's proffered hand and instead reduced her to a "remote will," as the Reverend Aisley Maude fears his God to be (26). Perhaps forgiveness for my lack of connection lies in the fact that The Adaptable Man itself concerns the failure of transmission and the absence of encounter with an other: divides of self-obsession, nationality, generation, and language splinter characters off from each other, from their environment, from the dead, and from God. How could such remoteness be possible in an age of

---

[96] I have borrowed the title of Michelle Cliff's novel No Telephone to Heaven (1987) more as a slogan than as an allusion. If anything, the squashing of ethnic difference in The Adaptable Man is a flat, bathetic counterpoint to the radical racial politics in No Telephone to Heaven. In Cliff's novel the slogan is painted on the side of a truck belonging to revolutionaries. It alludes, in a different context within the novel, to black Jamaicans' alienation from a God perceived as white: "Who God like? Not we. NO TELEPHONE TO HEAVEN" (17).

instantaneous contact through electronic transmission? And what are the risks of such contact--what unexpected violence might it bring?

To come to some understanding of why I feel a failure to "connect" with Frame's fifth novel, I want to return to the movement of haunting at work in Intensive Care, a dynamic which operates not only between characters in the novel but also between the text and myself as reader. Among hauntings in that novel is Colin Monk's inability to force Milly Galbraith from his conscience; from their first meeting she touches him with the grip that does not let go. Colin Monk describes his first encounter with Milly:

> I was annoyed. While I knew nothing of her she evidently knew of me. I could not see her more clearly. Her face was not gentle, unlined, untouched as one might imagine the face to be of a creature kept in hiding from the world. Her face startled me. It showed the wrinkles and lines of an old woman, not the birthlines, which daylight irons out, of a newborn child; these were lines of exposure, sun, weather, and people--exposure, with the deepest marks those of self-exposure. (224)

Colin Monk feels put on the spot by this "strangely invisible child-woman" (224), for his interaction with her is asymmetrical. Despite his guardedness it seems to him that his thoughts are transparent to her, while her inwardness remains opaque to him: "I was annoyed. While I knew nothing of her she evidently knew of me." Her presence is paradoxical, for she seems absolutely forthright--the deepest lines on her face are "those of self-exposure"--and yet absolutely unknowable. The poles of the paradox telescope together with the lexical ambiguity of the sentence "I could not see her more clearly": her face is apparent, in the sense that Colin can observe it closely, but even face to face with her he cannot recover the element of "beyondness" in her:

> The little spy! I realized then that my reaction to her was as to an elf who might know more secrets that [sic] one would prefer, inhabit more places than was wise for the comfort of others. (224)

Milly's prescience discomforts Colin Monk, or rather, to put it more strongly and more accurately, draws him off his ground of self-possession. Milly makes him feel foreign to himself, as if he has woken up from anaesthesia to find that a body part has been amputated; he is brought to the paradoxical awareness of something missing that he never knew was there in the first place:

> "And Sandy, home from the War?"
>
> I was pleased at last to find a point of strangeness. There was no Sandy, there has never been a Sandy, I have never heard of a Sandy, and no matter what Milly Galbraith in her fantasies was dreaming up I had to make it clear to her that there was no Sandy.
>
> My voice was protesting, almost whining.
>
> "There is no Sandy."
>
> It sounded stupidly like a cross between There is no God, There is no history, and There is no justice! (224-225)

Following his encounter with Milly, Colin Monk can't go back to his "old self" because he has been split, traversed, by his spectral twin, Sandy Monk. His three-fold denial of Sandy comes across as churlish even to himself. Colin Monk protests his singularity too much: Milly's alterity has evidently cut across him, made him a stranger to himself, with her "touch [that] is not less deep than a wound" (Nancy 98).[97]

This dynamic of being both too far from and too close to an other--another person, another time, another war--underlies the political and ethical urgency of Intensive Care and ensures its gripping effect. I felt exposed by the novel, dislocated by it, as Colin Monk is by the presence of Milly Galbraith. An early passage in The Adaptable Man promises a similar

---

[97] My wording in this sentence borrows from Jean-Luc Nancy's formulation of love as an acknowledgement of finitude:

> The other comes and cuts across me, because it immediately leaves for the other: it does not return to itself, because it leaves only in order to come again. This crossing breaks the heart: this is not necessarily bloody or tragic, it is beyond an opposition between the tragic and serenity or gaiety. The break is nothing more than a touch, but the touch is not less deep than a wound. (98)

encounter. The chapter in which it occurs tells of Botti Julio's escape from fascist Italy, his years as a refugee, and his eventual arrival in the tiny Suffolk village of Little Burgelstatham, where he plans to pick blackcurrants on the Sapleys' farm and where he is immediately murdered. "[Y]ou might think that the world would seal itself against Botti Julio," the narrator writes,

> but it's no use, there's no escape, the gash is there, the foreign invasion of people you never knew or whose language you could never speak; you'll have to lie in bed tossing and turning, obsessed with night, snow, mountains, avalanches, a surging river, the four crios, the mangy cat, and the daily pile of yellow mess on the dimly lit landings of the tenement. (20)

A far-off politics comes too close, "brought home" in the most immediate, irrefutable way, in the stinking pile on the landing; behind the putrid mess looms a scenario of power, risk, and danger. The foreignness will enter within (within the community of Little Burgelstatham, within its inhabitants, within "you" the reader) and never be assimilated to "your" understanding and recognition, pronouncing only "a language you could never speak." This gash will not heal.

Such is the early promise of the novel. And yet, as it turns out, no character in the novel is truly haunted or "gashed" by the "foreign invasion." Frame dashes this anticipation of encounter as surely as she undermines generic conventions and readers' expectations established by the pattern of her previous four novels. The disappointment of expectation is precisely the point of this witch's cauldron of a novel, brewed with "uneatables for others to observe, admire, shrink from" (3). Marked by metafictional self-consciousness, The Adaptable Man has been read as a pastiche of the English pastoral novel, "Frame's most explicit rebuttal of English culture and writing as it has commonly been understood" (R. Edmond 170; see also Mercer, Janet Frame 89-92).[98] Frame flirts with dullness--"but who

[98] In "'In Search of the Lost Tribe': Janet Frame's England" (1995), Rod Edmond explains that The Adaptable Man may be a literary joke directed against Frame's editor at W. H. Allen, Mark Goulden:

wants fun?" (AM 3, 4, 7)--introducing into the cast of characters the boring dentist Russell Maude, one of the "Great dull" "whose lives contained so little of interest to others that their death passed unnoticed, brought no protest or mourning" (204, 205). In tone the novel lurches between the emotive and the ironic, the nostalgic and the satirical, "step[ping] boldly along the fence between the sentimental and the callous" (Graham 150), an unevenness mocked from within the fictional world in Jenny Sparling's virtuoso medley of contemporary literary styles (138).[99]

The metafictional reading in which The Adaptable Man cheekily answers back to previous English novels parallels my own reading to the extent that it accommodates the text's diverse, frustrating tactics of disengagement: any critical analysis must work with the novel's lack of cohesion. Lauris Edmond suggests that Frame was "less a novelist than a sensitive and imaginative essayist" in writing The Adaptable Man, which Edmond describes as a sustained meditation "interrupted rather than actualised by the events of the plot" (11). The paradox I find is that Frame's most "essay-like" novel eludes systematization more radically than the more representational Intensive Care, which less frequently employs obtrusive narratorial commentary in its narrative structure. Working towards a reading of The Adaptable Man necessitates a more discursive, wayward path than was possible in the previous chapter, no doubt slipping on some of the red herrings scattered along the way.

> After publishing her fourth novel Scented Gardens for the Blind (1963), Goulden had set Frame up in a comfortable London flat in South Kensington to write a novel that would sell. Hence, it would seem, the pastiche; Frame is actually refusing to write the kind of novel her publisher has commissioned while seeming to do so, or rather, she is doing both at once. (170)

[99] Jenny asks her fiancé what kind of book he plans to write:

> Will your book be about us, Alwyn? You know, two students, two young people trying to "fit in" with the world, and all that corn; rebelling, arguing; every second word or phrase italicized; your mother uttering sentences like: "Don't put your books there, Alwyn. I've told you." . . . Or shall it be: "The bacon and egg is before him . . . his hungry eyes . . . he will break it, plunge his fork in it, the punctured sun, the earth reeling.". . . Or shall it be after the contemporary style, Alwyn? "Eccentric jackal, he he palinode, human--once, once he was resolute lava." Or shall it be a verse or two, just another playful verse with sinister implications? (138)

The textual elements which I want to focus on--electricity, light, touch, haunting--jostle against each other in this most internally dislocated text.

To understand the peculiar difficulties of reading The Adaptable Man--for me, at any rate--I want first to call back into service the three hermeneutic personae which I discussed in relation to Patrick Evans' criticism in chapter one. This process initially seems to be a negative one, consisting of a series of statements about what the novel is not, or what it does not do. But what I find most emotionally disengaging in The Adaptable Man, its seesawing of affect, is precisely the intellectual triumph of the text, which warns that the post-Hiroshima world is incapable of such engagement. One of the most sinister traces of World War Two is, paradoxically, the determination not to be haunted, enacted in the novel by the borderline psychopath Alwyn Maude, who was conceived during wartime. In a remarkable move the text links this post-war numbness of affect to the condition of light in modernity, asking, in part, what becomes of remembrance for the dead in an age of intense light. The novel defamiliarizes the phenomenon of electric light by returning readers to a time when it was still caught up in superstition, when some members of a community were subjected to it for the first time; the story takes place on the technological and epistemological cusp between the mechanical age and the age of electronic remoteness which is now dominant. My reading thus brings to the forefront one of the more overlooked events in the novel (indeed, one of the few events), the connection of Little Burgelstatham to the national power grid.

Finally, I will again compare two modes of language: not two ways of writing, as in Intensive Care (mathematics and punning orthography), but two ways of speaking, phrase-book language and prayer. Electricity is significant not only in its capacity to bring light and reduce distance by enabling telephone and television transmission, but also as a metaphor for a "transmission theory" of language which ultimately proves inadequate. The structuring irony of The Adaptable Man is that modernity has confused transmission with communication, substituting a bland "keeping-in-touch" in place of the dangerously sharp

edges of encounter. Both Botti Julio and Aisley Maude find that the perfection of the formal characteristics of a language--English and prayer, respectively--do not guarantee a successful exchange with their interlocutors. Both characters set up the transmission wires and send the correct signals, but find that an encounter does not follow. Botti is murdered, and Aisley's appeal for confirmation of God's presence goes unanswered--or is at best answered only ambiguously, as we shall see.

Underexposure

As mentioned already, in an early chapter of The Adaptable Man Botti Julio is killed in a dark country lane of Little Burgelstatham. In preparing to adapt to his new place of residence Botti had been learning English from a phrase-book, perfecting his "wonderful BBC English" (16). Among the more useless utterances he learns is "These photographs are underexposed, please could you intensify them." The sentence seems important, given its privileged positioning as the title of Part One of the novel and its frequent recurrence throughout the text, but to what purpose?[100]

Initially I pondered whether the sentence might be an impression point in Dilthey's sense of the term, a privileged moment in which a text instructs its reader in its own decoding, much as the metaphor of "splitting the alphabetical atom" alerts readers to the political functions of verbal play in Intensive Care. The deictic pronoun "you" would refer to the reader stumbling about in the dark lanes of Frame's text, who might find a guiding light by following the injunction to "intensify these photographs." To "develop" The Adaptable Man would be an operation parallel to the delineation of unconscious processes in the mind, as the following description of psychoanalytic interpretation suggests:

> the unconscious is not the message, not even the strange coded message one strives to read on an old parchment: it is another text written underneath and which must be

[100] The sentence recurs seven times, sometimes with the word "will" replacing "could."

> read by illuminating it from behind or with the help of a developer. (S. Leclaire, qtd. in McCaffery 67)

Perhaps The Adaptable Man is as yet "underdeveloped," as the effects of light on exposed film are not visible until after the application of a chemical process, or as a negative requires a further application of light to create the final, legible photograph. Perhaps beneath these "snapshots of country life"--to use a cliché that would gratify Unity Foreman's editor--lies an inchoate, truer picture that can only be brought to visibility by applying the right kind of reading. The trick is to know which kind of hermeneutic "lighting" to bring to the text; if the photological analogy is correct, the text's true "message" might be destroyed by the application of too much light. Sometimes, as in a darkroom, you have to dim the light to see the picture.

How would the three figures of hermeneutic criticism familiar from chapter one of this thesis--the disciple (who seeks light), and the detective and the psychoanalyst (who seek to bring hidden events of the past to light) approach this wayward novel? The disciple, to start with, will not quite know where to look to find the centre of meaning in The Adaptable Man; the "voice of truth" so routinely identified in many of Frame's other novels remains absent from her fifth novel. Although the precise significance of the interpolated parables and allusive poetry typical of Frame's first four novels remains opaque, readers have no difficulty in at least finding the place where truth ought to be, in the sybilline persons of Daphne and her "metamorphoses," as Jeanne Delbaere-Garant has labelled the set of marginalised seers comprising Daphne Withers, Istina Mavet, Thora Pattern, Vera Glace, Naomi Livingstone, Milly Galbraith, and Turnlung.[101] With the exception of Istina, these

[101] In "Daphne's Metamorphoses" Delbaere-Garant writes that Daphne, Istina, Thora, and Vera Glace are "clearly different facets of the same character" (34), "alias Janet Frame herself" (36). Delbaere-Garant curiously makes no reference to Intensive Care or Daughter Buffalo hence I have have added the names of Naomi, Milly, and Turnlung. In "Exiles of the Mind--The Fictions of Janet Frame" (1988), Vincent O'Sullivan writes that those characters who "consistently possess the treasure"--listing Daphne, Istina, Zoe, and Vera Glace--are "incapable, within the fictions they inhabit, of conveying what they know" (183).

characters are either dead by the end of the novel (Thora, Milly, Turnlung), or they are dying (Naomi), or they might as well be dead (Daphne following the brain operation, Vera in the psychiatric ward). Such characters must reveal their truth cryptically--in poetry, unorthodox spelling, madness, pain, silence--because they have died, metaphorically or literally, and thus speak the language of the crypt, incomprehensible within the rational, denotative terms of the living.

By contrast there is no evident locus of truth among the characters in The Adaptable Man. Botti fits the "Daphne" prototype in two respects--he is an outsider and a corpse--but his linguistic production is neither thematically nor formally akin to the poetic, metaphoric, and death-centered words of Daphne's metamorphoses. Rather, his pronouncements consist of banal repetitions from a phrase-book: "A brace of partridges and two rabbits. The boxers are skipping in the gymnasium to strengthen their legs. What time is it? It is foggy"--and so on (16-17). Botti's practice utterances are not "mere echoes" of ordinary language--Spivak's essay "Echo" proves the phrase "mere echo" to be an oxymoron
--but neither are readers likely to stick the words "A brace of partridges and two rabbits" up on their fridge door for aphoristic wisdom, comfort, and guidance. To put my point in technical terms, Botti's speech puzzles me in its pragmatic aspect rather than in its orthographic, syntactic, semantic, or figurative aspects. I have no difficulty construing the sense of each word and of the sentence as a whole, but I wonder about how the sentences will be useful to Botti and about the literary relevance of the sentence to the rest of the text. As I will discuss later in the chapter, the important point about Botti's speech is that he is aiming for clarity rather than obfuscation; it is BBC English, once touted as the most universal, lucid, and neutral accent of the English-speaking world, that he wants to perfect. Daphne has no evident incarnation in Frame's fifth novel.

If the literary disciple will fail to find an access point to the "inside" of The Adaptable Man, the literary detective won't have much luck either. The novel shapes

up to be another of Frame's "whodunits,"[102] with the announcement of Botti's death in chapter two: "He [Botti] never saw the black-currant farm, for in the morning he was found and taken, dead, from the pond at the end of the lane" (15). Yet the identity of the murderer is prematurely revealed, less than a quarter of the way through the novel: "Alwyn hadn't used an ax to kill the Italian. His hands had been strong enough" (66). The naming of the murderer is clearly not the central point of the novel; for the purposes of novelistic suspense, at least, Botti Julio has died in vain.

Perhaps, then, The Adaptable Man is a psychological thriller along the lines of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, a tale of guilt, confession, and expiation? The narrator promises as much with the statement that Botti takes his place as "a ghost in our story" (20), ready to haunt those who survive him as Milly haunts Colin Monk in Intensive Care. "People persist," the narrator adds later in the novel:

> Botti Julio persists. A happy Italian-born citizen of Andorra who has pleaded for the underexposed photographs to be intensified, who has spent weeks and months trying to learn English, is not going to be silenced by death. He will speak. (149)

Yet Botti does not persist, at least not in any insistent way. After his death Botti's haunting face does indeed drift into the mind's eye of his murderer, but Alwyn greets the vision without alarm:

> Alwyn had expected the face, and was prepared for it. It was not frightening, because it had appeared so often in fact and fiction. He glanced at it casually. "Botti Julio," he said calmly. I'm no Raskolnikov, he thought. . .
>
> The face receded. Its dark eyes were shining like tenpin bowls. It opened its mouth to speak. My tailor is not rich, it said. A brace of partridges and two rabbits.

---

[102] Patrick Evans writes that The Adaptable Man would be Frame's first "whodunnit" ("Adaptable Novel" 451), though in my first chapter I have written about Scented Gardens for the Blind, published one year before The Adaptable Man, as a metaphysical detective novel. In Scented Gardens the answer to the mystery does not come too soon--it never arrives at all.

> The boxers are skipping in the gymnasium to strengthen their legs. These photographs are underexposed; please will you intensify them? (113)

Botti's image is, paradoxically, a homely hallucination; the image of eyes shining like tenpin bowls is hardly ghastly, and the speech of the vision is more bathetic than oracular. So much for the moral force of literature: Alwyn's familiarity with Dostoevsky's text only prepares him all the better for the emotional and psychological consequences of murder. By sealing off his "third eye" (63), Alwyn has shut out receptiveness to the dead; he is "proud that he killed successfully" (150), that is, without remainder.[103]

The psychoanalyst encountering the text, therefore, will be met with a mind which evades the taxonomies of normal psychology. Alwyn has hallucinations, yet he does not seem psychotic; he has not foreclosed the murder so much as managed it. Foreclosure repudiates a trauma so fully that it cannot reveal itself even indirectly, as a symptom. By contrast Alwyn seems to hold off otherness not by damming it back, but by controlling it, as a penstock controls the release of water from a hydroelectric dam. Aside from a hint of unhappiness at the end of the novel (249), Alwyn remains unremittingly happy and upwardly mobile, as his name suggests: he ALways WINs. Any hesitations on Alwyn's part--he thinks at one point that "he must be going mad" (158)--are not elaborated, and the tenor of the plot confirms that "[p]eople living in the modern world have to know where they are; they can't be haunted by the dead, chiefly because if the dead did decide to haunt, their mass pressure would bring madness" (150). Alwyn disappears for Spain towards the end of the novel, without confronting his crimes; as an anonymous reviewer wrote, "one hoped [Alwyn] was set not on a course for Spain but on a collision course with himself and his family. Such a collision might have shattered the mirror Miss Frame falls back on and into with such maddening ease" ("It, With, and Without"). In the absence of any encounter

---

[103] Contrast Derrida's assertion that "a triumph retains traces of a struggle" (Gift of Death 16). In Derridean terms, the blocked or interrupted operation of the trace is one of the structural dynamics of The Adaptable Man.

following Botti's death, whether between Alwyn and his family or between Alwyn and Botti's ghost, the Italian is effectively silenced after all.[104]

If Alwyn is no Raskolnikov, he is no Oedipus either. The transgression of another primal prohibition, incest, generates only minor shockwaves of surprise and guilt for Alwyn's mother Greta, while Alwyn seems indifferent: "[a]fter murder the seducing of his mother had come easily" (151). Alwyn enters into the incestuous act with his eyes open, in the sense that he undertakes it deliberately:[105] he has not misread an oracle nor misrecognized his mother. Following the act he neither achieves insight, nor blinds himself in anguish. Incest in The Adaptable Man remains a strikingly unmythological event.

As for the wider community of Little Burgelstatham, Alwyn is entirely in touch with--representative of and expressive of--the community's fantasy of self-enclosure in its rounds of life. In effect he performs the "garbage man" function, removing the irritation of foreignness from the back alleys of the villagers' consciousness:

> An Italian farm worker had come to get a job in the district, had lost his way in the dark, and had been drowned; there had been gossip, sympathy mixed with a sense of triumph that one intrusive foreign worker speaking a strange language, even a strange English language (I am wounded, see my wounds are bleeding. My tailor is rich. These photographs are underexposed, please will you intensify them?) had been dealt with, got rid of. (227)

For the villagers, too, the murder has no remainder. Botti's sponsor, Beatrice Sapley, is only mildly annoyed at the inconvenience and embarrassment: '"The whole thing is sordid and stupid; there may have been foul play. It makes one feel responsible without knowing what one's responsible for"' (64). The villagers, having repudiated any identification with Botti, feel no impulse to memorialise him. After all, "[y]ou need to know people to mourn for

---

[104] At the end of the novel Alwyn is, however, learning Spanish by phrase-book (119). Perhaps he is about to be forced into Botti's shoes.

[105] Deliberately, though not entirely in control; see the next section below.

them. It is easier if they speak your language from the beginning and do not arrive in the dark from a foreign land" (273).[106]

This impassivity in the face (spectral or otherwise) of supposedly traumatic events is partly what I meant in claiming that no character "lie[s] in bed tossing and turning," suffering from the "gash" of the world's dispossessed and homeless. Alwyn and the Little Burgelstatham villagers may be sick--pathological in some way--but they are not febrile. The "gash" of otherness is experienced as a kind of emotional gulf, a dissociation, not as the wound of a personal encounter with the strange and alien. The Adaptable Man thus reverses the psychological dynamic of Scented Gardens for the Blind. The latter text depicts a situation which suggests some unspeakable previous trauma; the reader observes the effects but is denied access to the implied cause. The Adaptable Man reports traumatic events but omits the psychological consequences which usually flow from murder or incest: shock, guilt, anxiety, fear, outrage, denial, anger, repression.

***

What have I achieved so far in reading The Adaptable Man? To this point I have merely shown that The Adaptable Man is neither Intensive Care nor Scented Gardens, that Botti is not Milly, that Janet Frame is not a realistic novelist, and that literary characters need not fit neatly into psychotherapeutic paradigms of trauma and recovery. To summarize my comments so far, the strangeness of The Adaptable Man is that it carries no secrets; the "pictures of country life" which The Adaptable Man presents are not underexposed after all but overexposed, suffering from too much light. No secrets are held back from the reader: we know who the murderer is, we know that incest occurred. More importantly, the characters directly involved do not hold secrets back from themselves in the sense of

---

[106] Unlike Alwyn, the villagers do at least suffer a kind of retributive justice in the imminent flooding of Little Burgelstatham by the "overspill" from London. The logic is something similar to the Simpsons "Snake Killing Day" episode in which the fastidious music teacher Mr. Largo shoos away a bug only to be overwhelmed in the next instant by a crowd of panicking snakes. Otherness, many times magnified, revisits the community of Little Burgelstatham, though it turns out to be an otherness from within the nation's borders rather than from without.

repressing the memory of their deeds or explaining them away by rationalization. In the Alwyn-Greta plot thread at least, there are no hidden corners, no dark lanes.

Bearing in mind this excess of light in the novel, I want to reopen what one reviewer has dismissed as a "dated and perhaps unrewarding" aspect of Frame's novel, its "derid[ing] and deplor[ing]" of the "march of 'Progress'" in "the disintegration of beliefs and values in the modern world" (R. A. C. 4). No doubt literature and other forms of cultural production representing the perturbations of modernity--mobility, urbanization, the challenge to established religion, the emergence of communities based on noetic rather than sanguinary bonds, the decline of story and the triumph of information--were standard fare by the time The Adaptable Man was published. The deposition of Bert Whattling as the senior authority on Little Burgelstatham affairs would be a typical example of the topos to which R. A. C. refers: an "upstart television producer" (AM 223), one of the "nasty television breed" (232) arrives from London to take over Ruby Unwin's old house--"and wasn't it television that was emptying the pubs, making people so sour that you couldn't speak to them in their own homes of an evening without being told Sh, sh, sh, setting a bad example with its violence?" (223). R. A. C.'s comment would suggest that Frame's protests against modernisation in The Adaptable Man are on a par with the villagers' belated, hypocritical protests against television: "the enemy had invaded years ago, and the outcry against it was a ritual that served the purpose of most rituals by bringing comfort when its original meaning had been lost" (AM 232).

The critique of modernity in The Adaptable Man, however, is something more than a lament (however ironized) for a bygone era. More profoundly, the novel argues that the conditions of visuality under electric light bring changes at the levels of consciousness and cognition. The ambush of time which sweeps Little Burgelstatham from the Victorian mechanical age to the era of television transmission telescopes together stages of consciousness which developed over almost a century in municipal centres. Felicia

McCarren has suggested that the impact of electrification on people's sense of self is still barely appreciated or documented:

> Despite major scholarship on the history of electricity and on philosophical and scientific conceptions of electricity as the life force, to my knowledge a cultural history of electricity has yet to be written that would address the specific ways in which it has shaped subjectivity. (763n28)[107]

I want to place The Adaptable Man among the texts of that still-emergent "cultural history of electricity": in the novel electricity transforms characters' sense of temporality and spatiality and interferes with the ability to remember and hear the dead. Again, the site for understanding this point is the character of Alwyn Maude.

Overexposure

One of Freud's insights into the human mind was the archaeological structure of consciousness: an individual is infused with, and informed by past moments, whether belonging to the past of humanity itself (phylogenetic fantasies such as primal traumas) or the past of the individual. Past events and memories may not be superficially visible, but they never go away entirely; consciousness is never "safe" from the traces of the past. By contrast Alwyn's project is to hammer out the topography of his mind into one sinister force of pure conscious will, flat and crackling, as Aisley envisions his nephew to be in a dream (26). Although Alwyn is not the only "adaptable man" alluded to in the novel's title,[108] of

---

[107] In the same footnote McCarren gives an overview of scholarship to date in English but curiously omits David Nye's Electrifying America (1990), which goes some way towards answering the questions which McCarren poses.

[108] The narrator describes Alwyn as "the truly Adaptable Man, a Child of His Time" (149), "Adaptable Man" being the emergent successor to Homo sapiens. However, Aisley and Russell, the characters most resistant to modernization, are also "Adaptable Men," though in a transitive rather than intransitive sense of the verb "to adapt": Aisley "smiles to think how he has adapted the quiet rural scene to his own true time and nature--is he not, then, the truly Adaptable Man?" (77).

Frame critics disagree on the desirability of being able to adapt in the intransitive sense. Mercer argues that adherence to the evolutionary doctrine of the "survival of the fittest" isolates individuals,

all the characters he is most clearly the man of "now" and the man of light, burning with his "inner sun" (86). To live in the moment is to root out conscience and ethics through the simultaneity of thought and deed; it is to live in a state which the narrator describes as a time of light, a time when one stands "perpetually in the noon-deed of existence exposed to the precipitate dreams flying as deeds out of one's heart" (152).[109] To keep "current" is to maintain a surface free of the accretions of time, conscience, memory: "there just wasn't time to sink a shaft of guilt into one's mind and bring up on misery-creaking chains the dregs of conscience, using them to try to flood the so pretty landscape of Now" (113). As for poor Botti, he has no chance to haunt his murderer: in the smooth surface of Alwyn's mind there is no place for Botti to be encrypted, no dark place to keep his remains.

In refusing to turn away from his own corruption, Alwyn embodies a human dream of immediacy in self-knowledge, of some moment beyond ideology and traumatic forgetting. As in Intensive Care, the dream is of being fully awake. In that "new time" of direct knowledge

> [m]an would at last be free of time, his journey would take a new course in which he did not close his eyes and turn away from any part of his history, whether through fear, shame, horror, incredulity, vanity, hate, or love; beyond the imprisonment of time man would learn to stare at himself, at the truth of the strange history of his life upon the earth. (157-58)

---

preventing them from developing and effective community resistance against the death drive represented by Alwyn (Janet Frame 88, 90). In The Unstable Manifold: Janet Frame's Challenge to Determinism (1996) Karin Hansson generalizes the theme of adaptability to Frame's other novels, finding Frame to be most sympathetic to those characters who fail to adapt or refuse to do so.

[109] Paradoxically, Alwyn's movement with the psychopathic times amounts to a psychological regression, as the narrator pointedly notes. Alwyn

> knew that the incident [incest] with his mother had been less a "contemporary act" than a prompting urgency drawn from his childhood when closed eyes and sleep meant death, when absence was removal and burial in a dark, suffocating hole in the earth, when there was no differentiation between "thinking" and "doing." (152).

Incest also disrupts seriality in the progression of generations: assuming that Alwyn is the father of Greta's child, he would be both father and brother to his sibling, as his sinister riddling hints (250).

That time would be one of uniformity, in which no time or form of knowledge could be repressed or incorporated within another; it would be impossible for "two times to live together" as Milly would insist (IC 240). It would be a time beyond the necessity of redemption because there would be no darkness to wash away: unlike Raskolnikov, Alwyn need not finally convert because he is already bathed in light. And it would be a time of death, because something inherent to living, something to do with the psychological necessity of the remainder and the shadow of the unconscious, would be lost under the glaring noon-day sun.

Alwyn's demonic "enlightenment" finds its analogue, perhaps even its cause, in the new perception of things which electricity produces; electricity does not simply affect what people can see and when, but it also transforms how people see. Christoph Asendorf makes this point in Batteries of Life (1993), a study of the world's "reordering into quantitative and abstract elements" (3) in Western Europe in the decades between the mid-nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. To those experiencing the new electric visuality for the first time, electric light seemed to create a spatial immediacy by flattening perspective: "[t]o judge by contemporary descriptions, the specific quality particular to electric light was that it was everywhere present, and did not, like the gas light, illuminate only a point in the darkness. . . The light is hard and glaring, leaves no dusky corners" (161). Asendorf adds that

> [t]he electric light is stiff and uniform like homogeneous time--the flickering of a candle and the gas light's variations of intensity yield to a uniform flow of light, in which the constant light source obliterates shadows and perspective, at the same time dematerializing people and things. In electric light, unlike the differentiated light of day, or of candles or gas, things are disembodied; spatial volumes offered to the eye in a play of light and shadow are obliterated in the uniform brightness. (162; see also Schivelbusch 178)

As Asendorf begins to suggest, the kinds of temporal, spatial, and cultural homogenization which occur when Little Burgelstatham enters the national grid seem reinforced by the "uniform brightness" of electric light. The Little Burgelstatham villagers can no longer exist in a "backwater" of time when telephones bind them to the single time zone of municipal England; the Little Burgelstatham community ceases to represent itself through tall tales and local gossip when the "disintegrator integrator processes of television" (DB 32) march in. By the time Alwyn arrives to stay for the summer, "the features that made Little Burgelstatham a particular place in a particular time had been almost obliterated" (248)--a flatness to which electric light is well suited.

The new electric technology in Little Burgelstatham homogenizes time not only across a synchronic field but also diachronically: electricity not only brings the village into line with metropolitan temporality but also expunges the living memory by which past events make incursions into the present. Electric consciousness is amnesiac, militating against remembrance of the dead or witnessing on their behalf. The death of traditionalist Mrs Unwin coincides with the switching on of the "beautiful electric light" at the Baldrys' farm (184); more specifically, Mrs Unwin's son and daughter-in-law "[b]oth felt, but did not say it, that the coming of electricity to Murston Lane, in defiance of all old Mrs. Unwin's fears and threats, had somehow dealt Mrs. Unwin such a blow that she could no longer be thought of as 'away there, buried alone in Stamford,' but at last as actually 'dead, buried in Stamford'" (259). The new régime of elecricity is oriented toward disposal of the emotional detritus of the past. In the age of light there is no time for mourning, not for lack of time so much as lack of the right time, for electric light has wrenched the cycles of death and mourning out of kilter:

> You can't plow a field in thunder and lightning; you wait till the storm is over. You don't reap your harvest in winter. But what was the use of this argument? You did reap out of season now, and you sowed out of season. Why, even the hens had the lights in their houses burning day and night, like chandeliers, to deceive them into

> thinking they lived in perpetual daylight; and in the end it was no deceit at all, for it was perpetual daylight; so why shouldn't men work and play and smile and weep out of their season and time? (275)

Little Burgelstatham's callousness about Botti's death now can be seen as a function of a wider dynamic of modernity, the intensification of light being antithetical to the act of mourning. In the world of The Adaptable Man light enables one to see more, but hear less;[110] more specifically one loses the capacity to hear "otherwise," losing receptivity to otherness in the form of the foreign, the supernatural, or the dead. Despite its promise of instantaneous communication, the era of mass communications cannot make Botti's appeals for help heard, nor aid Aisley in his seeking of God.

World War Two, with its bringing of the brightest and most destructive light yet created by man, ushered in a particular régime of forgetting, a numb, emotionally distant refusal to acknowledge the dead. It is not simply that World War Two brought an unmanageable, inassimilable number of deaths, or that the mass communications developed since the 1940s bring news of mass death instantly to our living-room, although these factors come to mind in the comment that "[p]eople living in the modern world have to know where they are; they can't be haunted by the dead, chiefly because if the dead did decide to haunt, their mass pressure would bring madness" (AM 150).[111] Rather World War Two seemed permanently

---

[110] In this detail The Adaptable Man again reverses the sensory dynamic of Scented Gardens for the Blind, in which the deprivation of sight intensifies the faculty of hearing and animates material surroundings (see SG 15-30). I notice this altering of sense ratios in my own habit of taking off my glasses if I need to listen carefully.

[111] Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room (1969) comments sardonically on the mass media's habit of overlooking what is most immediate in death by their very compulsion to keep up-to-the-minute in the latest death news. The passage explains why news of Godfrey Rainbird's resurrection will not be broadcast:

> A news flash came on television: an earthquake in Central Europe, a busload of American tourists buried, volunteers digging night and day to unearth them. Two days laters Godfrey received a cable from the News Agency withdrawing their offer to print his story: its topicality had been overshadowed by more newsworthy disasters and rescues; there had been a lapse in disasters but the situation had now returned to normal, the cable said. (YF 208)

to alter not only the conditions of remembrance, but also its possibility. Again, a passage in Intensive Care helps explain the point more directly.

I suggested in the previous chapter that the failure to mourn each war in Intensive Care led to a repetition of violence in the next generation of Livingstones, the societal equivalent of a compulsion to act out the consequences of a trauma that has not yet been acknowledged and worked through. The passage in Intensive Care describing the Memorial Hall dedication in Waipori City explicitly contrasts the modes of mourning possible for World War One and World War Two. Following public resistance to the erection of yet another useless statue to commemorate yet another war, the civic authorities commission the building of a Memorial Hall. The Governor General, in his boy-scout uniform, leads the ceremony to open the hall; he quotes poems of pathos and reverence about the Great War, but concerning World War Two his

> aides had not been able to find a poem that expressed such simple faith in the work and destiny of a soldier; indeed, the verses spoke of the dead as neither heroic nor at peace, but simply dead. (74)[112]

The inert dead of World War Two cannot be elevated into martyrs; they are incapable of resurrection to any kind of wholeness, life, or purpose, and so must be suppressed:

> the fact of the bomb [was] forgotten, that it had been dropped not only on cities of the world but on large areas of human imagination and what was growing from the devastation was beginning to reveal its hiedeous [sic] deformities or, if nothing grew, the barrenness made a grim shelterless world without, and within, in that part of the mind where once man had been able to retreat and recuperate. (75)

Daughter Buffalo also critiques the media's anaesthetisation of death; see the section entitled "The Supermarket and the Gas Chamber" in my chapter on that novel.

[112] Confusingly enough, there follows a quotation, not from Second World War poetry, but from Isaac Rosenberg's 1917 poem "Dead Man's Dump."

World War Two has wrought a double forgetfulness: the forgetting of an amputation of the mind already exacted by the bomb. The ability to kill at a distance in this age of "remote near control" (IC 247) coincides with a psychic and emotional remoteness, a shutting off of any healing or transformative potential.

Ironically, it has never before been easier to "keep in touch" around the globe than in the remote age of today. Technology, which has extended the faculty of sight across space and extended the capacity to hear to almost the same proportion, is now setting about the goal of enabling long-distance touch as well. It will soon be possible to "keep in touch" across physical space not only in a metaphorical sense, but also in a literal sense through the use of virtual reality "body gloves" which stimulate the skin according to electronic signals. Taste and smell will soon be the only remaining senses which cannot operate long-distance by means of electronic transmission. Notably, sight--the sense which is both instantaneous and operative over the longest distance even without technological aids--has been the model which the other senses are to emulate in the competition for distance.

Electricity catches the contemporary subject in a play of contradictions: the rhetoric of electricity boasts its capacity to "annihilate distance as well as time" through near-instantaneous global transmission,[113] yet the remote access which electricity allows comes to infiltrate and characterize interpersonal "contact" and people's sense of spatial orientation toward their surroundings and their own bodies. The Adaptable Man does not allow a simple binary between the "face-to-face" and "the remote"; rather, the technologies of long-distance interaction have degraded touch, making it facile--as in the Bell Telephone advertising slogan quoted as an epigraph to this chapter--or dangerous.[114]

---

[113] The phrase "annihilate distance as well as time" appeared in the Bell Telephone display at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (qtd. in Essid 22).

[114] In "A Plea for the Physical" (1996) Kate Braid recommends a return, in some measure, to the kind of direct, embodied sociality she experienced while living for two years in a rural community without a telephone. She describes her sense of spatial dislocation when she first returns to using a telephone:

> When I got my first call, I found myself white-knuckled, clutching the receiver, saying over and over to the caller, "Where are you? Where are you?"

Nor does The Adaptable Man express any simple desire to return to a pre-remote time. After all, violence was hardly invented together with the capacity for remote control; one could scarcely claim that the trench fighting of World War One, in which enemy lines were sometimes within a few hundred metres of each other, was less "violent" than the long-range missiles and "star wars" projects which characterise contemporary militarism. Yet aspects of Intensive Care and The Adaptable Man suggest that something has been lost in the transition from the former to the latter. The Livingstones were murderous in their old-style killing, to be sure, but at least they were passionate, unhygienic murderers who "loved too much, like bombing" (IC 234): "[t]here were wars and wars and wars, and old men reliving them, and searching for them as they would search for long-lost lovers" (214). My understanding of this misplaced nostalgia was galvanized by a passage from The Gift of Death (1995), Derrida's elaboration of the work of Czech philosopher Jan Patocka. Discussing Patocka's interpretation of the Heraclitean polemos, Derrida writes:

> This polemos unites adversaries, it brings together those who are opposed (Heidegger often insisted on the same thing). The front, as the site upon which the First World War was waged, provides a historic figure for this polemos that brings enemies together as though they were conjoined in the extreme proximity of the face-to-face. This exceptional and troubling glorification of the front [in Patocka's work] perhaps presages another type of mourning, namely, the loss of this front during and especially after the Second World War, the disappearance of this confrontation which allowed one to identify the enemy and even and especially to identify with the enemy. (17)

The concept of the loss of the front--and hence the humanity of the enemy--may help explain why Frame decided to have Alwyn kill Botti by touch in The Adaptable Man

---

> "Here," he replied, puzzled. "I'm here, at home."
>
> Two minutes later I'd have to ask again. "But where are you?" Intellectually, of course, I knew where he was, but like a child who nods at the voice on the phone, I had physically and emotionally forgotten within two years that technology allows a voice without a body. (12)

("Alwyn hadn't used an ax to kill the Italian. His hands had been strong enough" 66). Alwyn was face-to-face with Botti, but there was no polemos, no politics, no recognition of the other's humanity even in the act of killing him. The remote age has come to inhabit not only the distant, but also the face-to-face.

***

The coming of electricity not only transformed the condition of light and thus of perception, but also extended aural capabilities through the devices of the telephone, the phonograph, the tape recorder, and the television. But just as the technological extensions of sight and touch have not extended "insight" in a spiritual sense or the ability to "be touched" in an emotional sense, so the capacity to hear sounds across time and distance need not enhance the ability to listen. Even as the wires go up to connect Little Burgelstatham to the national grid, the "wires" come down between Botti and Alwyn, and between Aisley and God. To use the terminology of electrical transmission--which was readily appropriated by semioticians earlier this century--the signals cannot successfully traverse the channel of communication (Botti's phrase-book language, Aisley's prayer) because the conditions of reception have not been met. Here too the traumatic events of World War Two have been pivotal, for the Holocaust stripped away hopes of responsiveness:

> There was no longer an other to which one could say "Thou" in the hope of being heard, of being recognized as a subject, of being answered. The historical reality of the Holocaust became, thus, a reality which extinguished philosophically the very possibility of address, the possibility of appealing, or of turning to, another. (Laub 82)

With Laub's chilling comment in mind, I want to reorient the discussion of The Adaptable Man away from the senses of sight and touch and toward that of hearing. Botti's phrase-book phrases and Aisley's prayer will be studied as linguistic corollaries of their time--the time of broken circuits in the communicational network.

"The telephone is out of order."

The relevance of Botti's pronouncements to other elements of The Adaptable Man is puzzling, to say the least. "I want a plain blue tie and a colored handkerchief to match. The telephone is out of order. I beg to inform you that my electric meter is not working. I want a lounge suit" (16). Why does Botti speak phrase-book language rather than any other kind? What, if anything, have phrase-book language and prayer to do with electricity and the connection with the national grid? Why are Botti's sentences repeated throughout the novel? Thematic significance? Attempts at humour? Is it worth paying any attention at all to this aspect of the novel, or is my pursuit of Botti's utterance symptomatic of the hermeneutic malaise of today, a "loss of the center" in the "desperate rage" to make everything have significance (AM 214-15)? As with my reading of Milly's punning in Intensive Care, my obervations on Botti's palilalia will not "decode" his utterances so much as study the phenomenon of the language as such, what kind of language it is, how it contrasts formally and pragmatically with other uses of language in the novel, and what its political and literary implications are, if any.

As I mentioned in an earlier section, Botti is scarcely an oracular ghost. His words neither terrify nor inspire. Unlike Daphne, Turnlung, Naomi, and Thora, he does not take up the theme of mortality. His words are not poetic or original at all; indeed, the very purpose of phrase-books is to list the most formulaic utterances likely to arise in typical communication scenarios (at the grocer's, at the post-office, at the train-station). What is uncommon about Botti's language is that it strives to be utterly common. His language is manifestly not "proper" to him, which is precisely the point: phrase-books specialise in words which have "lost their stretch and chew," as Milly would put it (IC 238). Phrase-book phrases are supposed to be typical, even quintessential in some way; to utter them is not only an attempt at articulation, but also at reticulation into some network of understanding (a culture, a community). This point becomes clear upon considering the basis for the humour

of Eugène Ionesco's absurdist play The Bald Soprano (first performed 1950), which is an intertext for The Adaptable Man. To generate satire on English manners Ionesco needed only to string together sentences and phrases culled from an English phrasebook, which make up the entirety of the script. Sentences such as "Mr. Fire Chief since you are not pressed stay a little while longer You [sic] would be doing us a favour" come to express a paradigmatic Englishness. Botti's mistake is to believe the implicit promise of the phrase-book, that learning the formal lineaments of a language somehow offers access to the cultural "inside" of a language community, some kind of a national linguistic grid.

Of course, Botti's phrase-book language proves to be useless. It is old-fashioned ("a brace of partridges"). More importantly, it cannot adjust to the exigencies of an unforeseeable set of circumstances: after all, what is the point of drawing attention to your bleeding wounds (17) if you are being killed by drowning? Why learn to appeal for help in English when the only English-speaking person within hearing distance is the one who is killing you?[115] Why speak at all when to open one's mouth underwater is to hasten one's own death? But Botti's language is "useless" in another sense: his utterances are not "in use," at least not within the fictional world. According to speech-act theory, the activities of learning a language and practising pronunciation belong to the category which John Searle deems "non-serious" (57n1). In Searle's terminology, Botti produces mere utterances without propositional or illocutionary content. Botti's sentences are recognisable within the grammar and vocabulary of English but lack reference and illocutionary force: to practise the sentence "These photographs are underexposed, please will you intensify them" is not to make an actual request, but only to pronounce sounds which could become a request if uttered in a particular context with (Searle would insist) a particular intention. Being "non-serious" Botti's words cannot be speech acts; they can have no perlocutionary force. They

[115] Being a character sprung from the ideal speech conditions of the phrasebook, Botti believes that in England, "[when] you asked someone in the street, 'Can you send for help?' they did so at once" (17).

are linguistic equivalents of a language which does not achieve "touch," in the sense of making any impact on a state of affairs or on another's state of mind.

Given that Alwyn's mother Greta also practises elocution--when she shifts to London before the war, she changes her northern accent--why should Botti's attempt to learn English be significant at all, beyond the thematics of adaptability signalled by the title of the novel? Although I do not want to push this point too far, Botti's phrase-book echoes bear the potential for a "deconstructive moment" which was to be more fully developed by Frame in Intensive Care. Phrase-book exercises demonstrate the potential wrenching of any "serious" speech from the context of its utterance by citation, recitation, parody. Botti's pronouncements are therefore doubly removed from any point of origin, being both disembodied--removed from the physical production of speech in the body--and non-intentional.

As the introduction of Derridean terminology into my analysis would suggest, Botti's echoing words seem a perfect set-up to illustrate the operations of the trace, the internally destabilizing "structural unconscious" within language ("Limited Inc." 197). Repetition is never a mere echo, but always a supplement, continuously keeping open the recontextualization of language and thereby preventing, not meaningfulness, but "meaningfulness" (195-96).[116] The stage seems set for a semiotic haunting by "the ghost in our story" (AM 20), but the logic of the trace falters for lack of thematic support in the other textual aspects of The Adaptable Man. Again, the best way to explain what I mean is to make a comparison with Frame's later and more successful exploration of haunting, Intensive Care, in which Milly's "echoes" of official Human Delineation discourse are fully integrated into the mythic content of the novel.

---

[116] Of all Derrida's writing concerning "the trace" (restance, remainder, supplement) I have selected "Limited Inc. a b c" as a reference point because Derrida takes particular pains to "spell out" his argument in that essay; after all, Derrida insinuates, his interlocutor Searle doesn't yet know the "ABC's" of deconstruction. For an explanation and defence of Derrida's theory of iterability within the protocols of analytic logic see Gordon C. F. Bearn, "Derrida Dry: Iterating Iterability Analytically" diacritics 25.3 (1995): 3-25.

Chapter two of my thesis followed the Narcissus intertext of Intensive Care, but stopped short of pointing out the operation of the feminine principle in Ovid's tale: the role of the "talkative" nymph Echo, which Gayatri Spivak brilliantly analyses in her essay "Echo." While "still a body not a voice" (Ovid l. 359)--that is, before pining away out of unrequited love for Narcissus--Echo had been cursed by Juno never to initiate speech but only to repeat the last few words of any utterance she hears. Following Echo's death Narcissus in turn is cursed, fated to love only what he cannot gain: his own reflection, a "hope without a body" (l. 417). Milly's "voice," like Botti's, is doubly removed from the context of its production: when her diary is read by other characters Milly is not only absent--for writing, like other communicational technologies, allows "a voice without a body"--but irretrievably absent, having been incinerated together with the other "Animals" of Waipori City. Although the degree of intentionality in Milly's political critique remains contentious both among the characters who read her diary and amongst reviewers and critics of the novel,[117] the deconstructive point is that the supplementary logic of Echo operates irrespective of intentionality to disrupt the closed circuit of self-representation: Milly plays Echo to Colin Monk's Narcissus.

I can find no place for the movement of Echo in post-war Little Burgelstatham. I am not suggesting that The Adaptable Man fails for me because it fails to draw on the Narcissus intertext evident in the subsequent novels, Intensive Care and Daughter Buffalo; what I mean is that The Adaptable Man lacks any thematic support to find any particular politics of form in Botti's pronouncements. Unlike Milly, Botti is not a martyr for the higher cause of breaching a self-enclosed, paranoic social structure; his murder threatens the self-grounding

[117] Everitt Morse scrutinizes Colin Monk, evidently suspecting him of having written the diary as a protest against the régime: "Obviously Milly Galbraith couldn't have written this. . . . How do you account for the intellectual grasp, the power of recall? This isn't the Milly Galbraith as described in the records" (IC 335). Alternately canny and naive, the Milly of the diary gives no clue as to whether she is satirically winking as she mouths the dogma of H.D., that "the world has to be clean for democracy" (244). As a dissident gesture Milly's "special spellings" are perfectly ambivalent, leaving undecidable the question of whether they are mere typos or deliberate jabs at the key terms of H.D.

integrity of the Little Burgelstatham community less than does the arrival of television. The dissociation of consciousness which prevents haunting in the novel seems absolute.

No Telephone to Heaven

Like Botti, Alwyn's uncle, the Reverend Aisley Maude, is learning a language, the "language of the soul" (214) forgotten in his "years of study and personal seeking-finding-losing-seeking of God--or not-God" (242). Unlike Botti, however, Aisley has no sure way of knowing whether his appeals--his prayers--have reached their target. If prayer is a speech-act, its perlocutionary force can never be ascertained beyond the shadow of a doubt: how can one guarantee that a prayer is "felicitous"? If a prayer appears to be "answered," how can one be sure that the prayer (and not some other coincidental factor) produced the desired consequences? How has the technological revolution brought by modernity altered the conditions of communication with God, if at all? Aisley prays for an encounter with God, and that, perhaps, is what he gets--but before attending to Aisley's private research of the soul, we need to backtrack a little, to return to the cultural history of light that The Adaptable Man helps to write.

With the coming of electricity Little Burgelstatham jolts from the mechanical age to the electronic era. The catapulting of Little Burgelstatham forward in time sends the reader back in time, to a stage in Western cultural development in which electricity was, if not entirely new, at least unfamiliar, endowed with superstition, and, to some, a threat to the existing cosmological as well as technological order. If, as I mentioned in chapter two, theoretical physicists strive to reproduce the originary mathematical equation by which God spoke the cosmos into being, their counterparts in applied science and engineering are attempting to emulate God's power to create light itself, having even manufactured an artificial sun on earth. The narratorial voice of The Adaptable Man alludes bathetically to this Promethean stealing of light when Vic Baldry, pig-farmer and devotee of electricity, "prepar[es], Godlike, to create the light" by building a log-fire (267).

Bathos aside, to some of those who witnessed its rise, electrical technology was not only a harnessing but also an appropriation and usurpation of the life force itself .[118] It is no accident, then, that the coming of electricity to Little Burgelstatham coincides with Aisley's crisis of faith; there is no shortage of literary as well as historical precedents for existential panic about whether there is room for God within modernity's rationalizing drive.[119] Yet--it is time now to state the irony which presents itself so crashingly in The Adaptable Man--in the predominant Western imaginary, light is the central metaphor of both the Christian religion and of the positivist Enlightenment which took as its mission the casting out of the shadows of religious superstition. Although ostensibly opposite, the two metanarratives of religion and science are united in their goal of plunging humanity into light. Man-made light can threaten to usurp God's light because the two systems, the theological and the technological, occupy similar mythical and symbolic coordinates; it is the isomorphism between them that enables one to be overlaid upon the other.[120]

---

[118] Electricity as the essence of the life force appears in both Romantic and Victorian thinking throughout the nineteenth century in Western Europe; see Asendorf 155-60 and Schivelbusch 71. Asendorf comments that "[t]he notion of invisible but still very effective energies that in some way have an effect on individuals is probably the phantasm of the last twenty years of the nineteenth century" (167).

[119] Eugene O'Neill's play Dynamo, first peformed in 1928, contested the secularization which electricity seemed to promote--or, more accurately, contested the misplaced, quasi-religious fervour by which Americans embraced electric commodities. The play features Reuben, the son of a minister of the Church, who is intellectually seduced by the atheist sophistry of his next-door-neighbour, the superintendent of the local electrical plant. Reuben transfers his religious zeal to the fickle matriarchal god Dynamo, on whose altar, so to speak, he finally electrocutes himself in orgasmic frenzy. For a contemporary novelistic reconstruction of the emergence of electricity from the scientific laboratory into the home and workplace in the late Victorian era, see Victoria Glendinning's Electricity (1995). The narrator, Charlotte Mortimer, marries an atheist electrician who believes that "power stations are the cathedrals of the future" (59). Following her husband's death by electrocution, Charlotte sets herself up as a medium, a conductor between the material and spiritual realms.

[120] In some cases this isomorphism was directly acknowledged: at the turn of the century, traditionalists who feared that electricity violated the natural order of things were met head-on by those who believed that earthly technological advances were utterly compatible with the divine, God being "the Great Electrician" (Elbert Hubbard, [member of the Jovians, a society of electrical engineers established in Texas 1899], qtd. in Nye 161).

It seems to me, and I think to Aisley Maude, that this capacity of the technological simultaneously to usurp and overlay the space of the religious becomes possible only when God has already been cut to the measure of Man. Such a God is able to be "resolved into a justified history (the history of a subject, history itself as Subject), and the ultimate justification of this history lies with a coming everywhere onto the scene in place of the gods" (Nancy 138-39). The two ostensibly opposing camps in the technology/spirituality debate exacerbated by the advent of electricity therefore base their arguments on the same anthropomorphic ground: the calculative-technological thrust to rationalise society can only threaten the place of God for those believers who have already imagined Him to be the future provider of a rationalised heaven on earth free of pain, evil, and darkness. [121] The technological sublime and the spiritual sublime are left to walk hand-in-hand toward their mutual apocalypse, as they do in the climactic moment of The Adaptable Man. [122]

Considerations of the limit between God and Man in "modern times" preoccupy Aisley Maude. In his parsonic persona Aisley recites Christianity's platitudes of light: "'Let there be light. The light of the world. A man does not light his candle [sic] under a bushel.' Good God, he thought, why do I say what is expected of me?" (172). But in his private research of the soul Aisley struggles against the technotheological collusion of light, which would strip God of His essential mystery. By constitution and philosophy Aisley is not one

---

[121] I have decided to retain the masculine pronoun for God, as Aisley does, though more from the motive of feminist irony than from conventionality. At least until the latter stages of the novel, Aisley's God wields power with a dead hand, very much occupying the place of the "absent Father" who maintains the symbolic Law. Through the course of his meditations on the divine, I would argue, Aisley comes to revalue this absence as a necessary limit.

[122] Nye lucidly explains the idea of the "technological sublime":

> In the aesthetic theory of the sublime [objects of grandeur were] thought to deepen and strengthen the mind of the observer. In nineteenth-century America certain machines began to receive the same kind of attention. Leo Marx has termed this response to displays of new railroads and steamboats as the "technological sublime," in which "the awe and reverence once reserved for the Deity and later bestowed upon the visible landscape is directed toward technology, or rather the technological conquest of matter." (Nye 59)

of the modern breed of ministers, those who like to "boogie-woogie to the Lord," as my Granny Mavis Lawn would say. While his wife was alive he resisted her attempts to

> persuade Aisley into a "contemporary" clerical mold--to appear on television or speak over the radio in the morning program Banish Thy Care, to give controversial interviews to reporters (Parson with Model-Type Wife Agrees the Only Thing for It Is to Get with It, Heartbeat or Drumbeat, God Is Listening), to become drama critic of a Sunday newspaper, captain a soccer team, compose a modern liturgy for electric guitar. (21)

Unlike his modern counterparts, Aisley is "out of touch" with God (21); he is not "switched-on," "tuned in." Yet the basis for Aisley's humility--and his ethic--lies in his sense that God is not instantly accessible, like some kind of electric light available by the click of a switch. He rejects the anthropomorphizing gesture in faith, "the human cunning that tries to bring God or not-God within its own limits" (235); he does not want to fall into the habit of "making his own irrelevant images" (242-43) of God. He has no truck with the shake'n'bake God of the evangelists.[123]

[123] To Aisley the New English Version of the Bible, which aims for ready comprehension for the modern reader, is the linguistic counterpart of a "quick-fix" God. The New English translation seems "nothing more than . . . a disappointing glimpse of incorrectly applied religious cosmetic":

> The group of scholars, Aisley thought, who sat at the conference table to make this new translation had undertaken the task of convicts breaking stones, monotonously striking day after day until they destroyed a quarry of jewels which they still imagined to be stones . . . . (57).

What is it that Aisley seeks, then? To what entity does he send out his prayers? To characterize Aisley's wavering faith we can start by noting that prayer is an intellectual problem to him, both at the point of sending and at the point of reception. We know from Aisley's self-checking after his brief "let there be light" speech that his clerical responses have become automated ("Good God, he thought, why do I say what is expected of me?" [172]). Loss of faith consists precisely in the fear that prayer itself may amount to nothing more than recitation, like phrases mimicked from a phrase-book. For Jean-Luc Nancy, the loss of the gods is so pervasive in contemporary religious thought that prayer as a speech-act--as something more than a mere "utterance" or rhetic act--has become impossible: "[f]rom all the rites and all the liturgies, not the least canticle is left over: even the <u>believer</u> who prays can only <u>quote</u> his prayer" (148). Aisley fears, like Claudius in <u>Hamlet</u>, that "Words without thoughts / Never to Heaven go" (III.iii.98).

For a contrasting example illustrating the "'contemporary' clerical mold," consider the words which I saw painted on an evangelical van on Vancouver's west side:

Prayer brings God closer.
<u>PRAY LOTS!</u>

GODS [sic] COOL

GOD'S FUN!

GOD BRINGS CLARITY

Prayer, these "more-is-better" slogans suggest, takes instant effect, enabling spontaneous and noise-free communication--sort of the theological equivalent of television, that instantly accessible medium which, paradoxically, militates against listening. Television

> communicate[s] so readily that nothing gets through. It is only when you disrupt sound and image, when one can hear nothing, that it becomes clear that something is

> not getting through, that it becomes possible to listen. (Jean-Luc Godard, qtd. in Trinh 197)

Within this "God brings clarity" mindset God has ceased to be the limit point of communication, the point where static scrambles the message or where a blot smudges the picture. When "getting through" to God is a sure bet, communication paradoxically ceases, for "communication takes place on the limit, or on the common limits where we are exposed and where it exposes us" (Nancy 67).

For Aisley, to pray is to send out feelers to infinity, addressing an immensity which remains in shadow. Aisley contemplates a well-known passage from the Bible (I Corinthians 13.9-10), which promises that in the fullness of time the present state of partial knowledge of God will fall away:

> For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face . . . . For now we know in part, and we prophecy [sic] in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away . . . (AM 56)

Aisley indeed wants to encounter God "face-to-face," but in a manner that acknowledges God's absolute alterity; he does not want to cut God to his own human shape, for God disappears when people and God cease to be strangers: "[l]iving in the same world, [the gods and people] are always face to face with each other, on either side of a dividing--and a retreating--line" (Nancy 124, 142).[124] God ends up being something like the wartime refugees, the "gash" of the "foreign invasion of people you never knew or whose language you could never speak" (AM 20), uncomfortably close (in the tenement hall, and closer), yet infinitely far away, making the echo of a distant danger (avalanches, a surging river) sound faintly in your ears. It is risky with God, though: too close, and you either obliterate God's

[124] Nancy coins the term "im-mediacy" which I would paraphrase as a sense of god's presence as something radiant rather than palpable; god is "immediate" and visible as the sky is immediate and visible, but "mediate" in the sense that the divine sends some other face to earth as a metonymy for an inaccessible whole (122).

particularity or yourself become engulfed by fusion with the absolute. The trick is to brush against God in the gloom, straining to listen and watch rather than staring directly into some shadowless noonday light. In watching, brushing against, listening, Aisley's attempts to "get through" to God make up a medley of the three senses of perception foregrounded in The Adaptable Man, the visual, the tactile, and the aural. Aisley's images for capturing the godhead evolve in approximately that order, from the photographic, to forceful physical contact, to a meditation on the ideal acroamatic conditions for receiving God's message.

At the outset of the novel Aisley figures the divine photographically, but the moss-covered monument pictured in his imagination has been disturbed by the "morning movement" (23) of God. Aisley explains how he

> woke one morning, made my usual morning adjustment to God, with my Christian faith set strongly behind me, and my human limitation protecting me from too obliterating a vision, only to find that the picture was blurred, that God had moved, that the steadfast landmark, feature of all my maps, routes, views, references, had become an unidentifiable shadow. Now if you are photographing an ancient monument of stone, and the stone moves and the photograph is blurred, perhaps it is wise to tell no one. The stone may be unwilling or unable to confirm or deny your story. People may insist that it was you who moved and spoiled the picture--especially if your camera is the old-fashioned type where you need the sun powerfully behind you, yet you must still curl your palm jealously around your tiny private view in order to reduce the obliterating effect of the same sun's light. (4-5)

In this scenario Aisley positions himself as the photographer, turning away from the light rather than either gazing into it (as he would if he were the subject of the photograph) or being struck by it (as the photographic film chemically transforms upon exposure to light waves). Light, the raw material of the photographer's craft, can destroy as well as enable the exposure; it is all a matter of how much light you allow to enter the shutter. As for God, He makes no appearance in Aisley's picture; assuming that the monument is dedicated to His memory, it does not mark the place where God is, but rather where He passed by, or passed

away. Aisley's photographic God is like Kilroy, evident only by the sign of His absence. Aisley thus multiply distances his God, by the predominance of the visual sense, and by maintaining the camera between himself and a God that is not only distant but absent and perhaps dead.

Now Aisley's picture has smudged. The stone has moved, perhaps promising, or witnessing to, some kind of resurrection. But no reincarnated God emerges in "technicolor" glory, "dress[ed] . . . in pleasing comforting imagery," beaming in response to the "'Smile, please' persuasions of the photographer" (212). The smudge remains a smudge, flat, inert, irritating, and persistent. Zizek aside, sometimes a blot is only a blot, and no matter what theological angle Aisley takes, the shadow does not loom once more into the solidity of a "steadfast landmark," the "meaning of meaning" (241) which might arrange the features of his spiritual landscape. Aisley "wished he could sleep again in peace and call the speck God" (103), but the blot remains illegible.

> Aisley's figuration of God moves on, briefly, to a tactile sensibility: God becomes present but still removed, walled off from the seeker. Aisley determines, I shall pray a kind of hammering, insistent prayer which wounds and indents metal but does not penetrate it. There's such a wide choice of instruments given to Man to make his rhythmical too ineffectual thrusts upon a cold, remote will. It is the striking power which matters; they say; [sic] men and nations do say: the striking force . . ." (26).

Two different kinds of masculine force meet in this figure of hostility and frustration, the forceful "thrust" failing to meet the controlling absence of a "remote will."

Finally, Aisley comes to a resting point in his progressive meditation on the divine. He abandons the visual and representational imagination which has predominated in his "view" of God, literally "[losing] sight of Him," not because "[Aisley's] vision is obsolete, but because [he sees] Him in his true form: the adult image of a powerful invisibility, the final Power and Pressure" (212-13). As a "powerful invisibility" God becomes diffuse, unlocatable, accessible more to the surround-sound capabilities of the ear than the linear

mode of the eye. The place of the seeker becomes that of a receptive passivity, whether as "bait to attract the meaning of meaning" (241) or as something more akin to a satellite dish, which "by its concentration of faith may trap the spirit of God--as radar traps the wandering stranger, not distinguishing between friend or foe, supplying the shadow only" (236). Aisley prepares for an encounter with the divine, finally, by making himself a gathering place, a refuge for God.

Perhaps God travels, after all, on sound waves rather than light waves. But in the end Aisley is struck, not by sound, but by light. Soon after its inaugural switching-on, Muriel Baldry's fifteen thousand-bulb Venini chandelier crashes down onto the dinner table at the Baldrys' (last) supper, killing Muriel, Greta, and Aisley, and paralyzing Vic Baldry completely. The technological and the Christian variants of the "light of the world," symbolically gathered together in the light of the electric chandelier, combine to bring the light of the heavens to earth, with disastrous results. A question which remains to be answered--and which never can be "answered" definitively within the terms of the novel, as in everyday existence--is whether the chandelier episode indicates the success of Aisley's appeals for an encounter with God or not. The perlocutionary force of prayer as a speech act, if any, can only be gleaned by indirections, by signs, auguries, dramatic coincidences. Aisley's meditations on prayer have already defined the uncertainties of sending out even a "creative" prayer--one which goes beyond "repetition" and "practice"--with no sure indication of its destination:

> Certainly if God had thoughts, there was no compulsion to tell. The exchange of thoughts between God and man was chiefly a one-way process unless man learned the language of God, by constant analysis, repetition, practice, and finally by creation, where the words and phrases of the language--but they were not these, there was no name for the components of God's language--struggled and fought like fish on hooks to get free . . . (170)

From the evidence of the chandelier, has Aisley managed to learn the language of God, or not? Perhaps the triple fatality represents God's punishment for Aisley's attempt to enter His sphere and speak His language, as Alwyn "murdered the stranger who dared to try to enter the closed community, to speak its language" (215).

Conclusion

Of the four novels which I have studied in depth and lived with while preparing this thesis, The Adaptable Man remains the one which I wrestled with the most yet which moved me the least. Straining to find a message that was meaningful to me ended up being an appropriate reponse to a novel which rejects the instantaneity of comprehension promised by electronic communication technologies. The novel suggests that consciousness is material, to the extent that it is informed by the technologies in which human interaction takes place. But the text also warns against the emotional consequences that seem to follow from this internalisation: technology's drive to minimize or eliminate differentials of space and time culminates in the psychopathology of an Alwyn Maude. Neither closeness nor distance is desirable as any kind of absolute remedy. In the temporal dimension both Intensive Care and The Adaptable Man demonstrate that "closeness can obliterate" (CP 43): in Intensive Care the past is too present for Tom Livingstone, who never manages to align psychological time and chronological time;[125] for Alwyn in The Adaptable Man the present is too present, severed from the temporal layers which make up the psychic apparatus.

Distance, too, can obliterate--and it is this theme of The Adaptable Man which makes me pause over the otherwise unremarkable fact that I felt disengaged from the fictional world represented in the novel. Given the fact that no character indicates regret for Botti

[125] See Hercus Millow's comment on memory in The Carpathians: "Last week--now last week's gone for ever. But the war--for me, it's still here. Other chaps experienced it this way. It's still here, but distant. Some experience it as now--they're the ones gone crazy" (41). In this novel Frame returns to this complicated dialectic of distance and closeness in space and time by combining the quasi-science fiction motif of the Gravity Star, a "galaxy which appears to be both relatively close and seven billion light years away" ([7]), with that of memory.

Julio's death, the text, I believe, calls upon the reader to bear witness to his murder. One is not murdered once, but multiply, in repeated refusals to remember and thus acknowledge affiliation. To be inaccessible to a haunting is therefore to occupy the position of the murderer, who would like to "identify death with nothingess" (Derrida, "Adieu" 5). Poor Botti suffers a double erasure in Little Burgelstatham: not only are his immediate appeals for help ignored by Alwyn, but he is also deprived of the spectral vengeance of haunting those who have disposed of him. It is the reader who must effectuate his voice--give it a host, in a sense--by assuming the position of the "other to which one [can] say 'Thou' in the hope of being heard, of being recognized as a subject, of being answered" (Laub 82). For me not to take that position seems to subject Botti to yet another erasure.

"Face to Face With Myself"

> Taking this pocket mirror, capture the reflection
> of the row of lamps. Steady the mirror. So.
>
> See those black stripes alternating with yellow?
> They are bars of actual darkness not perceived by the naked eye.
>
> To undeceive the sight a detached instrument like a mirror is necessary.
>
> (Frame, "The Pocket Mirror")

It is a principle of standard essay composition that an elegant introduction has the end of the essay in sight, though anybody who practises such writing knows that the "forward-looking" introduction is a fiction, frequently written, not first, but last, and inserted into the opening through the miracles of word processors and second drafts. One therefore writes the beginning from the point at which one has learned how to end, as I am doing now, retrospectively writing the beginning of the ending of this thesis. Of course, the impression of an "organic ending" may itself be a fiction, to the extent that many acts of writing are constrained more by exosketal factors of time, finances, and energy than by any spontaneous or internally necessary shaping. Given those exigencies, why did I decide to reserve Daughter Buffalo, and not some other text(s), for my final chapter? After all, writers of other book-length studies of Frame's fiction have worked both chronologically and comprehensively, beginning either with Owls Do Cry (1957) or The Lagoon (1951), and progressing through to Frame's most recent work at the time of publication (see Evans, Janet Frame; Panny, I Have What I Gave; Mercer, Janet Frame). I have worked with only four texts, and I discussed The Adaptable Man, published in 1965, after Intensive Care, published in 1970.

I didn't choose these four novels, in this order, to make any kind of statement against the evolutionary factors of development, maturity, and (perhaps) decline implicit in

chronological accounts. I am indeed interested in what "maturity" entails, though the maturity at stake here is not that of an author's talents, but rather that of an analysis. How can the literary interpreter, and the process she enters upon, "come to rest," even if only for the time between the ending of one interpretation and the beginning of another? There is in any arrival an act of wilfulness, a decision to stay put. Nonetheless, some moments, and some places, seem more suited to closure than others, for reasons that may become clear only from the synthesizing perspective of the backward glance. One may "draw" oneself a conclusion, only to realise more fully, later, why the ending fits the writing that precedes it, restoring balance to reader and text alike.

When I was a child I used to read a picture book, called Harold and the Purple Crayon. Harold had the magic power to draw a cartoon object and then bring it to life. To save himself from drowning he draws a boat and hauls himself into it; to satisfy his hunger he draws a pie to eat. What I will do in my reading of Daughter Buffalo is, Harold-like, draw myself an escape hatch and then disappear out of it. As the subject of my final chapter Daughter Buffalo provides the "escape hatch" to this thesis, an exit from it, but I mean to suggest an escape-hatch of a more personal and sentimental kind. I find myself determined to read Daughter Buffalo more positively than have previous critics, who have objected to the egotism and phallocentrism of the character Talbot Edelman. Jeanne Delbaere, for example, finds Talbot caught within an "ego-cult" ("Turnlung" 174); Gina Mercer labels him misogynist and narcissistic (Janet Frame 185); and Shona Smith foregrounds Talbot's patriarchal medical practice in reading Daughter Buffalo as a brand of instructive misogyny reflecting a "tyrannical" society ("Still Suppressing" 40). While Talbot undoubtedly has obnoxious qualities, I will emphasise the young medical student's emotional growth, reading his encounter with Turnlung as a period when he was able to "focus directly on loving" (DB 207). I admit that my optimistic reading contrives a resolving cadence for myself and for the thesis--a terminal upswing which is most untrue to the tenor of Frame's novels, with their typically bathetic, murderous, suicidal, and catastrophic endings.

Now, what could be so buoyant and inspiring about a novel which tells of the drawn-out dying of an old misfit and the medical travesties of a misogynist young man who progressively vivisects his own dog? The answer lies in the manner in which these two characters touch upon each other's being. In the homosexual and homoerotic love affair between Talbot, Turnlung, and (I will suggest) Talbot's grandfather I find conciliation, mutuality, and a sustained opening toward the other in the overcoming of historical, emotional, and sexual blockages. There is movement outwards through gestures of dispossession, giving, becoming. And there is a renewed, non-possessive masculine sexuality based on a desire which does not annihilate its object.

Ironically, this tripartite transferential relation is achieved through male homosexual desire, which has long been "associated in the popular mind with specularity or narcissism and in psychoanalytic discourse with the lure of the imaginary as manifest in [the male homosexual's] identification with the mother" (Lee Edelman 196; see further Dollimore 249-75). I propose that the sexual relationship between Turnlung and Talbot succeeds in "letting the difference flood in" (IC 27) where the heterosexual model in Intensive Care fails. In rebuttal of the phobic masculinity dominating Intensive Care, based on the projection of lack onto women and those designated "animals," Daughter Buffalo depicts a masculinity based on "phallic divestiture" (Silverman 389), the acceptance of loss without the necessity for phantasmatic compensation or exchange. Daughter Buffalo invokes the moment of Narcissus but allows an escape route from it: the novel radicalizes the Narcissus model by allowing the entry of otherness, of ethics, into the closed circuit of desire. In encountering Turnlung Talbot does indeed come face to face with himself, not as he is but rather as he has been and as he will be--a temporal striation which makes all the difference.

A glance back at the three novels studied previously in this thesis helps explain the novelty of Daughter Buffalo within Frame's oeuvre. The temporal and psychological structuration of Scented Gardens for the Blind, Intensive Care, and The Adaptable Man centres on emotional inertia. In each of these novels psychological time (as opposed to

chronological time) is reduced to a pathological stagnation through blockage, repetition, or stasis. With Erlene's silence lumped at its centre, Scented Gardens remains stuck in an unchanging dramatic situation; even the final chapter does not loosen the "knot" of the novel so much as merely displace it to another setting. In its absolute denial of catharsis Scented Gardens could be termed a "situation tragedy," structured on the static temporality of situation comedy but refusing its laughter. For characters and readers alike there is no way forward, and no way back; the story of Erlene, her parents, and her psychiatrist does not allow development so much as increasing envelopment in a miasma of clues without a definable crime. Insinuations of horror seep through the text, but an absolute stoppage in time blocks access to the presumptive crime, the "gap and the birth" (Frame, EA 52), the precipitating trauma which cannot even be guessed at, let alone glimpsed. No possibility of return, hence no possibility of resolution.

In Intensive Care, by contrast, there is nothing but return, and return, and return, to the nightmare images of war, amputation, blood, and loss. The same scene of violence repeats itself, from the battlefields of World War One to the bloodbath of Lorna Kimberley's home, from the Waipori City cementworks to the ovens of the Taeri plains. An entire society seems governed by the compulsion to repeat as a substitution for the "impulsion to remember" (Freud, "Remembering" 151); as the century-long chronological sweep of the novel indicates, repetition fixes the psyche in a past state by maintaining repression at individual, societal, and trans-generational levels. The war is never "over," as Tom Livingstone would have it (IC 86), but merely displaced interminably--over and over--from one theatre of war to another, with no escape from the cycle. Despite the magnitude and prominence of the war, or possibly because of it, New Zealand society never effectively acknowledges the multiple losses wrought by war, nor does any veteran manage to lay the ghost of the war to rest. If Scented Gardens runs on the spot Intensive Care runs in circles, but in each case the dominant effect--not only for characters within the fictional world but also for myself as reader--is emotional stasis.

In The Adaptable Man the absence of temporal and psychological movement centres on the character of Alwyn Maude. Being a man of light, his favoured psychic topography is that of a plain: he dreams of absolute visibility and absolute remembering, free from the repression of socially intolerable desires, without recoil from the terrifying facts of personal or historical trauma. This "noon-deed" existence (AM 152) would be "free of time" (158), but as Derrida comments, "looking for 'noon'" is

> not just any madness and it is not looking for just any moment; perhaps it is to dream, at whatever time and always too late . . . of an origin without shadow, without dialectical negativity, in the solar course on the basis of which we calculate time. (Given Time 34)

Derrida's comment points to a relation between temporality and alterity: to search for noon is to pursue an absolute identity which disallows the "shadow" of otherness. With the exception of Aisley Maude's tentative probings toward God, none of the characters I have studied in detail--including the personae of Patrick Evans--learns to co-habit with shadow, "to point the existence of shadow, how one may walk through it, tread upon it, strike it, without harming oneself or the shadow" (AM 152).

Daughter Buffalo, however, figures the time of noon quite differently from The Adaptable Man. As Jeanne Delbaere points out in "Turnlung in the Noon Sun: An Analysis of Daughter Buffalo" (first published 1978), noon can be figured not only as the absence of shadow but also as a moment of hiatus conjoining two opposites, a "symbol for [the] meeting of presence and absence, object and shadow, I and not-I" (172). My own reading of Daughter Buffalo will retain this focus on convergence rather than exclusion but locate it in the novel's homoeroticism, which Delbaere downplays. What most draws me to Daughter Buffalo is its homoerotic enfolding within oneself of what is deathly, raw, ugly, and foreign within oneself. There is indeed a "likeness" between Talbot and Turnlung as "the old and the young Narcissus" (DB 144), but it is an "alien likeness" (SS 137) which escapes the

violent logic of mirrors, for in embracing each other Talbot and Turnlung embrace the most unpalatable aspects of their selves.

Daughter Buffalo opens with an insistent, two-way blockage between the living and the dead. The living cannot converse with the dead and the dead cannot inhabit the living. Turnlung's journey to America, "this country where death appears to be more important than life" (DB 28), is prompted by a sense of estrangement from the "mystery and exclusiveness surrounding the community of the dying and the dead": "I wanted to enter the community of the dying. If there were tests to be passed I knew neither the questions nor the answers. I could learn nothing, rehearse nothing. The sources of information--the dead--were inaccessible to me" (28). Talbot Edelman's search for the dead begins with the death of his grandfather, after which Talbot "switche[s] [his] studies from embryology to death" (11). Incubated in America's hothouse culture of death, Talbot has nonetheless been unable properly to mourn his grandfather. He has learned of his Russian-Jewish heritage but he has not remembered it, to use a distinction suggested by Walter Benn Michaels (7, 13; see further below). Or, to borrow terms more proximate to the vocabulary of Frame's novels, Talbot knows about his cultural inheritance but does not yet know it.

Like Intensive Care, then, Daughter Buffalo builds upon a structure of blockage and repetition. Unlike the previous novel, however, Daughter Buffalo offers a varied form of repetition which conduces to the working through of loss for Turnlung as well as for Talbot, the character who will be the focus of my reading. I will situate Talbot and Turnlung's interaction within the domain of transference, arguing that their relationship reactivates Talbot's perceived losses--associated with his traumatically interrupted ethnic and familial inheritance--in a movement towards "curing" their effects. Talbot will eventually open to Turnlung--and thus to his ambivalence about his own paternal inheritance--through love. A mutual exchange takes place between the two, each serving as transferential agent to the other: through Turnlung's legacy Talbot receives his true inheritance, a gift of death; through

transmission of the death secret to a receptive younger man Turnlung completes his work and is able to enter the community of the dead.

So far my observations are not extraordinary, and indeed they follow a guideline which Frame's novel sets for its own interpretation, and which is as succinct a definition of transference as any: Talbot's observation that his "first meeting [with Turnlung] was merely a raising of the level of unconsciousness into consciousness" (DB 86). Talbot will come to remember what he once knew but has forgotten. The method of his realisation is unusual however. Whatever the ontological status of Turnlung--and it is an undecidable point of the text--in Talbot's mind Turnlung is a reincarnation of Grandfather, returned to life to die for a second time, to die properly. [126] When Talbot makes love with Turnlung he is effectively making love with the ghost of his own grandfather. In reading Turnlung as a ghost I am concentrating on only one of the identities which, for Talbot, attach to Turnlung like biddy-bids sticking to a trouser-cuff:

> I kept seeing him [Turnlung] at first as he appeared, then as he was transformed into myself, my father, my grandfather, becoming them and shedding their skins like a creature in metamorphosis, then becoming himself but retaining the other identities not because he chose to but because they attached themselves to him, like those plants which, lacking means to disseminate and reproduce alone, rely upon a stranger--man, beast, insect--to brush past them and unwittingly carry away their seed. (86)

---

[126] I am referring to the fact that Turnlung can be read as a creation of Talbot's mind inspired by the painting given to Talbot by his father (DB 157-60 and 209-212). Although this interpretation is supported by the epilogue, it also requires some temporal licence with the chronology of events presented in the novel, given that Talbot meets Turnlung (chapter three) before he receives the painting from his father (chapter twenty-one). Alternatively, Talbot can be read as a character within Turnlung's last work, with the epilogue a break between narrative levels from a diegetic level (the story of two characters called Talbot and Turnlung, written by Turnlung) to an extradiegetic level (a break to a "frame" narrative which refers to the act of writing the imbedded narrative). Or the two options can be combined: Turnlung imagines Talbot imagining Turnlung. There are yet further structural possibilities discussed by Mercer at the end of her chapter on Daughter Buffalo (Janet Frame 196-98). My decision to interpret Turnlung as a ghost blocks some avenues of inquiry in the novel but opens up a number of equally interesting ones.

The continuance of the Edelman "seed"--backward rather than forward in time, through regenerative memory--is not possible without the intervention of a transferential agent who is at once a stranger and a "familiar" figure, both an individual and the embodiment of a collective paternal inheritance presented as a trail of loss which Talbot embarks upon. One of the questions that I will be asking is how it comes about that an old gay poet from the antipodes can act as the catalyst for the cultural recollection of a Russian-Jewish American. But before commenting on Talbot's story, I need to situate Turnlung himself more specifically in his orientation toward death.

Given Daughter Buffalo's constellation of death, knowledge, and homoeroticism, it's no surprise that I should turn to Plato for pointers on how to proceed. The inter-generational pedagogy recommended in The Symposium, which ostensibly presides over the relation of initiation between Talbot and Turnlung, will appear later in the chapter, but it is the ethic of Plato's Phaedo that seems to motivate and guide Turnlung's private death research. The Phaedo seems to me to be thematically split: it endorses the idealism which reigned over the sexual, societal, and epistemological violence punctuating Intensive Care, but in other aspects Plato's text, despite itself, opens up the possibility of a materialist, non-theological, and non-possessive form of love. When Plato meets Frame the philosophy of death-in-life, the "cultivation of death" discussed in the Phaedo, becomes fodder for a radically revised version of Greek love.

The Unique Art of Dying

Plato's Phaedo reports Socrates' final dialogues with his friends in the hours immediately before his execution. Confident in the superiority of the philosophical life and the immortality of his soul, Socrates announces his intention freely to take the poison administered to him. The philosopher, Socrates argues, should welcome death as the summa of his quest for knowledge, for only in death can absolute knowledge be obtained: "if we can

know nothing purely in the body's company, then one of two things must be true: either knowledge is nowhere to be gained, or else it is for the dead; since then, but no sooner, will the soul be alone by itself apart from the body" (11-12). In death the rational intellect finally sloughs off the corrupting and deceptive medium of the bodily senses--escapes from the "prison" of the body to which it is "literally bound and glued," as Plato puts it (32)--and thereby frees itself to perceive the "Being" of things, "what each one actually is" (10).

In short, Phaedo contains a most succinct and unmistakable statement of the idealism which got such a bad rap in chapter two of this thesis. Intensive Care criticises the repudiation of the physical realm, which in that novel took the form of a psychic turning away from time and loss in the case of Tom Livingstone and Colin Torrance, and a disdain for the materiality of the linguistic sign in the case of Colin Monk. The passages that I have quoted from Phaedo are candid about the death-yearning underlying such idealism, which proves disastrous when combined with the phobic subjectivity of a Tom or a Colin: these male characters bring death to others precisely to avoid contemplating what is deathly or negative within themselves. For Plato the ideal realm of forms cannot be attained without the decline and death of one's own body; Tom and the two Colins, by contrast, must kill others in an effort to maintain their own psychic ideality. The total absence of the body upheld by Plato becomes recast as a fantasy of the total presence of the body, brought about by the removal of other bodies that threaten to fracture that wholeness. Death is no longer an end--the achievement of one's personal intellectual journey--but a means by which the masculine subject guarantees his own psychic "life."

Yet in addition to its strong statement of what I earlier characterised as Platonic idealism, Phaedo carries within itself another strain of thought, one conducive to the images of physical decay in Daughter Buffalo. The time of the psyche is distinct from the time of the sensible and superior to it, but for Plato the two realms are not mutually exclusive. With the ethical practice of philosophy death can and should infiltrate life: death can be welcomed as a presence acting with us, not against us. Given their disdain for the pleasures

of the body, Socrates reasons, philosophers are indeed "verging on death and deserving of it" (8), as some jokers of the time apparently suggested, for "one who cares nothing for the pleasures that come by way of the body runs pretty close to being dead" (9). The person who loves knowledge lives in accord with death, practising in advance the "release and parting of soul from body" (12) and thereby homeopathically relieving death of its sting: "those who practise philosophy aright are cultivating dying, and for them least of all men does being dead hold any terror" (13). Death abides by the philosopher, hovering ever more present as he sheds the trappings of his bodily functions, faculties, and desires.

As the philosopher practises dying, therefore, he approximates absolute knowledge, introducing some portion of it into the time of the living. But the path of his dying is asymptotic to the line of absolute knowledge: the fullness of knowledge cannot be achieved until the moment of death, at which time, to be sure, the prospect of communicating what one knows to the living is dubious. Plato's observations bring out the semantic and grammatical peculiarities of the the verb "to die." English allows both the continuative and the perfective form of the verb: "she is dying" is as permissible as "she died." One dies both duratively, as a process, and semelfactively, at a single point in time. We die over a series of moments of our lives and also at only one moment, the last of all. More strangely, Phaedo proposes a kind of intentionality in dying to the extent that death is coterminous with the arrival of knowledge for Plato, the process of dying can take on something of the deliberate or self-conscious quality attached to the intentional activity of seeking knowledge.[127] One can actively die, so to speak, and it follows that one can create an art out of dying, making death an accomplishment.

Turnlung, too, is practising being dead. He is mourning and anticipating his own death by documenting it in his work-in-progress entitled "Last Death":

---

[127] Suicide, clearly, is an intentional form of dying, but I am referring to the normal process of aging here.

> "I'm quite busy with writing my death experiences," Turnlung said. "My first book was called First Death. This is to be Last Death. My own. I believe in making the journey, the search, the discovery. I want my last years to have the real dream, the real journey. It is a preparation for leaving, for vacating myself." (106-107)

Turnlung does not write to stave off his death by leaving a permanent mark: he is not authoring his own immortality or shoring up his own glory. Even the act of moving his hand across the page while writing evokes the reaper's scythe: "I move my arm like a rusted reap hook to clear away the undergrowth growing me under" (27).[128] Nor is Turnlung a Tristram Shandy, frantically trying to bring his written self up-to-date with his writing self. Turnlung's writing has a "withness" with his lived reality, walking side-by-side with it. At the same time the work moves in an opposite direction to that of his life: the fullness of the work will coincide with the emptiness of Turnlung's physical being, when both his time and his body fluids will have "run out" completely:

> at Turnlung's age the body which is mostly water finds it hard to control its natural impulse to flow, to obey the command of the current of age when the dams which hold the body fluids are likely to burst or leak or overflow . . . . "His time is running out," we say of an old man, thus giving a realistic description of the last ten years of his life, the sense of the body's flowing outward, of the one, no longer self-contained, becoming the many. (106)

In a sense Turnlung is his own work of art, cultivating a full consciousness of his own dying. Like an antipodean Dr. Peter or an off-line Timothy Leary, he makes his own person a work-in-progress and stage-manages his own death.

Turnlung practises death in another sense: he is one of the "old men who precede and shadow the young through their life, who rehearse their death for them" (22). Turnlung rehearses death not only for himself, but also on behalf of the young men who will take his place. As the living representative of death he will shadow the young in every sense: he will

[128] An interpretation based on my own hook-armed left-handed writing style.

cast a shadow over their presumptions of immortality by standing between them and the light; in preceding them he will also follow them, give them the eerie feeling that they are being "shadowed"; and he will stand for their internal shadow, the part of themselves which is unthinkable and negative.

If Daughter Buffalo invokes Phaedo it does so idiosyncratically, grasping the terms of Plato's scheme of death and reworking them into a new and wonderful form. Here, in contemporary New York as in Ancient Greece, is a world centred on patrilinear descent and homoerotic pedagogy, with the transferral of the secret of knowledge (which is also the secret of death) from an older to a younger man. Daughter Buffalo inhabits a patriarchal scene yet dephallicizes it precisely by insisting on the physicality of a man's body. It is the frailty of old men in dying--not their glory in dying--which the old pass on as their legacy to the young in Frame's text. In short, Daughter Buffalo refuses the phantasmatic equation of penis and phallus which governs not only the actions of Tom Livingstone and his grandson in Intensive Care but also the libidinal logic of the Human Delineation régime. One of the most pleasurable ironies of Daughter Buffalo is that Turnlung chooses as the location of his fading the United States of America, a nation which, in its own imaginary if not in fact, displays the national equivalent of perpetual tumescence.

The Supermarket and the Gas Chamber

Turnlung's sense of death as a dispossession, a letting-go, stands against the movement of material and psychical accumulation by which the nation of America attempts to ward off death. America's national culture is characterised by a death-bringing refusal of death. As an example, here is Talbot's emotional response to that most banal of modern American practices, shopping at the supermarket. The supermarket alleys, no doubt designed to lull shoppers into a state of consumerist stupor, evoke the traumatic memory of the Holocaust suffered by Talbot's Jewish ancestors. Talbot describes

> going through the usual emotionless procedure of wheeling the shopping cart in and out of the cart traffic, pausing at the indicated shelves, noting the price, choosing, taking my time to decide which check-out counter was most suitable--the normal or the Express, Eight Items or Less; and then emerging with the feeling that invariably overcomes me there, of dehumanization; for I remember what my race experienced, and sometimes as a child in our clean home I would dream of what I had heard of the concentration camps, the time and motion studies put into effect to enable an inmate to go from one place fully clothed, and, divesting himself of everything without and much within, arrive at the end-place with nothing, yet with an economic completeness for death; and I felt the strange parallel of the supermarkets where instead of divesting ourselves of goods we collect them, we arrive laden at the exits where, exchanging out [sic] money for goods and receiving the green or blue stamp blessing, we come out into the street with the hope that in some way we have replaced the processions of death with those of life. (127)

If the American collective imagination associates accumulation with life and loss with death, then the motivating principle of the superabundance of the supermarket--and the materialism and consumerism for which it is a metonymy--is the attempt to keep death at bay. By straining to negate the gas chamber the supermarket ends up evoking it, at least in Talbot's heightened sensitivity to a kind of "structural unconscious" of consumerism. The Jews shunted down the alleys of the gas chambers were divested of "everything without and much within"--that is, stripped not only of their clothes but also of their emotional resources.[129] American shoppers load themselves up "without" but still divest themselves "within," by trying to chop out--or more accurately, fill up and crowd out--that part of memory and experience inhabited by death.

The supermarket does not act as a psychological anaesthetic for Talbot. Shopping starts out as an "emotionless procedure" (127), but ends up triggering the memory of an experience which did not happen to him but rather to other Jews. Talbot can "read" the

[129] Frame is cavalier about nuances of historical detail, eliding the diverse history of Jews from various parts of the Continent--Talbot's grandfather was from Russia, not Western Europe--in favour of a vague sense of a shared history of victimization for all Jews.

supermarket by perceiving its likeness to the gas chamber, as if the supermarket and the gas chamber were two transformations of the same generative grammar. At the same time the association of supermarket and gas chamber is involuntary for him, and overwhelming: he feels "overcome" by the impression of "dehumanization" when wheeling his cart along the rows of stacked shelves (127). Furthermore, it is Talbot's body which first remembers the gas chamber, evoked by physical movements: "going through the motions" of trundling a cart up and down the alleys triggers the memory of "time and motion" studies. It is as if Talbot has been in the gas chamber before, not only intellectually but also bodily and emotionally, so that he is now inhabited by his own ghost.

In the moment of the supermarket Talbot's Jewish ethnicity seems to interpellate him--to call to him and make him turn to it--despite his all-American upbringing. Talbot's parents have done their best to avoid their own ethnicity and shelter their sons from it. Talbot is "shock[ed]" when he learns that his father "had been brought up in a Jewish ghetto in Brooklyn" (8), for no signs of his father's childhood remain: "[h]e had become so separated from his early life that there was little trace of it; he had used the clean garbage disposal unit on his memories" (8). Talbot's parents now live in a well-stocked, all-mod-con apartment, wrapping themselves in the trappings of material wealth as emotional insulation against the traumatic past of their own parents. Talbot paints his mother as an "intelligent pretty woman who kept a kitchen like a jet control room full of throbbing whirring grinding machines flashing with time-lights and heat-lights. I was very fond of my mother" (6).[130]

---

[130] In "Still Suppressing" Smith explicates this passage neatly:

> If "intelligent" is a positive property then it is cancelled by "pretty" which in current usage lacks descriptive force. Comparing a kitchen with a jet control room reads as calculated, business-like efficiency at the expense of spontaneous, warm emotion, while the words describing mother's "machines" ("throbbing whirring grinding") depict her as a hooker resplendent with "flashing" adult aids. In this context a declaration of "fondness" is lukewarm at best. Post-industrial materialism has, it seems, deprived Edelman of a mother . . . . (39-40)

I would add that Talbot's aspersions on Mother reflect more than a little bitterness that she has not fulfilled her oedipal role of placing her son front and centre of her devotions. Talbot does not hold such resentment against his father.

Mother's machines have usurped her love for her son: "she had never felt me to be her baby. The garbage disposal unit had been her only baby" (155).

As for the previous generation of Edelmans, for much of his life Talbot believes that his paternal grandfather has died, together with his other three grandparents: "I honestly never questioned his disappearance; I took it for granted that Grandfather had no place in our life" (9). Talbot writes of his discovery that his grandfather is still alive as both a revelation from without and a spontaneous, intuitive acknowledgement from within:

> When I was in my third year at medical school, suddenly, as if the information had dropped from a cloud, yet released by a secret mechanism in myself, I learned that my father's father was still alive, ninety-three years old, living in a nursing home in upper New York State, that he had lived there, in failing health, for many years. (8)

Talbot visits his grandfather for the first time since childhood, and returns to find "the rest of the family reluctant to talk about Grandfather":

> "How is he?"
> "He's doing nicely. He's failing but he seems happy."
> Everyone sighed, a sound like the faint whirr made by the garbage disposal unit when it comes to rest after doing its work.
> "Dear dear Grandfather. Dear dear Grandfather." (9-10)

When the nursing home closes down, Talbot's parents refuse to care for Grandfather at home, choosing instead to shunt him off to the northern border, close to Canada, where he dies amidst the obliterating "blue sunlight" of winter (10). In choosing isolation from their cultural inheritance the Edelmans have not only stranded themselves but also broken the ties between Talbot and his grandfather, whose last words to Talbot are emblems of estrangement: "'Do I know you? . . . Are your parents living?'" (11).

Talbot does not become obsessed with death out of a sense of loss following his grandfather's death. The problem is rather that he has not experienced loss. He has come to

"[resent] the way [he] had been deprived of experience of death almost as [he] would have resented being deprived of love" (10). Talbot has lost loss, having missed not only the clinical opportunity to observe Grandfather's dying but also, more importantly, having failed to undergo loss through mourning. Throughout Daughter Buffalo Turnlung and Talbot theorise the psychic protocols of mourning as a kind of time-release abandonment of the dead. To mourn is to rehearse death by bringing death within oneself, not as a preventative innoculation (see DB 7) but as philosophy, the "cultivation" of one's own dying. But contemporary Western culture, with its devotion to image, noise, movement, is antithetical to mourning:

> Where the written word allows us to siphon off small doses of death, the image in the moving picture does not even wait to invite us, it abducts us to the scene with the result that we have a collection of unformed, ill-matured, ungrieved-over deaths in our storehouse and a scarcity of feelings to match them. The periods of grief, of mourning, are curtailed or lost, the death itself has no silence in which to become real . . . . (42)

To die properly the dead must first enter a "novitiate" death, not shut off from the living but "constantly violated by [their] probing memories" (60); the dead first enter a phase of living death, stretched out commodiously in their graves:

> I have long known that the living dead like stones in their secrecy and silence are the most effective absorbers and receivers of rain, sun, words, blows; and in their own way they grow a new attached life, like moss; and it is of no matter that they are not in places where the sun will shine on them and warm them, and other living creatures, such as lizards, make use of them; they do very well in the dark damp places where death is. How could they not be said to be doing well when moss is green, and green is life? (60)

Proper mourning engages both parties in a mutually beneficial contract: as compensation for the loss of the loved object the living "[lease] a part of [their] life and memory" to the dead, who can thereby find a "moment of sanctuary" in their death (202).[131]

Following his death Talbot's grandfather has no sanctuary, no place in Talbot's memory where he can continue the long process of letting go in which dying consists; "dying" in this sense is not only a durative verb but one which takes force even after physical death through the mourning of the survivors. To love a person is to acknowlege and allow his or her dying, as Talbot's analogy between the deprivation of death and the deprivation of love suggests (10). Such was not the case for Grandfather. Unloved and unacknowledged, he was left in a state of "still life," in limbo between life and death, figuratively "dead" to his family while in the nursing home even before his actual death, yet even after his death still not fully "dead" for Talbot in an emotional sense. Hence Talbot's comment that his "first death," his grandfather's, "was no death" (20): Grandfather's image remains encrypted in Talbot, an inert corpse "hidden from me, whom I hid from myself" which Talbot has been unable to release through mourning (20). Grandfather's death has not "fructified in [Talbot's] emotional life" (Delbaere, "Turnlung" 166). Talbot in the course of the narration must come to "love the dead as a living part of [himself]" (Derrida, "Fors" 71/ xvi), that is, as a part of himself which can continue its dying and thus leave him, thereby completing the mourning process. Grandfather must be reincarnated in Turnlung's form to die again, properly the second time around.

Talbot expresses some sympathy for his father's evasions concerning his own childhood, for "why should he have felt the need to relive the poverty and the prejudice?" (8). Mr

---

[131] For more on "the American evasion of grief" see Delbaere, "Turnlung" 174 and passim. Talbot's condition is a figure for contemporary America's encryption of trauma from multiple sources. America "imports" trauma, so to speak, through the immigrant experience of victimized families like the Edelmans, but the nation has equally failed to process the psychological effects carried by home-grown "exporters" of violence: "I write from a land as haunted by death and guilt as the the Ancient Mariner," Turnlung observes, "though here the mariner is young, he is the young Marine who has recently killed" (32).

Edelman is endeavouring to protect not only himself but also his children, as Turnlung later will announce his intention not to speak to his adopted daughter, Baby Buffalo, of her traumatic history of slaughter on the American plains:

> And we must never talk of the massacre, the incompatability
> between people and animals that led to war,
> nor about how people wear and use her hide and horn,
> for she would not understand; she might wish she had never been born;
> the new knowledge forced unthinkingly upon her would be
> a traumatic experience requiring excision by psychiatry. (137)

Turnlung's poetry suggests that it is the telling which implants the traumatic knowledge, as if knowledge were a function of education alone. Not telling is not the same as not knowing, however, and knowing itself may consist of learning and remembering. Talbot comes to know that his grandfather is still alive, though there is no suggestion that anyone told him. Furthermore, he not only knows about the Holocaust intellectually, but also seems to remember it somatically: even though he was never in the gas chamber himself, he experiences its presence in the supermarket, as if some transpersonal memory were occupying his body and finding expression through it.

In "'You Who Never Was There': Slavery and the New Historicism, Deconstruction and the Holocaust" (1996) Walter Benn Michaels asks whether "our memories come from our own lives or from other lives lived long ago," a question which he sees as distinctively American (2). In addressing the question, Michaels extrapolates from theories concerning American myths of national identity to the formation of Jewish cultural identity through collective remembering of the Holocaust. Michaels quotes Arthur Schlesinger Jr. to establish the principle that collective identity is analogous to individual identity: "History is to the nation rather as memory is to the individual. As an individual deprived of memory becomes disoriented and lost . . . so a nation denied a conception of its past will be disabled in dealing with its present" (Schlesinger, qtd. in Michaels 2-3). Michaels comments:

> Memory is here said to constitute the core of individual identity; national memory is understood to constitute the core of national identity. Insofar, then, as individuals have a national as well as an individual identity, they must have access not only to their own memories but to the national memory; they must be able to remember not only the things that happened to them as individuals but the things that happened to them as Americans. (3)

Michaels strategically extends Schlesinger's argument to the case of Jewish identity to avoid any question that genetic inheritance might form the base of Jewish identity: as Americans build identity not by racial allegiance--"Americans" belong to no one race--but rather through their individual access to collective memories, Jews maintain cultural identity by remembering the definitive, galvanizing moments of their shared history. "Being" a Jew is not a racial or even religious affiliation, but rather a function of the determination to remember, and not merely learn, the past: Jews are able to "transform history into memory" (Michaels 7) via the historicist capacity to "[redescribe] something we have never known as something we have forgotten and thus [make] the historical past a past of our own experience" (6).[132] A Jew is one who, "having experienced the Holocaust, can--even if he

[132] I want to clarify at this point that Michaels is not referring to the glib brand of "reconstructive" memory that Americans enjoy, a fetishistic memory which compensates for the loss of an object by proliferating its image. Daughter Buffalo presents an America which forecloses against immigrant memory (the Edelmans must sacrifice memory to become "staunch Americans") while at the same time indulging in a sentimental excess of memory through a fondness for monuments, dioramas, re-enactments, museums, and zoos dedicated to the genocides, wars, and crimes against nature which make up the nation's history. "I can't help admiring you Americans," Turnlung says to Talbot, "You're great killers, death is your way of life, but you're also great reconstructors of what you've killed. Only God can do that and get away with it" (87). America loves memories so much that it will kill an object for the pure pleasure of erecting a monument to it. America will hunt the buffalo, round up the survivors, and encamp them in zoos only to name its cities and football teams after them; America has loved its buffalo to death. Furthermore, the "traumatic experience" (DB 137) of Mother Buffalo and Daughter Buffalo in the novel is clearly a metonymic figure for the genocide and enclosure of the First Nations, who have also been "loved to death" by America; indeed I have borrowed the phrase from Rayna Greene, Cultural Historian of Indian Folklore at the Museum of American History in Washington D.C., who stated in an interview concerning the Disney "Pocahontas" marketing phenomenon that she has "often said that Indians have been loved to death" (CBC "Sunday Morning" radio program, 11 June 1995).

or she was never there--acknowledge it as part of his or her history" (13). Michaels distinguishes between "remembering" the past, in the special sense in which he uses the verb, and merely "learning" of it:

> it is only when it's reimagined as the fabric of our own experience that the past can become the key to our own identity. A history that is learned can be learned by anyone (and can belong to anyone who learns it); a history that is remembered can only be remembered by those who first experienced it and it must belong to them. (7)

In psychoanalytic terms no transference or working-through takes place in "learning," which merely places conscious knowledge beside unconscious material instead of replacing it.[133] The need to remember rather than learn history becomes imperative in the case of the Holocaust, the horror of which always exceeds representation. According to this perspective, the attempt to learn the Holocaust through explanation and empirical research denies the essence of the Holocaust by the very desire to seek and represent it. To bring the Holocaust within coherence, to reduce it by explanation (8), would be nothing short of an "absolute obscenity" (Lanzmann, qtd. in Michaels 8).

But how is it possible for one who "never was there" to have access to experiences "otherwise available to 'only those who' <u>were</u> there" (Michaels 7)? Michaels derives his

---

None of this is to say that the renewed interest in the Holocaust among historians and artists over the last decade is exempt from commodification. After all, Steven Spielberg's film "Schindler's List" took in $275 million at the box office.

[133] See Freud's essay "Transference" (1917):

> <u>Our</u> [the analyst's] knowledge about the unconscious material is not equivalent to <u>his</u> [the analysand's] knowledge; if we communicate our knowledge to him, he does not receive it <u>instead</u> of his unconscious material but <u>beside</u> it; and that makes very little change in it. We must rather picture this unconscious material <u>topographically</u>, we must look for it in his memory at the place where it became unconscious owing to a repression. (488)

Followers of Canada's comedy troup "Kids in the Hall" may bring to mind the scene in the film "Brain Candy" (1996) between the psychotherapist and Wally, a family man. The psychotherapist has repeatedly informed his client that he suffers from repressed homosexuality. Wally is curious but unmoved: he has learned of his homosexuality but still does not know it. Frustrated by the lack of progress, the therapist short-circuits the "talking cure" by prescribing a pharmacological intervention, the happiness drug "Gleemonex."

answer from a thematic commonality between Toni Morrison's novel Beloved and Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicist study Shakespearean Negotiations, both published in 1987. The past becomes present through the agency of ghosts, which "are not merely the figures for history as memory, they are the technology for history as memory--to have the history, we have to have the ghosts" (Michaels 7). It does not matter that this necromantic "conversation with the dead" turns out to be a conversation with oneself (6), for historicists avowedly conjure the dead to further the political exigencies of the present. Historicism invents a past to serve the identitarian needs of contemporary interest groups, representing both majority and minority cultures. "We don't get our identity from history," Michaels concludes, but rather "history gets its identity from us" (7).

Unencumbered by any obligation to conform to the anti-essentialism now dominant in contemporary theories of race, Frame in Daughter Buffalo is able to toy with the idea that memories may originate phylogenetically, with or without the intermediation of a ghost. Talbot's experience in the supermarket would suggest that "those who never were there" can be subject to a racial memory, a genetic prompting which overrides Talbot's goyim upbringing. Frame's thinking is more nuanced than this biologistic account, however, as suggested by Talbot's "puncept" based on the multiple meanings of the word "will."[134] In a dream following Turnlung's death, Talbot has a vision of his "blood kin" squaring off against his "life kin," "like families of the bride and the groom seated at a wedding ceremony" (196). I understand "blood kin," in context, to refer to Talbot's Jewish ancestors, and "life kin," to refer to his chosen family, "who being accessible to me beyond the conforming structure of the genetic code thus gave me the illusion of having a 'will' of my own" (196). "Will," foregrounded by inverted commas, puns on the dual meaning of the capacity for voluntary action and the written statement of one's testamentary gifts, implying that the phenomenon of involuntary genetic inheritance cannot be extricated from the

[134] A "puncept" employs puns as the basis for an epistemology capable of maintaining multiple meanings (including contradictory meanings) simultaneously. See Ulmer.

"wilful" action of passing on an inheritance. Inheritance is both a "given" for all--making up each person's genetic constitution constant from birth till death--and a "gift" for some, for those who are receptive to it.[135]

What, then, is the state of Talbot's "knowledge" throughout Daughter Buffalo? What has been given to him at the outset of the narrative, and what remains to be given? In one sense the past is inaccessible for Talbot: his grandfather has died unmourned and his parents have closed off memories of their own childhoods. In another sense the past is too present for Talbot, whose difficulty is not so much a failure to remember as an inability to forget an inherited trauma. The images which come unbidden to his mind when shopping at the supermarket show the history of his people repeating itself through him, in spite of his parents' endeavours to make of their son a "staunch American" (16).[136] The omissions of the parents are visited upon their son: their failure to "remember" the Holocaust and its consequences (geographical dislocation, childhood poverty, racism) reproduces a neurosis in Talbot, a "traumatic experience requiring excision by psychiatry" (137). As the Freudian formula puts it, Talbot must remember in order to forget. He must proceed from one modality of transference--the "transfer" or displacement of unconscious traumatic memory through three generations of paternal inheritance--to the "transfer" of affect which initiates healing. Talbot must begin to love. Fortunately the intervening agent of "psychiatry" for Talbot is no creepy Dr. Clapper--Daughter Buffalo rejects institutionalized remedies to historical ills--but rather a ghost.

---

[135] This idea appears, albeit elliptically, in A State of Siege. The narration lists "heredity," together with "conversion, sexual or filial love, extremes of human relations, [and] environment," among "[t]he grindstones that sharpen the senses," which "are not given to everyone" (SS 69-70).

[136] The prime example of Mr and Mrs Edelman's betrayal of inheritance is their approval of Talbot's sexual relationship with the decidedly Aryan "tall blond beauty" Lenore (16). The Edelmans turn a blind eye to the race of his partner in favour of a commercially favourable match, thinking of Lenore as "a real asset to the family" (17). "Panicking at the prospect of my never marrying," Talbot explains, "my mother had lowered her ethnic sights and searched for kinship rather than for differences in our backgrounds; her principal quoted example was that we were both from families which, though not native Americans, had since become staunch Americans" (16). Talbot does not tell his parents that Lenore's father "had been a Nazi official during the Second World War" (16).

The encounter between Turnlung and Talbot confirms that identity occurs only through dislocation, through what Diana Fuss terms "the detour through the other that defines a self" (2). Upon meeting Turnlung Talbot finds him both familiar and strange, comforting and intimidating: "I was overcome by a feeling of panic . . . . Then I had a strange feeling that I was a child and the man speaking to me was Grandfather. . . . I felt fear once more. . . . I was face to face with myself and I did not know how to act" (19, 20). Just as Turnlung must travel outside of his native land to America for his "death education" (21), Talbot's identity must be "brought home" to him: "Turnlung, I felt, had been carrying my life, entrusted with it in an unfamiliar land all these years while I, in my native land, tried to learn the language of the life imposed upon me" (143). Turnlung's country of origin, easily identified yet never named in Daughter Buffalo, stands as the shadow to America's pretensions of immortality, the borderland of dream in the terrain of American mythology. Turnlung's home country is an "unfinished" land (149), both more raw than America and more ancient: New Zealand is raw because unpeopled for so many millenia, still under historical process, and yet for that reason it is more ancient, because less overlaid or varnished by "civilization" with its psychic defences against death.

Now what of historical remembrance as an attempt to "converse with the dead"? Describing himself as a "tenured shaman," Stephen Greenblatt finds that his conversations with the dead end up being conversations with himself:

> Even when I came to understand that in my most intense moments of straining to listen all I could here [sic] was my own voice, even then I did not abandon my desire. It was true that I could hear only my own voice, but my own voice was the voice of the dead. (qtd. in Michaels 6)

Michaels comments that "the link envisioned in conversation is only made stronger by the discovery that the conversation is with oneself. Continuity is turned into identity" (6). The risk here is that tenured shamans might conjure tenured ghosts, those which represent the

past as a consolidation of the identitarian interests of the present. By contrast Turnlung's return destabilizes and radicalizes identity. He is a ragged ghost with "straggly grey hair," appearing first among the "old and derelict" (19). He is shockingly recognisable, his voice not Talbot's voice so much as the voice that Talbot has disowned. Talbot comes "face to face with [himself]" (20), but his reaction is to experience uncertainty and discontinuity with himself: he does not know how to act. What's more, Talbot and Turnlung do not merely converse but also date, in a fashion, and eventually have sex together. Turnlung is a sexual ghost, old but not incapable of achieving an erection, as he pointedly remarks to Talbot (116). If Talbot must "begin to love in order that [he] may not fall ill" (Freud, "On Narcissism" 42), why must he fall for another man?

Literary critics who have commented on Daughter Buffalo to date have not avoided Turnlung's sexuality so much as absorbed it and neutralized it. Shona Smith sidesteps the topic, focusing her feminist reading of the novel on Talbot's attitudes toward women, while Eve Scopes argues that Turnlung and Talbot are different aspects of one personality whose "joint project . . . is to break the ego apart" (148). Jeanne Delbaere comments concisely on Turnlung's kissing of Talbot as a moment of coherence between love and death ("Turnlung" 171), yet curiously elides the moment of sexual consummation itself. For these critics the sexual attraction between Talbot and Turnlung is, at best, a "homosexuality of no importance."[137] Judith Dell Panny addresses the issue more extensively, treating Talbot as an allegorical figure of Death in opposition to Turnlung as Life: "[t]he literal act of love is at the same time a figurative enactment of the orgasmic release of tension that may eventually accompany the moment of death. It is through love that Turnlung completes his death education" (Panny, I Have What I Gave 133). Panny adds, perhaps contradictorily, that "[w]ithin the allegorical dimension, the homosexual act is another sin like that committed in the Garden of Eden. But for Edelman, the amoral man of the future, it is

[137] The phrase is borrowed from D. A. Miller's essay "Anal Rope" (1991) in a passage theorizing connotative or indirect references to homosexuality as "the dominant signifying practice of homophobia" (D. A. Miller 122, 125).

simply an act of self-gratification" (136; Panny seems to conflate Talbot with The Adaptable Man's Alwyn Maude in this final comment). Panny unhelpfully introduces the dimension of sexual impropriety which is nowhere raised by the novel itself, and doesn't ask why it must be through homosexual love that Turnlung completes his death education.

Gina Mercer is more positive about the representation of homosexuality in Daughter Buffalo, welcoming Frame's explorations of "maleness in its diverse forms" (Janet Frame 185). Yet she too finds Talbot to be an unloving partner for Turnlung. Whereas "Turnlung's sexuality springs from his genuine love of men," "Talbot's homosexual desires . . . spring more from a fear and hatred of women" (185). "Talbot's narcissism," Mercer adds, "feeds itself in the relationship with Turnlung, a narcissism which not only loves itself but hates and fears the other":

> Talbot's feeling of hatred, expressed in the second encounter [DB 143-45],is partly fuelled by a realisation of man's lack. The two men, though genitally well endowed, become aware of an "insufficient ration of bodily parts" ([DB] p. 144). Is Janet Freud suggesting they experience vagina envy? (185)

Mercer perceives a mollification of Talbot's "misogyny and narcissism" (Janet Frame 185) following his experience of intercourse with Turnlung, but she too, like Panny, only grudgingly perceives mutuality in the relationship between the two men.

Why are these critics--with the partial exception of Mercer--so dismissive of, or negative about, the gay relationship in Daughter Buffalo? Why are they not positively excited about it? Or perhaps I should turn the question on myself, since I am the odd critic out here: why do I find the sexual involvement between Talbot and Turnlung so absorbing? Perhaps I feel starved for any other representation of homosexuality in Frame's fiction, and in the absence of any depiction of intimacy between women clutch onto the gay male relationship in

Daughter Buffalo as second best.[138] Perhaps I have fallen into the trap of pursuing a kind of "feminism without women," to use Tania Modleski's phrase. Or perhaps I have a falsely positive sense of Talbot's reformative potential because my principal point of reference for adult male sexuality in Frame's fiction has been Intensive Care, which is hardly a glowing account of masculinity.

At any rate, I want to pick carefully over the key terms that Mercer tosses off: narcissism, mirrors, love, lack, loss. How does it come about that the epithet "narcissistic" can be used pejoratively, as an accusation, as Mercer uses it against Talbot? What is the relation between narcissism and hatred of women--or hatred of one's homosexual lover, or even (against all expectation) hatred of oneself? Is Turnlung himself narcissistic, given Talbot's insight that in their lovemaking the "older and the younger Narcissus" confronted each other (DB 144)? How does the moment of Narcissus function in Daughter Buffalo compared to Intensive Care? And is it possible that learning to love oneself--as Whitney Houston puts it--might truly be the greatest love of all?

Narcissus was a Boy

Nobody likes to be called "narcissistic." In a limited sense the term denotes selfishness, self-absorption, a preference for "remain[ing] in the first person singular," and a tendency to receive more than one gives (DB 146, 143), all personality traits which Talbot displays flagrantly. It is the psychosexual dimension of narcissism, however, which will occupy me here, particularly the way in which narcissism can function as a finely directed insult while also being theorized as pandemic in human sexual desire and foundational in the development of subjectivity. To understand how narcissism can take both a general and a specific force, I will return once more to Freud's essay "On Narcissism," Frame's Intensive Care, and Ovid's Metamorphoses. Rather than examining the self-aggrandizing fantasies of

[138] As far as I know the only other gay character to appear in Frame's novels is the smooth, pale, and giggly Lawrence, who gives a cameo performance in The Edge of the Alphabet.

the narcissist, as I did in chapter two, I want to focus here on the circularity of narcissistic desire and its rupture in Daughter Buffalo.

In "On Narcissism" Freud sets out by defining narcissism simply as "the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way as otherwise the body of a sexual object is treated" (30). Posing the question whether narcissism "might claim a place in the regular sexual development of human beings" (30) he proposes a "primary and normal narcissism" (31) which "would not be a perversion, but the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature" (31). In primary narcissism the infant takes as his or her earliest sexual objects those who "have to do with the feeding, care, and protection of the child" (44). The self-interestedness of the infant's first steps in love never fully leaves the individual, remaining as traces in adult sexuality whether of the masculine "anaclitic" type, which I have discussed in the context of Intensive Care, or the feminine "narcissistic" variety.

So far so good: we are all narcissistic, children, women, homosexuals, schizophrenics,[139] and men alike. Yet some of us--women, homosexuals--are more narcissistic than others. Some of us are particularly susceptible to "secondary narcissism," in which the ego interests and the libido interests fall back into synch, together directed toward the self, as in infancy. Morality lurks behind temporality in this account, despite Freud's attempts at neutrality: if the masculine "anaclitic" lover gives only in the hope of a return to the investment of his self-esteem in the form of requited love (55), the feminine "narcissistic" lover cannot even "put out" in the first place. In her regression to an earlier phase of subject development she gives nothing yet expects every attention, self-attentive as a cat. As for homosexual love, the element of narcissism--presumably based on a morphological similarity between the lovers--seems evident enough to Freud to require no explanation beyond the statement that gays "are plainly seeking themselves as a love-object" (45), as if "gender amount[ed] to

[139] Freud uses the term "paraphrenic" in "On Narcissism" (31) for a condition later to be known as dementia praecox or schizophrenia.

alterity tout court" (Warner 193). Freud's attribution of narcissism to women can be neatly ironized, although not dismissed, by Spivak's five-word rebuttal in "Echo": "Yet Narcissus was a boy!" (17). In context, Spivak is reacting against Christopher Lasch's study of contemporary American malaise, The Culture of Narcissism (1983). Spivak does not seem to be suggesting that women can never be narcissistic, but rather protesting against an over-ready tendency to slap that attribution onto women, despite the contrary evidence of Ovid's tale.[140] Preferring to focus on the placeless place of Echo in the Narcissus myth, Spivak does not pursue the further detail that Narcissus was a boy who loved another "boy," in the form of his own image: his narcissistic love was necessarily homoerotic.

In "On Narcissism" Freud negotiates, sometimes implicitly, between a universalizing and a minoritizing account of homosexuality, without coming to a settled position on the matter.[141] Having established a general primary narcissism and a special parallel between this infantile state and adult homosexuality, Freud leaves implicit the concluding term of the syllogism which his observations set in train:

(i) narcissism is general

(ii) homosexuality is the epitome of narcissism

---

[140] Spivak writes:

> I started to think specifically about Narcissus when I came across Christopher Lasch's The Culture of Narcissism. The book seemed such an attack on the few social gains made by feminism. Yet Narcissus was a boy! . . . I turned to Freud and found that he too had located the richest examples of narcissism among women, especially women unfulfilled by the secondary narcissism of motherhood. Where was Echo, the woman in Narcissus's story? (17)

[141] I have borrowed the terms "universalizing" and "minoritizing" from Sedgewick's Epistemology of the Closet. The former perspective sees homosexuality as a determinant in all forms of sexuality, whereas the minoritizing account holds it to be relevant only to those who identify as homosexual. Homosexuality remained a paradox for Freud precisely because of its "troubling centrality to, and disruption of, the normal" (Dollimore 203). See further the long footnote in Freud's "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905), as emended in 1915 and 1920, in which Freud makes the famous statement that "all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious" (56n1). Luce Irigaray suggests that male homosexuality is suppressed by social law precisely because of its structuring role in Western societies: "because [masculine homosexual relations] openly interpret the law according to which society operates, they threaten in fact to shift the horizon of that law. . . . Once the penis itself becomes merely a means to pleasure, pleasure among men, the phallus loses its power" (This Sex 193).

(iii) homosexuality is general.

Later in the same essay Freud mentions that homosexual libido forms the ego-ideal, the self-monitoring effect which is "the most powerful factor favouring repression" (52), in turn a key function not only in the normal processing of the human mind but also in the formation of social law. Narcissism therefore lies both front and back of the subject, being both a lost infantile state and a future ideal:

> To [the] ideal ego is now directed the self-love which the real ego enjoyed in childhood. The narcissism seems to be now displaced on to this new ideal ego, which, like the infantile ego, deems itself the possessor of all perfections. . . . That which [man] projects ahead of him as his ideal is merely his substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood--the time when he was his own ideal. . . .
>
> Large quantities of libido which is essentially homosexual are in this way drawn into the formation of the narcissistic ego-ideal and find outlet and gratification in maintaining it. (51, 53)

The shorthand version of Freud's formulation is that homoerotic desire--more specifically, the love of an idealization of oneself--founds Western civilization.

Lacan makes overt the conclusion implicit in Freud's speculations, that homoerotic desire expresses the truth of desire itself, that ultimately it is "one's own ego that one loves in love, one's own ego made real in the imaginary level" (Lacan, qtd. in Silverman 4).[142] In Lacan's account homosexuality "is made exemplary of the tragic ontology of desire, which is condemned to the playing out of something like the Hegelian master/slave dialectic" (Dollimore 202). The homosexual

> exhausts himself in pursuing the desire of the other, which he will never be able to grasp as his own desire, because his own desire is the desire of the other. It is himself whom he pursues. . . . The intersubjective relation which subtends perverse

[142] Lacan would thus revise Freud's belief that an increase in object-libido (falling in love with somebody other than oneself, according to the anaclitic model) necessarily "impoverishes" ego-libido (love for oneself or attentiveness to one's self-interests) (Freud, "On Narcissism" 33).

> desire is only sustained by the annihilation either of the desire of the other, or of the desire of the subject . . . in the one as in the other, this relation dissolves the being of the subject. (Lacan, Seminar Book I: 221-22)

In pursuing the object of his love the homosexual merely ends up chasing his own tail, because what he finds attractive in the other is his anticipation of that man's regard for him and acknowledgement of him; as Lacan puts it elsewhere, to love is to want to be loved. Desire is extended only in the expectation that it will "rebound" to the self, a dynamic which occurs between heterosexual couples but is simply more obvious, according to Lacan, when the loved object has the same genital morphology as the lover.[143]

Homosexual desire thus becomes more "straight" than the straights', and heterosexuality is recast as structurally homosexual--a formulation which is startling or radical only at a superficial level. Both Freud and Lacan see love typically as an impasse, and a violent one at that. Despite his appeal to a Hegelian model, Lacan's conception of desire is not strictly speaking a dialectic, not an ongoing interaction between two terms; rather, "[i]n Lacan's theory the dialectic is less a process than an energized fixation permanently haunted by loss" (Dollimore 202). To this extent Lacan's choice of the word "exhausts" in the quotation appearing in the previous paragraph may be misleading. Perhaps the homosexual as an individual "exhausts" himself in pursuing his own image but desire itself, for which the homosexual's desire is an analogy, is never exhausted; desire may repeat but it never progresses or comes to term. In the homosexual scenario posed by Lacan desire remains fixed in a stalemate because of a situation in equilibrium: two gazes, two desires "match" or contest each other. In Freud's heterosexual model love is "suggestive of a neurotic

---

[143] To add a further complication, the comments on homosexual desire that I have quoted (Lacan, Seminar Book I 221-22) are, in context, directed to a sexual relation which is heterosexual in terms of genital organization but homosexual in terms of psychological structuration: the relation between Marcel and Albertine in Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, which Lacan terms a "quite stupendous analysis of homosexuality" (Seminar Book I: 221). We are led to yet another twist in the interplay between homosexual and heterosexual desire: a heterosexual relation gives the best, most "stupendous" example of homosexual desire which in turn provides the model for all desire.

compulsion" (Freud, "On Narcissism" 45)--a fixated repetition--precisely because it remains in permanent disequilibrium. The anaclitic masculine lover is most drawn to the narcissistic feminine lover, and vice versa: he will choose a woman who most absorbs his devotions and gives the least back; she will choose a man who, in a libidinal sense, feeds her to go hungry himself.

It seems to me that the "tragic ontology of desire" proposed by both Freud and Lacan neutralizes the subversiveness of their collapsing of the distinction between homosexual and heterosexual desire.[144] Little has been gained in presenting as normative a sexuality leading inevitably toward aggression and frustration. Whereas Freud merely hints at the anaclitic lover's "dissatisfaction," "doubts," and "complaints" ("On Narcissism" 46), Lacan places aggression front and centre in a model of desire grounded in possessiveness, self-oriented fantasy, and a physical, psychological, or epistemological battle for recognition. Frame's Intensive Care graphically, unremittingly presses home the violence of a love fixated in fantasy, whether at the level of "domestic" violence (the murders of Ciss Everest and Lorna Kimberley) or civic violence (the murder of Milly Galbraith and other "animals," with the narcissism of the masculine lover at a private level displaced onto the Human Delineation régime at a public level).

By contrast Daughter Buffalo is radical to me not because it depicts the only homosexual relationship in all of Frame's writing, but because it offers a love--contra Freud and Lacan--which steps outside of a self-consolidating homoeroticism. Paradoxically, the homosexual affair in Daughter Buffalo ends up being more "hetero-" or "difference"-oriented than the heterosexual affairs in Intensive Care; Daughter Buffalo is more capable of "imagin[ing] a moment when a large enough quantity of queerness is employed in the production of sameness that sameness itself will appear queer" (Bredbeck 178). In this sense the later novel offers a "cure" to the repeated waves of narcissistically-generated violence occurring

[144] And further for Lacan, the collapsing of Freud's distinction between anaclitic and narcissistic object-choice.

in the earlier novel. Here I must again acknowledge the tendentiousness of my reading of Daughter Buffalo, determined as I am to refurbish the "tragic ontology of desire" with a comic ending by drawing one for myself. And now for the last time--truly the last time--I would like to circle back to Intensive Care, this time in an effort to move beyond it, to find an escape route from the circularity and repetitiveness of the social relations that it portrays. In place of the reliance upon fantasy, wholeness, visuality, idealism, and a proprietary relation toward the other which possesses Tom Livingstone and his heirs-in-dream, Daughter Buffalo substitutes the principles of unpossession, ghostly visitation, lack, and reconciliation with the most degraded parts of oneself.

Owning Up

As early as 1966 Frame anticipated the concerns of Intensive Care in a narratorial comment occurring in A State of Siege: "a woman in middle age looks inward to snatch and rescue the desirable parts of herself; a man also looks and snatches, but he looks outward and his desperate capture is another human being, a woman--his wife, a mistress" (173-74). This statement insists on the gendered distinction lost in Lacan's homoerotic model of desire and foregrounds the possessiveness of the masculine lover downplayed by Freud.[145] In idealizing the object of his devotions the heterosexual masculine subject makes her image belong to himself; the lover's world becomes "struck with a presumption of idealization, of the suspicion of yielding [him] only [his] representations" (Lacan, Four Fundamental 81). In a narcissistic relation, objects exist in the world only for the subject's own psychic benefit. Idealization of an other therefore cannot be extricated from a proprietary orientation toward "her," for narcissism "cannot consist in finding satisfaction in one's own visual image. It must, rather, consist in the belief that one's own being exceeds the imperfections of its image. . . . [W]hat one loves in one's image is something more than the

[145] Freud perceives well the "desperateness" of the anaclitic masculine lover but downplays the element of possessiveness in his idealized love, his desire to "capture . . . another human being."

image" (Copjec 37).[146] Yet narcissistic desire can neither "own" nor "own up to" its object. An idealization exists to have but not to hold: as Narcissus found, one can reach out to one's reflection but never touch it (Ovid line 455)--at least, not without destroying the image and together with it the fantasy-prop of narcissistic subjectivity. The lover must be content to "gaze on what [he] may not touch" (Ovid ll. 478-79). Narcissism is therefore constituted visually and can only be maintained by warding off the moment of the "iste ego sum" ("I am that one!"), the moment of "owning up to" ownership itself by realising that the image one idealises is the product of one's own desire (Ovid 464).

Yet we know from the story of Narcissus, as well as from Intensive Care, that "owning up" as a moment of self-awareness does not suffice to break the drive toward "annihilation" that Lacan correctly locates in the narcissistic relation (Seminar Book I 222). Narcissus, after all, arrives at a moment of self-knowledge but is unable to step out of his fascination with his own image:

---

[146] I quote Copjec with some caution here, because her discussion of narcissism helps my own in some ways but muddies it in others. The context Copjec's comment is her correction of film theorists' attempts to graft together the fundamentally incompatible perspectives of psychoanalysis and Foucauldian historicism. Copjec is strong in elucidating the role of ownership in narcissistic idealization and insisting that narcissistic relations "unbind" society rather than guaranteeing compliance with ideology, as film theorists (according to her account) would have us believe. But I find Copjec misleading in first imputing the concept of "narcissism" to film theory and then attacking film theorists--she mentions Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Comolli, and Stephen Heath--for misunderstanding what narcissism is about. In brief--the debate is fascinating but not sufficiently relevant to Frame's fiction to address in more detail--Copjec tackles the film theorists' adaptation of Althusser's theory of interpellation. The viewer is "hailed" into ideology by identifying with "the images presented on the screen [which] are accepted by the subject as its own," as an image "of" the subject (21). Whether the images in question refer to an image depicting the subject or an image belonging to the subject, they have what Copjec (slightly misquoting Lacan) calls "that belong to me aspect so reminiscent of property" (21). "It is this aspect," Copjec adds, "that allows the subject to see in any representation not only a reflection of itself but a reflection of itself as master of all it surveys" (21). It seems to me, however, that the question of a subject coming into being through identification with hegemonic images differs subtly from narcissism as a model for desire. In assuming identifications the subject misrecognizes something not its own (the image) as something its own (an image depicting oneself, or an image belonging to oneself). By contrast one way of formulating narcissism is that the subject misrecognizes something its own (an idealized version of a person) for something not its own (the person him- or herself). See Copjec 15-38.

> I am that one! I realize it and my reflection does not deceive me.
> I am burning with a love for myself, I both excite the flames and suffer them.
> What am I to do? Am I to be wooed, or do I woo? And then, how shall I woo?
> What I desire is with me: my plenty has made me poor.
> Oh would that I were able to withdraw from my body;
> and, a strange wish in a lover, I should like what I love to be apart. (Ovid 464-69)

Narcissus is "bound" to the image of his own perfection because it is identical with his own desire: he is the image he adores. At the same time his exclusive infatuation with himself "unbinds" social relations--what Spivak terms the "call of relationship" or ethics (32).[147] To unbind himself as a "prisoner" of his own "exaltation" (Lacan, Four Fundamental 61), he must separate himself from himself, make what he loves apart from himself through the dual logic of alienated recognition: "where it [my image] is, I am [not]" (Spivak 24).[148] This Narcissus cannot do. Unable to give himself up, he beats his own breast until it bleeds and he finally dies, his body "wasted and dissolved / by love" (489-90).

The "unbinding force" of narcissistic desire, its necessary tendency to "conflict with and disrupt other social relations" (Copjec 23), is emphatically dramatized in Intensive Care's

---

[147] I must gloss Spivak's comment further to indicate a nuance of her thought which I have erased in my very selective quoting of her at this point. Spivak critiques commentators who present Narcissus as caught within an "invariable telos" by which "Narcissus marks an arrest where there should be a passageway to others or the Other" (Spivak 34). In other words the Narcissus myth is not simply a moralistic tale cautioning against self-absorption or selfishness in regard to other people. Rather, Spivak insists that the moment of Narcissus and the moment of Echo cannot be separated from their "deconstructive embrace" (32): where "Narcissus is fixed, Echo can disseminate" (38). Echo will take supplementary force in the narrative despite commentators' avoidance of her role. Spivak theorizes an ethical relation which is always present, a "passage between self and other" "crossed easily and imperfectly in the exchange of everyday life" (34), yet at the same time impossible in an absolute sense.

[148] See further Derrida's comments in his unpublished seminar of 25 Marc, 1992, "Le Secret, Séminaire inédit" ("The Secret, Unpublished Seminar"), referred to by Anne-Emanuelle Berger in "The Latest Word from Echo" (1996): "Narcissus, Derrida remarks, suffers doubly, from separation and nonseparation: he is cut off from the other, from 'the possiblity of the experience of the other' (says Derrida) for not being separated enough . . . . Thus, what [Narcissus] is asking for, explains Derrida, is 'transcendence, separation, the inaccessibility of the other, so that the other appears finally as it is'" (Berger 634, 635). Derrida's position put most succinctly: "'The love of self as other in separation, there's the elementary solution'" (635).

multiple murders. Despite the increasing self-consciousness of each of Intensive Care's three figures of Narcissus, none achieves the moment of the "iste ego sum," let alone anything like transference. Each character remains caught in the "moment of Narcissus," stated as the annihilating double bind that "if I make disappear what I cannot not desire, I disappear too" (Spivak 24). Tom Livingstone is completely absorbed by dream, murdering Ciss Everest to keep intact the image he holds of her timeless, doll-like state. Colin Torrance is at every point of his infatuation with Lorna Kimberley hyper-conscious of his foolishness, his abjection, and his sense that he has abandoned his own ground of subjectivity, but he never calls home to himself the idealized image he has created, beyond a dim but belated idea that "nothing is truly possessed that has life or the promise of life" (195). Colin Monk has the greatest ambivalence of the three characters, intuiting that those categorized as "animals" under Human Delineation are being slaughtered not because of their difference from the "human" but because of their uncanny similarity; nonetheless he holds to his attempts to exorcise the living dead through denial.

In short, the fictional world depicted in Intensive Care is based on the absence of relation. The sets of binaries which govern the conceptual structure of the novel--lack/plenitude, hunger/satiation, loss/return--remain stuck in mutual exclusivity, without the dialectical exchange that could move the action beyond repetition. Daughter Buffalo will remove the bar between these oppositions by insisting that a loss can be mitigated by further loss, that dispossession need not be violently traumatic, that loss can accrue to profit, and that what has been given can be kept. In learning ethics Talbot will become bound, not to his likeness, but to his "alien likeness": in meeting Turnlung Talbot will not recognise himself so much as have recognition thrust upon him. A dynamic of "dislocation" in both temporal and spatial terms (Talbot sees himself in the form of an old man from a foreign

land) will "locate" Talbot within his ethnic inheritance, the still living part of himself which he had once believed dead and excised.[149]

Two Seasons

In "On Narcissism" Freud establishes that the narcissistic mode of attachment not only takes present force but may also include a love for one's past self or future desired self. Freud writes:

> We may conclude these suggestions with a short survey of the paths leading to object-choice.
>
> A person may love:
>
> (1) According to the narcissistic type:
>
> (a) What he is himself (actually himself).
>
> (b) What he once was.
>
> (c) What he would like to be.
>
> (d) Someone who was once part of himself.
>
> (2) According to the anaclitic type:
>
> (a) The woman who tends.
>
> (b) The man who protects;
>
> and those substitutes which succeed them one after another. (47, 48)

In (1)(a) Freud's qualification of the word "himself" with the phrase "actually himself" is puzzling: why the apparent tautology? Freud does not specify which classes of people belong in (1)(a), though it presumably includes narcissistic women, who "love only themselves with an intensity comparable to that of the man's love for them" (46); possibly the category also includes homosexual men, who are "plainly seeking themselves as a love object" (45), though the "Greek love" model of male homosexuality between an older and a younger man would also belong in categories (1)(b) and (c) (see Silverman 362-73). What, then, is the relevance of the word "actually" in the English translation? "Actually" can refer both to a state which is factual (existent in reality) and current (existent now, in the present

[149] Unfortunately Talbot's realisation that psychiatry is a more efficient form of surgery than vivisection comes too late for poor Sally the dog, whom Talbot mutilates as a "diseased but living part of [him]self" (DB 141).

moment). Both meanings could be operative from a purely semantic perspective, yet in terms of Freud's own scheme neither prong of the word "actually" can have any force. As Freud notes, all forms of object-choice, including anaclitic object-choice, involve an "over-estimation" of the object which "is doubtless derived from the original narcissism of the child, now transferred to the sexual object" ("On Narcissism" 45).[150] Even the narcissistic woman does not love herself, "actually" herself, but the image of an idealized version of herself. Once this idealization is admitted, Freud's careful temporal scheme must also collapse, for idealization is psychically serviceable only if it stands independent of time. The subject loves an image of him- or herself precisely because it is possible to do with an image what one cannot do with one's own body: one can situate an image outside of time altogether in an effort to avoid the physicality of one's own body and its associated process of loss and aging. In all its forms Narcissism operates on a principle of synchronicity, as evidenced by the fact that the paradigmatic situation of narcissism, looking into the mirror, is a drama reliant more upon the spatial rather than temporal dimension.

What happens, however, if we take Freud at his word and add time to the equation which he sets up? My answer will lead quickly to Daughter Buffalo and its refusal of idealization in love, but I want first to make a stopover at a scene from The Adaptable Man to introduce one of the critical elements of Daughter Buffalo's overlapping temporalities, the intersection of what is with what was and what will be. The scene involves an exchange of looks between Greta Maude and her son's girlfriend, Jenny Sparling:

> Greta envied Jenny. She wanted sometimes to strike her. There had been the evening when Greta, deciding to have a bath and seeing that the others were

[150] Freud's comments on the "sexual over-estimation" of the object are potentially confusing. The anaclitic lover, apparently modelled on the courtly lover, idealizes the object of his devotions to the extent of damaging his own self-esteem. Such love exemplifies "true object-love with its accompanying sexual over-estimation" ("On Narcissism": 46). However, Freud also notes that over-estimation is a "sure indication of a narcissistic feature in object-choice" (48). Ultimately all forms of love seem to be narcissistic, whether the idealized image is projected onto oneself (Freud's category [1][a]) or someone else ([1][b-d] and [2][a-b]).

> absorbed . . . had crept upstairs and had begun undressing, when Jenny, not knowing she was in the bathroom, came in and saw her. She saw her touching the folds of her skin and thinking (for surely her thoughts were visible?), I'm like this. I never noticed it happening. I used to see it on old women when I was young. They shrink, the area of skin no longer fits edge to edge and bone to bone, it wrinkles like sand in a desert. And look down here, between my legs, hair has no color now, it's not even gray, it looks like ashes when the fire is out and there's no one in the room. (93)

Greta's self-image is mediated spatially as well as temporally: she sees herself being seen as a younger woman sees her. Greta experiences the moment of recognition as self-deflating, yet it is double-edged, for Greta's realisation, "I'm like this," is surely accompanied by a silent acknowledgement on Jenny's part: "I will be like this." Daughter Buffalo presents a scenario which is parallel but more involved: the novel splits this temporal encounter between three generations, not two, and folds the question of temporality into a more specifically masculine scenario of inheritance.

In his multiplex personality, alternately impersonating Talbot's grandfather, father, and Talbot himself (86), Turnlung encompasses Talbot's past, present, and future. In the guise of Grandfather, Turnlung makes present what Talbot "has been" by embodying his phylogenetic past, the disavowed part of himself that calls to him as a Jew when he experiences the gas chamber in the supermarket. Like Turnlung, Talbot is a male; like Turnlung, he will be an old man, his voice thin with spittle, his eyes milk-white, his body fluids flowing out. Talbot comes to desire what he will be--not what he would like to be[151]--in a reconciliation with the necessity of time and decay. He undergoes the same senility, the same "form of erosion" (148) as Turnlung: "[Turnlung's] body was in my own image though aged and much used, so that what I felt for him I also felt for myself; he gave me

---

[151] Contrast the Freudian dictum of desire, that "you cannot be what you desire [and] you cannot desire what you wish to be" (John Fletcher, qtd. in Dollimore 195), which the homosexual relationship in Daughter Buffalo breaches on several counts. Freud attempts to keep desire and identification separate from each other by insisting that in any homosexual relation one party cross-identifies with the other gender (see Fuss 11-12; Silverman 362-73).

permission to mourn and rejoice over my own life" (DB 144). The novel thus establishes a temporal crosshatching disallowed by the other three novels discussed in this thesis, for the meeting between Turnlung and Talbot enables "an ebbing of a tidal past to reveal the two aspects or ages of one landscape, two seasons under one sky" (86).

In conflating the "seasons" of youth and old age Daughter Buffalo works against a phallic inheritance which consists of the young man taking over his father's authority. Rather than coming into possession of the traditional guarantees of masculine identity--the father's name, title, property, and (hetero)sexual identity--Talbot comes into the estate of death and loss that his parents had denied him. An analogy with a cartoon which I came across recently might help explain what I mean. Parodying the hackneyed scenario in which the patriarch surveys his lands and promises his heir, "Son, one day all this will be yours," the cartoon depicts a father standing in the living room of a modest home holding aloft a fistful of bills and saying, "Son, one day all this will be mine." Turnlung as father-figure goes one step further in terms of dispossession, for he not only dramatizes the absence of phallic possession but also its impossibility. It is in this sense that Turnlung can bequeath what he does not have to Talbot:

> For him and Daughter
> Buffalo, I leave
> what I have not, what I have not had, and what I have. (183)

Talbot imagines this anti-inheritance as a scenario on the theme of "stepping into your father's shoes." After making love with Turnlung Talbot comments:

> I felt like a child whose father opens a closet to show the suit the child might wear when he is an old man; and when the father has left the room the child takes the suit and tries it on and walks up and down in front of the mirror saying, within the enormity of his idea of time, "This is me in two hundred years," contorting his face to his imagination and knowledge of how an old man's face may be, bending his back, his knees, quavering his voice. (144)

The symbolic mantle which Turnlung will pass over in the act of "investing" Talbot's masculinity will at one and the same time be a "phallic divestiture," to borrow Kaja Silverman's phrase, through the imaginative leap which skips the potency of flourishing manhood to arrive prematurely at the physical impotence of old age.

Daughter Buffalo thus tilts at a form of love based on phallic inheritance only to destabilize it through the age difference between the lovers; the double generational skip scars and wrinkles the idealized self-image that supports narcissistic identification. Neither Turnlung nor Talbot is able to reproduce himself fantasmatically in the other in the synchronic axis of narcissism. But my analysis of narcissism and temporality has skirted around one particular dynamic of paternal succession which the novel foregrounds. Through the pun on "will" we have already seen that Talbot envisions inheritance in at least three senses, involving the testamentary transfer of property, the genetic inheritance of physical characteristics, and Talbot's actualization of his "race memory," his ability to "come into" an incorporated ethnic inheritance through the effort to remember his own cultural and familial history. But there is yet another scenario of inheritance which Daughter Buffalo alludes to in its specific coupling of homosexuality and knowledge: the pedagogical transfer of wisdom from older to younger man. Does Turnlung not, ultimately, narcissistically double himself in the younger man through a kind of homosexual reproduction achieved through the transfer of the death secret? In rebuttal of this idea I will return to Plato and Socrates, this time to visit the scene of "Greek love" so marvellously skewed in Daughter Buffalo. Finally, I will be in a position to justify my claim that Daughter Buffalo radically reformulates masculine desire, not only for Turnlung but also for the young man who is his sexual partner and heir to the death secret.

Greek Love

In Plato's Symposium Socrates reports the theory of love given to him by Diotima, "a Mantinean woman . . . who was wise and skillful in this and many other things" (39).

Diotima proposes that the ideal form of love consists in the reproduction of an older man through the younger man he loves. This form of inheritance pointedly excludes any female mediation. Reproduction is wholly homosexual, "like father, like son." Earlier in The Symposium Pausanias has argued that any noble love between a man and a youth involves an exchange of gratification for wisdom: the younger man's "rule" is to please the older man, who in turn must take on the task of making his darling "wise and good" (25). Diotima's elaboration of this pedagogical contract ups the stakes for the older man, who not only receives gratification in exchange for his tutorial services but also gains the further benefit of immortalizing himself through his offspring. "Pregnant" with the judicious ideas which he has formulated during his life, the older man sets out to find a younger man to converse with and educate, with the aim of giving birth to his brainchildren. Then, Diotima continues,

> [w]hen he attaches himself to someone beautiful . . . and associates with him, he gives birth and brings forth what he was pregnant with before, both while in that person's presence and while remembering him when he's absent. Together with him he nurtures the offspring produced, so that such men have much more to share with each other and a stronger friendship than that which comes from rearing children, since they share in the rearing of children who are more beautiful and more immortal. (47)

By shaping the younger man in his own image the older man not only gives birth to his own ideas but also achieves the "rebirth" of himself.[152] This form of desire is clearly narcissistic on the older man's part, given that he loves along the lines of two of Freud's modalities of narcissistic love: he loves what he is (a male) and what he once was (a young man; see Silverman 364-66).

---

[152] See further David M. Halperin, "Why is Diotima a Woman?" in One Hundred Years of Homosexuality (1990), pp. 113-51. Halperin argues that Plato makes the educator of Socrates in The Symposium a woman so as to appropriate "the prestige of female procreativity" for men's cultural reproduction of themselves (144).

For Jane Gallop, the homoerotic model of reproduction through education is the basis of all pedagogy: "A greater man penetrates a lesser man with his knowledge. The student is empty, a receptacle for the phallus; the teacher is the phallic fullness of knowledge" (Thinking 43). If this model held true for the education of Talbot in Daughter Buffalo then it would be necessary to fault Turnlung, as much as Talbot, for a misogynist view of reproduction.[153] Such is not the case however. Quite apart from entering into impossible questions of anatomical specificity--Frame declines to report who, if anybody, or what, if anything, is penetrating whom in the sex scene between Turnlung and Talbot--this distribution of fullness and lack and the logic of auto-reproduction is precisely what Daughter Buffalo contests.

Turnlung and Talbot initially seem set up to play the Diotimean roles of the elder man of wisdom and his eager darling. Turnlung's mind is repeatedly figured as a stocked house being stripped, his body as a container slowly emptying its fluids:

> Soon I shall give up the first and secondhand furniture of memory.
> I shall live in a hollow house
> listening to the glint of the sun. (Prologue, n. pag.)

Talbot figures himself as an empty space waiting to be filled, as the potential complement to Turnlung's vacating of himself:

> I wanted the old men to enter me with all their baggage of history, their own past and the past of their ancestors, as if somewhere in my mind and body I kept an unstocked larder from which I was being constantly turned away in needless hunger when some act, some chance miraculously might have filled the empty shelves. (20)

---

[153] Feminist critics of Daughter Buffalo who cite evidence of Talbot's misogyny zero in on the passage in which Talbot announces his detachment from the processes of conception and procreation as baldly as a stage villain in some kind of feminist vaudeville (DB 126). See Smith, "Still Suppressing" 40; Mercer, Janet Frame 187.

Talbot presents himself as an empty larder in which Turnlung can permanently store all the nutritional goodness of his poetry and philosophy. What Talbot feels he lacks in turn is some secret that he could extract from Turnlung, or which Turnlung might bestow upon him, some "primer of death and beyond" (DB 88). After making love with Turnlung Talbot panics, fearing that Turnlung is using him as a vessel for his self-replication:

> he [Turnlung] had steered himself toward me, sensing that he could survive by emptying his life into mine. I felt afraid. I understood now why my mother had refused hospitality to my grandfather, though I did not forgive her refusal, and I did not forgive my own when I heard myself making it,
>
> "There must be some place you can go," I said. "I mean there are many places which cater . . . ." (147)

Talbot intuits that Turnlung has come to take as much as to give, a grasping which continues even after Turnlung's death: when identifying Turnlung's corpse at the morgue Talbot feels that "he [Turnlung] was demanding from me all my knowledge of him, my memories, my dreams, with a successful trick of haulage that I tried to resist. Where were the thoughts about death which I had hoped to prize from him?" (193). The stage seems set for Turnlung literally to bequeath himself, dying only to be reborn in his younger acolyte of death studies. Were the novel to conclude with the reproduction of Turnlung in Talbot it would merely replicate the morbid condition of America by sealing death off again through a fantasy of eternal life (see DB 27).

Luckily Daughter Buffalo quickly steps off this circular track, for neither Talbot nor Turnlung is willing to play along with the seamless auto-reproduction espoused by Diotima in The Symposium. Talbot's error was to mistake the nature of the "gift of death" that he hoped for and received. The gift of death does not comply with the logic of loss and profit, disposal and return, and nor can such a gift make itself a "present": it is a gift of something secret and hence inaccessible (see Derrida, Gift of Death 29). Turnlung has "entered" Talbot, not as a phallic fullness but as an absence which is permanently felt. Like a shell

held to the ear Turnlung "would become a personal echo of greetings, goodbyes, and though all in him would appear to be lost, nothing would be lost" (150). It's not that Talbot hasn't used Turnlung and disposed of him--he has--but that the disposal has left "valued . . . traces" (151) which will continually interrupt the polarization of lack and plenitude necessary to narcissistic desire, for Love, as Diotima argues, "is never either without resources or wealthy" (Plato, Symposium 41).

Now it is time to clear up a possible misunderstanding which may have been caused by my invocation of Harold with his purple crayon as the muse to this concluding chapter of my thesis. Sleepy after his adventures in the monster woods and the deep sea Harold finally arrives home by drawing for himself a house with windows and a bed to snuggle in. By contrast Daughter Buffalo is not a text which goes home to sleep, even though its final word is "sanctuary." Rather the reconciliation which takes place in Daughter Buffalo lies in the acknowledgement that, at least from a psychic perspective, such a home does not exist. Though the living may contract with death, no transaction--short of death itself--will finally "settle" death or expunge its uncanny force. The sanctuary which Talbot finds in Turnlung consists in this abandonment of safety, this embracing of shadow.

Afterword: Where to Write

It has struck me as both ironic and appropriate that I wrote this thesis on Frame, not in New Zealand, but in Vancouver, Canada. To pursue doctoral studies on the author I left behind her birthplace, Dunedin, which is also my home town. As an undergraduate I attended the same university as Frame, and I grew up near the neighbourhood where she lived as a first-year student. When my entrepreneurial brother contracted out part of his morning paper run to me (for 50¢), the cemetery that I galloped through in the pre-dawn darkness had been one of Frame's retreats a few decades earlier. Carroll Street, Queen's Drive, the Southern Cemetery--these names and places are foundational to me, and when I see them in Frame's autobiography, "the years make a hollow boom," as if one generation is turning to recognise another, or find its echo in another.[154]

Given that Frame's writing consistently turns around the question of geographical dislocation, what does it matter where one writes? Is there a "heartland" of Frame studies, geographically, emotionally, methodologically? As described in An Angel at My Table, Dunedin was a place of intellectual excitement for Frame, but also a place of terrible loneliness and despair; can a "heartland" also be a terrain of desolation? How might topographies of the mind correlate with geographical space in Frame's writing and its reception? What, after all, is an "exile of the mind," to use Vincent O'Sullivan's evocative phrase? The question of where to write is hardly new for participants in the literature of a settler society. "The Adaptable Man is a kind of novel which could not yet be written in New Zealand," wrote M. K. Joseph in a 1966 review, "for we do not yet sufficiently feel the pressure of the present or the past, and seem at present determined to hold the twentieth century at arm's length" (94). According to Joseph, New Zealand is not the place to find

[154] I remember the phrase "the years made a hollow boom" from Maurice Gee's novel, Plumb (1978).

words about contemporary topics, or to write from a contemporary point of view. Somehow, being insulated from the past makes New Zealanders numb to the present, or distant from it. But for Toby Withers in The Edge of the Alphabet, New Zealand is not the place to write about ancient and local topics either. Toby travels to London with the intention of writing his book about the "Lost Tribe," the people who haunt his imagination and who live, Toby believes, "behind a mountain approached through a secret pass . . . [i]n the South" (EA 216). His assumption seems to be that London is "the centre of the alphabet and at the centre language shall surely elude him no longer" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 107). The North, the origin of culture, is supposed to provide the means to shape and verbalize the inchoate energies of the South, the origin of experience. But Toby Withers and Zoe Bryce arrive to encounter "a mother culture that fails to recognise them" (R. Edmond 163); London disavows these strange travellers, disturbing shards of empire. Finding himself dislocated at the "centre," Toby eventually drifts back to New Zealand, having never written his book about the Lost Tribe.

A psychoanalysis of geography might take as its task, not the matching of physical geograpy to mental topography (North as consciousness, South as unconscious, for example), but rather the study of the accretions of place that inform subjectivity. It may be true, as the narration of A State of Siege suggests, that "environment," like "heredity," "is not given to everyone" (SS 69-70), and that an openness to place must be worked on, and worked-through, stripping away the "protective layers" provided by "land or hemisphere" (AM 261). It may be important not to ignore the promptings of one's "loyalties of place" (SS 117).

In the course of writing this thesis I have increasingly found psychoanalysis to be a powerful, compelling discourse of displacement and dislocation.[155] From a psychoanalytic

[155] There is some irony in reading Frame's texts through psychoanalysis, given Frame's history. In An Autobiography, Frame feelingly spoofs her invention of "a formidable schizophrenic repertoire" during her "talks" with John Forrest, the lecturer in first-year psychology at the University of Otago, who took an interest in Frame as a "case" and first suggested that she go into psychiatric care (201,

perspective, words always have some other centre: there is always something more, something other, than meets the eye. To write from one place is always to write of some other place, or to be written by it. This sense that there is something more to tell and more to find is basic to the decision to take on a text, to re-read it, analyse it, develop and interpret it. The co-creation of meaning between literary critic and text opens with what Steiner terms an "initiative trust" (296), or what Felman refers to as a transference on the part of the critic: the text is deemed to be the "place where meaning, and knowledge of meaning, reside" ("To Open the Question" 7). In particular, Frame as author-function stands for a set of postulates of profundity; Frame has become an auretic figure, for me as much as any of her followers. I open Frame's texts with an anticipation of finding some truth about the "human condition" revealed through an oracular sensibility. I look for something worth learning and taking to heart; I expect an inexhaustibility of meaning and even linguistic mastery. Frame's texts do not merely point their believers in the direction of some "other" place, but to some deeper place.

Nonetheless, part of my task in this thesis has been to interrogate the nature of this other place, what it ought to be, or what it could be. I have argued against maintaining the "beyond" as the locus of some truth (whether accessible or not) that would complete and explain the puzzles presented by Frame's novels. In the process of reading Frame, no agent --neither text, character, critic, or author--takes the place of the Other assumed to be capable of endowing a finalized meaning. Rather, what lies beyond remains both an external and an internal limit that can never be retrieved or overcome. Through the four novels discussed in detail, I have imagined subjectivity as the enfolding within the self of a little piece of death,

---

190). Though psychoanalysis per se was not responsible for Frame's years in New Zealand's understaffed and sometimes brutalizing psychiatric institutions, Frame's autobiography implies that a misapprehended version of the "talking cure" set her up for a career as a patient. Sometimes I have pictured myself as a female equivalent of the young John Forrest, "glistening with newly applied Freud" (Frame, AB 201), leaning eagerly toward Frame's work to catch textual hints of psychoanalytic terminologies, processes, and pathologies that are still new and wondrous to me--hopefully with more positive results.

a traumatic kernel, that can nonetheless make destabilizing, discomforting returns from outside the subject.

Intensive Care includes three lines of poetry that have stuck in my mind, in part--though this is the least reason--because of a niggle of scholarship, in not being able to trace their source. The lines read:

> But you my brother and my ghost if you can go
> knowing there is no reward, no certain use
> in all your sacrifice . . . (75)

What is it to come across another being who in one consciousness combines my brother--my blood relation, my comrade, my support, perhaps also my rival--with my ghost--the part of me that has died but does not rest in peace? Reading Frame is like this--like encountering that part of yourself that ought not be there, or the part that you thought you had left behind you, successfully murdered or disposed of. In the past few months of finishing this thesis, much of the uncanny effect of reading Frame's novels has derived from my state of "geographical bigamy" (Frame, AM 29). During a period when I was deciding whether I wanted in stay in Canada after my graduation, I found myself confronted every day by images of Dunedin that came to my mind randomly--ordinary places stark under the "whip and strike" of southern sun (Frame, ODC 130). There is always a place that cannot be left behind. Sometimes it catches up to you from behind, and other times it sneaks ahead of you, surprising you face-to-face as you turn a corner. Reading Frame is like encountering that interior geography, that place that tells you that you are not, entirely, in place.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abraham, Nicolas. "The Shell and the Kernel." diacritics 9.1 (1979): 16-28.

Abraham, Nicolas, and Maria Torok. "A Poetics of Psychoanalysis: 'The Lost Object--Me'." Trans. Nicholas Rand. SubStance 43 (1984): 3-18.

---. The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy. Trans. Nicholas Rand. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986.

Alcock, Peter. "Frame's Binomial Fall, or Fire and Four in Waimaru." Landfall 29 (1975): 179-87.

Alley, Elizabeth, ed. The Inward Sun: Celebrating the Life and Work of Janet Frame. Wellington: Daphne Brasell, 1994.

Antze, Paul, and Michael Lambek, eds. Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Asendorf, Christoph. Batteries of Life: On the History of Things and Their Perception in Modernity. 1984. Trans. Don Reneau. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.

Ash, Susan. "Janet Frame: The Female Artist as Hero." Journal of New Zealand Literature 6 (1988): 170-89.

---. "Scandalously In-different? Janet Frame, Postmodernism and Gender." Opening the Book: New Essays on New Zealand Writing. Ed. Mark Williams and Michele Leggott. Auckland: Auckland UP, 1995. 123-39.

---. "Urgent Journeys: Two Women Travellers." Australian-Canadian Studies 9.1-2 (1991): 53-65.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. "Appropriating Marginality: Janet Frame's The Edge of the Alphabet." The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures. London: Routledge, 1989. 104-109

Barringer, Tessa. "Frame(d): The Autobiographies." Unpublished paper presented at the Interdisciplinary Theory Conference, Canterbury University, 1993.

---. "Powers of Speech and Silence." Journal of New Zealand Literature 11(1993): 71-88.

---. "Trapped in the Looking-Glass." Rev. of Janet Frame: Subversive Fictions by Gina Mercer. New Zealand Books 4.2 (issue 14, 1994): 4-5.

Barthes, Roland. Roland Barthes. Trans Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

Bersani, Leo. Homos. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995.

The Best Years of Our Lives. Dir. William Wyler. Nelson Entertainment, 1946.

Bok, Sissela. Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation. New York: Pantheon, 1982.

"Bookenz: A Traveller's Guide to New Zealand Books." Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Book Council. n.d.

Bragan, Kenneth. "Janet Frame: Contributions to Psychiatry." New Zealand Medical Journal 100.817 (1987): 70-73.

Braid, Kate. "A Plea for the Physical." Canadian Forum June 1996: 10-13.

Brain Candy. Dir. Kelly Makin. Lakeshore Entertainment, 1996.

Bredbeck, Gregory W. "Anal/yzing the Classroom: On the Impossibility of a Queer Pedagogy." Professions of Desire. Ed. George E. Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman. New York: Modern Languages Association, 1995. 169-80.

Brooks, Peter. Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Brown, Ruth. "Hands Off Our Jane!" Meanjin 53.2 (1994): 283-94.

---. "The Rainbirds--and Other Dunedins." Journal of New Zealand Literature 10 (1992): 115-25.

---. "A State of Siege: The Sociable Frame." Journal of New Zealand Literature 4 (1993): 49-58.

Budick, Sanford, and Wolfgang Iser. "The Critical Turn: Toward 'Negativity' and the 'Unsayable'." Budick and Iser, Languages of the Unsayable xi-xxi.

Budick, Sanford, and Wolfgang Iser, eds. Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory. New York: Columbia UP, 1989.

Butler, Judith. "Desire." Critical Terms for Literary Study. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995. 369-86.

C., R. A. "Creative Gift." Rev. of The Adaptable Man. Press [Christchurch, NZ] 11 Dec. 1965: 4.

Carlin, Kathleen. "The Men's Movement of Choice." Women Respond to the Men's Movement: A Feminist Collection. Ed. Kay Leigh Hagan. San Francisco: Pandora-Harper Collins, 1992. 119-25.

Cheney, Charlotte. "New Novel Called Terrifying." Rev. of Intensive Care. Pittsburgh Press 10 May 1970, sec. 6: 6.

Clement, Shelley. "Frame to Screen." Onfilm Oct./Nov. 1989: 13.

Cliff, Michelle. No Telephone to Heaven. New York: Dutton, 1989.

Cohen, Jonathan. "On the Project of a Universal Character." Mind 63 (1954): 49-63.

Copjec, Joan. Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1994.

Corbett, Edward P. J. Rev. of Intensive Care. America [New York] 23 May 1970: 565-66.

Cowie, Elizabeth. "Fantasia." The Woman in Question. Ed. Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. 149-96.

Culler, Jonathan. On Puns: The Foundation of Letters. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

Danby, Dawn. "A State of Siege." And [Auckland, NZ] 2 (1984): 102-106.

Davis, L. J. "The Brittle Art." Rev. of Intensive Care. Book World [Washington Post and Chicago Tribune] 3 May 1970: 8.

Davis, Philip J., and Reuben Hersh. Descartes' Dream: The World According to Mathematics. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986.

Delbaere, Jeanne. "Beyond the Word: Scented Gardens for the Blind." Delbaere, The Ring of Fire 97-109.

---, ed. Bird, Hawk, Bogie: Essays on Janet Frame. Aarhus, Den.: Dangaroo, 1978.

---, ed. The Ring of Fire: Essays on Janet Frame. Aarhus, Den.: Dangaroo, 1992.

---. "Turnlung in the Noon Sun: An Analysis of Daughter Buffalo." Delbaere, The Ring of Fire 161-76.

Delbaere-Garant, Jeanne. "The Divided Worlds of Emily Brontë, Virginia Woolf, and Janet Frame." English Studies 60 (1979): 699-711.

Delrez, Marc. "Love in a Post-Cultural Ditch: Janet Frame." Kunapipi 13.3 (1991): 108-116.

Derrida, Jacques. "Adieu." Critical Inquiry 23.1 (1996): 1-10.

---. The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation. Ed. Christie V. McDonald. Trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronnell. New York: Schocken, 1985.

---. "Fors." Trans. Barbara Johnson. Georgia Review 31.1 (1977): 64-116. Rpt. In Abraham and Torok, The Wolf Man's Magic Word xi-xlviii.

---. The Gift of Death. Trans. David Wills. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1995.

---. Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1992.

---. "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." Budick and Iser, Languages of the Unsayable 3-70.

---. "Limited Inc. a b c . . . ." Trans. Samuel Weber. Glyph 2. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977. 162-254.

---. Of Grammatology. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.

---. Positions. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1981.

---. "Proverb: 'He that would pun . . .'." GLASsary. John P. Leavey, Jr. Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1986. 17-20.

---. "Sending: On Representation." Social Research 49.2 (1982): 294-326.

---. Writing and Difference. 1967. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978.

Dollimore, Jonathan. Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault. Oxford, UK: Clarendon-Oxford UP, 1991.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. Crime and Punishment. Trans. Constance Garnett. Intro. Clifton Fadiman. New York: Random, 1956.

Dupont, Victor. "Editor's Postscript." Commonwealth [France] 1 (1974-75): 175-76.

Easton, Elizabeth. Rev. of Intensive Care. Saturday Review 1 Aug. 1970: 29, 37.

Edelman, Lee. Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Edelstein, Arthur. "Art and Artificiality in Some Recent Fiction." Rev. of Intensive Care. Southern Review [USA] ns 9 (1973): 736-44.

Edmond, Lauris. "Janet Frame: Writer." Affairs [NZ] Nov. 1972: 10-11.

Edmond, Rod. "'In Search of the Lost Tribe': Janet Frame's England." Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction. Ed. A. Robert Lee. London, Eng.: Pluto, 1995. 161-73.

Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Debating Texts: Readings in Twentieth Century Literary Theory and Method. Ed. Rick Rylance. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987. 6-11.

Essid, Joe. "No God But Electricity: American Literature and Technological Enthusiasm in the Electrical Age, 1893-1939." Diss. Indiana U, 1993.

Evans, Patrick. "Alienation and the Imagery of Death: The Novels of Janet Frame." Meanjin 32 (1973): 294-303.

---. "At the Edge of the Alphabet." Delbaere, The Ring of Fire 82-91.

---. "The Case of the Disappearing Author." Journal of New Zealand Literature 11 (1993): 11-20.

---. "'Farthest from the Heart': The Autobiographical Parables of Janet Frame." Modern Fiction Studies 27 (1981): 31-40.

---. "Filming Fiction." Illusions [NZ] 15 (1990): 14-17.

---. Janet Frame Boston: Twayne, 1977.

---. "Janet Frame and the Adaptable Novel." Landfall 25 (1971): 448-49, 451, 453, 455

---. "The Muse as Rough Beast: The Autobiography of Janet Frame." Untold [Christchurch, NZ] 6 (1986): 1-10.

---. "New Zealand Mythmaker." Rev. of Intensive Care. Islands os 1 (1972): 180-83.

---. "Paradise or Slaughterhouse: Some Aspects of New Zealand Proletarian Fiction." Islands ns 8 (1980): 71-85.

---. "The Provincial Dilemma, 3: New Zealand as Vietnam: The World's Wars in New Zealand." Landfall 31 (1977): 9-22.

Fabian, Johannes. Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object. New York: Columbia UP, 1983.

Farrell, Fiona. "Sharing in the Shadows." Alley 120-26.

Felman, Shoshana. "To Open the Question." Yale French Studies 55/56 (1977): 5-10.

---. What Does a Woman Want?: Reading and Sexual Difference. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993.

Felman, Shoshana, and Dori Laub, eds. Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and Art. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Ferrier, Carole. "Dualities and Differences Revisited: Recent Books on Janet Frame." Hecate 20.2 (1994): 251-58.

---. Preface and Afterword. The Janet Frame Reader. By Janet Frame. Ed. and comp. Carole Ferrier. London: Women's Press, 1995. 11-22, 207-24.

"Filming a Trilogy." Southern Skies June 1989: 6-7.

Finney, Vanessa. "Speaking for Herself: The Autobiographies of Janet Frame." MA thesis. U of Sydney, 1993.

---. "What Does 'Janet Frame' Mean?" Journal of New Zealand Literature 11 (1993): 193-205.

Fletcher, Beryl. The Word Burners. Wellington: Daphne Brasell, 1991.

Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977. 139-64.

---. "What is an Author?" Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977. 113-38.

---. "What is an Author?" Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism. Ed. J. V. Harari. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1979. 141-60.

"Frame (Clutha), Janet (Paterson)." World Authors 1950-1970. Ed. John Wakeman. New York: Wilson, 1975. 487-89.

Frame, Janet. The Adaptable Man. New York: Braziller, 1965.

---. "Alone on a River of Words." With Rosemary Vincent. New Zealand Times [Wellington, NZ] 2 Oct. 1983: 9.

---. "Artists' Retreats." With Claire Henderson. Listener 27 July 1970: 13.

---. An Autobiography. New York: Braziller, 1991.

---. "A Boy's Will." Landfall 20.4 (1966): 314-23.

---. The Carpathians. Auckland: Century Hutchinson, 1988.

---. Daughter Buffalo. New York: Braziller, 1972.

---. "Departures and Returns." Writers in East-West Encounter: New Cultural Bearings. Ed. Guy Amirthanayagam. London, UK: Macmillan, 1982. 85-94.

---. The Edge of the Alphabet. New York: Braziller, 1962.

---. Faces in the Water. New York: Braziller, 1961.

---. Intensive Care. New York: Braziller, 1970.

---. The Lagoon. Christchurch: Caxton, 1951.

---. "Janet Frame." Beginnings: New Zealand Writers Tell How They Began Writing. Ed. Robin Dudding. Wellington: Victoria UP, 1980. 26-34.

---. The Janet Frame Reader. Ed. and comp. Carole Ferrier. London: Women's Press, 1995.

---. Living in the Maniototo. New York: Braziller, 1979.

---. Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun. New York: Braziller, 1969.

---. Owls Do Cry. 1957. New York: Braziller, 1960.

---. The Pocket Mirror. New York: Braziller, 1967.

---. The Reservoir. London, Eng.: Phoenix-Orion, 1996.

---. Scented Gardens for the Blind. New York: Braziller, 1964.

---. A State of Siege. New York: Braziller, 1966.

---. Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room. New York: Braziller, 1969.

---. You Are Now Entering the Human Heart. Wellington: Victoria UP, 1983.

Freud, Sigmund. "Analysis Terminable and Interminable." SE vol. 23. 216-53.

---. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. 1920. Trans James Strachey. New York: Bantam, 1959.

---. "The Dynamics of Transference." SE vol. 12. 99-108.

---. "Female Sexuality." On Sexuality. Trans James Strachey. Pelican Freud Library vol. 7. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1973. 367-92.

---. "Mourning and Melancholia." SE vol. 14. 243-58.

---. "Observations on Transference-Love." SE vol. 12. 159-71.

---. "On Narcissism: An Introduction." Collected Papers. Vol. 4. New York: Basic Books, 1959. 4 vols. 30-59.

---. "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through." SE vol. 12. 147-56.

---. "Repression." Collected Papers. Vol. 4. London: Hogarth P and the Institute of Psychoanalysis. New York: Basic Books, 1959. 4 vols. 84-97.

---. "Screen Memories." SE vol. 3. 303-22.

---. "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death." SE vol. 14. 275-302.

---. "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality." On Sexuality. Trans James Strachey. Pelican Freud Library vol. 7. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1973. 46-169.

---. "Transference." Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. Trans James Strachey. Pelican Freud Library vol. 1. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1973. 482-500.

---. "The Unconscious." SE vol. 14. 166-215.

Fromm, Harold. "From Transcendence to Obsolescence: A Route Map." 1978. The Ecocriticism Reader. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1996. 30-39.

Fuss, Diana. Identification Papers. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Gallop, Jane. Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction. London: Macmillan, 1982.

---. Reading Lacan. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985.

---. Thinking Through the Body. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.

Gee, Maurice. Plumb. Auckland: Oxford UP, 1979.

Glendinning, Victoria. Electricity. London: Hutchinson, 1995.

Graham, Desmond. "Intelligence and Wit." Rev. of The Adaptable Man. Journal of Commonwealth Literature 4 (1967): 148-50.

Grosz, Elizabeth. Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction. London: Routledge, 1990.

Gurr, Andrew. "NOT Living in the Maniototo." Unpublished paper presented at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1996.

Hacking, Ian. "Memory Sciences, Memory Politics." Antze and Lambek 67-87.

Hagège, Claude. "Writing: The Invention and the Dream." The Alphabet and the Brain: The Lateralization of Writing. Ed. Derrick de Kerckhove and Charles J. Lumsden. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1988. 72-83.

Halperin, David M. One Hundred Years of Homosexuality, and Other Essays on Greek Love. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Hansson, Karin. The Unstable Manifold: Janet Frame's Challenge to Determinism. Lund, Sweden: Lund UP, 1996.

Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto." Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge, 1991. 149-81.

Harris, Wilson. "Scented Gardens for the Blind." Delbaere, The Ring of Fire 92-96.

Hartman, Geoffrey. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies." New Literary History 26.3 (1995): 537-63.

Hawes, Tara. "The Self as Other/Othering the Self." Deep South [U of Otago English Department electronic journal, Dunedin] 1.1 (1995). N. pag.

Hayward, Margaret, and Joy Cowley, ed. Women Writers of New Zealand 1932-1982: Jubilee History and Writings of the New Zealand Women Writers' Society. Wellington: Colonial Associates, 1942.

Herman, Judith Lewis. Trauma and Recovery. New York: BasicBooks, 1992.

Ionesco, Eugène. The Bald Soprano. Trans. Donald M. Allen. New York: Grove, 1956.

Irigaray. "The Language of Man." Trans. Erin G. Carlston. Cultural Critique 13 (1989): 191-202.

---. "Questions to Emmanuel Levinas." The Irigaray Reader. Ed. Margaret Whitford. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991. 178-89.

---. This Sex Which Is Not One. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985.

Irvine, Lorna M. Critical Spaces: Margaret Laurence and Janet Frame. Columbia, SC: Camden, 1995.

"It, With, and Without." Rev. of The Adaptable Man. Times Literary Supplement 21 Oct. 1965: 933.

"Janet Frame Set for Posterity." Oamaru Mail [New Zealand] 17 Oct. 1984.

Johnson, Barbara. "Muteness Envy." Human, All Too Human. Ed. Diana Fuss. New York: Routledge, 1996. 131-48.

Johnson, Crockett. Harold and the Purple Crayon. N.p.: Harper Collins, 1955.

Jones, Lawrence. "No Cowslip's Bell in Waimaru: The Personal Vision of Owls Do Cry." Landfall 24 (1970): 280-96. Rpt. as "Janet Frame: No Cowslip's Bell in Waimaru: The

Personal Vision of Owls do Cry." Barbed Wire and Mirrors. By Jones. Dunedin, NZ: U of Otago P, 1987. 175-84, 259.

---. "Versions of the Dream: Literature and the Search for Identity." Culture and Identity in New Zealand. Ed. David Novitz and Bill Willmott. [Wellington]: GP Books, 1989. 187-211.

Joseph, M. K. Rev. of The Adaptable Man. Landfall 20 (1966): 92-95.

Kamuf, Peggy. "Introduction: Between the Blinds." A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds. By Jacques Derrida. Ed. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. xiii-xliii.

Kermode, Frank. "Endings, Continued." Budick and Iser, Languages of the Unsayable 71-94.

---. The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1979.

Knights, L. C. "How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?" Explorations: Essays in Criticism Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century. N. p.: New York UP, 1964. 15-54.

Kojève, Alexandre. Introduction to the Reading of Hegel. Trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. Ed. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1969.

Lacan, Jacques. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1981.

---. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. John Forrester. New York: Norton, 1991.

LaCapra, Dominick. "History and Memory: The Shadow of the Holocaust." Cecil and Ida Green Lecture. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., 19 Oct. 1996.

---. "Lanzmann's Shoah: 'Here There Is No Why'." Critical Inquiry 23.2 (1997): 231-69.

Laclau, Ernesto. New Reflections on a Revolution of Our Time. London: Verso, 1990.

Lambek, Michael, and Paul Antze. "Introduction: Forecasting Memory." Antze and Lambek xi-xxxviii.

Laplanche, L. and J.-B. Pontalis. The Language of Psychoanalysis. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Norton, 1973.

Larson, Gary. The Far Side Observer. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1987.

Laub, Dori. "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening." Felman and Laub 57-74.

---. "An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival." Felman and Laub 75-92.

Lawn, Jennifer. "Docile Bodies: Normalization and the Asylum in Owls Do Cry." Journal of New Zealand Literature 11 (1993): 178-87.

---. "The Many Voices of Owls Do Cry: A Bakhtinian Approach." Journal of New Zealand Literature 8 (1990): 87-105.

Lerner, Richard M. Final Solutions: Biology, Prejudice, and Genocide. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1992.

Levinas, Emmanuel. "The Trace of the Other." Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 345-59.

Leys, Ruth. "Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory." Antze and Lambek 103-145.

Litvak, Joseph. "Discipline, Spectacle, and Melancholia in and around the Gay Studies Classroom." Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation. Ed. Jane Gallop. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. 19-27.

McCaffery, Steve. North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-1986. New York: Roof, 1986.

McCarren, Felicia. "The 'Symptomatic Act' Circa 1900: Hysteria, Hypnosis, Electricity, Dance." Critical Inquiry 21.4 (1995): 748-74.

McLeod, Marion. "Dark Angel." The Guardian [Manchester, UK] 6 Dec. 1990: 38.

McLuhan, Marshall. "The Effect of the Printed Book in the 16th Century." Explorations in Communication: An Anthology. Ed. Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan. Boston: Beacon, 1960.

McNaughton, Howard. "Fraying the Edge of an Alphabet." SPAN 36 (1993): 131-43.

Malterre, Monique. "Myths and Esoterics: A Tentative Interpretation of A State of Siege." Delbaere, The Ring of Fire 120-25.

Manville, W. H. "Boring from Within." Rev. of The Adaptable Man. Sunday Herald Tribune: Book Week [New York] 3 Oct. 1965: 19.

Mercer, Gina. Janet Frame: Subversive Fictions. Dunedin, NZ: U of Otago P, 1994.

---. "'A Simple Everyday Glass': The Autobiographies of Janet Frame." Journal of New Zealand Literature 11 (1993): 41-48.

Michaels, Walter . "'You who never was there': Slavery and the New Historicism, Deconstruction and the Holocaust." Narrative 4.1 (1996): 1-16.

Miller, D. A. "Anal Rope." Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories. Ed. Diana Fuss. New York: Routledge, 1991. 119-41.

---. Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981.

---. The Novel and the Police. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1988.

Miller, J. Hillis. "Heart of Darkness Revisited." Conrad Revisited: Essays for the Eighties. Ed. Ross C. Murfin. N. p.: U of Alabama P, 1985. 31-50.

Moore, Lindsey. "Revising the Invisible: Autobiographies by New Zealand Women." MA thesis. U of Canterbury, 1995.

Moynahan, Julian. "A Sort of Anzac Peter Ibbetson and Family." Rev. of Intensive Care. New York Times Book Review 3 May 1970: 4.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. The Inoperative Community. Ed. Peter Connor. Trans. Peter Connor et al. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991.

"Noted N.Z. Writer is 'Inspired by People'." New Zealand Herald [Auckland, NZ] 22 Oct. 1963 sec.2: 1.

Nye, David E. Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880-1941. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990.

O'Brien, Susie. "'Little Ole Noo Zealand': Representations of NZ-US Relations in Janet Frame's The Carpathians." Kunapipi 15.1 (1993): 94-102.

---. "New World Disorder: The Place of the United States in Post-Colonial Fiction." Diss. Queen's University (Kingston, Canada), 1995. 277 pp.

O'Neill, Eugene. Dynamo. Lazarus Laughed and Dynamo: Two Plays by Eugene O'Neill. London: Jonathan Cape, 1929.

O'Sullivan, Vincent. "Exiles of the Mind--the Fictions of Janet Frame." A Sense of Exile: Essays in the Literature of the Asia-Pacific Region. Ed. Bruce Bennett. Perth: Centre for Studies in Australian Literature (University of Western Australia), 1988. 181-87.

Ovid. ["Narcissus."] Ovid: Metamorphoses I-IV. Ed. and trans. D. E. Hill. Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1985. 107-115.

Panny, Judith Dell. "A Hidden Dimension in Janet Frame's Fiction." Journal of New Zealand Literature 11 (1993): 59-70.

---. I Have What I Gave: The Fiction of Janet Frame. Wellington: Daphne Brasell, 1992.

Paris, Joel. "A Critical Review of Recovered Memories in Psychotherapy: Part I--Trauma and Memory." Canadian Journal of Psychiatry 41.4 (1996): 201-205.

---. "A Critical Review of Recovered Memories in Psychotherapy: Part II--Trauma and Therapy." Canadian Journal of Psychiatry 41.4 (1996): 206-210.

---. "Editorial: Recovered Memories in Psychotherapy." Canadian Journal of Psychiatry 41.4 (1996): 199-200.

Pearson, Bill. "Fretful Sleepers." Landfall 6.3 (no. 23, 1952): 201-230. Rpt. in Fretful Sleepers and Other Essays. Auckland: Heinemann, 1974. 1-32.

Petch, Simon. "Speaking for Herselves: The Autobiographical Voices of Janet Frame." Southerly 54.4 (1994-95): 44-58.

Pickover, Clifford A. Chaos in Wonderland: Visual Adventures in a Fractal World. New York: St. Martin's, 1994.

Plato. Phaedo. Trans. David Gallop. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.

---. The Symposium and the Phaedrus: Plato's Erotic Dialogues. Trans. William S. Cobb. Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 1993.

Platz, Norbert H. "Janet Frame's Novels and the Disconcert in the Reader's Mind." Anglistentag [Marburg, Germany] 12 (1991): 413-28.

Rand, Nicholas. "Psychoanalysis with Literature: An Abstract of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's The Shell and the Kernel." Oxford Literary Review 12.1-2 (1990): 57-62.

Rashkin, Esther. Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992.

Redman, Walter. Puns. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

Reid, Ian. "The Dark the Dull and the Dirty." Rev. of Intensive Care. Australian Book Review 10 (1972): 258.

Rhodes, H. Winston. "Preludes and Parables: A Reading of Janet Frame's Novels." Landfall 26 (1972): 135-46.

Robins, Kevin, and Les Levidow. "Soldier, Cyborg, Citizen." Resisting the Virtual Life: The Culture and Politics of Information. Ed. James Brook and Iain A. Bond. San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 1995. 105-113.

Rose, Jacqueline. Why War?--Psychoanalysis, Politics, and the Return to Melanie Klein. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Rotman, Brian. Ad Infinitum: The Ghost in Turing's Machine. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1993.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "Essay on the Origin of Languages." The First and Second Discourses . . . . Ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch. New York: Perennial Library-Harper & Row, 1986. 239-375.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. Disenchanted Night: The Industrialisation of Light in the Nineteenth Century. 1983. Trans. Angela Davies. Oxford: Berg, 1988.

Schwartz, Susan. "Dancing in the Asylum: The Uncanny Truth of the Madwoman in Janet Frame's Fiction." Ariel [Calgary] 27.4 (1996): 113-27.

Scopes, Eve. "Revisioning Daughter Buffalo." Journal of New Zealand Literature 11 (1993): 144-51.

Schwenger, Peter. Letter Bomb: Nuclear Holocaust and the Exploding Word. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992.

---. "Writing the Unthinkable." Critical Inquiry 13.1 (1986): 33-48.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. Epistemology of the Closet. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990.

Serres, Michel. Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy. Ed. Josué V. Harari and David F. Bell. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982.

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. Ed. Harold Jenkins. Arden Shakespeare Series (Third Series). London: Routledge, 1994.

Sharp, Iain. "A Bluffer's Guide to Janet Frame." Quote Unquote 9 (1994): 16-18.

Silverman, Kaja. Male Subjectivity at the Margins. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Simon, Roger I. "Face to Face with Alterity: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy." Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation. Ed. Jane Gallop. Bloomington, IA: Indiana UP, 1995. 90-105.

Sinclair, Keith. 1969. A History of New Zealand. 2nd rev. ed. Harmondsworth (UK): Penguin, 1973.

Smith, Shona. "Still Suppressing . . . : Reviewers & Daughter Buffalo. Untold [Christchurch, NZ] 8 (1987): 38-41.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Echo." New Literary History 24.1 (1993): 17-43.

Starobinski, Jean, ed. Words Upon Words: The Anagrams of Ferdinand de Saussure. Trans. Olivia Emmet. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1979.

Stein, Gertrude. Wars I Have Seen. New York: Random House, 1945.

Steiner, George. After Babel: Aspects of Translation. London: Oxford UP, 1975.

Tansley, Rebecca. "Self-Centred Cinema: Language and the Writer in An Angel at My Table." Antic [Auckland, NZ] 8 (1990): 52-53.

Trinh T. Minh-ha. When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Ulmer, Gregory. "The Puncept in Grammatology." On Puns: The Foundation of Letters. Ed. Jonathan Culler. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988. 164-89.

Vessey, Mark. "The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature." Journal of Early Christian Studies 4.4 (1996): 495-513.

Vince, Thomas L. Rev. of Intensive Care. Best Sellers [USA] 15 June 1970: 119.

Warner, Michael. "Homo-Narcissism; Or, Heterosexuality." Engendering Men: The Question of Feminist Criticism. Ed. Joseph A. Boone and Michael Cadden. New York: Routledge, 1990. 190-206.

Williams, Mark. Leaving the Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists. Auckland: Auckland UP, 1990.

Zizek, Slavoj. "Fantasy as Political Category: A Lacanian Approach." JPCS: Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society 1.2 (1996): 77-85.

---. Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1991.

---. The Sublime Object of Ideology. London: Verso, 1989.