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ALLEGORY IN THE FICTION OF JANET FRAME

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in English at Massey University.

**Judith Dell Panny
1991.**

ABSTRACT

This investigation considers some aspects of Janet Frame's fiction that have hitherto remained obscure. The study includes the eleven novels and the extended story "Snowman, Snowman". Answers to questions raised by the texts have been found within the works themselves by examining the significance of reiterated and contrasting motifs, and by exploring the most literal as well as the figurative meanings of the language. The study will disclose the deliberate patterning of Frame's work. It will be found that nine of the innovative and cryptic fictions are allegories. They belong within a genre that has emerged with fresh vigour in the second half of this century. All twelve works include allegorical features.

Allegory provides access to much of Frame's irony, to hidden pathos and humour, and to some of the most significant questions raised by her work. By exposing the inhumanity of our age, Frame prompts questioning and reassessment of the goals and values of a materialist culture. Like all writers of allegory, she focuses upon the magic of language as the bearer of truth as well as the vehicle of deception. She shows that language, in transferring culture and custom from generation to generation, is an instrument of immense power; it may create and preserve, or it may instigate destruction.

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July 1991

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all those who have made this study possible, I extend my thanks.

I would like to thank Janet Frame for her hospitality and her courteous interest in my work.

I have appreciated the careful attention, perceptive questioning and efficiency of my supervisor Dr William Broughton, and have appreciated the critical response of Dr Doreen D'Cruz as second supervisor. I would like to thank Dr Peter Brown for discussion on the topics of Myth and Rilke, Dr John Muirhead for sharing his expertise on *Paradise Lost*, Dr John Ross for his advice in bibliographical matters, Mrs Cheryl Woolley for her assistance in the field of psychology, Dr Peter Donovan, Dr Bronwyn Elsmore and Mrs Fay Pollok for their help on matters relating to the Bible, and Dr Hazel Riseborough for help with understanding Maori names. To Dr Jim Pollok, thanks are due for information relating to the Maniototo Plain, to Dr Alison Campbell, expert in chemistry, for data on bird-lime, and to Mr Colin Griggs for his expert knowledge of funeral procedure and embalming. Others helpers include Professor Axel Vieregg, Mrs L R Pound, Dr Russell Poole and Dr Gerard O'Connor.

This thesis has provided material for two conference papers. The first was presented to the AULLA XXV Congress in February 1989 at Macquarie University, Sydney, on the topic, "Allegory and Irony in "Snowman, Snowman" and *Living in the Maniototo*". The second paper, entitled "World and Underworld in Janet Frame's Novels" was presented to the 13th Conference of New Literatures in English at Mannheim, Germany, in June 1990. The thesis has also provided material for a chapter which has been accepted for a forthcoming new edition of *Bird, Hawk, Bogie*, edited by Jeanne Delbaere. The chapter is entitled "Opposite and Adjacent to the Postmodern in *Living in the Maniototo*."

Thanks are due to Professor Jeanne Delbaere who kindly sent me two of her critical essays on Frame that were unavailable in New Zealand. Thanks are also due to Professor Dr Norbert Platz of the University of Mannheim, Professor Dr Gerhard Stiltz of the University of Tübingen and Professor Dr Herbert Kraft of the University of Münster for allowing me to discuss the work of Janet Frame with them and their students.

A two-year Vice-Chancellor's PhD Study Award has made the research possible.

To the staff of the Massey Library and the staff of the National and Alexander Turnbull Libraries, thanks are due for their willing and competent assistance.

I am grateful to Susanne Shirriffs for her expertise in word processing.

I thank, also, my children for their encouragement, and, in particular, I thank my husband Rolf. His continuous support and his skill as reader, critic and discussion partner have helped to make the four-year study a pleasure.

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