

<歴史のない小さな国から>  
 —文学に見るニュージーランド人  
 (パケハ) のアイデンティティ—

ラクエル・ヒル

ニュージーランドが生んだもっとも著名な作家であるキャサリン・マン  
 スフィールド (Katherine Mansfield, 1888～1923) は、1909年に書いた  
 一編の詩のなかで、祖国を「歴史のない小さな国」と呼んでいる。英国を  
 中心とする西欧系の白人、いわゆるマオリ語で言うところの「パケハ」  
 Pakehaであったマンズフィールドは、イギリスに憧れ、19歳のときにイ  
 ギリスへ渡り、その後二度と祖国に足を踏み入れることはなかった。しか  
 し、そのマンズフィールドとて、ニュージーランドの周縁性をめぐる複雑  
 な問題から免れることはできなかった。本稿では、マンズフィールドをは  
 じめとするニュージーランドの作家たちの作品を通して、パケハの文化的  
 アイデンティティの構築と表象を検討する。

植民地ニュージーランドが誕生した1840年から国家主義的傾向が強まる  
 1930年代の直前まで、パケハの文学において顕著だったのはイギリスに対  
 する文化的帰属意識であった。こうした特徴を示す代表的なものとして、  
 マンズフィールドとロビン・ハイド (Robin Hyde, 1906～1939) という二  
 人の女性作家の作品をとりあげる。そして、第二次世界大戦後、イギリス  
 との密接な関係を失い始めたニュージーランドは、次第にポストコロニア  
 ルと呼ばれる状況へ入っていく。このポストコロニアルな状況におかれた  
 ニュージーランド人のアイデンティティを探るために、ジャネット・フレ

イム (Janet Frame, 1924~2004) の『カルパチア山脈』 (*The Carpathians*, 1988) と、ケリ・ヒューム (Keri Hulme, 1947~) の『骨の民』 (*The Bone People*, 1983) を分析する。最後に、1990年代に文学界に登場した三人の若手女性作家、カースティ・ガンヌ (Kirsty Gunn, 1960~)、エミリー・パーキンス (Emily Perkins, 1970~)、そしてカプカ・カッサボバ (Kapka Kassabova, 1973~) の作品に検討を加える。

興味深いことに、これらの作品の共通点は、地理的、時間的、文化的、言語的、そして、ナラティブ的ディスプレイメント (displacement) が起きているということである。本稿では、日本ではほとんど知られていないニュージーランド人 (パケハ) の複雑に揺れ動くアイデンティティを文学という観点から考察する。

**“A Little Land With No History”  
—Pakeha Identity in Aotearoa  
New Zealand—**

Raquel Hill

**Introduction**

In 1909 Katherine Mansfield, arguably New Zealand's most famous literary export, immortalized the country of her birth as “a little land with no history;” just over a quarter of a century later poet Allen Curnow<sup>(1)</sup> wrote of “a land of settlers / With never a soul at home;” and as recently as a decade ago Poet Laureate Bill Manhire<sup>(2)</sup> was still describing life “at the edge of the universe.” These observations are not exceptions; rather, they represent a thematic vein that flows throughout New Zealand literature, pointing to a sense of displacement that has plagued settler consciousness since the commencement of wide-scale British immigration around 1840. This paper is an exploration of the construction and representation of white European cultural identity in New Zealand as seen through the lens of literature. Excerpts from poetry and prose will chart the settlers' initial dependence on “Mother England” through to a burgeoning sense of literary nationalism in the 1930s and conclude with an examination of the literary scene in the 1980s and 1990s. My primary aim is to provide those unfamiliar with issues of cultural identity in New Zealand the opportunity to look at the country from a perspective that goes beyond the “land of sheep and honey” image promoted by glossy brochures and lightweight travel pro-

grammes; it is hoped that the reader will gain a richer understanding of the politics of cultural identity as reflected in New Zealand literature.

The perceptive reader will already be questioning the meaning of the words “Pakeha” and “Aotearoa” mentioned in the title of this paper. These two words are in fact useful springboards for contemplating the complicated nature of identity in New Zealand. “Aotearoa,” roughly equating to “land of the long white cloud,” is the Maori (indigenous) name for New Zealand – the latter is, after all, the moniker that arose from Dutch navigator Abel Tasman’s 1642-3 voyage around part of the land mass he discovered off the east coast of New Holland (Australia).<sup>(3)</sup> However, Tasman was aware, as was English explorer Captain James Cook who was the first to fully circumnavigate New Zealand in 1769, that these islands were already occupied – those occupants were, of course, the Maori who are said to have arrived in Aotearoa in fleets of canoes from Polynesia around the thirteenth century.<sup>(4)</sup>

Following Cook’s voyage, whalers, sealers, traders and missionaries came to settle on New Zealand’s shores; the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, in which just over 500 Maori chiefs ceded sovereignty to the British Crown in exchange for a promise to protect their lands and traditional fishing rights, brought with it an added influx of white European immigrants.<sup>(5)</sup> Unable to stem the tide of land-hungry settlers, Maori and colonial forces became embroiled in a series of bitter land wars which continued into the 1870s. The colonizers won the peace, confiscating Maori land as part of the spoils of war, and thus destabilizing a way of life that had continued for centuries. Maori were faced with an even deadlier foe towards the end of the nineteenth century when influenza and other imported diseases to which they had no immunity decimated the population. These crises contributed to the popular theory that Maori were

doomed to disappear (as can be gleaned from the title of Alfred Grace's 1901 collection *Tales of a Dying Race*); Maori survived this danger only to be subjected to racial policies of assimilation which effectively ignored their language and culture in the quest to make them obedient British subjects.<sup>(6)</sup> The 1970s however saw a Maori Renaissance, spearheaded by Whina Cooper's famous 1975 Land March, and a willingness on the part of the government to begin addressing the injustices of the past. In a nod to political correctness, Maori became an official language of New Zealand in 1987, with the country becoming known as Aotearoa New Zealand, although historical wrongs are far from being fully accounted for.

The double naming of Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>(7)</sup> highlights the thorny issue of what to call the people who were born and live there: New Zealanders? No, at least not officially. In this paper I write as a "Pakeha" – that is, a white European settler who has no Maori "blood" – for, according to the ethnicity column in the national census, a "New Zealander" does not exist. In the 1996 census, respondents could choose from categories which included "New Zealand European or Pakeha" and "New Zealand Maori," but not simply "New Zealander."<sup>(8)</sup> Such arbitrary categorization ignores the historical fact of the relatively high rate of interracial marriages between Maori and Pakeha and raises doubts as to whether or not identity can be so neatly cut and quartered in a country with a complicated colonial and post-colonial history.

Here I wish to take pause and acknowledge the difficulty of that slippery word "identity," which has become the darling of critics over the past few decades. Perhaps even trickier is the ubiquitous term "cultural identity" which is so often linked to ideas of nation and nationality. Benedict Anderson famously asserted that the nation is an imagined or constructed community, while most people

assume that culture produces the nation. In the case of a settler colony such as New Zealand, the perceived lack of a unique culture – Janet Frame recalls in her autobiography that in London in 1956 she keenly felt herself to be a “colonial New Zealander overseas without any real identity” (308) – was and is an inevitable part of the discourse of nation-building.<sup>9)</sup> In this paper I explore how literature has engaged in this process of constructing a Pakeha cultural identity, one that continues, in the words of Mark Williams and Lydia Wevers, “to be registered through anxiety, partly because of the burden of smallness and partly because of uncertainty about what biculturalism means” (16).

In the limited space of this paper I cannot, nor do I wish to, offer up a comprehensive and definitive “story of New Zealand literature”: literature does not abide by strict categories and, furthermore, my position as a Pakeha writing from overseas, as well as personal taste, will inevitably colour my choice of texts and the picture that emerges. My analysis will begin with poetry that shows the idea of Britain as cultural home, then move on to the rootlessness of writers such as Katherine Mansfield (1888 ~ 1923) and Robin Hyde (1906 ~ 1939), explore two 1980s texts by Janet Frame (1924 ~ 2004) and Keri Hulme (1947 ~) from a post-colonial perspective, and finally look at the theme of displacement in the works of three young contemporary “New Zealand” writers in the 1990s. However, to paraphrase Bornholdt et al, my aim is not to show an evolution from some kind of colonial dependence on Britain towards a confident postcolonial maturity (xxi). Rather, Pakeha identity will emerge as a fragmented and ever-developing entity, characterized by a sense of displacement which shakes the very foundations of the idea that culture is a fixed notion while at the same time enriching the literature of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **“More English than England Itself”**

Early Pakeha cultural identity can not be discussed without referring to Great Britain, the empire that provided the bulk of settlers in the nineteenth century. Whether fact or fiction, New Zealand long held a reputation for, and prided itself on, being a “Britain of the South” and “more English than England itself.” One of the founding myths of settlement was that, unlike Australia which was largely populated by convicts, New Zealand received only the highest quality immigrants: as Sinclair notes, two historians in 1902 confidently claimed that “The stock from which New Zealanders are sprung (...) is not only British, but the best British” (297). For over a hundred years, the flag that was frequently honoured was the Union Jack and the “national” anthem that was usually sung was “God Save the King,” while the focus at school was on British history; Snook argues that the New Zealand education system taught children that they were British, leaving them “without a personal history” (160). Robin Hyde affirms this cultural leaning in *The Godwits Fly* (1938): “You didn’t really have to think about it – Maoris, godwits, bird-of-my-native land (...) History began slap-bang in England” (33). So reluctant was New Zealand to let go of the Motherland’s apron strings that it was not until 1947 that the Statute of Westminster was finally ratified, giving the country complete autonomy. The new world order brought about by the end of the Second World War forced New Zealand to turn its eyes towards the Pacific and in particular the USA, with the ANZUS defence pact of 1951 firmly linking it to the fates of Australia and America. The last half of the twentieth century steadily saw New Zealand assert its position as a Pacific nation, with the flood of immigrants from neighbouring islands in the 1970s adding to this renewed sense of multi-culturalism.

But let us take a step back in history, and see how the settlers reacted to their

new homeland in the formative years. A quick glance reveals that, even fifty years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, there was still a self-conscious looking back to England amongst Pakeha, as can be seen in “A Colonist in His Garden” (c.1890) by William Pember Reeves (1857~1932). This poem employs an interesting double perspective: the conceit of the colonizer (in his English garden) and the colonist (in his New Zealand garden) reading letters from one another. The colonist urges his friend to abandon New Zealand, “a land without a past” (13) and instead “turn back to England, life and art” (6); he questions how the colonist can be content in “Isles nigh as empty as their deep, / Where men but talk of gold and sheep / And think of sheep and gold” (10-12). In reply, the colonist admits nostalgia for his youth in England – “my heart to England cleaves” (67) – but asserts “Here I am rooted. Firm and fast / We men take root who face the blast” (55-56), evoking pioneer history and claiming the land as his own. Ironically, the garden the colonist has created is in the image of England and he expresses pride in having raised his daughter as a true “English rose” (119). This ‘foot in both hemispheres’ duality is representative of the mood of many writers both before and after Reeves, who felt torn between love for the land in which they were born and longing for the mythical homeland.

Much early writing characterized New Zealand through metaphors of absence: that is, the country was constructed in terms of what it did not contain. Arthur H. Adams (1872~1936) wrote in “The Dwellings of Our Dead” (1899) that the dead “(...) lie unwatched, in waste and vacant places, / In sombre bush or wind-swept tussock spaces, / Where seldom human tread / And never human trace is” (1-4). To Adams, New Zealand is uninhabited and the settlers still long for “home”: “But in their sleep, like troubled children turning, / A



dream of mother-country [is] in them burning" (36-37). Blanche Baughan (1870 ~ 1958) expressed a similar sense of absence in her 1908 poem "A Bush Section": "'Tis a silent, skeleton world; / Dead, and not yet re-born, / Made, unmade, and scarcely as yet in the making; / Ruin'd, forlorn, and blank" (13-16). This long poem describes the trials and isolation entailed in the breaking in of a "little raw farm on the edge of the desolate hillside" (17) through the eyes of a young boy, appropriately named Thor (the god of agriculture). The narrator uses the landscape around Thor to thematize the questions of identity and belonging: "Where is the River, the running River? / Where does it come from? / Where does it go?" (171-173). This idea is repeated as Thor constantly questions the landscape around him: "What are you? Where do you come from? / Who are you? Where do you go?" (63-64) is a refrain which reflects the settlers' unsettled identity. These questions were to remain in the minds of writers for decades to come.

### **Katherine Mansfield and the Cultural Cringe**

Perhaps the best example of the kind of displacement experienced and written of by settler writers is that of Katherine Mansfield. Born in New Zealand's capital Wellington in 1888, she left in 1905 to attend boarding school in London; she returned to New Zealand for just one year before once more setting off for England, against her father's wishes. Mansfield was never to set foot in her home country again, dying an untimely death in France in 1923, but not before leaving a legacy of acclaimed stories that cemented her position as one of the best practitioners of the technique of direct interior monologue in the modern short story. Mansfield's journals and poems reveal her settler anxiety, like that expressed in the poem "To Stanislaw Wyspianski" quoted at the beginning of

this paper:

From the other side of the world,  
 From a little island cradled in the giant sea bosom,  
 From a little land with no history,  
 (Making its own history, slowly and clumsily  
 Piecing together this and that, finding the pattern, solving the  
 problem,  
 Like a child with a box of bricks)  
 I, a woman, with the taint of the pioneer in my blood (...) (1-8)

We can read Mansfield's colonial uneasiness in this poem – indeed, she recalled in her diary her master at boarding school in London telling her: “I am afraid you do not count. You are a little savage from New Zealand” (Stead, *Letters and Journals* 69). This poem is a prime example of the “cultural cringe,” a term coined by the Australian critic A.A. Phillips in a 1950 essay to describe the feeling of cultural inferiority felt by Australia in relation to the culture of the “Mother Country.” In New Zealand too the cultural cringe was to be found in all arenas of life, from the paranoia that surrounded the “Kiwi twang” – the New Zealand accent – to the quality of literature. Although this kind of self-inflicted cultural bashing is rarely seen in New Zealand society today, a form of “England hunger” remains, embodied by the concept of the “big OE”: “OE” stands for “overseas experience” – that is, the dream of many young Pakeha to leave New Zealand, usually for England, to find out once and for all if the country of their birth comes up to scratch.<sup>(10)</sup>

In 1907, restless with the slow pace of colonial life in Wellington and impatient with a country still in the elementary stages of national self-definition, Katherine Mansfield longed to return to London, the “centre” which she

thought would shower her with opportunities: “Life here’s impossible (...) There is nothing on earth to do – nothing to see – and my heart keeps flying off to Oxford Circus – Westminster Bridge at the Whistler hour..... It haunts me all so much – and I feel it must come back soon – How people ever wish to live here I cannot think –” (Alpers 43). Mansfield has been both heralded and disputed as New Zealand’s first significant literary figure. For many years critics ignored the New Zealand influence on her stories but in the 1980s and 1990s she was “recovered” as a New Zealand writer. Whether or not she was a “New Zealand” writer is not a subject that this paper engages with: rather, it is of more interest that critics have such a hard time “placing” Mansfield in the canon, a fact that points to the subversive nature of her works which seem to resist categorization.

A prime example of the divided cultural loyalties of the Pakeha identity can be found in Mansfield’s short story “Millie,” which tells of a married childless woman who lives a rough life in the remote New Zealand countryside. Her maternal instincts are revealed when she finds a young man on the run seeking refuge at her farm. At first she helps him but when she sees him being chased by the local law, including her husband, her moment of motherly softness is replaced by a perverse streak of cruelty. I would like to pay attention to the subtle portrayal of the interior of her farm house. Exhausted, Millie goes to her bedroom to rest:

She flopped down on the side of the bed and stared at the coloured print on the wall opposite, ‘Garden Party at Windsor Castle.’ In the foreground emerald lawns planted with immense oak trees, and in their grateful shade, a muddle of ladies and gentlemen and parasols and little tables. The background was filled with the towers of Windsor Castle, flying three Union

Jacks, and in the middle of the picture the old Queen, like a tea cosy with a head on top of it. 'I wonder if it really looked like that.' Millie stared at the flowery ladies, who simpered back at her. (...) Over the packing case dressing-table there was a large photograph of her and Sid, taken on their wedding day. (...) And behind them there were some fern trees, and a waterfall, and Mount Cook in the distance, covered with snow. (65-66)

There are a number of ironies here : for one, in the passage immediately preceding this one, the scorching hot New Zealand summer is evoked through mention of the "dusty road," "burnt paddocks" and the sun hanging "like a burning mirror." Millie exclaims "Oh, my word! It was hot. Enough to fry your hair!" (64). This setting makes the "grateful shade" of the English oak trees seem all the more incongruent. Another point of reference is the packing case doubling as a dressing table in her bedroom – a sign of colonial ingenuity but also of a lack of "civilization" compared to the "little tables" where "ladies and gentlemen" sit with parasols. The scene of a civilized garden party taking place in the shade of an English oak tree stands in stark contrast to the barbaric conditions of the New Zealand countryside. The English oak is juxtaposed with the indigenous fern and landscape which includes a waterfall and New Zealand's highest mountain, Mt. Cook.<sup>(11)</sup>

Once in London, Mansfield gradually became disenchanted with London life and fled for the continent, only to turn her mind towards writing about New Zealand. In 1915 she recorded in her diary: "Now – now I want to write recollections of my own country. Yes, I want to write about my own country till I simply exhaust my store. (...) Oh, I want for one moment to make our undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the Old World" (Stead, *Letters and Journals* 65). In 1922, close to death, she wrote to her father "London, for

instance, is an awful place to live in. (...) There's no peace of mind, (...) And another thing is the longer I live the more I turn to New Zealand. I thank God I was born in New Zealand. A young country is a real heritage, though it takes one time to recognize it. But New Zealand is in my very bones" (Stead, *Letters and Journals* 260). It seems that Mansfield was plagued by a sense of displacement for most of her life, only to be ready to come to terms with it when time had run out. Mansfield's identity was perhaps complicated by the fact that part of her refused to see the Pakeha identity as "authentic," as demonstrated in her camping trip through the Ureweras ("Maori country") in 1907: there she was relieved to come upon a party of English tourists and wrote "I am so tired and sick of the third-rate article. Give me the Maori *and* the tourist, but nothing in between," with the Pakeha presumably being the "in between" (Alpers 58). Katherine Mansfield's life and writings show that a simple either/or binary opposition with regards to identity will not suffice and her "geographic schizophrenia" (Boddy 159) raises fascinating questions about the dialectic of place and displacement that is always prevalent in post-colonial societies.

### **"Never a Soul at Home"**

The 1930s in New Zealand have traditionally been viewed as the beginning of literary nationalism; many writers seemed to be sick of the constant looking back to England, as exemplified by Alan Mulgan's 1927 book *Home: A New Zealander's Adventure* which accepted Britain as cultural centre. At the head of this shift of consciousness and movement to define a Pakeha (albeit male) identity were Frank Sargeson (1903 ~ 1982) and Allen Curnow, who reflecting on this period in his introduction to *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-50* (1951) noted that "The real question was not what they were to write *about*, but

whom they were to write *for*" (18). The 1936 poem "Home Thoughts" by Denis Glover (1912 ~ 1980) shows the tide turning: "I do not dream of Sussex downs / or quaint old England's quaint old towns - / I think of what may be seen / in Johnsonville and Geraldine" (1-4). One of the best poems that articulates the skepticism of the era is Curnow's "House and Land," published in 1941 around the time of the country's centenary. In this poem, a historian visits the site of an old homestead, where a rough and ready cowman works for Miss Wilson, who is a remnant of a past era:

There sat old Miss Wilson,  
 With her pictures on the wall,  
 The baronet uncle, mother's side,  
 And one she called The Hall;  
 [.....]  
 People in the *colonies*, she said,  
 Can't quite understand...  
 Why, from Waiau to the mountains  
 It was all father's land. (13-16, 19-22)

The poem ends with the distinct New Zealand voice of the narrator:

The sensitive nor' west afternoon  
 Collapsed, and the rain came;  
 The dog crept into his barrel  
 Looking lost and lame.  
 But you can't attribute to either  
 Awareness of what great gloom  
 Stands in a land of settlers  
 With never a soul at home. (33-40)

Once again, the theme of absence rears its head (“never a soul at home”), the kind of loneliness of exile expressed in the representative novel of the period *Man Alone* (1939) by John Mulgan (son of Alan). As Lawrence Jones notes, this exiled “Man Alone” figure – usually an inarticulate hero with pioneer virtues facing the test of nature – had appeared in New Zealand fiction previously, but Mulgan added a new dimension by positioning him as the victim of an unjust society (199).

Short story master Frank Sargeson is often heralded as the father of New Zealand letters and credited with being the first to capture the cadences of New Zealand English, thus giving his inarticulate and uneducated characters a believable voice. One of his best contributions is “The Making of a New Zealander” which won a national short story competition as part of the celebrations for New Zealand’s centennial in 1940. The protagonist wanders the countryside looking for work (“When I called at that farm they promised me a job for two months so I took it on, but it turned out to be tough going,” 99); there he becomes friendly with a Dalmatian immigrant, Nick, and uses their encounter to comment on the nature of identity. Nick claims he is a New Zealander, to which the narrator replies, “No (...) but your children will be” (103); the narrator observes with sadness that “Nick and I were sitting on the hillside and Nick was saying he was a New Zealander, but he knew he wasn’t a New Zealander. And he knew he wasn’t a Dalmatian any more. He knew he wasn’t anything any more” (104). While the narrator is confident in the vernacular of the country of his birth, Sargeson uses Nick to project the sense of displacement felt by settlers in a new land; the story characteristically ends on an unfinished note so that the reader too is left to wonder just what national identity means.

It is important to note that although this period of literary nation-building was

dominated by males, this does not mean women's voices did not exist: to give just one example, research during the past two decades has brought to light the extraordinary life and writings of journalist, poet and novelist Robin Hyde, born Iris Wilkinson. South African by birth, she came to Wellington as a baby, grew up to be sexually liberated, worked prolifically (to the point of nervous breakdown) and finally left for London because she could not find recognition of her talent in New Zealand; she committed suicide there at the age of 33 on the eve of the outbreak of World War Two. The very title of her autobiography, *A Home in this World*, points to the concerns with place and identity that run throughout much of her work, but especially in her novel *The Godwits Fly* which, with its "England hunger" is, in the words of Patrick Evans, "one of our culture's great expressions" (41). The godwit is a migratory bird that flies thousands of miles every year from the top of the North Island to Siberia, that is, north towards "home." In *The Godwit's Fly*, we chart the progress from girl to woman of Eliza Hannay, who is said to be closely based on Hyde herself. Eliza is full of the ambivalence of colonial New Zealand:

You were English and not English. It took time to realize that England was far away. And you were brought up on bluebells and primroses and daffodils and robins in the snow – even the Christmas cards were always robins in the snow. One day, with a little shock of anger, you realized that there were no robins and no snow, and you felt cheated; nothing else was quite as pretty (34).

Hyde was an observant critic of New Zealand society, but her poetry was seen by contemporary critics like Curnow as being too Georgian in taste – that is, too "English" and not "New Zealand" enough. Recent research has shown however that much of her poetry is in fact a mixture of styles which refuse to con-



form to one type, and that perhaps it was this boundary-hopping that unsettled her fellow writers more than anything else (Murray 170). Hyde was an adventurer who in 1938, on her way to London, stopped off in China when it was being invaded by Japan: there she was subjected to a beating at the hands of a gang of Japanese soldiers. Fearing for her life, she wrote a letter to her parents expressing a remarkably forward-thinking vision of New Zealand's future:

It's not being unfaithful to the best that was in the older countries, if we try to grow in new ways. And the contributions New Zealand can make are very many. (...) My New Zealand is too good to be a safe, smug, barricaded little country – it can lose its littleness for ever in the greatness of reaching out to other peoples, studying their languages and cultures, respecting their integrity, trying at all costs to work with them. (...) It must begin in the Pacific (Evans 44).

Hyde is unique in that she was a product of the split between inherited (=English) and Pakeha culture yet she could also look ahead to a New Zealand positioned in the Pacific, with startling post-colonial foresight.

### **The Manifold Frame**

Lawrence Jones has called the period from 1955 to 1985 a post-provincial one where writers “have no doubt that a New Zealand culture exists and that New Zealanders have their own sense of cultural identity” (203). Jones was writing at a time when post-colonial discourse was just coming into vogue; looking back at the works that were published in the 1980s and 90s, a clear post-colonial imagination can be seen and it is not perhaps as confident as Jones suggests, as the following lines from “Uneasy Resident” (1984) by Louis Johnson (1924 ~ 1988) suggest: “Not a country for people. Everyone here is / a migrant spat from

another climate of failure / to feed on roots or look for them (...)" (13-15). I now wish to focus on how two contemporary writers, Janet Frame and Keri Hulme, highlight the problems of Pakeha identity in the 1980s, and finally how the works of three 1990s writers are characterized by a continuing sense of displacement.

The story of post-war Pakeha literature cannot be told without mentioning Janet Frame, who passed away this year at the age of 79, after leading a life so traumatic that it often seemed to overshadow her writings. Frame was born of Scottish and English stock in the South Island city of Dunedin; a highly sensitive and creative child, she fought a paralyzing sense of shyness in her teenage years that saw her diagnosed with schizophrenia in her early twenties. This misdiagnosis led to her spending close to eight years in and out of a series of mental hospitals where she underwent over 200 sessions of electroconvulsive therapy. The most famous chapter of Frame's story is how she narrowly escaped a frontal lobotomy in 1951 when her first collection of short stories won an illustrious literary prize. The ensuing years saw Frame showered with various awards, although ironically she was recognized as a writer of talent in America and Europe long before New Zealand was willing to do so. The turning point was the publication of her three volume autobiography in the early 1980s which was made into the movie *An Angel at my Table* (1990), directed by Jane Campion (*The Piano*).

Frame recalls in her autobiography how, like most people of her generation, she was raised on a steady diet of British history and literature, so much so that she was struck with a sense of wonder in her teenage years when she came upon an anthology of New Zealand verse:

As a child I had looked on New Zealand literature as the province of my

mother, and when I longed for my surroundings (...) all I could do was populate them with characters and dreams from the poetic world of another hemisphere and with my own imaginings. There was such a creation as New Zealand literature; I chose to ignore it, and indeed was scarcely aware of it. Few people spoke of it, as if it were a shameful disease. (...) But here, in the anthology of New Zealand verse, I could read in Allen Curnow's poems about Canterbury and the plains, about 'dust and distance', about our land having its share of time and not having to borrow from a northern Shakespearian wallet (192).

This awakening was recorded in 1945 – the year World War Two ended and one which heralded the beginning of New Zealand's emergence from out under the maternal wing of England.

Frame's early works were autobiographical and influenced to some degree by the tendency towards social realism that dominated New Zealand literature at the time: her debut novel *Owls Do Cry* (1957) portrays four siblings struggling to survive in small town provincial New Zealand. However, Frame's own journey overseas led her to approach Pakeha identity from a more radical perspective in novels such as *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), where she uses the main character Toby Withers (the epileptic brother from *Owls Do Cry*) and his journey to London to comment on the old spectre of settler anxiety:

People kept stopping him and asking the way. When he told them at great length, expecting them to be pleased and interested, that he had just arrived from New Zealand, they did not seem impressed. Sometimes they murmured, 'Really? That's somewhere in Australia, isn't it?' Or they said in a dazed way, 'New Zealand? I've got a brother who emigrated to Australia (180).

The validation of one's own identity through travel is noted by Frame in her autobiography, when she recounts her first landfall on foreign soil in Willemstad. She unconsciously begins comparing it with New Zealand before realizing that "Here I was, travelling overseas to 'broaden my experience' and already undergoing the change forced on every new traveller and accomplished by examining not the place of arrival but the place of departure" (296).

Frame's last work *The Carpathians* (1988), which won the 1989 Commonwealth Writers Prize, provides an even more fascinating portrayal of identity when looked at from the perspective of post-colonial literary criticism, in that it steadily dismantles myths of national identity and reveals that nothing is truly authentic. In this novel, wealthy New Yorker Mattina Brecon travels to the rural North Island town of Puamahara, the home of the legend of the "Memory Flower." Mattina seems to believe that by coming into contact with an ancient legend and the people who live at the centre of its "truth," she will be able to find and validate her own existence and identity. Mattina has spent considerable time and money journeying the world in search of "authentic experiences" through encounters with the "natives" – "her aim had been to make a collection of people whose lives and 'truth' she had discovered and *knew*" (75); to Mattina, the purpose of the journey is to reaffirm her own identity through contact with the "real natives."

However, Frame the implied author refuses to allow such a validation to occur easily. Mattina's attempts to find the truth of the Memory Flower are thwarted by the Puamaharians who claim to be displaced themselves: "I'm almost a stranger" (39); "As I told you, I'm a stranger here" (41); "I'm a stranger here myself" (42). Mattina notes that "the residents she had met had spoken of themselves as strangers...Perhaps strangers never became at home in Kowhai

Street?" (39). The residents do not care about the Memory Flower: "Oh, the legend. Yes, we've all heard about it now. They've only recently made a song and dance about it. The town of the Memory Flower. Goes down well with overseas visitors, gives them a feeling that when they're in Puamahara they've arrived somewhere" (39). Furthermore, they constantly talk of other places that they believe will give them a sense of belonging, whether it be the materialistic Shannons, who run the local computer shop and dream of making it to Auckland, or Dorothy Townsend, born in England and always claiming it as home, despite the fact that her children were born in New Zealand. Even the Hanuere family, who as Maori are thus the rightful inhabitants of Aotearoa, feel culturally and linguistically displaced. Mattina describes the displacement of the Puamaharians thus:

There are churches, sports fields, schools, a library, perhaps a museum and art gallery, there are people being born and dying, yet I feel their anchorage is so slight that one morning the street and the town may wake to find all is adrift in the space of anywhere, or set on earth in places far from here, distant mountains or plains. There's no clear anchorage, no roots, the street is full of strangers with empty baskets of love, (...). (93)

As Ashcroft et al (2001) have noted, "The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of post-colonial societies where these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two. Beyond their historical and cultural difference, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity are a feature common to all post-colonial literatures in English" (9). Frame plays on all of these concerns in *The Carpathians* to create a novel that offers itself up to rich readings of the myths of national identity.

### **A Bone To Pick: Keri Hulme and the Right to Write**

Keri Hulme was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize in 1985 for her novel *The Bone People*, the tale of Kerewin Holmes, an asexual Maori/Pakeha, Joe, a violent Maori, and Simon, a mute Pakeha boy who was found shipwrecked by Joe and is brought up as his son. It is a narrative of passion, violence, myth and moments of brilliance, weaving together a mythological world that includes both Maori and Celtic elements, mixing Maori language with obscure English words. *The Bone People* was claimed as a truly “New Zealand” novel – the *Sunday Times* review on the back of the Picador edition claims confidently that “In this novel New Zealand’s people, its heritage and landscape are conjured up with uncanny poetry and perceptiveness,” while the *New York Times Book Review* emphasised its merging of cultures (“Set on the harsh South Island beaches of New Zealand, bound in Maori myth and entwined with Christian symbols”). As Mark Williams points out, fellow New Zealand writer Joy Cowley was even more rapturous: “I have been waiting for this novel, watching the earth, knowing (...) someday there would be a flowering of talent which had not been transported from the northern hemisphere (...) but which would grow – seeds, shoots, roots and all – from the breast of Papa (...)” (Williams 20), with Papa being Mother Earth.

However, Hulme’s novel, and indeed the writer herself, became a bone of contention in New Zealand and serve as a pertinent example of how identity is not clear-cut. A debate flared up around Hulme because *The Bone People* also won the Pegasus Award, a competition for Maori writers. The dispute was started by eminent Pakeha critic C. K. Stead who saw *The Bone People* as “a novel by a Pakeha which has won an award intended for a Maori” (*Kin of Place* 340) because Hulme, whose great-grandmother was Maori, is of primarily English

and Irish stock. Margery Fee observes that Stead's comment forces us to consider the whole idea of cultural appropriation of the identity of the "other" (native) in order to establish one's own authenticity, a concept which has been discussed by Simon During. This is an important point – in other words, the role of Maori culture in Pakeha identity, for New Zealand has developed, or at least claims, a culture that borrows (appropriates?) from Maori. I have argued in another paper about the role of Maori culture in Pakeha identity<sup>(12)</sup> but, needless to say, Maori symbols (for example, the All Blacks performing the *haka* before a rugby match, or the *koru* which is the symbol for flight carrier Air New Zealand) and language (for place names, flora and fauna, and sometimes cultural concepts) are an indispensable part of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. Even Katherine Mansfield was prone to such appropriation in the form of cultural cross-dressing: while in London, she frequently dressed as a Maori, thus privileging Maori as holders of an authentic identity, over the displaced Pakeha settler (Orr 456). Mark Williams has noted the dangers of "indigenization" – that is, the "prevalent cultural wish to discover authentic belonging in New Zealand by identifying with the indigenous" (200). This raises complicated questions about the relationship between settler and native, especially when the natives were also ultimately settlers and may have displaced peoples living there beforehand.

### **"This Place You Return To Is Home": "New Zealand" Literature Now**

Writers that appeared in the 1990s such as Kirsty Gunn (1960 ~), Kapka Kassabova (1973 ~), and Emily Perkins (1970 ~) perhaps signal the force of globalization and the shrinking of national boundaries. Perkins, who was heralded as a "new international literary voice" on the back cover of her debut col-

lection of short stories *Not Her Real Name* (1996), writes tales full of that universal Generation X ambivalence about life, where characters wander between New Zealand, Australia and England in pursuit of *something* but they are not sure what that something is. One of her best short stories, "A Place Where No One Knows Your Face," details a family car trip during the summer holidays told from the perspective of a young girl and brilliantly combines aspects of English and New Zealand culture:

You wish you could read your book in the car without feeling sick. In your book the countryside is full of robins and pussywillow and little stone cottages. Ramshackle. There's a twinkly old farmer, and winding lanes and streams and primroses. The car bounces again and your stomach lurches. The road's bumpy and dusty, loose shingle. You must be getting closer to the camping ground. There's that funny red clay you never see anywhere else. In your books the kids have boarding school and tuck boxes. They eat sandwiches with the crusts cut off them. Pony club and gymkhanas (...).  
(186)

The sense of linguistic displacement – robins, pussywillow, ramshackle, lanes, tuck boxes, pony club – are all recognizably English (and recall the dislocation of Eliza in *The Godwits Fly*) and stand in contrast to the reality of New Zealand – the bumpy roads, the red earth – which Perkins continues to evoke in the next paragraph (L&P is a unique New Zealand drink, while jandals are sandals): "You close your eyes again. Somewhere out of your dreams the car stops (...) Dad's getting fish and chips. Can I have L&P? you say. Go in and ask him (...) Put your jandals on, says your mother" (187).

Gunn, who now lives and writes in Edinburgh, initially had trouble getting her stories published in New Zealand because editors were "only interested in



New Zealand stories.”<sup>(13)</sup> In an interview for *New Zealand Listener*, she reveals the kind of settler ambivalence that could have come out of the journals of Katherine Mansfield:

New Zealand didn't have an imaginative reality for me because of the way I was brought up. With grandparents born in Scotland, we were not only brought up with the Scottish culture and stories, but the feeling that 'home' was somewhere on the other side of the world. I think of the weird juxtaposition of being brought up in a Scottish colonial atmosphere, the very British kind of street we lived in and then at the end of the street the Khandallah Reserve – that thick pelt of bush with trees and plants I had no names for.

The short stories contained in Gunn's debut collection *This Place You Return To Is Home* (1999) are strangely reminiscent of the metaphors of absence prevalent throughout New Zealand writing since its conception. Take the opening paragraph from “Not That Much To Go On” in which a mother takes her children and flees by car from her suburban life for the country house in which she grew up:

It was a part of the country you forgot about until you were back in the middle of it. Then, thirty miles past the turn-off, how the familiar shape of the land took hold. There were the low yellow hills, rumped like old carpets, rising up on either side of the car and falling back into paddocks, hillocks. Their worn sides were threadbare, showing grey earth through the thin earth, and not soft to lie on. In places, rocks jutted out like boards, or bone. Even though you could drive for hours, the woman thought, on bland roads, you would come back to this. (3)

In another interview after the publication of her international best-seller *Rain*

(1994), Gunn's comments echoed this sense of absence in the New Zealand landscape: "It's to do with the way one occupies it, in a sense that one can't occupy it. It's this endless stretch of space. There is something very unknown about it, something very untouched, something to my mind that is plangent and speechless, inchoate (...)."

It perhaps comes as no surprise that one of "our" brightest young literary stars is Kapka Kassabova: born in Bulgaria, she emigrated to England when she was 16, then came to New Zealand in 1992 where she garnered New Zealand's most prestigious literary prize for her debut poetry collection *All Roads Lead to the Sea* (1997) and the Commonwealth Writers Prize for her novel *Reconnaissance* (1999) – not bad for a writer for whom English is her fourth language. Her poems are full of questions about where "home" is and whether it can exist at all. *Reconnaissance* is dedicated to "those who know exile" and centres around 21 year old Nadejda who emigrated from Bulgaria and is backpacking around New Zealand: she is the classic person in exile – in transit, neither at home in her new country nor in her old. Kassabova has written of her personal sense of displacement in an autobiographical piece "Home is Where Every Memory Stops":

This [Bulgaria] is no longer home and I realize that home must be the other one, the far-away one, the New Zealand of which I only knew (quite wrongly) that it was similar to Australia and smaller than Bulgaria. But can it be home if everybody asks me where I'm from? Everybody comes from somewhere, especially in New Zealand. But some more than others. (...) I live between two worlds. One which is no longer home, and the other which will never be home (245).

One is reminded of Sargeson's Nick, who was also stuck between worlds. In

1999 Kassabova was awarded the Buddle Findlay Frank Sargeson Fellowship; in the same way that Sargeson represented the burgeoning consciousness of a new kind of New Zealand literature back in the 1930s, Kassabova, with her boundary-hopping cross-cultural writing, represents both a continuation and a new dimension of this process.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Ashcroft et al (1995) have noted that “Settler colony cultures have never been able to construct simple concepts of the nation, such as those based on linguistic communality or racial or religious homogeneity. (...) [T]he sense of place and placelessness have been crucial factors in welding together a communal identity from the widely disparate elements brought together by transportation, migration and settlement” (151-152). It is impossible to come to a neat conclusion about what constitutes Pakeha identity (which is, after all, only one of many kinds of identity – male, female, mother, father, daughter, worker, class member and so on – that one may choose from). This paper has been an exploration of how that identity has been questioned and constructed through the eyes of writers, some born in New Zealand and some not, but all claiming some kind of tie to these islands in the Pacific. If any one theme dominates, it must indeed be the sense of “place and placelessness,” a legacy passed on from the early settlers, that “taint of the pioneer in [the] blood” which dogged the consciousness of Mansfield. This displacement is in no sense negative; rather, in the words of Janet Frame, living in New Zealand is “like living in an age of mythmakers; with a freedom of imagination among all the artists because it is possible to begin at the beginning and to know the unformed places and to help form them, to be a mapmaker for those who will follow...” (415).

(\* ) This paper is a much expanded version of my presentation entitled “Representations of Pakeha Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand,” delivered at the Kanagawa University Institute for Humanities colloquium on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004. My interest in New Zealand literature was sparked in the summer of 2001 when I participated in Associate Professor Masami Nakao’s graduate school seminar at the University of Tokyo (Komaba). I also wish to express my gratitude to my PhD supervisor Professor Yoshiko Takita (University of Tokyo, Department of Comparative Culture and Literature) for encouraging me to continue my exploration of New Zealand literature. Finally, thanks to Pam Hill (Dunedin, New Zealand) for collecting materials and articles that I would otherwise have been unable to obtain here in Japan.

## Endnotes

- (1) Allen Curnow (1911 ~ 2001) published numerous poetry collections and is credited with being one of first poets to write in a distinctly “New Zealand” voice. His most famous poems include “House and Land” (taken up later in this paper), “The Skeleton of the Great Moa in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch,” and “The Unhistoric Story,” an ironic reimagining of New Zealand history on the eve of its centenary in 1940 which contains the oft-quoted lines “It was something different, something / Nobody counted on.”
- (2) Bill Manhire (1946 ~) was New Zealand’s inaugural Poet Laureate and currently teaches Creative Writing at Victoria University (Wellington). The lines quoted here come from his poem “The Milky Way” which argues that New Zealand is both central and on the periphery. A selection of Manhire’s poetry, along with critical writings and interviews, is available at the New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre’s website, <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz>
- (3) Tasman originally recorded this land mass as Staten Landt: it was thereafter renamed Nieuw Zeeland (“sea-land”) by Dutch cartographers after Tasman’s home province in Holland. See

- Sinclair (1959) 30; also King 99-100.
- (4) It should be noted that Maori, meaning "normal" or "local," identified themselves by tribal affiliations and had no sense of themselves as a united people or nation before the arrival of white settlers. Thus the word Maori (to denote the indigenous inhabitants as a unified group), along with Aotearoa, only came into popular usage in the 1820s. See R.J. Walker, "Maori Identity," *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, eds. David Novitz and Bill Willmott (Wellington: GP Books, 1989) 35-51.
- (5) In a country with no formal constitution, the Treaty of Waitangi is as close to a founding document as one can get; February 6<sup>th</sup>, the day the Treaty was signed, is celebrated as a national holiday, "Waitangi Day." However, the unfulfilled promises of the Treaty remain a source of ill-feeling between Maori and Pakeha to this day. See Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, (Auckland: Paul and Co, 1996) for a detailed account including analyses of linguistic discrepancies between the Maori and English versions.
- (6) A whole paper could be devoted to the issue of Maori and Pakeha race relations; see King for a reader-friendly and up-to-date account of Maori-Pakeha history.
- (7) For the purposes of clarity and succinctness, and because I am dealing with Pakeha literature in this paper, I adopt the usage "New Zealand" here.
- (8) The website for Statistics New Zealand contains more about the wording of the ethnicity question in the National Census; see <http://www.stats.govt.nz>
- (9) Novitz and Willmott (eds) contains a selection of highly readable papers exploring New Zealand cultural identity from perspectives such as education, land, language, literature, sports, and television.
- (10) It should be noted, however, that destinations such as America, Australia and Japan have also become popular options. Furthermore, the issue of what constitutes a "New Zealand" identity seems to be of less concern to a generation brought up under the umbrella of "globalization," or the tidal wave of American popular culture that infiltrates every aspect of our lives due to television and the Internet.
- (11) It is interesting that New Zealand identity has often been constructed in terms of landscape, not culture, a phenomenon that continues today in the tourism campaigns which promote New Zealand. See Rebecca Burns, "'Myth Today' and National Identity," *DeepSouth* 6:3 (Spring 2000). 12 Aug. 2004. <<http://www.otago.ac.nz/DeepSouth/spring2000/burnsone.html>>.

- (12) ラクエル・ヒル 「ニュージーランド人（パケハ）から見たマオリ文化のかたち」『文化のかたち』（お茶の水書房、二〇〇四年）。
- (13) The New Zealand Book Council's web site [www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/gunnkirsty.html](http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/gunnkirsty.html) contains a useful summary of Gunn's works. This website contains entries from the *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* for all major New Zealand writers.

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