Una poeta:

Perspectives on the Translation of Janet Frame's Verse into Italian

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ……………………………………………………..

ABSTRACT

Janet Frame (1924–2004) is known for being one of the most prolific, translated, and unconventional New Zealand novelists. Her work, however, includes a vast production of poems, which scholars and translators have ignored or, at least, not considered worthy for a comprehensive approach to her.

Frame's work has undergone the further limitation of a strongly biography-based hermeneutics: from the gossiping around her alleged schizophrenia, to the popularity of the filmic version of her autobiography (*An Angel at My Table*) by Jane Campion, and the countless legends that have sprung around her, she has often been stigmatised and labelled the 'mad writer' of Campion's movie. This thesis links the risks of the life/myth-driven perspectives to the current lack of interest in Frame's poetry.

Her poetic production is here presented as a fundamental part of her oeuvre and her idiosyncratic approach to writing. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature on Frame and thus reconfigure her role as a poet.

Through a combination of methodologies grounded in literary and verse translation theories, creativity and genre studies, poststructuralism and postcolonialism, this thesis investigates the most significant traits of Frame's prose and poetry, particularly the traits shared by both. It critiques past translations of Frame's prose into Italian where these have not taken into account the poetic value of her work, and suggests strategies for the translation of her verse into Italian, arguing that an informed approach to her poetry in translation may greatly contribute to a reconfiguration and re-evaluation of her legacy.

CONTENTS

I've managed to survive. I'm happy.

Janet Frame

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This thesis, my research, and the past four years are dedicated to my mother and to you, who will come into our lives and create our future.

INTRODUCTION

It was my writing that at last came to my rescue. It is little wonder that I value writing as a way of life when it actually saved my life.[1]

Harvard critic and librarian John Beston called Janet Frame 'the most distinguished woman writer in English', Michael Holroyd described her three-volume autobiography as 'one of the great autobiographies written in the twentieth century', and Nobel Laureate Patrick White said that Frame's fiction made him feel that he had 'always been a couple of steps from where [he] wanted to get in [his] own writing'.[2]

Janet Frame (Dunedin, 28 August 1924 – 29 January 2004) is undoubtedly one of the greatest New Zealand voices of the twentieth century. Along with Patricia Grace, Katherine Mansfield and Keri Hulme, she is certainly one of the most celebrated New Zealand female authors, yet the least public.

In her lifetime she published eleven novels, five short story collections, a children's book, one collection of poetry, and three volumes of autobiography, as well as many separate published stories, sketches, poems, essays, articles,

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[1] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table* (London: Virago, 2011 [1982, 1984, 1985]), p. 263.
[2] Michael King, 'Biography and Compassionate Truth: Writing a Life of Janet Frame', *Australian Humanities Review* <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-December-2001/king.html> [accessed 15 May 2010]. As King and various journalists confirm, Frame herself was frequently spoken of as a potential Nobel recipient and was one of six writers shortlisted for the literature prize in 1998.

book reviews, and letters in anthologies, newspapers, and periodicals including the *Listener*, *Landfall*, the *New Statesman*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and the *New Yorker*. Her posthumous publications are numerous and include: one collection of poems, a volume comprising a selection from both collections of verse (posthumous and non-posthumous), two novels, two collections of short stories, a collection of letters, a novella, and a collection of published and unpublished extracts from interviews, essays, and private writings.[3]

Frame's work is in print in English in New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It has been translated into twenty-three languages if we include Greek, Hebrew, Iranian, and Croatian, into which individual stories and poems have been translated and published in anthologies.[4] Paul Matthew St. Pierre has defined her prolific body of work as

> original, visionary, and heterodox [...] less because of its generic and interdisciplinary variety than because of its plurality of forms and contents, and its stylistic versatility, ranging from autobiographical to metafictional forms, subversively antisocial to maximally esoteric contents, and conventionally lyrical and narratorial to idiosyncratic, avant-garde and semiotic styles of writing.[5]

Janet Frame conveyed her experimental approach to writing through a highly poetic language, exploring it in most of its forms and rhythms, both in verse and prose. Nevertheless, it seems that the means by which she reached the wider public (in Italy, but not only there) are not so much linked to her talent as to her painful personal history and the film Jane Campion based on it.

Family tragedies and the fear of being trapped in a job that did not correspond to her poetic vocation created a dangerous cycle of anxiety and loneliness, which resulted in periods of personal crisis and the fatal submission to society's judgement that she was abnormal. Over an eight-year period Frame spent four and a half in mental hospitals on the basis of a misdiagnosis of schizophrenia. Almost miraculously, her writing freed her. She had continued to

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[3] See Appendix A for a full list of Frame's works.

[4] A full list of translations is available in Appendix B.

[5] Paul Matthew St. Pierre, *Janet Frame: Semiotics and Biosemiotics in Her Early Fiction* (Lanham: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), p. 13.

write throughout her troubled years, and her first book (*The Lagoon and Other Stories*, 1952) won an important literary prize. This convinced her doctors to cancel the already planned lobotomy after which it would have been, as she was told, 'all over':[6]

> Everyone felt it was better for me to be 'normal' and not have fancy intellectual notions about being a writer [...]. I had seen in the ward office the list of those 'down for a leucotomy', with my name on the list and other names being crossed off as the operation was performed. My 'turn' must have been very close when one evening the superintendent of the hospital, Dr Blake Palmer [...] spoke to me – to the amazement of everyone.
> As it was my first chance to discuss with anyone, apart from those who had persuaded me, the prospect of the operation, I said urgently, 'Dr Blake Palmer, what do you think?'
> He pointed to the newspaper in his hand.
> 'About the prize?'
> I was bewildered. What prize? 'No,' I said, 'about the leucotomy.'
> He looked stern, 'I've decided that you should stay as you are. I don't want you changed. [...] You've won the Hubert Church Award for the best prose. Your book, *The Lagoon*.'
> I knew nothing about the Hubert Church Award. Winning it was obviously something to be pleased about. I smiled. 'Have I?'[7]

Her writing had saved her, but society was not going to accept her talent if not through the lens of her alleged mental illness. Despite the morbid patina of the 'mad woman' that developed around her, Frame was determined to achieve her goal of being regarded as a writer. She wrote continuously, fighting her terrible fear of publication. Rumours did not distract her from her routine, as they did not prevent her making good friends along the way and leading a happy life. She felt she was a survivor after all.

However, Frame was also committed to understanding what was 'wrong' with her. Why did she struggle so much at times? While living in London, she had herself committed as a voluntary patient at the Maudsley Clinic where, for the first time in her history of hospitalisation, she was treated as a human being.

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[6] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 263.
[7] Ibid., pp. 264–65.

Several tests and therapies were tried and, twelve years after the first diagnosis, the outcomes revealed that she was not 'crazy', she had never been. After the news, her friends Karl and Kay Stead said: '[She] is just as frighteningly sane as ever'. And as for what it was that actually troubled her, they agreed with the doctors: she lacked 'one layer of protective skin; and [...] it was a lack which had been made worse by her incarceration at a time when young people need to be out in the world learning social skills and defences'.[8]

While Frame was free from mental hospitals, her life and career did not escape social stigma and a detrimental form of literary gossiping would linger over her serenity. Over the years, she had become the object of an uncontrollable process of mythologisation according to which she could only be the 'loony' who had escaped lobotomy and was back in 'normal' society, though she maintained her weird 'hermit' manners. From the label of 'mad writer' to 'mad fat writer', 'recluse', and 'autistic', Frame was subjected to categorisation and pathologisation all her life. This has inevitably affected the study of her as a writer and, consequently, the reception of her work both in her country and abroad. Furthermore, the 1990 film *An Angel at My Table* based on her autobiography brought sudden exposure, popularity and the confirmation that the legends would remain attached to her forever. Indeed the film, despite being a brilliant work of art, visually fixed the mythical figure and gave the public an authorised version of it.

Perhaps partly due to this tendency to approach her and her work in an uninformed way, critics and scholars have denied Frame her role of poet. Despite her explicit and repeated claims of her love for poetry and her very strong desire to become a poet, and regardless of her copious poetic production, critical works on Frame's verse only include, to the best of my knowledge, two essays and an unpublished PhD thesis that analyses it in comparison with the poetry of other female writers.[9] Some brief comments on

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[8] C.K. Stead, quoted in Michael King, *Wrestling with the Angel: A Life of Janet Frame* (London: Picador, 2001 [2000]), p. 189.

[9] Gina Mercer, 'Exploring "the Secret Caves of Language": Janet Frame's Poetry', *Meanjin*, 44.3 (1985), 384–90; Valéry Baisnée, 'A Home in Language: The Meta(Physical) World of Janet Frame's Poetry', in *Frameworks: Contemporary Criticism on Janet Frame*, ed. by Jan Cronin and Simone Drichel, Cross/Cultures, 110 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 89–106; Chua Siew Keng, 'Some Women Poets of the Sixties: The "Confessional" Poetry of Janet Frame, Fleur Adcock, Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Auckland, 1981). I do not include in the definition of critical work the eleven reviews that appeared about

Frame's verse are also included in the volume *Janet Frame*, by Patrick Evans – eight pages out of 260.[10] Moreover, and quite interestingly, there is no published translation of her two collections of poems, and none of her poems has ever been published in Italian.[11] I believe this is both the result and the cause of a limited and biased approach to her writing.

Part of the focus of this thesis is therefore Frame's Italian reception through translation. As an Italian, I came to know Frame's works there. Her prose immediately felt intensely poetic, which pushed me to investigate whether she had ever written poetry. It was interesting to find that this part of her production was completely neglected by the Italian and international translation market.

In her poems, Frame ranged from regular prosody to the most irregular examples of free verse, from visual poetry to traditional rhyming schemes; she alternated very short compositions with much longer ones, in which all sorts of registers, tones, and rhythms can be found. Frame showed an awareness of traditional patterns by playing with them in terms of both formal and prosodic features, thus creating a highly personal and unconventional lyric. What is perhaps even more fascinating, however, is that her use of verse-specific features constantly overruns and overflows into her prose. Frame even used to write in verse form to friends and acquaintances (letters, postcards),[12] which is indicative of her innate tendency to express her thoughts in forms that, conventionally, would be considered prose-specific. Her language is inherently poetic and the boundaries of genre did not represent a limit for Frame's creativity. One of the three scholars who have given attention to her verse, Gina Mercer, wrote:

Frame's first collection of poetry, *The Pocket Mirror* (1967), or the two newspaper articles in which Bill Manhire talks about the second and posthumous collection of poetry, *The Goose Bath* (2006).

[10] Patrick Evans, *Janet Frame* (Woodbridge: Twayne, 1977).

[11] Few, sparse translated poems have appeared in anthologies, while the translation of a collection of her poems was agreed in 2012 with a Mexican publisher, but has not yet been released. NB: a week after the submission of this thesis, the 31st October issue of the literary journal *Atelier* (www.atelierpoesia.it) published Eleonora Bello's and Francesca Benocci's Italian translations of three of Frame's poems ('The Happy Prince', 'Icicles', and 'A Journey'). Bello and Benocci are first year PhD students at Wellington University (NZ). Their translations demonstrate that something is starting to happen in this area of Frame studies. However, these texts, like the other translations that have appeared in limited numbers in anthologies or blogs (in Russian, Czech, and Portuguese), fail to provide a more comprehensive and solid approach to Frame's verse.

[12] See Appendix G for an unseen archive letter from Janet Frame to Dr Robert Cawley.

> One of the most fixed and impassable borders in literature is that between poetry and prose, yet Janet Frame repeatedly traverses this border, writing poetic prose and including whole chapters of poetry in her fictional explorations. The punishment meted out to Frame for these 'transgressions' is neglect by the literary establishment.[13]

Although Frame had been performing her peculiar juggling of prose and poetry since the 1950s, scholars have neither produced a comprehensive study of 'her subtle mixture of both' nor of her verse.[14] So, even if her approach to genre is quite evidently one of the most subversive features of her writing, there are only scanty and sparse reflections on this point, disseminated in a body of criticism that defines her as a novelist, but never a poet. Numerous also are the studies of her autobiography and the intersections it produces with her fiction. Though Frame's autobiography is available in Italian, I have decided to focus my research solely on her fiction. The reason for this is that the autobiographical discourse, and the translation of it, implies a whole different apparatus of theoretical and practical implications. So, although Frame clarified that her autobiography is a mixture of facts and memories of facts, thus admitting a fictional component, I hold that Frame studies lack a more solid stylistic perspective on her work. Why is Frame never considered a poet, while studies of her prose have provided a wide and multifaceted range of interpretations?

Mercer also talked about 'anarchic implications' in the novel form:[15]

> She eschews the label 'novel' and, one may assume, 'novelist', because of the restrictive expectation such labels engender. [...] Frame, though, is neither a 'novelist' nor a 'poet' exclusively. She is an explorer in language, boldly crossing forbidden borders of form and style.[16]

Categories were indeed limiting fields that Frame wanted to trespass on, and whether this shows an influence of her personal history of suppression or of her feelings of inadequacy towards poetry and novels as traditionally conceived, her

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[13] Mercer, p. 384.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 285.
[16] Ibid., p. 384.

idiosyncratic work certainly places her above genres and within both poetry and prose. However, though it may have been recognised that Frame ventured into a variety of forms, the scarce attention directed solely to her verse has limited a more comprehensive vision of her generic experimentalism. In turn, this has inevitably influenced the translation of her works and, therefore, her reception through foreign editions.

For these reasons, I contend that it is necessary for literary criticism to start focussing on the role that verse played in her prose and, even more importantly, to analyse and value her role as a poet. This thesis aims to fill this gap in Frame studies. It is not, however, a study of Frame's poetry in the classical sense, for it considers her verse from a translational perspective, comparing the Anglophone Frame with the Italian. The reasons behind such a choice lie in the belief that translation is 'the most intimate act of reading'[17] and that, in order to reshape Frame's legacy as a poet in Italy, one needs to consider what has already been done in prose. The desire to make Frame's poems available to the Italian audience had to be addressed from multiple angles; therefore, each chapter will consider a facet of the issue that I judge indispensable for an aware approach to the translation of her verse.

This thesis departs from some of the most significant biographical misunderstandings in order to offer a new perspective on Janet Frame's life and thus reshape the common perception of her. Chapter 1 will present the development of this process of mythologisation, focussing on the elements that may have influenced the reception of her work. The notions of 'paratext' and 'cultural capital' will guide the analysis of the Italian editions and the ways Frame has been presented to the Italian public. This chapter will also discuss the role of Campion's film in both the growth of Frame's popularity with a wider audience and in its affirmation of the legendary, extravagant figure. It will be underlined how the news of the misdiagnosis has not been able to dislodge the sturdy category of 'mad writer', sometimes even among scholars.

Chapters 2 and 3 will then set out the methodological approaches to be used throughout the thesis. Given its complex and multifaceted character, this case study has demanded an interdisciplinary approach in which theoretical and

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[17] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Politics of Translation', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis e-library, 2004), pp. 397–416 (p. 398).

descriptive methods could work together. Borrowing from translation studies, Chapter 2 will illustrate how the creative turn in translation is fundamental to approaching the role of the translator and the very act of translation in a different way. Departing from a reconfiguration of how theory can sustain praxis, it will be argued that creativity is an inextricable component of translation and that it is of paramount importance that translators – and readers of translated literature – start to look at its primary role within the target literary system. By dismantling the romantic ideas of 'originality' and 'creation', the chapter will demonstrate how the translators' agency is central in shaping the target literature.

In relation to this, polysystem theory will help assess the reception of Frame in Italy as well as establishing a more central role for translators and translated texts in the Italian publishing market. The way translators perceive their task directly influences their practices and, with regard to Frame, polysystem theory will reveal that the old-fashioned idea of the secondariness of translation (compared to the alleged originality of creative writing) has shaped the Italian versions of her books. Both polysystem theory and the creative turn will therefore provide the theoretical basis for a new approach to the study of Frame in translation and will inform the elaboration of translation strategies for her verse.

Chapter 3 adds to the methodological apparatus by borrowing from poststructuralist, deconstructionist, and postcolonialist theories. The practice of writing will be approached through the ideas of philosophers such as Bakhtin, Barthes, Kristeva, and Derrida, who opposed the traditional notions of 'originality' and looked at language as a differential, intertextual, and dialogic practice. This will lay the basis for an investigation of Frame's unconventional use of words as well as her own ideas on language and communication. Postcolonialism will underpin Frame's perspectives on identity, hybridity, and 'third space'. Bhabha's positions will inform not only the study of Frame as a doubly marginalised figure – as a woman writing from the literary periphery of New Zealand – but also the way she chose and enacted alterity and marginality through her writing.

Chapters 4 and 5 will move on to a more text-based study of Frame, each proposing a different aspect of her writing that has been neglected or only

partially considered by the current criticism. Chapter 4 will offer an alternative perspective to the concepts of *this* and *that* world that are so frequently associated to Frame's books. While several critics have interpreted them as Frame's way of separating reality from imagination, I will argue that Frame conceived them in a much more contiguous and complementary way. If dichotomy animates her oeuvre, Frame also performed a subversion of the very idea of dichotomy, by making oppositions appear to be fictional constructs. This enables her to develop a 'third space' of signification that moves beyond binarism and embraces paradox. Drawing from the notion of 'rhetoricality', I will illustrate how Frame's *third space* is not merely another category, but rather the movement that deletes labels by performing itself. In this sense, this chapter clarifies the notions of *this* and *that* world both theoretically and textually: through quotations from interviews and personal writings, as well as extracts from her works, dichotomy will be revealed as an instrument of investigation that Frame adopted to interpret and communicate the world(s) she inhabited.

Chapter 5 will move the discussion on to Frame's spaces of marginality, again considering them from both an ideological and a textual point of view. Frame's position with regard to margins and boundaries has direct implications for her approach to genre, which she redefines and subverts in the light of her focus on marginalised identities. Her ideas of marginalisation and self-marginalisation will be studied through the recent theories on 'borders' and 'liminality' as metaphorical places of re-action and re-creation, in which the agency of peripheral groups manifests itself through practices of subversion and alternative ontologies. The interstitial spaces of Frame's narrations thus tie in with power discourses that she enacted through her alternative textual practice of the 'prose poetry'.

The chapter will present the prose poem as a genre-*non*-genre that can help interpret Frame's combination of prose and poetry in her prose works. However, while in theory the label of prose poem could be applied only to her short stories, the chapter will demonstrate how her novels are a peculiar type of poetic prose that shares with her poetry many a feature justifying the designation of 'prose poetry'. By comparing quotations from her poems, novels, and short stories, I will maintain that the stylistic contiguity among them is the sign of a writing that defies definitions and categories, and challenges the very

notion of genre. For this reason, Frame's 'prose poetry' indicates the absence of a specific prosaic genre, the fundamental poetic quality of her language, and the importance that poetry and poetic composition had for her writing as a whole. As Frame herself said, 'Every time I sit down to write, I write "poetry"'.[18]

Chapter 6 will finally approach Frame's verse in the light of what the previous chapters have suggested in terms of methodology, ideology, and style. As has been said, this is not a study of Frame's poetry in the purest sense of the word; nevertheless, the first section of this chapter will provide an introduction to its most important features so as to frame the translation-based study that will follow. I will look at six major areas of technical and formal aspects of Frame's verse (metrics, sound, form, style, and lexicon) and analyse them in comparison with parallel characteristics in her prose poetry. I will examine how Frame's Italian translators have dealt with them and identify the main shifts between source and target texts. This contrastive analysis will then inform the translation strategies for Frame's poems. I will demonstrate that through a creative approach to translation and an interdisciplinary, informed perspective on Frame's writing, the translation of her poetry into Italian could valorise the experimentalism of her verse and language in general, and illustrate how the losses of the existing Italian versions can be mitigated in future translations.[19]

Evans and other critics have argued that Frame's poems do not contain 'inherently poetical' thematics and that her genius lies in prose.[20] But Frame's poetry touched upon all sorts of topics, and if one looks closely at her writing one will discern a literary project that moves beyond the implications of what is or is not poetic:

> One of the most fundamental ways in which language restricts communication is through its 'division' of experience into exclusive and opposite halves: rational vs irrational; sane vs insane; novelist vs poet. These are prescriptive oppositions; not neutral transparent words

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[18] Janet Frame, quoted in Foreword to *Storms Will Tell: Selected Poems* (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2008), p. 15.

[19] This thesis will include only extracts and examples taken from Frame's works for which a published Italian translation is available. A full list of Italian translations is available in Appendix C.

[20] Patrick Evans, quoted in Mercer, p. 388.

> allowing free communication, but value-laden terms which colour and constrain our thoughts as soon as we attempt to express them.[21]

Frame fought against such restrictions and chose to perform an inclusive rather than exclusive use of words. In *Intensive Care*, she shows how children's language is full of binary couples and demonstrates how early on we learn how to use them. She called it 'the practice of "division"', which is so 'necessary and comforting for the poem-playing child who remains in all of us'.[22] Yet, the faculty of finding similitude in different aspects of life was, to Frame, the focal point of creation. In a letter to Charles Brasch, she wrote: 'isn't the need to compare, to perceive relationships, the source of all art?'.[23]

These ideas appear to echo Nicole Mallet's point on great literature: 'Is it not the unique property of/for great texts to catalyse a dialogue of opposites?'.[24] Aided by the intense, deep approach to textuality that translation provides, this thesis hopes to show what lies behind Frame's legendary figure and the conventional approaches to her writing, and above all to suggest alternative paths to interpret her unique poetic voice.

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[21] Mercer, p. 386.

[22] Janet Frame, quoted in Mercer, p. 386.

[23] Janet Frame, quoted in Baisnée, p. 104.

[24] Nicole Mallet, 'Comptes rendus', review of Antoine Berman's *L'Épreuve de l'étranger. Culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne romantique. Herder, Goethe, Schlegel, Novalis, Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Hölderlin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), in *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 8.2 (1995), 275–79 (p. 275). ['N'est-ce pas le propre des grands textes que de catalyser le dialogue des contraires?']. My translation.

CHAPTER 1

JANET FRAME, AN INWARD SUN

I write you see. I don't tell about my life.[1]

I do enjoy happiness. I'm a great lover of fun and laughter. I wish you would all believe me. Please do![2]

Introduction

When the film director Jane Campion described her first encounter with Janet Frame, she used these words: 'Frame was not like anyone else I had met: she seemed freer, more energised, and absolutely sane. She was witty, unconventional in her manner'. However, this is not the image the wider public has of the writer.

Janet Frame is one of those literary figures who have been at the centre of a gossiping literary culture, while having rarely spoken themselves. Much has been said and written about her, especially in connection to her alleged mental illness, so that legends and myths have spread uncontrollably. Although her work has not been overshadowed by the vast amount of misinformation, and

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[1] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *Janet Frame: In Her Own Words*, ed. by Denis Harold and Pamela Gordon (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 114.
[2] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 12 February 1983, article by Tony Reid, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 109.

the quantity of scholarly works on it is growing, this research has been conducted in the belief that there is still a great need for a radical change in the approach to Frame, both as a person and as an author. The main goal of this chapter is, therefore, to unveil the mythological figure and initiate a different trend in approaches to Frame. Many of the reflections made in this thesis will specifically address the Italian scenario, so as to provide a background for the analysis of Frame's Italian translations that will be conducted in Chapter 6. Indeed, as will be shown, the reception of a translated writer can be different in the source and target cultures.

Each section will provide original extracts from newspaper articles, essays, interviews (TV and radio), documentaries, and private letters that demonstrate how and (where possible) why Frame has been misrepresented for so many years. It will be argued that the main causes for the false picture of her have been the spread of incorrect biographical details and an interpretation of her works based excessively on this false biography. The chapter will also claim that though Jane Campion's film, *An Angel at My Table*, based on Frame's autobiography has greatly contributed to making Frame known to a wider audience, it has also reinforced the existing myth.

Section 1.1 will show how Frame has been presented to Italian readers through a detailed analysis of Italian paratexts. More than a hundred pieces of evidence are considered, including newspaper articles, reviews, blurbs, and interviews. Through the notion of cultural capital, the section will contend that the writer has been seen through the lens of a deceitful and limited view of her biography, and that this produced a biased approach to her work. Section 1.2 will maintain that a new reception of Frame needs to go through a revision of the 'mythical Janet Frame'. It will be shown how critics and scholars have contributed to the diffusion of misinformation and legends about the writer. Sections 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 will illustrate how Campion's film adaptation and the misdiagnoses of schizophrenia and autism are fundamental parts of the mythologising process. Finally, section 1.6 will offer a different approach to Janet Frame, presenting her through the eyes of those who knew her and, most of all, through her own words. This chapter will thus present a new perspective on Frame's biography, in the awareness that it needs to stay separated from

her work, reflecting Frame's own statement that 'I generally talk trivialities and do my serious thinking when I'm writing'.[3]

1.1 Paratext and Cultural Capital

This section illustrates how the notions of paratext and cultural capital can help to analyse the reception of Janet Frame's work. As this thesis focuses on a comparative study of the Italian- and English-language editions, the data presented here regard Italian, New Zealand, Australian, British, and American publications.

Paratext is defined by literary theorist Gérard Genette as the totality of elements that accompany a published text, such as the author's name, title, introduction, preface, appendix(es), front and back cover, blurbs, and so on. According to Genette, the paratext is '[m]ore than a boundary or a sealed border, [it] is rather a threshold'; it is 'a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition, but also of transaction, a privileged place of pragmatics and strategy'.[4] As a result, the paratext makes a book a concrete object and connects it to the 'real world'. Indeed, it is also through its concreteness that a book relates to the immaterial content it bears. Although one normally refers to the ideas and meanings they transmit, books are, at the same time, material objects that can be touched, observed, and smelt.

As these complementary features control the relations between the book's strategies and their effects on the reader, it follows that they should be considered in the study of an author as a public figure. The paratext influences the reception of works, define the audience, and can even direct marketing policies, which in turn steer the way journalists and critics talk about them, thus influencing TV and internet visibility, as well as the interest in buying and selling the rights for translations, retranslations, and intersemiotic translations (such as filmic versions). Photos, illustrations, and the whole graphic aspect of the pages and covers influence the reception of a book and, by extension, the way an author is perceived at first glance. Philippe Lejeune describes the paratext as 'a

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[3] Janet Frame, *Oamaru Mail*, 1 November 1963, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 81.
[4] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–2.

fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text'.[5]

Salient aspects of an author's life undoubtedly contribute to directing readers' curiosity. People are interested for a variety of reasons and, consciously or not, may be influenced by the author's age, gender, political orientation, personal events, beliefs, and so on. Prizes can also be considered as paratextual features. Indeed, they contribute to the growth of an author's literary reputation and generally influence the audience's opinion of both book and author.[6]

Therefore, the way a book is presented on the market indicates a reading path, foresees a reader, and shapes a writer: 'The paratext makes the book's intentions and interpretation explicit. It creates expectations, gives suggestions, and advice. It protects and encloses, classifies and pushes towards preservation'.[7] Consequently, the paratext is likely to influence translators' approaches and practices, since the translator is a reader of the source text (albeit a reader in a very privileged position). As André Lefevere states:

> Writers and their work are translated differently when they are considered 'classics', when their work is recognized as 'cultural capital', and when they are not. Writers become classics, and their work becomes cultural capital not only on their/its own merits, but also because they are rewritten.[8]

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' is a sociological concept referring to non-financial social spheres. Bourdieu identified culture as a form of capital that shares certain characteristics (transmission and accumulation) with other types of capital. It is a relational idea and, as such, cannot be viewed in isolation from other forms of capital (economic, social, and symbolic).[9]

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[5] Philippe Lejeune, quoted in *Paratexts*, p. 2.

[6] A complete list of the awards won by Frame is included in Appendix D.

[7] *Il paratesto*, ed. by Cristina Demaria and Riccardo Fedriga (Milano: Bonnard, 2001), p. 21. My translation.

[8] André Lefevere, 'Acculturating Bertold Brecht', in *Constructing Cultures. Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. 109–22 (p. 109).

[9] Social capital is generated through social processes between the family and society as a whole; economic capital is wealth either inherited or generated from interactions between the individual and the economy; symbolic capital is manifested in personal prestige and qualities,

This raises the question of how the reception of Frame's writing has been affected by its paratexts, and whether there is a difference between the English and Italian contexts. In order to determine the main factors that have influenced Frame's readers, I have analysed nearly seventy editions of her works, comprising New Zealand, Australian, UK, US and Italian editions, along with more than a hundred newspaper articles, radio interviews, reviews, and blog entries. Newspaper articles were selected in consideration of their importance in the English- and Italian-language editorial markets, both at the time of the titles' major success and today; minor newspapers have been considered when they might have had a relevance in the female, popular press; the analysis includes newspapers belonging to every political orientation.

In the Italian press, Janet Frame's name is frequently associated to Māori culture, a connection made much less often in the Anglophone world. This could be the result of recent interest in Māori culture and literature in Italy,[10] or of the common attitude of focusing on the most exotic sides of alterity – what anthropologists call 'exotic bias', namely the tendency to concentrate only or mainly on those aspects of a group/society that differ most from one's own.[11] Claudio Gorlier, journalist of *La Stampa*, interviewed Frame and wrote two articles about her.[12] In both, Frame and her works are mentioned in association with Māori literature and Campion's film (see Section 1.3 for a wider discussion on this point). Also, references to Frame's schizophrenia, which was certainly considered appealing for the public, are frequently repeated. Gorlier writes:

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such as authority and charisma. To put it simply, together with money, people inherit culture, which in turn can be translated into social resources (power, status, wealth). In addition to this, the cultural capital one accumulates can be 'spent' on education, leading to further qualifications and skills that contribute to the improvement of status and job position. See John H. Goldthorpe, '"Cultural Capital": Some Critical Observations', *Socio*logica, 2 (2007) <doi: 10.2383/24755>; Jean-Marc Gouanvic, 'A Bourdieusian Theory of Translation, or the Coincidence of Practical Instances: Field, "Habitus", Capital and "Illusio"', *The Translator*, 11.2 (2005), 147–66; Moira Inghilleri, 'The Sociology of Bourdieu and the Construction of the "Object" in Translation and Interpreting Studies', *The Translator*, 11.2 (2005), 125–45.

[10] See Paola Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice: The Rise of Maori Literature* (Auckland: Oratia Media, 2010).

[11] Kay Deaux, Francis C. Dane, and Lawrence S. Wrightsman, *Social Psychology in the 90s*, 6th edn (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1993), p. 350.

[12] Claudio Gorlier, 'Janet Frame, l'ombra del falco', *La Stampa*, 30 January 2004, p. 29 and 'Quell'angelo neozelandese', *La Stampa*, 18 September 1990, p. 16.

> She was a fragile, troubled, harrowed woman and [...]
> unwilling to talk about herself. Naturally, such an attitude
> was due to her past, and the memories it projected onto
> her present. When she was younger, she had worked as a
> teacher, but then had a breakdown and was confined in a
> mental hospital. When she was discharged and finally
> devoted herself to writing, that experience nurtured her
> unforgettable autobiography [...] as well as her entire
> production.[13]

Gorlier is explicit in his claim: Frame's experiences in mental wards represent the main inspiration for her fiction. In a previous article, he had already presented Frame under the lens of schizophrenia, claiming that it had been transformed into a tool of analysis in her works:

> Her work provides intense and vivid pictures of
> schizophrenia, commonly perceived by so-called 'normal'
> society as something shameful, something to hide and
> suppress. She turns it into a lucid tool of investigation, a
> form of raised awareness, an invincible refusal to accept
> or undergo, and a sort of magic prophecy.[14]

Perhaps unintentionally influenced by the long tradition of associating women with madness, the Italian journalist makes of Frame's mental illness the quintessence of her literary talent.[15] His analysis fails to recognise, however,

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[13] Gorlier, 'Janet Frame, l'ombra del falco'. 'Era una donna fragile, inquieta, tormentata e […] riluttante a svelarsi. Naturalmente tutto ciò discendeva dal suo passato e dal ricordo che esso proiettava sul presente. Ancor giovane aveva fatto l'insegnante, ma poi era caduta vittima di un crollo nervoso e confinata in una clinica psichiatrica. Una simile esperienza, una volta che, dimessa, si era dedicata allo scrivere, alimentò non soltanto la sua memorabile autobiografia […], ma tutta la sua narrativa'. My translation.

[14] Ibid. 'nei suoi libri ha fornito ritratti di straordinaria intensità di situazioni in cui la schizofrenia, denunciata dai codici della società «normale» come vergogna da reprimere e da nascondere, diviene lucido strumento di indagine, di risoluta presa di coscienza, di indomito rifiuto di accettare o di subire, di magica profezia'. My translation.

[15] Cf. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahaine, eds, *In Dora's Case: Freud—Hysteria—Feminism*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*, 3rd edn (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1997); Hannah Lerman, *Pigeonholing Women's Misery: A History and Critical Analysis of the Psychoanalysis of Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Elaine Shawalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); Janet Wirth-Cauchon, *Women and Borderline Personality Disorder: Symptoms and Stories* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001). In addition, for a specific focus on madness in Frame's works, see Venla Oikkonen, 'Mad Embodiments: Female Corporeality and Insanity in Janet Frame's *Faces in the Water* and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*', *The Electronic Journal of the Department of English at the University of Helsinki*, 3 (2004) <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/hes-eng/volumes/volume-3-special-issue-on-literary-studies/mad-embodiments-female-corporeality-

that she had actually been the victim of a misdiagnosis – as she repeatedly stated in her autobiography. Such a strong misrepresentation may well have influenced the way Frame's books have been read in Italy.

All fifteen of the articles in which Janet Frame is mentioned in *L'Unità* are centred on Campion's film, which was presented at the Venice Film Festival in 1990. In most of these articles, Frame is described as a writer whose international fame entirely depends on that film adaptation. Furthermore, even when the misdiagnosis is acknowledged, the three-volume autobiography on which the film was based is presented as the history of a woman's hospitalisation.[16] This view is rather limited and its underpinning thesis is that Frame's main point of interest is her past in mental wards. The focus is therefore not on Frame and her work, but rather on the 'madness' element, which is so underlined that it inevitably shapes readers' approach to her as a writer and to the content of her work.

On the other hand, the covers of British, New Zealand, Australian, and American editions generally take a less biography- and film-related approach. Though Campion's *Angel* and the experience of hospitalisation are sometimes mentioned, Frame's achievements are emphasised (awards, literary merits, and so on). If one considers, for example, the English Women's Press edition of *Living in the Maniototo*, the back cover is dominated by large type stating 'Winner of the Fiction Prize, New Zealand Book Awards, 1980', and the author is defined as 'New Zealand's finest living novelist'. The Virago editions of her works are endowed with accurate introductions, and the back covers present reviewers' praise, giving deep insights into her style. The old George Braziller American editions of novels such as *Scented Gardens for the Blind* or *The Edge of the Alphabet* make no reference to Frame's past in mental hospitals.

Even if the film is mentioned on the back cover of some English-language editions, it is always a very brief reference, generally placed after other information on the author. Conversely, in the Italian editions, references to the film normally initiate the preface or blurb. The conclusion that can be drawn

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and-insanity-in-janet-frames-faces-in-the-water-and-sylvia-plaths-the-bell-jar-venla-oikkonen/>
[accessed 06 May 2012] and Susan Schwartz, 'Dancing in the Asylum: The Uncanny Truth of the Madwoman in Janet Frame's Autobiographical Fiction', *ARIEL*, 27.4 (1996), 113–27.

[16] Cf. Maria Serena Palieri, 'Janet Frame, un angelo della diversità', *L'unità*, 30 January 2004, p. 24.

from a comparison of the Italian and English-language paratexts is that in Italy, much more than in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and the US, Frame is presented as a product of her past and of Campion's successful adaptation. It seems obvious that a film brings popularity; nevertheless, Italian journalists' and editors' tendency to mention the film before the literary quality of Frame's books is meaningful. It might be argued that such paratextual features suggest that in Italy the film makes the writer worth publishing, while in Anglophone countries it merely enhances Frame's popularity. Only some of the more recent Italian editions provide a richer paratext, and present the writer also in the light of her style. This means that the complex and long process of "liberating" Janet Frame from the burdens of her past needs to be shaped from many perspectives, including a particular attention to paratextual details.

The boundaries between what can be dismissed as gossip about Frame and what contributes to her status as writer are not clear. Lefevere maintains that the difference between information and cultural capital can be defined as follows: 'information is what you need to function on the professional level, whereas cultural capital is what you need to be seen to belong to the "right circles" in the society in which you live'.[17] If one wanted to apply this definition to the field of translation, one would deduce that, since the choice of books to be translated is determined by matters of literary and commercial value, the cultural capital of a source text generates its target texts (translations), which in turn will determine the cultural capital of that work in the target culture. Thus translations are both a means and a cause of cultural capital.

Pascale Casanova studies the balance and creation of cultural capital in translation, and sees translation as an 'unequal exchange'.[18] She builds on Abram de Swaan's notion of unequally distributed capital, and holds that languages are socially and politically different.[19] This idea refers to the presence of a given language in various markets: educational, professional, national, international, and so on. Casanova believes that each language has a linguistic

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[17] André Lefevere, 'Translation Practices and the Circulation of Cultural Capital: Some Aeneids in English', in *Constructing Cultures*, pp. 41–56 (p. 41).

[18] Pascale Casanova, 'Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire. La traduction comme échange inégal', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 144 (2002) <doi: 10.3406/arss.2002.2804>.

[19] Abram de Swaan, 'The Emergent World Language System', *International Political Science Review*, 3.14 (1993), 219–26.

and a literary (or linguistic-literary) capital, which are relatively independent from one another. Its prestige has to do with literary history, the importance of its poetic tradition, the degree of its rhetorical sophistication, and is also related to the number of texts translated out if it. In order to provide a linguistic analysis of these power relationships, Casanova employs the opposition 'dominant/dominated', bearing in mind that the value of a language's capital has to be determined not by the number of its native speakers and writers, but by the number of polyglot speakers who know it and the number of literary translations that exist in that language. She therefore recognises two types of language:

> [R]ecently 'nationalised' languages (that is to say languages that have become national relatively late), with little literary capital, little international recognition, few translators [...] and the dominant languages that, thanks to their particular prestige, age, and the number of texts proclaimed as 'universal' written in them, are endowed with a significant amount of literary capital.[20]

Within the four subsets into which Casanova divides the dominated languages, New Zealand English occupies a hybrid position. As a variety of Standard English, it is neither an oral language that has recently started to fix its written code, nor an ancient language, nor yet a widely spoken language with a literary canon which is not internationally appreciated. New Zealand English appears to belong to the type of languages of recent creation or recreation that have acquired a sort of autonomy and have become national thanks to a recently gained political independence. (This is also the case, for example, for Catalan, Korean, Gaelic, and Neo-Norwegian. However, these are not varieties or dialects, which means that New Zealand English has access to the wider English locale where a monolingual Korean speaker does not.) New Zealand English can be considered a national language because it is the form of English used in a particular country and because it has its own lexicon, spelling rules,

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[20] Casanova, p. 9. 'langues récemment «nationalisées» (c'est-à-dire devenues langues nationales relativement tardivement), dotées de peu de capital littéraire, de peu de reconnaissance internationale, d'un petit nombre de traducteurs [...] et […] les langues dominantes, qui, du fait de leur prestige spécifique, de leur ancienneté, du nombre de textes déclarés universels écrits dans ces langues, sont dotées d'un volume important de capital littéraire'. My translation.

pronunciation, and suprasegmental features. It is widely studied, has its own dictionaries, and important writers have used it in their works. This means that it has a growing cultural capital. Languages of recent (re)creation, however, have relatively few speakers and, therefore, cannot offer varied literary scenarios, which consequently do not host many translated texts.

Stemming from her definitions of 'dominant' and 'dominated' languages, Casanova develops interesting points regarding what translated texts carry with them. She states that there are four main types of translation: first, the translation of a text from a dominant language into a dominated one; second, the opposite, that is, a translation from a dominated language into a dominant one; third, the translation from one dominant language into another; and fourth, the translation from one dominated language into another, which is rare.[21] This classification makes the present case study quite peculiar. Frame's works are written in a mixture of Standard English, New Zealand English, and Māori (though she did not make extensive use of the latter two) and her work is not particularly popular among average readers; hence her work does not have the canonical status to justify a great number of translations. Conversely, Italian is a very old language with a prestigious literary tradition, but is not spoken by a large number of people.

As a Casanovan hybrid, New Zealand English is both dominant (as part of the globalising behemoth that is English) and dominated (as a minority within this large locale, and one with a postcolonial identity at that). The issue in terms of translation and international relations is which of these comes through in the target text.

About this, Casanova states that the praxis of translating texts from a dominated language into a central language is one of the possible means by which the dominated idiom acquires autonomy. Therefore, fighting for the right to be translated in dominated spaces means fighting for global recognition: 'Being translated into one of the big literary languages means immediately becoming literary, that is to say legitimate'.[22] Translation is, therefore, one of the most powerful tools with which to fight the battle towards literary legitimacy. Thus, given the number of Frame's translations all over the world, the numerous

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[21] Ibid., pp. 9–10.
[22] Ibid., p. 14. 'Être traduit dans l'une des grandes langues littéraires, c'est d'emblée devenir littéraire, autrement dit devenir légitime'.

awards she was awarded, and considering also the prestige of the Italian literary tradition, it could be argued that New Zealand English literature and Janet Frame have the potential to gain cultural capital in Italy. It is now a question of deciding how to handle the case in terms of paratextual information and translation strategies.

1.2 Janet Frame, the myth

The analysis of Janet Frame's Italian paratexts leads to the conclusion that the writer has been presented to the public through a double lens: the heavy burden of her past in mental hospitals, and the link with Jane Campion's film. This approach to Frame, which seems to constantly demand the mediation of biographical evidence, is, however, the result of a wider process of mythologisation and categorisation to which the writer has been subjected. This section will demonstrate the strength of such a process, aiming to untie the relationships between Frame's work and the myths that have been built around her persona. Alan Tinkler writes:

> When considering [...] Frame's oeuvre, critics often focus on the autobiographical aspects of her writing. Frame was, after all, widely known for her life, particularly her movement in and out of mental institutions during a twelve-year period.[23] Yet Frame's creative enterprise was not autobiography; her writing is first and foremost the rendering of the imagination.[24]

Claire Bazin is of a different opinion, defining *An Angel at My Table* as Frame's masterpiece, and the work that helps unravel and define her whole production.[25] Even in the academic community, then, there is still uncertainty about how to handle Frame's biography. The links between her stories and her life are surely strong; nevertheless, the subtle line between framing certain attitudes in a biographical background is different from interpreting a whole production in the

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[23] Tinkler is considering also the years between Frame's last admission in New Zealand and the voluntary sectioning at the Maudsley Hospital in London.
[24] Alan Tinkler, 'Janet Frame', *The Review of Contemporary Fiction,* 24.2 (2004), 89–124 (p. 89).
[25] Claire Bazin, *Janet Frame* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2011).

light of personal events. Furthermore, the almost morbid interest in Frame's life has resulted in the creation of a legendary figure, inevitably influencing perceptions of her.

An example of this dangerously distorted approach to Frame is given by Patrick Evans. Evans is a New Zealand scholar and professor of English literature, who has authored several papers about Frame, reporting her as a non-human figure who denied her past, especially her experiences in mental wards. In an interview with the quarterly journal *New Zealand Books* four years after her death, Evans declared that he was looking for stories about Frame, including untrue or inaccurate accounts. Pamela Gordon, Frame's niece and literary executor, commented:

> Evans has been frustrated his whole career by Frame. He has long sought to question her agency. [...] Two decades ago Frame scholar Gina Mercer brilliantly analysed Evans' masculinist approach to Frame, teasing out the consequence of his approach, the violation that results from swaggeringly and doggedly questioning Frame's integrity and self-determination [...].[26]

Thus, when Evans' *Gifted* was published in 2010, Gina Mercer judged it just another attempt to 'penetrate' Frame's work in a chauvinist way.[27] In *Gifted*, Evans invents a different Frame through episodes and anecdotes that he presents as facts.[28] His novel is, therefore, an example of contemporary work that undermines more objective forms of criticism of Frame.

In her introduction to *Faces in the Water*, Hilary Mantel explains this process of 'reworking' to which Frame has been subjected:

> Despite the other things she could do, distinctive and remarkable things, Janet Frame remains subject to categorisation. She was put into the mad category, saved

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[26] Pamela Gordon, 'Gifted by Patrick Evans: A Review', in *An Angel @ My Blog* <www.slightlyframous.blogspot.com> [accessed 15 February 2011].

[27] Gina Mercer, *Janet Frame: Subversive Fiction* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1994), p. 230.

[28] The plot of *Gifted* is based on the year Frame spent at Frank Sargeson's house in 1955, during which period she wrote *Owls Do Cry*. Frank Sargeson (1903–82), pen name of Norris Frank Davey, is one of the most famous New Zealand writers, especially known for his short stories.

at the last moment for the artist category, and is sometimes put back into the mad category by people keen on classifications and unable to explain her genius except by defining it as an abnormality. An arid reductionism still haunts her. [...] It is time to subdue the urge to pathologise, and see Frame as the highly conscious artist that she was.[29]

Inaccurate information was released by journalists, editors, critics, and scholars too. Frame was aware of this gossiping, superficial attitude towards her, and sent out countless complaints, in vain. A sample of one of her letters to editors is provided below:

Sir,
It is unfortunate that your interviewer did not honour her promise and my request not to mention some details of my private life. We had agreed that a brief local interview was not the place, as many details would need to be given to make a clear picture. We had also agreed that such discussion would be an invasion of my privacy.
Your interviewer's statement ['Occasionally in periods of depression or exhaustion Janet Frame has voluntarily committed herself to mental institutions for rest periods'] is untrue. I would like your paper to make a statement that it is untrue, possibly that there was a misunderstanding, but not further to violate my privacy by trying to give 'the truth'.
Yours sincerely,
Janet Clutha[30]

Unfortunately, incorrect details have also been included in official sources, such as the *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* (1998) and Michael King's biography (2000). Gordon attributes these inaccuracies partly to jealousy of

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[29] Hilary Mantel, Introduction to Janet Frame, *Faces in the Water* (London: Virago, 2011 [1961]), pp. xii–xiii.

[30] In the year 1958, Janet Frame became Nene Janet Paterson Clutha, like a river in Central Otago of which she was particularly fond. So, while many authors choose to write under a pen name, she chose to live under an alias and continue to write and publish under her own name. (At the time, Frame was living in London and was concerned that the publication of *Owls Do Cry* could be a threat to her anonymity.) This name condenses several elements of her life: Nene was chosen for her admiration for the Māori chief Tamati Waka Nene, and the fact that, when she was a child, her relatives called her 'Nini'; Paterson was her Scottish grandmother's surname, and had been her second name; and Clutha was not only a river she remembered from her fruit-picking summer in 1944, but was also the Gaelic name for the Clyde, where her father's parents had been born. Michael King, *Wrestling with the Angel: A Life of Janet Frame* (London: Picador, 2001 [2000]), pp. 191–92.

Frame's success, and partly to a sort of natural behaviour towards famous people. The mythological Frame should then be considered to be the result of

> a natural human process – the need for a satisfying coherent story, the urge to stereotype and label; some through the publicity machines of her own publishers; some through the process of malicious or big-noting gossip. And some, of course – like the myth of the 'hermit' – she either contributed to or did not actively discourage, as the legend ensured she was left in privacy to live her life and do her work.[31]

Indeed, the 'hermit' was perhaps the only legend about herself that Frame did not resent, as it was conducive to the solitude and tranquillity she needed to write. Nonetheless, her desire for privacy has been often mistaken for a 'pathological shyness' or symptom of madness (see Section 1.4 for a discussion of Frame's misdiagnoses). There has, in fact, been a constant pathologising of her behavioural traits.

Janet Frame enjoyed meeting people and appreciated their company: 'People are my inspiration', she said, underlining how it was contact with others that made her work ultimately possible.[32] In fact, she considered real life a prerequisite for her stories: 'I keep my eyes open in daily life and see things and meet people who interest me and make me want to write'.[33] Those who knew her in person describe a cheerful, witty woman who liked spending time with friends and family. Life inspired her; it represented 'the scene behind the scene', in her words.[34] She also admitted that her creative work was based on real experiences as well as imaginary journeys, but, while several scholars have stressed that imagination is key to understanding her writing, it has rarely been acknowledged that imagination only came from her contact with *this* world. (See Chapter 4 for a wider discussion of Frame's *this* and *that* world.)

Frame embraced the totality of the human condition: her work demonstrates an open-minded, inclusive look at the facts of human experiences. She enjoyed living a full life, and the fact that her idea of a

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[31] Pamela Gordon, Preface to *In Her Own Words*, p. 5.

[32] Janet Frame, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 81.

[33] Janet Frame, *Oamaru Mail*, 1 November, 1963, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 82.

[34] Janet Frame, *Evening Star*, 6 December 1962, interview by Gwen Robins, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 79.

satisfactory life did not match others' unfortunately seemed to authorise a vision of her as 'weird', 'lunatic', or 'extravagant'. In the TV documentary *Three New Zealanders*, Frame talked about her experience of the United States. She recounted the intense joy of feeling and acting like a child in Movieland, just going around the automats, watching hands come out and give food. On the other hand, she did not fail to mention the poverty and violence she saw there: 'I didn't like it, but I felt that I was sort of in the midst of the human condition [...] I felt a part of the human race [...] I felt sympathy with it'.[35] She particularly appreciated experiencing the *other* as the only way to understand diversity: 'I do like being there. I enjoy very much being in foreign places and meeting a variety of people'.[36]

Frame believed in the fundamental transparency of human behaviour. She felt she could understand what people were thinking or feeling, not because she presumed to read other people's minds, but rather because she had developed a special sensitivity through the years: 'From as far back as I can remember, I have spent my time watching and listening and wondering about what I watched and listened to. [...] I do acknowledge though, that my insights aren't always accurate'. This is mirrored in the way she constructed her characters: she created complex, articulate, sometimes contradictory, figures that communicate their humanity through their faults, idiosyncrasies, and inner monologues. At the very basis of her writing there is a genuine interest in humanity: 'you have to have a passion for reading people and their behaviour, and their lives. You are sort of an everlasting observer, and it's not really a conscious decision'.[37]

As much as she liked observing people, she did not object to being observed, or 'read'. To give an example of this special kind of responsiveness, Frame mentioned the periods she spent in artist colonies in the United States. At the Yaddo community (New York), people took meals together, and she remembered that their faces 'were absolutely full of knowing what others almost were thinking'. The artists could sense what others were feeling: 'There was a

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[35] *Three New Zealanders: Janet Frame*, dir. by Michael Noonan (NZ television, 1977). Available at <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/three-new-zealanders-janet-frame-1975>.

[36] Janet Frame, *Daily News*, 12 November 1976, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 99.

[37] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 19 October 1988, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 138.

sensitivity. You don't do it consciously, but when you're writing you remember all these things. They come to you and you choose what you want to choose'.[38] To her, the months spent in the colonies represented her first experience of being 'among people who read people', that is to say a place where, rather than just reading others, she would be read and understood.[39]

Frame had no problem admitting that she had always been 'a watcher and a listener rather than a joiner [...]. I like being alone. I do venture among people from time to time. [...] I always return, however, to my sanctuary [...]. It's called The Imagination, [...] where I am free to be myself'[40] (see Chapter 4 for an analysis of Frame's concept of imagination). She took great pleasure in solitude, and said her life was a 'solitary experience' also because she needed quiet to focus on her work.[41] This ability to enjoy her own company has been harshly criticised. However, it is in no way the sign of a sick mind, as has often been insinuated by literary critics attempting to diagnose retrospectively if and how certain behaviours were symptoms of social anxiety disorder.

Certainly, this tendency to pathologise her behaviours was fostered by Frame's predilection to tell the stories of people on the margins of society (see Chapter 5). This reading of Frame's stories in the light of (often false) personal events would continue throughout her life and beyond, creating the myth of a mad, reclusive personality who was impossible to deal with. It also generated such a powerful process of categorisation of her persona that Frame's own words could not dismantle it. About her work routine, she once said:

> I need to allow myself long spells well away from everyone. I'm like a monk. Not a nun. Monk is a better word. It conveys such an attractive idea of monastery, books, study, endeavour. 'Nun' has a sexist loading, it's associated with an unfulfilled life with a definite sexual undertone.[42]

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Janet Frame, *Sunday Star–Times*, NZ, 25 September 1994, article by Susan Chenery, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 150.

[40] Janet Frame, Notes for interviews, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 122.

[41] Janet Frame, *Evening Star*, 6 December 1962, interview by Gwen Robins, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 79.

[42] Janet Frame, *Svenska Dagbladet*, Sweden, 2 August 1989, interview by Ingmar Björkstén, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 146.

While expressing her feminist-oriented ideas on gender roles, Frame clarified that her solitude was not contemplative.[43] It was, instead, full of work, books, and study: however, Frame's public appearances were probably too infrequent to make people choose the truth over the legend. As Gordon once said, myths are so powerful that people 'would rather ignore the truth in front of them, than lose the comfort of the story they have acquired culturally'. Legends are reassuring, they are a way of avoiding facing real life, 'which is much more unpredictable and untidy'.[44]

Thus, the fact that Frame was 'a little averse to people' was due to her preference to be 'on the outside, observing rather than participating'.[45] She once admitted, 'I live like a hermit', and often commented on the importance of silence for her work. Every unwanted sound was an invasion, a form of violence to her routine: 'You wouldn't let a stranger enter your house without knocking, so why let this noise come in unwanted?'.[46] For this reason, she would often move house as her neighbour or the area had become too noisy, and did not care if such decisions further nurtured the myth of the reclusive writer.[47] She had found her own balance between companionship and solitude, and was not willing to give up on a lifestyle she had entirely shaped around her writing: 'I have to build a fortress around myself – it's the only way I can get anything done'.[48] In reality, Frame had to develop a sense of protection towards her work, especially after the publication of her official biography in 2000. During an interview with Radio New Zealand, she confessed: 'I believe I am reclusive and will continue to be, particularly because the shock of having my life and correspondence revealed will never be softened'.[49]

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[43] For further expressions of her ideas on gender, see *In Her Own Words*, pp. 130, 132, 150, 206.

[44] Pamela Gordon, '"Reclusive" or "exclusive"?', *An Angel @ My Blog*, 30 September 2010 <http://slightlyframous.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/reclusive-or-exclusive.html> [accessed 3 September 2014].

[45] Janet Frame, *Svenska Dagbladet*, Sweden, 2 August 1989, interview by Ingmar Björkstén, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 146.

[46] Janet Frame, *Wanganui Chronicle*, 5 July 1980, article by Yvonne Dasler, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 105.

[47] Janet Frame, *Time Out* (Wanganui Newspaper Weekender), 15 April 1983, article by John Francis, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 112.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 3 August 2000, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 154.

Her approach to solitude and companionship is well illustrated by the following quote:

> I have grown up quite a lot. Yes, I am still shy. You see, by force of circumstance I'm quite a solitary person. But, although it is not meant to be a nice thing to say, I like my own company. However, I take pleasure in the outside world and I venture out a great deal. In the right company I can be very bold. Still, I'm willing to forgo a lot of pleasures so I can continue another existence. When I'm with people part of me is missing. That's the important part used when I sit down at my desk and it's between me and imagination.[50]

Frame's sense of contentment with her life being mostly occupied by her writing probably went as far as her desire not to see her work published, especially her poetry (see Section 6.1). It is understandable that a person with such a strong sense of privacy would struggle with seeing their writing at the mercy of others. On more than one occasion, Frame stated that she did not write to be published; publication caused her an unbearable embarrassment because her books were very personal:

> My writing is deeply involved with my life and my dreams. When I write I'm not writing to be published. Publication is always a shock and an embarrassment. I still think posthumous publication is the last form of literary decency left.[51]

To say that her work was profoundly linked to her own life does not imply that her novels or short stories were autobiographical. The events and personal developments of a writer's life inevitably influence their creations; in fact, Frame's uneasiness with publication might be linked to a fear of seeing her

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[50] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 12 February 1983, article by Tony Reid, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 108. It could be said that Frame's attitude is well represented by a passage of José Saramago: 'loneliness is not living alone, loneliness is the inability to keep someone or something within us company, it is not a tree that stands alone in the middle of a plain but the distance between the deep sap and the bark'. José Saramago, *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero, in *The Collected Novels of José Saramago* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), p. 193.

[51] Janet Frame, letter to Karl Stead, quoted in *Storms Will Tell: Selected Poems* (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2008), p. 18.

creativity associated with what had really happened to her. For instance, with regard to *Faces in the Water*, she said that surely her experiences in mental wards had given her a solid base of material to work on, but she also added that she had to change the real stories radically in order to make them milder: nobody would judge the real events plausible.[52]

Frame very rarely read her works after they had been published. She considered them as gone, finished in the real sense of the word, up to a point where she would forget the names of the characters or even parts of the plot. She said: 'I don't usually know what happens to my work. I don't like to see it in print'.[53] In the end, she believed that 'writing is of the moment'.[54] However, it was also her strict self-criticism that made publication incredibly stressful for her: 'I never read my books when they are finished. The only feeling I have about my past books is that I am ashamed of them'.[55]

As has been said, it is the label of schizophrenia that has particularly influenced critics and readers. In order to fight it, Frame asked Dr Robert Cawley, one of the psychiatrists who attested that she had never been mentally ill, to write a letter she could use to counter untrue claims about her:

> Miss Janet F. Clutha has told me that a number of literary scholars and editors of anthologies are publishing biographical comments which refer to her previous state of mind as sick or disordered. I understand that some people are going as far as to suggest that her creative ability is in some way related to a history of mental illness.
> Miss Clutha was under my care between 1958 and 1963, and I saw her frequently during that time; she and others have kept me informed about her activities since then. She has been seen by a number of eminent psychiatrists, all of whom agree with me that she has never suffered from a mental illness in any formal sense. She went through a long period of considerable unhappiness before making various decisions about how to spend her life.
> I have told Miss Clutha that in my opinion any writer who publishes comments to her 'disordered mind' or 'mental illness' is running two risks. One is of public ridicule at the

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[52] Mantel, p. ix.

[53] Janet Frame, *Evening Star*, 6 December 1962, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 80. See also *In Her Own Words*, p. 101.

[54] Janet Frame, *Sunday Star–Times* (NZ), 25 September 1994, article by Susan Chenery, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 151.

[55] Ibid., p. 152.

hands of scholars more knowledgeable and informed about these matters. The other is litigation.[56]

The letter was signed 'R.H. Cawley, Physician', and was used by Frame in her confrontation with Professor Victor Dupont. Dupont was a French scholar who had stalked her for six years, repeatedly inviting her to participate in conferences at the University of Toulouse. Frame never accepted, but eventually agreed to meet him while she was in Menton thanks to a fellowship.[57] She had hoped that Dr Cawley's letter would prove wrong Dupont and others who had made statements in print such as 'diseased mind', 'recurring suicidal impulses', and 'never recovered from the shock of seeing her sister burned in a rubbish fire'.[58] Unfortunately, as the paratextual analysis has proven, much still needs to be done in order to stop Frame being presented through the prejudice of madness and misinformation.

1.3 Janet Frame, the character

While the previous section has analysed the mythological aura dominating Janet Frame's reputation, this section explains how *An Angel at My Table*, the film, has influenced perception of her. I argue that a clearer distinction between 'the real Janet Frame' and 'Janet Frame the character' is necessary, and by analysing the main differences between the movie and the book, I contend that the film has contributed to reinforce 'Janet Frame the myth'.

Many readers all over the world have come to Frame through the 1990 film *An Angel at My Table* directed by Jane Campion.[59] *An Angel at My Table* came out first as a television film in April of that year. Frame watched it three times in rapid succession. The first time, she found herself too personally involved to be able to judge it objectively, but, by the third viewing, she was really pleased with it. She said: '[Within] its own limits it found its own freedom

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[56] *Wrestling with the Angel*, pp. 388–89.
[57] Ibid., pp. 382–88.
[58] Ibid., p. 388.
[59] The screenplay of the film was written by Laura Jones, but Campion has made clear that she contributed significantly to it. Cf. Alistair Fox, *Jane Campion: Authorship and Personal Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), p. 94.

and did [the job] splendidly'.[60] Her only concern was that, it being a filmic adaptation, it substantially changed her story, and when facts are turned into a film, it is the re-created image that is fixed in people's memory. As she predicted in a letter to Lindsay Shelton, the filmic revised version of her life would eventually become part of the 'authorised version' of her.[61]

The movie was an enormous success and took on a life of its own. The Sydney Film Festival screened it in June 1990 and it was soon voted the most popular film of the festival. Consequently, Jane Campion and Bridget Ikin, her producer, decided to convert the TV version into a theatrical release. *An Angel at My Table* became the first New Zealand film selected for the Venice Film Festival, where it won eight awards, including the Silver Lion and the Special Jury Prize. It was then screened all over the world and achieved feats that no other New Zealand film had ever managed. As King reported, *An Angel* the movie generated an unprecedented demand for Frame's books, so that her agents in London and Sydney struggled to cope with the huge number of requests for foreign rights, for both the autobiography and the novel. This proves the importance of the film in boosting Frame's popularity.[62] Nevertheless, even if one should not talk of fidelity in film adaptations, Campion's version of Frame gained such a popularity that it has brought many scholars and readers to forget that Frame the character was indeed a fictitious creation.

It is noteworthy that when actress Kerry Fox (who played the adult Janet in the film) was interviewed, she used to draw a neat distinction between 'Janet Frame the person' and 'Janet Frame the character'.[63] What journalists have failed to acknowledge is that the border she drew is blurred when in the film Janet is advised to write about her experience in mental hospitals, and is shown in the next scene writing *Faces in the Water*. This also happens every time the film includes scenes taken from that novel, removing the divide between real life and fiction. Campion's intervention is visible in innumerable aspects and represents an interesting case of how a filmic recreation can strongly influence the reception of a real person.

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[60] *Wrestling with the Angel*, p. 495.
[61] Janet Frame, private letter, quoted in *Wrestling with the Angel*, p. 495.
[62] Ibid., p. 496.
[63] Mantel, p. viii.

In *Jane Campion: Authorship and Personal Cinema*, Alistair Fox addresses the creative process in Campion's films and devotes a chapter to her adaptation of Janet Frame's life.[64] Fox explains how the film diverges from the text on which it is based, particularly because it tends to represent Campion's preoccupations and personal views rather than Frame's. In the commentary to the film, Campion herself admitted that her representation of the writer was deeply influenced by her mother's struggle with depression.[65] She acknowledged that her recreation was highly personal, and that she explored certain episodes of her own biography in the film, mingling them with Frame's life.[66]

After reading *Owls Do Cry* when she was fourteen, Campion identified Frame with her mother, Edith, and with herself. She said that whenever she passed 'the notorious loony bin' at Porirua, she wondered whether Frame was there.[67] Campion admitted that her mother's depression was a traumatic experience in her life:

> The issue of mental illness ... even now is still incredibly difficult in our society, and anybody who has a family member or anyone they're close to who suffers any mental problems – depression, schizophrenia – knows how painful it is to have a family member with a problem like that or, in fact, to be the person with the problem, because it's just so badly understood.[68]

According to Fox, it is not surprising that Campion decided to process this trauma through the literary figure of Frame, thus associating certain episodes and features of her own and her mother's life with Frame: 'she chose as her vehicle the story of a prominent figure who, in her mind, strikingly resembled Edith in certain respects'.[69] It was actually Edith who introduced her daughter to Frame's autobiography, when she sent her *To the Is-Land* from Ashburn Hall, a psychiatric clinic in Dunedin, Frame's hometown. Campion remembers that

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[64] Fox, pp. 88–106.
[65] Ibid., p. 14.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Campion was to become familiar with the Porirua Hospital because, fifteen years after she had read Frame's book, her mother was admitted to ward K2 as she had 'tried repeatedly to find relief from the overwhelming terror and bleakness of her late-life depression'. Fox, p. 91.
[68] Jane Campion, quoted in Fox, p. 92.
[69] Fox, p. 91.

when she read the book she 'sobbed and sobbed. She had struck a blow right to my heart. But it was not only about Janet's life, I was also experiencing my own childhood'.[70] As Fox notes, Campion associated herself and her mother with Frame's story particularly in terms of a shared experience of isolation and suffering.[71] Drawing on psychoanalytic literature on children's behavioural development, Fox maintains that:

> The weeping that was triggered in Jane as a response to *To the Is-Land* shows Jane identifying with Janet as if she (both Janet and Jane) were Jane's mother Edith – which suggests a mirroring in Jane's own life of her mother's unhappiness, which she is moved to act out as a result of intense empathic identification.[72]

It may be that Campion was so fascinated by the book and by the myth of Janet Frame because she found in Frame's life the answer to problems she could not solve in her own life, her mother's depression, her struggle to cope with it, her anxiety.[73] Campion has often noted that her cinema and her life reflect each other. 'I live through my films', she said, 'and it is only later that I find out how much of myself I have invested in them'. The result is that, as Campion admits, 'there is certainly more of me in the final result than I was conscious of when I started'.[74]

When she read Frame's autobiography, Campion reports that she could 'really see [her]self' and felt 'she would just kind of invest [her] own childhood memories along with it'.[75] Fox thus identifies many passages where 'Janet' is more Jane- or Edith-like, and where biographical truths are completely distorted or omitted. Even Frame's relationship with her father is completely fictionalised in the film. Pamela Gordon reports that when Frame watched the film, she commented on one of the scenes featuring the father character, saying, 'I would never have done something like that!'.[76] Campion even inserted some of her

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[70] Jane Campion, quoted in Fox, pp. 92–93.
[71] Fox, p. 93.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., p. 91.
[74] Jane Campion, quoted in Fox, p. 93.
[75] Fox, p. 93.
[76] Here Frame was referring to the scene where 'Janet' returns to her family home after her father's death, and tries on his boots. Quoted in Pamela Gordon, *An Angel @ My Blog*

own father's passions and hobbies, such as caravans, which did not belong to Frame's father.[77]

As Fox explains, 'Campion's personal investment in her fictions extends even to small details in the costuming and props'.[78] For example, in an interview with Marie Colman, Campion admitted that Frame 'the character' wore gumboots not much because everyone in rural New Zealand was wearing them, but rather because, when she was thirteen, she and her family moved to the country, thus when she puts on gumboots 'it is like a physical memory, an extraordinary sensation'.[79] She added: 'I don't know whether Janet actually had them, but I wanted her to wear them'.[80] Therefore, not only did Campion make Janet resemble Edith, her mother, but she also put parts of herself into Frame's character.

Indeed, Frame's story mirrored the shyness and anxiety Campion had experienced as a young woman. She described her years at university as deeply lonely and unhappy. She saw a striking parallel between Frame's issues with social interactions and her own problems making friends and inserting herself into groups.[81] As Fox points out, Campion projects her own childhood, traumas, and family-related problems onto the figure of Janet Frame in many ways, for instance in her depiction of the writer as a child who feels unwanted. In her commentary accompanying the film, Campion said: 'We all feel vulnerable and unchosen, unlovable, uncared about in one way or another', but, in fact, nothing in Frame's autobiography suggests that her parents neglected her or that she felt unloved.[82]

Fox holds that Campion expressed through the film her need to come to terms with her relationship with her mother, especially when, advancing through her thirties, she realised how much she was coming to resemble her. It is likely that dealing directly with this issue would have been too problematic; adaptation

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<http://slightlyframous.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/how-much-jane-is-there-in-campions.html> [accessed 16 July 2014].

[77] Fox, p. 15. The end scene of *An Angel at My Table* (film) features Janet Frame writing in a trailer.

[78] Ibid., p. 14.

[79] Jane Campion, quoted in Fox, p. 15.

[80] Fox., p. 15.

[81] Jane Campion, quoted in Fox, p. 43.

[82] Fox, p. 98.

gave Campion a psychologically safe way to address it.[83] Fox argues: 'All fictive invention provides for precarious substitution, but an adaptation has the added advantage of allowing a particularly painful subject to be addressed at an even greater displaced remove, under the guise of another person's invention'.[84] Filmic adaptation was thus Campion's way to deal with personal issues through the indirect lens of creativity. Filmic creativity claims a certain degree of authorship of the material that is adapted. As a consequence, Campion's *An Angel at My Table* is a work of fiction in itself and, by extension, Campion's Frame should not be viewed as the real Frame.

Some years after the film was released, Frame lamented: 'Until Jane Campion's film I was known as the mad writer. Now I'm the mad fat writer'.[85] In particular, she was disappointed that the film did not mention her poetic ambitions.

However, despite the discrepancies between the autobiography and its filmic recreation, Campion's film has evident artistic merit, and has been praised worldwide, winning seventeen awards. Some critics have praised in particular its capacity not to reduce Frame to a victim of society. As Sue Gillett notes, the writer is never victimised, not even in the scenes of her breakdown, unlike the more pathologising portrait of Bertha in *Jane Eyre* (2003) or other cases of literary 'mad women'.[86] Conversely, Campion located her protagonist always at the centre of the picture, notably in certain scenes where she visually dominates the whole frame. For example, the ending scene where she is writing in the caravan, or the scene in which she moves towards the camera along a linear path in the middle of a field, are so intense that they echo Frame's own style.[87]

Nevertheless, the power of the images should not be mistaken for the intensity of Frame's own story. Scholars of Frame, the editors of her books, and the journalists who write about her should begin to recognise Campion's work for what it is: an artistically (and commercially) successful adaptation.

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[83] Ibid., p. 90.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Janet Frame, in 'Challenging the Myth', Janet Frame Estate <http://www.janetframe.org.nz/Biography.htm> [accessed 30 July 2014].

[86] Sue Gillett, 'Angel from the Mirror City: Jane Campion's Janet Frame', *senses of cinema* (October 2000) <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/103201/20090728-0108/archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/10/angel.html> [accessed 1 August 2014].

[87] Anna Ball, 'Writing in the Margins: Exploring the Borderland in the Work of Janet Frame and Jane Campion', *eSharp*, 5 (2005) <http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_41163_en.pdf> [accessed 24 August 2014] (para. 40 of 51).

1.4 Hospitalisation and misdiagnosis

As has been mentioned, the stigma of mental illness plagued Frame's life. It is undeniably the principal cause of the proliferation of the 'mad writer' myth, thus influencing both the reception of her work and the attitude towards Frame as an author. Hilary Mantel expressed her opinion on this point, claiming that: 'Even more than Virginia Woolf, Janet Frame is the prisoner of her biography; or, to be specific, of the eight years in her life when she was stigmatised as mad, and held in psychiatric hospitals'.[88] This section aims to reveal the reality behind the legends surrounding Frame's mental illness. It will provide an account of the main events linked to the misdiagnosis of schizophrenia and its consequences for her. Through the analysis of original material and testimonies, this section will shed light on some of the shadows that have been hanging onto Frame's public figure, in the hope that 'Frame the person' may finally be read without the 'mad' preconception.

Frame's history of hospitalisation began in 1945. In 1944 she had started a teacher training college course as well as attending a course at the University of Dunedin. She immersed herself completely in her studies, and particularly enjoyed the English Literature and Psychology courses. The first two years were full of reading, writing, and solitary study. She enjoyed her new life and was more and more convinced that she wanted to make a career of her passion for literature. However, the third year of training college involved a compulsory year of probationary teaching, which, in order to pass, required assessment by a headmaster and a formal inspection of her classroom work.[89] Thus, in late January 1945 she returned to Dunedin, after spending the holidays in Willowglen at her parents' home, to teach two classes of eight and nine-year-olds at Arthur Street College, the oldest primary school in the country. Despite the continuous reservations about whether she wanted to be a teacher, she coped with the training very well. She enjoyed teaching, preparing material for her classes, and the contact with the children was stimulating. She also attended psychology lectures and continued writing in her free time. Though the previous year she had had two poems published and been awarded a prize,

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[88] Mantel, p. vii.
[89] *Wrestling with the Angel*, pp. 58–61.

that year she showed no interest in publication. As King wrote, 'the writing was its own – and only – reward'.[90]

What she found particularly difficult was engaging with the corporate life of the school. She recollected: 'my timidity among people, especially among those who might be asked to judge and comment on my performance as a teacher, led to my spending free time alone'.[91] The social aspects of her new job, such as tea with colleagues or meetings with parents, troubled her introvert nature; 'her old fear of being judged and found wanting' grew progressively and uncontrollably.[92] She became more and more isolated and an acute depression began to undermine her daily activities. As she told King:

> I knew no one to confide in, to get advice from; and there was nowhere I could go. [...] What, *in all the world*, could I do to earn my living and still live as myself, as I knew myself to be. Temporary masks, I knew, had their place; everyone was wearing them, they were the human rage; but not masks cemented in place until the wearer could not breathe and was eventually suffocated.[93]

Despite never having been very involved in social activities with adults, Frame was aware of the Pirandellian masquerade that people normally enact. Nevertheless, she was sure she could not cope with it for the rest of her life and, if she failed in her teaching observations, she feared there was nothing else she could do to make a living.

Fortunately, university courses offered relief from her daily stress, especially the psychology classes of the junior lecturer John Money. The 23-year-old graduate was a good-looking, bright man, whose charm immediately struck Frame. From her accounts of that period, it seems she had a crush on him, while he was impressed by her writing talent (he would score her assignments 100%, admiring her parable-like style and deep understanding of the experiments). Money's tutorials on Saturday mornings remained Frame's

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[90] Ibid., pp. 61–62.
[91] Ibid., p. 62.
[92] Ibid., p. 63.
[93] Ibid. Italics in original.

only source of pleasure, and when a new lecturer took over his classes, she could not bear it. She attempted suicide.[94]

On the evening of the same Saturday that Money failed to turn up to class, Frame tidied her room and her belongings, and then swallowed a whole packet of aspirin. She said: 'I lay down in bed to die, certain that I would die. My desperation was extreme'.[95] To her surprise, she woke up the following morning, with a roaring in her ears and her nose bleeding: 'My first thought was not even a thought, it was a feeling of wonder and delight and thankfulness that I was alive'.[96] The following Monday, Frame returned to school and resumed her activities as though nothing had happened. But, when Money set an autobiographical assignment, she summarised her life and added that she had recently attempted suicide.[97] Money, who was also holding free 'clinics' for students to discuss problems of a psychological nature, called Frame to his office. Thus began a series of regular meetings, in which Frame told her lecturer about her preoccupations (for example, the episode when she had walked out of her classroom as the inspector walked in). Sometimes, she would exaggerate to catch Money's attention.[98]

Their meetings went well, and Money was satisfied with Frame's progress. However, it happened that the young psychologist had to cancel an appointment they had for a Friday afternoon, and left a message at her school to tell her the rescheduled appointment was on Monday afternoon. This resulted in another crisis. Frame rang him from a public telephone and told him she wanted to end her life. Money immediately alerted his head of department, Henry Ferguson, and the police. Frame's parents were informed and her father came down from Ōamaru so she would not be alone over the weekend. Though Frame turned up to the Monday appointment, after a few days she wrote a letter to Money, in which she implied that she wanted to commit suicide. She missed their following appointment and, again, rang him from a public telephone: his records report that she was absolutely determined to take her life, and that this time she had it very well planned. Money called Ferguson, as he felt they could

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[94] Ibid., pp. 63–65.
[95] Ibid., p. 64.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., pp. 64–65.
[98] Ibid., pp. 65–66.

not leave Frame alone. They went to her home and managed to talk to her. She had actually set out to commit suicide by climbing up the cliffs at St Clair, but then thought of something funny and decided to go home.[99]

Owing to this second attempt, at 10:30 pm on 18 October 1945 Frame was brought to the Colquhoun Ward of Dunedin Public Hospital. She was told it was only for a few days, in order to give her some rest from an excessively stressful period. Money kept in contact with her and went to meet Frame regularly in the ward; his opinion was that she was recovering very well, and hoped that his colleagues at the hospital agreed. He feared that Frame would be sent to Seacliff, the psychiatric hospital north of Dunedin, where patients were often committed for life.[100] His records report:

> She now talks perfectly normally to me, although she is very shy with the doctors [...] and talks rather stupidly with them. They [...] therefore settle themselves with the belief that she is on the way to being insane. I do so hope that they do not send her to Seacliff. I am working hard to get her in a frame of mind to be able to talk to them as easily as to me.[101]

Unfortunately, when doctors attempted to talk to Frame, she would become elusive, overly dramatic, or giggle nervously. According to the doctors, her behaviour, the suicide attempts, and her interest in psychology were all evidence of an incipient schizophrenia. When Money understood that Frame was at serious risk of being taken to Seacliff, he advised her to keep a journal of her dreams, so that they could discuss it together. He knew that the psychologists and psychiatrists of the hospital were unfamiliar with the latest techniques to deal with anxiety, so he tried to help Frame personally. By 30 October Frame was significantly better, and seemed to have overcome the crisis. The hospital staff announced that she could go home to Ōamaru for a period or recuperation.

This was not what Frame was expecting: she had hoped she could remain in Dunedin and resume her studies. At the prospect of going back home,

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[99] Ibid., pp. 67–69.
[100] Ibid., p. 69.
[101] Ibid.

she felt terrified: 'I felt all the worries of the world returning, all the sadness of home...'.[102] Thus, when she saw her mother standing at the entrance of the ward, she screamed at her to go away. No one asked why she reacted so, and she was punished, deprived of all her books and further visitors, including Money. Frame was then held *incommunicado* until Dr Malcom Brown, superintendent of Seacliff Hospital, saw her again on 2 November. On that day, he signed the documents to have Frame admitted to Seacliff and persuaded her mother to sign them. Two practitioners working at Dunedin Hospital, Warren John Boyd and Eric Robin Harty, certified that the patient was mentally defective and suicidal, and thus needed 'oversight care or control for his [*sic*] own good, or in the public interest'.[103] The following day the writer was escorted to the infamous Seacliff Hospital.[104] A long, dramatic period of eight years in and out of hospital began that day.

Six weeks later Frame was released to the care of her parents in Ōamaru, but she returned to Dunedin to work as a boarding-house maid and to write. During that period, she was made aware of her diagnosis of schizophrenia. Unfortunate events resulted in further crises and consequent periods of hospitalisation: Money departed for the United States and she was devastated by the death of her younger sister Isabel, drowned in Picton harbour, uncannily recalling her other sister Myrtle's death exactly ten years before. In 1948 she was admitted to Sunnyside Mental Hospital in Christchurch, where she received her first electroconvulsive therapy treatment (ECT). The ECT worsened her anxiety and symptoms, which led her mother to recommit her to Seacliff in October of that year.[105]

Much of the next eight years were spent in Seacliff and in Avondale Hospital in Auckland, where she went as a voluntary patient or was sectioned. In these institutions, she was treated with frequent ECTs and insulin injections, as well as periods of confinement. Incarceration alternated with probationary periods in the care of her parents, but contact with them and her brother, who fought continuously with their father, prevented her recovery. Nevertheless, during her time at home, Frame continued to write, and sporadically publish,

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[102] Ibid., p. 71.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., pp. 72–120.

short stories and poetry. The ECTs certainly caused damage to her brain, mainly to her memory; perhaps worse, the pain of the years spent in wards had completely destroyed her already fragile self-confidence. In the second volume of her autobiography, Frame recalls:

> After having received over two hundred applications of unmodified E.C.T., each the equivalent, in degree of fear, to an execution, and in the process having my memory shredded and in some aspects weakened permanently or destroyed, and after having been subjected to proposals to have myself changed, by a physical operation, into a more acceptable, amenable, normal person, I arrived home at Willowglen, outwardly smiling and calm, but inwardly with all confidence gone, with the conviction at last that I was officially a non-person.[106]

The emotional and psychological damage of the treatments had instilled in Frame the idea that no one would listen to what she had to say, or what she thought about her unhappiness. She was now labelled a mental hospital patient and the world would not let her have her say. This situation was to change only in 1957, in London, at the Maudsley Hospital.

Frame went to London for the first time in 1956. In May 1957, she returned there after having travelled to Spain, where she mainly stayed in Ibiza and Barcelona. During that period, she sent letters to John Money, telling him about her renewed distress, depression, and of episodes of hallucination. Money sent her anti-psychotic drugs in the conviction that she was now a chronic schizophrenic. Unfortunately, Money's opinion of Frame's condition was worsened by misunderstanding: as before, at university, Frame used metaphors to describe her feelings (for example, she wrote she felt like 'dog-paddling out of a dream-sea'),[107] which made Money believe she was describing hallucinatory events. For this reason, he proposed that, when she reached London, she should visit the Maudsley Hospital, which was renowned as the best psychiatric hospital in the UK and one of the best in the world. Among the Maudsley staff, Money knew Dr Michael Shepherd, to whom he wrote a letter of referral to familiarise him with Frame's medical history.

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[106] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table* (London: Virago, 2011 [1982, 1984, 1985]), p. 266.
[107] *Wrestling with the Angel*, p. 179.

By July, Frame was unhappy in London. She was worried about her finances and once again facing the old dilemma of publication. In fact, she was under a lot of pressure from Pegasus Press (who had published *Owls Do Cry* the same year), who were requesting a new manuscript. She was unwilling to open up again to doctors but, in the end, she accepted because she felt that, if she really wanted to continue writing, she had to regain control over her fears:

> I don't want to change myself, only to have command in my house, and the right of shutting or opening the door on the darkness. You know that I live almost completely in a fantasy world, that though I may walk fearfully in it, I never want to leave it, only not be exhausted there, to death.[108]

Frame knew that if she did not face her problems properly, she might put her writing in danger. In a later letter to John Money, she wrote:

> I do not want to become placid, only a *little more* placid, so that each day is not such an exhaustion of wasted emotion [...] To me the need to write and the act of writing are worth more than any opinions of what I write. You understand that if I change myself, I fear that perhaps I may no longer *need* to write; yet such has been my recent confusion and exhaustion that I am not *able* to write.[109]

Thus, her vital need to keep writing, even just for the sake of it, with complete disregard for publication, led her to become a voluntary patient at Maudsley two and a half years after her final discharge from Seacliff. Later, when Frame looked back at the month of August 1957, she felt she had exaggerated the description of her symptoms for two reasons: first, as was her custom, she wanted to attract the sympathy of the staff – especially Dr Shepherd – and second, she was seriously committed to understanding whether she was really schizophrenic.[110] Frame immediately noticed major differences in the way she was treated at Maudsley: for the first time she had an electroencephalogram and, most of all, she enjoyed having her typewriter with her, as well as spending

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[108] Ibid., p. 180.
[109] Ibid. Italics in original.
[110] Ibid., p. 184.

time painting and being treated kindly. She was very surprised that nurses and doctors talked to her frequently and that they always listened to her. She said: 'it was taken for granted that I did have thoughts and feelings... [This] helped to give patients a sense of being, and of being *somewhere*'.[111]

For the first time in her history of hospitalisation, Frame was lucky enough to meet competent and humane professionals, such as Dr Alan Miller, to whom she was assigned and whom she immediately liked, as he 'was not afraid to acknowledge and voice the awful thought that he belonged, after all, to the human race'.[112] After four months, Dr Miller, in concert with a team of other experts, explained to Frame that she had never been schizophrenic and that she should never have been admitted to a mental hospital. Any problem she was experiencing was a result of what had been done to her in New Zealand with the aim of curing her of a disease she had never had. However, this 'verdict',[113] as Frame called it, left her puzzled and confused:

> [I] had suddenly been stripped of a garment I had worn for twelve or thirteen years – my schizophrenia. I remember how wonderingly, fearfully I had [...] searched for it in psychology books and medical dictionaries, and how... I had accepted it, how in the midst of the agony and terror of acceptance I found the unexpected warmth, comfort, protection [...] even when I did not wear it openly I always had it by for emergency, to put on quickly, for shelter from the cruel world. And now it was gone... banished officially by experts. [...] I was bereaved, I was ashamed. How could I ask for help directly when there was 'nothing wrong with me'?[114]

After twelve years, Janet Frame was simultaneously freed from and robbed of the burden of schizophrenia. Yet she did not feel liberated; she felt lost. Mental illness had become the answer to the incessant questions the world and she herself posed about her unhappiness. What was she to reply now? Why was she so different from 'normal' people? The answer would come from Dr Robert Hugh Cawley, one of the most important people in Frame's life.

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[111] Ibid., p. 185. Italics in original.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., p. 186.
[114] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table*, p. 447.

When Frame was in therapy at Maudsley, Dr Cawley was a trainee psychiatrist of the same age (thirty-four). He replaced Dr Miller when the latter left the hospital to return to America. Frame immediately felt at home with him, both because she perceived that he was a shy person, and because he had many interests – psychiatry was only one aspect of his multifaceted personality. He had studied zoology for his BA, before developing an interest in genetics and ecology; he also had a PhD in medical statistics and was very passionate about music and literature. He had entered the school of medicine relatively late due to health problems. Frame trusted him: 'he was not aggressive, his manner was excessively polite, his smile kindly as if these were more a protection for himself than a gift for me. I felt he was a clever, uncertain man'.[115] He was soon to realise than many of the techniques he was applying were subverted by her: 'an instrument of clinical investigation was meeting some powerful resistance from a force which could perhaps challenge and debunk much of what I believed I knew'.[116]

Frame would discuss anything with Cawley, her 'emotional, personal, and even financial budget'.[117] He constantly varied his psychotherapy tools as Frame was easily bored, and able to recognise and subvert the tricks of his techniques. They also played chess – Frame beat him soundly. Dr Cawley also asked the nurses to find her more engaging activities than making baskets or lampshades: he had immediately recognised Frame's literary inclination, so that her allusive language was, at last, no longer mistaken for a sign of madness.[118] It was clear to Cawley that Frame was not schizophrenic, although she was going through 'an identity crisis or an existential dilemma'.[119] He wrote:

> She was a highly intelligent, sensitive, and artistically creative person with desires and abilities for verbal expression of ideas and associations ... Her long periods in hospital had been occasioned, and prolonged, by what could be regarded as the negative side of her exquisite sensitiveness. She had become overwhelmed by a world in which harshness and cruelty, indifference and loneliness, appeared to threaten the splendours of the

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[115] *Wrestling with the Angel*, pp. 194–195.
[116] Ibid., p. 195.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., p. 196.
[119] Ibid., p. 197.

> human spirit – splendours of which her deep awareness
> was itself searchingly painful.[120]

Dr Cawley's diagnosis was that Frame was an extremely sensitive person who found the cruelty of the world difficult to deal with. He could not help but notice her intelligence and artistic talent; for this reason, he always rejected the idea that psychotherapy should have changed her. Instead, he helped her rediscover herself and her real ambitions.

He found that the issue of the future was still problematic for her. She had come to terms with her past and was learning how to deal with the present; nevertheless, she was uncertain how to proceed. He focused on this point and eventually managed to persuade her that '[it] was time to begin again'. In her words, he taught her that 'I was myself, I was an adult, I need not explain myself to others. The "you should" days were over'.[121] Most importantly, Dr Cawley convinced her that she really needed to write, as it was her 'way of life', possibly starting from her own story, so as to gain a clearer perspective on her future.[122] He also advised her that if what she wanted and needed was a more solitary lifestyle, then she had to live alone and devote her time to what made her happy.

Dr Robert Cawley helped Frame to escape the constraints New Zealand society had put on her. Their encounters continued, and even when the therapy was over, they remained friends and exchanged letters. Frame would dedicate seven books to him, as 'RHC'.

1.5 Autism

As proof of the common tendency to categorise and pathologise Frame's life, a second misdiagnosis emerged in 2007. This was a diagnosis of autism, which spread quickly, thus contributing to the already impressive amount of misinformation about the writer. This section explains how this second misdiagnosis has further boosted the myth, underlining that a more objective approach to Frame has still to be constructed.

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[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., p. 198.
[122] Ibid.

Sarah Abrahamson's article 'Did Janet Frame have high-functioning autism?' appeared in the *New Zealand Medical Journal*.[123] The New Zealand medical doctor claimed that Frame had suffered from high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome, maintaining that she had shown clear signs of the condition in her autobiography. She based her diagnosis on some of the episodes mentioned in *An Angel at My Table*, including passages that are likely to have been creatively re-imagined. For example, Abrahamson claims that Frame had suffered from language learning difficulties in her childhood in light of the well-known episode of the 'is-land'. In the first volume of her autobiography, *To the Is-land*, Frame reported she was fascinated by this new word that she had learnt at school, and that she would mispronounce it by not muting the 's' sound. Any reader who is familiar with Frame's word plays, puns, and metafictional approach to writing would interpret such an episode as an incident of her life that she had reworked through her memory.[124] As Frame specified in the first chapter, the autobiography contains a 'mixture of facts and truths and memories of truths'.

Other symptoms identified by Abrahamson included 'impairment in social and high-level communication skills', 'impairment in the development of normal peer relationships', and 'a special interest which is abnormal in intensity and focus'.[125] Abrahamson also comments on Frame's difficulties in socialising and hypothesises that her father was also autistic, due to his problems expressing emotion and catching humour in everyday life.[126] Frame's shyness is, once again, treated as a sign of disease. Frame did declare difficulties in making new friends and socialising during her university years; however, what was a behavioural characteristic and, perhaps, a common form of anxiety in new

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[123] Sarah Abrahamson, 'Did Janet Frame have High-Functioning Autism?', *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 120.1263 (2007) <http://journal.nzma.org.nz/journal/120-1263/2747/> [accessed 3 April 2012].

[124] In the seventh chapter of her autobiography, Frame tells about her discovery of the word 'island', 'which in spite of all teaching I insisted on calling Is-Land'. She then goes on to explain that she found the adventure book *To the Island* at school, which impressed her so much that she talked about it at home. When her sister, Myrtle, heard her mispronounce the word 'is-land', she corrected her, so that '[i]n the end, reluctantly, I had to accept the ruling, although within myself I still thought of it as the Is-Land'. Frame demonstrates that she was already aware she could play with words. Furthermore, this could be one of the episodes that Frame was able to revisit and rework in her memory before inserting it into her autobiography. Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table*, p. 35.

[125] Abrahamson, (para. 8 of 32).

[126] Ibid., (para. 13–14 of 32).

situations, cannot provide scientific evidence for such a serious disorder as autism. Abrahamson even considered Frame's good grades in mathematics and passion for poetry as signs of autism.[127] Her argumentation appears highly unscientific for a work of fiction cannot be considered, in any way, a form of medical proof.

In addition, diagnoses of high functioning autism and Asperger's were quite popular long before Frame's death in 2004; this means that, given Frame's reported willingness to investigate her personality, she would have had enough time to explore and embrace that condition. In fact, when Michael King told her that the Asperger community was calling her 'one of them', she did not hesitate to discuss the matter with her close friends. She considered it carefully, and understood that it was just another of the misdiagnoses she seemed to attract. King also commented on this: 'Janet has a strongly developed sense of what's public and what's private and she certainly likes to protect her privacy. But the notion that she's some kind of perpetually frightened autistic creature that shrinks from all human contact just isn't true'.[128]

Nevertheless, Frame's alleged autism was reported around the world as having been diagnosed by experts. Abrahamson has herself frequently defended her study despite the numerous attacks, all of which underlined how a posthumous diagnosis that relies on caricature can hardly be considered reliable. In her article, Abrahamson points out that the psychiatrists in London 'were not able to provide her with any other label', thus manifesting her own need to pathologise Frame.[129] Her assumptions resulted in dozens of articles in newspapers and on literary blogs, which started reporting that the writer's madness had, in fact, been a form of autism.[130]

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[127] Ibid., (para. 12 of 32).

[128] Michael King, quoted in Iain Sharp, 'In the Frame', *Sunday Star – Times*, 15 September 2002.

[129] Abrahamson, (para. 22 of 32).

[130] There was a response in the scientific community as well. In 2007 Hilary Stance, researcher at the University of Wellington, published a short article confirming Abrahamson's diagnosis. She said she had based her analysis on Frame's autobiography, the biography written by King, as well as video and audio records. Stance added that she had discussed the matter with King himself, and that he 'indicated agreement, mentioned she had shown interest in autism since the diagnosis of her great niece, but suggested it was best not to publicise my research as it might upset members of her family'. The niece Stance referred to is Pamela Gordon's daughter, who replied to her completely denying her claim. However, despite having no scientific evidence whatsoever, Stance defended her claim. See Hilary Stance, 'Janet Frame and Autism', *NZMJ – The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 120.1264 (2007), <http://journal.nzma.org.nz/journal/120-1264/2791/content.pdf> [accessed 17 July 2014].

1.6 Frame and happiness

The main goal of this concluding section is to show that the mythical figure of the reclusive, lonely, mad writer is false, and that it was greatly influenced by the prejudiced approach to Frame's experience with mental illness. Since the discovery of the schizophrenia misdiagnosis has not completely erased the patina of gossip and categorisation about her, this section claims that a different approach to 'Janet Frame the person' is necessary for a new perspective on her history and her work.

Janet Frame found a way of coming to terms with her past and her country:

> I have been in great personal danger in New Zealand. I have been in danger of being destroyed by people who decided it was their right to try to make me what they wanted me to become – and this without any detailed scientific or human investigation of me. Do you wonder when I say I'm not completely at home in New Zealand. [...] I'd rather not meet people who've read my work or have 'heard' of me. I don't think they ever forgive me for the ordinary practical reality of myself as opposed to the myth that some people in New Zealand have created to represent me. I resent this myth.[131]

Frame lucidly perceived the danger of the myth-making machine that had been working against her. She knew that a legendary, complex figure is more intriguing than a woman who has been a victim of a faulty medical system and of banal literary gossip.[132] She was aware that such mythologising-pathologising approaches affected the reception of her work. In an interview on ABC Radio Australia, she said she believed that people were not incentivised to read her books. The myth had worked against her as it had scared readers: they had become accustomed to the idea that a book written by a crazy person would be too difficult to follow, or perhaps not worth it.[133]

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[131] Janet Frame, Notes for interviews, quoted *In Her Own Words*, pp. 119–20.

[132] See also *In Her Own Words*, pp. 81–82 and p. 94 for more insights in Frame's view on living in New Zealand as compared to living in London.

[133] Janet Frame, ABC Radio Australia, November 1985, interview by Gina Mercer, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 128.

Frame reacted in different ways to this situation in which a legendary figure seemed more real than the real one. She contemplated legal action;[134] she tried to fight it by speaking in first person about her life and her work, including personal details about her work routine, for example; she also faced the myth with the resigned attitude of those who have done all they could and are now just waiting for the storm to pass: 'All these myths... I suppose it is too late to do anything about them. [...] I think the way I am writing the story of my life might at least show that I'm not – well, that I *am* a human being'.[135]

Nevertheless, she also found her own way to live a happy life, which, given the abuse and brutality she had gone through, any accounts of her should mention as an extraordinary achievement. Frame felt she could 'be happy to some degree anywhere',[136] and was content with her ordinary childhood. She considered herself 'mostly a happy person'.[137] Her sense of happiness and contentment was linked to a belief in universal goodness and an attitude of positive thinking: 'I do believe in the triumph of the human condition, over all adversity. And, although I'm not religious, I honestly feel that everything is good. Everything that happens can be turned to some use'.[138] Frame did not go into much detail about her relationship with religion in interviews or her non-fiction writing, but she felt that there was something spiritual and mystical in her approach to life: 'It's my belief that there's an indestructible goodness in all things, states, everything. Religious people would call it God'.[139]

It is known that she had a deep interest in Buddhism since her time as a student at the University of Otago.[140] Indeed, it was especially in London that she felt more confident in her knowledge of Buddhism and started thinking of herself more seriously as a Buddhist. Gordon claimed that her aunt had identified as Buddhist on more than one occasion until her last years of life; she

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[134] Janet Frame, Notes for interviews, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 120.

[135] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 12 February 1983, article by Tony Reid, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 107. Italics in original.

[136] Janet Frame, *NZ Woman's Weekly*, 18 November 1963, article by Leah Newick, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 85.

[137] Janet Frame, *NZ Woman's Weekly*, 21 March 1983, article by Frances Levy, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 111.

[138] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 12 February 1983, article by Tony Reid, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 109.

[139] Janet Frame, Notes for interviews, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 120.

[140] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table*, p. 182.

told her: 'I used to be a Buddhist and I suppose in a way I still am'.[141] Her education was catholic and, as her autobiography testifies, her mother's Christadelphianism deeply influenced her, especially because it made her question the validity of certain religious creeds.[142] In fact, she believed it was possible to reconcile Catholicism and Buddhism. However, apart from any religious belief, what strongly emerges from Frame's interviews is her optimism and faith in the future, mostly due to her survival – in society, wards, or any other form of suppression – which proved that she could overcome. Interviewed by Elizabeth Alley on Radio NZ, she said: 'I'm an optimist. [...] there are people who survive. It's a triumph of survival'.[143]

It appears that her serenity derived from a sense of having come to grips with her past. She stopped thinking about what could have happened if she had not been hospitalised, and she also stopped interrogating doctors on the damage her brain had suffered after the violence of the ECTs. To her, bitterness and resentment were a waste of time.[144] She was focused on the fact of having survived and, above all, on the ways she could turn those terrible experiences into something positive and enriching. When Alice Steinback asked her if she was angry about the years she had lost, she replied:

> Well, I think I felt more sad than angry. But then sadness is another facet of anger, isn't it? I think I chiefly felt sad for others who didn't survive.
> I think it is really enriching if one survives it. In a sense you can compare it to people who've been in concentration camps. I think it gives something extra to one's views because one has been really faced with death. We all face death, of course, but to have it thrust like that on us... .[145]

[141] Pamela Gordon, 'Janet Frame and Buddhism', *An Angel @ My Blog*, 19 May 2010 http://slightlyframous.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/janet-frame-and-buddhism.html [accessed 30 July 2014].

[142] *Wrestling with the Angel*, p. 45.

[143] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 30 April 1983, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 117. See also *In Her Own Words*, pp. 136, 148.

[144] Janet Frame, *Sunday Star–Times* (NZ), 25 September 1994, article by Susan Chenery, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 151; Janet Frame, *The Whig–Standard Magazine* (Canada), 27 October 1984, article by Larry Scanlan, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 126.

[145] Janet Frame, *The Sun* (Baltimore), 18 October 1984, article by Alice Steinbach, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 126.

Frame's lucid, deeply sane attitude towards her past unveils an incredibly strong personality. In 2002, two years after the publication of *Wrestling with the Angel*, Michael King published *An Inward Sun: The World of Janet Frame*, a volume of photographs dedicated to the writer.[146] In an interview for the *Sunday Star–Times*, journalist Iain Sharp commented:

> Some of the photos in Michael King's new pictorial biography are startling. There are shots of Frame tap-dancing, grinning on a family picnic, larking around with friends on a beach, whizzing around the North Island on her motor scooter and pausing thoughtfully with a pool cue while working out how best to demolish the opposition. This isn't how much of us think of Frame. The dominant image is of the painfully shy recluse haunted by memories of her harsh early years [...].[147]

Sharp effectively synthesises the contrast between 'the real Janet' and 'Janet the myth', the unreal persona that had been constructed through legends, anecdotes, and a stern, persistent process of categorisation and misinformation. The photographs King selected show a happy, lively girl, who kept her cheerful attitude as an adult, despite the tragic events she went through. He said: 'Janet has a smile that comes from deep within. She's capable, at any time, of this sudden transforming radiance, which I also regard as a kind of inward sun'.[148]

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[146] Michael King, *An Inward Sun: The World of Janet Frame* (Auckland: Penguin, 2002).

[147] Iain Sharp, 'In the Frame', *Sunday Star – Times*, 15 September 2002.

[148] Michael King, quoted in Iain Sharp, 'In the Frame', *Sunday Star – Times*, 15 September 2002.

CHAPTER 2

INTERACTIONS: TRANSLATION AND LITERARY SYSTEMS

Let poetry win without allowing scholarship to lose.[1]

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish a methodological approach to Janet Frame's work and the translation of it. Chapter 2 works in (thematic) conjunction with Chapter 3: while the former provides a focus on systems theory and frames this study within canonical translation studies, the latter will move on to a broader philosophy of writing, and will establish how translation might relate to this. An interdisciplinary approach to methodology will allow this research to combine descriptive and theoretical elements without turning into a prescriptive guide on how to translate.

Section 2.1 aims to elicit a change in the way theory is commonly conceived in the study of translation. Building on the creative turn of translation studies, Section 2.2 will offer an insight into the links between the notions of creativity, originality, and agency in

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[1] Attipate K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 297.

translation. Section 2.3 will provide the theoretical background to help understand how a combination of different methods can boost translators' awareness in the decision-making process. Finally, Section 2.4 will present polysystem theory, the first of the three big methodological approaches underpinning this thesis (Chapter 3 will introduce poststructuralism and postcolonialism as methodological approaches), and will clarify how it can contribute to an understanding of Frame's work and their Italian translations. Following the debate outlined in Chapter 1, this chapter offers the tools to address the shifts between source and target literary systems. Particular attention will be given to the importance of the translator's role in the transmission of the *other*, and to the agency translated literature can express in the target culture.

2.1 The role of theory

Generally speaking, theory has often been seen as one of the many limits imposed on the translator's taste. Jean Boase-Beier, however, explains how theory can actually enhance translators' freedom and subjectivity thanks to two specific features of theory.[2] First, according to Boase-Beier, theory is an explanation of practice and, as such, is descriptive in nature rather than prescriptive; second, theories are nothing but creative constructs in themselves: they can be compared to painting, music, and art in general. Therefore they are not dissimilar – in fact, they are essentially the same as the abstract areas with which we engage through creativity.[3] This idea does not disregard the objectivity of scientific theories; Boase-Beier's point is that, from the moment a new theory is developed, the world as we knew it no longer exists, this vision has been replaced by a new one. She maintains: 'Theories [...] fulfil a human need: the need to refresh constantly, rethink, expand and adjust our picture of the world; they are, in Mary Midgley's words, "pairs of spectacles through which to see the world differently"'.[4] Thus, if theory allows us to see the world afresh, without imposing upon us any role that was not already part of reality, it follows that it does not establish boundaries, but rather liberates new ways of thinking.

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[2] Jean Boase-Beier, 'Loosening the Grip of the Text: Theory as an Aid to Creativity', in *Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies*, ed. by Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 47–56.
[3] Ibid., pp. 47–48.
[4] Ibid., p. 48.

This is exemplified by the approach to semantics and pragmatics known as relevance theory. Elaborated by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, this addresses the implicit inferences that happen in a communication act. It argues that readers (listeners, translators) search for meaning in any communicative situation and, when they find something that meets their expectations, stop processing.[5] Relevance theory is, therefore, a framework for the study of cognition and, when applied to translation studies, it offers the vision of translator as subject. It shows how they read a text in a certain way and, by critically engaging with it, produce another text, which will in turn allow for endless new readings by new readers.

Mackenzie and Pilkington state that poetry achieves relevance due to its characteristics of drawing the reader in, and that it manages to do so by being non-explicit. This allows inferences, which take the reader to new, mysterious places governed not only by the poem, but by the reader's subjectivity (*Weltanschauung*, values, beliefs).[6] The same is true for the reader-translator. Therefore, a translator of poetry cannot aim to translate the universal meaning of a specific poem, given that this does not/cannot exist. S/he will not wonder 'what does this poem mean?', but rather 'what does this poem mean to me, given my background, understanding, aims and knowledge?'.[7] Indeed, it is not possible, in any case, to recreate the author's mental picture and intention.

Nobody can read without constructing an intention; this is what guides translators in their work. Consequently, there are, in theory, an infinite number of possible translations of a text, just as there are infinite intentions that an endless number of potential readers could attach to it. Relevance theory can help translators become aware of this, and appreciate that their approach/intention towards a source is 'a construct, though a necessary one, upon which they can act, while simultaneously acknowledging that it is not final or exclusive. If I return to the poem later, I may translate differently. Someone else may translate differently'.[8] Awareness of this issue varies among translators; however, it is no

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[5] Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 256–57.

[6] Mackenzie and Pilkington, quoted in Boase-Beier, p. 50. The role of the reader in constructing the meaning of the text is a crucial topic of literary theory, and had been debated in a vast bibliography. See: Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1981); Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. by Richard Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, The Text, The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994); Susan R. Suleiman, ed., *The Reader in the Text: Essays on audience and interpretation* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1980).

[7] Boase-Beier, p. 50.

[8] Ibid., p. 51.

exaggeration to say that this kind of awareness can shape the whole work of a translator: 'my' translation will become only one of the possible readings of that poem (text), namely one of the potentially infinite number of translations that can be performed. In fact, '[a] poem works by encouraging such constructs, so, if you construct a reading of a text and translate in such a way that the reader can in turn construct their own readings, you are doing exactly what poems demand'.[9] It follows that translators should handle the task of translation as a particular type of creative writing, as well as understanding their role as that of a creative author. This kind of creativity will, inevitably, have some limitations – creativity and translation are not in the same continuum. But limits enhance creativity.[10] What is important is to understand what is actually meant by the term 'creative process'. The exploration of what lies behind authors' creations and translations is actually an enquiry into cognitive processes.

The cognitive turn took place in parallel with the creative turn in translation studies, that is in the early 2000s.[11] Cognition has had a great impact on many different disciplines: if one only considers the latest developments in cognitive linguistics (Lee, 2001), cognitive poetics (Stockwell, 2002; Semino and Culpeper, 2002), the 'cognitive revolution' in psychology (Sperber, 1996), as well as a growing interest in literary studies on how readers read (Lecercle, 1999) and how readers construct meaning (Fobb, 1997; Goldsworthy, 1998; McCully, 1998). Cognitively based approaches, in all areas, are interested in 'what is below the surface', implying that readers, translators, listeners, observers, and so on, activate certain processes in order to decipher what is beyond the superficial level of speech/words/texts.[12]

When applied to translation studies, cognition refers mainly to how translators construct a reading of a text, how that reading determines the creation of a translation, and what translators are thinking while making their choices (think-aloud protocols). Cognitive methods view poetry and literature in general as indeterminate and ambiguous constructs, full of gaps and complexities, which require a lot of effort on the part of the reader-translator. This view may lead to conclusions along the lines of the impossibility of literary translation, especially for verse translation. Nevertheless, Boase-Beier suggests an alternative position: 'Views of translation which fall into this category can have profound

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[9] Ibid., p. 54.
[10] See Section 2.2.1.
[11] Ibid., p. 55.
[12] Ibid.

consequences for the literary translator's task because they suggest that it is the nature of the literary text to invite creative engagement'.[13]

It could therefore be argued that the cognitive turn emphasises, on the one hand, the reading aspect of the translation act and, on the other, the creative engagement of translators. The latter, in engaging with a text (poem) that is 'maximally underdetermined in meaning', need to make the greatest use of their own creativity.[14] As a result, rather than working as a limit, theory

> free[s] the translator from feeling too closely tied to the content of the original text and should encourage maximum creative freedom in the act of translation. [...] In this its effects are very similar to those of literature and other creative works. In this way theory can act as a counter balance to the constraints of the ST.[15]

Yet, if both theory and the limits imposed by the source text enhance creativity and promote a new vision of the translation task, what are, in practice, the differences between the creation of a source text and a target text? To what extent can translators feel 'free' and 'liberated' from the constraints of an existing text in a given culture? In order to address such questions, it is essential to develop a model for the understanding of creativity and how it intersects the translation process. Moreover, traditional qualities associated with writing and translation, such as 'original', 'faithful', 'derivative', and so on, need to be substituted with thoroughly new perspectives on creativity and translatability.

2.2 The creative turn in translation studies

The cultural turn in translation studies is probably the most widely debated shift the discipline has seen in the past few decades. It is generally associated with the work of Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere and, later, Lawrence Venuti, to name some of the most well-known scholars. It gained recognition in the early 1990s and, since then, has never stopped proliferating and promoting original, interdisciplinary connections. Its beginnings draw on a progressive blurring of the apparent division between cultural and linguistic

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. 56.
[15] Ibid.

approaches to translation, which dominated research until the 1980s. According to Bassnett, this is partly due to changes in the discipline of linguistics, which in the late 1950s and early 1960s started to take a more culture-based vision of language, and partly because those who supported an approach grounded in cultural history had become less protective of their stances.[16]

In accordance with these principles and building on Sapir and Whorf, Jurí Lotman stated that '[n]o language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of natural language'.[17] Language started to be seen as central in the definitions and development of cultural phenomena and, in turn, the socio-cultural context was interpreted as determinant in the study of language. 'In the same way that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril'.[18] In a similar approach, Roman Jakobson elaborated theories that radically opposed Georges Mounin's. The latter interpreted translation as a series of operations, of which both the starting point (the source text or ST) and the end product (the target text or TT) are significations of and within a given culture.[19] For example, if you translate the English word *pastry* into Italian as *pasta*, without first interpreting its meaning in the target and source cultures, a literal translation will cause the loss of its meaning within the sentence, even if you managed to find an 'equivalent'. Indeed, *pasta* has a different associative field.[20] It must also be remembered that the creative turn builds on the descriptivist approach (especially the so-called 'Manipulation School'), polysystem theory (Even-Zohar), and the theory of norms (Toury), particularly in terms of keeping a target-oriented focus.

However, if descriptivism and polysystem theory began to weave the links between translation and culture, it is only with the cultural turn that translation starts to be seen as a crucial cultural product and carrier. With this shift to viewing translations as cultural products, there was also a shift recognising the creative possibilities of translation, which started to be thought of in similar terms to original creation. Notable promoters of this innovative vision are Manuela Perteghella and Eugenia Loffredo, who believe that 'creative

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[16] Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, 3rd edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 3.

[17] Jurí Lotman and Boris A. Uspensky, 'On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture', *New Literary History,* 9.2 (1978), 211–32 (p. 211).

[18] Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, pp. 22–23.

[19] Georges Mounin, *Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction* (Paris: Callimard, 1963).

[20] Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, p. 24.

writing, as a new critical setting, has increasingly become the next contender field promoting an insight into the process of translation, and, ultimately, an innovative and stimulating "project of translation"'.[21] According to this view, translators are readers who propose their readings of the works by articulating original, creative processes. From that moment on, the translator's subjectivity will be endowed with a new agency.

2.2.1 What do 'creative' and 'original' mean?

The re-evaluation of creativity as a constitutive element of the translation process challenges most traditional approaches to translation and, perhaps, makes the whole debate about what translation is even more interesting.[22] However, the links between creativity and translation are not easy to pin down, as creativity itself is particularly difficult to define. As the psychologist Paul Torrence once wrote: 'Creativity defies precise definition. This conclusion does not bother me at all. In fact, I am quite happy with it. Creativity is almost infinite'.[23]

The concepts of 'creation', 'creativity', and 'originality' have generated some of the most puzzling questions in the history of theory, and studies of it span psychology, sociology, computer science, art, education, theory of literature, as well as other fields. The common trait that these studies share is the impossibility of attaching to creativity a stable, universal definition. It appears as though creativity cannot be enclosed in fixity, and the impossibility in measuring it complicates the matter even further. Yet, since this study aims to consider the intersections between translation and creativity, it is important to understand what exactly creativity can do to support and inform the translator's work.

Since the idea of creation is associated with creation *ex nihilo* (from nothing), it has long been considered the prerogative of a divine power. For this reason, Plato believed that a rational understanding of creativity was impossible.[24] For him the poet was, in effect, a holy creature who becomes inspired and is then able to perform creation as a passage

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[21] Loffredo and Perteghella, p. 2.

[22] Translation is not a fixed category and the definition of what a translation actually is and what it entails is a big issue that underlies all of translation studies.

[23] E. Paul Torrance, 'The Nature of Creativity as Manifest in its Testing', in *The Nature of Creativity*, ed. by Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge, CUP, 1988), pp. 43–75 (p. 43).

[24] *Dimensions of Creativity*, ed. by Margaret Boden (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), p. 1.

from non-being to being.[25] Poets are able to produce a new vision, unlike a painter or a sculptor, who simply imitates what already exists in nature (*mimēsis*). So while arts such as music, for instance, must comply to rules (*technē*) and are therefore imitative more than creative, poetry implied *poiesis* (creation) in the sense of the formation of something new to the world, 'original'. While *poiesis* and *technē* are not mutually exclusive, but rather one often implied the other, the predominance of one over the other was at the basis of distinctions that Greek philosophers made amongst different types of art and activity. If Plato saw *mimēsis* and 'technique' (in the sense of mechanic reproduction) negatively, Aristotle greatly valued imitation as part of the literary arts. Indeed, he talked of *poietikē technē* in his *Ars poetica*.[26] To Aristotle, imitation necessarily involves selection from the continuum of experience, and therefore gives boundaries to what in reality has no beginning or end.[27]

Poetry, however, continued to be considered divine and thus represented the only real possibility for artistic creation.[28] This concept changed during the Roman period, as visual artists came to share with poets the gift of creation. Nevertheless, in the early Christian/late antique era, the idea of a *creatio ex nihilo* became once again a privilege of God alone and creativity lost its human attributes.[29] Romanticism would then emphasise again the role of inspiration in poets, whose creations represented their being attuned to divine or mystical 'winds', as the poet's soul was able to receive such visions.[30]

In reality, even a scientific approach to creativity is paradoxical. How could one empirically explain something that one cannot measure nor trace back to a point of origin? How can one define it, in the first place? A common dictionary entry for creativity reads 'to bring into being or form out of nothing'.[31] It is not so surprising that, even today, the common understanding of creativity coincides with romantic intuition or divine inspiration.

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[25] Plato, *Symposium*, trans. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 205b; Plato, *Sophist*, trans. by Nicholas P. White (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 219b.

[26] Arisotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2006)

[27] Michael Davis, *The Poetry of Philosophy: On Aristotle's Poetics* (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 1999), p. 3.

[28] Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics*, trans. by Christopher Kasparek (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980), p. 244.

[29] Margaret Boden, *The Creative Mind* (London: Abacus, 1994), p. 2. The debate includes, however, theologians and philosophers who believed that creation out of nothing was impossible by definition, even for God. Therefore, it was argued that the universe was created not just by God, but out of God.

[30] Cf. the writings of Coleridge and Shelley.

[31] Boden, *Dimensions of Creativity*, p. 75.

These approaches do not analyse creativity, they simply acknowledge that it exists.[32] The following comparison sums up the discussion so far:

> Alice was surprised to meet a unicorn in the land behind the looking-glass, for she thought unicorns were fabulous monsters. But having met it, she readily agreed to believe in it. We believe in creativity for much the same reason: because we encounter it in practice. In the abstract, however, creativity can seem utterly impossible, even less to be expected than unicorns.[33]

So creativity does exist, but scientists cannot provide a reasonable explanation because: a) it cannot be submitted to scientific method; b) a scientific psychology of creativity seems equally impossible; and c) inspirational, divine, and romantic ideas do not solve the puzzle. If one wanted to take a more experiential approach (Hadamard, Poincaré, Koestler),[34] it could be said that creativity is not generating something out of nothing, but rather a 'novel combination of old ideas',[35] or in Terry Dartnall's words 'the combination or recombination of what we already have' (a position he calls 'combinationism').[36] Many psychometric tests designed to measure creativity are based on this principle.[37]

Margaret Boden distinguishes between two acceptations of creativity, one historical and one psychological. The historical meaning of the word, which she calls H-creativity, refers to those creations that happen for the first time in history. The psychological meaning, referred to as P-creativity, alludes to those ideas a specific person could not have had before, no matter how many people have already had it in the past. It follows that an H-creative idea is necessarily also P-creative. Interestingly, historians are often wrong in differentiating H- from P-creative inventions.[38] P-creative ideas can easily arise in newly generated sentences; language is, indeed, creative due to its capacity to generate endless first-time novelties.[39] This approach derives from the distinction between

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[32] Boden, *The Creative Mind*, pp. 4–5.
[33] Ibid., p. 29.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Boden, *Dimensions of Creativity*, p. 75.
[36] *Creativity, Cognition, and Knowledge*, ed. by Terry Dartnall (Westport: Praeger, 2002), pp. 3–4. This volume offers a more cognitive approach to creativity, and complements Boden's with regard to the discussion of computational tools used to study creativity.
[37] Boden, *Dimensions of Creativity*, p. 75. These tests, however, do not consider value judgements: they assume that every novel combination is interesting, and therefore deserving of a positive evaluation.
[38] Ibid., p. 76.
[39] Ibid., p. 77.

first time novelty [and] radical originality. A merely novel idea is one that can be best described and/or produced by the same set of generative rules as are other, familiar, ideas. A genuinely original or radically creative idea is one that cannot. It follows that the ascription of creativity always involves tacit or explicit reference to some specific generative system.[40]

Thus, if creativity needs to refer to a generating system, it can be argued that constraints nurture novelty rather than limiting it – creativity exists because of the limits that allow its activity. As Boden writes, the idea of constraints, 'far from being opposed to creativity – make[s] creativity possible. To throw away all constraints would be to destroy the capacity for creative thinking'.[41] The link between creativity and translation strategies suggested in Chapter 6 stems from this awareness: the adjective 'creative' does not necessarily mean 'unbounded' or 'disjunct' from any previous text; on the contrary, creativity, seen from a poststructuralist perspective, rejects the principle that a creative translation produces an 'original' text, and supports the belief that, in order to be creative, a text needs boundaries.

In conclusion, creativity appears to be impossible to pin down, though there is no doubt about its existence. The paradox and confusion remain, seemingly unavoidable, no matter the approach one takes (scientific, religious, purely descriptive) to the question. Creativity is indeed mainly a social question: the much-discussed H-creative factor is deeply influenced by the prejudices and judgements attached to the idea of what 'being creative' and 'original' actually entail. Having dismantled the notion of originality, poststructuralism has brought critics to look at creativity as a result of the constraints that oppose and, simultaneously, facilitate it.

2.2.2 Creativity and boundaries

Building on this paradox, namely that creativity exists because of the limits that regulate its activity, Perteghella and Loffredo maintain that in translation one enables 'creativity *within* and *thanks to* constraints'.[42]

It was modernism that first initiated a different approach to the role of creativity in translation. Steven Yao states that Ezra Pound was the first writer since the seventeenth

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[40] Ibid., p. 78.
[41] Ibid., p. 79.
[42] Hermans, in Loffredo and Perteghella, p. x. Italics in original.

century to attribute to translation a generative rather than a derivative role in culture formation processes.[43] According to Yao, modernists looked at translation as 'much more than either just a minor mode of literary production or an exercise of apprenticeship […]. Rather, […] a crucially important mode of writing distinct from, yet fundamentally interconnected with, the more traditionally esteemed modes of poetry and prose fiction'.[44] Postmodernism focuses even more on creativity and shifts the attention of criticism from texts to contexts. Through the continuous use of wordplay, intertextual references, non-standard use of punctuation and page layouts, as well as new modes of language that interrogate and engage readers, older, resistant literary standards are questioned and subverted.

The fundamental route by which links between original writing and translational writing can be discovered is to establish that a piece of fiction – be it prose or poetry – and a translation are not to be judged as different because their essence is different: they are not dissimilar in nature and do not belong to different categories of being. Their polarity is only determined by a discourse of power relations, as well as by a persistent intolerance, or maybe diffidence, in accepting duplicity. In her famous metaphor of translation, Lori Chamberlain writes:

> The metaphorics of translation […] is a symptom of larger issues of western culture: of the power relations as they divide in terms of gender; of a persistent (though not always hegemonic) desire to equate language or language use with morality; of a quest for originality and unity, and a consequent intolerance of duplicity, of what cannot be decided.[45]

All of the elements mentioned by Chamberlain, especially the intolerance of duplicity, are not only at the centre of poststructuralism and deconstruction, but are also the kernel of Janet Frame's poetics. The following chapters will discuss elements such as Frame's concept of marginality (writing on the margins, marginalisation as a living condition), her idiosyncratic use of language as a way of opposing pre-determined orders and defying hierarchies, her rebellion against forms of established binarisms when these violate humanity, and the suggestion of three spaces in place of a Manichaean view of the

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[43] Steven G. Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 2.
[44] Ibid., p. 6.
[45] Lori Chamberlain, 'Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation', *Signs*, 13.3 (1988), 454–72 (p. 465).

world.[46] To give an indication of what will follow, it will be demonstrated that while Frame's *this* world includes standard norms and *that* world is Frame's way of showing that something 'different' can and does exist, the *third space* performatively moves Frame's writing – and readers – beyond dichotomies and explains, by being what it is, the instability of meaning and the non-existence of hierarchical principles. In reality, Frame's *third space*, conceived as a continuous movement amongst binary oppositions and, at the same time, a refusal of them, represents in its very essence the deconstruction of meaning and authorial identity as traditionally conceived.

From what has been argued in the sections above, it follows that the derivative status of translation is not determined by translation in itself, but rather by an old-fashioned conception of it. This traditional approach conceives translations as second-hand texts when compared to the originality of the source.[47] As a consequence, translators are placed in an inferior position on the creativity scale: the verticality in the author-translator comparison stresses the innovation of the so-called original creation, and the secondary nature of the translation.[48] Likewise, an author's subjectivity, creativity, and uniqueness are seen as opposed to the translator's submissiveness.

The creative turn tries to subvert this verticality, suggesting a comparison of the two roles on a parallel plane, and showing how creative writing and translation are intimately interconnected, even interdependent. In some ways, this approach was anticipated by Walter Benjamin, who shed light on the missionary duty of translations and reversed the conventional order: the life (and perhaps success) of original writing depends on the quality of its translations (and re-translations).[49] This gives translators a significant role in the reworking of a source. In effect, seeing translation as a mere reproduction is equal to ascribing it an impossible task, that of the 'perfect translation'.

This brings us back to the traditional dilemmas of translation: can one text really reproduce another; is meaning really transferrable between cultures and languages; and, finally, can content and form be perfectly transferred to another language-culture? Once these questions start to be seen as theoretically impossible to answer, praxis will show that literary translation is always nurtured by compromise, choice, and creativity.

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[46] See Chapters 4 to 6.

[47] Romanticism had a significant role in this, in prioritising inspiration in literary works.

[48] Loffredo and Perteghella, p. 3.

[49] Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis e-library, 2004), pp. 15–25 (pp. 16–17).

2.2.3 Creativity, re-writing, and agency

The new links between creativity and translation have surely changed the approach to interdisciplinarity in translation studies. Commenting on this point, Theo Hermans states:

> As […] disciplines evolve, models change. Still, translation itself keeps one step ahead. No individual approach seems able to encompass it.
> Exactly why this should be so is hard to say. The complexity of translation may well be one reason. Another may be that too much research has too readily bought into the traditional construction of translation as a derivative type of manufacture under cramped conditions.[50]

In line with the aim of this study, which does not set out to look for or offer problem-solving strategies, boundaries and classifications are conceived as impediments to the flourishing of creative and cultural activities. Translation – as conceived in this work – needs to be informed and nurtured by theory *and* creativity. Therefore, the present analysis of Frame's translation will incorporate concepts such as agency, subjectivity, and intentionality – aspects marginalised by most traditional approaches to her.

Within such a framework, intervention on the part of the translator seems not only possible, but also advisable. Whether or not a translator should engage actively with target texts according to political agendas, the innovations promoted by the creative turn are based on the conviction that the polarity between 'original' and translation – or, better, between original and translational writing – is not ontologically determined. On the contrary, the derivative status of translation reflects nothing more than socio-cultural bias. Basing the argument on the belief that translators do not translate between texts but between contexts, and given that a particular context is impossible to recreate, the notion of translation as reproduction makes the task impossible, and the whole translational apparatus nonsense.

Poststructuralism and deconstructionism explain this paradox with recourse to textuality and its mechanisms. As Derrida points out in 'Des tours de Babel', 'the original gives itself in modifying itself; this gift is not an object given; it lives and lives on in

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[50] Hermans, in Loffredo and Perteghella, p. ix.

mutation'.[51] Therefore, STs and TTs, otherwise called originals and translations, share the same features: both are non-finite, mutable, interdependent creations. It is interesting to note, following Chapter 1, that translations are a strange form of paratext of the 'original' text.

According to these approaches, textual boundaries do not exist:

> Texts do not occur out of nothing, but recur as altered forms of pre-existing texts – as intertexts; there are no origins and there is no closure, but an ongoing textual activity consisting of a host of complex transactions, in which texts are assimilated, borrowed and rewritten.[52]

Thus, translation, conceived as an active form of rewriting, offers its own interpretation and, consequently, is endowed with cultural, political, and social agency, which means that its impact can be huge. As Lefevere maintains, translation can be considered the most influential type of rewriting, because it can move the image of authors and their works beyond the culture of origin.[53] Such an approach changes the traditional visions of both translator and reader. On the one hand, the translator is empowered with a new dimension of activism and socio-political agency: s/he is not only the mediator between two cultures and the carrier of foreign values, but is also the one who can change the target language, enrich its culture, and perform as literary actor, as much as a writer does. The reader, on the other hand, is no longer seen as a passive figure. Within this new vision, s/he is a protagonist of the translation act and is able to engage with the creative practices that s/he encounters.[54] In this sense, reading is a creative activity in itself, which necessarily entails a form of (re)writing.

If the performances of both reader and translator involve creativity and (re)writing, translator and writer share the same task in a way:[55]

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[51] Jacques Derrida, 'Des tours de Babel', in *Difference in Translation*, ed. by in Joseph F. Graham (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 165–207 (p. 183).

[52] Loffredo and Perteghella, p. 4.

[53] André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 9.

[54] Ibid., p. 3.

[55] In relation to this, Gaddis Rose argues in her book *Translation and Literary Criticism* that translation is 'also a form of literary criticism [...] examining literature from the inside'. Marilyn Gaddis Rose, *Translation and Literary Criticism: Translation as Analysis* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), p. 13.

> Both the creative impulse in the original and the retracing of that creative impulse – what translation seems to do – are operations originating from a primary constraint common to both writer and translator: the handling and crafting of the raw material of language.[56]

However, although writer and translator handle the same material and the same task, common opinion still puts translators' skills on a secondary level of creativity. What would happen if translators conceived themselves as writers who base their original work on someone else's words and style? Given the systematic inclusion of notions of creativity and creativity-related arguments in recent translation theories, Paschalis Nikolaou highlights the necessity of an even more compact and shared creative turn in translation studies.[57] In Perteghella and Loffredo's words:

> This shift of focus from ideology to ideolectology, from culturality to cognition and consciousness, from text to textuality, not only continues and complements the previous scholarly turns and conceptual paradigms already applied to translation, but it also interrogates them in an ongoing productive dialogue.[58]

The creative turn has certainly fostered innovative questions in contemporary debate; its demand of a shift from text to textuality implies, in addition, attaching a much higher degree of consciousness to the role of cultural mediator.

Anthony Pym expresses a different position in his article 'The Translator as Non-author, and I Am Sorry about That'.[59] He makes very clear that he is not against the creative approach to translation or the idea that subjectivity is involved in any translation process. He links the creative turn to the well-established theories of intertextuality (Kristeva's interpretation of Bakhtin) and of the 'death of the author' (Foucault, Barthes). He also accepts that a renovated approach to creativity as translational is at the basis of postmodern theory. He writes:

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[56] Loffredo and Perteghella, p. 10.

[57] Paschalis Nikolaou, 'Notes on translating the self', in Loffredo and Perteghella, pp. 19-32.

[58] Loffredo and Perteghella, p. 2.

[59] Anthony Pym, 'The Translator as Non-author, and I Am Sorry about That' <http://usuaris.tinet.cat/apym/on-line/translation/2010_translatore_as_author.pdf> [accessed on 24 June 2014].

> From this perspective, to say that the translator has authorship is also to say that all authors work translationally. And if that means that translators, like all authors, transform texts, bring newness into the world, have complex productive cognition processes churning within them as they work, and are all different, then I have no qualms about the proposition at all: translators are indeed subjective in their minds and creative in their writing, as any piece of empirical research should be able to show.[60]

So, while Pym agrees with the role of subjectivity in translation that has been contended so far, what he disagrees with is the idea of attributing authorship to translation. Authorship cannot be used as a synonym for creativity as it involves responsibility.[61] Pym builds on formal pragmatics (Habermas, Goffman) to demonstrate that translators do not share the same position as authors for three main reasons. First, a translator does not occupy the 'I-here-now' position an author necessarily occupies; whenever a translator says 'I', it is false since that 'I' has been already occupied by someone else.[62] Second, translators are not asked to make claims of validity about the content of their work.[63] Third, translators do not normally have to declare they believe in what they are translating.[64]

Therefore, Pym's position allows subjectivity to play a role in translation, but maintains that translation can only claim responsibility for the representation of a text. Chapter 6 will illustrate that the line between creative contribution and authorship can be rather subtle, and often authorship determines translation choices and vice versa.

Given his opinion regarding the impossibility of attributing an author-role to translators, Pym sees translation as 'a repressive and misleading institution' and believes the world should start seeing it that way too.[65] In fact, he believes translation does not break boundaries, as contemporary criticism think it does; he holds the opinion that, on the contrary, it fosters dichotomous thinking: 'the translation form operates on binary distinctions and sets up the borders between national cultures, and does so in a way that systematically identifies translators as non-authors'.[66]

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[60] Ibid., (para. 3 of 35).
[61] Ibid., (para. 4 of 35).
[62] Ibid., (para. 7 of 35).
[63] Ibid., (para 1 of 35).
[64] Ibid., (para. 17 of 35). An exception is made by the Bible translators, who traditionally state the belief that the text is the word of God.
[65] Ibid., (para. 34 of 35).
[66] Ibid.

This study promotes a different vision. The approach of scholars, as well as the attention of the general audience (including publishers and editors), should not focus on the features of the translation-text and of the translation-act that impede translators' authorship. On the contrary, I argue that a shift in thinking is needed: translation inevitably divides and puts limits on creativity, but it does so with the aim to embrace, and overcome, them. Such a movement cannot be ignored. An activity that pragmatically and simultaneously performs a division and a reunion is a paradox, not a fraud. In line with the deconstructionist approach, culture and communication can and should be seen as inherently translational. Therefore, although most contemporary translation practices work in such a way that translators are conceived as invisible (to give but one example, the Italian publishing houses that do not state the translators' name on the cover of the book, or do not mention it at all, greatly outnumber those that do), it will be illustrated that, within textual practices, translators can and should express their presence.

Translation occupies the space in-between (the 'third space' for Frame and Bhabha) – it is only by inhabiting that space that translators can become authors and innovators of the literary canon. Building on the questioning of traditional theories promoted by the creative turn, this research favours an approach that subverts the idea of originality and fosters interdisciplinarity. Indeed, it is in the belief that interdisciplinarity is a necessity in translation studies that this study has been conducted. As Venuti argued: 'Many disciplines are possible in translation studies, and […] even if disciplines do not share conceptual paradigms and research methods, they might nonetheless be joined together to advance a project of translation'.[67]

As has been said, it is not easy to determine why it is so hard to keep translation controlled in a finite number of approaches, complexity being only one of the possible reasons. However, the introduction of creativity as a theoretical frame or, better, as a liberating non-frame, clarifies some basic assumptions about the praxis of translation and 'shifts the ground altogether'.[68] This is so because, while taking into consideration the inevitable constraints facing a translator, it interprets them as possibilities rather than limits: possibilities towards agency, subjectivity, and intentionality.

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[67] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 3.
[68] Theo Hermans, Foreword to Loffredo and Perteghella, *Translation and Creativity*, p. ix.

2.3 Study of an interdiscipline: Methodological abundance and eclecticism

Translation studies has long struggled for disciplinary independence from cognate fields such as literary studies and linguistics. With the cultural turn there came greater awareness that translation is a task only partially based on language: its linguistic aspects need to be analysed against the cultural context. Given this strong link between language and culture, it is easy to understand why translation cannot be studied using a single, monolithic approach. As José Lambert states, '[t]he very recognition of "culture" implies indeed that it is difficult to formulate the rules and features of translation once and for all'.[69] He suggests that translation should be included in the 'Sciences de la culture'; consequently, the descriptive methodology should be applied to both its practice and didactics:

> Whether we like it or not, the impossibility of excluding the cultural component implies [...] that there can never be an ideal translation, and that only a better investigation of the various cultural parameters can provide a better basis for a better predictability of say efficiency in translation practice.[70]

Lambert considers the types of constraint acting on translators, spanning from those of 'high culture' (stylistic, artistic, and literary values) to everyday socio-cultural norms. These are determinant in the translation process, as all translators follow the norms of their socio-cultural-historical context.[71] Translations are, therefore, 'submitted to collective and/or organizational principles'.[72] Indeed, although many scholars tend to highlight the idiosyncrasy of translation activity, if all translations were mainly or absolutely idiosyncratic, they would be barely readable:

> The (often ideological) resistance to the concept of systems is in fact secretly linked with a resistance to the implications of the norms concept itself and hence with a misunderstanding about the role of

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[69] José Lambert, 'The Cultural Component Reconsidered', in *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline*, ed. by Mary Snell-Hornby, Franz Pöchhacker, and Klaus Kaindl (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1994), pp. 17–26 (p. 17).

[70] Ibid., p. 18. Italics in original.

[71] Ibid., pp. 19–20.

[72] Ibid., p. 20.

> norms: whatever the possible constraints may be, there is an enormous openness in the selection of norms by the translator, there are various layers within the norms [...] and more or less individual behaviour is not excluded at all.[73]

Lambert gives norms a less strict, normative meaning: norms are everywhere and everyone is subject to them. Hence, all linguistic acts, including translation, are the result of a negotiation between subjectivity and compliance to norms. In this open approach to the communicative task as determined by cultural, social, historical, as well as normative aspects, interdisciplinarity appears to be the only possible methodology for the study of translation.

This methodology is based on the belief that a descriptive and empirical analysis can contribute to a critical study of texts. Indeed, the comparative analysis carried on Frame's STs and the Italian TTs has produced empirical data that will be used in the elaboration of strategies for translating her poetry into Italian. Edoardo Crisafulli described this method as 'eclectic', and proposed that it was achieved by 'reconciling descriptive-empirical and critical-interpretative approaches'.[74] The pure empirical-descriptive nature of this work, theoretically sustained by an 'abundance' of perspectives, will demonstrate in practice how this method can support and facilitate the elaboration of informed translation strategies.

Crisafulli proposes that translation scholars harmonise quantitative and qualitative analysis, the former focussing on patterned regularities, the latter on the individual choices of a personal-ideological nature.[75] He states that the common perception of their impossible cooperation is false, and works as an obstacle towards eclecticism in translation studies. He emphasises that the differences between the empiricist-descriptivists (Toury and Baker) and the translation historians (Pym, Bassnett, Venuti, and others) have to do with method rather than philosophy: both could be reconciled through empiricism. In fact, more than thirty years ago, Giulio Preti maintained that if historical research had a philological component requiring experimental verification, empirical research could not ignore the evaluations and findings of historical methods. In both

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Edoardo Crisafulli, 'The Quest for an Eclectic Methodology of Translation Description', in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies*, ed. by Theo Hermans (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2002), II, 26–43 (p. 26).

[75] Ibid., p. 27.

cases, facts, data, or descriptive elements cannot be excluded from the analysis. If one accepts that the binary opposition between descriptive statements and value judgements is faulty, then one could also say that value judgements are not always prescriptive. Thus, there are surely degrees of bias in descriptions, but 'the fact remains that value judgements influence the selection of data as well as the descriptive categories of analysis and the explanatory theories into which these are organized'.[76] Indeed, as Hermans observes: 'the claim to neutrality or objectivity is already an ideological statement in itself'.[77]

A second principle that guides this thesis is the idea that Frame's work demands an underpinning set of heterogeneous approaches. Each of the methodologies that will be suggested in this chapter and the following one addresses specific features of Frame's work and offers its own particular critical insight. It will be demonstrated that, despite their different applications and aims, a combination of diverse methods can in fact produce a wider angle of analysis – a concept that will be touched upon again in the concluding remarks.

The idea that multiple methodologies can fruitfully work together was introduced by Paul Feyerabend in the mid-1970s, and presented thoroughly in his book *Against Method* (1975).[78] In the belief that the world that surrounds us is too variegated to be looked at through just one lens, Feyerabend argued that the use of a single method or philosophy inevitably limits the observer's view and, consequently, the outcomes of their research. The richness of existence cannot be fully grasped by only one, ordering method, with the pretence of instituting tidiness in the world. On the contrary, the plurality of ways of *being-in-the-world* needs to be reflected by the analytical instruments used to make sense of them. However, even an abundance of approaches represents just one of the multiple positions available to the scholar. It should therefore be considered as a single, homogeneous perspective, rather than an untidy mix of different methodologies.

The idea was then elaborated by the art critic Mika Hannula, who presents it as a kind of motto which, despite having been applied mainly to artistic research, well suits this study. He writes:

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[76] Ibid., p. 32.

[77] Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1999), p. 36.

[78] Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso, 2010 [1975]).

the important thing is to see this plurality and insecurity as a part of life, as a part of the fabric of our everyday experiences. You should not box yourself in. Plurality, openness, complexity and uncertainty are not a problem. They are a necessity.[79]

The present research strongly supports this view: the whole methodological apparatus, as well as the practical approach to translation strategies, is imbued with this attitude. The thematic richness and technical diversity of Frame's works cannot be boxed into one single methodology; it would be too limiting and misleading for both readers and translators. Accordingly, *Killing Time*, Feyerabend's autobiography, presents Hannula explaining that one of the reasons behind *Against Method* was Feyerabend's aim of freeing people from 'the tyranny of philosophical obfuscators and abstract concepts such as "truth", "reality"', or "objectivity", which narrow people's vision and ways of being in the world'.[80] Janet Frame's work promotes a similar view. Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate that she was strongly opposed to the existence of a universal truth; she depicted a constant, radical, and inherently doubtful movement beyond dichotomies.

The ideas of freedom and a liberating methodological approach recur throughout Hannula's works. It could be said that both his and Frame's approaches represent a way of looking at the world: 'In place of a "frozen", material universe, I could perceive an open and changeable reality, and I became able to see, and thus I was liberated from, all sorts of fixed ideas about "the way things are"'.[81]

The notion of 'the abundance of reality', continuously reshaped by Feyerabend, belongs to that tradition of thought for which research subjects (especially in human sciences, although Feyerabend also included natural sciences) are discovered and constructed through writing. They are not there before one starts writing. To quote Hannula's words: 'Writing is simultaneously thinking and doing, both observing the world and creating it'[82] – and we could say by extension that a translation is thinking and doing, observing a text and recreating it.

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[79] Mika Hannula, 'Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research', *Arts&Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts, and Methods*, 2.2 (2009), 1–20 (p. 5). Available at <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/pdfs/hannula1.pdf> [accessed 8 January 2012].

[80] Paul Feyerabend, *Killing Time: The Autobiography of Paul Feyerabend* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 179.

[81] Paul Feyerabend, quoted in Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta, and Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research. Theories, Methods and Practices* (Helsinki: Academy of Fine Arts, 2005), p. 40.

[82] Ibid.

It is precisely this kind of approach to writing that can help readers perceive Frame's *third space*. Writing was her way of being in *this* world, making sense of it, and communicating about *that* sensorial experience; in this way, the *third space* emerges in allusion. It is a passage, more than a proper space, a process, a movement. In writing about *this*, and communicating about *that*, she reached a *third* realm, which is not a space in itself, rather it is what I term a 'reaching beyond through writing'. Let it be said that this conception of writing does not correspond to an impossibility of writing about physical realities or facts; this idea highlights a question of perspective: writing becomes one of the realities that create life.

Feyerabend has often been criticised for being a relativistic and irresponsible theorist.[83] In reality, the radical shift that he promotes simply requires a very clear framing. If appropriately used, it can provide interesting innovations on the link between method and translation. The interdisciplinarity promoted by Feyerabend supports Hannula's belief that such an innovative perspective expands the possibility of research as a performative act: the act of doing with words.[84] This is as subversive a way to allow translators' agency as the counter-hegemonic policies of postcolonialism and deconstruction.[85] It is also important to underline that methodological abundance is based on the belief that no perspective is really original:

> Since there is no neutral, given, natural or value-free perception, experience or knowledge, this means that all these definitions have to be particular, value-laden and positioned. We leave the land of static hierarchies and enter the turbulent waters of the performativity of concepts.[86]

By focussing on the *how*, Feyerabend underlines the importance of context. Everything is relative to a precise moment in space and time. For this reason, his focus is on the action and its modalities, in 'the awareness that, regardless of what our aims are, it is not the what, but the how that counts'.[87]

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[83] Cf. Hannula in 'Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research'.
[84] Ibid., p. 6.
[85] See Chapter 3.
[86] Ibid., p. 4.
[87] Ibid., p. 6.

The notions of abundance and eclecticism do not offer a clear-cut blueprint for translators. Rather they expand translators' sphere of activity, as well as their self-awareness. In promoting the impossibility of a single, universal truth, and maintaining the necessity of a plural methodology for certain types of texts, this abundant, eclectic methodology encourages translators to intervene actively in the interpretation of the sources. Translators are responsible for the creation of an appropriate methodology, which will have to address the selection of features they have decided to deal with. Any TT is the result of a preliminary and ongoing process of decision-making: in the inevitable mechanism of loss, translators choose the features on which they wish to focus; this choice, which undergoes continuous re-negotiations, determines translation strategies. Therefore, even if no definite response to the translation conundrum is offered – for the main reason that there is no definite response – this shift towards plurality stimulates richer methodologies and more informed translations.

It has often been said that the challenges translators (especially translators of poetry) have to face are all mingled into one. Robert Bly writes:

> What is it like to translate a poem? [...] The difficulties are all one difficulty, something immense, knotted, exasperating, fond of disguises, resistant, confusing, all of a piece. One translates a poem in fits and starts, getting a half line here, weeks later the other half, but one senses a process.[88]

For this reason, Chapter 6 will engage with some of the most fascinating paradoxes concerning verse translation, and will illustrate through practical examples how what seems impossible in principle is, instead, pure possibility.

In effect, the question 'what is poetry?' is a dilemma in itself. Chinese literature critics, for instance, are not concerned with what differentiates a poem from ordinary speech. The Aristotelean distinction between non-poetic (ordinary) and poetic (non-ordinary) discourse is of less interest than the idea of grasping poetry in the abstract. In Chinese tradition the quality of being 'poetic', which is the essence of a poem, exists beyond words:

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[88] Robert Bly, 'The Eight Stages of Translation', *The Kenyon Review*, 4.2 (1982), 68–89 (p. 68).

> What makes a text poetry is not what exists textually but the chemistry in the amalgamation of all the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the work, including the reader, the poet and the whole cultural environment – in a word a Gestalt emerging only when all the possible factors somehow come together beautifully. Poetry in a text is an aesthetic Gestalt, perceived and yet non-existing.[89]

So, what makes poetry poetic cannot be explicitly termed or even identified. It is an intuition based on the equilibrium of the parts. In Gestalt theory any substitution of an element can cause changes in the others. Consequently, translation, especially verse translation, would seem, once again, impossible and unfaithful. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why verse translation 'often aims at rewriting, as if accepting the challenge of the original text so as to recreate it in another form and substance'.[90] Re-writing and re-creation seem key in the translation of poetry, but what does rewriting actually mean? Richmond Lattimore's statement is eloquent: 'verse translation is poet plus translator'.[91] It appears that the translator of poetry, unlike the translator of prose, is given a central role here.

2.4 Polysystem theory and interdisciplinarity

This section clarifies how polysystem theory ties in with the interdisciplinary approach used in this thesis. It will underline why it is important to study Janet Frame's work as part of her contemporary New Zealand literary system, and understand that any translation strategy will need to consider the movement from that system to the Italian one. In addition, the section focuses on the postulation of the various positions translated literature can occupy within the literary polysystem.[92] The way literary systems function and develop also defines the way in which translated literature – which represents a particular type of system – affects the national literature and, in turn, is affected by it. This idea has allowed

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[89] Xavier Lin, 'Creative Translations, Translating Creatively: A Case Study on Aesthetic Coherence in Peter Stambler's Han Shan', in Loffredo and Perteghella, pp. 97–108 (p. 101).

[90] Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of the Text* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 94. Eco states that a 'translation can express an evident "deep" sense of a text even by violating both lexical and referential faithfulness' (p. 14).

[91] Richmond Lattimore, 'Practical Notes on Translating Greek Poetry', in *Mirror on Mirror: Translation, Imitation, Parody* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1959), pp. 48–56 (p. 49).

[92] Itamar Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, special issue of *Poetics Today: International Journal of Literature and Communication*, 11.1 (1990), 1–268.

scholars to view translation through a more comprehensive angle and, most of all, to reflect on the role of translators in the target system.

Itamar Even-Zohar postulated polysystem theory in 1969–70, but he made several adjustments to the original theory, taking back some of his positions. Despite having been criticised by various scholars, the theory has been shared, improved, modified, and enlarged consistently over the past four decades. Stemming from the Russian Formalism of the 1920s,[93] and informed by a dynamic view of Structuralism,[94] polysystem theory proposes the conception of translated literature as an integral part of the literary system, one of the systems that create the polysystem to which every cultural phenomenon belongs. Such a view stresses the multiplicity and interrelations of a complex, albeit structured reality; also, it claims that, in order for a system to function, uniformity is not a prerequisite. The polysystem approach includes literary as well as non-literary texts, canonical and non-canonical works.

In his initial postulations, Even-Zohar pointed out that little research had been carried out on the role played by translation in the crystallisation of national culture, and that scholars need to address this point more deeply:

> As a rule, histories of literatures mention translations when there is no way to avoid them, when dealing with the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, for instance. One might of course find sporadic references to individual literary translations in various other periods, but they are seldom incorporated into the historical account in any coherent way. As a consequence, one hardly gets any idea whatsoever of the function of translated literature for a literature as a whole or of its position within that literature. Moreover, there is no

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[93] At the beginning of its diffusion, Formalism conceived a literary text as dissociated from its context and viewed literary history as a linear tradition. As a consequence, literary work was not a product of its time and place, rather an entity in itself. Jurij Tynjanov opposed this view, and argued that it is not possible or advisable to study literary works alienated from the context that has produced them. To the Formalists' attention to 'literariness' of a work, Tynjanov replied that it was impossible to determine the innovativeness of a work without knowing the relevant tradition. In order to explain the relationship between a literary work and literary tradition, he created the 'system' concept, according to which a literary tradition, a literary genre, and even a single literary work each forms a system of its own, working in dialectical relation to each other. See also Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Studies* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), p. 112.

[94] In the Introduction to *Polysystem Studies* (p. 1), Even-Zohar stated that a biased and erroneous view of Russian Formalism was still highly popular in professional circles, and the conceptions of a-historicity and stasis were to be considered mere stereotypes. He believed that as the synchronistic approach belonged to the Geneva School, it was with Russian Formalists and Czech structuralists that the dynamic dimension came to be embedded in the study of literature (and not only literature). He writes: 'Their notion of a dynamic system has regrettably been ignored to a large extent in both linguistics and the theory of literature. […] For both layman and "professional", "structuralism" is still, more often than not, equated with statics and synchronism, homogenous structure and a-historical approach' (p. 11).

awareness of the possible existence of translated literature as a particular literary system. The prevailing concept is rather that of 'translation' or just 'translated works' treated on an individual basis. Is there any basis for a different assumption, that is for considering translated literature as a system?[95]

Since translated literature represents a system on its own, it is of paramount importance that theorists come to think of it in those terms, so as to create a new idea of translation and of the entire body of translated texts. No study of translated literature will be able to highlight the interrelations within the system of translations if these are studied in isolation.

According to Even-Zohar, translated works are linked to each other in at least two ways: first, in the reasons that brought the target system to choose that particular source (the principles of selection cannot be considered alien to the 'co-system' of the target literature); second, in their use of the literary repertoire, which is nothing but the result of the relations between the target system and the other 'home co-systems'.[96]

In this way, translated literature will be endowed with an exclusive repertoire.[97] In our case, this means that Frame's Italian target texts should be considered a literary system in their own right, which relates back to the New Zealand system from which it derives. The Italian system will, consequently, produce a literary repertoire that is the result of its interrelations with the other co-systems; therefore, its texts will not be studied in terms of originality or conformity to the 'original', but rather in the ways they relate to other literary co-systems.

Lambert's position is useful to demonstrate how polysystem theory does not, in fact, claim to be a theory in the normative sense of the word, especially because it 'is perfectly aware of the fact that the scholar himself, while trying to describe and explain cultural phenomena in terms of values, does not function in an ideal world without norms'.[98] Accordingly, this thesis proposes a non-prescriptive analysis based on empirical data, which is aimed at highlighting features of both the STs and TTs, in order to suggest options, rather than norms, to the translator of Frame's poetry. Therefore, interference of

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[95] *Polysystem Studies*, p. 45.

[96] Ibid., p. 46.

[97] See also Gideon Toury's, 'Translational Solutions on the Lexical Level and the Dictionary', in *International Conference on Meaning and Lexicography: Abstracts: Lodz, 19–21 June 1985*, ed. by Jerzy Tomaszczyk and Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (Lodz: University of Lodz, Institute of English Studies, 1985), pp. 87–89.

[98] José Lambert, 'Translation, Systems and Research: The Contribution of Polysystem Studies to Translation Studies', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 8.1 (1995), 105–52 (p. 105).

personal stylistic preferences or cross-cultural issues will not be excluded. It is unavoidable that the personal judgement of aesthetic features, opinions, and taste partly guide the translation process. To quote Lambert: 'This is one of the key features of this theory: its aim is not to theorize but to provide models and methodology for research. [...] Even-Zohar himself did not want to offer a finalized system of theories'.[99]

In effect, polysystem theory also ties in with the interdisciplinarity this study advocates. It has, indeed, greatly contributed to the establishment of systematic research, both from within the field of translation studies, and by opening it up to other disciplines. The additional and complementary theories developed from polysystem theory as proposed by Evan-Zohar suggest this is more than one single hypothesis. Many scholars have taken this approach as a basis for their studies without even recognising it:

> Scholars' reaction to theories like the (poly)systems theory reveal a lot about their own positions and goals. [...] The lack of official (written) reactions on the side of many colleagues who have uttered their opinion in an unofficial (and oral) way cannot be without significance. Why do scholars react in an emotional rather than a scholarly way when new models develop in their field? The answer in systemic terms would be that new models are inevitably in competition with the previous ones and that they threaten established (power) positions. [...] Scholar and scholarships are not innocent at all, they struggle for recognition and 'distinction' [...] and hence for prestige and power.[100]

It is not in the interest of the present work to survey the different reactions towards new theories; nevertheless, it is maintained that a stronger attention to the conception of translated literature as equally worthy as original productions could not only change the traditional way of looking at translation, but could also boost creativity in the translation process. If translators were aware of the fact that their creations are of the same importance as any other original creation, it is likely that they would conceive, approach, and accomplish their creative task differently. A greater awareness of one's own authorship affects one's results and, as a consequence, the literary system as a whole changes.

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[99] Ibid., pp. 110–11.
[100] Ibid., p. 112.

As a matter of fact, it is in the very nature of the polysystem theory to leave space for scholars to depart from it by developing new theories. As has been said, its goal was not to offer a reference theory, rather a methodology for research. It must also be said that a specific feature of the polysystem approach was to leave some of its basic questions unsolved. When Even-Zohar turned to culture research after 1990, he had not explained in detail the basis of his main hypothesis, and to Nam Fung Chang's question on when he would look back and answer the first questions, he replied that he would leave that to other scholars.[101]

2.5 Polysystem theory and the translator's agency

Even-Zohar looked at translated literature 'not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as a most active system within it'.[102] This means that translated literature has an active role in shaping the centre of the polysystem and, in this sense, is not so different from STs:

> In such a situation it is by and large an integral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary history while these are taking place. This implies that in this situation no clear-cut distinction is maintained between 'original' and 'translated' writings.[103]

To recognise translation's central position and role in the literary polysystem changes the traditional attitude towards it: in our case, the Italian translations of Frame will be conceived as a system of their own within the Italian literary polysystem (and linked to the New Zealand one) that is actually able to influence and shape the Italian target system, because it shares with STs the features of creativity and original writing. This mind-set subversion helps scholars and translators of Frame's act as carriers of newness. Through the employment of strategies of creativity and awareness, and by subverting the traditional paradigms attached to translation, Italian translators can intervene in the current state of

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[101] Nam Fung Chang, 'Itamar Even-Zohar's Culture Theory and Translation Studies' (2007) <http://translation.hau.gr/telamon/files/ChangNamFung.pdf> [accessed 11/12/2012].
[102] Even-Zohar, p. 46.
[103] Ibid.

the art. As Even-Zohar maintains, with new models constantly emerging, translation is probably the most powerful means of elaborating the new repertoire:

> Through the foreign works, features (both principles and elements) are introduced into the home literature which did not exist there before. These include possibly not only new models of reality to replace the old and established ones that are no longer effective, but a whole range of other features as well, such as a new (poetic) language, or compositional patterns and techniques.[104]

Therefore, translation occupies a central role in the literary polysystem and carries multiple possibilities for the enrichment, modification, and renewal of the existing system. Yet, traditional ways of looking at translation depict it as a sort of repetition of what has already been said in another language. Almost no creative and innovative input is associated with that praxis. For translation to be central, Even-Zohar fixes three necessary conditions: a) a polysystem that has not yet been crystallised, namely when a literature is young or in the process of being formed; b) a weak or peripheral literature, or both; c) a literature that is facing a crisis, a literary vacuum, or is at a turning point.

Regarding the first case, young literatures are not able to provide for all genres, so they can benefit from the experience of older literatures. The same is true for the second case, where peripheral or weak literatures often do not develop a full range of literary activities because of their position within the polysystem. Furthermore, they do not feel adequate to initiate innovation, with the result that a relation of dependency may arise, not only in the peripheral areas, but also in the very centre of these literatures. Subsequently, translations tend towards acceptability when they occupy a peripheral position within the system, and towards adequacy when they are at the centre of it. Therefore, with the exception of the abovementioned cases, translated texts' place tends to be peripheral. As the following chapters will demonstrate, this is what happens in the case of the Italian versions of Frame's prose.

With regard to Western world literatures, Even-Zohar believes that hierarchical relations were established at the very beginning:

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[104] Ibid., p. 47.

> [S]ome literatures have taken peripheral positions, which is only to say that they were often modelled to a large extent upon an exterior literature. For such literatures, translated literature is not only a major channel through which fashionable repertoire is brought home, but also a source of reshuffling and supplying alternatives. [...] the dynamics within the polysystem creates turning points, that is to say, historical moments where established models are no longer tenable for a younger generation. At such moments, even in central literatures, translated literature may assume a central position. This is all the more true when at a turning point no time in the indigenous stock is taken to be acceptable, as a result of which a literary 'vacuum' occurs. In such a vacuum, it is easy for foreign models to infiltrate, and translated literature may consequently assume a central position.[105]

So far, the innovative role of translation is fairly clear-cut: those literatures that found themselves on the periphery of the polysystem, but also those that were central but experiencing turning points, needed alternative strategies to grow, and experience newness. Thus, translation was one of the best ways to let foreign models enter into the periphery.

However, despite translation acquiring a central role as a carrier of innovation, it can also work as a force of conservatism. Translated literature may represent a central or peripheral system, but it can also be both at the same time. Like every other stratified system, it may have sections that assume a central position, and others that are peripheral. Through the example of the Hebrew literary polysystem, Even-Zohar noted that, when there is intense interference, the section of the translated literature system derived from a major source is more likely to assume a central position. Although he admits that the historical material he had analysed was not sufficient to draw any influential conclusion, he maintained that 'the "normal" position assumed by translated literature tends to be the peripheral one'.[106] It follows that, if a translated literature keeps a peripheral position, it constitutes a peripheral system, generally adopting secondary models. Therefore, it will be modelled on already existing norms by an already dominant type in the target literature. Consequently, it will have no influence on major processes, and translation will become, instead, a major factor of conservatism.[107]

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[105] Ibid., p. 48.
[106] Ibid., p. 50.
[107] Ibid., p. 48.

While contemporary original literature may go on developing new norms and models, translated literature adheres to norms that have been rejected recently or long before by the (newly) established centre. It no longer has positive correlations with original writing.[108] Here is an interesting point: the same means through which new models, genres, ideas, and techniques can be introduced into a peripheral literature becomes, in a different situation, a way to preserve tradition.[109] Even-Zohar claimed that, in establishing the possibility of translation occupying a central position, and thus its capacity to create primary models, scholars need to focus on the role of the translator within this (poly)system:

> Since translational activity participates, when it assumes a central position, in the process of creating new, primary models, the translator's main concern here is not just to look for ready-made models in his home repertoire into which the source texts would be transferable. Instead, he is prepared in such cases to violate the home conventions. Under such conditions the chances that the translation will be close to the original in terms of adequacy (in other words, a reproduction of the dominant textual relations of the original) are greater than otherwise.[110]

It can be concluded that translators' main task is that of subverting the conventions of their home repertoire and effecting change, rather than looking for already existing solutions to produce an adequate translation. Only by doing so could the new text approach closer and closer to the original, and the result be satisfactory. However, when translated literature belongs to the periphery of the literary polysystem, translators have to conduct their work in another way:

> Here the translator's main effort is to concentrate upon finding the best ready-made secondary models for the foreign text, and the result often turns out to be a non-adequate translation or (as I would prefer to put it) a greater discrepancy between the equivalence achieved and the adequacy postulated.[111]

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[108] Ibid., pp. 48–49.
[109] Ibid., p. 49.
[110] Ibid., p. 50.
[111] Ibid., p. 51.

The translator has to adopt one of two opposed behaviours, according to the position (peripheral or central) of the translated literature in question. When its position is central, the peripheral target text will, inevitably, follow secondary models, condemned to be a non-adequate translation. As Chang asserts, 'repertoires imported from other entities may be regarded as doubly subversive because they may hurt national pride, thus posing a direct threat to the collective identity'.[112] Nonetheless, Even-Zohar admits problems with and limitations to the implementation of these translational behaviours, and argues that:

> Of course, from the point of view of the target literature the adopted translational norms might for a while be too foreign and revolutionary, and if the new trend is defeated in the literary struggle, the translation made according to its conceptions and tastes will never really gain ground. But if the new trend is victorious, the repertoire (code) of translated literature may be enriched and become more flexible. Periods of great change in the home system are in fact the only ones when a translator is prepared to go far beyond the options offered to him by his established home repertoire and is willing to attempt a different treatment of text making.[113]

For that reason, translated literature is normally seen as something alien, originating from a foreign entity, and therefore resisted by the institution of the literary polysystem that sees it as a threat ('That is to say, it is not allowed to be converted into a powerful cultural tool').[114] Despite an inevitable initial period of adjustment, the features considered 'too foreign' may, with the passing of time, become part of the target literature, and so enrich it, push it towards innovation, and promote literary exchanges. In addition, it might happen that, if the system is facing a crisis or is particularly weak, the collective identity could more easily welcome foreign elements. The two co-systems will, then, grow closer, and new links will be created within the polysystem.

It is important, therefore, to detect the moments when a literary polysystem is stable or in flux. Once this individuation has been made, the conclusions we can draw regarding the final product are: a) the translated text will have a different socio-literary status depending on its position in the polysystem; b) the very practice of translation will be strictly linked to this position. Chang opposes this optimistic view of translation as a means

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[112] Chang, p. 1.
[113] Even-Zohar, pp. 50–51.
[114] Chang, p. 2.

of innovation, arguing that despite translation's power and the fame that translators can sometimes gain, translated literature seldom becomes part of the cultural heritage. He realises that translations might be famous for a certain period of time, since every system faces change here and there, but the process of canonisation takes too much time for them to become an integral part of the target culture.[115]

However, the notion of being in crisis or at a turning point appears problematic: it is difficult to determine whether a literary system is more or less healthy, and where precisely among its inner strata. Also, who is to decide what is objectively 'weak' or 'peripheral', rather than 'central' or 'strong'/'primary'? According to what principles? In *Translation in Systems*, Theo Hermans argued that '[t]he value judgment characterizing a literature [...] requires a criterion to ascertain such things as the youth or strengths of a culture or the presence of a "vacuum" in it'.[116] Therefore, along with the difficulty of deciding whether a literature is at a turning point/crisis, the very basic terms of the polysystemic approach seem problematic in their actual application. Bassnett interrogated them by asking:

> What does it mean to define a literature as 'peripheral' or 'weak'? These are evaluative terms and present all kinds of problems. Is Finland 'weak', for example, or Italy, since they both translate so much? In contrast, is the United Kingdom 'strong' and 'central' because it translates so little? Are these criteria literary or political?[117]

If Bassnett and Hermans are right about the evaluative and political dimensions the discourse might assume in these judgements, it could also be said that it is politically and sociologically impossible to expect those values to be scientifically objective. Moreover, it has to be clear that words like 'peripheral', 'central', or 'weak' were meant to be neutral in the polysystem theoretical frame. They do not imply a like or dislike ('in Even-Zohar's hypothesis weakness is a matter not for other people to judge, but for the entity itself to perceive').[118]

Even so, a question remains: how to discover which system is in a more central/peripheral position than another? Bassnett holds that if literature A translates less

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[115] Ibid., p. 3.

[116] Hermans, *Translation in Systems*, p. 109.

[117] Susan Bassnett, 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies', in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevendon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. 123–40 (p. 127).

[118] Chang, pp. 4–5.

from literature B than vice versa, that would be one of the signs attesting the centrality of literature A in relation to literature B. Also, if translations from A to B tended more towards adequacy than those from B to A, this would be another sign of the same condition. With these parameters, even though much more objectively measurable, 'the researcher need not and cannot shirk the responsibility of making the judgement in good faith'.[119]

Although scholars have not come to an agreement on the centre/periphery issue, polysystem theory has certainly favoured a more horizontal approach to translated literature, as compared to the verticality of the traditional ST-TT hierarchy. In this sense, it has boosted a greater awareness of the role of the translator. As Andrew Chesterman writes, 'a theory is an instrument of understanding [...] But theories are also goals or ends in their own right, in the sense that they are conceptual structures that need to be designed, formulated and tested'. They are, therefore, comparable to methods, which etymologically represent the task of proceeding (from the Greek *meta hodos* 'along the way') to do something or to reach a goal. Thus, if a theory is a form of understanding, 'methods are the ways in which one actually uses, develops, applies and tests a theory in order to reach the understanding it offers'.[120] As users of both theories and methodologies, translators are, according to Chesterman, theorists, but of a special kind; they theorise all the time (see Pym 1992), but they do it in a deeper sense.

For this reason, Carol Maier conceived the translator as a *theōros*, namely a person who makes a 'journey' in search of knowledge: 'the traveller witnessed things and events with which he was unfamiliar. [...] to theorize those unfamiliar things was to be affected by them, to be moved to wonder'.[121] The application of theories and methods to the praxis of transferring meaning from one culture to another entails an affective journey, which moves texts and translators from the known to the unknown and back, in a constant movement of knowledge, discovery, and questioning. This form of 'wondering contemplation', as Chesterman calls it, brings translators 'to the very roots of philosophical enquiry'.[122]

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[119] Ibid., p. 4.
[120] Andrew Chesterman, 'On the Idea of a Theory', *Across*, 8.1 (2007), 1–16 (p. 1).
[121] Carol Meier, quoted in 'On the Idea of a Theory', p. 15.
[122] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

WRITING AND TRANSLATION AS CREATIVE ACTS

[F]or every contamination there is a poem.[1]

Introduction

The approaches outlined in this chapter complement those presented in Chapter 2. Moving from a study of how a literary text interacts with others, this chapter frames the present research within a more philosophical and ethical stance on textuality and translation. Following the contribution of polysystem theory, Sections 3.1 and 3.2 will illustrate how poststructuralism and deconstruction can be applied to the study of Frame's writing and its translation. Sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 will then move on to postcolonial theory, and will elicit an active questioning of the validity and actual applicability of the dichotomy 'foreignisation/domestication' proposed by Venuti. The oppositional relationship between the two concepts will be analysed through practical examples of translated literature. In this way, the passage from purely theoretical discourses to the challenges of

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[1] Janet Frame, *Towards Another Summer* (London: Virago, 2011 [2007]), p. 103.

the praxis of translation will lead towards the text-based analyses performed in the following chapters.

3.1 Differentiality of the linguistic sign as the basis for intertextuality and dialogism

Polysystem theory gave translation for the first time the chance to actually occupy a central position in the literary system. It became a tool to act on the marginalisation of certain literatures, and to judge what is peripheral or central in the target system. As a consequence, translators have started to be conceived as active agents of the publishing market, rather than the passive figures they had traditionally been. In this sense, translation practice acquires political agency: the act of re-writing subverts standard views of originality, and the difference between primary and secondary reading is questioned. It follows that, although Even-Zohar elaborated a systemic theory, thus suggesting the intention of focussing on the controllable elements of literature, polysystem theory actually subverted some basic assumptions. Similarly, structuralism, which is based on the existence of definite structures and precise relations between elements, introduced into the linguistic and philosophical debate a notion that has paved the way to a radical revision of Western thought: the idea of differentiality.

According to Saussure, the linguistic sign is composed of two elements, the concept (meaning) and its phonic component, which are interrelated and reciprocally indispensable. More precisely, the relationship between the two parts is necessary, reciprocal, and arbitrary. Its arbitrariness does not depend on a personal choice of the speaker, rather on the fact that the signifier (the formal aspect of a word) is not linked to the signified (conceptual aspect) through a natural or logical bond. It is not nature that makes 'food' mean 'something to eat'; it is rather the result of a human convention.[2]

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[2] Saussure's theory of arbitrariness has some limitations. For this reason, he identified a difference between absolute and relative arbitrariness. He drew a distinction between intrinsic arbitrariness and relative arbitrariness, which means that he did not deny the possibility of motivation factors in language production. For example, 'twenty', is absolutely arbitrary, while twenty-one is relatively arbitrary, because it can be analysed in association with a previous sign; the former, instead, has no logic or motivation. In fact, any compound word can be said to be relatively arbitrary (e.g. toothbrush, key ring, etc.). Linguistic phenomena such as onomatopoeia and other forms of phonosymbolism (i.e. exclamations) have a 'relative arbitrariness', as opposed to 'absolute arbitrariness'. The theory explained above relates to absolute arbitrariness. However, the fact that onomatopoetic sounds differ from one language to another suggests that each language can only choose from a limited repertoire of phonemes. Moreover, once introduced into a linguistic

Furthermore, the linguistic sign only exists by virtue of its biplanarity, namely the relationship between the level of signifier and signified. Without this link, the sign loses its concreteness and becomes pure abstraction. Indeed, if you take the phonic elements and the meaning in isolation, they can no longer be considered linguistic entities. Ideas and sounds become words only when one works in support of the other; therefore, the relationship is unmotivated, but also necessary and mutual.[3]

Linguistic signs are part of a system and can only exist as such. This means that they draw their value (and meaning) from that system, and the interrelations with the other elements that form it. Their *raison d'être* lies not in the expression of meaning, but in the relations with other elements and their difference from them.[4] This is what 'signifying difference' means. In this reciprocal difference, each sign opposes the others in an unrepeated way: since the meaning of the linguistic sign stems from a necessary, biplanar, and reciprocal relationship between signifier and signified, its value is unique. It follows that the linguistic system is 'a system of pure values'.[5]

Such conceptions of language began to change in the middle-late 1960s. This was a period of transition in France: students' and workers' uprisings threatened the stability of the government, and society was dominated by a political and social crisis that culminated in the 1968 revolution. In that cultural milieu, structuralism was subject to profound questioning: the idea of stability and fixity it promoted no longer matched the historical and social context. Thus, the proliferation of a new approach to language was favoured by the period in which it was introduced. In those years, Julia Kristeva introduced the work of Mikhail Bakhtin: this was the beginning of a radical revision of linguistic theories, which later led to a number of theoretical debates that appeared under the poststructuralist banner. Poststructuralist theory in general interprets the stable, fixed relationship between signifier and signified as the way in which dominant ideology maintains its power and

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system, onomatopoeias are subdued to the same processes as any other word; their link with reality may therefore become conventionalised with the passing of time. A good example, according to Manfu Duan, is the French word 'pigeon'. The same applies to exclamations. They become conventions and their link with what is supposed to be a natural reaction disappears. Furthermore, both onomatopoeia and exclamations are marginal elements of a language, whose origins are highly debatable. Consequently, they do not compromise the basic arbitrariness of the linguistic sign; quite the opposite, they underline the arbitrariness of language. For a wider discussion on the topic, see Manfu Duan, 'On the Arbitrary Nature of Linguistic Sign', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2.1 (2012), 54–59.

[3] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Corso di linguistica generale*, ed. by Tullio De Mauro (Roma: Laterza, 2009).

[4] For this reason, the qualities of a linguistic sign are defined negatively: it is what other elements are not. Taken 'positively', it is said to have an oppositive value within the system.

[5] Ferdinand de Saussure, quoted in Massimo Prampolini, *Ferdinand de Saussure* (Roma: Meltemi, 2004), p. 67.

prevents other perspectives from being heard. Therefore, any approach to language that does not take into consideration the fact that language is always differential promotes a static view of language.

If the relationship between signifier and signified is in constant movement and cannot be fixed, meaning can never be fully, absolutely grasped; as a consequence, the text represents the site of resistance to stable signification.[6] It is this idea of textual movements and linguistic non-stability that the notion of intertextuality stresses.

The term *intertextualité* entered the French language through the early work of Kristeva, in which she introduces Bakhtin's positions.[7] Almost forty years earlier, in the 1920s, Bakhtin, together with Medvedev and Volosinov, wrote about Russian Formalism and suggested an alternative to Saussurian linguistics. While appreciating the importance of the formalist approach in literary studies, Bakhtin and Medvedev recognised their total irrelevance in the interpretation of meaning in art. Thus, while structuralism promoted a science of language conceived as an abstract system, formalism interpreted the literariness of works without considering their social context. What was missing in both approaches was an analysis of the role played by the social situation, which Bakhtin believed to be inseparable from meaning.

Bakhtin and Volosinov judged structuralism as an 'abstract objectivism';[8] one of their key terms is 'utterance'.[9] They wrote:

> Not only the meaning of the utterance but also the very fact of its performance is of historical and social significance, as, in general, is the fact of its realization in the here and now, in given circumstances, at a certain historical moment, under the conditions of the given social situation.
> The very presence of the utterance is historically and socially significant.[10]

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[6] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 33.

[7] See 'The Bounded Text' and 'Word, Dialogue, Novel'.

[8] Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Valentin N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. by Ladislav Matějka and Iruin R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 61. Bakhtin's position regarding his publication is interesting: we actually cannot be sure of what he authored, co-authored, etc.; therefore, many texts that are attributed only to Volosinov or Medvedev might be Bakhtin's as well. In *Intertextuality* (p. 15), Allen talks about a 'hotly debated philosophical and critical *oeuvre*'.

[9] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Pavel N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. by Albert J. Wehrle (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 120.

The focus, then, is on the performance of the linguistic act. The word is no longer seen as an abstract relation between a signifier and a signified; it does not exist in a pure system, it lives in the real, social world. It is performance and action. This is the element that poststructuralism stresses most: language as movement.[11] Similarly, Bakhtin and Volosinov argued that '*language stands in opposition to utterance in the same way as does that which is social to that which is individual*. The utterance, therefore, is considered a thoroughly individual entity'.[12]

This means that meaning belongs to the interaction between individuals in a specific social situation. It is unique to the extent that it belongs to the language uttered there and then. In Saussurian terms, utterance is an act of *parole*, while language, *langue*, is the sum of every possible utterance.[13] While Saussure believed that only language taken in its abstract sense can be the object of a science of language, Bakhtin and Volosinov maintained that language is always in a 'ceaseless flow of becoming'.[14] Language needs, therefore, to be seen in its social context, since it continuously reflects and transforms the reality that surrounds it.[15] This new conception promoted a radical change in the way theorists conceived language: seen as a part of social interactions and transformations, language became a creative component of human activity. It works in a constructive dialogue with the past, acts on the present, and builds the future, being inevitably and continuously connected to previous and future utterances or works.[16] This is perhaps one of the best definitions of intertextuality and anticipates some of the most significant features of Frame's writing, such as her relationship with poetic tradition and her reaction to New Criticism, a formalist movement of the early twentieth century that conceived the study of literature as being primarily based on the linguistic features of texts.[17]

No utterance is independent and, as a consequence, meaning cannot exist in isolation. Given this condition, all utterances are dialogic: they logically depend upon what has already been uttered. Therefore, the chain of meaning is endless. Dialogism was, in

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[10] Ibid.

[11] See Frame's approach to language and the writing act in Chapters 4 and 5.

[12] Bakhtin and Volosinov, quoted in Allen, pp. 17–18. Italics in original.

[13] Bakhtin and Volosinov, quoted in Allen, p. 17. They argued that 'Saussurian linguistics cannot have the utterance as its object of study' because the linguistic element in the utterance is represented by the 'normatively identical forms of language present in it' (Allen, p. 17).

[14] Bakhtin and Volosinov, quoted in Allen, p. 18.

[15] Allen, p. 18.

[16] Ibid., p. 19. A similar perspective was already being debated in the 1920s.

[17] See Section 6.1.

Bakhtin's perspective, a constitutive feature of language, and it was complemented by other concepts, such as polyphony, heteroglossia, double-voiced discourse, and hybridisation.[18] (The following chapters will show how Frame's writing is intrinsically dialogic, hybrid, and polyphonic, for example in her way of mixing different narrative voices, or favouring ambiguity in free indirect speech.) Polyphony refers to the simultaneous co-existence of different voices in a story. If dialogism means that every character of a novel has his/her own specific world view and, within that and in communication with other characters' worldviews, they constantly engage in critical discourse, the polyphonic novel sees multiple voices and points of view engaging in constant dialogue, without an external omniscient, director narrator to direct the choir: 'all characters, and even the narrator him- or herself, are possessed of their own discursive consciousness. [...] no individual discourse can stand objectively above any other discourse; all discourses are interpretations of the world, responses to and calls to other discourses'.[19]

This does not imply the 'death of the author' – as Roland Barthes would postulate later – but it means that the authorial voice, though standing behind narration, does not enter nor guide it. 'Like the tradition of the carnival, the polyphonic novel fights against any view of the world which would valorize one "official" [...] ideological position, and thus one discourse, above all others'.[20] Furthermore, dialogism does not operate only at the level of text; it also works within single characters and within each single utterance or word. In this sense, language is constantly moving between past and present, to then point at the future. It works and re-works the present society in a flowing dialogue among and within subjectivities – which is what Bakhtin meant by double-voiced discourse.[21]

The only point where these ideas differ from poststructuralist views is that, while Bakhtin immersed dialogism in the social context, thus attributing the power to create meaning to the interaction between context and language, poststructuralists see language as the only generator of meaning.[22] Bakhtin stated that 'language for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other, the word in language is half someone else's'.[23] From this perspective, language is never individual, but rather

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[18] Allen, pp. 19–21.
[19] Ibid., pp. 22–23.
[20] Ibid., p. 24.
[21] Ibid., pp. 24–25.
[22] Ibid., p. 28.
[23] Bakhtin, quoted in Allen, p. 28.

collective. In it, one can discern the traces of the *other*, which in turn were posited on someone else's words. Words are always already inhabited. As the word heteroglossia (literally 'other tongue' or 'voice') indicates, language has the capacity to contain many voices at once.[24] Therefore, not only is language heteroglot, but each single utterance can contain multiple voices. The linguistic clashes that occur within a single utterance produce the hybridity of language. The immediate consequence of this process of hybridisation is that the authorial voice is threatened. If poststructuralism questions language's validity and existence, it is with Bakhtin that the process of devaluation begins.

Due to similarities of intention, Kristeva's works are normally grouped together with the work of poststructuralist thinkers. In what she terms 'semianalysis', Kristeva underlines the productive role of texts. By combining the Marxist view of production and the Freudian analysis of dream-work, she stresses that productivity is not just a factor in the act of producing a text but also affects the author, reader, or critic of the work being considered (the 'sujets-en-procès').[25] Kristeva does not see ideas as finished products, but rather as phenomena constantly produced by author and reader, and encouraging various *sujets* in intervening in the process of meaning creation. To quote Graham Allen: 'The text is practice and productivity. [...] Texts do not present clear and stable meanings; they embody society's dialogic conflict over the meaning of words'.[26]

This radical subversion of what meaning and textuality entail produces a progressive blurring of the distinctions between fiction, logic, science, and imagination.[27] (Chapter 5 will demonstrate how Frame's writing is an example of Kristeva's theories through a constant blurring of the borders between genres.) Kristeva was not interested in the formal aspects of a text, rather its significance, namely the way in which it signifies what language does not say.[28] As Barthes said: '"Signifiance", unlike signification, cannot be reduced to communication, to representation, to expression: it puts the (writing or reading) subject into the text, not as a projection, not even as a fantasmatic one ... but as a "loss"'.[29] Barthes' main argument was that textuality can only be understood as movement and creation: 'the Text is experienced only in an activity of production'.[30] Thus, the process

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[24] Allen, p. 29.
[25] Ibid., p. 34.
[26] Ibid., p. 36.
[27] Ibid., p. 35.
[28] Ibid., p. 52.
[29] Barthes, quoted in Allen, p. 52.
[30] Roland Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 157.

of *signifiance* occurs in the text, which is not seen as the locus where meaning is expressed as a stabilised form, but rather as the place where writing acts. In Allen's words, 'writing opens the sign up to an explosive, infinite and yet always already deferred dimension of meaning'.[31] As will be illustrated, Frame's wordplays, continuous intertextual reminders, and polyphonic writing perfectly embody the revolution Barthes was talking about.

According to Barthes, the text is released within a work but exists, above all, between that text and other texts.[32] The text is essentially plural, not because it contains multiple meanings, but because of the very nature of writing, which is differential. Each text is built upon the play among different signifiers, which lead to other signifiers and are associated potentially to infinite meanings. The 'trace' – a term borrowed from Derrida – of the signifying chain develops itself through unstable meanings, discovering further unstable meanings; in this process, the role of the reader is not to look for the one meaning to discover, but to follow the endless process of signification:

> The plural of the Text depends [...] not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric). The reader of the text may be compared to someone at a loose end.[33]

The reader sees, from this perspective, his/her active role disclosed. The text's plurality and its necessary intertextuality engage readers in a continuous play, where both text and reader are actors and producers of meaning. These are the types of reader that Barthes defines 'writers': they are not looking, as mere 'consumers', for a given, finished product;

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[31] Allen, p. 65.

[32] Roland Barthes, 'Theory of the Text', in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. by Robert Young (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 31–47. In this work Barthes' theorisation of the difference between 'text' and 'work' can be seen as paradoxical, as it starts from an assumption to then reach the opposite result. At the beginning of his essay, Barthes explained how the text is the material counterpart of a work: it is its concrete realisation, without which the work would be lost in time. The text is 'the weapon against time' (p. 32), that which gives the work permanence and, therefore, readability. In Saussurian terms, the materiality of the text corresponds to the signifier, and the text to the signified. In this sense the text is secondary to the work, which has a primary role (Allen, p. 64). Consequently, as the work comes before the text, it needs something to gain stability and materiality. In subsequent pages, however, Barthes reverses his argument and states that the work is the finished object, something that occupies a physical space, while the text is a methodological field. One cannot count texts, as a text is a theoretical entity that lies behind a work. He wrote: 'The work is held in the hand, the text in language' (Barthes, 'Theory', p. 39).

[33] Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, p. 159. Italics in original.

on the contrary, they create something out of what they are given, constantly.[34] In this sense, readers of translations, if supported by an apparatus or culture that re-formulates translators' authoriality, will be able to read translated literature as a chance to bring into focus the mechanisms of textuality.

Barthes, like Michel Foucault,[35] believed that the author was not an unquestionable entity, nor is s/he the generator of the work. Writing, indeed, 'knows a "subject" not a person'.[36] At the origin of a text, there is not a unified authorial voice, but a multitude of voices and texts; that which creates it is the 'already-read' and 'already-written'.[37] Therefore, for Barthes (as for Derrida), 'nothing exists outside the text'.[38] Such a perspective questions any notion of origins, authoriality, and stability of meaning. Meaning is given by the play of the signifiers and cannot be fixed; it is an ongoing, creative process that involves writer, text, and reader. Therefore, '[t]he modern scriptor, when s/he writes, is always already in a process of reading and of re-writing. Meaning comes not from the author but from language viewed intertextually'.[39] Frame appears particularly aware of this and activates texts that echo the voices of previously written texts. They engage in dialogue with her own words in a productive tension that characterises her relationship with tradition, in which language was not thought to transmit 'first-time novelties' but rather re-combine and reconfigure the 'already written'.

Such positions turn the two authorial figures linked to the text (author and critic) into readers:

> The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; [...] the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.[40]

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[34] Allen, pp. 69–70.

[35] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josué V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 141–60.

[36] Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, p. 145.

[37] Roland Barthes, quoted in Allen, pp. 72–73.

[38] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 36.

[39] Allen, p. 74.

[40] Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, p. 148.

Nevertheless, the 'Author' keeps the traditional capital letter. Does this mean that his/her position will always be primary compared to that of the reader? Is it just a typographical convention that echoes standardised views? Or is it, perhaps, the paradoxical subversion of what has just been argued? In Frame's texts, readers are continuously engaged in metalinguistic and metafictional games. She explicitly called upon the reader's ability to grasp what lay beneath the surface of words, and pushed them towards a constant questioning of the reciprocal positions of authoriality. In so doing, she subverted the very notion of originality so as to leave space for a ceaseless, performative flow of significations.

The notion-process of 'death of the author' and the consequent 'birth of the reader' have been accused of simply substituting one symbolic figure for another, without actually acting on the theoretical positions beside the idea of 'origin' and 'originality'.[41] To some extent, this degree of ambiguity or paradox can be traced in most poststructuralist theories: if one takes them to extremes, it is quite easy to make them fall into contradictions. The answer several scholars have given to such criticism is that 'the tensions and contradictions stem from a recognition [...] of the never resolved struggle between truth and its subversion'.[42] Accordingly, their texts are interpreted as having to embrace and enact paradox, in order to fully eschew *doxa* and represent the endless struggle between *doxa* and *para-doxa*.

In Frame's work, *doxa* (*this* world) and *para-doxa* (*that* world) are represented in hegemonic discourses: while *doxa* creates ideology and monologic point of views, *para-doxa* challenges them 'to unleash the power of the text and of the intertextual to unsettle all dominant discursive positions, to unleash the paradoxical power of writing within the apparently natural, the doxa'.[43] In her dialectics, oppositive couples of *this* dimension are brought, through *para-doxa*, to an-*other* dimension, *that* space of the imagination, where deeper meanings can be accessed. But the instability of meaning and its porosity make it an uncertain ground. It is only in the ceaseless tension of textual and semantic forces that Frame's poststructuralist approach to language is liberated, in that writing process which thinks of itself as the never finished result of the fight against dogma.

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[41] Allen, p. 75.
[42] Ibid., p. 76.
[43] Ibid., p. 93.

3.2 Poststructuralist Frame

Frame's writing is essentially anti-canonical and anti-hegemonic. As Chapters 5 and 6 will demonstrate, her opposition to standard features of literary language allows alternative and liminal spaces to emerge and show the hybridity of her texts. These features resonate with the poststructuralist debate on meaning and power. Furthermore, deconstruction allows Framean texts to show their idea of movement in the overcoming of dichotomies and the activation of a third dimension.[44] The space that Frame enacts in her writing overcomes binarism, implying that dichotomies can be embraced and encapsulated categories do not exist.

The philosophers who object to the self-sufficiency of structures and interrogate the binary oppositions behind them, as well as the basic assumptions of traditional Western thought, are defined as poststructuralists. Jacques Derrida, with his elaboration of deconstruction, is one of them,[45] though it would not be realistic to suggest that deconstruction is a proper methodology, or that it represents a cohesive system of ideas. This would be to betray its nature, and make it fall into the framework of structuralism, which deconstruction tries to dismantle. Derrida himself warned that his texts are not made of concepts ready to be applied; they represent rather 'an *activity* resistant to any such reductive ploy'.[46] He believed that the concept of structure immobilises the play of meaning and reduces it to a manageable construct.[47] However, as always happens in the history of literary movements, it is only from the criticism of structures that poststructuralism and deconstruction emerge. In many ways, structuralism is crucial for the development of poststructuralist thought.

Structuralists suggested theories that, stemming from linguistics through literary theory and anthropology (De Saussure, Culler, Lévi-Strauss), aimed at providing readers with an appropriate body of insights into a certain work, thus creating a legitimate framework against which to check personal interpretation. In the preface to *Structuralist Poetics*, Jonathan Culler explains how his work aimed to

> lay the foundations for a systematic study of literature. The goal was
> a poetics, an understanding of the devices, conventions and

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[44] See Chapter 4.
[45] Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[46] Ibid., p. 24. Italics in original.
[47] Ibid., p. 2.

strategies of literature, of the means by which literary works create their effects. In opposition to poetics, I set *hermeneutics*, the practice of interpretation, whose goal is to discover or determine the meaning of a text.

In principle, these two enterprises are diametrically opposed: poetics starts with attested meanings or effects and seeks to understand what structures or devices make them possible, whereas hermeneutics argues about what the meanings are or should be.[48]

Culler suggests that there is one single meaning, or at least one right interpretation of meaning. He also mentions that the New Critics focussed on the discovery of the most appropriate interpretations of literary works. Conversely, he believed that, rather than furthering their project and proposing the interpretation of more works, the priority of literary scholars should be the discovery of how those works came to produce these specific effects on readers. Like linguistics, poetics should not aim at identifying the meanings of each single work, but rather the rules and conventions that make them work (and mean) the way they do.[49] Nevertheless, structuralists like Barthes and Genette were particularly interested in the non-conventional aspects of novels. Their choice of texts (such as *À la recherche du temps perdu*) and their creation of a literary poetics worked together:

Far from articulating a science which they claimed could account for the works adduced as examples, Barthes, Genette and others used the idea of a systematic account of literature as a horizon against which the anomalies that constitute the better part of literature stand out and become comprehensible.[50]

It follows that structuralists gave much consideration to the role of textual 'anomalies' in the creation of literary effects; however, they saw them as non-conformist features to be measured against a scale of acceptability. Culler defends this position by stating that just as in the study of language there are rules to learn, so it is in the study of literature, where a knowledge of poetics is necessary to the appreciation of every transgression and alternative creation. He also adds that if the common ground of hermeneutics today facilitates readers to interpret works in a variety of ways, then 'the analyst's task is to try to

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[48] Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. vii. Italics in original.
[49] Ibid., pp. vii–viii.
[50] Ibid., p. ix.

make explicit the kinds of operations that are involved in generating the sort of inferences that readers do make'. It is always, therefore, a question of 'literary competence'.[51]

Despite the little space Culler and the structuralists seemed to leave to 'anomalies', their consideration of non-standard features implied an idea of meaning as stable and truthful. They also accepted that extrinsic devices (poetic techniques) put limitations or ordering impositions on literature. This is indeed the presupposition of any possible understanding of texts, and also of any alteration of the canon.[52] Deconstruction fights such positions. Drawing on the poststructuralist refusal of structure and objectivity, deconstruction refuses the idea that meanings correspond to some deep-laid mental '"set" or pattern of mind which determines the limits of intelligibility'.[53]

As has been said, Barthes occupied an ambivalent role among structuralists. If his early work was markedly dedicated to the search for a structure and showed a deep interest in the creation of new sciences,[54] his later writings engaged with Derrida and other poststructuralists, showing an approach to structuralism as an endless activity, rather than as a method in search of fixed truths. Thus, if it is not appropriate to list him alongside the deconstructionists, it is worth remembering that his work on rhetorical play and the constant evolution of his assumptions on language and meaning do participate in a deconstructionist approach to textuality.[55]

So deconstruction and poststructuralism are in many ways linked to structuralism, and to the Kantian philosophical tradition on which it builds. However, Derrida's work represents a real challenge to the whole of Western philosophical thought. Christopher Norris describes this challenge stating that Derrida 'refuses to grant philosophy the kind of privileged status it has always claimed as the sovereign dispenser of reason'. According to Derrida's view, philosophers have imposed their systems of thought by ignoring or suppressing the importance of language.[56] Moreover, they disregarded the fact that reason, since it is expressed through language, can never reach, nor communicate, pure

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[51] Ibid., p. xi.

[52] These arguments show evident links to Kant's philosophy. For a wider discussion on this topic, see Clair Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation: From Kant to Post-Structuralism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

[53] Norris, *Deconstruction*, p. 3.

[54] It is worth noting that the term 'science' in French means systematic thought, while in English it refers to experimental knowledge. This may be one of the reasons for the misunderstanding between the works of French structuralists – with their idea of a 'science of literature' – and the Anglo-American response. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. ix.

[55] Norris, *Deconstruction*, pp. 8–12.

[56] Ibid., p. 18.

truth.[57] Derrida adds that rhetorical analysis is indispensable for the reading of any sort of discourse, philosophy included. It follows that literature is no longer seen as secondary to philosophy because of its creative or fictitious qualities.[58]

Since all forms of writing necessarily bring about perplexities regarding meaning and authors' intentions, there can be no hierarchy amongst the different forms of writing, discourses, or genres.[59] Therefore, unlike New Criticism, deconstructionism opposed the idea of a boundary between literature and critical theory. Literary texts were less betrayed by their own nature than philosophical-critical texts: while the former acknowledged their rhetorical status and, at times, found ways of exploiting it from within, the latter were trapped and deluded by their alleged superiority to language.

It is clear from Janet Frame's writing style that she rejected both New Criticism and structuralist assumptions about language. She opposed the New Critical positions in two ways: formally, for she did not prioritise poetry over prose, nor did she faithfully respect formal standards; and philosophically, in distributing the same theoretical conceptualisations among all her works (novels, short stories, poems), therefore showing – in line with Derrida – an idea of writing as a unique form of discourse.[60] This form undergoes the same theoretical and practical limitations and has the same creative potential in all genres. The following chapters will show that Fame's writing is incompatible with the formalist principle of a superimposed structure, as well as with the structuralist idea of boundaries.

As has been said, structuralism advanced the idea of language as a differential phenomenon. Since there is no one-to-one link between signifier and signified, meaning is caught up in a play of distinctive features, where elements of sound and sense combine and give meaning to words. The differential feature of language is especially visible in the written mode, to which Derrida gave a primary role:

> Language is always inscribed in a network of relays and differential 'traces' which can never be grasped by the individual speaker. What Saussure calls the 'natural bond' between sound and sense [...] is in fact a delusion engendered by the age-old repression of a 'feared' and 'subversive' writing. [...] Writing is that which exceeds – and has

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[57] Ibid., p. 19.

[58] This attitude has a long tradition in Western philosophical thought. Plato expelled the poets from his ideal republic, which had to be a place where reason won over the mere illusions of rhetoric.

[59] See Chapter 5 for Frame's subversion of generic theories.

[60] See Section 6.1.

power to dismantle – the whole traditional edifice of Western attitudes to thought and language.[61]

Language does not work as an obedient, controllable tool for communication. To state this is to push the project started by structuralists a step further, rather than dismantling it from the ground up. Deconstructionists shake up the existing debate to undo the given order of priorities and the system itself in which that order was possible. Deconstruction is, in this sense, a movement, 'an activity of reading'.[62]

This movement and the differential quality of language are expressed in the concept of *différance*, which in many respects sums up Derrida's thought.[63] Its meaning is suspended – the anomalous spelling creates a homophone with 'différence' (difference) – between the French verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer', given that the verb 'différer' means both. Both contribute to the meaning of *différance*, but neither is fully expressed by it. This concept refers to the Saussurian idea of linguistic systems being based on an economy of signs that, by interacting among themselves, create different words and meanings. Meaning depends, therefore, on difference. Derrida builds on this idea and combines 'differ' and 'defer'. Meaning is always deferred to Derrida, potentially engaging in an infinite play of signification. Therefore, *différance* not only explains its meaning, but it is itself a deconstructionist practice at work: a deconstructionist use of language and a demonstration of play and movement to which meanings are constantly exposed. In this sense, the playfulness associated with the word is disruptive and subversive, but also constantly engaged in creating – movement, novelty, and unexplored approaches.

Différance is, therefore, neither a concept nor a word, but rather a motif, which implies play. This play exists prior to Being, and the ontological difference between beings and Being.[64] Being neither a word nor a concept, this motif is a trace. Derrida argues that the 'a' in *différance* is the trace of something that never existed, a play prior to any ontological determination. The vagueness of the non-ontological stability of *différance* has its only practical function in play and movement, where it discloses the instability of reference.

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[61] Norris, *Deconstruction*, p. 29.

[62] Ibid., p. 31.

[63] Derrida used the term *différance* for the first time in 1963, in his paper 'Cogito et histoire de la folie'. The idea was then elaborated and used in many other works, especially in his essay 'Différance' and in several interviews collected in *Positions.*

[64] Jacques Derrida, 'Différance', in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 1–27 (p. 16).

3.2.1 Deconstruction in *a state of siege*[65]

Deconstruction 'always in a certain way falls prey to its own work', wrote Derrida.[66] As he foresaw, his theoretical positions have attracted strong criticism, but have also stimulated further debate. Often these debates have been noted exclusively for their negative, disruptive elements, and therefore accused of destroying ideas without suggesting feasible alternatives. For example, Murray Krieger argued that deconstructionist methods were not so different from those of New Criticism.[67] Yet Derrida's work has hugely influenced thinkers of French poststructuralism, as well as scholars of the Anglo-American academies. Some have gone over to 'the wild side', as Norris puts it, proposing extreme positions (for instance Geoffrey Hartman and J. Hillis Miller); others have borrowed from deconstructionism to create conceptual rigour (Paul De Man). Linguists have used Derrida's ideas about playfulness to create new theories on the performativity of language (Austin) and, finally, literary critics have engaged more and more in interpretation of poets and novelists who have overcome the limits of tradition and standard conventions (Bloom). However, there have been no serious attempts to approach deconstructionism on philosophical grounds that focus on what it has brought, rather than what it has not done or destroyed.[68] As Norris states:

> In the hands of less subtle and resourceful readers deconstruction can become – it is all too clear – a theoretical vogue as uniform and cramping as the worst New Critical dogma. At best it has provided the impetus for a total revaluation of interpretative theory and practice, the effects of which have yet to be fully absorbed.[69]

Derrida's aim was not to annihilate communication; it was, rather, to suspend any preconceptions attached to Western traditional thought and see what happened if one freed language from conventions. As a matter of fact, 'language continues to communicate, as life goes on, despite all the problems thrown up by sceptical thought', and it would be naive to think that Derrida was not aware of this. He did not actually ignore language's possibilities, he muted all pre-existing notions attached to it (and its uses or

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[65] The reference is to Frame's novel *A State of Siege* (1966).
[66] Norris, *Deconstruction*, p. 91.
[67] Ibid., p. 126.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., p. 17.

interpretations), and let them play. He let language move, allowed it to be trace, movement, activity.

In 'Why deconstruction still matters', Paul Sawyer interviews Jonathan Culler[70] and states:

> In the popular reception of deconstruction in the United States, theory is something scandalous and threatening, something you fall for or run from. I recall one magazine article that featured a photo of Derrida posed as a bandit, as if he were about to rob the palace of culture.[71]

Culler gives an interesting, ambivalent reply. On the one hand, he simplistically makes short work of deconstructionist 'new questions as well as new readings, often difficult', adding that he sympathises with those who used to hope this new theory would disappear ('I'm not especially eager at my age to engage with complicated new discourses').[72] On the other hand, though, he praises Derrida's effort in uncovering important meanings of Western thought, blaming the right-wing side of the debate that, still today, attempts to define deconstruction as destructive of Western culture civilisation:

> [I]t's Derrida more than anyone else who got students and faculty in literature departments reading Plato or Kant. He brought them to explore classic philosophical texts whose meaning people previously assumed they knew. Derrida's rereading of major texts of Western culture has reinvigorated the humanities, and his engagement with literary works has never been a debunking of literature but always a celebration of the shrewdness and rhetorical and imaginative resourcefulness of literature. The right-wing claim that students would read Derrida and deconstruction and become turned off from literature proves false. On the contrary, students exposed to deconstruction have taken a heightened interest in literary and philosophical texts – with different questions, certainly.[73]

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[70] Both are professors in the English Department of Cornell University.

[71] Paul Sawyer, 'Why Deconstruction Still Matters: A Conversation with Jonathan Culler', *Cornell Chronicle*, 24 January 2008 <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2008/01/why-deconstruction-still-matters-according-jonathan-culler> [accessed 4 June 2014] (para. 3 of 14).

[72] Ibid. (para. 4 of 14).

[73] Ibid. (para. 7 of 14).

Culler probably judges these 'different questions' very stimulating in their subversiveness, and therefore important for both students and theorists. Nevertheless, it is the attention to rhetoric and the literary values of traditional texts that he praises most. Even if concealed by the ambivalence of such an answer, his inclination to consider deconstruction nothing more than an intelligent provocation is discernible.

In truth, deconstruction could be accused of two main faults. It could be argued that language is never totally free from constrictions, for example those imposed by the economy of signs, or more simply by the necessity to be fully understood by as many readers as possible (perhaps in performative, or official uses of written language), and in any form of power discourse. Furthermore, it could be argued that, by configuring itself as a critique to Western thought, deconstructionism only works in Western contexts and could never be applied to languages that respond to hermeneutical conceptions that are radically different. Both points are sensible. The answer offered by this study is that when Derrida moved Western tradition towards deconstruction, he was well aware of the risks and critiques to which he was exposing his theories. However, he pursued his project anyway, probably because his ultimate aim was not to be right, but to question. The constant subversion of assumptions, the endless movement to which he opened language and the multiple, intricately interrelated doubts, reminders, and play – these were, in part, his goals. Such a position could be linked, paradoxically enough, to the Augustinian-Cartesian 'dubito ergo sum'.[74]

A more contemporary explication of these positions is provided by the American philosopher Richard Rorty. He holds that there are two main philosophical traditions, which can never reach a common point, because their aims and approaches are too radically different.[75] Therefore, they exist and work in perpetual rivalry, offering diverse, and at times complementary insights. On the one hand, there are thinkers who stick to the traditional view of philosophy as a dialogue of minds, pursued through rationality in the quest for truth. These thinkers accept scepticism, but only as a tool to avoid confusion and to ground their beliefs more solidly. On the other hand, there are thinkers who do not accept the impositions of rationality, who focus on subverting standardised paradigms, often through paradox and idiosyncratic style. Rorty calls their activity 'philosophy as writing', that is a kind of philosophy that does not employ language to structure reasoning

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[74] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, trans. by Patrick Gerard Walsh (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2013), XI, 26.
[75] Richard Rorty, 'Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida', *New Literary History*, 10.1 (1978), 141–60.

or reach truths. On the contrary, language is a tool with which to show alternative perspectives and fight against traditional assumptions. The ontological difference between them is expressed by Derrida in a letter to Searle:

> I ask myself if we will ever be quits with this confrontation.
> Will it have taken place, this time?
> Quite?[76]

Owing to her approach to language and written texts, Frame's works could certainly be understood in the light of a 'philosophy of writing'. As Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will illustrate, her stories defy rational, pre-constructed patterns and engage in a constant tension with traditional forms. Rather than looking for a specific point to convey, Frame employed language as a means to contradict and frustrate any quest for truth, for truth itself is unattainable. Her use of more conventional forms always hides a paradox or an implicit meaning. According to such a perspective, Frame's texts deconstruct themselves.

Due to their very natures, translation and deconstruction are mutually implicated. As Kathleen Davis points out, both deal with language at its limits, and challenge standard ideas in order to do justice to an*other*'s words. Moreover, both delve into the permeable, muting margin between possibility and impossibility, meaning and paradox. The unresolvable (and unavoidable) double bind of translation lies in its being simultaneously possible and impossible. In a dimension of possibilities, texts collect stable sets of relations that make them intelligible; conversely, the impossibility of their essence lies in the fact that language has no pure origin, and meaning is constantly disseminated. One could ask: what is it that translations need to transfer if there are no stable, original meanings?[77]

Texts 'mean' because they are repeatable. Since the text is not the cause, but rather an effect of conventional systems that institute that boundary, it 'overspills its borders: both STs and TTs are situated within an open weave of texts that stretches into the future, and which (fortunately) makes texts continue to mean'.[78] Thus, translation is possible because neither the author nor the context can limit the possibility of a text to

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[76] Jacques Derrida, quoted in Norris, p. 129.
[77] Kathleen Davis, *Deconstruction and Translation* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2001).
[78] Ruth Evans, Review of *Deconstruction and Translation* by Kathleen Davis, *Translation and Literature*, 12.2 (2003), 312–16 (p. 313).

disseminate difference. In a non-prescribing approach, deconstruction elucidates how translators are always 'working in the dark'. Davis' example of the 'micro-preemies' (extremely premature babies) well illustrates the struggle to make decisions when the outcome is unpredictable and there are no fixed protocols. In this sense, deconstruction clarifies why each translation is a unique event, thus contributing to a revision of normative, limiting visions.[79]

In this sense, a deconstructionist approach to Frame's language would allow translators to continue her idiosyncratic approach to textuality. In the impossibility of recreating a context, a similar perspective on translation will not stop words 'meaning', so that new disruptive/creative languages can/will enter the target culture.

3.3 Postcolonialist Frame

As a New Zealand woman writer, Janet Frame was subject to a double marginalisation, that of gender and that of the periphery. Quite interestingly, the Māori and New Zealand culture-bound aspects of her poetics are some of the features that have received less attention in translation. Although she did not overtly address the postcolonial debate, her work touches upon a range of markedly postcolonial issues. From her particular interest in New Zealand landscape (name of cities, streets, valleys, rivers, mountains, and endemic birds and plants) to her use of Māori words, Frame commented on the complexity of Māori–Pākehā[80] relationships (especially in *The Carpathians*). She emphasised the importance of 'fitting in' from a social point of view (*Faces in The Water*, *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, *Living in the Maniototo*), as well as focussing on marginalisation, border-writing, and experiences of migration (*The Lagoon*, *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, *Towards Another Summer*). Therefore, a postcolonial approach to Frame's writing will help uncover another important aspect of her poetics and will serve as a guide in the analysis of the Italian translations.

The term postcolonial is at the centre of an ongoing debate. The definition of its scope is a complex matter, partly because of the different perspectives held by scholars who come from different areas of the postcolonial world, and partly because of the

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[79] Ibid., p. 315.
[80] Pākehā is the Māori term describing the New Zealanders of European descent. By extension the word has come to signify, in recent times, the fair-skinned persons or any non-Māori New Zealander.

difficulty in defining the affiliated notions of colonialism and imperialism.[81] The fluctuant meaning of colonialism*s* have complicated the theoretical discussions about postcolonialism. Furthermore, the different localist approaches of intellectuals have rendered the issue highly contested on many accounts. The prefix 'post-', one of many in contemporary criticism, indicates both a temporal and ideological 'aftermath': postcolonialism should, therefore, come after colonialism along a temporal line, and supplant it with an opposite creed.

Historically, the end of colonialism spanned three centuries, from the eighteenth and nineteenth century (the Americas, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa), to the 1970s (Angola and Mozambique). Critics (Kwame Nkrumah, Noam Chomsky) argue that the consequences of colonialism are certainly not over, and social inequity still prevails in most ex-colonies. So colonialism cannot be considered to be over from an ideological or practical point of view, and the 'post-' prefix appears, in this case, too premature. Indeed, a country can be simultaneously post-colonial from a historical point of view, and neo-colonial in terms of economic and cultural dependence on former colonial powers. Furthermore, the term postcolonialism is not able to account for situations of hybridity in mixed societies.[82]

Thus, despite its popularity, the term proves inadequate after a closer analysis. Moreover, it is important to underline that

> 'Colonialism' is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within. So that 'postcolonialism', far from being a term that can be indiscriminately applied, appears to be riddled with contradictions and qualifications.[83]

What is particularly interesting is that these internal frictions simultaneously produce the most dangerous consequences and the most creative forms of agency. Although it is not the aim of this thesis to investigate such aspects of postcolonialism, it is useful to frame it

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[81] Cf. Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 19.

[82] For instance, in the Spanish colonies of South America, local-born 'whites' (creoles or *mestizos*) dominated the native population. Here, hybridity or *mestizaje* produced complex internal relationships, proving that the experience of colonialism depends on the position one occupies on the social scale. Loomba, pp. 7–8.

[83] Loomba, p. 12.

as a complex phenomenon that happens from the outside as much as from the inside. The following quote, taken from Frame's *The Carpathians*, illustrates how Frame dealt with this multifaceted dimension through language:

> 'Even I use words that are out of date. And where have all the *creeks* gone, and the *paddocks*?' [...]
> 'They now say *streams*. And *fields*. And the Minister of Agriculture has been talking of the *New Zealandisation* of Fisheries!'
> 'Oh, Mum, don't go on about it,' Sharon urged. 'At least you can still understand what people are saying. And the language is never dead anyway, it's the people using it that can't keep up. And you're not so bad, Mum. These days you even say *tena koutou* or *haere mai* without saying *Hairy My* and looking nervous.'[84]

The postcolonial scenario that Frame depicted simultaneously perpetuates and challenges the tensions between Māori and Pākehā. In this linguistic mix, their identities approach very close to then depart from each other. The 'old' paddocks have left space for the modern, 'New Zealandised' fields; however, their linguistic trace, like that of the 'creeks', has not disappeared in the memories (and words) of the people.

Madge, one of the characters, speaks the language of another era; she knows that 'her own words had left her and were no longer used in their old meanings'.[85] Within the same space of interaction, Frame mixed different times and different languages that do and do not belong to the same people. Policies intervene to regulate the hybrid reality, but the actual realit*ies* that Frame narrates appear more difficult to handle: by intertwining colonialism with its 'post-', Frame embraced Loomba's point that colonial and anti-colonial forces do not only happen from the outside to the inside or vice versa. There is a point where they meet, figuratively and linguistically, which suggests that it is perhaps more useful to conceive the 'post-' element not as a temporal aftermath, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and its various legacies.[86] Accordingly, the most recent historical approaches claim that history should no longer be seen as a linear progression of events, but rather as the coexistence, often conflicting, of multiple and frequently parallel narratives.

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[84] Janet Frame, *The Carpathians* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), pp. 30–31. Italics in original.
[85] Ibid., p. 30.
[86] Loomba, p. 12. This change of perspective allows us to embrace the diverse conditions of many ex-colonies around the world, as well as the neo-colonial situation of 'postcolonial' subjects living in metropolitan cultures.

As Jorge de Alva explains:

> [S]ince the late 1970s a profound shift in the character of the study and conceptualization of colonialism has taken root in a number of scholarly communities in Europe, the United States, and Latin America. The transformation has been primarily from a structuralist perspective, emphasising economics and politics, to a poststructural one, where the accent is on the detailed analysis of local phenomena while highlighting cultural, discursive, and power formations in everyday life. It is also a change that calls for undermining the transcendent pretensions of totalizing theories and narratives, uncovering and rejecting essentialist assumptions and criticising reductive dichotomies and binary characterizations.[87]

Poststructuralist theories are, therefore, pivotal in the understanding of postcolonialism as a phenomenon that is bound to everyday practices, aside from international relationships. They allow one to avoid the deceitful idea of a totalising narrative and essentialist approaches to cultural facts. In turn, this will facilitate the overcoming of dichotomous structures and push the comprehension of such a complex phenomenon beyond dogma.

Such a shift inevitably influences translation practices. According to Douglas Robinson, the postcolonial approach to translation can make of the practice of translating cultures a channel of colonisation as well as a means of decolonisation.[88] Remaining on practical ground, Edwin Gentzler advises that the strategies that allow the use of translation as a decolonising practice should aim to subvert the colonial power from within. Indeed, an exposure of the contradictions of the colonial past, together with an emphasis of the complexities of the source text, may empower translators with alternative approaches to that very past. Frame addressed this point emphasising the difference between Māori and Pākehā ways of looking at the past:

> The country is full of legends. [...] legends are everywhere. They don't often break into our *real* life. [...] We're only now beginning to look closely at the place we're living in. The Maoris have been looking at it for centuries and their legends have long ago crept in out of the cold to be part of their lives. And now we're looking. You have

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[87] J. Jorge Klor de Alva, 'The Postcolonial of the Latin American Experience: A Reconsideration of "Colonialism'', "Postcolonialism", and "Mestizaje"', in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Displacements*, ed. by Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 241–75 (p. 263).

[88] Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), p. 31.

to look at something, I suppose, besides your homes, furniture and gardens.[89]

A shared place is not a shared past, the same way that a shared language does not imply the same view of realit*ies*. Nevertheless, the mythical element of legends seems to summon the human view of history towards an a-historical continuous present that lingers over both Māori and Pākehā. Amongst the strategies Edwin Gentzler proposes to address such issues is the use of prefatory material and historical backgrounds.[90] This would allow the contextualisation and clarification of culture-bound words, such as 'paddock' for instance. However, can it really be considered a foreignising attitude to the source culture? If a translator/editor chooses to clarify the cultural references of the ST, is s/he not imposing his/her own perspective anyway? Footnotes, prefaces, and any form of explanatory material would explain the foreign culture through the words of the target culture. In this sense, however, only the source words left untranslated would be able to communicate their true foreignness.

Recent writing on postcolonialism tends to highlight the hybridity of postcolonial cultures, underlining processes of fragmentation and emphasising diversity. Nevertheless, more and more theorists have started to refer to this hybridity as 'the postcolonial condition', or to the subjects who live it as 'the postcolonial subject/woman/child/etcetera'. As a consequence, '[p]ostcoloniality becomes a vague condition of people everywhere', which, in Loomba's opinion, is to be ascribed partly to poststructuralism and partly to literary and cultural criticism.[91] The present methodology is based on a different conception: it suggests that what poststructuralism has done for contemporary theory is not produce a levelling of differences in the indiscriminate blurring of boundaries, but rather the promotion of a shift in the perception of traditional assumptions. Poststructuralism does not offer ready-made answers; quite the opposite, it represents the never-ending questioning of truth(s).

However, the postcolonial approach is certainly not risk-free. A common danger is that of creating forms of 'nativism' through the tendency to unrealistically praise native cultures and peoples. This approach also produces a simplification of the global human

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[89] *The Carpathians*, pp. 110–11. Italics in original.

[90] Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), pp. 176–86.

[91] Loomba, p. 17.

condition, where the difference between the so-called 'First World' and 'Third World' is determined only by the relations to colonialism.[92] The same can be said of anti-colonial movements, which often treat singular national cases as part of an indistinct mix corresponding to the label 'postcolonial'.[93] Importantly, few anti-colonialist initiatives worked in the interest of all the peoples in a colonised country. The scholar/translator trying to approach the postcolonial situation from the outside could inadvertently handle the so-called 'postcolonial subjects' indiscriminately. Informed and aware postcolonial strategies should, instead, avoid 'nativist' attitudes and re-create, in translation, the author's attention to a multifaceted cultural issue.

In a recent publication, Armando Gnisci analyses the threads of the *transcultural* debate. Together with the notions of multiculturalism and interculturality, he explains the meaning of the word 'acculturation'. This is defined as the result of a deep contact between two cultures, in which the weakest acquires the distinctive traits of the strongest. The exchange is, in fact, never equitable and the process of acculturation is inevitably charged with political and social values. Gnisci argues that, despite the ongoing debates on such topics, Europeans' superiority complex remains; therefore, only through an awareness of notions such as 'globality', 'creolisation', 'decolonisation', and 'transculturation', is a more inclusive and less Eurocentric culture possible.[94]

3.3.1 A postcolonial approach to Frame in translation

'Nothing comes closer to the central activity and political dynamic of postcolonialism than the concept of translation', writes Young.[95] Indeed, '[a] colony begins as a translation, a copy of the original located elsewhere on the map'.[96] Colonies are all clones of a mother country, which is far away but always present. Such clones are, however, colonised copies, and therefore different from the colonised power dominating them: they resemble them, but uncannily. Because of this, postcolonial analysis is primarily interested in any form of transfer: linguistic, geographical, and cultural elements that are transformed into something different, something they were not originally.

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[92] Ibid., p. 18.
[93] Ibid., p. 17.
[94] Armando Gnisci, *Via della Transculturazione e della Gentilezza* (Roma: Ensemble, 2013).
[95] Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 138.
[96] Ibid., p. 139.

Numerous studies have tackled the problems of translating the culture of multiethnic India, or post-slavery Africa, or the creoles of the Caribbean islands. Fewer studies have analysed the literature of New Zealand as a clear example of postcolonial writing. As has been said, every postcolonial experience is different, though they share some common features. As histories of human groups, the colonial and postcolonial periods touch upon fundamental questions, such as those of identity and power. The following quote is one of the most cited definitions of colonial power, by Franz Fanon:

> Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: 'In reality, who am I?'[97]

Even though colonialism in New Zealand was not as bloody and violent a phenomenon as in other parts of the world, the presence of white Pākehā in the land once exclusively governed and inhabited by Māori unavoidably caused issues of identity. The arrival of a colonising government, along with the domination of another language and culture over local customs, did represent a form of psychological cruelty and barbarity. Young speaks of 'translational dematerialization':

> With colonialism, the transformation of an indigenous culture into the subordinated culture of a colonial regime, or the superimposition of the colonial apparatus into which all aspects of the original culture have to be reconstructed, operate as processes of translational dematerialisation. At the same time, though, certain aspects of the indigenous culture may remain untranslatable.[98]

In the cultural encounter there will always be, by definition, untranslatable elements. If not just for the truism that no culture is equal to another, but for the very essence of intercultural and intracultural spaces, which is difference. Hence, untranslatability appears to be a loss necessary for multicultural gain.

The paradox of such a position is well clarified by Frame's essay 'Departures and Returns' subtitled 'Some Recognitions of the Cross-Cultural Encounter in Literature',

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[97] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 203.
[98] Young, pp. 139–40.

where she states the importance of intercultural encounters, which she sees as often resulting in superficial artefacts.[99] She comments on the inevitable impossibility of translating culture and, in surveying the shifting boundaries between former literary colonies and imperial capitals, she adds that, even though communication has sped up, it has not deepened. While the world has become more interconnected, this has not improved the exchanges among cultures. In Frame's opinion, the contemporary writer enjoys travelling and meeting other people and literatures but the encounter is superficial. She wrote: 'It is hard to change the idea of truth as an exterior geographical conception, limited to the eye's seeing, that is, the view'.[100] She also argued that only the poet manages to reach beneath the surface:

> I think the poet would die rather than admit that the travelling is to 'gather material'; for poets, as a rule, do not work that way. [...] There is an idea that a poet's best medicine is a heavy dose of scenery, of 'nature'. So the poet arrives, travels about, lectures, lives, returns to his country, and five or ten years later may produce a group of poems, or one poem, about his visit to our country. The poem goes right to the heart of the place, describing the poet's imaginative recognitions of our culture in a way that is so unfamiliar that those who read the poem are unwilling to overcome their resentment, and to spend their time and energy visiting the unfamiliar view as if it were another country and another culture to be learned.[101]

Poets, in going to the heart of things, in reaching beneath the surface, immerse themselves too much for their compatriots. They get close enough to a foreign nature to create a product that profoundly depicts another culture, nature, perspective. This produces an unfamiliar feeling in readers who are not willing to venture so far into foreignness.

Thus, Frame identifies politics, in the sense of the exercise of power, as one of the dominant forces in her view of cross-cultural encounters. Consequently, the idea of power governing the transmission of messages between cultures undermines the actual possibilities of translation. If translation always starts as a form of intercultural communication, it inevitably involves issues of power and domination. Indeed, '[n]o act of

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[99] Janet Frame, 'Departures and Returns', in *Janet Frame: In Her Own Words* (London: Penguin, 2011), pp. 57–66. [Originally published in *Writers in East-West Encounter* (London: Macmillan, 1982)].
[100] Ibid., p. 60.
[101] Ibid., p. 59.

translation takes place in an entirely neutral space of absolute equality. Someone is translating something or someone. Someone or something is being translated, transformed from a subject to an object [...]'.[102]

Therefore, in the impossibility of an equivalent, non-prejudiced, and non-discriminatory position on the part of the translator, translation practice will never be ethical, and even the most well-meaning, source-oriented policies will carry the presence of an external control. Nevertheless, it is within the possibilities of translation to work as an informed type of intercultural exchange, aware of its limits and creative possibilities, to stimulate dialogue and suggest that untranslatability need not necessarily mean domination and subjugation. This is especially applicable if the source text suggests that the encounter with alterity needs to be a democratic, ethical step.

If the translational practice continues to be presented and studied in the light of hierarchical structures, that is in the alleged verticality existing between original and secondary creations, then translation will continue to be a forceful, dematerialising process.

Under colonialism, the coloniser's language becomes culturally more powerful, because it devalues native language through strategies of domestication and false accommodation. In effect, one of the first ways the colony attested its power was through the translation of indigeneity – in the form of written and oral texts – into its idiom:

> Translation becomes part of the process of domination, of achieving control, a violence carried out on the language, culture, and people being translated. The close links between colonization and translation begin not with acts of exchange but of violence and appropriation, of 'deterritorialization'.[103]

Translation, as traditionally conceived, is an instrument of domination and violence. It does not open up to the other, but rather resists and swallows the other's alterity in an act of brutality. This form of treachery can also be applied to those marginal groups that set out to move from periphery to centre.[104] To quote Bhabha's words:

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[102] Young, p. 140.

[103] Young, pp. 140–41. With the term 'deterritorialization' the author is referring to the practice the Irish dramatist Brian Friel has shown in his play *Translations* (1981), through a constant reference to the act of naming and renaming seen as act of imperialistic power.

[104] In this view, Janet Frame's long stays in London and the US can be considered movements from the periphery of New Zealand culture to the centrality of the dominant British and American cultural scenes.

> The creation of new minorities reveals a liminal, interstitial public sphere that emerges *in-between* the state and non-state, *in-between* individual rights and group needs; not in the simpler dialectic between global and local. Subjects of cultural rights occupy an analytic and ethical borderland of 'hybridization' in a partial and double identification across minority milieux.[105]

Frame's narration of marginality creates new marginalities and interstitial spaces that 'write back' to the hegemonic-colonising powers.[106] Their responses become the subject of Frame's discourse on postcolonial difference and on the human condition living on the margins between centre and periphery. Her writing is not just a description of the Māori-Pākehā opposition, but also the representation of the active and perennial transformation and movement of all dichotomies into her *third space*, where her cultural, political, and ethical project *is*.[107]

3.3.2 Hybridity and the 'third space' in translation

The expression '[c]ontemporary culture is hybrid, just like colonial culture' appears to be the leitmotif of much contemporary theories and socio-political debates. However, the definition of hybridity is not universally accepted. It would be hazardous to interpret it as an incongruous mix of different ethnic groups. Bhabha has argued against this label, as it is multicultural only in an uninvolved sense. One cannot 'put together harmoniously any number of cultures in a pretty mosaic', he says.[108] From an historical perspective, there is no mechanism by which a 'pure culture' encounters another 'pure culture' and produces hybridity, because the very notion of 'pure culture' is untenable. Every culture is, in fact,

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Frame's reasons for travelling were diverse and mostly linked to her career as a writer. When she left New Zealand she was already a published, award-winning author, so she was not properly moving from a peripheral position. Nonetheless, New Zealand literature was undoubtedly marginal compared to its US or UK counterparts, and a writer's life was certainly more limited in terms of opportunities of encounter and confrontation with other intellectuals. Thus, she chose to travel and experience the writer's life in different countries (England, Spain, the US, France). These experiences were particularly important in her personal and professional development, because she had the chance to experience the condition of the migrant in the active form of a cultural translator.

[105] Homi K. Bhabha, 'On Minorities: Cultural Rights', *Radical Philosophy*, 100 (2000), 3–6 (pp. 4–5).

[106] Cf. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[107] See Chapter 4.

[108] Homi K. Bhabha, interview for the journal *Art in America*, (p. 82), quoted in David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 124.

the result of a 'contested authority',[109] which clarifies how the distinctive features of different cultures are not blurred into an indistinct horizon, a hoarded mix of silenced identities.

Bhabha opposes 'cultural diversity' to 'cultural difference',[110] and holds that: '[h]ybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other "denied" knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority'.[111] Building on the awareness that no cultural manifestation can be studied discretely, in isolation from its context and reciprocal influences, this ideological shift needs to be incorporated into the scholar's (translator's) culture. From this perspective emerges the idea of a 'third space':

> [F]or me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original movements from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.[112]

Bhabha's understanding of national narrative incorporates two main aspects, pedagogical and performative, where '[t]he first is a question of being, the second of becoming or doing'.[113] Both features are necessary and complementary for him, and have to do with his idea that there is a substantial difference between describing a situation and intervening in

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[109] Ibid., p. 125.

[110] David Huddart, 'Hybridity and Cultural Rights: Inventing Global Citizenship', in *Reconstructing Hybridity: Post-Colonial Studies in Translation*, ed. by Joel Kuortti and Jopi Nyman (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 21–41 (p. 22).

[111] Homi K. Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004 [1994]), p. 162.

[112] Homi K. Bhabha, quoted in Jonathan Rutherford, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi K. Bhabha', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), pp. 207–21 (p. 211). The ideas of hybridity and third space appear exceptionally productive in Bhabha's recent discussions of cultural rights (Huddart, 'Hybridity and Cultural Rights', p. 21). In the present globalised world, the notion of global rights appears to be based on 'liberal assumptions about internationalism', that is to say on the idea of an 'interplay of pre-existent nations, and [...] national cultures' (Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, p. 127). Bhabha believes that the people who most require protection are not covered by the language and culture of the organisations that should provide for their security because often they cannot be located within a specific national context. As Huddart points out, 'the migrant perspective demands that we re-think the possession of rights', which 'suggests that a truly transnational culture of rights is still to be built'. Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, p. 127).

[113] Huddart, 'Hybridity and Cultural Rights', pp. 23–24.

it.[114] In her performative use of language and her approach to paradox, Frame endorsed this point.[115]

Yet, '[c]an the culture of rights and the writing of culture be made to converse with each other, to convey, in collaboration, the human spirit?'.[116] Bhabha's answer is that they can and should indeed be brought together to collaborate.[117] Similarly, Frame's narratives need to be read in the light of a constructive cooperation between an ethical attitude to the postcolonial question and the enactment of the 'third space' in narration. Her interest in giving centrality and voice to marginalised subjects through consistent writing techniques – in prose and poetry – appears as a clear preoccupation with voicing the broader issue of human rights in the New Zealand literary scene. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, Frame places marginality at the centre of her poetics and adopts specific rhetorical devices to let it speak autonomously. These give liminal space political power.

As Huddart comments, normally the practice of narration is associated with prose fiction; Bhabha, instead, turns to poetry to better explain his idea of culture 'as being narrated'.[118] Adrienne Rich's poem 'Inscriptions' (1995) suggests to Bhabha 'that to belong to a movement, in the collective or political sense of the word, demands a renewed sense of self-recognition that disturbs the language of self and Other, of individual and group'.[119] In line with this concept, Chapter 6 will illustrate how Frame appointed poetry as the bearer of such a movement and of a renewed idea of relationship between self and other. In her poems, not only did she re-use the rhetorical devices used in prose, in a sort of technical echoing of her longer narrations, but she also synthesised the thematic aspects of her poetics in a language that mixes genres and locates itself beyond genre and oppositions. The technical consistency, the thematic recurrences, and the enactment of the *third space* become, in her verse, the writing of difference or, better, difference narrated.

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[114] Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, pp. 131–32.

[115] See Chapters 4 and 5.

[116] Homi K. Bhabha, 'On Writing Rights', in *Globalising Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1999*, ed. by Matthew G. Gibney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 162–83 (p. 164).

[117] Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, p. 133.

[118] Ibid., p. 137.

[119] Bhabha, 'On Writing Rights', p. 172.

3.4 Visibility or invisibility? That is not the (only) question

Often, discussions about the role of translators and the space for creativity in literary translation focus on the oppositional couple visibility/invisibility suggested by Venuti. The dichotomy that he proposes conceives 'foreignisation' as the most source-oriented approach, the one in which the translator's intervention is most visible; 'domestication', instead, implies silencing, flattening, or standardising all foreign elements in favour of a more target-oriented version of the text. Despite having some important merits, this approach, as any binary perspective, risks becoming an oversimplification of the complexities involved in the translation process.

This section aims to unveil some of the issues behind Venuti's positions, in order to clarify that what tends to be considered one of the main theoretical and practical references for translators is actually a highly contradictory and limiting view of the translator's task. It will be argued that even the most domesticating path can be an appropriate choice. This will highlight the importance of awareness of the possibilities translators have *in between* polarity. This section thus represents an important frame for the practical study of Frame's verse in Chapter 6. Indeed, when translation theory meets praxis there is an easy risk of falling into binary thinking: wrong/right, appropriate/inappropriate, foreignising/domesticating. I contend that a critical, open look at the practical challenges of translation, informed by a more realistic approach than Venuti's position, favours subjectivity and creativity in translation. Furthermore, it can help translators define their procedures more clearly and critically, relieving them of the burden to pursue an impossible fidelity to a single strategy.

Translation is a process of constant negotiation and re-negotiation.[120] Caught in an endless process of choice making, the translator is constantly choosing among infinite options. The high number of variables at stake and the inextricable links with cultural elements make the acceptance of loss necessary. It is the way one understands this loss that changes one's approach to the translation task. Poet and translator Norman Shapiro stated that he saw translation as

> an attempt to produce a text so transparent that it does not seem to
> be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass. You only
> notice that it's there when there are little imperfections, scratches,

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[120] Cf. Umberto Eco, *Mouse or Rat: Translation as Negotiation* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003).

bubbles. Ideally, there shouldn't be any. It should never call attention to itself.[121]

Shapiro believes that translators have to mask their subjectivity and submit it to the source. Translations thus have to be thickly veiled texts: one should not discern anything in it that makes one wonder what is behind that veil; on the contrary, one should forget that what is before one's eyes is a translation at all. Essentially, both authors and translators have frequently emphasised the subordinate nature of translation. Willard Trask, for example, drew a clear distinction between authoring and translating. In a late interview, he was asked whether the impulse to translate could be compared to the impulse to write a novel; he replied:

> No, I wouldn't say so, because I once tried to write a novel. When you're writing a novel [...] you're obviously writing about people or places, something or other, but what you are essentially doing is expressing yourself. Whereas when you translate you're not expressing yourself. You're performing a technical stunt. [...] I realized that the translator and the actor had to have the same kind of talent. What they both do is to take something of somebody else's and put it over as if it were their own. I think you have to have that capacity. So in addition to the technical stunt, there is a psychological workout, which translation involves: something like being on stage. It does something entirely different from what I think of as creative poetry writing.[122]

Following one of the most recurrent metaphors for translators, Trask states that translating is like acting: one is not spelling out one's own words, but those of others. Creativity seems to be totally excluded from the translation process. Shapiro claimed that he was a sort of collaborator of the writer: 'Certainly my ego and personality are involved in translation, and yet I have to try to stay faithful to the basic text in such a way that my own personality doesn't show'.[123] These theories have undoubtedly contributed to increase the marginal position of translators.

The consequences of the inaccuracies regarding the translator's role and, above all, the nature of the translation act have produced, according to Venuti, cultures that are

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[121] Norman Shapiro, quoted in Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 1.

[122] Willard Trask, quoted in Venuti, *The Translator's invisibility*, p. 7.

[123] Norman Shapiro, quoted in Dennis Kratz, 'An Interview with Norman Shapiro', *Translation Review*, 19 (1986), 27–28.

'aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations'.[124] These transport the foreign text within a domestic reality and thus 'provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other'.[125] This act of cultural – and literary – violence has grown to huge proportions and Venuti's position, even if some points are unclear, is explicit in its intentions to change the current state of affairs and initiate a new policy to promote the translator's visibility, both in theory and in practice. His point is that, if fluency starts to be seen as only one discursive effect among others, translations could and should be read as translations, that is to say texts in their own right.[126]

When Venuti says that domesticating translation is an act of violence, he is referring to those TTs (and the beliefs behind them) that try to reconstruct the foreign on the basis of values that are not their own. It seems that an impossible reconciliation is at stake here: any source text will always have to come into contact with cultural and intertextual references that are not its own; this is the premise of translation. This clash can never be removed, but what can change is how one looks at it and the way translators handle its inevitable consequences. In Venuti's words, a target text 'necessarily suffers a reduction and exclusion of possibilities – and an exorbitant gain of other possibilities', which is where the creative turn and Venuti's project coincide.[127] The intention of critics and editors has always been to deny these possibilities and propose fluency as the only acceptable option. Fluency has its advantages, of course, but at what risk? In Venuti's opinion:

> The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political. Translation can be considered the communication of a foreign text, but it is always a communication limited by its address to a specific reading audience. [...] translation wields enormous power in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures, and hence it

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[124] Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 15.
[125] Ibid.
[126] 'The ultimate aim of the book is to force translators and their readers to reflect on the ethnocentric violence of translation and hence to write and read translated texts in ways that seek to recognise the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts'. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 41.
[127] Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 18.

> potentially figures in ethnic discrimination, geopolitical confrontations, colonialism, terrorism, war.[128]

Building on polysystem theory, this quote clarifies that any translation, even one that moves towards the foreign, can signify difference only by disrupting the target system; it has to deviate from the norm and 'stage an alien reading experience'.[129] This experience of alienation departs from the choice of a text excluded by the target canon, to get to the use of marginal discourses to translate it.

Although culture-bound elements will inevitably remain 'foreign' in comparison with target values (they will always be submitted to the domestic system of values), foreignising-resistant strategies are presented by Venuti as desirable. He claims that foreignisation shows an awareness of the other, does not mask TTs under illusionary conceptions, does not enact further wrong ideas about translation, promotes a more active role for translators, responds to and modernises national canons, and engages in processes of signifying the foreign rather than obscuring it. In the current state of affairs on a world-scale, including globalisation, '[f]oreignising translation [...] can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism'.[130]

So, what is really innovative in Venuti's argument is the way resistancy can turn the cultural clash between ST and TT into the definition of more democratic approaches to foreignness. The awareness that foreignising strategies are not transparent precludes the conception of this notion as an ethics of translation (as Schleiermacher's theories were defined by Berman).[131] Nevertheless, even if they appear no less partial than domesticating strategies in their interpretation of the source, they show an understanding of the limits and possibilities of their partiality, rather than focussing solely on their inevitable incompleteness.

Schleiermacher preceded Venuti in the elaboration of a target-oriented approach to translation. For him, the first opportunity to foreignise lies in the choice of the text to translate. After this first step, foreignising strategies represent tools that can help create a democratic national culture;[132] however, opening up translation practices to the *other* also

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[128] Ibid., pp. 18–19.
[129] Ibid., p. 20.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Berman, quoted in Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 20.
[132] As Venuti explains, foreignising translation strategies lacked cultural capital in nineteenth-century England, while they were perceived more positively in Germany.

entails mining one's own values.[133] Schleiermacher was aware that even foreignising strategies were partial and ethnocentric: every bend towards the foreign is always made within a domestic political agenda and inscribed in the target system. Hence, the belief, shared by Venuti, that 'translation is always ethnocentric'.[134]

Schleiermacher's lecture remained untranslated, so it was only available to a few English translators during the nineteenth century. Other theorists developed different foreign-oriented views, such as Newman. In line with his concept of liberal education and his preoccupation with the recognition of cultural differences, he stated:

> The translator, it seems, must carefully obliterate all that is characteristic of the original, unless it happens to be identical in spirit to something already familiar in English. From such a notion I cannot too strongly express my intense dissent. I am at precisely the opposite; – to retain every peculiarity of the original, so far as I am able [...] the English translator should desire the reader always to remember that his work is an imitation [...].[135]

For Newman, transparency is an illusion that risks confusing source and target texts. Therefore, translators should opt, instead, for strategies that signify the differences between the two texts, and signal the presence of a cultural encounter.

On the opposite bank is Lefevere, who bases his argument on Nida's criticism of Schleiermacher: 'we are faced here with a not-illogical and very spirited defence of what we know now as "translationese" or, with another phrase: "static equivalence"'.[136] The term 'translationese' began to be used after the Second World War, and Lefevere approved of Nida's concept of 'dynamic equivalence', which is now, according to Venuti, a synonym of domesticating strategies.[137] Therefore, the idea that a translator can face a text with profoundly different approaches was not new.

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[133] Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 100.

[134] Ibid., p. 101. Since Schleiermacher wanted to influence 'the whole evolution of a culture', his ideas on foreignisation were specifically addressed to the German educated elite. Only the educated, upper-class members of society had the power to shape cultural evolution; therefore, the project of the German scholar was at the same time nationalist and elitist. So, although his ideas regarding translation and openness to the foreign mark a definite move towards a change in approach to textuality, the nationalist and elitist elements make Schleiermacher's project radically different in principle to Venuti's, even if they share the same intention of producing more source-inclined translations (Ibid. pp. 102, 109).

[135] Francis W. Newman, quoted in Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 121.

[136] Eugene Nida, quoted in Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 117–18.

[137] Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 118.

Nonetheless, Venuti's theory of visibility (foreignisation) and invisibility (domestication) has received various attacks from translation scholars. Maria Tymoczko points out that Venuti does not define the terms foreignisation and domestication. He argues the importance of foreignising translations, but he never specifies what it is precisely that makes a TT foreign-oriented.[138] If the terms are not well defined, or quantified, how can a translator know if s/he is producing a foreignised text? If one cannot measure foreignisation, how can one know when one has reached resistancy? Venuti makes clear that foreignisation and domestication do not constitute a binary opposition, but rather two poles containing a range of possibilities:

> [T]he terms 'domestication' and 'foreignisation' do not establish a neat binary opposition that can simply be superimposed on 'fluent' and 'resistant' discursive strategies [...]. The terms 'domestication' and 'foreignisation' indicate fundamentally ethical attitudes towards foreign text and culture [...] whereas terms like 'fluency' and 'resistancy' indicate fundamentally discursive features of translation strategies in relation to the reader's cognitive processing. Both sets of terms demarcate a spectrum on the relation between a translation project and the hierarchical arrangement of values in the receiving situation at a particular historical moment.[139]

Venuti unequivocally denies that the two terms represent a dichotomy; on the contrary, he emphasises the spectrum of possibilities translators can choose from in order to engage in resistancy. Nevertheless, Tymoczko contends that no spectrum can be fully understood or realised if its two extremes are not clarified in their definition and specifications.[140] Similarly, Mona Baker insists that what Venuti describes is essentially a dichotomous opposition, and asserts that any set of two main alternatives is too simple to describe the reality of what happens in translation practice. She seems to disregard Venuti's words about the spectrum of effects and writes:

> Lawrence Venuti's sweeping dichotomies of foreignizing and domesticating strategies [...], recast elsewhere as minoritizing and majoritizing strategies [... a]part from reducing the rich variety of positions that translators adopt in relation to their texts, authors and

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[138] Maria Tymoczko, quoted in Kjetil Myskja, 'Foreignisation and resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his critics', *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 12.2 (2013), 1–23 (p. 7).
[139] Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 19.
[140] Tymoczko, quoted in Myskja, p. 7.

> societies, [...] reduce the intricate means by which a translator negotiates his or her way around various aspects of a text into a more-or-less straightforward choice of foreignizing versus domesticating strategy.[141]

The focus is again on dichotomy and the way oppositional couples cannot be applied in the description of translation processes. However, Venuti was aware of the complexities of the task and did not aim to reduce it to the simplest of structures. When he engages with the limits of foreignisation, he implicitly demonstrates his awareness of the reductionist power of the dichotomy. Foreignisation and domestication should, therefore, be understood as labels indicating a certain attitude toward the text and the process of meaning transfer to the target system.

With regard to the role of the target culture, Kjetil Myskja writes:

> In order to achieve a resistant effect within the target language discourse, the translator would be dependent on balancing elements of domestication and foreignisation in such a way that it is domesticated enough to be accepted into the discourse, and yet alien and foreignising enough to be resistant. Venuti clearly agrees that a balance of these elements would be required – a totally foreignising translation is, in a sense, no translation at all – but this still seems to make the assessment of the foreignising vs. domesticating effect into an assessment of the socio-political effect of the text in a certain society at a certain time.[142]

Though she proposes a more balanced approach to Venuti's work, Myskja too focusses on the inconvenience of a dichotomy in the description of the translator's task.

A further criticism comes from Tarek Shamma, who supports Tymoczko's and Baker's points, and adds that foreignising translation can easily lead to exoticising texts, that is to say forms of writing reinforcing English prejudices against the source culture. His case study is based on nineteenth-century translations from Arabic into English, and he notes that, despite showing foreignising intentions, some TTs only resulted in the imposition of English values and cultural references over Arabic ones. Such translations

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[141] Mona Baker, 'Reframing Conflict in Translation', *Social Semiotics*, 17.2 (2007) 151–69 (p. 152).
[142] Kjetil Myskja, 'Foreignisation and Resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his Critics', *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 12.2 (2013), 1–23 (p. 11).

work towards the reinforcement of biased views and prejudices about the foreign, rather than presenting it in its otherness.[143]

With regard to the negative consequences of foreignisation, Michal Cronin interestingly reverses Venuti's point, claiming that a foreignising approach could have a detrimental effect on the target literary system if this latter is a minority-language culture. He sees a danger of lesser-known languages losing their identity, which is perhaps already threatened by the predominance of high-capital cultures. Foreignising strategies, in this case, could imbue their lexicon and syntax with well-known words or phrases to such a point that their very survival could be at stake. As Myskja states, 'every margin has its own margin' and if it is an interesting experiment to present foreign elements of marginalised cultures in a dominant cultural system, the introduction of dominant linguistic-cultural elements in a peripheral reality is likely not to have the ethical effect Venuti suggested. In fact, some of the elements of the dominant system might be so well known in the minority target culture that references to them will not be seen as foreignising strategies, let alone as resistant.[144]

3.5 Visibility and invisibility in practice

Scholars have often underlined how verse translation is less limited by market constraints as the conventions of poetry publishing are different from those of prose: less page space is needed, and more freedom for experimentation is allowed.[145] Others focus less on genre, as 'all translation is intervention'.[146] Ros Schwartz emphasises the role of translators as cultural mediators, be it working through prose or poetry. Essentially, a translator is always working with 'something that is language- and culture-bound', trying to transpose it into another language and another culture. Intervention is constantly needed: 'If you didn't intervene, you would have lost something enormously significant. That's the translator having an understanding of the two cultures, and mediating between them'.[147]

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[143] Tarek Shamma, *Translation and the Manipulation of Difference: Arabic Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2009).

[144] Myskja, p. 20.

[145] *The Translator as Writer*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 6.

[146] Ros Schwartz and Nicholas de Lange, 'A Dialogue: On a Translator's Interventions', in Bassnett and Bush, pp. 9–19 (p. 17).

[147] Schwarts-de Lange, p. 16.

For this reason, in a dialogue with Schwartz, Nicholas de Lange maintains that, in this mediation act, subjectivity is unavoidably linked to a translator's choices and there cannot be a 'right' or 'wrong' choice:

> NDL: I think people make a great mistake in thinking that there is a right way and a wrong way to translate. I sometimes look at texts with students and we talk about translation, they sometimes say, 'why didn't you use this word, the obvious word to translate that would have been this?', and I have to try and intimate that there isn't a right way or a wrong way, or an obvious way. It depends entirely on who you are, and what you're trying to do.
> RS: That's something that we as translators need to articulate more widely, because there is an assumption that there is one right translation.[148]

Translation is still perceived as a right-or-wrong task, as though there could be a definite answer, a right interpretation to literary texts. It goes without saying that there is a difference between subjective intervention and translation error. A translator should not alter, in the common understanding of the task, the meaning of a text, just as s/he should not attribute the wrong meaning to a word. This means that translators do not share the same freedom as authors – while the writer is known to face the white page when feeling stuck, one has never heard of 'translator's block'.[149] If the translator's freedom is obviously limited when compared to the writer's freedom of constructing a page from scratch, it follows that they do not share the same degree of creativity. But does this mean that the translator is inevitably less visible?

As has been said, several translators and scholars of translation have compared the activity of translating to acting (Willard Trask, Michael Frayn, Adriana Hunter, and others).[150] Translation is, for them, an interpretative task in which, unlike acting, they are not allowed 'to offer a bold, provocatively new interpretation of a text. We owe a duty to our authors and our readers alike'.[151] English translator Anthea Bell endorses this comparison and overtly sides with the invisibility supporters. She stresses the fact the she is not going to change her mind because visibility is the latest trend. To her, the most important thing in

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[148] Ibid., pp. 17–18.
[149] Anthea Bell, 'Translation: Walking the Tightrope of Illusion', in *The Translator as Writer*, pp. 58–68 (p. 66).
[150] Ibid., p. 59.
[151] Ibid.

translation is '[t]he illusion [...] that the reader is reading not a translation but the real thing'.[152] She adds that this illusion does not prevent readers from enjoying the foreignness of the source; on the contrary, only a fluent translation allows readers to fully immerse themselves in the text, as they perceive it as if it had originally been written in their language.[153]

Her point is that if readers are led to believe that what they are getting is the 'real book' or, at least, something 'as close as possible to the original', then the illusion will enable a full reading experience.[154] Not having to question whether the translation is more or less close to the source, readers are able to surrender to the text as though it contained the authorial voice and not someone else's. According to Bell, this is the main task of a translator, certainly more important than any ethical project of foreignisation:

> A good, easy English style, obvious as it may sound, is one way to ensure that a translation is easily accepted as a work in its own right, not a feeble imitation of the original. To me, this is far more important than whether a theoretical case is made for the obtrusion into a translated version of difficulties arising from the original.[155]

By arguing that invisibility is also the most appropriate choice with regard to commercial reasons, Bell explains that publishers need the book to sell, which, according to her position, is possible only if they are written in a plain style. This point is highly debatable. A source text with a specific political intention, which is articulated through recurrent stylistic choices, enacts a textual function that needs to be recreated in translation. If the translator opts to flatten all marked features, s/he creates a text whose reception is certainly easy, but one that betrays the author's political agenda. So, if one opts for a 'good, easy English style' and intentionally omits idiosyncratic details, what happens to a text in which the authorial voice clearly did not create plainness?

Bell's approach seems to mirror a general confusion about the actual meanings of foreignisation and domestication. There is a tendency to associate domestication with all non-marked translation choices, and foreignisation with the preservation of the foreign elements (words, proverbs, and all culture-bound elements) at the expense of clarity and

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[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., p. 60.
[154] Ibid., p. 62.
[155] Ibid., p. 65.

fluency. In reality, these two attitudes, which seem so distant and incompatible, have much in common and can easily merge, especially in postcolonial contexts. Indeed, even though Bell overtly aligns herself with the 'invisibility side' ('I am an unrepentant, unreconstructed adherent of the school of invisibility, and cannot change an honestly held opinion because it is out of fashion'),[156] in the examples she gives of her practice, she actually demonstrates that it is hardly ever possible to adhere to solely one side of the debate. Translators' decisions always depend on the text and can be contextualised only in the light of that given text.

Bell speaks about the differences between translating a memoir and a scientific text. When she was translating *Am Beispiel meines Bruders*,[157] Uwe Timm's memoir of his brother Karl-Heinz, who died during the Second World War, she came upon a passage where Timm's parents tell him what his brother had been like as a child. His parents recounted that his brother liked Brussels sprouts and used to call them *Rosenköhler*, rather than *Rosenkohl* (*Rosenkohl mochte er und sagte als Kind: Rosenköhler)*, *Rosenköhler* being a childish coinage. Bell chose to cut the invented word and translate 'As a child he liked Brussels sprouts'.[158] At a seminar held at the University of Leeds in 2004, she was asked whether that choice represented a single case or a principle she would follow. She replied that it was a principle: had it been a novel, she would have devised a replacement like 'He liked cauliflower as a child, and called it curly-flower', but it was the real story of a real boy who grew up in the 1930s and actually liked Brussels sprouts. She felt she could not change a fact, and the author of the story agreed with her choice.[159]

Bell also mentions another interesting example. She was asked to translate from German Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* for the New Penguin Freud Series. The volume was mainly about Freudian slip, which Freud illustrated through a number of examples. For those examples related to slips of the tongue, Bell chose to present the original German phrase in a note, translating and explaining the slip (differentiated from Freud's footnotes) and clarify where the slip arose and what it meant according to Freud. At the same time, she was worried that the notes were too much of a burden affecting the fluidity of the text, and therefore chose to jettison the word 'parapraxis', commonly used to

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[156] Ibid., p. 59.
[157] Published in the UK by Bloomsbury in 2005 as *In My Brother's Shadow*.
[158] Bell, p. 63.
[159] Ibid., pp. 63–64.

describe the Freudian slip in specialised texts and replaced it with terms she borrowed from other translations of the early twentieth century. Bell shows an awareness of the requirements genre places on the translator and explains how the decision-making process is strictly linked to the features of the text in question. In fact, while she talks of her general attitude towards her task and the intention to remain invisible, hidden from the reader, she refers to cases of clear intervention on the TT.

Bell's awareness of genre specifics clashes with what she believes to be her principle of invisibility. Her choice to cut the invented word *Rosenköhler* and that to add and rework footnotes in the translation of Freud's work are, indeed, signs of her visibility. The contradiction lies in the fact that she claims to be conscious of her preference towards invisibility but, at the same time, is aware of having made significant changes. Bell's case of unawareness is an interesting example showing that what many translators and critics believe to be invisible decisions are, instead, signs of their subjective decisions.

The concept of foreignisation being unavoidably linked to the presence of foreign words, to name but one example, is misleading: Bell was actually foreignising her version of Freud when she explained the 'original' examples in German to the English audience; and she was exercising her power when she chose to cut the invented word from Timm's memoir. Creativity, subjectivity, and foreignisation do not necessarily imply transformation according to idiosyncratic attitudes. At the same time, invisibility does not always mean passivity and a total absence of intervention. On the contrary, the conscious decision to be invisible and let the foreignness of the source do the work can be a highly creative choice.

In a recent paper given at the University of Oxford, Daniela La Penna presented Amelia Rosselli's translation strategies as overtly and subversively invisible.[160] La Penna questioned the negative features that are generally attributed to literal translation and showed how a word-for-word strategy became, in Rosselli's texts, a way of rendering the source mostly deeply. The intention to convey the meaning of each single word, often at the expense of rhyme or rhythm, is the expression of Rosselli's desire to let the words speak and evoke the original meanings. In this case, the translator deliberately chooses which limits to impose upon her work and, within them, exercises her creativity and subjectivity. A literal approach to poetic translation, which could easily be judged negatively in the classroom, can actually be a conscious form of political intervention. The

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[160] Daniela La Penna, 'Who's Afraid of Poetic Translation? Semiotics, Ethics, and the Challenge of Authoriality', talk given at the conference 'Echoing Voices: Translation Poetry in 20th-century Italy', Oxford, 18 June 2014.

apparent invisibility of a word-for-word approach is, in fact, a means of resistance and subversion of the power structures existing between 'original' and 'rewriting'. Matthew Reynolds maintains:

> Venuti's notion of 'foreignisation' […] lies on implausibly simplified accounts of linguistic difference and cultural hegemony. Its usefulness as a heuristic tool is correspondingly limited [...] The theory allows no space for the subtle measuring of here against there and now against then [...].[161]

The dichotomous couple foreignisation/domestication acts, therefore, as a constraint, rather than an interpretative and theoretical aid for translators. Its binarism is not sufficiently responsive for the complexities that each translation act necessarily has to re-write.

But what does it mean to view translators as re-writers? Is rewriting an implicit acceptance of the impossibility of the task, or is it the overt manifestation of a willingness to accept the translator's creative input? When Bell writes, 'we must be free where necessary, but not excessively free', is she limiting creativity or actually admitting that it is in the whole range between visibility and invisibility that the practice discloses its potential? She remembers:

> At a seminar in Oxford in the spring of 2004, where the question of visible versus invisible translation was mentioned, adherents of both schools ultimately came to at least near-agreement, concluding that what may in theory appear a wide gap between them is often bridged in practice.[162]

She appears to admit that the demarcation between the two poles is not so impenetrable, and that what happens in practice is a much more complex and, perhaps, overlapping combination of the two extremes. Thus, when she talks about the aim 'to preserve the illusion that what was thought and written in one language can be read and understood [...] in another', she is probably misunderstanding the claim of transparency: a translator is invisible if s/he does not act on the text and passively transfer meanings – provided this is

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[161] Matthew Reynolds, 'How to Read a Translation', in Matthew Reynolds, *Likenesses: Translation, Illustration, Interpretation*, Studies in Comparative Literature, 30 (London: LEGENDA, 2013), p. 140.
[162] Bell, p. 66.

possible. The translator's visibility is, on the contrary, an expression of conscious work on both ST and TT, and of an awareness of a number of factors involved in the process. The type of audience, genre, editorial policies, and the *skopos* of the translation are all elements that determine translators' choices. Whether they act more or less intrusively is a matter of degree of intervention. As Chapter 6 will demonstrate, invisibility is, in fact, not an option in translation praxis.

An interesting example that supports this position is offered by the contemporary 'translation culture' in India. Due to its multilingual milieu, there has been a translation consciousness in India for centuries, which became even livelier with the advent of postcolonial theory. Indian-born British writer and translator Lakshmi Holmström explains that, in pre-colonial India, the translation of epics was an operation of creative retelling. This tradition was retrieved in colonial times, when many popular texts written in English were adapted into Indian languages, rather than translated. In her region, Tamil Nadu, the situation began to change in the 1930s. In the letter pages of several literary journals, a heated debate on the accuracy of translations was initiated by the writer and journalist Pudumaippitan.[163] He maintained that there was a big difference between adaptation and translation and made a plea for more careful practice in translation.

Adaptation normally meant 'Indianizing' the source.[164] In India a growing percentage of the population reads books in translation, while Indian literatures in translation are not widely known outside India. Thus, many publishing houses tend to publish translated literature, and literary journals such as *The Book Review* mainly offer reviews of works in translation.[165] In the 1970s theoretical debates started to investigate the nature of this 'culture of translation'. In his Translator's Note to *Samskara*, Attipate K. Ramanujan wrote: 'A translator hopes (against all odds) to translate a non-native reader into a native one'.[166] He refers to the desire of Indian translators to render a foreign text as close as possible to the culture of receiving readers, who could perceive a more 'Englishing' text as too distant. In reality, both approaches, 'Indianizing' and 'Englishing', pose practical and theoretical problems.

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[163] Lakshmi Homström, 'Let Poetry Win: The Translator as Writer – an Indian Perspective', in Bassnett and Bush, pp. 33–45 (p. 34).

[164] Ibid., pp. 34–35.

[165] Ibid., p. 35.

[166] Attipate K. Ramanujan, translator's note in Anantha Murthy, *Samskara*, trans. by A. K. Ramanujan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. ix.

Most discussions focus on how to translate culture-bound words.[167] If translators kept words in the original English form, they could prevent Indian readers from abandoning themselves to the experience of reading and perceiving the text as part of their own culture. On the other hand, if translators decided to translate English concepts into Indian equivalents, they had to find a linguistic and cultural correspondent, which, most of the time, did not exist, for obvious reasons. Thus began an ongoing debate on fidelity: fidelity to what? And, also, what is meant by fidelity after all? Did being faithful to the English text, that is adopting a foreignising approach, mean being visible or invisible to the Indian audience? Issues of power were at stake in the discussion. The Indianisation of English texts was perceived as an act of power and, perhaps, rebellion. So, in this case, a domesticating strategy allowed the weakest culture to speak its own language. The Englishness of the sources was, indeed, muted in the domesticated translations.

At the same time, if one follows this perspective, Indian texts are to be considered untranslatable into English. First of all, there are no cultural equivalents that match the ideas expressed in an Indian book; second, the two grammars are so incompatible that the task of the translator seems to be impossible; third, translating the Indian lexicon into English would mean admitting defeat and surrendering to the colonising power – a power that, by the way, had become part of Indian culture in the growing use of English language in everyday communications.

Susie Tharu, Tejaswini Niranjana, and Harish Trivedi have often pointed to this situation, which does not seem to have a solution, especially if one considers the instability of both target and source languages and the unavoidability of power relations in the translation process:

> [F]ormulations that set up the problem of translation as one judging how faithful a translation has been to the original, or how well it reads in the target language divert attention from the fact that translation takes place where two, invariably unequal, worlds collide, and that there are always relationships of power involved when one world is represented for another in translation.[168]

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[167] Homström, p. 36.
[168] *Women Writing in India*, ed. by Susie Tharu and Ke Lalita, (London: Pandora, 2003), II, p. xx.

In the light of postcolonial theory, these approaches acquire a political dimension. Strategies such as abrogation and appropriation were actually used by many Indian writers.[169] Many appropriated English, making of it a sort of Indianised English. They retained the speech rhythms of their regional languages, reproduced the colloquialisms of the English that was spoken regionally, naturalised Indian words both from Sanskrit and regional languages, and kept references to a wide range of myths, legends, and literary works of their culture.[170]

Clearly, the situation was different for Indian translators. As Homström argues, '[i]t has taken longer for translators in India to take this route and to accept that an appropriated English might be the most suitable and natural venue for translation from the regional languages'.[171] This is because certain strategies that are now taken for granted in creative writing cannot be taken for granted in translation as well, as '[o]f course translators cannot take quite the same liberties that creative writers can'.[172] As Bell would say, 'we must be free, [...] but not excessively free'.

Indian translators, supported by postcolonial theory, have developed an awareness of the creative spaces of their task. Nevertheless, the boundaries imposed by the source text are still seen as constraints that restrict creativity, rather than chances to develop a personal voice. The expression of creativity in translation does not imply the deletion of the necessary differences between source and target text. Translators need not change the essence of their task in order to use creativity; they need to change perspective regarding what is original writing and what they can – rather than cannot – do notwithstanding and beyond the given limits. A new approach to such notions shows that the alleged polarity between domestication and foreignisation is a theoretical grid that softens amidst the negotiations of the practice.

The Indianised English Homström talks about has become an 'opaque' language, both for an international readership and for speakers of other regional languages of India.[173] In this opaqueness, domestication and foreignisation interweave to then disappear. This phenomenon is also witnessed in the politics behind metatextual tools, such as footnotes, endnotes, glosses, translator's notes, introductions, afterwords, and so

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[169] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, p. 38.
[170] Homström, p. 37.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.

on. Two attitudes are possible in this regard: one that conceives all these additions to the text as ways to let the foreign culture arrive in the so-called First World without an excessive imposition of its presence; and another that sees those explanations as a necessary tool to equip the receiving culture with the appropriate information to comprehend the source text more fully. In both approaches, the existing power dynamics of the translation process cannot be eliminated. However, what a translator can do is show awareness of these dynamics and express his/her personal angle.

Ramanujan, for instance, adopts an ingenious solution in his translation of *Samskara*. He employs two sets of notes, which he addresses to two different readerships. The glosses explaining myths, rituals, food names, and so on, of Kannada terms retained in the translation are conceived for the non-specialist non-Indian or non-Kannada readers; the notes listing the Kannada or Sanskrit terms that have been substituted by glosses in the target text are intended for fellow Indians or Indianists.[174] This solution demonstrates that the literature written in Indian regional languages is aimed at different audiences and, therefore, requires different translation strategies. In this complex process of rendition, what is domesticating for one side of the exchange might be perceived as foreignising by the other.

Conversely, Tharu and Lalitan opt for explanatory introductions, in which they provide the necessary cultural and historical elements for readers to approach the text. In this case, translators add information to the text and comment on its content. They thus metaphorically ask readers to engage in the process of clarification and cultural encounter that Ramanujan accomplished through his glosses. Both metatexts are important but, as Homström clarifies, they guide the reader in different ways and according to different political agendas.[175] The addition of explanatory material is, in both cases, the manifestation of an external power that adds to the writer's work. Thus, what is normally considered a foreignising strategy could be understood as a way for translators to domesticate the source culture by imposing their own viewpoint.

The unsolvable dilemma perhaps finds a synthesis in the poststructuralist ideas of instability of the original and the Derridean notion of trace.[176] Nevertheless, '[t]o acknowledge this is only part of the acknowledgement of the overall subjectivity of the

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[174] Ibid., p. 38.
[175] Ibid.
[176] See Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Poststructuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1992).

translator, and the individuality of the reading which becomes the translation'.[177] Translation is an act of reading and, therefore, an act of interpretation. As Spivak says, it is 'the most intimate act of reading', and if the translator does not become intimate with the text, s/he cannot surrender to it, and will not be able to respond to its 'special call'.[178]

It is precisely in trying to respond to that special call, expressed by the rhetoricity of the text, that translators perform their real task: 'an activity of interpretation and rewriting across languages, meanings and cultures'.[179] This task is not risk-free, but it is by virtue of these risks that translators, to give an example, continually appropriate and change the status and features of the English used in India. Being exposed to multiple levels of negotiation, translators act in a more self-conscious way than creative writers; they therefore exercise a greater power over the transformations of their language and culture.[180]

As Ramanujan asserts, 'the language you translate into comes from yourself. As hard as you try, you just cannot get away from it. It has to come from your expressive needs'.[181] As much as power cannot be eliminated from the translation process, so too are creativity and subjectivity inextricably part of it. Associating invisibility with an ideal absence of these elements is nonsensical as well as misleading with regard to what the translator's visibility actually means.

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[177] Homström, p. 38.
[178] Gayatri Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 183.
[179] Holmström, p. 39.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Attipate K. Ramanujan, *Uncollected Poems and Prose* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 68.

CHAPTER 4

DICHOTOMY AND THE 'THIRD SPACE' IN JANET FRAME

In another's country that is also your own, your person divides, and in following the forked path you encounter yourself in a double movement [...] once as stranger, and then as friend.[1]

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the use of dichotomy as the main rhetorical device that structures Frame's use of language and, as a consequence, her poetics. It aims to illustrate how her style is built on the coexistence of traditional rhetorical tools and the absence of canonical forms. This mixture gives her work a unique combination of formal transgression and technical attention to language. It will be demonstrated that, through a renewed perspective on rhetoric, Frame challenges the conventional notion of binarism, thus performing her idea of a

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[1] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004 [1994]), p. xxv.

'third space'. In that metaphysical dimension dominated by a continuous movement *beyond*, opposites converge and paradox is transcended. Furthermore, it will be argued that the use of dichotomous couples and the consequent overcoming of their oppositional nature are fundamental in understanding Frame and translating her work.

Section 4.1 introduces what has been called the 'revival of rhetoric', providing a background for Frame's use of dichotomy and paradox. Section 4.2 presents Frame's main oppositional couple, *this* and *that* world, which will be termed the 'supra-dichotomy'. Indeed, this dichotomy has long been considered the fundamental structure of Frame's works and the basic construct of her *Weltanschauung*. It will be contended that the Manichaeistic perspectives applied so far fail to fully appreciate the performativity of Frame's language, and prevent the development of her *third* dimension. Section 4.3 will provide useful quotes from Frame's works exemplifying a specific use of dichotomy as a means to embrace opposition. The binary couples to be analysed will be interpreted as 'sub-dichotomies' as they all represent single aspects of the *this/that* supra-dichotomy. It will also be demonstrated that both the sub-dichotomies and the supra-dichotomy are not real oppositions: they represent, rather, a fictitious contrast the writer uses to show that binarisms do not exist, implying that truth and reality are themselves relative and relational concepts. Building on postcolonial and poststructuralist theories, Section 4.4 will illustrate Frame's idea of *third space*, concluding that it needs to be interpreted as the performance of her constant hinting at something beyond. This section will, therefore, also rely on the notions of performativity and 'minor literature'. Finally, Section 4.5 will provide some of the latest approaches to Frame's concept of *beyond* and the dissolution of borders. It will also demonstrate how the dimension of beyondness in Frame's writing should be interpreted in association with a postcolonial and deconstructionist approach to language and marginality. Sections 4.3 and 4.5 will also provide some examples of how Italian translators have dealt with Frame's use of dichotomy. Echoing Bhabha's idea of a metaphysical dimension that enables individual agency, her concept of performing through writing will link to the following chapter, where Frame's

works will be presented in the light of the recent theories on borders and border writing.

4.1 'Rhetoric revival': Deconstructing dichotomy

The idea of Frame's writing as performance is also linked to a renewed perspective on rhetoric, which will guide the approach of this chapter on Frame's use of language. One of the definitions the Oxford English Dictionary gives of rhetoric is: 'the art of using language effectively so as to persuade or influence others, especially by employing figures of speech and other compositional techniques'.[2] Rhetoric is presented as a linguistic art whose final goal is persuasion, requiring a specific employment of language, which could happen at any time and in various contexts. Roland Barthes held a different point of view. In the 1960s, he argued that rhetoric could be conceived of only as an object of historical interest, and hypothesised the impossibility of any modern application.[3]

In *Rhetoric*, Jennifer Richards opposes this view and holds that Barthes' vision of the discipline as a mere instrument of intellectual colonisation was too simplistic, in that it failed to allow for rhetoric's power to confer critical distance. To her, rhetoric is

> an understanding not just of the 'how-to' persuade others to serve our interests, but also of the 'how-to' resist being persuaded. [...] Recognition of this double potential of rhetoric, as a tool of power and a critical method, must inform any attempt to renew it.[4]

In Richards' opinion, the shift from structuralism to poststructuralism in the 1970s could be interpreted rhetorically. Poststructuralism emphasises the instability of language and opens up the way to notions such as metalanguage and metafiction. Similarly, Paul de Man explains how the rhetorical dimension of

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[2] Oxford English Dictionary online version.

[3] See Don Paul Abbott, 'Splendor and Misery: Semiotics and the End of Rhetoric', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 24.3 (2006), 303–23.

[4] Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 128–29.

language impedes the cognitive functions of grammar.[5] He maintains that tropes and figures are constitutive of language and, therefore, out of the speaker's control. Such an approach paves the way for a 'revival' of rhetoric itself; indeed, it emphasises the instability of words and, simultaneously, the inevitability of rhetoric. This radical change of perspective is defined as 'rhetoricality': '[r]hetoric is no longer the title of a doctrine and practice, nor a form of cultural memory; it becomes instead something like the condition of our existence'.[6]

The profound links between rhetoric and the human need for communication had previously been explored by Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche taught rhetoric at the University of Basel in the academic year 1872–73. He is thought to have written his 'Lecture Notes on Rhetoric' (1874) for a course he had been appointed to teach, but never did.[7] In these 'Notes', he used examples of Latin authors to explain how style could be defined as rhetorical and what the functions of the figures of speech were. He contended that 'what is called "rhetorical" as a means of conscious art, had been active as a means of unconscious art in language and its development'.[8] It follows that all words are tropes, and therefore '[w]hat is actually called language, is actually all figuration'.[9] To illustrate Nietzsche's point: if one thinks of a word whose meaning is commonly taken for granted, such as 'snake' (Latin, *serpens*), the etymology can be traced back to the original meaning, 'that which crawls'.[10] Nietzsche, then, took into account figures of speech such as metonymy, synecdoche, and metaphor to explain that they were tools for the transference of meaning from one context to another. Consequently, tropes are not deviations from literal meaning; in fact, there is no distinction between literal and figurative. For that reason, Nietzsche held that human lives are based on a series of lies, and that human beings will never be able to grasp the truth of

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[5] Paul de Man, 'The Resistance to Theory', *Yale French Studies*, 63 (1982), 3–20.

[6] John Bender and David E. Willbery, 'Rhetoricality: On the Modernist Return to Rhetoric', in *The Ends of Rhetoric: History, Theory, Practice*, ed. by John Bender and David E. Willbery (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 3–42 (p. 25).

[7] Carole Blair, Introduction to 'Nietzsche's Lecture Notes on Rhetoric: A Translation', trans. by Carole Blair, *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 16 (1983), 94–129 (p. 94).

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, quoted in Blair (p. 106).

[9] Friedrich Nietzsche, quoted in Richards, p. 132.

[10] Nietzsche, 'Nietzsche's Lecture Notes', pp. 107–08.

things, nor, consequently, communicate it. As Richards maintains, '[i]n Nietzsche's view [...] language is fundamentally figurative and duplicitous; it can never represent exactly what we mean, or what we think we mean'.[11]

Deconstruction shared with Nietzsche this way of conceiving language as being deceitful and figurative. In 'Plato's Pharmacy', one of the essays in *Dissemination* (1972), Jacques Derrida performed an historical and deconstructionist study of the word *pharmakon*.[12] By referring to Plato's paradigm of the cave, he played with the homonymy between *antre* ('cave') and *entre* ('between'), engaging with different figures of penetration and articulation. One of these was the 'hymen': given its reference to both membrane and marriage, the word alludes to both the contrast between outside and inside in the virginal condition, and to the removal of that division through the union of one body with another. Derrida thus demonstrated the double-edged nature of words as well as the 'semantic infiniteness' of concepts. And he added: 'What counts here is not [...] the sedimentation that has produced inside it two contradictory layers of signification [...]. What counts here is the formal or syntactical *praxis* that composes and decomposes it'.[13]

Barbara Johnson, translator of the English version of *La Dissémination*, argues: 'The passage from [...] *antre* to [...] *entre* is thus a passage from ontological semantics to undecidable syntax, from the play of light and shadow to the play of articulation'.[14] Derrida's praxis of deconstruction worked both ontologically and semantically. In order to demonstrate this point, Derrida mentioned the Greek noun *pharmakeia*, which also refers to the administration of the *pharmakon*, the drug, and includes, therefore, the taking of both medicine and poison (for example, Antiphones used it to mean 'poison', while Plato's Socrates used it to mean 'drug').[15] In Derrida's words: 'This *pharmakon*, this "medicine", this filter, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself [...] with all its ambivalence'.[16]

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[11] Richards, p. 134.
[12] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. by Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 2004). Italics in original.
[13] Ibid., p. 220. Italics in original.
[14] Barbara Johnson, Translator's introduction to *Dissemination*, p. xxiv. Italics in original.
[15] Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 75.
[16] Ibid.

In Derrida's epilogue entitled 'The inferiority of the written to the spoken word', Theuth, son of Ra, god of the sun, presents his invention to the king of Egypt, an invention called *pharmakon* that 'will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memories'.[17] The king replies that he considered it a 'poison'. Even though the value of writing had been explained to him, it was the king himself who had to attribute a value to it on the basis of his thought: 'The value of writing will not be itself, writing will have no value, unless and to the extent that god-the-king approves'.[18] Therefore, writing is conceived as something simultaneously good and bad, and the word *pharmakon* itself is the representation of a convergence of the oppositional meanings the word embraces.

From this perspective, writing becomes the symbol of the slipperiness of language, and, at the same time, of the transcendence of dichotomies. However, Plato resolves the ambiguity by maintaining the boundaries of the extremes and allowing binarism. In the epilogue, Theuth insists that writing is a remedy, whilst the king confirms his opinion that it is a poison, and the logic of conceptual antagonism prevails. In conclusion, not only does Derrida show that writing is inherently rhetorical, but also that it cannot be anything but rhetorical.[19]

The literal/rhetorical dichotomy was studied by de Man as a 'semiological enigma'. He did not believe in the possibility for language to convey the truth, because whilst the 'enigma' controls us, we cannot control meaning. For that reason, grammar, rhetoric, linguistics and tropes are placed in a 'productive tension', in which none of the poles is privileged, nor does a nihilistic view prevail.[20] As a consequence, meaning is not impossible, but it has to be understood as a constant movement amongst different and connected meanings. This would imply the inexistence of boundaries, which mirrors de Man's perspective on rhetoric as representation of the instability of meaning.

In the following sections, Janet Frame's *this* and *that* will be studied as applications of this new approach to rhetoric and, as such, they can be read

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[17] Ibid., p. 81.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Richards, p. 140
[20] Ibid., p. 147.

from the perspective of language as a real performance.[21] It will be demonstrated how Frame's writing performed a subversion of the conventional idea of binary opposition, and the role of paradox in her works will, consequently, be re-shaped.

4.2 A supra-dichotomy: *This* and *that* world

Janet Frame was often asked about *this* and *that* world, probably because she herself had often made reference to the differences between *this* dimension of life as it was conventionally conceived, and *that* private place, her imagination, where she needed to isolate herself in order to write. *That* place allowed her to turn ideas, experiences, and observations into something of her own: it was her space and privileged perspective on the world. However, *that* dimension was not detached from reality but simply represented her reality as she wanted it to be. *This* world, instead, represented reality as the place of common views and traditional values, the world in which people – including herself – go about and live their lives, with all their various events, and are confronted by others' expectations. Nonetheless, critics and journalists have tended to apply the *this/that* opposition too literally, and labelled her work as a persistent response to that polarity. Frame clarified her position in notes written in preparation for interviews:

> *This* world and *that* world: When I talked of *this* world I was referring to the world where one lived as one was expected to, that is, a job of whatever kind, possibly marriage, children, the conventional happenings of that time. *That* world referred to the world where I might live as myself, doing what I had chosen to do, i.e. writing. My reference to *this* and *that* world has been taken to be a reference to *this* world as the so-called 'real' world and *that* world as an unreal world. I have never lived in a so-

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[21] Cf. Terry Eagleton's idea of 'concrete performance'. Eagleton underlined how rhetoric was neither a 'humanism', nor a 'formalism', that is to say rhetoric is not about the experience people have of language, nor a formal analysis of linguistic devices. Rhetoric, instead, treated language in terms of its 'performance' (i.e. persuasion, pleading, etc.), of people's responses to them, and the situations in which they worked. See Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

called 'unreal' world. I hoped only, with the help of elusive imagination, to transform 'this' world into my 'that' world.[22]

The writer made a distinction between the conventional, 'normal' expectations of life (*this* world) and a personal dimension, a sort of metaphorical place (*that* world) where she felt she could be completely free to be herself. This does not mean that she pretended or wished to live an unreal life, but rather that she did not feel comfortable within the conventions and limitations of *this* life. She managed to find her way to make *this* and *that* coexist, and create a place of her own, free from the dictates of society. That place was nurtured by both dimensions and was figuratively located in her imagination, where ideas, thoughts, and elements of real life were transformed into her stories.

One of the examples of the disproportionate attention and erroneous interpretation of the *this/that* dichotomy is given in an extract of Anna Nadotti's introduction to the Einaudi edition of *An Angel at My Table*, in which she went as far as to say that Frame deliberately chose to live a split life:

> Janet [...] chooses to split herself into two parts. She studies hard and enthusiastically – as is typical of her family – and works so over-conscientiously and meticulously that she herself starts to worry. It seemed there was something missing here – she's trying to keep something at bay [...] We can now argue that it was an unconscious defence strategy to protect the only thing she really cared about: the desire to write, her most exquisite quintessence. There is no continuity between imagination and reality for Janet. The only way she can live is through writing, and she lives as she writes.[23]

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[22] Janet Frame, Notes for interviews, quoted in *Janet Frame: In Her Own Words* (London: Penguin, 2011), pp. 121–22.

[23] Anna Nadotti, Introduction to Janet Frame, *Un angelo alla mia tavola*, trans. by Lidia Conetti Zazo (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), p. viii. 'Janet […] sceglie così di viversi sdoppiata. Studia con l'impegno e l'entusiasmo intellettuale di tutti i Frame e lavora con un eccesso di diligenza e dedizione di cui lei stessa sospetta e su cui si interroga con crescente frequenza. Che cosa tiene a bada? […] A posteriori appare evidente che si tratta di un'inconsapevole strategia di difesa della sola cosa che realmente le sta a cuore, la sua più squisita sostanza, il desiderio di scrivere, quintessenza di sé. Non c'è soluzione di continuità tra immaginario e realtà, per Janet, il solo modo in cui può e sa vivere è la scrittura, esiste in quanto scrive'. My translation.

In fact, as much as writing was Frame's 'quintessence', she also clearly stated that she belonged to *this* dimension and that the critics' interpretation of the *this/that* opposition was incorrect. Some journalists even saw it as her intention to separate herself from the mundane, unimportant trivialities of the real world. But this was not Frame's idea.

It must be remembered that her family, following the social conventions of the time, wanted for her a future as a teacher, while she had always wanted to become a writer – more precisely, a poet: '*They* think I'm going to be a schoolteacher, but I'm going to be a *poet*'.[24] This sentence, which she wrote in her adolescent diary, separates – even graphically – the ordinariness of being a schoolteacher (*this* world) from a profession towards which she felt more inclined, that of the poet, symbol of imaginative freedom, creativity, and faithfulness to her own values. Therefore, her desire to turn *this* world into *that* one could also be interpreted as her dream to become a professional poet and, more generally, to be able to write without being stigmatised by society as abnormal. In an article published in the *New Zealand Herald* in 1983, Frame said:

> All this talk of two worlds! [Critics] seem to think I look down on ordinary people. And I don't. Well, perhaps they think they have seen things in my work, or is it a prejudice they apply? There's just the world, this solid base, but there is some sort of abyss for all of us and you can shiver suddenly with the apprehension of it. [...] All these comments must come about because I'm not good at creating characters.[25]

Frame recognised that she belonged to this world, but she also knew that something *other* existed. Whether one calls it dream state, imagination, or contemplation, the point is that one's life does not only take place *here*, in the here and now. There is more to it and creative people particularly confide in *that* space, as they need to dig out the deepest expression of themselves and then turn their feelings and visions into art. People who tend not to indulge in

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[24] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table* (London: Virago, 2011), p. 157. Italics in original.
[25] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 12 February 1983, article by Tony Reid, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 109.

imagination are those who deny this possibility, probably because they are scared of it. As Frame once said, 'people are afraid of imagination, they can't see what is going on, and it frightens them. It's mainly only writers themselves who know what it's like – [...] you're working with the invisible'.[26]

Since it is an experience one is not taught how to manage, being able to abandon oneself to imagination does require courage in many respects. Frame thought that 'we sometimes recoil from using it, or we are denied the opportunity. I think [...] the proper use of imagination is a form of courage, daring to explore beyond horizons'.[27] Frame was extremely attentive to her inner life. She consciously explored her moods and understood her need to isolate herself from reality as an essential part of her creative life. It was imagination that allowed her to really see the world:

> I'm not sure that I see life at all. What I do see is life within. I suppose you would call it the imagination. I'm rather unconscious of things around me, in a way. I've a kind of arrangement with a part of myself which is given the menial task of absorbing things [...] and I don't know what these things are until I see them in an imaginative light – which is a bright light, without shade – a kind of inward sun.[28]

The above quote is an extract from an interview she did for a national radio programme in New Zealand in 1970. After the interview, she wrote a letter to Bill Brown about it, in which she reasserted that she was almost absent from *this* world: 'I answered by saying [...] I lived largely in a state of unconsciousness. Which I do'.[29] At the same time, though, she was also aware of the fact that life needs to be lived by experience: 'although one can do all these things in

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[26] Janet Frame, *Time Out* (Wanganui Newspapers Weekender), 15 April 1983, article by John Francis, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 112.

[27] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 19 October 1988, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 137. For further opinions on the notion of 'beyond', see *In Her Own Words*, p. 147.

[28] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 11 June 1970, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 90. See Sections 4.4 and 4.5 for a wider discussion of Frame's beyondness.

[29] Janet Frame, letter to Bill Brown, 24 June 1970, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 91.

imagination, one learns a tremendous lot by living these things'.[30] Frame knew she needed *this* world, and that part of her inspiration came from it, as generally happens in creative writing. Still, *this* world was 'too noisy' for her ideas to be recollected and reworked. *That* dimension became the quiet, comforting refuge where her thoughts and experiences could gain real life through her writing.[31]

Although she frequently mentioned the world of imagination as the place in which she found shelter when she was working on a book, she also described it as a constant part of her life. This simple coexistence of *this* and *that* in her own descriptions of them proves that she did not choose to live a 'split life'. Perhaps this reliance on the distinction between two main dimensions represented her way of describing the importance of her creative side in her life. As she once said: 'I am always in fictional mode [...] I look at everything from the point of view of fiction'.[32] Writing actually haunted her and made her abandon *this* dimension for a while: 'When I write I am possessed by my characters. In fact, I never stop thinking about them, and not always consciously. I often feel lost when I have to leave [the world of imagination] for the real world'.[33]

At times, Frame would mention a 'dream world' in which she lived when she was thinking about her stories.[34] Indeed, her works began and developed in her subconscious before they could reach the concreteness of the page: 'I don't write that chair. It comes and gets me. That chair writes me'.[35] She also talked of being obsessed by her plots: 'For me, a theme must be an obsession before I will consider writing about it, and by the time it is an obsession I have little choice in the matter'.[36] Frame needed to have a 'whole picture' of the story

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[30] Janet Frame, in *Three New Zealanders: Janet Frame*, dir. by Michael Noonan (Endeavour Films, NZ Television, 1977).

[31] Janet Frame, Oral History Recording, National Library of Australia, 14 December 1977 (ORAL TRC 1 / 1052 (22686)).

[32] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 19 October 1988, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 137.

[33] Janet Frame, *Saturday Review*, article by John Barkham, 22 March 1969, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 87.

[34] Janet Frame, *NZ Woman's Weekly*, 21 March 1983, article by Frances Levy, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 110.

[35] Janet Frame, Harpers & Queen, March 1985, article by Cynthia Kee, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 127.

[36] Janet Frame, *NZ Listener*, 24 September 1988, article by Mario Mc Leod, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 133.

before moving on to create individual characters, and the story would develop gradually; 'shape'[37] was what sustained her while writing: 'Of course, you have to go through the awful task of sitting down and plodding, plodding, till you get to the end. But you are sustained by – I suppose you would call it "the vision"'.[38] For Frame, writing was an act of shaping and contemplating ('when you're writing you are shaping'), a kind of 'imaginative process':

> Oh I think it's contemplation. Well you stare. You see a story and you stare at it, and you get the shape of it, and the sound of it, and all the senses are brought to bear on it. You see it again – it's a sort of contemplative thing like a dream, an enforced dream, a dream over which you have control.[39]

Frame's approach to her imagination was both instinctive and controlled. She knew she was living *this* life, and that often *that* dimension governed her thinking. Nevertheless, the dream-like state was mostly guided by her. Thus, the 'fictional mode' to which she referred appears suspended between *this* and *that*. In another interview, Frame offers further proof of her management of both dimensions:

> [O]ne tries to imagine a character who has her own life, her own thoughts and feelings. Naturally, I draw from what I've seen and observed and people I have seen, but it's always a mixture [...] of what I have observed and what I have imagined. But often, like other writers, I use characters to exploit the tricks of the trade [...]. I do have a great interest in the actual writing of a novel [...].[40]

The communication between *this* and *that* is explicitly stated: her creative process was inevitably an amalgamation of reality-inspired elements and

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[37] Cf. the idea of 'shape' in *In Her Own Words*, pp. 123, 128, 131, 134–35, 157.

[38] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 30 April 1983, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 118. See also *In Her Own Words*, pp. 134–35.

[39] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 3 August 2000, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 157.

[40] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 19 October 1988, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 140.

reworkings of them through her fantasy. Thus, even if she underlined the predominance of *that* world in her life ('[a] writer writes from within, not from without, so the outside situation doesn't matter very much'),[41] the exchanges between the two territories appear undeniable, likewise their complementarity.

Moreover, the metafictional quality of her works represents not only a stylistic and technical choice, but also a subversion of the narrative pact between author and reader. By repeatedly interrogating the role of the writer, the writing task, and issues of originality and authoriality, Frame deleted or, better, transcended the boundary between writer and reader. Reality is presented as a relational concept, in which movement and exchange determine the existence of the parts involved:

> I'm never going to write another story.
> I don't like writing stories. I don't like putting he said she said he did she did, and telling about people, the small dark woman who coughs into a silk handkerchief and says, excuse me would you like another soda cracker Mary, and the men with grease all over their clothes and lunch tins in their hands, the Hillside men who get into the tram at four forty-five, and hang on to the straps so the ladies can sit down comfortably, and stare out of the window and you never know what they're thinking, perhaps about their sons in Standard two, who are going to work at Hillside when it's time for them to leave school, and that's called work and earning a living, well I'm not going to write any more stories like that.[42]

The above quote is just one of the many metafictional passages written by Frame. It can be said that her intention to subvert the conventional I-writer/you-reader dichotomy challenged the boundaries of the process of meaning creating itself. This means that transcendence in Frame did not invest simply the shift from *this* to *that*, but rather it refers to the very act of transcending and to the ceaseless, inevitable movement which governs life.

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[41] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 11 June 1970, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 88.
[42] Janet Frame, *The Lagoon and Other Stories* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991 [1952]), p. 181.

4.3 Sub-dichotomies: Frame's perspective on *this* world

The opposition of Imagination/Reality is the most recurrent in Frame's work, and the one that could be said to incorporate all other dichotomies, which we will, therefore, term 'sub-dichotomies'.

One of the most common labels used to interpret Frame's novels is the dichotomous expression 'magic realism'.[43] This oxymoron describes the 'binary opposition between reality and imagination, a permanently contradictory relation between two worlds, or apparently incompatible systems of signifiers and signifieds'.[44] According to Isabella Maria Zoppi, '[t]hese find a meeting point in magical-realist writing, thus giving voice to the unthinkable and unspoken [...]'.[45] Zoppi's position endorses the point this chapter is making: the incompatibility of reality and imagination is only apparent, as *this* and *that* world are tangential and in productive tension (the short story 'Tiger Tiger' is entirely built on an ambiguous, doubtful approach to reality and dream).[46]

Another cardinal dichotomy of Frame's works is that of Truth/Falsehood. The following passages are taken from three different genres: the short story 'The Lagoon', the novel *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, and the children's book *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, and offer an example of how Frame tended to develop the same themes in different shapes:

> All this my grandmother told me, my Picton grandmother [...].
> See the water she would say. Full of sea-weed and crabs' claws. But I knew that wasn't the real story and I didn't find out the real story till I was grown-up and Grandma had died [...].
> - Is there a story, I said. I was a child again, Grandma tell me about…
> My aunt smiled. She guesses things sometimes.

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[43] Especially used to refer to the novel *The Carpathians*.

[44] Isabella Maria Zoppi, 'The Magic Reality of Memory', in *Coterminous Worlds. Magical Realism and Contemporary Postcolonial Literature in English*, ed. by Elsa Linguanti, Francesco Casotti, and Carmen Concilio, Cross/Cultures, 39 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 151–70 (p. 151).

[45] Ibid., p. 151.

[46] 'Tiger Tiger', *The Lagoon*, pp. 121–25.

> - The sort of story they put in *Truth*, she said [...] It's an interesting story, she said. I prefer Dostoevsky to *Truth*.[47]

> Truth may be a vast ocean within reach of all but how genuine are truths that have been drawn from the ocean, distilled, bottled, flavored, diluted, chilled, boiled, in fact adulterated with the potion of ourselves?[48]

> 'Is that really true?' 'Mona said, 'Yes, it's true', because it seemed to be true and then it was true.[49]

As the quotes illustrate, Frame frequently presented the opposition between Truth and Falsehood in the form of invented stories, thus engaging in a double attitude towards the true/false sides of the narration, and the possible ways one deals with deceit. Elements such as accounts, memories, or declarations of identity can never be totally trusted in her plots, as they are given by someone who – the narrator anticipates – is not trustworthy. This implies that there will never be a faithful version of a story, as language cannot communicate truth ('It's an interesting story, she said, I prefer Dostoevsky to *Truth*').[50] Thus, semi-truths and deceit are paradoxically preferred to an honest original:

> – Look at me Myrtle. I'm swimming.
> – Yes, with one foot on the bottom.
> – I only put it down sometimes, but I'm swimming aren't I?[51]

> 'I'm gaged now', she announced. 'I'll soon be married.' No one contradicted her. When you have been in hospital long enough you tend to lose the urgent need, taken for granted in the 'outside world', to express disbelief; it seems pointless, even a presumption, to burst out with cries of 'That's not true' when you realize that truth is the

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[47] 'The Lagoon', *The Lagoon*, pp. 3–7. Italics in original.

[48] Janet Frame, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (New York: George Braziller, 1980 [1964]), p. 39

[49] Janet Frame, *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* (New York: George Braziller, 1969), p. 37.

[50] 'The Lagoon', *The Lagoon*, p. 7. Italics in original. *New Zealand Truth* was a tabloid newspaper published in New Zealand from 1905 to 2013. Frame plays with the idea of a 'Truth' expressed by written language, symbolised by the *Truth*.

[51] 'The Secret', *The Lagoon*, p. 15.

indestructible foundation of the foundation of the foundation and needs no defense anyway.[52]

By constantly questioning the truthfulness of her characters, Frame, as a narrator, focuses on providing different sides of a story rather than assuming or suggesting a definite position about them. Her goal, it could be argued, was not to give answers, but rather to elicit questions and comparative thinking.

Accordingly, many of her stories deal with the issue of 'difference' – being different from one's relatives, from those who are perceived and defined as 'normal', or from the group to which one previously belonged:

> Actually I didn't think my cousins were of the same family as us, they couldn't have been I thought. They were clean and quiet and they spoke up when visitors came to their house, aunts and uncles I mean, and they didn't say dirty words or rhymes. They were Cultured.
> But for a long time I could never understand them, for instance they could eat cooked turnip. […]
> Each time we came to Aunty Dot's we were visitors to an alien world.[53]
>
> They haunted me, not the few articulate ones who had been to church, but those I glimpsed sometimes through the fence into the park or the yard. Who were they? Why were they in hospital? Why were they so changed from people that you see walking and talking in the streets of the World? And what was the meaning of the gifts or rejects which they threw over the park and yard fence – pieces of cloth, crusts, feces, shoes – in a barrage of love and hate for what lay beyond?[54]
>
> I'm the only one in the family awake, Mona thought. A feeling of loneliness came over her as she remembered her real family, the House Ants. Aunt Phyllis and Uncle Pogo and Barbara and Nigel were a wonderful family to be adopted into but Mona couldn't help remembering, not

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[52] Janet Frame, *Faces in the Water* (London: The Women's Press, 1980 [1961]), p. 159.

[53] 'My Cousins Who Could Eat Cooked Turnips', *The Lagoon*, pp. 44–46.

[54] Janet Frame, *Faces in the Water* (London: Virago, 2011 [1961]), p. 46. Subsequent references to this book will refer to this edition.

often, but at times suddenly and vividly the smells of the House-Ant nest.[55]

The perception of being different from others has often been associated with a willingness and/or a perceived pressure to adapt to a new form, more suitable to the predominant group. Often, Frame's characters experience the need for transformation in the sense of adaptation. Emblematic examples of this process are the mental hospital patients in *Faces in the Water*. From the threats of lobotomy presented as a life-saving treatment, to being perceived as different upon returning home, the sense of having to adapt to a so-called normality informs most of Frame's stories:

> [N]ow, it was assumed, that her personality had 'changed', there was hope for the rest of us who still had our old apparently unacceptable personalities.[56]

> The family talked jokingly of my having been in the 'nuthouse', and I gave them what they seemed to want – amusing descriptions of patients whose symptoms corresponded to the popular idea of the insane; and I described myself as if, by misfortune, I had been put among people who, unlike myself, were truly ill. This [is the] image that I presented of myself […].[57]

> We came to New Zealand by ship. [...] the New Zealand aim was to have people who would 'fit in' readily and painlessly (painless for those already there). Like invisible mending. Or like an insect that moves to another tree and is given a new camouflage and told, stay on that bough, blend, and all will be well. Pretend you are not there![58]

In order to be accepted, one has to 'fit in'.[59] Difference is perceived as an obstacle to Frame's Normality. People hold a self-protective attitude, try to avoid looking at 'strangeness' too closely because they fear to discover their own. Erlene, protagonist of *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, is autistic and nobody

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[55] *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, pp. 44–45.
[56] *Faces in the Water*, p. 111.
[57] Ibid., p. 127.
[58] Janet Frame, *Living in the Maniototo* (London: Virago, 2010 [1979]), p. 163.
[59] The phrase is used throughout *Faces in the Water*.

knows the causes of her silence. Tossed between 'reality and hallucination',[60] Erlene feels that her silence scares people:

> People stare at me, waiting and waiting, because there are no words to calm them, no friendly words flying warm from my mouth. People dread silence because it is transparent; like clear water, which reveals every obstacle – the used, the dead, the drowned, silence reveals the cast-off words and thoughts dropped in to obscure its clear stream. And when people stare too close to silence they sometimes face their own reflections, their magnified shadows in the depths, and that frightens them. I know; I know.[61]

Silence is threatening because it brings people into contact with their inner self – not an easy encounter. Thus, Erlene's autism troubles people, because it forces them to think and look within themselves.

Like Erlene, Mona Minim is an example of a stranger or borderline figure. In *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, Frame's only children's book, Mona is a House Ant, who sets out for 'her first journey out of the nest'.[62] She gets lost playing a game and is found by Barbara, a Garden Ant. Mona is soon presented as an outsider and, as such, she needs to confront otherness, learn how to live with it, comprehend it, and appreciate it. On this journey, Mona often feels lonely: although she is never isolated by the Garden Ants who welcome her as part of their family, she misses her origins, her traditions, and all the little things that she is missing out on from not living with other House Ants.[63] The Garden Ants are not her family and their home is not hers. Therefore, despite being warmly welcomed and appreciating the Garden Ants' peaceful attitude, she still experiences feelings of alienation:

> 'I will cover you with my smell and the colony will accept
> you. We have kits of strange insects living peaceably with

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[60] Jennifer Lawn, 'Redemption, Secrecy, and the Hermeneutic Frame in Janet Frame's *Scented Gardens for the Blind*', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 30.3 (1999), 105–26 (p. 117).

[61] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 87.

[62] *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, p. 11.

[63] Ibid., pp. 44–45.

us. Oh,' – she said hastily – 'not that you're *strange*. But we do have foreign species everywhere. Now you must take off your House-Ant clothes['].[64]

Mona will be accepted by the colony only if she conforms to its rules: she has to change her smell, dress, behaviour. In short, she has to change identity in order to continue to live.[65] However, despite the marginalisation and loneliness Mona experiences, the adventure has made her realise what she really wants, and where she feels she belongs. At a certain point of the story, she wants to come back home. She is scared, but remembers something her friend Barbara had told her a long time before, when she complained about the impossibility of ever becoming a queen: 'You can fly without wings', Barbara told her.[66] So, she returns home, but is stopped by two House Ant soldiers who bar her way. I've been abroad' she says, 'I've traveled. These clothes are specially imported'.[67] Because of her strange look, Mona is not immediately recognised and has to struggle to claim her right to enter the House Ant family again. It is as though having touched and experienced alterity can prevent her from returning home: she has become a stranger.[68]

Mona Minim and Erlene had to find their own way to overcome their misdiagnosed abnormality; their way of facing such a complex refusal from society is generally animated by a persistent doubt: 'Perhaps we'd made a mistake, perhaps it wasn't really Christmas, perhaps Christmas had been and we hadn't noticed it, perhaps there was no Christmas this year'.[69] Informed by this pervasive doubt, characters' identities are real and are not and, in the

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[64] Ibid., p. 23. Italics in original. The final quotation mark is missing in the original.

[65] This episode echoes Frame's experience in mental wards, where patients had to disguise their real identities to survive, and where brain surgery eventually transformed them into something more manageable for the ruling society.

[66] *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, p. 43.

[67] Ibid., pp. 78–79.

[68] Frame had herself experienced the feeling of being perceived and treated as different. She felt *other* from 'normal' people every time she went home from periods in a mental hospital or from her travels abroad. She often commented on the experience of feeling like a stranger in her own country, as if her mind was bound to be living on the borders, between here and there, like migrant writers who lived the in-between dimension of diasporic transitions. In many letters to friends or personal notes, she wrote about the differences between the work and life conditions in the UK and NZ. While she stated that London offered the best environment (especially in terms of weather), she also expressed feelings of nostalgia for the landscapes and places to which she felt she belonged. (See *In Her Own Words*, pp. 81–82, 226).

[69] 'Tiger, Tiger', *The Lagoon*, p. 122.

coexistence of two opposites, Frame creates a polysemic space, 'as though it were a laboratory where the budding writer was experimenting with style, register, tone and genre, and testing both conventional and innovative narrative strategies'.[70]

Janet Frame appears to handle absolute concepts as dogma capable of perpetuating stigma and prejudice. Because of this, absolute concepts are pushed and stretched to the most peripheral areas of their meanings, where the dividing limit between Right and Wrong blurs:

> – Mum, have we come to the wrong sea?
> Mother looked bewildered. I don't know, kiddies, I'm sure.
> – Is it the wrong sea? Totty took up the cry.
> It was the wrong sea.
> – Yes kiddies, Mother said now that's strange I'm sure I remembered what your father told me but I couldn't have, but I'm sure I remembered. Isn't it funny. I didn't know it would be like this. Oh things are never like you think they're different and sad. I don't know. […]
> So it was all right really it was a good sea […]. It was a distinguished sea […]. It was the right kind of sea.[71]

Characters in Frame's stories oscillate between liminal zones: between Sea and Land, In and Out, Right and Wrong. They are unsure of where and who they are. Many cannot even recognise if they are free or trapped. In 'Snap-dragons', an indiscernible voice (probably the narrator or a character called Ruth) says:

> If you were free did you always fly away? Or were you ever free? Were you not always blundering into some prison whose door shut fast behind you so that you cried, let me out, like the bee knocking in the snap-dragon, or the people beating their hands on the walls of their ward?[72]

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[70] Vanessa Guignery, *Chasing Butterflies: Janet Frame's* The Lagoon and Other Stories (Paris: Éditions Publibook, 2011), p. 26.
[71] 'Swans ', *The Lagoon*, pp. 62–63.
[72] 'Snap-dragons', *The Lagoon*, p. 98.

Frame questions the common ideas of Freedom/Captivity: in this world, is freedom still a possibility? Can people really call themselves free? In 'The Day of the Sheep', the narrator says:

> Nora has travelled, she knows about things, it would be nice to travel if you knew where you were going and where you would live at the end or do we ever know, do we ever live where we live, we're always in other places, lost, like sheep, and I cannot understand the leafless cloudy secret and the sun of any day.[73]

Nora, who is 'living everywhere and nowhere', is chained to number fifty Town Street, which is still 'somewhere'.[74] It is good to have somewhere, Frame seems to suggest: 'you must have somewhere even if you know you haven't got anywhere'.[75] The spatial coordinates become relative concepts and Everywhere and Nowhere coincide. By equalising antithetical terms, the uncertainty of the narrative voice 'blurs boundaries, so that the meaning oscillates between a sense of imprisonment [...] and a sense of endless drifting [...]'.[76] In fact, we are in 'nothingness':[77] Nora feels nothing, but the whole world is nothing and no one is really anywhere.

In 'Jan Godfrey', Frame claims the collapse of personal identity: we are not one, and perhaps we are not multiple either. Are we really what we think we are? How does our perception of ourselves influence what we are? What are we? Who are we? In the incessant enquiry with no pretence of a definite solution (what is a solution?), Frame interrogates readers, thus deleting the frontiers – narrative and metaphysical – between Me and You, since both are indefinite and identity is mutable:

> I am writing a story about a girl who is not me. I cannot prove she is not me. I can only tell you that her name is Alison Hendry.

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[73] 'The Day of the Sheep', *The Lagoon*, p. 75.
[74] Ibid., p. 71.
[75] Ibid., pp. 71–72.
[76] Guignery, pp. 24–25.
[77] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 251.

> Alison Hendry. Margaret Burt. Nancy Smith. We cling to our names because we think they emphasise our separateness and completeness and importance, but deep down we know that we are neither separate nor complete nor very important, nor are we terribly happy [...].[78]

Frame's characters constantly doubt their own identity: to quote but two examples, Istina Mavet keeps repeating 'I did not know my own identity',[79] and Erlene is unsure of who she is ('perhaps she had changed now, perhaps she was no longer a human being'), but knows that 'there were no Strangs, that her father was a myth and a dream, that he would never return, and that neither she herself nor her mother was real'.[80] Frame's narratives appear to be a continuous discovery of the unstable limits between people's lives.

The desire to cling to a fixed identity is linked to the human need for stability; but is it real? Is it really possible? When Frame was 'robbed' of her identity as an alleged schizophrenic, she felt lost and deprived of a solid way of being. In her autobiography, she wrote: 'I was still inclined to cherish the distorted "privilege" of having schizophrenia because it allied me with the great artists more readily than my attempts to produce works of art might have done'.[81] The marginalisation of mental illness had become Frame's space within which to create, a sort of socially accepted path to creativity.[82]

Like the postcolonial theorists, Frame condemned any essentialist claims about identity because they failed to deconstruct the binary oppositions that informed the Western philosophical tradition. Absolutist positions simply invert the poles and perpetuate dichotomies, which, like any form of binarism, do not allow the 'permeability of culture'.[83] As Terry Goldie states in *Fear and Temptation*, the desire of the dominant culture to absorb indigenous features into its own identity is a neo-colonial behaviour, for it is tantamount to appropriating the indigene's place. The 'indigenisation' of the settler colony is,

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[78] 'Jan Godfrey, *The Lagoon*, p. 131.

[79] *Faces in the Water*, p. 55.

[80] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, pp. 227–28.

[81] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 437.

[82] See Section 1.4 on the misdiagnosis of schizophrenia.

[83] Cindy Gabrielle, 'The Poetics of Dissolution: The Representation of Maori Culture in Janet Frame's Fiction', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 46.2 (2010), 209–20 (p. 1).

therefore, far from a cancellation of all boundaries.[84] The following quotations present examples of interaction between Māori and Pākehā – recalling the I-You dichotomy – in which Frame offers an alternative perspective:

> 'Do come,' Hene had urged. 'See how we live when we're not in Kowhai Street. See the way of life of our people.'
> Mattina hesitated.
> 'But I don't know the language.'
> Hene laughed. 'Neither do I. I'm learning. And the best way to learn is on the marae. And don't worry it's quite informal.'[85]

> There's no clear anchorage, no roots, the street is full of strangers with empty baskets of love, or so it seems to me; but only because I have not struck the most valuable of treasures: acceptance. I know they have not accepted me. It might seem so, but I am merely the American researcher, the visiting would-be expert to whom they have fed their information – it is I, not they, who is the creature studied for *Our Beautiful World* shown in prime time.[86]

Frame presents a situation in which the outer look of the American researcher, occupying a hegemonic position, is welcomed by the local population, representing the colonised position, though she perceives that the cultural distance between them is irreconcilable. She does not feel completely accepted; but her discomfort seems to derive also from her constant sense of inadequacy. Mattina constantly doubts whether she is really grasping the spirit of the place, the reality behind the myths and legends so that, in a subversion of the traditional schema, her alleged neo-colonial behaviour appropriating the indigenous culture is mitigated by her awkward approach to alterity.

During one of their conversations, Hene tells Mattina how peculiar it is to live in the Māori village following the *Maoritanga*, the traditional Māori lifestyle.[87]

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[84] Terry Goldie*, Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literature* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 13.

[85] Janet Frame, *The Carpathians* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), p. 81.

[86] Ibid., p. 93.

[87] Ibid., p. 83. ('Only three families live here now [...] But more are returning. We don't realise how unique it is until we leave it for the city. The Pakeha has nothing like this way of living').

Hene, whose perspective symbolises that of the colonised group, draws a clear-cut boundary between their language nests, *Kohanga reo*, and the kindergarten that belongs to the government. Hene complains about this intrusion, 'with nurses coming to tell us what to do with our babies', which again suggests a form of colonial power and cultural clash.[88] However, in the project Hene shares with Hare, they rescue young Māori and Pākehā in trouble, and often prevent them from going to prison. The Pākehā often get bored of life in the *marae* (Māori village) and soon leave, but when they are among their friends they show off about having experienced the real Māori community life.

What most upsets Hene is the absence of mutual comprehension, even within her own community: 'even the elders of my own people don't seem to understand what I'*m* doing'.[89] The Italian translation of this last sentence reads, 'neppure gli anziani della mia comunità sembrano comprendere cosa *sto* facendo'.[90] So while the Italian version emphasises the verb 'stare', which means 'to stay' and translates, in this case, the auxiliary 'to be' in continuous tenses, the focus of the English version semantically invests both what Hene is doing and what she is. As a personification of the new Māori generation, Hene seems to respect and protect her own culture, but her point of view is open and inclusive, showing an ethical attitude towards otherness. In the postcolonial context of the story, she is a hybrid: she deals with both groups, speaks both languages, and tries to introduce Mattina's American outer look into her community. Hene represents, therefore, the performative role of one who understands both cultures because, in a way, she embraces both.

Mark Williams, who has studied Frame's concept of identity in its relations with postcolonial issues, claims that Frame disregards 'the widespread desire for […] identification with Maori legends', these being 'self-deluding and self-interesting'.[91] It seems that, once again, Frame was not interested in the polarities of the matter, but rather in the way the opposites interact and, in certain particular, unforeseeable ways, mingle.

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., p. 84.

[90] Janet Frame, *La leggenda del Fiore della Memoria: The Carpathians*, trans. by Simone Garzella (Roma: Robin, 2007), p. 145.

[91] Mark Williams, quoted in Gabrielle, p. 210.

The blurring of frontiers has been a widely debated topic in studies on Frame. Cindy Gabrielle talks about the 'dissolution of selves', where the boundaries between human beings are permeable. Marc Delrez emphasises, instead, the 'universal dimension of being',[92] as well as images of 'bodily decrepitude' and 'physical disintegration', which depict death as the ultimate way of reconnecting with one's nature.[93] The spiritual dissolution implies the dissolution of the membrane separating ourselves from the rest of the world. 'Self-dissolution' refers, therefore, to

> the sacrifice [...] of the ego in favour of a long-deferred communion with the world, whereby transactions between one individual and the next indeed become reciprocal since divisions between self and non-self no longer exist and the ego, which excludes and appropriates, has been dismantled.[94]

The dissolution of the character's ego corresponds, in Frame's work, to the dissolution of textual borders. Having dismantled the boundary between reader and writer and having discharged the validity of Manichaeism, Frame's texts do not offer solutions, except in asserting the certainty of a never-ending and irresolvable doubt, which animates plots to the last line. This makes her stories resemble puzzles with a missing piece:

> 'I'm Dr. Clapper.'
> He grasped her hand and shook it heartily.
> 'And you're Erlene?'
> He answered himself.
> 'That's right, you're Erlene.'
> It was a presumption, but she did not protest; how could he be so sure when she was not sure herself?[95]

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[92] Mark Delrez, *Manifold Utopia: The Novels of Janet Frame* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), p. 101.

[93] Mark Delrez, 'Forbidding Bodies: Avatars of the Physical in the Works of Janet Frame', *World Literature Written in English*, 38.2 (2000), 70–79 (p. 70).

[94] Gabrielle, p. 211.

[95] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, pp. 95–96.

If certainty and fixity are not acceptable answers to the nebulous horizons of life, what is the solution to the puzzle? Is the puzzle its own ultimate solution? What is the value of *a* solution? Perhaps Frame wanted to suggest that there is and is not an answer, and the puzzle exists to the extent that our thought is real. The puzzle exists and it does not, in the sense that it is within us, it is us, we who are partly *here* (in *this* world) and partly *there* (in *that* one). We are peripheral and dwell on marginality; we are the movement towards the *third space*, the transcendence of all dichotomies.

4.4 Overcoming dichotomy: The *third space* in Janet Frame

In chapter one of her autobiography, Frame mentioned a 'Third Place':

> From the first place of liquid darkness, within the second place of air and light, I set down the following record with its mixture of fact and truths and memories of truths and its direction always toward the Third Place, where the starting point is myth.[96]

This concise, evocative passage sets out the tripartite structure of Frame's work, and specifies that the autobiographical account will contain a mixture of fact, truth, and memory. While many have interpreted Frame's 'Third Place' as *that* world ('the creative world of the artistic imagination, the Mirror City of Janet's dreams'),[97] the ideas that have been presented so far in this chapter have shown the *third space* as the constant movement between *this* and *that* world, thus rejecting the oppositional state of dichotomies and suggesting a third dimension. The metaphysical space of a third realm is not, therefore, a physical location, nor an ideal imaginative state; it is, instead, the possibility of overcoming binarisms and envisioning a liminal, porous dimension of constant exchange.

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[96] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 3.
[97] Suzette A. Henke, 'Jane Campion Frames Janet Frame: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young New Zealand Poet', *Biography*, 23.4 (2000), 651–69 (p. 653).

In Maria Wikse's opinion, the initial chapter of *An Angel at My Table* is a myth-evoking passage that de-authorises the account that follows.[98] In effect, what Lejeune called 'autobiographical pact' is challenged and questioned by Frame from the beginning of the autobiography, when she admits that she will mix 'truths and memories of truths'.[99] Therefore, Frame's 'Third Place' signals the way readers should approach the work and perhaps, by extension, her writing in general. Similarly to Bhabha's 'Third Space', the 'Third Place' of Frame's fiction 'constitute[s] the discursive conditions of enunciation'.[100]

As has been demonstrated so far, Frame moves beyond the apparent clarity of dichotomy: she is constantly hinting at something beyond *this* reality, which could reunite the extremes, or at least allow them to coexist. In order to verbally communicate the passage to *that* world, Frame needed to enact that movement. This is often accomplished by creating a system of various perspectives and voices. She often positioned her characters at different points of the opposition: inside or outside, free or entrapped, here or there. The following quote, taken from 'Snap-dragon', is an example:

> – Goodbye, they said. […]
> – Goodbye…
> Standing by the verandah, near the sun and the bees and
> the snap-dragons, Ruth spoke aloud.
> – Goodbye.
> Her mother glanced anxiously at her. What was she
> seeing? Who was she talking to?
> – Goodbye, Ruth said again.[101]

The adverbs and verbs suggesting the reciprocal position of characters appear to report also on their visions of the situation, as well as their feelings about it. Visual, acoustic, and verbal devices obliquely speak of the characters' emotive states. Sometimes, synaesthesia also contributes to the polyphonous effect: 'So I went back home [...] and I sat on the stairs in the front and I listened. I listened

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[98] Maria Wikse, *Materialization of a Woman Writer: Investigating Janet Frame's Biographical Legend* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 125.
[99] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 3.
[100] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, quoted in Wikse, p. 125.
[101] 'Snap-dragons', *The Lagoon*, pp. 98–99.

with my head and my eyes and my brain and my hands. With my body'.[102] At other times, it is the depth of the divide between one place and another and the struggle one faces to overcome it that create the positional play:

> I will write about the season of peril. I was put in hospital because a great gap opened in the ice floe between myself and the other people whom I watched, with their world, drifting away through a violet-colored sea where hammer-head sharks in tropical ease swam side by side with the seals and the polar bears. I was alone on the ice. […] Perhaps I could have dived into the violet seas and swum across to catch up with the drifting people of the world […].[103]
>
> The doors to the outside world are locked.[104]
>
> […] I was now an established citizen with little hope of returning across the frontier; I was in the crazy world, separated now by more than locked doors and barred windows from the people who called themselves sane.[105]
>
> […] we were spectators now, gazing at the strange people who were not patients.[106]

Words such as 'gap', 'across', 'spectator', 'frontier', 'outside', together with phrases that signal an uncontrollable and unceasing movement describe situations in which *this* world is always pointing at *that* one, and voices from one dimension are constantly trying to communicate and/or reach the other side. These figures are often confused: the opposition that animates the dichotomy appears destabilising as their situation is liminal, hybrid, and complex: 'And it is still winter. Why is it winter when the cherry blossom is in flower?'[107]

The fluid, ongoing movement that permeates Frame's writing is given, as has been indicated, by a performative approach to language. Performativity is defined by Jonathan Culler as that feature of literary language that 'brings into being' characters and their actions, and also their ideas and beliefs. Therefore,

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[102] 'The Birds Began to Sing', *The Lagoon*, p. 158.
[103] *Faces in the Water*, pp. 10, 12.
[104] Ibid., p. 22.
[105] Ibid., p. 105.
[106] Ibid., p. 198.
[107] Ibid., p. 13.

literature belongs to those 'acts of language that transform the world, bringing into being the things that they name'.[108] However, the idea of performative literary language is particularly interesting if applied to 'minor literature', as the people, actions, and objects that are named generally occupy liminal, hybrid spaces.

As theorised by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the definition of 'minor literature' does not refer to minority languages; rather it is 'that which a minority constructs within a major language'.[109] For instance, Kafka is described as an author of minor literature because, by means of German, he turns the literatures of the Jews of Prague into something impossible: 'the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing differently'.[110] By acting within the system of a major language, he gives space for the potential of a minor literature, thus deterritorialising the major language.[111] As it often stems from a contact between two linguistic and literary systems, a 'minor literature' can be full of linguistic inventions, which often mix the two idioms or translate phrases and expressions from one system into the other. The verbal texture of such texts is, therefore, naturally hybrid. Another example is Mıgırdiç Margosyan: he is of Armenian descent, his native language is Turkish, but in his texts he often mingles Turkish with Armenian and Kurdish words. In so doing, a major language (Turkish) is deterritorialised by a minority language.

This is the same process used by Frame in her works. Through a mix of English, New Zealand English, and Māori, the writer operates a disempowerment of the major language. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this way of using language to act on literature always has political implications.[112] Its most powerful element of change lies in the consequences produced by the act of deterritorialisation in the major language: forms of

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[108] Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 97.
[109] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. by Dana Polan (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 16.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., p. 17.

linguistic displacement and hybridity create a mixing of ideologies and, as a consequence, engender new forms of speaking, thinking, and writing.

However, in order for such changes to happen, the new linguistic acts need to occur repeatedly. Minor literature is characterised by a high degree of linguistic repetitivity: 'a minor literature repeats, not in order to express what goes before, but to express an untimely power, a power of language to disrupt identity and coherence'; as such, 'a minor literature repeats the past and present in order to create a future'.[113]

Things that are repeated, therefore, figuratively go and return and acquire power through repetition. Accordingly, Deleuze saw Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence as the 'constant repetition of difference', a difference in which marginalised or oppressed groups find a way to express themselves.[114]

In this sense, the repetitivity of minor literature is similar to the Butlerian concept of performativity. Within the gender discourse, Judith Butler referred to the repetition of gestures and corporeal acts, emphasising the fact that it was through repetition that gender identity was shaped.[115] Thus, the establishment of new discursive formations is possible by the constant repetition of non-traditional elements. The repetitive act is productive because it allows the re-creation and re-production of social relationships.

So, it is by acting on and through writing that Frame enabled her 'minor literature' to perform a subversion of concepts and attitudes that are generally assumed to be unquestionable. As Guignery suggests, Frame appears to enact what Derrida described in his *The Truth in Painting* (1987), in which he wrote about the 'parergon', the frame used in painting. He suggested reversing the binary opposition between 'the intrinsic' and 'the extrinsic', that is, what is within the frame, and what is outside it: 'Where does the frame take place. Does it take place, where does it begin. Where does it end. What is its internal limit. Its external limit. And the surface between the two limits [...]'.[116] Like Derrida's

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[113] Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 119–20.

[114] Deleuze and Guattari, p. 58.

[115] Moya Lloyd, *Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 42–45, 54.

[116] Jacques Derrida, quoted in Guignery, p. 25.

parergon, Frame's writing recalls images of instability and uncertainty; her poetics of space and, more generally, her way of describing the world(s), can thus be approached in the same way Derrida handled the object that delimits and encloses the picture.[117] Narrative voice(s), viewpoints, formal conventions (for instance, the use of punctuation and free indirect speech) are rarely used conventionally by Frame; on the contrary, they are ceaselessly questioned. This suggests that she challenged and, in a way, subverted the limits within which her stories could be contained.[118]

With regard to this, Anna Grazia Mattei argued that Frame's writing represented an endless movement between the Tangible and the Invisible, as she was 'an everlasting observer and explorer of the real and the visible, engaged in a constant search for its hidden dimension [...] and for a new form to convey it'.[119] This chapter illustrates how the 'hidden dimension' is neither a physical space, nor a spiritual concept: it is the deconstructionist activity of language, which is able – in fact, could never do otherwise – to move constantly between opposite poles, embrace them, and overcome the dichotomy which, through the performativity of words, is shown to be the fundamental and, simultaneously, illusory condition of reality.

4.5 Liminality and beyondness between reality and utopia

As has been demonstrated so far, Frame's narratives are full of liminal spaces: 'by the fences', on the edges, between sea and land, truth and lie, *this* and *that*.[120] Every opposition is described as comprising both poles. According to Michaël Roy, these characteristics embody a challenge to the dichotomy of Inside and Outside, and therefore between Enclosure and Escape.[121] This, once again, signals a clear intention on the part of the author to investigate the notions of frontier and border, both literally and figuratively. The idea of limits

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[117] Guignery, p. 25.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Anna Grazie Mattei, 'Exploring the Is-Land', *Inward Sun: Celebrating the Life and Work of Janet Frame*, ed. by Elizabeth Alley (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1994), p. 176.

[120] Guignery, p. 25.

[121] Michaël Roy, '"Or Were You Ever Free?" Enclosure and Escape in Janet Frame's *The Lagoon and Other Stories*', in Guignery, pp. 109–23 (pp. 110–19).

recurs throughout Frame's work: the prison motif of the 'snap-dragon' and the 'picket fences of the mind' in *The Lagoon*, the condition of entrapment in mental ward patients described in *Faces in the Water*, the desire for a home in 'The Bedjacket' and 'The Park', Frame's hatred of her own home expressed in the central chapters of her autobiography. In this way, the images of home and prison – symbols of the 'inside' – that work in complementary opposition with that of 'outside' and freedom are 'deterritorialised and reterritorialised [...] in such a way that can give neither Frame nor her fictional characters a stable sense of place and belonging'.[122]

For instance, Grace Cleave suddenly remembers her father singing a war song that included the phrase 'I want to go home', but then she immediately wonders, 'But was there anywhere to go? How could you go home if you were already home? Or was home some place out of the world?'.[123] Similarly, in 'Snap-dragons', when Ruth's mother said they would catch a slow train home, Ruth wondered:

> Home. If only her mother would come near. If only she would be very close and fat and friendly. She was a fat far away woman, oh so far away. Ruth felt she would have liked to stretch out her arms over dark hills to reach her.[124]

A motherly figure, which is normally symbolised by images of closeness and affection, is here a distant, arid entity. As a consequence, the daughter lacks the typical intimacy that ties a child to its parent, and in expressing such feelings, questions the very notions of home, distance, and proximity. Indeed, Ruth goes on:

> What if they stopped her from going home? What if it wasn't real? If only the little fat woman would come near her and tell her it was real about going home, if only she

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[122] Guignery, p. 24.

[123] *Towards Another Summer*, quoted in Guignery, p. 24.

[124] 'Snap-dragons', *The Lagoon*, p. 99.

> would put her arms round her neck and kiss her, and say,
> you lucky pig, Ruth.[125]

By describing a scene of mother-daughter interaction, Frame performs a deconstruction of the paradigms of fictionality, truth, reality, and authoriality. In 'Living On: Border Lines', Derrida asked: 'what are the borderlines of a text?'.[126] He believed they had collapsed since text had overcome 'all the limits assigned to it so far [...] (making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines)'.[127] Indeed, Derrida wrote: 'one can no longer think of a finished corpus of writing, some content enveloped in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces'.[128]

Frame's writing frees textuality from its standard limits and suggests that stories, characters, and words can only be thought of as allusions to a continuous moving beyond. The never-ending gesture towards other 'traces' is the *third space* of Frame's writing as this study conceives it: unlike a concrete dimension, it only exists as an endless motion affecting and shaping the human need to go beyond. Frame's beyondness as an attitude, as well as a critical and textual movement above and beyond dichotomy, questions the notions of Normality and Abnormality by challenging dogmas' binarisms. Most Italian translations have recreated this approach through a conscious selection of terms and structures:

> The traditional phrases of her own country – up north, down south, had no meaning in this part of the world. The combination of the two phrases – up north here, up north there, cancelled both meanings in such a way that Grace felt herself to be lost in a desert or snow-plain of reference; her mind grew chilled; yes-yes murdered no-no; day and night together were effaced ...[129]

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Jacques Derrida, 'Living On: Border Lines', in Harold Bloom et al., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 62–142 (p. 64).

[127] Ibid., p. 69.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Janet Frame, *Towards Another Summer* (London: Virago, 2011 [2007]), p. 97.

> Le espressioni tradizionali della sua terra – su a Nord, giù a Sud – non avevano significato in questa parte del mondo. La combinazione delle due espressioni – su a Nord qui, su a Nord là – annullava entrambi i significati, cosicché Grace si sentiva sperduta in un deserto o in una distesa innevata di riferimenti; le si congelò la mente; il sì-sì uccise il no-no; giorno e notte insieme furono eclissati [...].[130]

Overall, the Italian translator recreates the aspect of dislocation and disorientation, and the effect is quite powerful in Italian. As Chapter 6 will demonstrate, the main problem with the Italian versions of Frame's work is an insufficient attention to lexical nuance. For example, 'snow-plain of reference' is untied into the longer and less analogical 'in un deserto o in una distesa innevata di riferimenti', where snow and plain are detached from one another.[131] In the praxis of lexical creation, Frame played with language, expressing her refusal of formal boundaries to the semantic and creative possibilities of words. Her subversion of the conventional approach to language pushes readers to move beyond the standard, abused convention.

In her article on Frame's ethical transcendence, Simone Drichel approaches the concept of *beyond* in Frame's novels.[132] As Drichel recognises, this aspect of Frame's oeuvre has attracted different interpretations. The early social realist readings, for example, conceived it as the imagination of the author, the creativity that overcomes the rigid structures imposed by society. It

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[130] Janet Frame, *Verso un'altra estate*, trans. by Giovanna Scocchera (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2012 [2007]), p. 110.

[131] Further example of flattening given by adaptation and modulation can be found in *Giardini profumati per i ciechi* [*Scented Gardens for the Blind*], trans. by Monica Pavani (Parma: Ugo Guanda, 1997 [1964]): 'dark-brown chairs stained with people' (p. 19) becomes 'sono diventate marron scuro, tanto si sono macchiate col vivere delle persone' (p. 13). The translator over-explains and unties the analogy, thus deleting the poetic style. After few lines, 'I had to believe the sun. But when I heard people explain, The sun's bright today, isn't it nice in the sun [...] I hear blood' (pp. 20 –21), becomes 'Dovevo per forza credere al sole. Eppure quando sentii la gente esclamare: «Oggi fa caldo, vero? Si sta proprio bene qui al sole!» [...] Comunque mi sento il rumore del sangue' (p. 15), which gets rid of the free indirect speech and normalises the synaesthetic language. A few lines below, the intense 'Blind, I am safe' (p. 25) is rendered into the misleading 'Poiché sono cieca sono al sicuro' (p. 19), and the concise 'And then no one understood them' (p. 31) becomes 'Solo che a quel punto nessuno riusciva a capire quello che cercavano di dire' (p. 25).

[132] Simone Drichel, '"Signposts to a world that is not even mentioned": Janet Frame's Ethical Transcendence', *Frameworks. Contemporary Criticism on Janet Frame*, ed. by Jan Cronin and Simone Drichel, Cross/Cultures, 110 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 181–212.

has also often been interpreted as Frame's means of escaping conformism, which later feminists and postcolonial approaches tended to underline in the submission of a female or indigenous dimension to the dominant, patriarchal, settler power. Drichel, however, focuses on Marc Delrez's works *Manifold Utopia* and 'Forbidding Bodies'. Delrez invests the *beyond* with a metaphysical dimension, defining it as 'a form of utopianism':[133]

> To an irreligious person like myself it is not easy to determine whether Frame's intimations of immortality can be related to any established religious orthodoxy, but it is safe to say at any rate that her pursuit of totality is spiritual in essence [...] her primary impulse is not political so much as existential, philosophical, and possibly even religious.[134]

Delrez maintains that the transcendent urge detectable in Frame's books was existentialist, philosophical, religious, and/or spiritual. However, Drichel is not comfortable with the utopian dimension Delrez suggests. She questions the very concept of utopia that Delrez uses because it conforms to the habitual conception of utopias as perfect places/ideas. In reality, the etymology of Thomas More's neologism associates the words 'no, not (*ou*)' and 'place (*topos*)'; therefore utopia is the 'no place', 'nowhere'. According to Drichel, however, the word simultaneously evokes the *eu topos*, the good place: '*Utopia* is thus the good nowhere'. Subsequently, the term has frequently moved from being the good place that does not exist to the good place that does not exist but should.[135] Thus, utopia emphasised the distinction between two worlds, separating the *here* where we live and the *there* which is ideal and perfect.

Perhaps, as a consequence of the importance she attributed to imagination, Frame did not believe in the existence of just one reality. In preparatory notes for an interview, she pretended to be asked what reality was:

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[133] *Manifold Utopia*, p. xv.
[134] 'Forbidding Bodies', p. 77–79.
[135] Drichel, p. 188. Italics in original.

> Of course I can't say. For me, there are just *realities*, a succession of realities and the one defined as more 'real' – if there are degrees of reality – is the one most demanding of attention. Reality is a state, an existence, a gift, and with a working philosophy one can organise one's realities so that living becomes a feast-time with each moment a gift.
> When one is writing, the ideas, the dreams, are the reality, otherwise one would not write them – or am I being too naïve ...[136]

On the basis of what could be defined as ontological relativism, Frame denied the existence of a univocal way of looking at the world, as the world itself is made of multiple instances. Beyond any absolutist belief, and by denying the chance for human beings to grasp the truth, she appeared to take a poststructuralist, fictional approach to *this* world.

As Linda Wevers points out: 'What is marvelous about [Frame's] fiction is that it doesn't let you rest, not that it offers up the promise of something better and beyond'.[137] However, Drichel wonders: 'if the inevitable result of the struggles of Frame's characters is emptiness, silence or death, rather than freedom, happiness, and comfort, this certainly does not seem as though "something better and beyond" is achieved', and then asks: 'Is Delrez right [...] in calling such rips and holes in the fabric of reality "utopian"? Or, if not utopian, what else are we to call Frame's seemingly insatiable desire for a beyond?'.[138] Drichel takes issue with the idea of Frame's beyond as an ideal place to which one should aim. In her opinion, considering the beyond as a totality to aspire to forces the *other* dimension into *this* world, that is to say into immanence. However, a *beyond* can remain as such only if it can transcend all that *is*, namely the ontological structures of totality. As a consequence, it must remain a pure exteriority and can only ever be intimated:

> The beyond, in other words, functions as trace in Frame's work, an absence that is not the opposite of presence, that

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[136] Janet Frame, Notes for interviews, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 121.
[137] Linda Wevers, 'A Review of *Manifold Utopia: The Novels of Janet Frame*, by Marc Delrez', *Utopian Studies*, 14.1 (2003), 183–84 (p. 183).
[138] Drichel, p. 183.

is not completely nothing, but instead is an enigmatically present 'nothing' beyond being.[139]
Her primary impulse […] is ethical. Totality, I suggest, is the very last thing Frame desires. […] Totality is associated with violence, conflict, and war, whereas infinity signals a mode of relating to the other informed by love and care.[140]

According to Drichel, Frame shares an ethical commitment with the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas believed that ontology was a philosophy of violence that imposed itself over the singular and the unique.[141] Conversely, Frame's experimental writing is a way to avoid replicating violence through a use of words that is not conventional or indexical, but rather representational. These 'signposts' do not link themselves to *this* world literally; if they did, they would simply replicate the violations and limitations of the immanent.

Because of this, Frame's beyondness lies in a gap or in absence. This trace could be defined as 'utopia' provided utopia is conceived differently. Frame's 'utopia' is not a 'better place'; it is a 'principle of transcendence that persistently unpicks the fabric of totality'.[142] Her texts are irreducible enigmas both formally and thematically, but even so they can be interpreted as reflecting her ethical stance. Indeed, as Drichel says, Frame's work in general can be read as 'utopian narratives that gesture towards a new way of being human'.[143] Staying on the margins of identity, constantly acquiring a new awareness, and moving across borders: these appear to be the founding elements of Frame's poetics of humanity.

In conclusion, Frame re-constructs the original meaning of utopia, but she also pushes it to its conventional limits and leads us to think about it differently. As Drichel writes, she does not give us a presence, but rather an absence or, better, a 'disrupted presence, a gash in the fabric of worldly "there-

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[139] Ibid., p. 188.
[140] Ibid., pp. 204–05.
[141] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998).
[142] Drichel, p. 207.
[143] Ibid., p. 209.

ness"'.[144] In this way, Frame's *beyond* dimension is intimated without becoming trapped in the totality of ontology. Accordingly, her works are informed by a 'transcendent urge', continuously pointing beyond the fictional worlds she constructs:

> We have to be imitating, bargaining, transacting every part of ourselves. [...] it was this fluidity of people which fascinated him.[145]

> I had had enough, in the meantime, of the manifold, and the real 'marble complexities and bitter furies'. Of paying attention and avoiding. [...] I, Violet Pansy Proudlock, Barwell, Halleton, Alice Thumb herself, would continue to live and work in the house of replicas, usefully, having all in mind – the original, the other, and the manifold.[146]

As the above quotations demonstrate, although '*this* and *that* world' represent the basic structure of Frame's writing, they should not become a limit to the interpretation of her works. No binary perspective can allow the existence of a *third space* and would deprive Frame's writing of its ultimate goal: the awareness that between *this* and *that* there is continuity, and what separates them also unites them, because the liminal space is, by its very nature, porous and permeable. As Frame herself wrote – uncannily echoing the translational approach that has been suggested so far – texts and, perhaps even more so, texts in translation, embrace it all, 'the original, the other, and the manifold'. For this reason, the beyondness of Frame's writing is not a discrete space, but something that can only be inhabited through the process towards it.

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[144] Ibid., p. 187.
[145] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 147.
[146] *Living in the Maniototo*, p. 266.

CHAPTER 5

BORDER-WRITING IN FRAME: FROM THE IDEA OF MARGINALITY TO HER PROSE POETRY

> Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element… [it is] never comfortable, not with society's clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd. No, not comfortable, but home.[1]

> [T]o write is [...] to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'.[2]

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[1] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontiera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinster/Aunt Lute, 1987) [unpaginated preface].
[2] Roland Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 143.

Introduction

In the previous chapter Janet Frame's writing is shown to be engaged in a constant pushing of boundaries up to their only possible function: organising and, possibly, tidying up realit*ies* in order for the mind to better control them. Once the polarity is proven fictitious, it is possible to overcome the *this/that* opposition and move beyond dichotomy. In the impossibility of universal Truth, Frame's language performed a continuous motion towards beyondness. By creating 'signposts to a world that is not even mentioned',[3] Frame leads the reader to her *third space*, an unmentioned reality where no dichotomy or binarism exists. Categories cannot represent a conscious approach to life; only the inevitable, endless motion among the infinite *traces* of language can communicate the fluidity of life.[4]

This chapter will engage with Janet Frame's widely discussed 'writing of the margins' and offers a dual investigation of Frame's position regarding genre and liminality. It will offer a comprehensive account of the issue of marginality in her poetics, and will envisage her border-writing as a manifestation of ontological relativism and postcolonial agency. Building on Frame's movement beyond dichotomy, this chapter examines the interstitial spaces in-between the different dimensions/categories she presents, and the ways to inhabit them. If absolutist positions are not possible, how is this manifest in Frame's characters? How do they actually perform marginality? The investigation of such questions will lead to an analysis of how this is represented textually. This chapter will, therefore, illustrate how Frame trespassed the borders of genre by mixing prose and poetry, and will demonstrate how her way of acting on the limits between genres enacted a form of creative liminality.

Section 5.1 will provide a brief account of how Janet Frame perceived and responded to the assumptions made about her works dealing exclusively with 'outcasts'. Section 5.2 will explain how Frame developed an ethics of self-marginalisation in order to find her true voice. Quotations will be related to

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[3] Janet Frame, *NZ Times*, 2 October 1983, article by Rosemary Vincent, quoted in *Janet Frame: In Her Own Words*, ed. by Denis Harold and Pamela Gordon (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 123.
[4] See Section 3.2 for Derrida's notion of *trace*.

episodes in her life: this is not intended as an autobiographical reading of her work, which the present study explicitly rejects; rather it will show how Frame informed her writing with an original philosophy on the topic of identity and postcoloniality. This issue will be analysed further in Section 5.3 through examples of spatial and emotive displacement, which will provide forms of alternative ontologies. This section will also provide some examples from Italian editions in order to identify how Frame's approach to marginality and hybridity has been handled in translation.

Marginalisation will be presented as a deliberate choice for artistic freedom. Building on the latest perspectives on the 'border' as a place of agency and identity formation, Section 5.4 will contribute to the scholarship on Frame's marginal writing, offering an extensive analysis of her approach to marginalisation, otherness, identity, and, again, language as performance. Section 5.5 moves the discussion on to how marginality is expressed through genre and introduces the prose poem and the development of the concept from the Romantic Age to contemporary Anglo-American contexts. Section 5.6 will provide a number of examples from Frame as a practical application of the theoretical notions previously explained. It will also illustrate why the concept of the prose poem, normally applied to short compositions, easily intersects that of poetic prose in Frame's work. Finally, Section 5.7 will frame this new approach to Frame's writing within a wider change of perspective towards her role in contemporary New Zealand and postcolonial literature, and will illustrate how some meaningful features of Frame's prose poetry have been only partially dealt with in translation.

The arguments developed here will be useful to understanding Frame's approach to poetic tradition outlined in the following chapter. Indeed, they will contribute to a study of the existing Italian translations, as well as the elaboration of informed strategies to translate Frame's verse into Italian. For this reason, especially in the last section of this chapter, frequent cross-reference to Chapter 6 will point towards more translation-related issues.

5.1 The 'world abnormal'

Janet Frame was aware of the fact that critics recognised her as a writer who wanted to give voice to the marginalised, of which she said:

> I don't mind people having discussions on my style of writing, but I rather object when people say I keep on writing about outsiders and people on the borders, about the 'world abnormal'. I insist I am writing about normal people within a little boundary. After all we are all human.[5]

Frame's definition of her characters as 'normal people' while inscribing them 'within a little boundary' indicates two things: first, that she wanted to avoid the label of the writer who concentrates only on specific typologies of people without investigating any further; second, that the enclosed group of humanity she depicted did represent a selection, but the selection criteria was certainly not abnormality. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, Frame's writing fought against polarities, especially those that create detrimental boundaries nurtured by prejudice and stigma. '[W]e are all human' shows her fundamental belief in the equality of all creatures, which ties in with her desire that no additional category be attached to her work.

However, she appears to contradict this point in an interview she gave ten years later, when she said: 'I'm strongly on the side of the outcast. Like my stories, I suppose'.[6] Perhaps Frame's desire to promote her characters as belonging to *this* ordinary world implied an intention to battle the prejudiced, old-fashioned view that excluded the mentally ill, sick, poor, old, and non-conformists in general from 'normal' society. Everybody is 'normal' for the simple reason that everyone is equal. As she said in *Three New Zealanders*: 'I think [my characters] are all ordinary. And extraordinary at the same time'.[7]

The following section will demonstrate how a *margin* is not necessarily an imposed condition, but can also be a deliberate choice of self-affirmation and

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[5] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 22 October 1963, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, pp. 80–81.

[6] Janet Frame, *NZ Woman's Weekly*, 21 March 1983, article by Frances Levy, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 111.

[7] Janet Frame, quoted in *Three New Zealanders: Janet Frame*, dir. by Michael Noonan (Endeavour Films, NZ Television, 1977).

a/n un-/structured process of identity creation. Hence the idea of self-marginalisation as both a perception of self, and a choice for artistic freedom.

5.2 The marginalisation of self in Frame's quest for identity

When Frame arrived in London (1956) after years of institutionalisation in New Zealand, she delighted in every novelty; 'everything she saw was charged with significance', especially the Underground and everyday chores.[8] She felt her angel had provided her the ideal city and weather to work on her stories.[9] Indeed, as she wrote to Sargeson a few days after her arrival, she had finally resumed writing.[10] She soon found ways to engage with contemporary literature and bought copies of the most important literary magazines, in which she found particularly exciting the works, prose and poetry, of West Indian authors:

> I was much influenced by the West Indian writers and, feeling inadequate in my New Zealand-ness (for did I not come from a land then described as 'more English than England'?), I wrote a group of poems from the point of view of a West Indian new arrival and, repeating the experiment that Frank Sargeson and I had made with the *London Magazine* when I pretended to be of Pacific Island origin, I sent the poems to the *London Magazine* with a covering letter explaining my recent arrival from the West Indies.[11]

When she submitted her poems, she claimed a different identity. She had already camouflaged her real self; now she wanted to experience an-*other* point of view. But why change a peripheral literary position – given by her 'New Zealand-ness' – for an even more marginalised perspective – the West Indian? What is the reason behind the desire to hide her origins behind an identity that

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[8] Michael King, *Wrestling with the Angel: A Life of Janet Frame* (London: Picador, 2001 [2000]), pp. 147–49.
[9] Ibid., p. 149. The figure of the angel is recurrent in Frame's autobiography. She often spoke about an angel who protected her and guided her. See King, pp. 137, 346.
[10] Ibid., pp. 149–50.
[11] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table* (London: Virago Press, 2011), p. 365.

could be victim to even more prejudice? The following paragraphs will try to answer these questions.

Frame's conception of identity certainly changed with the passing of time and certain experiences inevitably influenced her perception of herself, and of personal identity in general. The years in mental hospitals not only damaged her memory permanently, but profoundly affected her sense of self.[12] After those years, the experience at Frank Sargeson's home unfortunately did not boost her self-confidence. When *The Lagoon and Other Stories* won the Hubert Church Award, Frame was still a patient at Seacliff Hospital. Up to that moment, she had not imagined becoming a professional writer, but thanks to the award, her name started to become known in New Zealand literary circles, and Sargeson, the most famous national writer at the time, decided to help her. It has been said that Sargeson took Frame under his wing before she had to face the crude reality of being a woman writer in the New Zealand of the 1950s – a condition exacerbated by the rumours of her mental illness. He took her into his home, renting her a hut by his house where she could live and write with the necessary quiet. Sargeson reported that he taught her 'how to live as a writer in a society which was hostile to those who rejected the Puritan work ethic, writing not being classified as "proper" work'.[13] Thus, on the one hand, Frame finally had a place to work; on the other, this support was heavily conditioned by Sargeson's misogyny.[14]

As Pamela Gordon points out, Sargeson's admirers have long portrayed a picture of Frame that is untrue. To give an example, in *Speaking Frankly*, the collected Waikato University Frank Sargeson Memorial Lectures, he is referred to as a 'patient friend to the seemingly impossible Janet Frame'.[15] This biased view was transmitted over the years by Sargeson's supporters and has perpetuated one of the myths attached to Frame: the female writer-to-be who needed to be saved, educated, and introduced to the right circles by the

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[12] See Chapter 1.

[13] Tara Hawes, 'Janet Frame: The Self as Other-Othering the Self', *Deep South*, 1.1 (2005) <http://www.otago.ac.nz/DeepSouth/vol1no1/hawes1.html> [accessed 9 March 2012] (para. 26 of 40).

[14] Ibid. (para. 27 of 40); King, p. 136.

[15] Pamela Gordon, 'To Be Utterly Frank', *An Angel @ My Blog* <http://slightlyframous.blogspot.it/2012/01/to-be-utterly-frank.html> [accessed 5 April 2012].

professional male writer. It has also been said that Sargeson taught her how to write, but Frame was already a published and award-winning author. Gordon has often suggested that Sargeson was envious of this new literary talent and tried to undermine her success in many ways.[16] What is certain is that critics have tended to see Frame as someone constantly in need of guidance, and biographer Michael King's portrait seems to confirm this opinion. In chapter twelve of *Wrestling with the Angel*, King writes of the mentor-figures in her life, Sargeson and Dr Cawley:[17] 'The momentum of her career as a writer, which had commenced under the nurturing of Frank Sargeson, was resumed under the patronage of another mentor'.[18] Sargeson and Dr Cawley were certainly important male figures in Frame's life, but while Dr Cawley did all he could to nurture her self-esteem, Sargeson often tried to impose his rules and judgements on her. In her autobiography, Frame reported:

> The price I paid for my stay in the army hut was the realization of the nothingness of my body. Frank talked kindly of men and of lesbian women, and I was neither male nor lesbian. He preferred me to wear slacks rather than dresses. I, who now looked on Frank Sargeson as saviour, was forced to recognise through the yearning sense of gloom, of fateful completeness, that the Gods had spoken, there was nothing to be done.[19]

Frame experienced an undermining of her persona during her stay with Sargeson. She was forced to conform to certain standards and Sargeson's opinion had such an influence on her that she felt like she was still in the asylum:

> My life with Frank Sargeson was for me a celibate life, a priestly life devoted to writing, in which I flourished, but because my make-up is not entirely priestly I felt the sadness of having moved from hospital, where it had been

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[16] Pamela Gordon, 'Fake Janet Frame "quote" promotes bogus "Janet Frame"', An *Angel @ My Blog* <http://slightlyframous.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/fake-janet-frame-quote-promotes-bogus.html> [accessed 1 August 2013].

[17] See Chapter 1.

[18] King, p. 199. See also p. 125.

[19] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 299.

thought necessary to alter the make-up of my mind, to another asylum, where the desire was that my body should be of another gender.[20]

Yet Frame was very grateful to Sargeson and appreciated many of the moments they lived together. She wrote of the things he taught her, the experiences they shared, and praised 'his encouragement': 'I was desperately shy, just emerging from a state of intimidation. Frank was protective and kind';[21] 'Dutifully at first, but inspired by Frank's enthusiasm, I began to read Proust [...] and each day Frank and I talked of the highlights of what I had read'.[22] Her feelings towards Sargeson were ambivalent: while she did not like being told what to do or how to approach her writing, she admired him as a professional writer and appreciated being treated as a writer ('I was amazed and grateful at his acceptance of me as a writer').[23] However, she did not appreciate that he expected to read her work regularly, and then criticised her stylistic choices ('I resolved not to show him more stories, and I kept my resolve, later showing him only the beginning of my novel').[24] It would thus be too simplistic to say that he was a severe, negative figure, but Frame's self-confidence was certainly not helped by his attitude towards women:

> In all his conversations there was a vein of distrust, at times hatred, of women as a species distinct from men, and when he was in the mood for exploring that vein, I listened uneasily, unhappily, for I was a woman and he was speaking of my kind. I was sexually naive, unaware, and only half awake, and I was ignorant of such subjects as homosexuality, but I felt constantly hurt by his implied negation of a woman's body. [...]
> In exchange for this lack of self-esteem as a woman, I gained my life as I had wanted it to be.[25]

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[20] Ibid., pp. 298–99.
[21] Ibid., p. 298.
[22] Ibid., p. 303.
[23] Ibid., p. 295.
[24] Ibid., pp. 296–97.
[25] Ibid., pp. 298–99.

It seems that Frame was willing to accept the negative aspects of life with Sargeson in exchange for being able to write in peace. Sargeson's mortifications inevitably affected Frame's idea of self and of female identity. It could be argued that he suggested Frame's first 'cultural cross-dressing': 'He chose a name for me — Santa Cruz — repeating solemnly as if I did not know, "That means *Saint* and *Cross*"'.[26]

As has been mentioned, Sargeson once wrote about Frame to an editor (John Lehmann), presenting her as 'a woman from the Pacific Islands who was new to Auckland'.[27] According to Tara Hawes, Sargeson was implying that she wrote as if she had just arrived from another country and had not mastered English. Sargeson's actions worked on Frame's identity on different levels: 'Sargeson is not only making Frame ashamed about her sex, but is implying that her vision is so different, she might as well not be a New Zealander'.[28] Such episodes are likely to have affected Frame's approach to identity-related topics and the related expressive forms in writing.

Frame's quest for identity became even more complicated when she arrived in England. It was there that, according to Hawes, she really adopted the identity Sargeson had pinned on her. Once in London, Frame decided she had to *wear* the point of view of a West Indian.[29] However, her cultural cross-dressing seems paradoxical: it would have been plausible for her to *dress up* as an English woman to achieve a more powerful social status; her native language was English after all. Instead, she pushed her marginalised position even further: she culturally cross-dressed as though she were not a New Zealander (as Sargeson had taught her) in order not to feel the burden of being unable to use her naturally literary, poetic language, and avoid the risks of a label as demanding as that of poet:

> I did realize that such literary pretences were a safeguard
> against the discovery by others that my 'real' poetry was
> worthless. […] in a sense my literary lie was an escape

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[26] Hawes, (para. 30 of 40).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., (para. 31 of 40).

[29] The notion of 'cross-dressing' refers back to the ancient tradition of women who had to disguise themselves as men in order to be allowed to act in plays.

> from a national lie that left a colonial New Zealander overseas without any real identity.[30]

As with the West Indian disguise, here Frame is not only questioning her geographic origins, but also her own language and literary talent. Because her identity as a writer and a woman had been so violently suppressed, she now perceived herself as faulty. Nonetheless, she kept writing and did not give up the investigation of her mental issues. She wanted to know the truth about her illness, perhaps just because she needed to find her real self.

In her writing, which was the most important expression of herself, she chose to inhabit an unexplored territory on the margins. In the 1950s, the literary scene was dominated by European authors (mainly men), and Frame decided to propose a doubly marginalised point of view: a female writer who came and wrote from the margins. Hawes maintains that in this process of self-marginalisation, Janet Frame was not looking for a specific type of literary identity; she was, instead, clearly seeking a post-colonial position. Though one cannot be sure whether Frame had a precise idea of how she wanted to appear to the public, the additional marginalisation she imposed upon herself is likely to have been linked to her strong lack of belief in her poetry. As has been said, Frame had always wanted to become a poet and wished the world to consider her a poet; nonetheless, she published prose almost exclusively in her lifetime.[31] She probably felt more confident that her prose would be accepted by editors, which means that to her prose was the way to keep living as a writer. Interestingly, though, she frequently mixed poetry and prose; she would also start off writing a poem and then transform it into a piece of prose.

Hawes sees Frame's process of self-marginalisation differently, framing it as a determined refusal of traditional values: 'choosing to adopt a doubly-colonised identity includes an explicit rejection of patriarchal power structures, and white men'.[32] Although Hawes's idea is confirmed by Frame's questioning of biased, old-fashioned attitudes, her point appears quite generic and needs to be fine tuned. Frame's identity as a writer was a cardinal component of her

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[30] *An Angel at My Table*, p. 365.
[31] See the Introduction to Chapter 6 and Section 6.1 for a wider discussion on this point.
[32] Hawes, (para. 35 of 40).

identity as a woman; therefore, if she chose to project herself against conventional social values, this would inevitably have been manifested in her writing. Frame's self-marginalisation can thus be interpreted as a way of disguising her insecurity about her work – however it was her feeling not good enough to belong to the canon that pushed her to pursue a path never trodden before. Her self-imposed peripheral position was a metaphysical place with which she deeply identified, a place where she could express herself fully and safely. In agreement with Hawes, this section concludes that '[t]o escape "a national lie" she must adopt a literary one, a culturally inflected othering of the self that gives her her very own true post-colonial identity'.[33]

5.3 Displacement and identity: Alternative ontologies

The topics of marginalisation and self-marginalisation are some of the most fecund in Frame's work, providing some of the most emblematic borderline or outcast figures in contemporary literature. An interesting example in this sense is Grace Cleave, protagonist of the posthumous novel *Towards Another Summer*. In her name Grace's character condenses the uncertainty and ambivalence of life: the verb 'to cleave' means to separate or divide, or to cause something to split, often violently; 'to cleave to', instead, means to stick or hold firmly on to something.[34] It could be defined as an internal binary opposition:[35] the whole story develops, therefore, departing from and being supported by something which means one thing and, simultaneously, the opposite. As Marc Delrez writes: 'The name of the protagonist [...] aptly encodes the defining tension whereby the chasm of sensibility which cleaves her from others somehow represents a saving grace all the same'.[36] Interestingly, the Italian translation does not recreate a similar function in Grace's surname, nor does it

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[33] Ibid., (para. 34 of 40). Section 6.6 will offer a translational approach to this point.

[34] *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[35] See Chapter 3 for Frame's use of dichotomy.

[36] Marc Delrez, 'The Migration of the Flightless Bird: Janet Frame's *Towards Another Summer*', *Journal of Postcolonial Culture and Societies*, 1.1 (2010), 8–21 (p. 15).

opt for an explicative footnote – the translator does, however, take recourse to a footnote once to explain a wordplay that is lost in translation.[37]

Grace is a writer, the outsider position *par excellence* at the time, especially for a woman. She has been invited to spend a weekend at a friend's house in northern England. Her friend Philip and his wife Anne are from New Zealand, like her, and have two children. The invitation frightens Grace out of proportion, but she manages to handle her anxiety and decides to go. Her shyness makes any kind of social interaction a struggle, and now that she has recently moved to London she leads a very solitary life. The prospect of a weekend at her friends' home scares her particularly because of the presence of children: she fears that their spontaneity will cause her excessive embarrassment. Indeed, the uncertainty and fluidity of life represent obstacles to life itself: 'Nothing was simple, known, safe, believed, identified. Boundaries were not possible, where nothing finished, shapes encircled, and there was no beginning'. Life was comparable to 'standing in the midst' of a raging storm. 'In these circumstances it needed courage to go among people, even for five or ten minutes'.[38]

Nonetheless, she appears to look at identity changes without fear: 'you see during the night Grace Cleave had changed into a migratory bird'.[39] At a certain point, Grace discovers to her immense relief that her real identity is actually that of a migratory bird. She is simultaneously one thing (a writer, to others) and an*other* (a bird, for herself). In the book, Frame also introduced another kind of 'hybrid' avian figure, the takahē, which is a flightless New Zealand bird indigenous to the South Island. It is, therefore, a bird that does not fly because it has inner wings – it is not unable to, but rather it is unequipped. The Italian translator opts for 'quell'uccello incapace di volare, il takahe' (literally: that bird that cannot fly, the takahe), where 'incapace' means unable, unsuited for a certain task.[40] The extract is taken from one of the imaginary conversations Grace has with Philip:

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[37] Cf. Janet Frame, *Verso un'altra estate*, trans. by Giovanna Scocchera (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2012 [2007]), p. 111. See Sections 6.5.1 and 6.6 for more examples on the use of footnotes in the translation of Frame's texts.

[38] Janet Frame, *Towards Another Summer* (London: Virago, 2011 [2007]), p. 6.

[39] Ibid.

[40] *Verso un'altra estate*, p. 126.

> When Philip talks of the West Coast there is an apprehension deep in his eyes: I know. Isn't it there, in the south, that they have discovered the flightless bird, the takahe, long thought to be extinct? Is there a fear that it will flourish and increase, 'take over' the sparsely populated country? Why is so much fiction preoccupied with the conquest of the human race by birds, vegetation, insects, visitors from outer or inner space?[41]

This conversation is similar to many others in which the British and New Zealand worlds are compared, and questions about the interactions between Inner/Outer dimensions are discussed, not without a certain tension of perspectives.

While the British side of the source describes a natural situation in which implicit allusion is made to the impossibility of flight and is not attached to a deficiency but to a lack, the Italian version clearly attaches an element of inability to the New Zealand side. Symbolically, while the submissiveness of New Zealand to British power might have been emphasised, the Italian texts loses the actual reference to the idea of hybridity and 'being wanting, lacking' due to internal, pre-imposed reasons. It explicates an opposition that is only intimated in the source. The implicit opposition between a me-observing/dominating look onto a you-still/observed is thus reduced into the declared approach of superiority of Philip, who judges 'incapace' the scenario he is pedantically surveying.

Fortunately, Grace is conscious of her identity change and is happy, but avoids talking about it, as she knows people tend to fear those who have found their real 'self':

> I don't wish to inhabit the human world under false pretences. I'm relieved to have discovered my identity after being so confused about it for so many years. Why should people be afraid if I confide in them? Yet people will always be afraid and jealous of those who finally establish their identity; it leads them to consider their own, to seclude it, cosset it, for fear it may be borrowed or interfered with, and when they are in the act of protecting it

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[41] *Towards Another Summer*, p. 111.

> they suffer the shock of realising that their identity is nothing, it is something they dreamed and never knew; and then begins the painstaking search – what shall they choose – beast? another human being? insect? bird?[42]

Her condition of being 'a migratory bird' could be easily understood by her friends as a metaphor for her position of exile; but the point is that she is not *like*, she *is* a migratory bird.[43] The circumstance of migration recalls a nomadic life, constantly stopping on the margins of places: the migrant does not live long enough in a place to feel it is his/her own; s/he stops somewhere, then moves on. The wanderer is nowhere and no place is home. Migratory birds can leave; but to what place is their identity linked? The one they leave or the one they go to?

A similar perspective on life is linked to the issue of identity in fiction. As has been said in the previous chapter, most of Frame's characters are unsure who they are, and often make irrational statements about their *being-in-the-world*. Conversely, Grace seems completely conscious of her real self: she is sure she is not what others see. At the sight of a woman who 'suddenly flapped her arms then opening her mouth […] screeched three times',[44] Grace says: 'Does she know that I too have changed to a bird? That it is time for me to fly towards another summer?'.[45] Grace seems to face her identity change with great authenticity; it makes her proud of herself, though she knows that society is not ready to accept such transformations.

Figuratively, acquiring the identity of a migratory bird has various allegorical implications: hybridity (a human being who believes herself to be a bird; people who, instead of seeing a bird when looking at her, see a person), displacement, uncertainty of definition and belonging, outsiderness, marginality, freedom (but to do what? To fly where?). Philip explicitly asks Grace about her being a 'hybrid': 'You're a little hybrid, aren't you? Philip said fondly. You're

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[42] Ibid., p. 105.
[43] Frame also used the trope of the migratory bird in *Faces in the Water* ('fly out like a migrating bird to another country and never return [...]'). Janet Frame, *Faces in the Water* (London: Virago, 2011 [1961]), p. 213.
[44] *Towards Another Summer*, p. 104.
[45] Ibid., pp. 104–05.

English and New Zealand'.[46] Grace lives the migrant condition and has to cope with the absence of *home* – or with the feeling of actually having two homes.[47] However, her identity goes beyond a physical transformation or sense of displacement; she feels she is nowhere, she experiences 'nothingness':

> I'm not there, she thought. I'm not there. I'm nowhere. She felt the world go dark with sudden exclusion and she was beating her wings against the door of the dark but no one opened the door; indeed, no one heard.[48]

Sometimes she feels the urge to disappear and actually be nothing, 'pretending herself into invisibility'.[49] On other occasions, she manages to find a place among others, provided it is far from the 'centre'. She appears to feel more comfortable in peripheral positions, as if the margins were a semi-barrier between herself and 'the World',[50] between *this* and *that*:

> – Excuse me, this is a *Second Class* carriage isn't it?
> The man looked up from his Sunday newspaper.
> – Yes, he said.
> With a sense of relief out of all proportion to the occasion, Grace sighed.
> – Thank goodness, she said. – For a moment, just for a moment I thought it was *First Class*.[51]

The realisation that she was in second class (periphery, peripheral class, and status) makes Grace feel relieved. First class (centre) could never have been her place. When she gets home, she is relieved to be back at her typewriter, even though she feels inadequate before her work: 'Grace […] prepared her typewriter and papers for the next day's work, flipped through the unfinished typescript, shuddered at her inability to compose one beautiful dignified

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[46] Ibid., p. 110.
[47] See Section 3.3 for a postcolonial approach to identity and Māori–Pākehā relationships in Frame's work.
[48] Ibid., p. 179.
[49] Ibid., p. 201.
[50] *Faces in the Water*, p. 30.
[51] *Towards Another Summer*, pp. 211–12.

sentence'.[52] Once again, the feeling of inadequacy dominates her relationship with writing. What she missed so much while she was with her friends now makes her feel anxious and incapable: there seems to be a constant concern with how she is perceived or read by others.

The notions of migration and separation echo in the novel's closing words, which reproduce a Charles Brasch poem, 'The Islands': '*Distance looks our way; the godwits vanish towards another summer and none knows where he will lie down at night*'.[53] Even in this novel, Frame positions herself on the margins of genre, exactly between prose and poetry: she did not feel able to write real poetry but nor did she consider her prose complete without verse, so she embraced both. As Chapter 4 illustrated, the focus needs to be on the fluctuating movements of narrations, which mirrors the never-ending motion between dimensions. In this way, migration comes to symbolise the unsolvable gesture towards the *third space*:

> Grace's inability to identify with, or deliberate dismissal of a sense of place allows her [to] assume a nomadic existence symbolised in the figure of a migratory bird. The power of the trope of the migratory bird lies in its ambivalence and its resistance to closure, completeness, or arrival. There is an unresolvable tension and constant flux, a being in process, and moving to and fro.[54]

Grace Cleave is an ambivalent figure. Although she has found her real identity, her avian condition does not allow her to escape the claustrophobia at Philip's home. Despite being a symbol of freedom and self-affirmation, Grace's new identity must be concealed. The bird therefore comes to signify a series of contradictions: she is a migratory animal, but longs for her distant homeland; she has wings, giving her complete freedom, but feels comfortable only in the periphery of second class; she is proud of her real identity, but terrified in front of others and her work. As a form of *other* ontology, even this bird figure suggests the impossibility of clear-cut positions and embraces paradox.

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[52] Ibid., p. 212.

[53] Ibid., p. 213. Italics in the original.

[54] Leili Golafshani, 'Self as 'Migratory Bird': Janet Frame's *Towards Another Summer*', *Hecate*, 34.1 (2008), 104–17. Unpaginated electronic version (para. 32 of 55).

The bird is not the only animal Frame employs as a symbol of displacement. Her writing is populated by various animal characters that 'serve to provide an index to alternative ontologies which might be profitably rehearsed with a view to approaching various categories of ostracized humanity'.[55] This means that, beyond any symbolic association, animals in Frame's fiction are endowed with a philosophical stance: their *otherness* provides minorities with an alternative possibility, which implies that different ontologies are possible.

In *The Carpathians*, Frame describes the life of those who are 'distant enough' to be perceived as non-human: Māori tribes, and to some extent the Pākehā too, are compared to exotic animals the Western world watches in documentary, at a safe distance:

> The tribes of the far south on that TV programme *The Beautiful World*, eh? We're distant enough from the rest of the world to be thought not to have feelings and lives of our own: both us and the Pakehas are at the long end of the poking stick – Look, they move, they speak, they walk, they think. Isn't it so, that the further away you are, the less you are known, the more easily you may lose your state of being human? For some of us, we've already lost it in our own land.[56]

Physical distance becomes a cultural barrier and an obstacle to the empowerment of the colonised country. This is a strong postcolonial claim: the extreme geographical position of New Zealand conditions its relationships to the rest of the world. New Zealanders – both Māori and Pākehā – are too far from the centre of power and are consequently cut out from the 'civilized' Western world. In the novel, Hene (a Māori lady) tells Mattina (the narrator): 'A pity we're not a people with multicoloured plumage, building our nests in trees; and flying with our own wings; with interesting mating habits [...] raising our young under the eye of the camera!'.[57] The animal condition appears preferable to that of the Māori in a Pākehā world. Being in need of help and dependent would be more

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[55] Delrez, 'The Migration of the Flightless Bird', p. 11.
[56] Janet Frame, *The Carpathians* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), p. 84.
[57] Ibid., pp. 88–89.

advantageous than being lost in a far off colony, ignored and looked down on by the colonisers.

Here, Frame appears to subvert the situations she so much disliked in her past: the status of being in need or at the mercy of someone (*chez* Sargeson, in the hospital). King reported that she was depressed by what looked like an 'eternally dependent status, and by the conviction that she was being tolerated and patronised'.[58] In her writing, she illustrated the complexities behind similar conditions, but also provided alternative approaches to them: Erlene's silence is seen from the outside (her mother's, father's, and doctor's perspectives), but also from the inside (Erlene's own reflections on her autism); the way Māori and Pākehā are seen by others is described from both viewpoints, the American tourist Mattina's, and the Māori Hene's.

Many other examples could be quoted, but the key point is that, by giving a double perspective on issues such as difference, identity, marginality, and abnormality, Frame allowed alternative interpretations of those concepts. The following section will clarify how the 'margins' or 'borderland', seen as figurative spaces of (self-)marginalisation, can, in fact, become deliberate choices for self-affirmation.[59]

5.4 Empowering margins

Notions related to geographical space have become increasingly fruitful in contemporary critical theories; concepts such as marginality, periphery, centre, liminality, and the in-between are widely used in fields spanning literary theory, sociology, politics, psychology, and philosophy. In particular, cultural studies and postcolonial scholars have argued that the physical environment is inextricably linked to the processes of identity formation, and have investigated the idea of 'border' as a socio-political territory where identity is constantly

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[58] King, p. 136.
[59] With regard to this, Section 6.6 will provide an analysis of the strategies that Italian translators have adopted so far on these issues.

constructed and deconstructed.[60] This approach has been applied especially to those groups defined as 'marginalised': 'subjects who are metaphorically positioned at the edges, outskirts or margins of society by the dominant racial ethnic, political, class-based or gendered systems of power'.[61] According to Anna Ball, these subjects find on the margins a symbolic location where they can identify and situate their marginalised position.[62]

The border becomes a space of empowerment for peripheral groups, a sort of spatial metaphor halfway between the real and the figurative.[63] This idea stems from a vision of the border as both a limit and a possibility: a border limits one's vision and one's room for action but, as such, it also pushes these limits by triggering a desire to move beyond. In Avtar Brah, borders are

> [a]rbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic; territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the Others; forms of demarcation where the very act of prohibition inscribes transgression; zones where the fear of the Other is the fear of the Self; places where claims to ownership – claims to 'mine', 'yours' and 'theirs' – are staked out, contested, defended, fought over.[64]

Brah points out how borderlines are charged with cultural and political constructions: regardless of the side one occupies, the margin shapes one's perception of the *other* and influences visions and actions of both groups. For this reason, the geographic and/or metaphorical border can become a zone of subversive power and self-recognition.

In the previous pages, characters like Grace Cleave, Istina Mavet, or the autistic Erlene have expressed their doubts about the issue of identity, but have

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[60] Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (London: Routledge, 1995); Dominic Watt and Carmen Llamas, *Language, Borders and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

[61] Anna Ball, 'Writing in the Margins: Exploring the Borderland in the Work of Janet Frame and Jane Campion', *eSharp*, 5 (2005) <http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_41163_en.pdf> (para. 1 of 51).

[62] Ibid., (para. 1 of 51).

[63] See the notions of minor literature and minority language in Sections 4.4 and 6.6.1 respectively.

[64] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 198.

also made clear that they do not want to 'inhabit the world under false pretences'. Frame appears to underline that in *this* world people fear to be themselves, or to confront those who have found their real identity, as this would force them to face the possibility of failure. Although the writer provides no solutions or keys to the quest for identity, she offers an articulate investigation of the links between identity search and marginality, in which borders acquire an ambivalent status. Frame's characters are on the margins of mainstream society as it is conventionally conceived, but they are also able to offer authentic self-analyses and deep awareness of their place in the world. Grace, for instance, does not fear change; to her, being true to oneself is the only viable option, though that entails a complete metamorphosis; Istina Mavet, a patient in a mental ward, lives in a constant state of apprehension and terror, and says that she does 'not know her identity', but simultaneously presents the most lucid accounts of how the traditional way of handling mental illness had reduced patients to 'de-souled'[65] creatures.[66] Her name, like Grace Cleave's, is itself a convergence of two opposites: as Frame explained in a letter to Patrick Evans, 'Istina' is the Serbo-Croatian word for 'truth', while 'Mawet' is the Hebrew for 'death'.[67] (Even in this case, the Italian translator does not explain the etymological references in a footnote or the prefatory material). Characters living on the border – like a narration on the margins of dichotomy – emerge as privileged perspectives for a description of liminality and power.

According to Janet Wilson, Frame wrote 'from within the diasporic space of travel', a dimension in which people become the quintessence of the foreigner:[68] strangers in the sense of *other* to themselves and their country – migrating, like a bird. The twofold nature of the margin, especially when considered in postcolonial contexts, not only demarcates the line between *here*

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[65] Hilary Mantel, Introduction to *Faces in the Water*, p. xii.

[66] *Faces in the Water*, p. 55.

[67] Judith Dell Panny, *I Have What I Gave: The Fiction of Janet Frame* (New York: George Braziller, 1992), p. 28.

[68] Janet Wilson, 'Living in Diasporic Space: Art, Memory, Belonging', lecture given at the 10th ASNEL Summer School 'Spaces of Projection', Bern and Basel, 2011 <http://spacesofprojection.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/abstract-wilson-lecture3.pdf> [accessed 22 August 2014] (para. 2 of 4). Wilson develops and frames her considerations within the 'spatial turn' in diaspora studies. Quoting from Michel de Certeau's *Practice of Everyday Life*, she underlines how travel introduces 'an in-between zone, a condition of moving through space, with feelings of transience rather than in identifying with place and a fixed order of positioning'.

and *there*, me and you, but also creates hybrid spaces where power structures are questioned and subverted.[69] When Istina or Erlene doubt their own and others' identity, they are not simply doubting; they are acting simultaneously on a double perspective, reporting the movement of their thoughts. In so doing, they create the diasporic spaces Wilson mentions, and let opposites converge in an in-betweenness of hybridity and agency. There, the *third space* creates an endless movement between old and new, traditional and unconventional, and questions old forms. Such a movement dissolves absolutist and binary thoughts, overcoming and embracing dichotomy. Margins enact, therefore, a process of deconstruction and, within that movement, of recreation. From this perspective, Frame's writing is an example of how borders retain a revolutionary force and represent an ideal space to embrace paradox. Conceived as such, the vagueness and undecidability of her plots and characters appear an inevitable feature of liminality and *third space*.

Referring to the specific case of the US–Mexico border, Gloria Anzaldúa defines the margin as 'una herida abierta [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds'.[70] Anzaldúa's borderland space is vague and transient; its very nature manifests 'both the traumatic nature of inhabiting the margins [...] but also the transgressive, productive potential of cultural fusion'.[71] For this reason, the margin is seen as the place where dichotomy is disrupted and the power of binarisms melts.

With a similar approach, Ball defines the border as an attractive place for the transgression of the marginal cultural location: 'the border-crosser seeks the borderland not only out of necessity, [...] but also in order to redefine themselves out of choice'. The margin thus becomes 'a psychologically empowered space, not simply a site of wounded identity'.[72] This could explain why Frame opted for a position that marginalised her even further: rather than claiming a central position, she (like the characters of her stories) chose to dwell on the margins of society because a 'radical position of marginality' allowed her to counteract traditionally assigned identity roles. Thus, the margin is no longer

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[69] Ball, (para. 5 of 51).
[70] Gloria Anzaldúa, quoted in Ball, (para. 7 of 51).
[71] Ball, (para. 8 of 51).
[72] Ibid., (para. 11 of 51).

the place where socially excluded groups are relegated, but rather a conscious decision to actively influence social conventions through language.

In this light, Frame's mixture of New Zealand English and Māori appears an explicit mode of resistance. As Ball argues, Frame's 'use of language becomes a means to retain control over her sense of self where she employs the world of the text to inscribe her own set of social boundaries and borders, amongst which she feels comfortable'.[73] In relation to this, Chapter 6 will illustrate, through quotes from her prose and poetry, how Frame engaged in a duplicitous relationship with traditional forms: she explored them, to then subvert their regularity and challenge their validity. Italian translators have adopted different strategies towards Frame's hybrid language and Section 6.6 focuses on this point.

I argue that Frame enacts a conscious linguistic policy, in which the sustaining binary structures are systematically called into question and margins become sites for self-affirmation. In this process, the paradox is transcended and the focus stays on the movement between *this*, *that*, and beyondness, where the *third space* suggests that 'meaning proliferates, so that to write a sentence is to touch on, allude to, all the possibilities of other sentences allied to it'.[74] As Istina Mavet says:

> I never answered Mrs Hogg to tell her the difference for I knew only the similarity that grew with it; the difference dispersed in the air and withered, leaving the fruit of similarity, like a catkin that reveals the hazelnut.[75]

Frame's imagery seems to break through the old mechanisms of meaning; in her writing, marginal spaces come to represent the most sensible option for human communication. In this sense, Frame's idiosyncratic language recalls the notion of 'minor literature', a textual practice that, according to Ball, is located at the margins of meaning making.[76] (See Section 4.4 for a wider explanation of

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[73] Ibid., (para. 23 of 51).
[74] Hilary Mantel, Introduction to *Faces in the Water*, p. xiii.
[75] *Faces in the Water*, p. 8.
[76] Ball, (para. 33 of 51).

'minor literature'.) Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari talked of 'linguistic Third World zones', places through which a language could find ways to escape.[77]

Thanks to a new vision of linguistic and textual hybridity, Frame managed to create a 'borderland writing' that deconstructed the old forms of I-You binarisms to suggest that a different, inclusive approach to otherness is, in fact, possible. As has been said, the movement beyond dichotomy happened through a leap into imagination, which does not deny the links with *this* world. Jopi Nyman defined imagination as the 'dreamlike uncanniness of the liminal position of the migrant or a refugee', which, in Bhabha's opinion, represented the typical postcolonial condition.[78] Frame's writing is therefore animated by the postcolonial urge to uncover the limiting powers of borders, and to unveil the creative capacities of imagination and marginality. As Emily Hicks states, border writing is 'a strategy of translation rather than representation'. This is due to the fact that the border writer does not look for stasis in meaning, but rather fosters continuous movement between all expressive boundaries.

Janet Frame was a border writer who had experienced the condition of being marginalised in her own society, as well as the diasporic separation from (and consequent return to) her homeland. Wilson describes the travel experience of those who depart from the place of origin as a 'translational "third" space between colony and host society'. In that in-betweenness, one can lose contact with one's identity, not in the sense of forgetting who one is, but because one becomes the victim-protagonist of a process in which identity structures are continuously deconstructed and reconstructed.[79] The diasporic location is, therefore, a liminal space

> where various transnational forces, both local and global, remould identity. In this sense, diasporic identity can be addressed as a form of hybridized identity as it is in this space of in-betweenness where the diasporic subject

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[77] Deleuze-Guattari, quoted in Ball, (para. 34 of 51).

[78] Jopi Nyman, *Home, Identity, and Mobility in Contemporary Diasporic Fiction*, Studies in Comparative Literature, 59 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 24.

[79] Wilson, (para. 2 of 4).

reconstructs itself, problematizing the issues of home, belonging, and nation [...].[80]

The liminal space of diasporic subjects' identities fits exactly Bhabha's notion of the 'Third Space of enunciation': the space where the dichotomous relationship between coloniser and colonised is undone by postcolonial agency.[81] Identity in Frame (as in Bhabha) is not a celebrative concept, but rather 'the prime mode of being in the world that uncovers the discursive appeals to tradition, purity and nation as attempts to maintain fixed and hierarchical boundaries between human beings'.[82] Like Bhabha's 'Third Space', Frame's *third space* is a place of 'meaning-construction'. Indeed, the condition of diasporic traveller does not mean absence of tradition or destruction of the originary home; for '[t]o be unhomed is not to be homeless'.[83]

5.5 The prose poem: A (non-)genre on the margins

As perhaps her way to experience textuality differently, enacting a marginal/peripheral approach to what was considered to be 'good', 'conventional', or 'acceptable', Frame demonstrated an interest in experimenting with genre from her very first published work, *The Lagoon and Other Stories*. Her short stories and her later novels borrow features from different forms; for instance, as Ian Richards points out, 'A Note on the Russian War' reads and looks 'more like a meditative lyric poem than a plot-driven story'.[84] This should not sound surprising to critics of Frame's work. She had always wanted to be a poet, and considered poetry her greatest passion.[85] However, as much as her autobiography and private writings are full of references to her desire to become a poet, they also refer to her constant feelings of inadequacy regarding verse: 'Poetry is my first love. I unfortunately

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[80] Nyman, p. 23.

[81] See Section 3.3 for a wider discussion on this topic.

[82] Nyman, p. 24.

[83] Homi K. Bhabha, quoted in Nyman, p. 24.

[84] Ian Richards, 'Janet Frame's Songs of Innocence and Experience: "A Note on the Russian War"' (2008) <http://nofrillsnzlit.angelfire.com/Frame.html> [accessed 25 August 2014] (para. 3 of 24).

[85] See Section 6.1 for a wider analysis of Frame's relationship with poetry.

don't feel that I've ever been able to write a real poem, but I keep trying'.[86] Perhaps it was this sense of incapability that pushed her to devote most of her time to prose: in her lifetime, she published twenty works in prose and only one volume of poetry, *The Pocket Mirror* (1967). *The Goose Bath*, her second collection of poems, was published posthumously in 2006, and *Storms Will Tell*, a third collection, a selection of lyrics from the previous two, appeared in 2008.

Frame's prose masterfully combines binary and ternary rhythms, and makes full use of figures of speech and poetry-specific forms: from the lined layout of the words to the employment of alliteration, anaphoras, parallelisms, and song-like refrains, her prose shares with her verse a broad range of features.[87] This makes her writing an intriguing case of genre hybridity. This section illustrates how the existing notions of the prose poem and poetic prose can be extended to Frame's work in general, thus viewing her body of work as an original example of 'prose poetry' in contemporary literature.

The prose poem is still a controversial topic in genre studies – Michael Riffaterre called it 'the literary genre with an oxymoron for a name'.[88] It is usually maintained that the beginnings of the prose poem date from Aloysius Bertrand's *Gaspard de la Nuit* (1842), though he had composed prose poems earlier. Interestingly, the new genre is frequently associated with the strict French separation among genres and the work of French symbolists. Broadly speaking, however, the label 'prose poem' has been applied to a great variety of texts, spanning from the Bible to Faulkner's novels, and folk lyrics.[89] Prose passages written by Romantic poets (Wordsworth, Chateaubriand, de Guérin, Tieck, and Sainte-Beuve) are often defined as prose poems. Indeed, alongside Victor Hugo, it was the Romantics who first supported this *mélange des genres*.[90] Baudelaire's *Petits Poèmes en prose*, or *Le Spleen de Paris*, is certainly the

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[86] Janet Frame, Unpublished manuscript, Hocken Library (Dunedin), quoted in Janet Frame, *Storms Will Tell: Selected Poems*, ed. by Pamela Gordon, Denis Harold and Bill Manhire (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2008), p. 16.

[87] Vanessa Guignery, *Chasing Butterflies: Janet Frame's* The Lagoon and Other Stories (Paris: Publibook, 2011), p. 27.

[88] Michael Riffaterre, 'On the Prose Poem's Formal Features', in *The Prose Poem in France: Theory and Practice*, ed. by Mary Ann Caws and Hermine Riffaterre (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 117–32 (p. 117).

[89] Michel Delville, *The American Prose Poem* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), p. 2.

[90] *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Roland Greene and others (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 1112.

most famous example of a prose poem (in which he recognised Bertrand as the originator of the genre). This was further enriched by the works of the Symbolists (Rimbaud, von Hoffmansthal, Pound, Mallarmé, Gide, Claudel, Valéry, and others), especially in the innovative mixing of the first- and third-person perspectives.[91] After Symbolism and Post-symbolism, the prose poem genre was further developed by the Cubists (Jacob, Reverdy, and Cendrars), the Surrealists (Breton, Desnos, and Éluard), Gertrude Stein (see her cubist vignettes in *Tender Buttons*), and many contemporary poets in France and the US (Char, Ponge, Bonnefoy, Wright, Merwin, Hollander, Bernstein, Bly, the "Language poetry" group, and many others).[92]

However, both before and after Bertrand's work, one can find interesting examples of prose poems in a variety of languages.[93] In Italy the genre was introduced and developed by the Cubo-futurists (Marinetti), and it was further refined by a number of contemporary poets. Be it more lyrical in inspiration, more narrative-like, highly experimental, or visually eye-catching, the Italian neo-avant-garde of Amelia Rosselli, Giampiero Neri, and Valerio Magrelli, and later with Antonella Anedda, Gabriele Frasca, Tommaso Ottonieri, and many others has shown a great interest in this hybrid (non-)form.[94] Therefore (and to anticipate the discussion that will be conducted in Chapter 6), it can be said that since the prose poem is not inherently English – nor are its features – and since it does exist in Italian, both in the literature of the beginning of the twentieth century and in contemporary poetry, it should be indeed a translatable feature.

English-language readers were introduced to the prose poem through the work *Pastels in Prose*, a collection of prose poems translated from French by the American poet Stuart Merrill (1890). Since then, the prose poem has attracted the interest of many British Decadent writers, amongst them Ernest

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[91] Ibid., pp. 1112–13.

[92] Ibid., p. 1113.

[93] In Switzerland with Salomon Gessner (*Idylls*, 1756); in Germany with Rilke and Hölderlin, then George, Rilke, Kafka, Bloch, and Novak; in Austria with Hoffmansthal, Altenberg, and Polgar; in Belgium with Verhaeren; in England, with De Quincey, Lovell Beddoes, Wilde, and the Imagists; in Russia with Turgenev and the Futurists; in Spain, with Bécquer, Jiménez, and Cernuda; in Italy, with the Cubo-futurists, such as Marinetti; in Latin America with Borges, Neruda, and Paz; and in Denmark with Jacobsen. *The Princeton Encyclopedia*, p. 1113.

[94] Paolo Giovannetti, *Dalla poesia in prosa al rap: Tradizioni e canoni metrici nella poesia italiana contemporanea* (Novara: Interlinea, 2008). See also Gherardo Bortolotti, *Tecniche di basso livello* (Villa D'agri: Lavieri, 2009), and Alessandro Broggi, *nuovo paesaggio italiano* (Firenze: Arcipelago, 2009).

Dowson, William Sharp (a.k.a. Fiona Macleod), and Oscar Wilde. The typical decadent poem makes great use of formal devices, especially repetition and alliteration. Both an aesthetic and a political reaction to neoclassicism, the prose poem is, by definition, based on an oxymoron.[95] According to the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, it is

> [a] composition able to have any or all the features of the lyric, except that it is put on the page – though not conceived of – as prose. It differs from poetic prose in that it is short and compact, from free verse in that it has no line breaks, from a short prose passage in that it has, usually, more pronounced rhythms, sonorous effects, imagery, and density of expression. It may contain even inner rhyme and metrical runs. Its length, generally, is from half a page (one or two paragraphs) to three or four pages, i.e., that of the average lyrical poem. If it is any longer, the tensions and impact are forfeited, and it becomes – more or less poetic – prose.[96]

The prose poem is not to be confused with any forms of poetic prose or free verse. It is shorter than poetic prose, and lacks the typical line breaks of verse. It is characterised by high density of expression, strong use of imagery, and musical patterns – including inner rhymes and parallelisms. According to this definition, what distinguishes poetic prose from a prose poem is mainly length. It follows that Frame's novels cannot be considered prose poems, unlike most of her short stories, which are one to four pages long. The following sections will show, however, that her prose represents a particular case of 'extended poetic prose'.

5.6 Frame's 'prose poetry'

Christine Lorre, who endorses the idea of reading Frame's short stories as prose poems, has noted that the sustaining structure in *The Lagoon* stories is chiasmus. This technique is so systematically used that it confers a highly

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[95] *The Princeton Encyclopedia*, p. 1112.
[96] Delville, p. 2.

poetic effect upon the whole work.[97] Moreover, the stories are often so brief that their language and imagery become very dense; thus 'the narratives', Lorre maintains, 'may be considered as much prose poems as short stories'.[98] The fact that poetic tropes appear frequently in her short stories and novels alike makes Frame's texts a peculiar form of hybrid writing, which looks and sounds like both prose and poetry at the same time. As Lorre explains, the years in which Frame published her first stories (1945–1960) were particularly fecund for such an approach to writing: New Zealand poetry was moving from the long domination of new-Romantic forms to the innovations of Modernism.

According to Clive Scott, the prose poem was part of a Modernist project that 'wanted meaning to reside in the process of experience'.[99] The combination of different genres challenged the idea of an inviolable canon, and brought about a subversion of traditional forms. In this sense, Frame's writing represents a form of action on genre, both practically and theoretically. Frame always refused to consider her works as belonging to that most canonised literary form, the novel. Whether or not this was due to a feeling of inadequacy, she was very clear in stating that her works were not novels; they were, instead, 'explorations':

> Oh yes, I'm not a successful novelist. I'm told I have a large international reputation and I accept that, but for myself – I have my own judgements. My books are really just explorations. In the early days I did try to insist they should be called that rather than novels.[100]

As has been shown, Frame often took issue with formal constraints and labels; to her, writing meant freedom, something that could not be trapped within prefabricated compartments. She also seemed averse to any sort of classification for the sake of formal or commercial purposes: 'My novels are not

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[97] Christine Lorre, 'The Tropes and Territory of Childhood in *The Lagoon and Other Stories* by Janet Frame', in *Tropes and Territories: Short Fiction, Postcolonial Readings, Canadian Writings in Context*, ed. by Marta Dvořák and W. H. New (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), pp. 247–70 (p. 264).

[98] Ibid., p. 264.

[99] Clive Scott, quoted in Lorre, p. 264.

[100] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 12 February 1983, article by Tony Reid, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 108.

novels',[101] 'Publishers call them novels so that people will buy them. I'm not too definite what I think is a novel'.[102] On 14 December 1977, Frame attended the 42nd International PEN Congress at the National Library of Australia. On that occasion, Hazel de Berg recorded an interview with her for the Hazel de Berg collection of sound recordings. During the approximately thirty-minute recording, Frame touched upon various topics, from her family, to her love of poetry, and her writing routine. She read out one of her pieces, which she defined as an 'idea'. She said: 'I'm going to read just an idea I wrote down, just developed it. I don't call it a poem, I don't call it anything. Well, I call it "Hypotenuse", it's about the hypotenuse'.[103] Writing preceded definition. As her most articulate and complex means of expression, Frame regarded writing as the pure, raw creation of her mind. To define it would mean to fix it into a definite form.

Her writing developed from the idea of a 'shape', a pattern she had in mind: 'I think when you're writing you are shaping. It is very important to me to have a space and be shaping and have everything fall into place. You are creating, but part of it is memory'.[104] Shape and patterns were certainly important to her, but they were also the product of her imagination rather than given standards. She felt that her writing should not and did not obey conventional approaches; it should recreate *that* private world, this is why she did not stop working until she got it right:

> I might have a view of the whole novel, everything that happens, but in the actual writing it's like an exploration. Again, this is for me the enjoyment. It's just the ideas which come. Sometimes they're quite frightening because I know I won't be able to put them down, just because of

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[101] Janet Frame, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 November 1985, article by Stephanie Dowrick, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 131.

[102] Janet Frame, *NZ Herald*, 22 October 1963, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 80.

[103] *Janet Frame interviewed by Hazel de Berg for the Hazel de Berg collection* [sound recording], interview by Hazel de Berg, Sydney, National Library of Australia, 14 December 1977, sound recording call number: ORAL TRC 1/1052 (22686). Available at <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/22686>.

[104] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 3 August 2000, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 157.

my lack of skill, you know. One always hopes for improvement.[105]

That world did not follow specific genres, and her aim was to transport it into *this* dimension as it was. Her choice to continuously alternate prose and poetry is certainly the most visible sign of Frame's intention not to obey pre-established, formal constraints. There are numerous example of her non-generic writing amongst her novels, short stories, and autobiography. In *Living in the Maniototo*, for instance, a whole chapter (the twelfth) is a poem, which interrupts the narration in prose over more than four pages.[106] The following chapter continues with an explicit poetic interlude:

> Was trying to organise my novel and get used to a town
> full of sky, English flowers, bloody history and the taste of
> snow, I found myself (as the saying is) 'going to seed'. [...]
> I find that I have a verse about it, from the Manifold.
>
> Yes, I am going to seed. I know it.
> After being eaten for so many years,
> Cut, recut, forced to branch this way and that,
> I have grown tall, I have put forth small white flowers,
> I look over fences into people's faces.
> Bees glance at me, the wind has taken me in hand.
> My taste is too strong and sour, my growth is rank.
> People frown to see me put down yet one more root.
>
> The invitation from Brian Wilford to return to Baltimore and
> write my novel there came three years ago [...].[107]

Frame appears to integrate the two genres as two expressions of the same mode of thinking. A few pages ahead, chapter eighteen mixes prose, poetry, intertextual references, metafiction, as well as combining different fonts.[108] It could be argued that Frame interpreted the conventional boundaries between

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[105] Janet Frame, Radio NZ, 30 April 1983, interview by Elizabeth Alley, quoted in *In Her Own Words*, p. 118.

[106] Janet Frame*, Living in the Maniototo* (London: Virago, 2010 [1979]), pp. 71–75. The poem, in slightly different form and with the title 'Hypotenuse', was read by Frame at the 42nd International PEN Congress in Sydney (14 December 1977, National Library of Australia).

[107] Ibid., pp. 79–80.

[108] Ibid., pp. 121–27. See Appendix F for an integral version of chapters twelve and eighteen of *Living in the Maniototo*.

genres like the margins she so thoroughly explored in her books: the frontier between prose and poetry becomes a porous, liminal space where she decided to locate her own writing style. Like the decision to position oneself on the borders due to a need for empowerment and agency, the idea of creating a new form right on the margins *in-between* prose and poetry may have been a deliberate choice to deconstruct and subvert standards. What comes out of that process is the creation of a non-definite form of expression that defies definition (see Chapter 6 for the mixture of regular and idiosyncratic forms, and the translation strategies that have been elaborated for them).

In fact, the mixture of poetic and prosaic features is such a widespread characteristic of Frame's writing that one might talk of many of her texts as 'prose poetry'. Indeed, both her short stories and her novels rely on a form of poetic language which, through the use of various techniques and devices, distinguishes itself from the more matter-of-fact language of prose.[109] As a consequence, the main task of the prose poet should be that of creating poetry (in its rhythmic, sonorous, rhetoric, and stylistic components) through the medium of prose.

However, the *Princeton Encyclopedia* stresses prose poetry's quality of 'unity even in brevity', which draws a distinction between poetic prose and poetry only on the basis of length and a more intense use of the same stylistic devices.[110] In *Le Degré zero de l'écriture* (*Writing Degree Zero*), Roland Barthes maintained that these positions stem from the classical conception of prose and poetry as two genres apart,[111] an idea still common among readers and critics. According to Jean Cohen, 'prose is only a moderate kind of poetry', whilst poetry represents 'the most passionate form of literature'.[112] Barthes argued that the difference is, in fact, not one of essence, but rather of quantity: prose and poetry are 'dissimilar because of the very difference in their magnitudes'.[113]

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[109] Delville, pp. 2–3.
[110] *The Princeton Encyclopedia*, p. 1112; Delville, p. 3.
[111] Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* [*Le Degré zero de l'écriture*], trans. by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).
[112] Jean Cohen, *Structure du langage poétique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1966), p. 149, quoted in Delville, p. 3.
[113] Roland Barthes, *A Barthes Reader*, ed. by Susan Sontag (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982), p. 53.

Janet Frame subverted traditional ideas and rebelled against the stereotypes of genre divisions. She merged the stylistic devices of the two genres, thus moving beyond canonical requirements. In line with her perspective on boundaries, she mixed two 'opposites' – if one could call them such – of what she conceived to be a literary continuum. This results in a unique type of writing, which overcomes even the limits of the prose poem itself. By acting on genre, Frame's work moves beyond it, so that her prose is highly poetical and her verse can be very prosaic. Consider the following extract from her latest collection of poems:

> My brother kept bantams coloured-like straw-like copper
> beech leaves;
> my sister kept a pet rabbit with a sensitive collapsible
> nose.
> I kept nothing. Nothing stayed with me
> not even snow when I put salt on its glossy white tail
> [...]
> not even the snail
> when I helped it travel a million miles
> [...]
> not even the rescued foreign stamp
> when I gave it a family home
> [...]
> Nothing stayed.
> Dust did not stay, nor shadows [...].[114]

Parallelisms and repetition sustain the alternation between end-stopped lines and enjambments, which creates a dynamic movement of visual and acoustic elements.[115] The same happens in her prose, where the frequent repetition of sentences creates an idea of parallel structures going through the whole book. Sometimes this effect is emphasised by a change in formatting:

> [A]nd the door flings itself open like two palms with
> gesture,
> *Cela m'est egal, Cela m'est egal.*

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[114] Janet Frame, 'The Dreams', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 204.

[115] See Section 6.4 for further analysis of repetitions-parallelisms in poetry and prose, and how they have been translated in prose.

> [...] Till the door flings itself open again in a gesture of indifference, revealing its wooden hands and the grains of heart and life and fate.
> *Cela m'est egal*, *Cela m'est egal*, it speaks like a carefree breath or commonplace [...].
> And once more the crocodile is severed, the same procession to the door, the same quietness,
> *Cela m'est egal*.[116]

As in a song's refrain, an expression is repeated; the graphic difference created by the italics seems to suggest that the message comes from someone who is outside *this* dimension of the story. With no graphic signals, the repetition of parallel structures creates diverse effects. In *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, Erlene, the autistic protagonist of the story, talks about her mother's habit of tilting her head to one side as she walked with a lamp or a candle, and quotes a passage from the scary nursery rhyme 'Hark, Hark the Dogs Do Bark'.[117] The passage of the rhyme is repeated elsewhere to create a sort of musical refrain throughout the whole novel, which produces a strong internal cohesion and sustaining structure. This detaches the novel from its traditional features and makes it approach something *other*. In that *différance*,[118] Frame fused elements of two or more genres, thus moving beyond the conventional textual barriers, and suggesting that formal elements can indeed play in combination with meaning, regardless of generic specificities.

Erlene, presented as a girl who often reads poetry (which showed 'how easily words could be torn, distorted, made unrecognizable, or removed altogether'),[119] remembers songs and poems she recited at school, or rhymes that her imaginary beetle sings to her. This interrupts the flow of the narration with passages that look and sound different from the rest – the extracts often rhyme and are graphically set apart from the prose, as bits and pieces of music and poetry accompanying prose.[120] *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* is

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[116] Janet Frame, *Owls Do Cry* (London: The Women's Press, 2002 [1957]), pp. 46–47. Italics in original.

[117] Janet Frame, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (New York: George Braziller, 1980 [1964]), pp. 42, 43, 49–50.

[118] See Section 3.2 for Derrida's notion of *différance*.

[119] Ibid., pp. 51–52.

[120] Ibid., pp. 53–55, 58, 60, 167–168, 180–81, 184.

one of the texts where Frame makes the most of these poetry-specific features such as alliteration and onomatopoeia ('Mona made a chopping movement with her mandibles. "Chew chew chew, chew chew chew."'; 'Don't mind my banter. I don't want to be antagonistic but, little Mona Minim, you have a fantastic imagination!').[121] Although children's books generally emphasise the sounds and musicality of words, Frame adjusted those poetic devices in such a way as to combine them with prose through the whole book, as if sounds and wordplays were the real protagonists of the story. However, onomatopoeia can be found in most of Frame's works, especially her short stories. The following example is taken from *The Lagoon*:

> Oh, the train and the coloured pictures on the station, South America and Australia, and the bottle of fizzy drink that you could only half finish because you were too full, and the ham sandwiches that curled up at the edges, because they were stale, Dad said, and he knew, and the rabbits and cows and bulls outside in the paddocks, and the sheep running away from the noise, and the houses that came and went like a dream, clackety-clack, Kaitangata, Kaitangata, and the train stopping and panting, and the man with the stick tapping the wheels, and the huge rubber hose to give the engine a drink, and the voices of the people in the carriage on and on and waiting.[122]

From the use of onomatopoeia to the dense imagery, from the use of free indirect speech to the stream of consciousness, the above quotation sums up many traits of Frame's unconventional approach to writing. In passages like these, the effect is destabilising, especially when the fictional pact is subverted:

> This story came last night. Everything is always a story, but the loveliest ones are those that get written and are not torn up and are taken to a friend payment for listening, for putting a wise ear to the keyhole of my mind.
> hell
> me

---

[121] Janet Frame, *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* (New York: George Braziller, 1969), pp. 42, 84.
[122] Janet Frame, *The Lagoon and Other Stories* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997 [1952]), p. 59.

> me
> me
> I am writing a story [...].[123]

Rather than a symbolist-surrealist form of experimentalism, Frame appears to apply a recurrent alteration of the norms. The focus does not seem to be on the quality of the 'alterations', but rather on the quantity and consistency throughout the whole production. I argue, therefore, that Frame took issue with the very notions of 'limit' and 'acceptability' imposed by conventional literature. She challenged the idea of an acceptable way of writing novels and poems, and fought the boundaries between genres. To give another example, the figure of parallelism is frequently employed in both short stories and novels, often creating highly poetic effects:

> I walked through swamps full of red water, and down
> gullies covered in snowberries, and then up gullies again
> [...]
> I saw a pine tree on top of a hill.
> I saw a skylark dipping and rising.
> I saw it was snowing somewhere over the hills, but not
> where I was.
> I stood on a hill and looked and looked.[124]

The passage is densely lyric. Apart from the line endings of the sentences, which instantly evoke verse, the repeated and cadenced sound of the parallel structures gives the passage a growing intensity. In other cases, the extreme fragmentation of language is sustained by galloping rhythms, creating a breathless effect:

> I felt cold in my darkness, I shivered, I wore a thick
> cardigan over my summer dress.
> My senses were overlapping, misplaced.
> I was afraid.
> I listened.
> The traffic light showed red. The world would stop
> spinning. What color was red? A plaited squeeze from a

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[123] Ibid., p. 131.
[124] Ibid., p. 157.

tube of light, soaked in blood [...]. The chairs in our house are tall-backed, with bars, and webbing beneath the seat, with uncurled springs hanging; these are kitchen chairs; red with blood; submit, submit, torture, leveled secrets, primitive disclosures; dark-brown chairs stained with people.[125]

Shape pleases; sob bitterly; rattrap; made dull; vague guess; tough feelings; five voices; this season; those zebras; eighth theme; wreathe them; fish shop; pull lightly; calm moments; soapbox; mob pressure; must do; did take; duke goes; vague kind; enough vases; love fully; this zoo; those seats; both those; breath through; oasis; opera arrangements; the hour; the apple; two ears; I saw an opening; how awful...[126]

The juxtaposition of short words separated by semi-colons creates a fragmented, quick cadence. The passage could resemble a chaotic list of words whose mutual link is intimated rather than explained, as one would expect in a poem. The absence of conjunctions and/or clarifiers echoes, once again, the language of poetry. At times, characters' thoughts are expressed in a lineated form, as in the case of the ventriloquist of *Living in the Maniototo*, who constantly changes name and identity.[127] From the moment she introduces herself, the narration is partly continuous and partly lineated:

And I, Mavis Furness, Mavis Barwell, Mavis Halleton, perhaps, in a world once peopled with Madges and Mavises and Peggys, the penultimate Mavis, yet remaining, as all good stories satisfy us by saying 'to this very day', just Alice Thumb, or Ariella, Lokinia, or Maui's sister, or mere Naomi, Susan, Ngaere, Belinda. Or Violet Pansy Proudlock, ventriloquist.
Alice Thumb.
Instant traveler, like the dead, among the dead and the living; an eavesdropper, a nothingness, a shadow, replica of the imagined, twice removed from the real.
Alice Thumb.

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[125] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, pp. 18–19.
[126] Ibid., p. 104.
[127] *Living in the Maniototo*, pp. 170–74.

Violet Pansy Proudlock?[128]

Frame seems to reverse her perspective on identity in a generic undecidability. The correspondences between content and form are thus emphasised, just as one would expect from verse. Moreover, Frame seems to contrive her texts as elements that work on multiple levels: the layout of the page, the acoustic features amplified by repetitions, internal rhymes, onomatopoetic sounds, the formatting of characters, and the density of each paragraph make Frame's writing resemble a canvas where each thread is linked to another, contributing independently to the whole picture. In *Owls Do Cry*, for example, entire chapters are written in italics, as though they represent silent thoughts coming from an-*other* dimension. Frame frequently chose to italicise smaller passages or single words in her prose, again separating them from the larger narration.[129]

The passages presented show how Frame played with language formally, syntactically, and semantically. Often her words follow one another with no apparent link, animated by an irregular and unconventional use of punctuation. The flow of narration seems to be governed by an uncontrolled stream of thoughts. Some paragraphs are, instead, completely irregular:

> There came to them both, then, a red and gold and black
> thought, and they looked at each other and spoke it:
> —A bicycle.
> —with a dynamo.
> —tail light
> —head light
> —painted red, painted gold painted black
> —a pump lying along the bar
> —a carrier
> —a bag of tools fastened with a shiny silver dome thing,
> —handbrake
> —footbrake, bell
> —no free-wheeler.
> —no, brakes. Or you'll go over the handlebars downhill
> and be like Ted West and wear a black patch over your
> eye till you're dead.

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[128] Ibid., p. 4.
[129] Cf. *Owls Do Cry*, pp. 9, 10, 18–19, 45–46, 48–49, 53–54, 70, 82, 83, 150.

And oh, oh to cycle in the wind, they thought.[130]

In this case, the use of dashes and the association of words that are apparently disjoined from the rest of the story offer an example of Frame's stylistic experimentalism, which is clearly set against the normal and normative expectations of genre.

Mona Minim is an interesting example of experimental and hybrid writing. Aside from an intense use of tropes, it is entirely built on a form of acoustic and visual wordplay using the word 'ant' (formica): '*ant*ennae', 'inf*ant*', '*Ant*hology', 'inf*ant*ile', 'fond*ant*', 'inst*ant*ly', 'toler*ant*', 'const*ant*ly', 'flipp*ant*', 'exuber*ant*', 'f*ant*astic', 'miscre*ants*', 'Import*ant*', 'dist*ant*', '*ant*icipation', 'remn*ants*', and many others.[131] The Italian translator ignores both the wordplay and the italicisation, and recreates a text that does not play with language. Such a choice could be interpreted in the light of a functional simplification: the Italian ST, *Cuor di Formica*, is specifically conceived for a young audience,[132] which restricts the source function and may also explain the omission of some passages.[133] The TT omits sentences such as 'Mona smiled because she guessed she was expected to smile',[134] which creates strong cross-references with other works in which Frame's protagonist tend to do what they are expected to do (see *Faces in the Water*, and Frame's autobiography as well).

However, what could be justified in the light of editorial policies alters the hybrid nature of the book. *Mona Minim* is indeed a multi-layered work of fiction with strong postcolonial and postmodernist claims. To turn it into a children's book, by simply deleting all its cultural references is to provide Italian readers with a partial representation/recreation of the source. While this is entirely possible given that translators could motivate their choices on the basis of specific reader-oriented strategies, there certainly remains an issue of function restriction and partial representation. Yet the problem is not omission in itself:

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[130] Ibid., p. 29.
[131] *Mona Minim*, pp. 11-37.
[132] This is signalled by several paratextual elements, such as the typical colours of the 'Junior' Series of Mondadori, and the age-indicator on the cover (10 years).
[133] Cf. *Mona Minim*, p. 16, 33, 34.
[134] Ibid., p. 33.

the point is that this case of it is not ethical owing to a marked shift in function.[135]

The wordplays could have been adapted to a younger audience. Consider the following examples: 'nurse-ant' = formi-tata; '*ant*ennae' = formicantenne; 'inf*ant* school' = formicasilo; 'Anthology' = manuale di Formicologia; '*Adventures in ANTwerp*' = Avventure a Formicolandia/nel Formiciao/a Formic City/ or, if one wants to keep the reference to a real city, Avventure a Formia/a Formicola, which are real Italian towns, respectively in Lazio (Central Italy), and Campania (Southern Italy).

These examples demonstrate that the translator's creative engagement can take on a number of functions, and that omissions from the ST must be validly justified. In this sense, an informed and creative approach to the hybridity of Frame's texts and their playfulness[136] favours, on the one hand, the translator's active engagement, and on the other hand, a limitation of unnecessary and unmotivated mutilations of the source. With this in mind, the translator of Frame's prose poetry (and poetry exclusively) could shape his/her strategies according to what has been lost in previous translations.

Such a strategy would respond to what David Constantine once defined as one of the basic reasons why one chooses to embark upon the translation of poetry: to pay 'an act of service' to an author you want to make available in your culture.[137] The notion of 'serving' should not mislead. The process of translating verse was described on the same occasion by Constantine as a 'real fight'. Indeed, the likely initial goal of paying tribute to a poet one loves, which may imply a subordinating attitude towards the source culture/language, needs to leave space for the autonomy of the new text. In his words, a verse translator should make 'that poem live again. You should make it warm again!'.[138] Undoubtedly, this is an extremely difficult *and* creative process, and it is so because of the constraints that the ST imposes/gives.

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[135] See Section 6.5 for further examples and explanations of the ethical justification of translation choices.

[136] Cf. Section 3.2 for Derrida's idea of playfulness as applied to language.

[137] David Constantine, talk given at the '*Modern Poetry in Translation* Workshop', London, 7 October 2012.

[138] Ibid.

The creative approach to verse translation can thus shed new light on the crucial issue of the intrinsic foreignness of poetic language. When a poet writes verse or a form of highly poetic prose, their language, in that moment, is itself foreign: it is foreign to the standard variety, to ordinary speech, to anything that same poet could write in a form that is not poetry. For this reason, Constantine argued that when translating poetry, 'consciousness needs to be continuously shaken. [...] Watchfulness is keeping alert your sensations. Sometimes there can be disgust, but disgust is better than nothing'.[139] The incessant trying, moving on the edge of consciousness, and getting incessantly closer, but never quite there, typifies the peculiar autonomy of translators: although their page is not completely white, their journey may still take endless directions.

5.7 Generic instability as a symptom of 'post-' aesthetics

The examples provided so far demonstrate the various ways in which Frame challenged the stable features of genres and the positions a writer can take on them. The poetic and prose elements are so intertwined in her writing that one seems unable to find – again – a solution to the puzzle.

The subversive potential of this new conception of writing is certainly not limited to the mixture of formal features and rhetorical tools. Frame again appears to use the spaces of marginality as places of subversion and agency. Seen as a site of power and change, the border becomes the elected space for her stylistic revolution. Her writing thus becomes *other*: it mingles and reshapes what was once a strict dichotomy of literary conventions. Furthermore, in its hybridity it represents neither *this* nor *that* world exclusively, but rather a fluid element that mixes them continuously, thus implying a space for alterity. As a formal response to her idea of *third space*, her prose poetry symbolises her writing's movement towards and within otherness.

Thus, it is also through acting on generic dichotomies that Frame produced the idea of flowing and hinting beyond. In clear similarity to Derridean

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[139] Ibid.

philosophy, Frame deconstructs language to push its limits and create a third dimension, which deletes binarisms by embracing opposition. In this process of mimicry, prose and poetry are placed on the same level: both contribute to the creation of a new, hybrid form and equally challenge traditional constraints. Consequently, only a comprehensive approach to her work can show the revolutionary power of this third dimension of writing, of this genre *qui n'en est pas un* (which is not one).[140]

The prose poem has also been defined as a formless genre with an intrinsic subversive power. Michel Delville writes:

> At a time when verse and poetry are no longer necessarily synonymous, the survival of a certain number of formal expectations and perspective boundaries between literary genres nonetheless remains the uncertain ground from which the prose poem still manages to draw a significant part of its subversive and, some would argue, political potential. What is more, the recent renewal of interest by both writers and critics in the prose poem, a "formless" genre par excellence, has greatly contributed to relegitimizing debates concerning the specific attributes of poeticity resisted or transgressed by prose poets. [...] the allegedly "genreless" or "postgeneric" space of the prose poem has given a new significance and a new relevance to the notion of genre itself.

From the uncertainty of generic boundaries, Frame drew the space for her revolutionary approach to writing. Even more than the prose poem, her extended form of poetic prose locates its power on the margins, *in between* distinctions.[141] Thus, 'formless' indeed becomes 'genreless' in her works, and the 'post-' philosophies are echoed in her radical subversion of the very concepts of boundaries and genre. In such a dense approach to language, emotions, like style, become the central concern: 'Emotion is contracted under the force of ellipsis, so deepened and made dense. [...] the prose poem aims at

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[140] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One* [*Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*], trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).
[141] See Section 6.4 for formal hybridity in Frame's verse and a discussion of appropriate translation strategies.

knowing or finding out something not accessible under the more restrictive conventions of verse'.[142]

Owing to its non-conformist status, the prose poem has attracted various opinions: some critics have focussed on the spatial element (David Scott), some on its necessary intertextuality (Michael Riffaterre), others have even underlined its political orientations (Jonathan Monroe).[143] T. S. Eliot was very critical of the prose poem. In 'The Borderline of Prose', he judged Richard Aldington's prose poems 'a disguised attempt to revive the stylistic preciousness and technical "charlatanism" [...] of the Decadents'.[144] Conversely, he admired Baudelaire's *Paris Spleen* and Rimbaud's *Illuminations* because they expressed generic purity, as opposed to the mere feature-mixing chaos generated by the prose poem. If Eliot is right from a purist's perspective, he failed to recognise the importance of the ideological battle the new (non-)genre was enacting against the limits imposed by tradition.

That battle has attracted the attention of several contemporary writers in the United States. While modernism had produced some of the greatest examples of prose poem, voices like Robert Bly, Rosmarie Waldrop, and Charles Simic have given an enormous boost to the genreless-*ness* of the (non-)genre. Yet, as Delville notices, critics have become interested only recently and have analysed only a few examples, which are not exemplary of the phenomenon.[145]

The subversive, disruptive nature of the prose poem is perhaps its most fascinating feature: the necessity to free oneself from the constraints of categories and binary oppositions is revolutionary and resonates with contemporary critical theories (deconstruction, postcolonialism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, the avant-gardes, and so forth); its non-conformist and hybrid qualities make it a literary example of present ideological fights against canon and hegemony:

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[142] Michel Beaujour, quoted in *The Princeton Encyclopedia*, p. 1112.
[143] *The Princeton Encyclopedia*, p. 1112.
[144] Thomas S. Eliot, quoted in Delville, p. 5.
[145] See *Poet's Prose* by Stephen Fredman, and *A Tradition of Subversion*, by Marguerite Murphy. See also Delville, p. 7.

> [T]his emphasis on the inherently intertextual and heteroglot dynamics of the prose poem is indispensable in the context of a form whose very name suggests its ambivalent status as a genre writing across other genres – a self-consciously deviant form, the aesthetic orientation and subversive potential of which are necessarily founded on a number of discursive and typographical violations.[146]

A prose poem represents, therefore, a conscious trespassing of convention, hence the idea of a genre-*non*-genre, where the 'non' element is not a negation, but rather the symbol of ambivalence and endless movement. Because of this, it could be studied according to the elements that welcome and fight tradition. Delville's approach is particularly interesting in this sense; he conceives prose poems 'as representatives of how individual works can subvert the very codes and narratives by which they exist and can expose them as the product of specific historical moments'.[147] Similarly, it can be argued that Frame, by writing across genres, detached herself from the specificities of the canon, thus promoting a conscious opposition to the notion of genre itself. Genres, like margins, delimit; they cut and reduce the spectrum of possibilities. Nonetheless, generic distinctions, as traditionally conceived, created space for a reformulation of the problem: it was not about being in a genre, but rather moving above and across genres.[148]

In *The Power of Genre*, Adena Rosmarin writes that 'a genre is chosen or defined to fit neither a historical nor a theoretical reality but to serve a pragmatic end'.[149] In this sense, Frame's decision to step outside formal conventions confirms her aesthetic reaction to New Criticism.[150] Through metafiction, wordplay, questionable narrators, paradox, nonsense, irony, playfulness, intertextuality, temporal distortion, fragmentation, and unconventional use of punctuation and layout, Frame can be seen to respond to Rosmarin's calls for a revised theory of genre, one that would work as a critical

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[146] Delville, pp. 8–9.

[147] Ibid., p. 9.

[148] Cf. Frame's approach to postcolonial identity issues in Section 6.6.

[149] Adena Rosmarin, *The Power of Genre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 49–50.

[150] See Section 6.1.

instrument to interpret individual texts as symptomatic of the present 'crisis of legitimization' that genre theory and criticism are facing.[151]

As Delville holds, today the notion of 'generic instability' has become a fact, normally associated with the 'post-' aesthetics. This is a general proof that 'the taxonomic logic often associated with genre studies still appears to be caught in the throes of its former existence as a prescriptive discourse'.[152] The interest in marginal, peripheral, and hybrid forms (such as pastiche), the importance attributed to intertextuality, the pursuit of cross-cultural and cross-discursive dimensions all relate to an intricate network dominated by paradox and contradiction, which is no longer containable within the symmetrical schemata of traditional genre studies.

Amid 'this postgeneric chaos', the prose poem represents a relatively young genre still in the process of self-definition, a form of abstraction extremely difficult to pin down both in its changing methods and in its ambitions.[153] As has been demonstrated in the quotations above, the mixture of forces that Frame enacted in her writing brings readers and critics to question not only the act of defining genre, but also the notion of genre itself and the validity of formal structures. Through her idiosyncratic approach to writing, Frame appears to suggest – in accordance with contemporary literary criticism – that the idea of genre is inevitably founded on the semi-arbitrary link between a label and its content.[154]

If Italian translators have not dealt with such instances of action at word-level, their praxis has been more attentive at a macro (structural) level. Apart from a recreation of the numerous refrains and parallelisms that Frame scattered throughout her texts, Italian translators have also engaged in a recreative approach of her poetic insertions in prose works. For instance, the two verse chapters of *Living in the Maniototo* have been entirely recreated. Here is a passage from chapter twelve:

Io sono Ipotenusa.

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[151] Delville, p. 9.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., p. 10.
[154] Ibid.

> Qui oppressa dal peso dell'opposto e l'adiacente
> dimostrata uguale ad altri, mai a me stessa,
> mi quadro con me stessa per la soddisfazione d'altri
>   che più contan di me stessa,
> che esili come un confine di giardino giacciono nel mio
> corpo senza carne
> che ghiaccio e quadro e cubo e reggo e unisco.
> Io sono Ipotenusa. Io chiudo
> [...]¹⁵⁵

The translator recreates the lineated layout and engages in a recreation of the semantic aspects of the source without losing the poeticity of the expression – the elision of the final vowel in 'contan' could actually be considered a phenomenon of 'poeticization' and a slight 'archaicization' in Crisafulli's terminology.[156] Similarly, in *Owls Do Cry*, the Italian translator creates a hybrid text that alternates pages of highly poetic prose (often italicised),[157] with more narrative prose, poetic refrains that are repeated throughout,[158] and translations of short rhymed compositions:

> Nel cielo setaccia la nube più alta che c'è
> Marrone verde il mare, torta salata fuori
> Da mangiare, poi spegni il sole e muori
> Fredda moneta in un forno di perché
> Daphne interruppe la ninnananna e fissò qualcosa […].
> «[…] e io, Daphne, che non sono morta bruciata, vivo in
> un istituto, persa in una confusione di sogno; e tu, Toby, tu
> sei qui e non ci sei, e viaggi solo per metà, un tormento
> perché
> Il telo strinato è peggio che bruciato
> Il mezzo posto è peggio di un dove
> Povero il bambino derubato
> Il cui tesoro non è qui ma altrove».[159]

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155 Janet Frame, *Vivere nel Maniototo*, trans. by Pietro Ferrari (Milano: Interno Giallo, 1992 [1979]), p. 66.

156 Edoardo Crisafulli, 'The Quest for an Eclectic Methodology of Translation Description', in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies*, ed. by Theo Hermans (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2002), II, 26–43 (p. 38).

157 Cf. Janet Frame, *Gridano i gufi*, trans. by Laura Noulian (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2011 [1957]), pp. 9–10, 25–26, 65, 71–72, 75–76, 79–80, 90, 141, 173–74

158 Ibid., pp. 67–68, 93–94, 136–40, 254–55.

159 Ibid., p. 122.

For reasons of space, I am not going to analyse the translation at word-level. What must be noted, though, is the alternation or, better, the coexistence of poetry and prose in a highly poetic approach to language that sustains throughout the whole book. The translator recreates the alternate rhymes and, in an almost literal approach to the form-meaning link, she also reproduces the capitalisation of the first word of each line, which is typical of the Anglophone versification. These elements contribute to the creation of a hybrid form of textuality that not only merges poetry and prose but is ontologically generated by both.

Tzvetan Todorov believed there was no pure genre, which means that even new genres, like Frame's form of prose poetry, necessarily exist by virtue of reference to one or several previously existing genres.[160] However, to say that Frame created a new (non-)genre is not the same as saying that she ignored tradition. Creativity is produced by new combinations of older forms.[161] It means, instead, that she was aware of that tradition, but chose to move it forward.

Jonathan Monroe shares Delville's idea of prose poetry as a conscious reflection on the issue of genre. He considers the significance of the prose poem 'above all that of critical, self-critical, utopian genre, a genre that tests the limits of genre'. The prose poem, in his view, 'aspires to be poetic/literary language's own coming to self-consciousness, the place where poet and reader alike become critically aware of the writer's language'.[162] As a self-consciously deviant form, the prose poem abolishes the distance between reader and author and enacts what Delville calls 'a *mise en abyme* of genericness'.[163] This echoes Derrida's argument about writers acting from within or without generic conventions:

> What are we doing when, to practice a 'genre,' we quote a genre, represent it, stage it, expose its generic law, analyze it practically? Are we still practicing the genre?

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[160] Tzvetan Todorov, quoted in Delville, p. 10.

[161] See Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 for an account of different perspectives on creativity.

[162] Jonathan Monroe, *A Poverty of Objects: The Prose Poem and the Politics of Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 16, 35–36.

[163] Delville, p. 11. Italics in original.

> Does the work still belong to the genre it re-cites? But inversely, how could we make a genre work without referring to it [quasi-]quotationally, indicating at some point, 'See, this is a work of such-and-such a genre'? Such an indication does not belong to the genre and makes the statement of belonging an ironical exercise. It interrupts the belonging of which it is a necessary condition.[164]

Derrida seemed to anticipate what would become one of the main interests in contemporary poetry or, better, in what could be defined as poetry of the 'post-' aesthetics. The boundary crossing within genre fosters creativity and innovation. As Delville writes:

> [T]he prose poem is concerned not just with the limits of a permissible expression of subjective experience but with understanding the close interdependence between changes in formal convention and changes in beliefs about how to apprehend the world outside art. It should now be apparent that what is at stake in the genre's multiple negotiations with literary and utilitarian discourses is the possibility of problematizing not only the nature and boundaries of poetic language but also its relevance or nonrelevance in other discursive domains.[165]

The nature of the practical experiments of Frame's 'prose poetry' appear, therefore, very relevant to a theoretical debate on genre theory. Indeed, the formal changes that her prose poems and poetic prose present allow for conceptual redefinitions. This means giving writers – and readers – not just one further perspective on the practice of writing, but also a powerful lens to investigate their own positions relative to the creative act. The genre-*non*-genre promotes stylistic, narrative, and identity awareness in the actors of the creative moment. The act of questioning and innovating on a formal level fosters the possibility of new theoretical horizons, which is the possibility of moving beyond the 'already-read' and 'already-written'.[166] Such a praxis, which promotes a

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[164] Jacques Derrida, *A Derrida Reader*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 259.
[165] Delville, pp. 249–50.
[166] See Section 3.1.

constant movement towards self-analysis, cannot be standardised, either formally or in a trend. It would be a contradiction in terms: in order to overcome borders, the subversion of schemes triggers a creative process that cannot, by definition, be stopped or blocked into categories.[167]

One could ask, What genre was Frame practising when she intentionally moved the prose poem beyond its tradition, subverting the very notion of genre? Was she still acting within generic definitions, given that any 'new' genre inevitably derives from old ones? It could be argued that Frame was working 'from without', thus acting *upon* the notion of genre and expanding the scope of the prose poem and writing itself. She created an alternative, a movement, a *third* possibility, which was constantly redefined. Once genre theory has been redefined into a differential practice, it 'can derive new heuristic strategies from the ashes of its now obsolete prescriptive foundations'.[168] Within this renewed approach to genre studies, Frame's writing appears, therefore, to be a genre-*above*-genre or meta-genre that self-consciously signals its constructedness, constantly disclosing the arbitrariness of language and the undecidability of borders.

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[167] Chapter 6 will deal with this point from a translational perspective.
[168] Delville, pp. 11–12.

CHAPTER 6

TRANSLATING FRAME'S POETRY INTO ITALIAN

Probabilmente non c'è niente che ci avvicini di più alla contemplazione dell'essenza della poesia del lavoro di tradurre versi, o anche solo di una riflessione approfondita su tale lavoro. Il paradosso di questo lavoro è che il traduttore tende all'impossibile e proprio su questa strada arrivi a un buon risultato, al risultato desiderato, persino a un risultato meraviglioso, sebbene non giunga mai al risultato cui tendeva.[1]

Introduction

This chapter aims to bring to a conclusion the revision process initiated by this study, a reconfiguration of Janet Frame as an experimental writer and poet,

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[1] Vladimir Vejdle, quoted in Evgenij Solonovič, 'Esperienza del tradurre poesia: tra possibile e impossibile', in *The Frontiers of the Other: Ethics and Politics of Translation*, ed. by Gaetano Chiurazzi (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2013), pp. 211–20 (p. 211).

promoting a writing-based evaluation as opposed to the biography-based scrutiny of her work, which has distorted her image. It develops three main points by providing: an introduction to Frame as a poet, a reinforcement of the idea of continuum between prose and poetry, and a suggestion that points one and two may be favoured by the creative turn in translation studies, especially in its applications to poetry.

Although this is not a study of Frame's verse in the strictest sense, it presents Janet Frame, for the first time, as one of the most interesting voices of contemporary poetry, and develops a threefold analysis of her copious production. The idiosyncratic features of her verse will be first presented in comparison with traditional forms and, when possible, with comparable elements in prose. Second, it will be shown how and if Italian translators have dealt with these features, thus emphasising the most significant shifts between source texts and target texts. Third, in the light of the stylistic continuity between prose and poetry, and what has been perhaps misrepresented or lost in translation, each section will suggest informed translation strategies for Frame's verse into Italian. In this sense, these strategies are aimed not only at a re-creative compensation, but also, and perhaps more importantly, encouragement towards a change of approach to Frame's writing as a whole through creative translation.

To ground the suggested paths in translation theory responds to the belief that a close analysis of the existing translations of her works is indicative of how she has been perceived in Italy over the past four decades. It will be demonstrated that a contrastive ST-TT analysis, in combination with a multifaceted approach to the translation of her poetry, can effectively contribute to reshape Frame's legacy, as well as recognise and value how she saw herself as a writer.

After a presentation of Frame's poetry and her peculiar approach to writing poetry (6.1), Frame's subversive, yet always constructive dialogue with more traditional-standard forms will be considered in terms of the following aspects: (6.2) metrics; (6.3) sound, including her use of rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia; (6.4) form, ranging from haiku-type to letter-like compositions, narrative structures, and visual poetry; (6.5) style, especially in her use of

punctuation, capitalisation, free indirect speech, and parallelism; and finally her use of New Zealand English and Māori words (6.6). Furthermore, the constant debate on the productive tension between constraints and creativity in translation will bring the chapter to conclude on a possible reconfiguration of the border between prescriptivism and descriptivism in translation studies.

By presenting the 'Italian Janet Frame' in comparison with the New Zealand 'original', Chapter 6 completes and, via a theoretical-practical approach to the translation of her verse, confirms that a reassessment of her legacy is still much needed.

6.1 A 'poet' in inverted commas

As has been stated in the introduction to this thesis, there is a significant gap in the studies on Janet Frame: to date, no comprehensive examination of her poetry has been conducted, which has consequently affected the understanding of her as an experimental poet and novelist as well as, I contend, the translation of her works. As Chapter 5 has demonstrated, Frame's writing challenges and blurs the border between prose and poetry, and questions the very notion of genre. This section builds on that theory and illustrates that, in order to fully appreciate Frame as an author, it is of paramount importance to look at her verse.

In her mid-teens, Janet Frame started to feel more imprisoned in her life and in need of a place to escape – in her autobiography she would refer to the discovery of menstruation and her ill-fitting school tunic as two of the many constrictions that made her feel entrapped and oppressed. Significantly, she replaced the Brontë sisters – with whom she used to interact through stories she invented with her siblings – with the inhabitants of the imaginary Land of Ardenue. Solitary walks in the fields or along rivers, and stories of female heroes longing for their own place in the world were no longer sufficient to distract her from the inner struggles she was starting to experience. Therefore, more and more frequently, she found refuge in her diary writing.[2] Here is a

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[2] Michael King, *Wrestling with the Angel: A Life of Janet Frame* (London: Picador, 2001 [2000]), p. 46.

passage she wrote to Mr Ardenue, bearded ruler of the valley, in the early 1940s:

> Mr Ardenue, I want to write and write and imagine. I can imagine and imagine. God, kill me if I cannot write … I want to make something beautiful. I shall know it is beautiful as I know the stars and the night, and the moon and everything of the earth is beautiful. I shall not rest until I write something that affects me as the earth – her trees and stars affect me. Mr Ardenue, I am dead serious.[3]

Some of Frame's typical themes and stylistic features are already there, such as the use of repetition and the dialogue with nature. Furthermore, the passionate desire to write is notable. More precisely, it was poetry she wanted to create: Frame was sure she wanted to become a poet, though she never felt worthy of the name. As she reported in her autobiography, during her second year at Waitaki Junior High School, she had made the decision of her life: 'making up my mind to be a "poet" [...], I began to write poems regularly in my small railway notebook'.[4] The word poet, however, started to seem like a risk: she did love poetry, but to claim that she could actually become a professional poet felt like a lie.

This tendency is also traceable much later in her life. For example, when she discovered that her niece liked poetry, in 1985:

> I'm really glad you're into poetry. When one goes 'into' poetry one can take so many things along – everything … Every time I sit down to write, I write 'poetry' – I put it in inverted commas because I make no claim for its proof that I'm a 'poet' or that it is 'poetry', I only know it's fun and it leads me into interesting places. I sometimes 'fit it in' to my book, or even use it as an introductory quote …[5]

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[3] Ibid., p. 47.

[4] Janet Frame, *To the Is-Land* (Auckland: Random Century New Zealand, 1989), p. 73.

[5] Janet Frame, quoted in Foreword to *Storms Will Tell: Selected Poems* (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2008), p. 15.

Frame appears keen to specify that poetry, in her world, was not real, or at least she could not be sure of it.[6] Frame was very ambivalent towards verse: she was sure she wanted to be a poet and whenever she set to work, she wrote poetry, but, as the inverted commas suggest, she was still scared of such categories. This ambivalence is frequently expressed in her personal writings. In an unpublished manuscript kept in the Hocken Library, Dunedin, she wrote:

> Poetry is my first love. I unfortunately don't feel that I've ever been able to write a real poem, but I keep trying. Perhaps that's not the way to go about it, but I tend to kill a poem. I start off and write it and then something happens and I destroy it with the wrong words. I do it every time with a poem. I see it coming. It gets to the end and I've used the wrong words and I've slipped in something too easy … I write what I call my best poetry, I don't publish it but I write it just when I sit down and don't think it's a poem.[7]

Her relationship to her writing is strong and personal enough that she talks of 'love', indeed, her 'first love'. Yet, she feared that her lack of skill could only kill that pretentious affection she felt. Such an emotional relationship with words and their power denotes a strong attention to the lexical level of communication, which needs to be considered in any translational approach to her work.

The same ambivalence can be found in critical works on Frame. In *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature*, Elizabeth Caffin maintains that Frame probably never really considered herself a poet.[8] C. K. Stead judges her verse inferior to her prose: 'Frame is inventive, she can be fluent, her best effects are sparks and flares of her genius in prose, but seeming uncertain where her own poetic strengths lie, she displays the limitations as well as the licence of the uncommitted'.[9] Critics appear to identify a problem of finishing things off. Evans, for his part, believed that Frame's lyrics did not contain 'inherently poetical'

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[6] Cf. the role of doubt in Frame's writing in Section 4.3.

[7] Janet Frame, unpublished manuscript, Hocken Library (Dunedin, New Zealand).

[8] Elizabeth Caffin, 'Poetry, Part Two: 1945–1990s', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. by Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 470.

[9] C.K. Stead, quoted in Valérie Baisnée, 'A Home in Language: The Meta(Physical) World of Janet Frame's Poetry', in *Frameworks: Contemporary Criticism on Janet Frame*, ed. by Jan Cronin and Simone Drichel, Cross/Cultures, 110 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 90.

themes. Mercer believes that Frame's biggest limitation with verse was a deep lack of self-consciousness: 'she is still beset by the problem of a "they" who think she is, or ought to be, something else'.[10]

However, it could be the case that Frame's approach to poetry was not aimed to respond to a specific definition. Despite her admiration for more conclusive and definitive poetry, her own approach to verse, in line with her rejection of categories and boundaries, might have actually led her to poems that worked against such restricting notions. In effect, she did nothing to contravene the critics' idea of her; on the contrary, by disparaging her own poems, she contributed to its validity.[11]

Yet it is undeniable that poetic composition had always been crucial in her creative process, not only in her approach to genre, but also in the development of her evidently self-reflexive use of language.[12] In her prose works (especially novels and autobiography), there are countless examples of poetry inserted in-between paragraphs: quotations of poets' names or of their most famous lines, poetic features (alliteration, parallelism, rhyme, simile, metaphor, allegory, analogy), song-like refrains, intense use of imagery, and other highly poetry-specific characteristics, which 'create an intertextual web of cultural references that run throughout her work and act as original viewpoints on her fiction'.[13] In relation to this, Denis Harold confirms that further research is needed to establish the relationship between her poetry and prose, which is one of the main objectives of this thesis. Indeed, I believe that the lack of more specific studies on Frame's verse has inevitably limited both the perception of her prose and the translations of it. If one ignores the inherently poetic character of Frame's writing, one is tempted to consider these elements as secondary in the translation tasks of decision-making and negotiation.

Studies of Frame's notebooks have demonstrated how one format tended to transform into the other. The poem 'Worms', for example, appears in prose form in the manuscript of *Towards Another Summer*; 'The Servants'

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[10] Gina Mercer, 'Exploring "the Secret Caves of Language": Janet Frame's Poetry', *Meanjin*, 44.3 (1985), 384–90 (p. 384).
[11] Sections 6.2 to 6.4 will focus on Frame's subversion of traditional poetic forms.
[12] Baisnée, p. 90.
[13] Ibid.

exists in both verse and prose variants.[14] Frame commented on this mutability in notes for an interview:

> I have always thought there was something magical about writing, and how it can be changed, buried, resurrected, influenced, and even added to by others with their own point of view. Very often a poem becomes a story or a novel, or a story becomes a novel.[15]

Frame openly acknowledged that her writing flew from one form to another; a poem could become part of a novel and, vice versa, narrative passages could end up in a poem. She conceived her writing as part of an unlimited, non-limiting chain.[16]

According to Valéry Baisnée, this use of language allowed Frame to constantly subvert her own ideas about language. In that sense, Frame questioned and challenged her narrations by confronting them with poetic language, thus implicitly transforming both prose and verse. In effect, although her project certainly moved beyond the mere desire to transgress linguistic barriers, she defined her poems in the measure in which they broke with tradition.[17] It could be argued that she turned her systematic doubts about her poetry and the perception of herself as a poet into a poetics.

Frame challenged language as well as poetic tradition. Her poetic practice often engaged in metalinguistic and metafictional analyses, which made self-reflexivity an overpowering matter. Frame frequently criticised conformism in poetry – especially her own. In a letter she sent to the editor George Braziller, she wrote that '[r]e-reading [the poems] with detachment I pronounce them pusillanimously pastoral, gently Georgian, and not at all the sort of verse I dream of writing. They are technically poor, also with jiggety-jig instead of concealed rhythm ... but I'm improving'.[18] As Baisnée notes, there is

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[14] Denis Harold, Afterword to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 140.
[15] Undated manuscript, quoted in *Storms Will Tell*, p. 140.
[16] Cf. Chapter 6 for the notion of prose poetry, and Chapter 2 for the notions of differentiality and trace.
[17] Baisnée, p. 91.
[18] Janet Frame, quoted in *Wrestling with the Angel*, p. 311.

ambivalence in Frame's desire to be recognised as a poet, and in the profound rejection of that very type of labelling discourse.[19]

Interestingly, her reflections on the role of the poet tend towards puppet-like figures guilty of perpetuating stereotypes and clichés, symbolised by 'their merry-go-round of words and postures known'.[20] These ridiculous figures lack depth of vision, and their conventional poetry is incapable of depicting the complexities of the world(s):

> The poet still breathes with one lung
> climbs a ladder of only one rung
> shoots at stars with his hand off the trigger.[21]

Frame's poets do not seem to belong to *that* dimension of imagination. Perhaps, she envied those who could boast the label 'real poet' so much as to ridicule them; for she was no poet, only a 'poet'. Or, this may be another way to communicate her distancing from tradition, convention, and *doxa*.[22] The latter opinion finds justification in her idiosyncratic approach to language in general: to quote Baisnée, 'Frame refuses to "use" poetic language. Rather, she tries to inhabit it, which implies its transformation'.[23] Accordingly, Frame wrote:

> Poetry has no room for timidity of tread
> [...]
> Poetry is a time for the breaking of habits good or bad,
> a breaking free of memory and yesterday
> to face the haunting that is.[24]

Verse appears to be a *modus* of being rather than a conscious choice. However, along with the various experiments with linguistic forms, Frame never abandoned her typical uncertainty: while she wanted to perform a revolutionary updating of language, she was extremely aware that language can always,

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[19] Baisnée, p. 92.
[20] 'These Poets', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 177.
[21] 'The Poet', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 208. See Appendix E for 'These Poets' and 'The Poet'.
[22] Cf. Barthes' perspectives on language in Chapter 2.
[23] Baisnée, p. 95.
[24] 'Some of My Friends Are Excellent Poets', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 123.

sometimes inadvertently, lead to the mere repetition of clichés and ideologies, 'making poetry an almost uninhabitable place'.[25] In Mercer's opinion, Frame

> regards language with affection and admiration, but at the same time with trepidation, even terror. She is constantly aware of its power and paradoxical weakness. It has limitations and borders; a border defines and communicates a shape, that is its virtue. In so doing, however, it confines and restricts the communication of any other shape and that is its fearful power. [...] Language can be comforting because of its familiarity, but ultimately its comfort is that of the straitjacket. It allows communication just as a straitjacket allows movement.[26]

The straitjacket metaphor effectively explains Frame's ambivalence towards language that enables but, simultaneously, impedes verbal exchanges and, in fact, towards every communicative act: on the one hand, she revered language as her most valuable means of expression; on the other, her writings illustrate how deceitful it can be and continuously warn readers of its risks and pitfalls. To Frame, the limits of language emerge especially when you are confronted with the communication of the *other*. In 'Lament for the Lakes', Frame actually writes an*other* language:

> Barevolved craffhanded turbuked
> under driftices of berge
> damperly they have sultured
> mormed without crumbience or zone
> each tressled pave.
> [...]
> and angletamed with armile
> the dislatched wolmew clangs
> headily this downage ominime
> [...]
> the dindle pyrrage
> brackly tanquish the plion's thrave.[27]

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[25] Baisnée, p. 105.
[26] Mercer, pp. 385–86.
[27] Janet Frame, 'Lament for the Lakes', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 197.

Through the act of writing a language of the *other*, Frame forces her audience to see how conventional language prevents experiencing otherness.[28] Thus, through a performative use of language, the reader's agency is activated and the distinction between author as primary/active and reader as secondary/passive dissolves.

6.1.1 A posture game: Frame's reaction to New Criticism

The Pocket Mirror (1967) is the only collection of poems that Frame published in her lifetime. However, she left a huge quantity of unpublished poetic material. The exceptional privacy in which she shrouded her poems has led to a complex and long-lasting editing project, which is still incomplete.

Many lyrics that looked like finished pieces ended up in the posthumous collection *The Goose Bath* (2006), while others are still being considered by editors.[29] By the year 2000, Frame seemed resigned to the fact that a second volume of poetry would be published posthumously. To Elizabeth Alley, who asked her whether a second collection was imminent, she replied 'I think that will have to wait until I'm dead'.[30]

The task of selecting the poems to be published in *The Goose Bath* was not an easy one. Frame's manuscripts were rarely tidy, and often carried more than one date. Indeed, the volume was not organised chronologically as that would have required several more years of scholarly sifting: between checking manuscript archives and trying to discern among different typewriters, word-processors, and also different types of typing paper used, the work was slow.

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[28] Section 6.6 shows how Frame demanded the reader's active participation in the reception/definition of hybrid and liminal spaces of identity. Translation, however, has generally deleted this feature.

[29] Janet Frame, *The Goose Bath: Poems* (Auckland: Random House, 2006). Gordon insisted that the volume include only those poems that showed clear signs of editing and approval by Frame. For this reason, she asked for the academic expertise of Bill Manhire and Denis Harold. In fact, Frame herself had indicated Manhire as the person able to edit her poems – she once told her niece Pamela that she had talked to Manhire about her writing, and felt he understood her poetic vision as well as her diffidence towards what she saw as poetic failures. Foreword to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 17.

[30] Janet Frame, quoted in Foreword to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 16. After 2004, the year of her death, her niece found an exercise book in which the poet had noted the titles of two recent projects: a novel entitled *The Complete Book of Fear – A Novel of Incidents* (of which no trace has been found), and *The Goose Bath – Poems*. Foreword to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 18.

Also, it was often the case that different drafts of the same poem existed, and they were not always dated. Sometimes they all looked like final versions. Therefore, editors were faced by many a conundrum: 'which version would we have chosen? The one we thought most poetically pleasing, or the one we thought most recent?'.[31] At other times, the same poem appeared in different notebooks, marked by a different year. For example, 'A Specimen in the Maudsley Brain Museum' was published in Frame's autobiography with the year 1955 in its text. However, there is also a typescript on which Frame crossed out 1955 by hand, replaced it with 1985, and then crossed it out again in favour of 1975.[32]

In reality, what appears from the archival work is that Frame wanted more of her verse to be published. She made about ten different lists of poems over the years, thereby indicating repeated attempts to form new collections.[33] As Gordon attests, after the completion of *The Carpathians* (1988) Frame felt it was time to devote her energies to a second volume of poetry; in fact, she had already been working on it for some time but, in that period, she wanted to focus exclusively on that task.[34] However, she struggled with the organisation of a complete collection, and remained undecided about her poems till the end – 'Some of them are rather good' but 'there's such a lot of rubbish'.[35]

When Frame described her poetry to her niece, she compared it to the posture game she used to play with other children when she was little: it was a game that involved loss of poise and balance, some falling, with children shouting expressions like 'I saw you! You're out!'. She said, 'You see, there's too much of that in my poems'.[36]

When poetry was at stake, it was mainly a question of rhythm for Frame. She felt she never managed to get the right harmony ('Somehow I can't get

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[31] Bill Manhire, Introduction to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 24.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Harold, Afterword to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 140.

[34] Pamela Gordon, Foreword to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 15.

[35] Ibid. In reality, Frame did like two of her poems: 'The Place', and 'Wyndham', and 'perhaps also the one about the cabbages, and the one about the suicides. I think they work'. (See Appendix E for the 'The Cabbages' and 'The Suicides'). Janet Frame, quoted in the Introduction to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 19.

[36] Manhire, Introduction to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 24.

that').[37] Whether she was talking to an editor, a fellow poet, an acquaintance, or a friend, she was constantly devaluing her verse. Almost forty years after the publication of her only book of verse, she stated during an interview that she had still not published most of the poems she had written because she did not 'trust' them: 'I have a heap of poems, but none of them are real, you know? None of them are successful poems. They all trip over the old, um, rhythm and rhymes and so on, and they're not free enough'.[38]

However, though her own lyrics were frequently criticised, she also appears to have written against a specific movement of criticism. When Frame began writing professionally, New Criticism was dominating English and American academies. American New Criticism shared with Russian Formalism the belief that literature should be studied in the components that make it formally different from other types of texts, especially ordinary ones. This meant that literature needed specific rules of analysis, because it was written, according to them, in a different language. Whereas ordinary speech is subordinate to the rules of logic and communicative efficacy, poetry works on assonance, repetition, rhythm, rhyme, and so forth.[39] These elements rely on a very different logic, which uses words denotatively rather than connotatively. That is why poetry is able to evoke and enable secondary meanings and multiple interpretations.

However, while Russian Formalism aimed at objectivity and proclaimed the importance of a science of literature, New Criticism was anti-scientific and more prone to consider the non-rational dimension of art.[40] Its principal method of investigation is often described as 'close reading', which did not emphasise arid analyses of textual features or literary devices, but rather aimed to let out the 'concrete universals' (universal truths) enclosed in the text. In this sense, New Critics saw poetry as simultaneously specific and universal. Despite its distinct language, poetry can make allusion through metaphor and, therefore, bear both individual and general meanings.[41]

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., pp. 19–20.
[39] *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 9.
[40] Ibid., p. 5.
[41] Ibid., p. 6.

Frame's approach to the specificities of poetic language was radically different to that of the New Critics. As the following sections will demonstrate, her poems constantly merge elements of the tradition with the rhythms and liberties of ordinary speech. Conventional devices (such as metrics and rhyming patterns) are subverted, whether through an ironic, emphatic use of their regularities, or by their continuous moving towards irregular forms. The constant mix of standard and non-standard forms displays a creatively active relationship with and reaction to tradition and literary criticism. For this reason, an informed approach to Frame's verse in translation should take into consideration that her 'irregularities' are not simply aimed to subvert 'regularity'. On the contrary, translation could become a means to engage with Frame's project and, simultaneously, let readers enjoy and become active parts of it. Through resistant translation strategies readers can sense that something is happening in the source, and approach the target in a different way.

Frame's lack of self-consciousness had her continuously comparing her works to parameters of regularity, as well as to the work of other poets (especially those published in the journal *Landfall*). As Manhire notes, 'Janet Frame was sometimes too willing to let ideas of symmetry inflect her own voice as a poet'.[42]

Frame discovered *Landfall* when she was a student in Dunedin. In her autobiography, she reported that it published lyrics that were 'obscure, scholarly, very carefully written, with formal stanzas and intricate rhyme and rhythm; occasionally there was a rogue free verse of half a dozen lines'.[43] Although Frame's production shows her sympathies were with free versification, she truly appreciated clean and neat style. In a letter to Sargeson, she commented on C.K. Stead's first book, *Whether the Will is Free* (1964):

> I admire Karl's poems for their 'purity', and don't ask me to define purity.[44] They remind me of clean potatoes out of the garden; the earth is washed off them (and some readers like their earth on) but their skin is a beautiful

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[42] Manhire, Introduction to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 20.

[43] Janet Frame, *An Angel at My Table*, quoted in *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 20–21.

[44] For a definition of 'purity' and 'pure poetry' in New Criticism, see Robert Penn Warren, 'Pure and Impure Poetry', *The Kenyon Review*, 5.2 (1943), 228–54.

> texture, and you can make necklaces only with clean potatoes. I'll have to read them again to find out if they've eyes – too many or too few.[45]

Frame admired Stead's structural precision and transparency, suggesting that only from clarity and beautiful texture can readers extract true meaning. Her verse lacked all this. However, she also suggested these poems probably had 'too few' imperfections, as if having none were unnatural.[46] In her world purity worked differently. The children of *Owls Do Cry*, for instance, find treasures in the town rubbish dump, where they usually go to play. A similar symbolism is shared by most of her novels, and suggests that truth and insight are to be found in 'what is clumsy, variegated, impure', for '[v]ision is rarely tidy, or polite: it interrupts the clean, pure surface. Some people cut it out'.[47]

At this point, Frame's position may appear paradoxical: while she recognised and greatly appreciated the beauty of poems that so neatly recalled traditional forms, she disliked the passive imitation of tradition. Moreover, her idiosyncratic use of regular forms clearly is not aimed at standards of formal perfection; quite the opposite, she challenged and subverted the very idea of conformity in verse. However, the paradox allowed her, once again, to embrace polarity and encompass formal boundaries. She managed to create a unique poetic voice, which finds its place precisely on the margins between conventional forms and their explicit creative questioning, thereby reconfiguring what people would normally 'cut out' of poetry.

6.2 Metric features

In the light of the previous chapters, one would certainly not expect Frame to take a conventional approach to metrics; indeed, an overall view of her collections may easily lead to the conclusion that her verse is highly irregular. However, a closer analysis will demonstrate that Frame occasionally used

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[45] Janet Frame, private correspondence with Frank Sargeson, quoted in *Storms Will Tell*, p. 21.

[46] She referred to the patches that are about to sprout and which one would normally cut before cooking the potato.

[47] Manhire, Introduction to *Storms Will Tell*, p. 21.

standard metres, and that she was able to mix them with variations so as to achieve a personalised approach to traditional patterns. Certainly, those lyrics that conform to metrical norms stand out, owing both to their rarity, and to the striking effect of their rhythmic patterns. Yet, as this section will illustrate, Frame's personalised structures can be found even in highly regular contexts as, regardless of tradition, 'most poems seek their own direction'.[48] Her peculiar approach to poetic conventions is, therefore, expressed through an ambivalent use of conventional norms and a reconfiguration of the same.

The work on Frame's approach to metrics needs to depart from text-based study. The first poem to be presented is entitled 'I Met a Man', and its metrical analysis – with possible alternatives – follows:

1. Ĭ mét / ă mán / whŏ wóre / ă wĬn / tĕr súit.
2. Hĕ pláyed / thĕ flúte.

3. Ĭ mét / ă mán / whó săng / cárŏls / bý ă / bŏnfíre.
    / whŏ săng cá(rŏls) / bў ă bón(fĭre).[49]
4. Hĕ wás / ă líar.

5. Ĭ mét / ă mán / whŏ dúg / hĭs gráve / tŏo eár (lў).
6. Hĭs háir / wăs cúr (lў).

7. Thĕ mó / răl ís, / thĕ strán / gĕst péo / plĕ gó
8. Ăbóut / thĕ eárth. / Dón't yŏu / thĭnk só?
    / Dŏn't yóu/[50]

9. Ĭ mét / mўsélf / móră / lísĭng
10. éatĭng / ă cáke / wĭth whíte / ícĭng.[51]

As a general rule, one needs to bear in mind that stress patterns in spoken English are not entirely fixed, so it is often possible to scan a line in more than one way, depending on how one chooses to read it and where one decides to place the emphasis. However, I will suggest one way of reading it, which is perhaps the closest to spoken English, and will analyse it metrically so as to

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[48] Ibid., p. 23.
[49] Alternative metrical reading.
[50] Alternative metrical reading.
[51] 'I Met a Man', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 60.

identify whether there is a sustaining pattern. According to the stress markers indicated above, the poem appears to be sustained by binary rhythm: line 1 = iambic pentameter; line 2 = iambic dimeter; line 3 = mixed feet (two iambs, two anapaests, and an unstressed hyperbeat or feminine ending); line 4 = iambic dimeter; line 5 = iambic pentameter (hyperbeat); line 6 = iambic dimeter (hyperbeat); line 7 = iambic pentameter with caesura after 'is'; line 8 = iambic tetrameter; line 9 = mixed feet (iamb, iamb, trochee, trochee); and line 10 = mixed feet (trochee, iamb, iamb, trochee).

Each line has an end stopping, perhaps with the sole exception of line 7, which flows into line 8 through an enjambment. Therefore, the whole poem is formed by lines that mostly contain a single thought expressed within the space of a line. This gives the poem a sense of wholeness and clarity, and the well-structured message appears as a concluded piece of information. The full stops, end stoppings, and a quite regular metrics mark the cadenced pace of the composition, which is seldom altered – perhaps only the caesura and the enjambment in line 7 produce a small alteration in diction. Furthermore, one notices that, whenever a substitution occurs (line 10) or when the poet mixes feet (lines 3, 9, 10), this creates a sudden change in the even pace and, therefore, catches readers' attention and allows the poet to stress certain points. For instance, 'Don't you' in line 8 is a trochee preceded and followed by iambs: this alteration in rhythm is likely to catch the reader-listener's attention and highlight the interrogative tone of the final beat.

Thus, although the prosody of the poem cannot be said to strictly reproduce a traditional metrical pattern, the rhythm is regular with rare exceptions, which creates a recurring and predictable sonic structure. The focus appears to be on a controlled recreation of spoken language, in which the poet demonstrates metrical knowledge, as well as her ability to play with rhythmic aspects. Iambs with the occasional trochee, anapaest, and hyperbeat do represent the ordinary rhythm of spoken English; anyone not aiming for a deliberate effect will tend to fall into it naturally. What is interesting, but tends to be neglected by scholars of Frame, is that she showed an awareness of such issues, and engaged in a critical dialogue with traditional and oral forms of poetic language.

The second poem to be analysed is 'A Light Verse', which presents a much more regular metrics:

1. Nŏw hére's / ăn ín / trŏdúc / tiŏn tó
2. Thĕ béar / whŏ líves / ĭnsíde / thĕ Zóo.
3. Hĕ líved / ĭn hóu / sĕs má / nў yéars,
4. hĕ wá / s ă mán / wĭth hópe / s ănd féars,
5. hĕ bréak / făstéd / ŏn bréad / ănd hónĕy,
6. hĕ wórked / ăll wéek / tŏ eárn / smăll mónеў,
7. hĕ wá / s ă téac / hĕr quíte / cŏntrárў
8. ín ă / státe schóol / sécŏn / dárў
9. whŏ fóund / ŏne dáy / hĕ'd nóth / ĭng léft
10. ŏf áll / măté / riăl thíngs / bĕréft
11. ĭnclú / diŏg hís / mŏst faíth /fŭl wífe
12. whŏ súi /tĕd hím / ăs fórk / tŏ knífe
13. ŏr knífe / tŏ fórk / ĭt dóes / ŏ't máttĕr
14. ŭpón / thĕ mát / rĭmón / iăl pláttĕr
15. whích ĭs whích, / ĕxcépt / thăt shé
16. cŏuld cút / hĭm móre / cŏnvín / ciŏglý
17. wĭth wórds / ănd wáys / - thăt póor / yŏung téachĕr
18. hácked ănd / hágged ĭn / évеrў / féatŭre!

19. Hĕ thóught / ĭt bést / (ăs má / nў dó)
20. tŏ gó / tŏ líve / ĭnsíde / thĕ Zóo.

This lyric is composed of regular feet with sporadic alterations. Out of twenty lines, seventeen are iambic tetrameters, two are trochaic tetrameters, and one is semi-irregular (line 15 = amphimacer (or cretic) and two iambs). Since the amphimacer is a ternary foot with a beat either side of an unstressed middle, it could be considered as a sort of iamb preceded by an accent. However, the general musicality of the poem is not affected by this.

The insertion of a mixed-feet line can be seen as a slight deviation from the iambic tetrameter pattern employed throughout the composition. The two trochaic lines, despite being regular tetrameters, are wisely placed in points where Frame may have wanted to signal a turning point: in line 8, the switch from iamb to trochee could symbolise the 'contrary' idea signalled in the

preceding line; while in line 18, the trochees change the rhythm, thus marking the conclusion of the story – further emphasised by the final exclamation. Once again, every exception to the norm appears an intentional choice in the picture of a regular text, in which metrical irregularities (such as the trochaic and mixed-feet lines) do not alter the overall sing-song rhythm.

As in prose, Frame did not seem to find a suitable form of expression in fixed, ready-made metric models. As has been argued in Chapter 5, hers is a border-writing acting between what is considered acceptable and what is not. Nevertheless, to be aware of her knowledge of classical metrics changes the way her non-standardness is interpreted – and translated: rather than a lack of knowledge and mastery (as critics such as Evans have tended to hypothesise) or even a mere ignorance of traditions (which might be one of the reasons her poetry is so underrepresented in studies of her work), her verse is rooted in solid ground, which the poet chose to interpret.

'I'm invisible' demonstrates Frame's idea of the necessary coexistence of conformity and subversion in poetic language.[52] The metrical analysis of a few lines will suffice to demonstrate this point:

  9: Líke dĕcísiŏns
10: Líke ĕlsewhére
11: Líke ínstĭtútiŏns fár frŏm thĕ róad lábĕlled Scénĭc Dríve
14: ăs yóu ănd Í wálk wĭth ŏur tínў créscĕnt móon ŏf síght ĭn ŏur pérsŏnăl [dàrknĕss
19: thĕ lóvers / réach thrŏugh / mў lífe / tŏ tóuch / ĕach óther
22: Ĭ gíve / fréedŏm / tŏ dáncĕrs
23: tŏ thĕ spéa / kĭng ŏf trúth
24: Ĭt ís / thĭs wáy. / Thĕre's nó / ŏne hére / tŏ éavesdrŏp / ŏr ŏbsérve
25: ănd thén Ĭ léarn móre thăn Í ăm ĕntítled tŏ knów

As is visible, the lyric does not follow any particular pattern. The lines' length varies greatly, moving from monometers to nine- and ten-foot lines. There are frequent end-stoppings, but also several caesuras and many lighter breaks due to some extended lines. There is only one enjambment, which, together with the

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[52] See Appendix E for complete version.

alternation between very short and very long lines, does not favour a continuous, regular flow. In this poem, there is no discernible metre in the standard definition of the term, with the coexistence of up to five different types of feet in one line, thus creating a much more irregular pace if one compares it to the previous two examples. Lines 19, 22, 23, and 24 in particular display a clear intention towards a drastic alteration of the rhythmic pattern: line 19 is an iambic pentameter with one trochaic substitution and its rhythm is quite patterned, as is that of lines 22, 23, and 24; line 22 is made up of an iamb-trochee-iamb combination (with hyperbeat); line 23 is an anapaest dimeter; and line 24 can be read as an iambic heptameter (if one stresses 'or').

In this sense, 'I'm invisible' exemplifies the way Frame most often approached metrics: she used a variety of different beats in the same piece with regularity an exception throughout – in the overall body of work, 'A Light Verse' is the only poem, among hundreds between the two collections, that presents a much more regular metre than ordinary speech cadence. Stephen Fry said that '[i]f the foot is the heartbeat, the metre can be best described as the readout or cardiogram trace'.[53] In Frame's case, although the readout of her often unmetered and unrhymed lines rarely appears consistent, her verse is generally sustained by an intense, though irregular, musicality.[54]

Frame mainly wrote in free verse, which she animated by a consistent use of assonance, alliteration, and parallelism[55] – in fact, cadence is thought to be the rhythm of both free verse and poetic prose, Frame's favourite forms of literary experimentation.[56] Cadence works as 'a larger, looser unit of rhythm than the metrical foot', and regards the symmetry and balance that phrasal units, rather than patterns of stress, create in a poem.[57] Frame probably made great use of free versification because it allowed her endless variation in style

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[53] Stephen Fry, *The Ode Less Travelled: Unlocking the Poet Within* (London: Arrow, 2007), p. 7.

[54] See Section 6.2.

[55] See section 6.3.

[56] Walt Whitman is seen as the American originator of the cadence rhythm. However, since the nineteenth century, many poets (including W.C. Williams, Pound, and the Imagists) abandoned formal metrics for the cadence, which sounded closer to music and human speech. More precisely, while in standard lines regular feet are the unit against which readers weigh the form-meaning pair, free verses are gauged in terms of syntactical units, breath units, sense or thought units, conversational units, and rhetorical units. *The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms*, ed. by Jack Myers and Michael Simms (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 38, 123–25.

[57] *The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms*, p. 38.

and subtlety of effect, something standard patterns could not provide. Interesting examples of free verse are 'I Visited', 'The Landfall Desk', and 'On Not Being There'. Here is a passage from 'The Landfall Desk':[58]

> I think I will keep you, malicious desk.
> You refuse to stay tidy, you get stuck and you wobble on your cut legs.
> The edges of the wound around your middle
> will never meet again; you are unbalanced, overweight.
> I remember the day I took you in,
> a Dunedin day of generous cloud
> - no niggardly blowaway tufts in these journeying skies
> pursuing their massive somewhere along a one-track wind from the mountains
>   to the sea
> towards the north, the Peninsula and beyond.
> There was some suggestion that day, I remember, that I remove my front door
>   to admit you.
> It was not necessary. How agile you were, how accommodating, how fitting!
>
> You were something to live up to.
> Perhaps, after all, something I could never face –
> too good, too clever, too correct.
>
> Mind my reputation, you said, when I dropped the wrong word or touched you
>   with a misplaced syllable.
> It was later, I remember, that your corners began to attack me as I walked by
> [you.
> Once during my absence, the occupants of the house dismembered you and
> [hid
>   you in the cellar until I returned.
> […]
> - You can't guess what they did! Her horror was clear.
> - What did they do?
> - I don't know how to tell you.
> - Tell me.
> […][59]

The poems present no form of metrical or rhythmic regularity, and lines are sustained only by the rare repetitions and consonances disseminated in the text. The use of enjambment is consistent and links them to one another, making them flow, albeit at a fast pace. The irregular cadence is mainly due to the alternation of very long lines and extremely short ones, which is even more

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[58] See Appendix E for 'I Visited' and 'On Not Being There'.
[59] 'The Landfall Desk', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 90–91.

accentuated by the absence of rhyme. It might be argued that, rather than a lyric, this text sounds like spoken English:

> In intention and effect, [free verse] has claimed a middle ground between prose and metered verse which has brought poetry closer to the spoken idiom of various languages. […] In general, [free verse] creates an air of familiarity, accessibility, and naturalness. In terms of language, models that f. v. reflects, it is based on (1) *verse written toward the style of prose*, […] (2) *verse structured on semiformal speech rhythms*, […] or (3) *verse written toward the style of the common idiom or low diction*.[60]

Visibly echoing both spoken language and modernist short story, Frame's verse frequently leans towards the style of prose (lines 3–5, 13–21 of the extract), and the rhythms of semiformal English speech (lines 1, 22–25). Not only does this denote her idea of a stylistic continuum between prose and poetry, it also signals a reaction against any formalist perspective on poetic language.

6.2.1 Translating metre

Broadly speaking, translators might approach metrical aspects in Frame's poetry in two ways. Given the preponderance of free verse over regular metres, they could base their strategies on the awareness that metrics was not a primary preoccupation for the poet. Consequently, they could decide not to consider it a feature that needs to be recreated in translation. Alternatively, they could recognise that, despite the large amount of technical freedom, Frame's verse did include some examples of more regular metrical patterns, and interpret them as meaningful representatives of her original approach to language.

Aiming to establish a methodology for verse translation as a whole, Lefevere formulated a structured approach that moves towards criteria of objectivity. Among the seven strategies he develops, the notion of 'metrical translation' states that if a translator opts to retain the metrical aspects of the

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[60] *The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms*, pp. 124–25.

ST, s/he is no longer bound to sense or sound, only to the metre of the source. This strategy, however, may lead to radical changes in the information owing to the clumsiness created in the TT – if not to unintelligible texts.[61] To opt for such a strategy would imply a total rejection of semantics in favour of a strict fidelity to metrics. If one considers, for example, the first two stanzas of 'I Met a Man', a translation completely disregarding the semantic level while perfectly recreating the iambic pentameter might read as follows:

Hŏ més/sŏ giú/ lă cól/lă dél/lă mám(mă).
Ĕ ché/ sărá.

Hŏ fát/tŏ mía/ lă gón/nă dél/lă nón(nă).
Ŏ lí/ ŏ lá.

As the English iambic pentameter has generally been translated into the *endecasillabo sciolto*,[62] the Italian stanzas proposed here perfectly adhere to the principle of metric translation advanced by Lefevere. They bear no other relationship (formal, semantic, or acoustic) with the ST besides metrics. But can this still be called a translation? How would the constraints of metre be faced in a creative translation; and how would they interact with those of meaning? Could they really be isolated from one another as if metre and sense were working on independent textual levels?

In looking at how other English-Italian translators have approached this issue, one needs to remember that the iambic pentameter was originally borrowed by English (and German) poets from the classical Latin tradition between the thirteenth and fourteenth century. It was adopted, to quote but some of the highest examples, by Marlowe, Donne, and Shakespeare ('Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'). Inevitably, in its overseas transposition, the

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[61] André Lefevere, *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), p. 41.

[62] The phrase literally means 'eleven syllables without rhyme'. In the Italian metric system, the name of the line derives from the number of syllables that compose it in its most common form, that is *piana*. This is because most Italian words are stressed on the penultimate syllable (*parole piane*). Therefore, if one counts the position of the last stressed syllable, which in the *endecasillabo* must be the tenth, the line will be made up of eleven syllables, as the last one will be unstressed (feminine ending or unstressed hyperbeat).

blank verse had to be adopted to the specificities of the Anglo-Saxon lexicon: English language, unlike Italian, has a large number of monosyllabic words, which could result in monotonous and heavy cadence. That is why the Italian *endecasillabo* was translated into a regular alternation of unstressed-stressed syllables, to create a livelier rhythmic pattern.

The same is true when translating English blank verse into Italian: it has been suggested by many poet-translators that alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables should be avoided, as it generates a flat rhythmic structure.[63] This is visible in the various retranslations of the classics written in blank verse. An interesting example comes from the Italian translations of Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (first scene, second act):

> ... quando tu stesso, amico
> Sempre giocondo, simile a leggera
> Colorata farfalla che sorvoli
> Un cupo fiore, mi schiudevi un nuovo
> Mondo, una nuova vita, e la gaiezza
> Tua stessa m'infondevi dentro il cuore;
> Così che, dietro a te, dimenticando
> La mia sventura, io mi accendevo tutto
> Del fervor d'un'ardente giovinezza.
> (Diego Valeri)

> E tu compagno ognor giocondo dal par
> di leggera farfalla variopinta
> attorno a un fiore tenebroso, in ogni
> levar di sole mi scherzavi accanto
> spirando nel mio cuor la tua letizia
> sì che, scordate le mie pene, anch'io
> folleggiavo con te, travolto in gorghi
> veloci di fervente gioventù.
> (Vincenzo Errante)

> E quando tu, compagno sempre gaio,
> Giocavi accanto a me, come farfalla

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63 Diego Valeri, preface to Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Ifigenia in Tauride*, trans. by Diego Valeri, Teatro, 168 (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1954), p. 13 [Catalogo del Fondo Diego Valeri FV8].

Lieve, svariante intorno a un cupo fiore,
E riversavi la tua gioia in me,
Sì che l'anima mia dimenticava
La sua miseria ed era trascinata
Ad esultare in giovanile ebbrezza.
(Gilberto Forti)[64]

For reasons of space, I will limit my observations to a general examination of the links between form and meaning. Each with their peculiar lexicon and use of poetic devices, the three versions above provide extraordinary renderings in *endecasillabi sciolti*, still recreating the sense and poetic quality of the ST. Are these not to be considered metrical translations because, here and there, the metrics does not perfectly match the source patterns for reasons of sense recreation? Furthermore, is the fact that the meaning of the TT matches that of the ST to be considered as a sign of the secondariness of the TT to the ST? Since they have had to respond to so many constraints, can these translations really be considered creative?

It is not easy to identify a definitive answer to the above questions; there is no univocal way of approaching them. If, on the one hand, there is no such thing as a 'perfect' or 'best' translation in principle,[65] on the other, there are certainly more informed strategies. Generally speaking, an aware strategy involves a clear intention-project on the part of the translator, which may or may not be explicitly stated in prefatory materials. If a translator decides to engage in a pure exercise of metrics recreation, s/he will be handling the creative aspect of the translation process as a form of creativity whose only constraint is metrics. It follows that their approach will work on one given issue only. Also, as Holmes states, prosody cannot be 'retained' in the movement from source language (SL) to target language (TL): verse forms outside of their own traditions are meaningless – an iambic pentameter in itself does not recreate Frame's iambic pentameter.[66]

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[64] The three extracts can be accessed at:
<http://www.diegovaleri.it/userfiles/schede/IFIGENIA%20IN%20TAURIDE%202.pdf> [accessed 24 September 2014].

[65] See Section 2.2.2.

[66] James S. Holmes, 'Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Form', in James S. Holmes, *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*, 2nd edn (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), pp. 23–33 (pp. 23–30).

Conversely, if a translator looks at metrics as one of the multiple features that s/he must take into consideration, his/her perspective will be closer to an exercise on multiple levels, all working simultaneously. To handle a poem as a unitary construct made up of a complex of features will, then, entail the simultaneous consideration of prosodic (metric, rhyming, and intonation patterns), semantic (links between formal and meaning), stylistic (acoustic, formal, and lexical level), and ideological features (any reference made to critical-theoretical questions or movements). The practice of this particular exercise exposes translators to the difficulty of having to respond to a double call: facing the constraints of the ST, and making of the TT an autonomous work of creativity. The translation proposed below is a candidate TT for 'I Met a Man', and aims to clarify some aspects of this articulated process:

'Ho visto un uomo'

1. Ho visto un uomo tutto incappottato.
2. Suonava il flauto.

3. Ho visto un uomo che canticchiava ed un falò.
4. Solo bugie narrò.

5. Ho visto un uomo che presto si è scavato la fossa.
6. Stramba la sua capigliatura rossa.

7. La morale è: la gente è strana,
8. secondo me. La trovi un'idea balzana?

9. Ho visto me stessa che giudica e passa,
10. mangiando una torta dalla candida glassa.

The text retains the number of lines, typology of stanzas, rhyming, and metric patterns. The regular binary rhythm has been recreated in seven iambic and three mixed-feet lines (lines 5, 9, 10). In line 1, 'tutto incappottato' translates the English 'who wore a winter suit', which translates literally as 'indossava un abito invernale'. The periphrasis proposed in Italian retains the idea of 'winter garment used to protect oneself from the cold', in that 'tutto incappottato' refers

to a male subject who is wearing a coat (and possibly other winter accessories, such as scarf or hat).

The second line slightly alters the rhyming pattern. The perfect rhyme of the ST could have been recreated in, for example, 'Tutto incappottato un uomo se ne andava. | Il flauto suonava', but this would have caused the loss of the sustaining parallelism ('I met ...') repeated in first line of the first, second, third, and fifth stanzas, which I have preferred to recreate as 'Ho visto ...'. Therefore, I have opted for an imperfect rhyme (incappottato/flauto), in which the Italian diphthong slightly widens the acoustic correspondence between the two lines. Overall, a minor loss in sound has allowed me to engage with a fundamental structural and stylistic element. As for the perfect rhyme in line 4, this has been retained by transforming 'He was a liar' (era un bugiardo) into 'Solo bugie narrò' ('only lies he told'), an inverted object-verb/subject structure. The same inversion has been applied to line 5 ('who dug his grave too early' / 'che presto si è scavato la fossa'), so as to recreate the full rhyme 'fossa'/'rossa'.

That rhyme has been recreated by a transformation of the word 'curly' into 'rossa' (red). For those readers of Frame who are familiar with her biography and the whole mythology associated with it, red and curly are both adjectives that one would associate with Frame. Moreover, they are emphasised by the adjective in first position 'stramba' (weird), a further allusion to Frame's persona.[67] For these reasons, line 6 is an example of translator's subjectivity, creativity, and subject knowledge working with the 'original' to create a 'new original'. Furthermore, I opted for a reaffirmation of the idea of 'strangeness' in lines 7–8, where I re-state the concept with 'strana' (strange) and 'balzana' (whimsical, odd).

If line 7 recreates the same meaning (but loses the superlative), line 8 completely recreates the question the poet is asking. 'About the earth' becomes 'secondo me' (in my opinion) mainly for metrical reasons. However, this finds justification also in the fact that 'about the earth' may be seen as a phrase that does not add content to the couplet, just like the phrase 'secondo me', which is abused in informal speech. Conversely, the second part of the line, which poses a question to the reader, is turned into a question that reinforces the semantic

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[67] Cf. Chapter 1.

association with the idea of 'weirdness' (developed throughout the whole poem).

This, perhaps, compensates the loss on the semantic level in line 3, where 'carols' ('canti di Natale') does not have a one-word, exact correspondence in Italian. The whole web of associations that 'carols' triggers is much more intense and specific if compared to the generic expression 'canti di Natale' (Christmas songs). Therefore, in order to keep the rhyme and meter, I decided to recreate a sort of corresponding symbolic association through the conjunction 'ed': the unusual association of a singing man 'and' a bonfire (rather than the spatial image suggested by the preposition 'by') strengthens the relationship between the animate and inanimate elements, almost implying they occupy their own unique space within the whole picture of the poem.

The last couplet develops the theme of strangeness into that of superficial moralisation. I have chosen to stress this point, paying particular attention to the recreation of an effective rhyme and an immediate ideological association with the concept of morality, at the expense of a perfect recreation of prosody. If one compares the syllable count of lines 9–10 in the two poems, one will notice different lengths that nevertheless retain a regular rhythm. In line 9, the expression 'che giudica e passa' triggers a powerful association with the popular passage of *The Divine Comedy*, 'Non ragioniam di lor | ma guarda e passa',[68] which over time has been transformed by *vox populi* into 'Non ti curar di loro, ma guarda e passa'. The final couplet thus recreates the topic switch, its irony, the perfect rhyme, and the regular cadence. The focus, however, has been turned into a more immediate cultural association that, at the closure of the poem, echoes the traditional ironic and/or moralising function of the final couplet of the sonetto.

A similar but less metrics-bound approach could consider accurately recreating the general cadence (for instance, the chanting rhythm in 'A Light Verse'), without expecting the lines to perfectly match the source feet. It might also accept slight modification of the meaning of some lines in order to preserve rhythmic aspects, provided that the overall meaning is not altered. The following

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[68] Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. by Robin Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin, 2006), III, 51.

translation illustrates this approach and offers a candidate TT for 'A Light Verse':

'Un verso leggero'

1. Eccomi pronta, vi racconterò
2. la storia dell'orso che vive nello Zoo.
3. In casa abitò per tanti anni,
4. con speranze e anche affanni,
5. pane e miele a colazione,
6. era un insegnante, nessuna ambizione,
7. lavorava sodo e guadagnava male
8. questo professore un po' asociale,
9. che d'improvviso si trovò privato
10. di tutto ciò che aveva conquistato
11. compresa la sua moglie eccezionale
12. che per lui era davvero essenziale
13. come il coltello per la forchetta
14. nel matrimonio nessuna scaletta
15. solo che la moglie poteva
16. ferirlo come voleva
16. con parole e modi, che il prof poverino
17. restava stregato in un angolino!

18. Come molti altri la azzeccò
19. e prese a vivere nello Zoo.

Starting with a literal translation of the title, which makes an explicit reference to the tradition of light poetry,[69] this TT aims to recreate all the elements that contribute to the witty spirit of the ST. The full rhymes, the sustained humour, the irony of the closing couplet, the minimalist punctuation, and the lightness of the plot have thus guided the re-creative process. The slight semantic alterations in lines 6–8 and 12–15 are functional to the overall meaning and, most importantly, recreate the typical irony of light verse. In this way, metrics is

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[69] Light verse (or poetry) is a kind of poetry considered light due to its humorous or frivolous content, as well as for its usual brevity. In fact, it is not necessarily comic in intent, but needs to be 'digestible', as Stephen Fry describes it. In his opinion, light verse 'encourages readers to believe that they and the poet share the same discourse, intelligence and standing, inhabit the same universe of feeling and cultural reference, it does not howl in misunderstood loneliness, wallow in romantic agony or bombard the reader with learning and allusion from Parnassian or abstrusely academic height'. Fry, *The Ode Less Travelled*, p. 270.

seen and handled as one of the multiple features that contribute to the overall message/function of a poem.

6.3 Sound: Rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia

According to Craig Dworkin, no other poetic feature is currently as neglected as the sound dimension: 'the discourse on poetry today, largely fixated as it is on what a given poem [...] "says," regards the sound structure in question [...] as little more than a peripheral issue, a kind of sideline'.[70] It could also be said that, on the one hand the importance of sounds may have been taken for granted for too long, while on the other it has become so detached from the semantic-based analyses that sound is now understood 'as both the defining opposite of meaning and the very essence of meaning'.[71] To rethink the nature of sound is, as Nancy Perloff explains, to rethink the nature of poetry and, therefore, produce new understandings of poetic voices.

This section focuses on the acoustic dimension of Frame's language, which appears very intense and pervasive, as though the writer wanted to hear her own voice in the texts she produced. Indeed, the sensorial and formal features of words appear as important as the stories themselves. Taking examples from both her verse and prose, this section will analyse Frame's use of rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. This analysis will be used to compare Frame's STs with the Italian TTs, in order to check if and how her idiosyncratic perspective on musicality has been recreated. Subsequently, the contrastive analysis will provide the necessary data for an informed and aware approach to the translation of her poetry into Italian.

One generally becomes accustomed to the sound of one's voice while speaking.[72] It appears, however, that Frame experienced it by subliminally hearing herself speak while she was writing:

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[70] Craig Dworkin, Introduction to *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound*, ed. by Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). Chicago Scholarship Online ebook.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), p. 6.

> I am wanting to write a story today. I am wanting more than anything to write a story. I am sitting on my bed with my typewriter, typing words that are not a story. I have my new slippers on, the ones my land lady [...]
> But I have wandered from my story. I knew I would wander. I will write about the girl who sleeps in the room with me.
> This story came last night. Everything is always a story [...]
> You can tell that the kids in the playground haven't got names. [...]
> You see I have wandered again.[73]

Once again, Frame used words as a means to experience by doing: the more she wrote, the more she could hear/experience of herself. And it probably did not matter whether the story was completed in the end; she was more interested in the process, and in the material presence of language. When the story ends, she leaves the reader with the following sentence: 'My name is Alison Hendry'.[74] The pages she wrote had been functional to an investigation of writing as a creative act, which, in turn, had informed and repeatedly modified her knowledge of it and of herself.

The modernist approach she embodied in this scriptural performance signals the authorial presence and simultaneously questions it through a visceral relationship with the sonic dimension of words. In this process, the reader's autonomy is also called upon: through the voices and sounds of the *other*, the audience – and the author – can experience their own sounds. As David Levin states, this is the power of modernist novels that face themselves by enacting a

> double mirroring [...] or reciprocal self-effacement, because the writer understands that he must let the ontology of the novel [...] spell itself *beyond* the audible

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[73] Janet Frame, 'Jan Godfrey', *The Lagoon and Other Stories* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991 [1952]), pp. 129–32.
[74] Ibid., p. 135.

> sound. [...] deconstruct the novel it has constructed, in order to give presence to its ontology, or show it forth.[75]

The music of the *other* may be a tuner with which to harmonise one's own. In Frame's writing, sounds – foreign and familiar – contribute to create a polyphony of voices that accompany the dialogic nature of language. Evidence of the fact that no utterance is independent,[76] verbal communications show their dialogic nature in the many acoustic correspondences: song-like refrains, recurrent parallelisms, lines of poetry that Frame quotes, lyrics, or just titles of songs,[77] as well as italicised passages that sound like voices coming from a different narration, all create a chorus of heterogeneous sounds sustaining and simultaneously challenging textuality.

The chain of sounds, as that of meaning, is endless. Frame's language is heteroglot in the etymological sense of the word – it embraces *other* languages, *other* voices. Between an unconventional approach to rhyme and the sense of replication that onomatopoeia suggest, the sounds of her language became

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[75] David Michael Levin, 'The Novelhood of the Novel: The Limits of Representation and the Modernist Discovery of Presence', *Chicago Review*, 28.4 (1977), 87–108 (p. 88).

[76] See Section 3.1.

[77] Frame frequently quoted musicians, composers, titles and whole passages of songs. In *The Carpathians* she mentioned the Beatles song 'Hey Jude' (1968) and referred to a passage she herself had revised (p. 169). In *The Lagoon* (p. 12) she inserted the refrain of 'Cheek to Cheek', written by Irving Berlin for the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers film *Top Hat* (1935). 'My Dad's the Engineer', a famous ballad by Charles Graham (1893?), and 'I Want to Go Home', a First World War song are both quoted in *Towards Another Summer* (pp. 70; pp. 75, 76, 141, 145). Frame generally quoted traditional, working-class songs, for instance, drinking songs like 'Little Brown Jug', which was written in 1869 by Joseph Winner and remained known as a folk song throughout the twentieth century (*Towards Another Summer*, p. 98). Other examples of folk songs quoted are 'Won't you buy my Pretty Flowers' (1876?) (*Towards Another Summer*, p. 149), and 'Come Where Duty Calls', which was the English version of the New Zealand 'Hoea Rä Te Waka Nei' (1917) (*Towards Another Summer*, p. 185). Frame also mentioned classical composers like Bach and Schubert, and used songs to refer to important historical moments, as with 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic', an 1861 hymn written for the American Civil War (which has now become a renowned patriotic American song) (*Towards Another Summer*, pp. 172, 199). *Faces in the Water* and *Towards Another Summer* are particularly full of intertextual references to music: the author quoted 'Walkin' My Baby Back Home', a popular song written by Roy Turk and Fred Ahlert in 1930 (*Faces in the Water*, p. 137); 'The Grand Old Duke of York', also known as 'The Noble Duke of York', an English nursery rhyme (*Faces in the Water*, p. 157); 'My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time', a 1945 song made popular by Doris Day (*Faces in the Water*, p. 158); 'Some Enchanted Evening', a show tune that appeared in the musical *South Pacific* (1949) (*Faces in the Water*, p. 176); 'The Campbells are Coming', the pipe hymn of the Campbell clan, one of the largest and most powerful of the Highland clans (*Faces in the Water*, p. 132). She also frequently quoted religious hymns, like 'God the All Terrible', 'There is a Green Hill Far Away' (both in *The Lagoon*, p. 12), and 'Eternal Father, Strong to Save' (*Faces in the Water*, p. 124).

Frame's voices and silences of her past and present life. In this sense, poetic figures of sound refer to a dimension of oral communication that Frame mainly experienced in the written form and that she carefully crafted. Writing helped her hear herself. As she frequently repeated, her most serious thinking happened while writing, rather than in conversation.[78]

The intense approach to sonority invests all forms of her writing practice: aside from the use of rhyming patterns, there is virtually no difference in the way Frame employed figures of sound in verse and prose. Here are some examples of her use of onomatopoeia in *The Lagoon:*

[A]nd the houses that came and went like a dream, clackety-clack, Kaitangata, Kaitangata […].[79]

They're always trying to leave their mark on the world some sort of a trail but it's like the wind and the sand ha ha.[80]

Magpies settle in the gum trees and cry 'quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle', at night you can smell the milky smell of the sheds.[81]

Lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub, her heart was saying.[82]

And here are some lines of her poetry:

Tap-tap. Knock-knock knock. Tap tap tap. Knock.[83]

Our world was a hush-hush world. We both found a wand, pencil and paper, to enchant our silence.[84]

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[78] See Introduction Chapter 1.
[79] 'Swans', *The Lagoon*, p. 59,
[80] 'Spirit', *The Lagoon*, p. 91.
[81] 'Jan Godfrey', *The Lagoon*, p. 135.
[82] 'The Secret', *The Lagoon*, p. 17. Interestingly, there is no use of onomatopoeia in *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*, the only children's story Frame wrote. This is another hint towards the interpretation of the book as a multi-layered, complex text that was conceived for adults as well as children.
[83] 'The Child', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 35.
[84] 'For Paul on His Birthday', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 35.

Onomatopoetic sounds did not just echo the 'real world', they were also linked to the multiple meanings in the stream of significations of Frame's stories. The sarcastic and almost caustic 'ha ha' and the 'Kaitanga Kaitanga' that follows the 'clackety-clack' of the houses belong to Frame's world of voices: the sordid laughs she heard from patients of mental hospitals, the memories of a town on the left bank of the River Clutha that meant so much to her,[85] and the mental associations that these references trigger with characters of other stories who laugh sonorously without smiling,[86] or with the many rivers she mentioned in her novels.[87] They all create a form of musical correspondence that gives her writing sonic cohesion and semantic interdependence.

A passage like 'She's down for shock. […] She needs to be taught a lesson. […] She's for shock'[88] relies heavily on alliteration, with the repetition of the /Σ/ sound mimicking the patients of the ward whispering so that nurses do not hear them. It also echoes the sordid atmosphere of near silence that dominated mental illness at the time. A few lines below, the narrator says 'My heart beat so that I found it hard to breathe', a sentence that actually impedes a fluent emission of breath owing to the continuous stops produced by the /t/ and /d/ sounds. In poetry, Frame often used alliteration as a reinforcement of rhyming patterns, as well as an additional means to create compact structures. The following poem, 'The Tom Cat Which Sargeson Refused to Have Neutered', illustrates this point:

> Sargeson's black **t**om (en**t**ire) ca**t**
> ou**t** all nigh**t**
> sleeping la**t**e
> s**t**re**t**ched on **t**he ma**t**,
> leaves a no**t**e,
>
> Call me at **t**hree or four
> I wan**t t**o wash and polish my fur
> wi**t**h a bi**t** of ca**t** spi**t**, have a bi**t**e **t**o ea**t**,
> before I **t**ake a preliminary prowl **t**o haun**t**s of cour**t**
> **t**o pu**t** as i**t** were my card ou**t**.

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[85] See Introduction.

[86] Erlene's father in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* for example. Janet Frame, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (New York: George Braziller, 1980 [1964]).

[87] Cf. Janet Frame, *Towards Another Summer* (London: Virago, 2011 [2007]).

[88] Janet Frame, *Faces in the Water* (London: Virago, 2011 [1961]), p. 85.

I **t**hink I sui**t t**his orgy of mee**t** and ma**t**e.
Though I'm nei**t**her gra**t**e nor ingra**t**e
I **t**hink I **t**hank **t**he e**t**ernal Ca**t** for i**t**.
So, Frank,
call me at **t**hree from my sleeping-place on **t**he ma**t**.
Yours,
the black **t**om (en**t**ire) ca**t**.[89]

The intense repetition of the phonemes /τ/, /T/, and /Δ/ unifies the whole lyric and, in a way, makes it all-rhyming. The widespread consonance also gives the poem an effective sense of unity, as well as reinforcing the more traditional rhyming schemes. For example: in lines 1 and 4, the envelope rhyme created by 'cat' and 'mat' seems to continue in the central lines (2 and 3) and in the closing part of the stanza (line 5), owing to the persistent alliteration. The second stanza momentarily interrupts the predominance of alliteration to give space to a perfect eye rhyme plus assonance in lines 6–7 (four/fur). In line 8 there is an internal rhyme with the words 'spit' (/I/) and 'eat' (/ι/). Also, 'court' and 'out' in lines 9 and 10 could be considered as an eye rhyme. In lines 11 and 12, the end rhyme between 'mate' and 'ingrate' is strengthened by the alliterative adjacent words ('meet and mate', line 11; and 'grate nor ingrate', line 12). Another alliterative couple follows in line 13 ('I think I thank'). Lines 16 and 17 create a cross rhyme (mat/cat) that cross-refers to the envelope rhyme in the first stanza.

A similar technique is used in the poem 'Complaint', with assonances and consonances disseminated throughout the text:

The motormower a giant wasp on the lawn
reminds me that my nerves are torn.

The TV shots through the wall
Do but speak of a Western Hell.

The children's quarrels and cries
Tell me where my hate lies.

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[89] 'The Tom Cat Which Sargeson Refused to Have Neutered', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 42. My emphasis.

> The traffic changing gear,
> the singer without voice or ear,
>
> the loudspeaker from the factory next door,
> remind me that I've been here before
>
> in a time quiet enough to hear a thought
> parting the tangled stalks of words, creep
> soft-footed from the dark into the sure trap
> of light, serene light, smooth light;
>
> the splinters piercing the once-quiet spot
> remind me that thought without quiet has no shape,
> that there's no escape,
> that I wish either noise or I were not, were not.[90]

The lyric follows the pattern AA BB CC DD EE FGGF FGGF. A, C, D, and E are full rhyming couplets, while B is a partial rhyme. The final quatrains are arranged in envelope rhymes: thought/light (lines 11 and 14) creep/trap (lines 12–13); spot/not (lines 15 and 18), and shape/escape (lines 16–17). In the sixth stanza, rhymes are partial (thought/light, creep/trap). Another good example of full rhyme is 'Three Black Mice',[91] while 'Gods' is interesting because it merges cross rhyme with imperfect rhymes and off rhymes (lines 9–11, and 10–12):

> 9. The lonelier their peaks of cloud
> 10. the closer their dreams come
> 11. to warm plain and peopled hillside
> 12. - Gods most have need to dream.[92]

These examples demonstrate that Frame was well aware of standard forms, and was able to use them according to her needs. As the section on metrics has illustrated, her approach to poetic language challenged tradition by personalising existing models. In 'the Poet', for instance, she experimented with an original way of drawing together two envelope rhymes:

> Though the wheat is so beautifully puffed

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[90] 'Complaint', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 205.
[91] Included in Appendix E.
[92] 'Gods', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 209.

the rice is ballooned and stuffed
and the world seems so much bigger
from a few to a marvellous crowd
of supers, the pushing and proud
with more push and pride and the prig growing prigger,
the poet still breathes with one lung
climbs a ladder of only one rung
shoots at stars with his hand off the trigger.[93]

The rhyming arrangement of the poem is AABCCBDDB, where A is a full rhyme and BCCB is a perfect example of an envelope rhyme made of four full rhymes. B, however, is the beginning line of a second, contiguous envelope rhyme, attached to the first through its last line. The second envelope rhyme is, instead, made of true rhymes.

Frame's innovative approach to rhyme is exemplified in 'Child', which illustrates how she aimed to create musical correspondences, rather than adhering to fixed patterns:

1. When I was a **child** I wore a fine tartan coa**t**
2. that my grandmother, woman of **might**,
3. magnificent launc**her** of love and old clothes, had set afloa**t**
4. on a heav**ing** relative **sea**
5. of aunt and cousin and big enfold**ing** wave of mot**her**
6. down to small wave of **me**.
[...]
15. But the **spell** soon broke in my **hand**.
16. **Love** and **sleeve** together **fell**.
17. The wind **blew**
18. more perilous when the world **found**
19. my tartan coat was not even ***new***.[94]

The poem is composed by three stanzas, where the first and third, more intricate in terms of rhyme, enclose the central one, which presents no rhyme or assonance. The poem contains different types of internal rhyme and some end rhymes. The consistent number of assonances and consonances in the first and third stanzas is sufficient to give the whole composition its own specific

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[93] 'The Poet', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 208.
[94] 'Child', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 33–34.

cadence. In line 1, Frame inserted a partial internal rhyme but broadened its scope by making it cover two proximate lines (lines 1–2: child/might). Lines 1, 2, and 3 present a light consonance on the last words (coat/might/afloat). In line 3, the word 'clothes' is semantically linked with 'coat' in line 1, which creates a further sound- and eye-impact interlink in the composition and contributes to tying up the lines in terms of coherence and musicality. In lines 4 and 5, launcher/mother and heaving/enfolding can be considered internal eye rhymes. Between lines 4 and 6, sea/me create a perfect end rhyme. In lines 15–16, Frame opted for an interesting solution: she subverted the standard form of internal rhyme, by making 'spell' (internal word, line 1) rhyme with 'fell' (last word, line 2), and 'love' rhyme with 'sleeve' (both in line 16), through a partial internal rhyme. While the two words rhyme perfectly and their respective positioning would suggest an internal rhyme, they are on two different lines. Thus, even though it cannot strictly be considered an internal rhyme, its acoustic effect remains relevant. Between lines 15 and 18, there is a light consonance (hand/found), whilst between lines 17 and 19, there is perfect end rhyme (blew/new).

Fry claims that 'much of poetry is about "consonance" in the sense of *correspondence*: the likeness or congruity of one apparently disparate thing to another. Poetry is concerned with the connections between things'.[95] From the examples quoted so far it is clear that Frame's idiosyncratic approach to sound structured her poems through internal links, and created a cohesive tight weave despite the heterogeneity of formal devices employed.

6.3.1 Translating sound[96]

Roman Jakobson said: 'Poetry is not the only area where sound symbolism makes itself felt, but it is a province where the internal nexus between sound and meaning changes from latent into patent and manifests itself most palpably

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[95] Fry, p. 124. Italics in original.
[96] Since examples of rhyme in translation have been given in the previous section, this section will focus on alliteration and assonances as representative of Frame's approach to the acoustic dimension of language.

and intensely'.[97] The previous section has demonstrated the importance of sounds in Frame's writing, prose and verse. As for her prose, her approach to sound has been partially recreated in translation.

Onomatopoeia have generally been retained ('Sometimes she put wheat in her pinny and shook the wheat out to the fowl, calling Chook Chook Chook.';[98] 'A volte si metteva del mangine nel grembiule e lo buttava alle galline, chiamando pio, pio, pio!').[99] However, when the sound is more idiosyncratic or distant from an Italian counterpart, the onomatopoeia is completely omitted: 'Tell her, blackbird that pirrup-pirrupped'[100] becomes 'Diteglielo voi, merlo che pigolavi' (You tell her, blackbird that chirped).[101] Alliterations have also generally been recreated in the TT:

> "[...] Yet I myself cannot speak any more even though I live between *speech* and *spell*."
> "So you do, Erlene. Or between *spectre* and *spindrift*, between *spark* and *spirit*, *seem* and *sprout*, *seek* and *spy*, *seed* and *squander*, *science* and *stone*. It is a delicate matter to choose one's boundaries of words."[102]

> «[...] Eppure proprio a me è toccato perdere la parola, anche se vivo tra *sillaba* e *stregoneria*.»
> «Già, Erlene. Ma può anche darsi che tu viva tra *spendaccione* e *spettro*, tra *scintilla* e *spirito*, tra *sembrare* e *spuntare*, *scrutare* e *spiare*, *seminare* e *sperperare*, *scienza* e *selce*. È una questione molto delicata scegliere i propri confini verbali.»[103]

The translation recreates both the alliterative /s/ sound, and the italic formatting. Luck would have it that all the English words starting with 's' have Italian counterparts who also start in 's', including 'stone' (sasso, or selce). Several pages later, the translator recreates a series of assonances and consonances:

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[97] Roman Jakobson, quoted in Introduction to *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound*.
[98] *The Lagoon*, p. 81.
[99] Janet Frame, *La laguna*, trans. by Antonella Sarti (Roma: Fazi, 1998), p. 53.
[100] *The Lagoon*, p. 69.
[101] *La laguna*, p. 45.
[102] *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (New York: George Braziller, 1980 [1964]), p. 177.
[103] Janet Frame, *Giardini profumati per i ciechi*, trans. by Monica Pavani (Parma: Ugo Guanda, 1997 [1964]), p. 145.

'Strang Strong Strange estrange danger extra'[104] becomes 'Strang Strong Strambo Estraneo Onere Estroso'.[105] Here the translator opted to capitalise the three non-capitalised words, a choice that can be justified by several explanations: a compensation for a stylistic detail she had previously lost, an intention to emphasise the non-conventionality of capitalisation in Frame, and so on.

By and large, the partial engagement with figures of sounds denotes, to a certain extent, a re-creative intention, and provides the Italian audience with one of the fundamental aspects of Frame's language. Nonetheless, the translator of poetry, following Jakobson's idea/point, may choose to stress this aspect to make it more palpable and intense than the restricting solutions adopted in prose. Rather than an intention to differentiate prose and poetry, which would omit perhaps the most basic function of Frame's writing, this could be done with the aim to compensate for the non-standardness that was softened in the existing versions. So, for example, it could be a viable strategy to focus on the acoustic aspects of a certain passage that accept a minimal variation in meaning. Let us consider the following lines:

> Return to the orchard, supposing
> it bloomed at the end of the garden. New trees not ready
> to bear fruit have been fed by god good god.[106]

The alliteration of the third line could become 'gesù grande gesù' rather than a more semantically faithful 'dio buon dio'. Such a choice would allow the Italian reader to sense that something was going on in the source at the sound level. In this way, a clear intervention by the translator (visibility) translates into a perfectly acceptable strategy in the target language (invisibility), which shows how paradoxical the foreignising/domesticating approach can be when it comes to formal features.

If the assonance invests the entire lyric, the translator will have to balance more variables: on the one hand, semantic loss needs to be limited

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[104] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 199.
[105] *Giardini profumati per i ciechi*, p. 162.
[106] 'These Poems, *Storms Will Tell*, p. 98.

(unless s/he is working on free recreation); on the other, the sonic features need to be addressed throughout the composition. This entails an intuitive analysis of their possible effects on the Italian reader who picks up on them. Here is a partial translation of 'The Tom Cat' quoted above (lines 1–8):

> Il gatto nero tom – intero – di Sargeson
> fuori tutta la notte
> tira tardi
> si stiracchia sul tappeto,
> lascia una nota,
>
> Chiamami alle tre o direttamente alle quattro.
> Mi voglio lavare e lucidare il pelo biondastro
> con sputo di gatto, poi mangiare una lattina,
> […]

Though the cat of the ST eats a 'bite' (morso, boccone) rather than cat's food in a can (metonymically represented by the Italian 'lattina') and his fur is not necessarily blondish ('biondastro', added to line 7), the TT plays with sounds without losing much of the semantics of the ST (phono-semantic matching). Also, the TT emphasises the /t/ alliteration – and the cheekiness of the cat in question – by adding the adverb 'direttamente' (line 6).

This example shows how creativity in verse translation can indeed be enhanced by the constraints imposed by the ST; it also demonstrates that the translation of poetry is necessarily a re-creation, which Derrideanly keeps the playfulness of the creative act.

This would not be possible if one saw the 'limit' of alliteration as a limit. In that case, any attempt would result in a homophonic translation.[107] Lefevere, for example, categorised phonemic translation as the attempt to apply 'fidelity' solely to the sounds of the ST, and defined 'rhyming translator' as the translator who ties him/herself to source rhyme, thus imposing on him/herself a 'double

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[107] Other names proposed for this strategy are 'allographic translation' and 'transphonation', but none of these is widely used. Bernard Dupriez, *A Dictionary of Literary Devices: Gradus, A–Z*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 462.

bondage', that of rhyme and, consequently, that of limited lexical-communicative choice.[108]

But verse translation is a multi-level exercise and the sound aspect is only one of the many at play. As Yoko Tawada wrote:

> An onomatopoeic expression automatically entails the specification of what is being described. A pattering sound cannot come from a block of wood. But when I was listening to [Peter Ablinger's Berlin sound] recordings, I sometimes couldn't tell whether a sound was coming from thunder or a sheet of metal. I wanted to represent the sound, not the person who was producing it, nor its metaphorical significance. It took me quite some time to come up with a solution: My solution was not to find a solution, but rather to enter into the crevice between sound and language and make countless little notes.[109]

As always, there is no one solution, no right/wrong. Yet there is an attitude: an intention to pursue the challenge not to seek a solution, but rather to take into account infinite solutions and then choose to play with some of them. More or less creative results will have to be tested against a double-voiced, polyphonic discourse, as Bakhtin would call it: that of the source, that of the target language-culture, and all the spaces in-between. The desire to trans-late, that is to carry across from one *locus* to another, is constantly animated by double and multiple forces, which makes it a desire to 'transcreate'.[110]

6.4 Form: Lineation and visual poetry

The previous two sections have illustrated how Frame handled metre and rhyme, the basic formal and acoustic elements one traditionally associates with versification. This section discusses Frame's unconventional use of lineation and visual formatting through the analysis of examples ranging from narrative-

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[108] Lefevere, pp. 19–27, 49–61.

[109] Yoko Tawada, quoted in Introduction to *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound*. Ebook.

[110] The notion of 'transcreation' is mainly applied to the process of the adaptation and recreation of the message from SL to TL by advertising and marketing professionals. It has, however, many points in common with the idea of creative translation.

like lyrics to fragmentary structures. By responding to and continuing her project of generic subversion, the formal aspects of Frame's poetry range from extremely long to very short compositions, alternating more conventional and drastically unconventional outlines.

To start with an example, 'Sunday Drive' comprises 127 lines that do not conform to any type of metric or rhyming pattern, and create a rhythm that resembles that of a short story:

> 'Everything changes. Nothing will stay. My mother died
> [four years ago,
> and though I still do not mourn for her, I remember her.
> Memory recurs, cripples. There is no relief from its pain.'
> [...]
> 'I saw it. Skipping,
> Two little girls in navy blue
> these are the actions they must do:
> salute to the King,
> bow to the Queen –
> I would stop suddenly because my mother and father were
> [dead
> and there was no one above me to bend over me, there
> [was nothing above me
>
>   save   the
> sky.
> [...]
> 'When people are toys you cannot fight to regain them.
> They are gone. Let us put our perplexities and pain
> in the sack of dead clematis that the old man tree
> swings
> towards
> the sea.'[111]

The length of the passage, and the slow cadence, seems to create an immediate link with Frame's poetic prose. The juxtaposition of images recalls *The Lagoon*, in which short stories, dense in imagery and poetic language, depict impressionist scenarios rather than engaging in conventional narrations. The extensive use of enjambments also gives many of Frame's poems a typical discursive feel. Now let us compare this extract with the last stanza of 'The Dreams' and 'A Journey':

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[111] 'Sunday Drive', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 160–61.

I was a child then. I turn the memory
while tonight it snows, but I no longer care
for soft promises, and salt is for rubbing into old wounds,
and it is time while snow still falls, to feed the dreams
that run in panic up and down my sleep
that escape at last and unwittingly make friends with the
[hawk.[112]

Yes. We will sleep together.
We will mix juices
To put out the fire,
Arrive at the Poles
From the Equator
Without a scar,
With only a handful of unidentified
ashes.[113]

Whether in small fragments or in a more prose-like style, the meanings/images flow undisturbed. If one makes a comparison to the following extract from the short story 'Swans', the similarities will be immediately evident:

Mother was often too late for the fuzzy drinks and she coughed before she spoke to the children and then in a whisper in case the people in the carriage should hear and think things, and she said, I'm sure I don't know, kiddies, when they asked about the station, but she was big and warm and knew about cats and little ring-eyes, and Father was hard and bony and his face prickled when he kissed you.[114]

Both examples recreate analogic associations of images and thoughts, each apparently detached. The visual impact of the sequences, and their unconventional rhythms, border on mixed-genre discourses, thus impeding the very notion of generic convention. Another example of prose rhythm is 'Letter'. Here is the first stanza:

Dear friend, the here-there emphasis is made

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[112] 'The Dreams', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 204.
[113] 'A Journey', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 62.
[114] 'Swans', *The Lagoon*, pp. 59–60.

> to keep you at a distance as I write,
> to fix you, no captured human specimen
> in a crowded corner of a northern world
> reminding only how with spear, nail, pen,
> I came your way walking from paddock to field
> until at noon I fell asleep in an oak tree's shade
> and waking saw not manuka and the Southern Cross
> but above, Orion, and at my feet, lady-white.[115]

The poem, which begins in a proper letter-like form, has a warm, familiar tone; the rhythm is slow and the words flow calmly. Frame alludes to the physical dimensions of the postcolonial here/there dichotomy, signalled by the passage 'from paddock to field', meaning from New Zealand to Britain.[116] If 'Letter' did not follow conventional lineation, it could be confused with a passage from one of Frame's short stories.

In order to recreate the rhythms of oral speech, Frame made great use of enjambments. Below are the third and fifth stanzas of 'Hilda':

> So they gave her glasses with deceiving
> lens to try to make her mind
> surrender the insane believing
> that world is fire and men are blind.
> [...]
> Now Hilda lives as sensibly
> as any woman, and the sun's
> Antartica as far as she
> is burned by it or strange visions.[117]

In this lyric, one line flows into the next and lineation does not prevent the tone of the message from echoing fluent prose, unlike – paradoxically – the staccato (sometimes lineated) articulation of much of Frame's prose:

> I felt cold in my darkness, I shivered, I wore a thick
> cardigan over my summer dress.
> My senses were overlapping, misplaced.
> I was afraid.

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[115] 'Letter', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 220.
[116] Cf. Section 6.6.
[117] 'Hilda', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 38.

I listened.
The traffic lights showed red. The world would stop spinning. What color was red?[118]

I was blind. I am blind. A quick pinch of a word and time is adjusted, and we believe its adjustment, thinking, we have put time in its place, its pen, cell, hutch of sense, and all that remains now is to feed it, fatten it kill it for the feast.
No, I was never blind.[119]

The juxtaposition of very short sentences, or even single words, creates a fragmented style, in which meaning is assembled through analogical associations.

Although this certainly represents a non-standard approach to prose, the fragmented novel was not a complete novelty in the world of literature at the time. According to Ted Gioia, it came to the fore at the dawn of the twenty-first century, in works where the already 'old' fragmented style left space for a 'holistic and coalescent' form of writing that 'resists unity, even if it appears to embody it'.[120]

To Gioia, these novels 'do not simply delight us with their contrasting voices. They also send us through an enjoyable labyrinth'.[121] Yet this is not what happens in Frame's novels. As in her poems, her 'explorations' 'don't *end*', as she herself noted. Readers are frequently left with a sense of incompleteness, as if the conclusion of the story, or the story itself, has slipped away from them. It is almost impossible to find a real ending in Frame's writing. Often, there is even no sense of actual beginning, as if the story belonged to some pre-existent, *other* account someone was telling. The very progression of

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[118] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 18.

[119] Ibid., p. 23.

[120] Ted Gioia, 'The Rise of the Fragmented Novel: An Essay in 26 Fragments' (17 July 2013) <http://fractiousfiction.com/rise_of_the_fragmented_novel.html> [accessed 4 September 2014] (para. 3 of 26). Meaningful examples are Audrey Niffenegger's *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2003); Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012); Hari Kunzru's *Gods Without Men* (2012); Roberto Bolaño's *2666* (2004); and Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001). Trying to come to grips with this tendency, Michael David Lukas has talked about the emergence of a new type of fiction distinguished by a 'multiplicity of voices': 'A strange literary beast has reemerged, a hybrid of the short story and traditional novel. This newly reinvigorated genre – let's call it the polyphonic novel'. However, Lukas highlights only one aspect of the fragmented novel, namely the acoustic coexistence of a multiplicity of voices. Gioia, (para 3 of 26).

[121] Ibid., (para. 5 of 26).

the plot is non-linear, but rather circular, continuously departing and returning. In this sense, Frame's 'explorations' are not 'fragmented novels' by Gioia's definition: they do not have a final point and do not claim validity by being a mere juxtaposition of 'bits and pieces'. In both prose and verse, her fragmented structures break the consequentiality between the need to write and that of formal/structural frames without losing the correspondence between content and form. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, Frame's writing inhabits the interstitial spaces between margins: no standard, neat form could have signified that choice.

Ezra Pound wrote that '[n]o good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old, for to write in such a manner shows conclusively that the writer thinks from the books, conventions and cliché, not from real life'.[122] The continuity between *this* and *that* world in Frame's poetics[123] is mirrored by her approach to 'formality': she did not simply discard form as an outdated concept, she envisioned new spaces of signification in the revision of conventional forms and the subversion of the actual sense of form in writing. For, in any piece of standard fiction, as Fry observes, 'you certainly won't

<div style="text-align:center">find me doing this</div>

      or *this*, for that
        matter; it would be

<div style="text-align:center">highly</div>

      odd,

          not to mention confusing:
      in poetry such a procedure
      would not be considered
      strange at all, although as
        we shall see, how we
      manage the lineation of our poems is not a question of

random

      line
    breaks, or it had better not be ...'[124]

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[122] Ezra Pound, quoted in Fry, p. 173.
[123] See Chapter 4.
[124] Fry, pp. 171–72.

This astonishing passage is actually demonstrative of Frame's use of lineation in both poetry and prose. The alleged randomness of her writing needs to be framed in the relationship she established with tradition, rather than categorised as a mere symptom of outlandishness. Her linguistic revolution was in fact very coherent internally. The following extracts come from prose and then verse:

> I felt cold in my darkness, I shivered, I wore a thick
> cardigan over my summer dress.
> My senses were overlapping, misplaced.
> I was afraid.
> I listened.
> The traffic lights showed red. The world would stop
> spinning. What colour was red?[125]

> The chickadee drops like a scroll out of the sky,
> alights on my hand. I feed him sunflower seeds.
> The inky brushmarks on his head are scarcely dry.[126]

The similarities are significant, and it is extremely hard to tell them apart. There is a same use of imagery and fragmented language. The juxtaposed minimalist sentences are lineated in both cases, and in both they give readers flakes of scenes that run on from one to the next with no particular direction. As Fry argues, '[p]oetic forms can be cross-bred, subverted, made sport of, mutilated, sabotaged and rebelled against, but [...] [i]f there is no suggestion of an overall scheme at work in the first place, then there is nothing to subvert or undermine'.[127] This may have led critics astray: Frame's unconventionalities are not simply disruptive; they oppose specific criteria of formal norms. Below is an interesting example entitled 'Cat Spring':

> At this time of year strangers lurk in my garden.
> Their cry gobbles the snow-encircled full moon,
> their alley-hunger makes a sexual slum
> of a city that is rumoured to be clean. I
>   never trust

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[125] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 18.
[126] 'The Chickadee', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 84.
[127] Fry, p. 173.

rumour.

Beware, Dunedin!
    The cats are out of the bag at last.
                    The
chambers
   of night commerce are full
          to overflowing.
   It is spring.
    The gardens hold immeasurable loot
             of gold
   crocuses, silk-
     veined daffodils
         stained lust of
           tomcats'
             milk.[128]

If one considers the poem in isolation, it is likely that any visual approach, albeit theoretically solid, will only result in a fake replica of Apollinairean inspiration. In reality, Frame's visual poetry does not aim to represent physical objects, emotions, or words on the page; rather, it aims at questioning the limits of form itself. The only exception to this is perhaps 'Beach', which, recreating the movement of the waves, is the closest to the idea of concrete poetry.[129]

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[128] Janet Frame, 'Cat Spring', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 184.

[129] 'Beach' is included in Appendix E. Pattern poetry is thought to be of oriental origin, and is characterised by a visual arrangement of lines so as to represent physical objects or to hint to an action, feeling, word, etc. It also appeared in the works of Greek bucolic poets (see Simmias of Rhodes, fourth century BC) and it is likely that the Planudean version of the *Greek Anthology* spread the idea. English pattern poems started to appear in the sixteenth century (i.e. Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*, 1589) and George Herbert's *Easter Wings* (1633) is the first famous example. Later, modernism rediscovered the art of shaping lines according to visual patterns. Particularly famous are the lyrics by Apollinaire, Mayakovsky, Dylan Thomas, and e.e. cummings. Sometimes shaped poetry is also referred to as Concrete or Visual Poetry. However, these two terms may have distinct meanings, depending on the theoretical approach to them. Critics who do not believe that Concrete and Visual Poetry mean the same thing could be grouped into two categories: those who state that visual poetry is a sub-category of concrete poetry, and those for whom the two are not distinct genres apart.

6.4.1 Translating form

To survey poetic form from a translator's point of view would mean considering not only the elements of form but also the transformations these undergo in the process of translation. Even a superficial analysis of such transformations would eventually lead to a consideration of the psychology of form: for example, an investigation of the translator's impression that a certain formal element must be preserved.

Since the act of translating has been defined as an act of reading and interpreting, it can certainly be said that there are as many readings of a poem as there are readings of a form. It can also be said that there are more or less sensitive and less informed readings. Far be it from the intention of this thesis to draw a hierarchical line between them, what must be underlined is that translators embark upon their task with a more or less definite impression of the relative importance of the poem's constituent parts. These impressions arise out of the translator's knowledge, individual viewpoint, and sensitivity to the technical/formal aspects of poetry. According to Reginald Gibbons, '[t]hese aspects may not be of primary interest to an ideal reader, though they *must* shape the ideal reader's equally responsive reaction to the poem'.[130] This means that, in the impossibility of accounting for readers' impressions, the translator's impression of the features of a given poem should aim to represent the main features or patterns of features in the TT.

However, if Frame's genre-defying texts are impossible to categorise, how is a translator to face a non-genre? How can a poem be translated into a poem if it sounds more like a short story? Conversely, how can a piece of prose containing verse and highly poetic language be translated into a homogeneous form? Should the translator engage with the genre-crossing? Why, and how?

Despite the abundance of controversial opinions, poetry translated into prose has long been regarded as the only possible way to translate poetry accurately.[131] Those in favour claim that prose allows the source poem to be transferred in (almost) all its aspects – the wider space of a prose page is

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[130] Reginald Gibbons, 'Poetic Form and the Translator', *Critical Inquiry*, 11.4 (1985), 654–71 (p. 655). Italics in original.
[131] Lefevere, p. 42.

generally thought to offer the translator a wider expressive freedom. But two major problems emerge: first, the TT is not a poem (as conventionally conceived); second, the TT is, according to Lefevere, a hybrid, something in between prose and poetry. In trying to render the text poetic through devices and strategies that differ from common prose language, s/he will create a text that 'results in an uneasy hybrid structure forever groping towards a precarious equilibrium between verse and prose and never really achieving it'.[132]

Lefevere sees this situation as a losing battle, mainly because the structural features of a poem are too different from those of prose. As a consequence, the reader's attention will inevitably be re-directed to different textual features.[133] He envisions a number of strategies: making unusual lexical choices; using 'lean translation' to make words stand out from the rest; adding an explanation; relying on alliterations, internal rhymes, or rhyming prose; or even using exaggeration to amplify a given effect.[134] Still, the TT will represent a loss in communicative value due to the shift between two different genres and literary traditions – 'a shady no-man's land', as Lefevere calls it.[135]

In fact, a hybrid form might suit Frame's conception of genre. The poem translated into prose could symbolise her formal and figurative overcoming of boundaries. This may diminish its value as a poem however – her genreless project should not shadow her identity as a novelist and poet. It is evident that any strategy needs to be contextualised according to specific goals.

In Holmes' idea of 'metatext', prose translation of verse is one of the many forms of metaliterature that accumulate round a poem (commentaries, critical essays, etc.). Since every metatext (translation) is an act of interpretation, verse translation differs from all others because it aims also to be an act of poetry. As such, it will have a double purpose, that of metaliterature and primary literature; for this reason, Holmes calls it a 'metapoem' building on Barthes' notion of meta-language.[136] He adds that no other problem of

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[132] Lefevere, p. 42.
[133] Ibid., p. 43.
[134] Ibid., pp. 43–49.
[135] Ibid., p. 45.
[136] Holmes, pp. 23–24.

translation has generated 'so much heat and so little light' as the translation of form in verse translation.[137]

As has been said, Holmes rejects the idea of ST and TT sharing an identical form. A verse form cannot exist outside a language, therefore no form can be actually 'retained' in translation. The very nature of the passage from source to target calls for transformation and recreation.[138] The 'mimetic form', instead, tries to imitate the source form. It can thus lead to the creation of new forms/models – for example, the English *terza rima* for Italian poetry.[139] The formula $F_P - F_{MP}$ indicates that the translator looks at the form of the ST when making his/her choice about recreating a form in the TT. An 'analogical form' would require a form that fulfils a parallel function in the target system (for example, the use of heroic couplets for epics).[140] Alternatively, translators could begin by translating the semantic material and then elaborate an appropriate form, 'allowing it to take on its unique poetic shapes as the translation develops'.[141] Finally, Holmes calls the fourth form 'deviant' or 'extraneous', because it does not look at the source form at all, but aims to create a form that does not derive from it in any way.[142]

Each of the methods suggested by Holmes will work towards the opening of new possibilities and, simultaneously, will close up others. This is predictable, as it is predictable that there are countless other approaches to translating form. There certainly seems to be an issue of formal recreation whether one departs from the ST to imitate it or to reject it. Perhaps, the point lies in not isolating one feature from its context. If, as Crisafulli maintains, the problem of translation research is how to achieve a balance between conformity and creativity (but also between norm-governed and idiosyncratic behaviours, and universal tendencies and personal choices)[143] and if practice needs to be informed by

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[137] Ibid., p. 25.
[138] Ibid., p. 26.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid., p. 27.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Edoardo Crisafulli, 'The Quest for an Eclectic Methodology of Translation Description', in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies*, ed. by Theo Hermans (Manchester: St Jerome, 2002), II, 26–43 (p. 34).

research, it follows that the approach to formal features needs to be guided by factors/parameters that include form, and move beyond it.

With regard to the present case study, the decisions that translators make on translating Frame's verse should be informed and influenced by both that which brings her poems closer to and removes them from regular forms. Given her particular relationship with tradition, a comprehensive analysis of her writing could sustain translators in their decision processes, allowing for strategies that can act on the target system while recreating as many as possible of the forms with which Frame engaged. The narrative-like or fragmented structure of a poem will thus be seen in the light of a vast, variegated production of forms, in which Frame attributed specific features to her poetic language, in prose and poetry. In this sense, the genre-defying patterns will be seen as part of a complex, global subversion of formal conventions, rather than deviant elements of a specific discourse.

In this sense, a fragmented form will be recognised as a constitutive element of Frame's approach to written language, and will therefore be judged an important formal aspect to recreate. Here is a candidate TT for 'Before I Get Into Sleep with You', 'Prima di addormentarmi con te':

> Before I get into sleep with you
> I want to have been
> into wakefulness too.[144]
>
> Prima di addormentarmi con te
> voglio essere stata
> il tuo desto perché.

The ST is characterised by the proximity of very short sentences, separated by full stops, commas, or semi-colons, which creates a galloping rhythm. The compactness with which the three lines are constructed, sealed by an alternate rhyme, seems to me to be the essential feature of the text. Therefore, the features I would like to recreate for Italian readers are primarily the speed with which the message is conveyed, its articulation in three lines without

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[144] 'Before I Get into Sleep with You', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 62.

punctuation, and the rhyme that gives a sense of completeness. The candidate TT is in unmetred free verse, maintains the alternate rhyme, and engages successfully with meaning of the ST.

The Italian translator may encounter some trouble in the last line: 'wakefulness' means 'allerta' (alert, consciousness, awareness), or 'insonnia' (insomnia). Both, however, refer to sleep with connotations of deprivation rather than the opposition awake/asleep, which may refer to the difference between sharing daily, trivial experiences as opposed to sharing intimacy. The solution I propose recreates all this in 'desto perché', which literally means 'awaken reason', evoking someone's request to be involved in the other's life before sharing their bed. Of course, this is only one of many possible renderings, but it serves the purpose of illustrating how the many variables of a poem can indeed be recreated (as opposed to retained) in an autonomous text.

The autonomy of a translated poem is linked to the formal and semantic constraints of the ST, unless the translator decides to freely recreate a TT looking at the ST as a point of departure to conduct an exploration of the infinite possibilities that Frame's language in translation could bring to the target language. This option, however, has several opponents. Joseph Brodsky strongly criticised the English renderings of poems by Mandelstam by Clarence Brown and W.S. Merwin because both had used free verse, while the original poems followed perfectly regular patterns. Brodsky deems such a decision unacceptable.[145]

Commenting on one of his translations of Shakespeare, Yves Bonnefoy wrote that:

> the worst mistake would be to begin to think [...] that since the eleven-syllable line can work so well for the translation of Shakespeare, it would be even more satisfying to have it in our French text from the beginning to the end. A mistake, yes, because all the limitations and failures of the artificial regularity would very rapidly appear.[146]

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[145] Cf. Yves Bonnefoy, 'On the Translation of Form in Poetry', *World Literature Today*, 53.3 (1979), 374–79 (p. 374).
[146] Ibid., p. 379.

Bonnefoy frequently emphasised that translating other's verse helped him elaborate new forms, which he used in his own poetry. The encounter between source and target thus becomes a fruitful exchange rather than a mere transference of meanings. Bonnefoy's position is demonstrative of how the imposition of one form over another is a mechanical, pointless act; the recreation of a form should, instead, depart from a recognition of the complexities of the transfer of multiple levels, taking into consideration the value and function of a 'mimetic' or new form in the target system.

6.5 Style: Punctuation, capitalisation, free indirect speech, and parallelism

This section explores Frame's use of punctuation, capitalisation, free indirect speech, and different forms of repetition, such as parallelism. These four features are presented together as I believe that Italian translators have repeatedly handled them as though they were almost irrelevant to the narration. There are certainly exceptions; however, the examples in which such features have been normalised largely outnumbers the cases in which they have been recreated. As a consequence, this general underrepresentation has greatly affected the Italian TTs and, in turn, the perception developed by Italian readers. Therefore, it will be argued that a non-creative, standardising approach has contributed to the establishment of a dampened version of Frame's experimental style.

Though Frame's works have attracted talented translators who have sometimes captured the rhythmic and syntactic peculiarities of her writing, their approach to Frame's creative punctuation shows inconsistencies and unawareness, especially in the recreation of the dialogic and polyphonic dimensions of her language.

As has been anticipated, italicisation generally suggests the coexistence of different perspectives/voices: the different formatting emphasises, from a visual point of view, narrative movements from interior monologues to narrations of facts, asides, and so on. Furthermore, through the insertion of

extracts of poems, songs, or film titles, Frame created a form of coexistence between real and unreal dimensions. The clash of perspectives these voices project is often sustained by non-standard punctuation. The quote below illustrates how this feature is not recreated in translation:

> Vincent too was filled with a longing to be grown up, so he used the words they use in films. Will you marry me? I can't wait. I'll soon be earning enough to support a wife and family. Don't worry, darling, I can wait.[147]

> Anche Vincent fremeva di diventare grande, per questo usava le parole dei film: Vuoi sposarmi? Potrò aspettarti. Tra poco guadagnerò abbastanza per metter su famiglia. Non preoccuparti, amore, potrò aspettarti.[148]

The translator separates real-life language from movie language with the insertion of a colon between 'films' and the direct question 'Will you marry me?'. Rather than an explicative function, suggested by the colon, the words of the film become, in the source, part of the characters' words. As has been demonstrated, Frame did not believe in the creation of frontiers between the different dimensions of life, an approach she recreated semantically (see the notions of *this*, *that* world, and *third space*); formally (see her non-generic approach to writing); and stylistically (see the continuum of features between her novels and her verse, and her non-standard use of them). Therefore, by adding a colon, the translator graphically and ideologically separates two different dimensions, while Frame's choice, consistent with other countless examples throughout her work,[149] had been to put the words of the movies and Vincent's longing to grow up on a same plane. Conversely, in the Italian version, film and reality belong to two different, incommunicable spheres.

The following passage from *Scented Gardens* shows how the translator has engaged in a recreation of Frame's staccato style, but has normalised the free indirect speech through the use of dashes, which, again, results in a disconnection between different textual voices:

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[147] *The Lagoon*, p. 11.
[148] *La laguna*, p. 8.
[149] Cf. *The Lagoon*, pp. 16–17, p. 45, 48, 111, 121, 125.

> I moved my finger, walked it along the corridor, trying to find the door into speech, but the diagram did not show it, somewhere in the brain, the book said, an impulse in the brain letting the words go free, sympathetic movement of larynx lips tongue, the shaping of breath, and even then, the book said, it may not be speech which emerges, it may only be a cry such as a bird makes or a beast lurking at night, or, loneliest of all, not the cry of a bird or beast but the first uttering of a new language which is understood by no one and nothing, and which causes a smoke screen of fear to cloud the mind, as defense against the strangeness.[150]

> [S]postai il dito, lo feci camminare lungo il corridoio, cercando di trovare la porta che si apre sulla parola, ma il grafico non la indicava; da qualche parte nel cervello – diceva il libro – parte un impulso che lascia fluire liberamente le parole, con un movimento coordinato di laringe lingua labbra, insieme al formarsi del respiro, ma anche allora, diceva il libro, può accadere che fuoriescano non delle parole, ma un verso tipo quello di un uccello o di una bestia che si cela tra gli alberi la notte; oppure, il più desolato di tutti, non il verso di un uccello o di una bestia, ma la prima articolazione di un nuovo linguaggio incomprensibile per uomini e animali che offusca la mente con una cortina fumosa di paura, quale difesa dal senso di estraneità che ne deriva.[151]

Often Frame alternated extremely long periods with very short fragments of speech. Normally, the long passages echo the inner flow of thoughts or, alternatively, suggest the presence of a deeper level of consciousness. Cohesion is favoured by a sustaining, uninterrupted rhythm. As in the example above, explanatory phrases such as 'the book said' are part of that flow. In the Italian version, 'diceva il libro' is, on one occasion, enclosed within dashes, thus separated from the rest of the text; in the second occurrence it follows the source pattern. Though critically engaging with the macro-structure of the passage, the translator fails to recreate stylistic details. In addition, this choice indicates an uninformed approach to Frame's use of dashes, which she generally employed for direct speech.

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[150] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 10.
[151] *Giardini profumati per i ciechi*, p. 6.

In most of Frame's work free indirect speech is used throughout the text. In *Scented Gardens* in particular, inverted commas indicate the intrusion of voices that do not belong to the narrative level (the words of the beetle, the doctor, and at times also Vera, Erlene's mother). Conversely, the Italian version mixes them all through an indiscriminate use of quotation marks, which confuses the source pattern ('Erlene thought, If only I were dead'; 'Erlene pensò: «Magari fossi morta»').[152] Chapter two of the novel starts with the narrator reporting on Erlene's thoughts on autism: 'She could not speak if she wanted to, because every time she opened her mouth to say something, her voice, in hiding, reminded her that there was nothing to say, and no words to say it'.[153] The following four sentences seem to continue the narrator's report but may also represent Erlene reporting on her own thoughts. There is no clear demarcation between the two voices. Nonetheless, the passage from sentences which largely employ the third person singular (personal pronouns and possessive adjectives) to sentences that do not and rather focus on personal memories, suggests that those memories might be Erlene's: 'And everybody milled round in a dither, faced with unexpected treasure and desperately wanting their share. The dying were bled white; that was the expression. The living held out their pannikins for blood; or words'.[154] As usual, Frame's focus is evidently on the blurring of borders, and on a narration that dwells on the margins between one dimension and another.

After a few lines, the memories of past school days (of which again we are not sure who is the author) read as follows:

> And when the teacher talked of copulative verbs [...] putting her hand, which had no engagement or wedding ring on it, flat on certain pages of Shakespeare, and saying, Turn the page girls, we'll skip this scene. And there were words which had to be looked up in the dictionary, and could not be found; new words, foreign words, forbidden words, slang.
> "O.K., Chief!" she said one day, and her grandfather had slapped her hard across the face.

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[152] Cf. *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 229; and *Giardini profumati per i ciechi*, p. 187.
[153] *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, p. 31.
[154] Ibid., p. 31.

"Slang!" he shouted. "American slang!"
Yet long before her grandfather died he used to say O.K.,
Chief, half-a-mo, without seeming to notice what he said,
and with no one looking shocked.[155]

Here Frame employed free indirect speech for the narrator's and/or Erlene's thoughts, and standard direct speech to report the words of the teacher's – possibly Erlene's – grandfather. In the light of the approach she adopted throughout the whole book as well as in other works, this may suggest that the grandfather's words are perceived as alien: they represent a different dimension that cannot be assimilated to Erlene's or the narrator's viewpoint. A comparison between the above quote and its Italian rendering will clarify my point:

Se poi la professoressa doveva parlare di verbi copulativi [...] mentre spiacciacava la mano (dove non portava né l'anello di fidanzamento né quello di matrimonio) su certe pagine di Shakespeare e diceva: «Voltate pagina, ragazze, questa scena la saltiamo». Infine c'erano le parole che dovevano essere cercate sul dizionario, ma non si riusciva a trovarle da nessuna parte, nemmeno nell'appendice alla fine: i neologismi, le parole straniere, le parole tabù, lo slang.
«OK, Capo!» aveva detto un giorno Erlene e suo nonno le aveva dato uno sberlone in faccia.
«Slang!» aveva gridato. «Slang americano!»
Eppure, molto prima di morire, anche lui era solito usare le espressioni OK, Capo, Datti una mossa, e non sembrava preoccuparsi troppo di quello che diceva, e del resto nessuno ne rimaneva scandalizzato.[156]

The TT shows the translator's (or editor's) intention to clarify the ambiguities of the ST and make the passage as explicit as possible. This implies the transformation of a resistant prose into a fluent one. The use of brackets to sort out the very long passage and the transformation of the free indirect speech into direct speech clearly respond to a desire to normalise stylistic idiosyncrasies, and make them an 'easy reading'. As a consequence, the translation is a

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[155] Ibid., pp. 31–32.
[156] *Giardini profumati per i ciechi*, pp. 25–26.

standardised and flattened version of Frame's unconventional use of punctuation, free indirect speech, sentence length, and rhythm.

An exception to what has been argued so far about the free indirect speech is *La Laguna*, in which the translator generally adopts a non-fluent approach to it. Let us consider the following examples: 'forse glielo avrebbe detto. Winnie mi ha dato una spinta e mi ha detto bugiarda'; 'Ce la facevano provare, aspettando rispettosamente, senza mai dire, il tuo turno è finito, stai cercando di farlo durare di più, è l'ultima volta e poi tocca a noi'.[157] Yet the translator is inconsistent in her approach, which disrupts the strength of such a distinctive choice.

A similar approach has been adopted with Frame's use of capitalisation, which is abundantly employed mainly to emphasise essential ideas and dimensions such as 'The World, Outside, Freedom',[158] 'The Giant Unreality',[159] or commands from authorities such as nurses, doctors, and parents (all representing different dimensions) such as 'Safety First',[160] 'Look to the Left and Look to the Right'.[161] Sometimes they are recreated, others they are not. For instance, the Italian version of *La laguna* does not retain the capitalisation of important concepts such as 'Mother' and 'Father'.[162] This prevents the Italian audience from connecting the dots within the overall approach to capitalisation in Frame. Inconsistency makes such stylistic choices appear random irregularities rather than coherent elements. As Spivak states, 'the person who is translating must have a tough sense of the specific terrain of the original' in order to claim a 'right of friendship' to the text.[163]

If, as Theodore Adorno says, punctuation shapes and critiques the facts, even seemingly irrelevant linguistic traits like commas or capital letters are able

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[157] *The Lagoon*, pp. 28, 43. 'Perhaps she would tell. Winnie pushed me over and called me names. And then when Winnie got down from the tree and went to join the others her mother would look at her with a hurt expression in her eyes and say, blessed are the peacemakers'; 'They let us have turns on it, waiting respectfully at the side, and not saying, your turn's over you're only trying to make it last, only one more swing and then it's ours'.

[158] *Faces in the Water*, p. 30.

[159] Ibid., p. 7.

[160] Ibid., p. 4.

[161] Ibid., p. 6. See also p. 27.

[162] *The Lagoon*, pp. 29, 57–66.

[163] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Politics of Translation', in Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis e-library, 2004), pp. 307–416 (pp. 405, 400).

to instil a great deal of pragmatic force into the narration. Authors use them to manage voices and points of view; readers take them as a guide for their sense of direction; and narrators and characters interact along their porous membranes.[164]

Comparative analysis between TTs and STs has demonstrated that parallelisms and repetitions have generally been recreated in Italian. It is likely that they were not perceived as a threat to the fluency of the text, as they do not call for excessively creative strategies. The following extract is taken from *Living in the Maniototo*:

> Io avevo ancora il mio dono, un paio di orecchini, minuscoli pendenti a forma di globo con le linee della latitudine e della longitudine […].[165]
> - Ho ancora i suoi orecchini – dissi precipitosamente a mo' di presentazione e paternalistico incoraggiamento.[166]
> - Ho ancora la sua spilla a forma di stella marina e gli orecchini a forma di globo.[167]
> La nostra visita fu breve. Quando ce ne andammo, ricordai a Tommy che avevo ancora la sua spilla a forma di stella marina e gli orecchini a forma di globo […].[168]

As we can see, the translator retains the refrain that goes on throughout the chapter, thus recreating a form of non-standard internal cohesion. A similar approach is adopted with the recreation of inner monologues, seen perhaps as a more widely known aspect of contemporary writing; with these, translators have succeeded in the rendering of excellent passages,[169] which confirms that Italian translators have generally been attentive in their approach to macro-structures of narration (parallel structures within a chapter/book, long passages of interior monologue, dichotomous meanings). It is at sentence and word level

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[164] Rachel May, 'Sensible Elocution: How Translation Works in & upon Punctuation', *The Translator*, 3.1 (1997), 1–20 (p. 17).

[165] *Living in the Maniototo*, p. 30.

[166] Ibid., pp. 31–32.

[167] Ibid., p. 33.

[168] Ibid., p. 34.

[169] Cf. Janet Frame, *Verso un'altra estate*, trans. by Giovanna Scocchera (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2012 [2007]), p. 182–84.

that they have taken significantly more liberties, often easing the transition from non-standard narrations to normalised syntax.

Taken together, the changes that translators have imposed on seemingly small details of punctuation have an almost predictable quality suggesting an overall editorial rather than creative or interpretative perspective. As a consequence, in their approach to experimental features such as creative punctuation, translators 'seem to share a desire to totalize, to reduce language not just to manageable segments [...] but to something complete and static rather than fluid and open-ended',[170] thus performing an approach which is in complete contrast with Frame's attitude to words.

Christiane Nord's concept of 'loyalty' states that translators have an ethical responsibility to the source author;[171] the representation of the writer must be ethically justified:

> As an interpersonal category referring to a social relationship between individuals who expect not to be betrayed in the process, loyalty may replace the traditional intertextual relationship of 'fidelity', a concept that usually refers to a linguistic or stylistic similarity between the source and the target texts, regardless of the communicative intentions and/or expectations involved.[172]

Nord is claiming that an author should not be misrepresented – the risk of falling into prescriptivism and contradiction here is high. If one understands Nord's point as a form of faithfulness to the author and the ST, one might easily fall into the right/wrong binarism, since issues of intentionality would come into play.

Translators are responsible for the representation of an author, and in this sense their relationship is based on ethical principles. In our case, this means that if a certain feature is systematically employed so that a pattern behind it is visible to the source audience, then the target audience should be allowed to experience the same pattern, albeit recreated/adapted. From this

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[170] May, p. 10.

[171] The others are the client and the target audience.

[172] Christiane Nord, 'Function plus Loyalty: Ethics in Professional Translation', *Génesis. Revista Científica do ISAG*, 6 (2007), 7–17. Electronic version available at <http://humanities.ufs.ac.za/dl/userfiles/documents/00001/937_eng.pdf>, 1–14 (p. 3)

perspective, translators engage in an ethical process of representation if, in their act of mediation, they do not impose a concept of one culture on members of the other.[173]

The fluent strategies that have been presented so far do not appear to respond to loyal-creative approaches, that is to say they have not initiated a productive relationship with the sources. Also, if on a small scale they translate an idea of punctuation that homologates rather than challenges readers, on a larger scale this inevitably limits the subversiveness of Frame's positions, thus restricting the source function. On this point, Nord would talk of a double transgression, on both the functional and ethical side, which causes interpretation to lose its ethical quality.[174]

Indeed, even when they have produced texts which could be defined as good translations overall, Frame's translators have precluded those translations becoming agents of change in the target system. Furthermore, the general normalisation has prevented the TTs from creating a unitary, interdependent system – perhaps because they considered translated literature as secondary rather than independent.[175] Conversely, translators who are well informed and conscious of the author's stylistic idiosyncrasies use STs as a chance to exercise their own subjective judgment about experimental features in TL and are, therefore, likely to use this prerogative consistently.[176]

As Reynolds states, translation, like any flirtatious act, involves desire. Thus he sees 'the characterisation of reading-and-trying-to-understand, and moving from reading-and-trying-to-understand to venturing-translations as a response to an appeal that is at once needy and provocative and challenging'.[177] Nonetheless, translators have found flattening and standardising approaches much more comfortable even in highly idiosyncratic modernist writing.[178] For example, a study of the Russian and French translations of the works of Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner proves that

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[173] Ibid., p. 3.
[174] Nord, pp. 9–12.
[175] See Section 2.4.
[176] May, p. 14.
[177] Matthew Reynolds, 'Transoscillations: Reading Translated Writing in the Company of Bassani and Calvino', talk given at the 'Echoing Voices' conference, Oxford, 18 June 2014.
[178] May, p. 1.

there are regular patterns of alteration (simplification) in punctuation and syntax. Moreover, corpus-based research has proven that translators deal with intertwined voices or incomplete sentences through a clarifying use of punctuation, thus outweighing its interpretative or creative function.[179] In this sense translators, who are themselves readers and writers, have tended to adopt the role of editors over that of creators.[180]

6.5.1 Translating style

The poems presented here will be used to move the discussion on to an analysis of how an informed approach to Frame's stylistic features could give Italian readers a more detailed and multifaceted vision of her writing.

The poems 'Chant' and 'Instructions for Bombing With Napalm' are interesting examples of Frame's use of punctuation and capitalisation:[181]

'Chant'

Down with summer spring autumn winter
give me deep freeze for ever
icicles on roofs walls windows the allwhite
alltime allover dream of a world and its people frozen
within the blackest night, so black it's impossible to discern
the alltime allover allwhite dream.

Now blind eyes come into their own.[182]

'Instructions for Bombing With Napalm'

naphtalene coconut oil
health
a neat lethal plan
a late net

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[179] Ibid., pp. 5–17.

[180] It is necessary to add that it may well be that editorial policies and controlling interventions on the part of editors have directed the translators' approach in that sense. However, this is, first, impossible to determine from an analysis of published works and, second, every translator has a different experience with their editor.

[181] See also 'Thistledown' in Appendix E.

[182] 'Chant', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 157.

> an alp at panther heap
> a pale ten-pin heel lent to plant help
> to pelt
> at nether halt
> at nether halt
> hell
>
> coconut ointment
> ultimate oil
> unction
> lotion
>
> count coil
> act lout to that tune in loin
> toil out then
> lick the lion's lap
> cut the lint
> pal[183]

As far as punctuation is concerned, the first poem only presents a final full stop at the end of each stanza, and a comma in the third to last line. The second stanza being only one line long, it runs for six lines virtually without punctuation. This creates a relentless intensity and makes the reader reach the last line almost breathless. As for the second poem, Frame completely omits punctuation marks. Nor does it have any capital letters, not even the personal pronoun 'I'. It seems as though, in her rejection of formal boundaries, Frame decided not to submit even to the most basic rules of standard poetic language. As the above examples demonstrate, her poems tend to be free of any imposed limit, perhaps with the only exception of the linearity of language and lineation. If one compares them with a passage from the novel *Owls Do Cry*, the stylistic continuity is immediately visible:

> they say they say
> they're a queer family though, […] and they put her away
> in a hospital, an asylum
> they say
> and his other sister, Chicks, […] and they went up north
> they say they say

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[183] 'Instructions for Bombing With Napalm', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 163.

> it's the sort of things that runs in families, it's just as well
> as he isn't married, but his heart's kind, remember he
> helped that old man and gave him somewhere to live, and
> bedding and food; but he's mean with money, he's married
> to money, pennies and threepences and sixpences, and
> pound notes wrapped around him like an overcoat to keep
> him warm from the outside cold; he'd give everything away
> but his money
> they say they say
> and he reads. Sometimes he reads queer things
> and didn't he drink once but it was hushed up
> didn't he travel round the world in a sailing vessel or was it
> round and round himself?[184]

The passage is thoroughly unconventional: from the missing capitalisation, to the creative punctuation, to the repetition of a song-like refrain that reads as an uncanny off-screen voice. In 'Goldfinch', she appears to follow her usual approach to capitalisation: 'The Tooks and the Gaves | [...] The Gives and the Takes [...]'.[185] She also chose to capitalise the preposition 'In' in the line 'In wanting Out', so as to visually contrast the two opposite dimensions.[186]

Likewise, Frame's use of free indirect speech and parallelism in verse is similar to her use of it in prose. The following extract is taken from the poem 'The Cat Has a Mouthful of Larks':

> I said to my mother, who do you love most.
> She said, I love you all. A politician's answer.
> Choose then, choose between us,
> the lover and the husband said to the lover's mistress
> who replied, It's not my place.[187]

The direct question in the first line is introduced by a comma and terminates in a full stop, rather than a question mark, while in the last line, the direct speech is signalled by the capitalisation of 'It'.[188]

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[184] *Owls Do Cry* (London: The Women's Press, 2002 [1957]), pp. 62–63.

[185] 'Goldfinch', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 31.

[186] For further examples of idiosyncratic uses of capitalisation, see also 'I Must Go Down to the Seas Again' and 'Christmas and Death' in Appendix E.

[187] 'The Cat Has a Mouthful of Larks', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 115.

[188] Other similar examples are 'A Dream' ('Ha Ha, he said'), with the onomatopoeic sound of a laughter, 'The Happy Prince' (in which 'The voice orders, Turn the Page, Turn the Page'),

Frame took recourse to parallelisms and repetitions so frequently as to make them key elements of both collections of poetry.[189] 'Some of My Friends Are Excellent Poets' well illustrates this point:[190]

> Some of my friends are excellent poets
> modestly packed with knowhow, the practising a craft look
> [about them
> in control of their words which in print
> are welldressed in the classical style.
> Even where they barefoot, in rags, they would have dignity
> I tell you, some of my friends are excellent poets.
>
> [...]
> Why am I so obstinately trying to write poetry?
>
> It's a habit. In all the years I've been alive
> habits have been classified as good or bad.
> Bad habits bring ruination (a fine word, a poem in itself).
> Writing poetry is not a bad habit
> though the poems may turn out to be habitually bad
> with the thoughts habitually thought
> the words in their habitual place.
>
> [...]
> Poetry is a time for the breaking of habits good or bad,
> [...]
> This is my life and it is my habit
> said the poet.[191]

As in her novels and short stories, the poet balances and organises the composition around some load-bearing sentences/phrases. Repetition could also involve entire sentences in subsequent lines ('Unwrapping the world |

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and 'The Legend' ('A barking crow, kennelled somewhere in the treetops cries Unchain me'), with no graphic distinction between the two voices. *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 31, 36, 73.

[189] Although parallelism was particularly common in oral traditions and Hebrew poetry, it was revisited by modernism and was very frequently used by poets such as Eliot, Lawrence, and Whitman – the latter being said to be the poet who used it more than any other. John Anthony Cuddon and Claire Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 680.

[190] See also and 'A Simple Memory of a Poet, a Memory Shuffled Face Upward' in Appendix E.

[191] 'Some of My Friends Are Excellent Poets', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 123.

unwrapping the world';[192] 'And the sound of the cellos. | And the sound of the cellos was heard in all the land'),[193] or syntactically parallel structure:

> I'm serving whelk and conch
> I'm crying out for independence
> I'm playing guitar and drums.[194]

> I will give you a desert swollen with sunburst
> I will give you hate and sleep.

> I will give you distances that beetles, maggots, bacteria
> [have.[195]

She also reiterated identical phrases, conveying visually and lexically the form of musical cohesion that alliterations and assonances create acoustically: 'the celebrations that say it is best to say it is best';[196] 'second by split second … | […] we might have chatted about living and dying and dying';[197]

> Absence, absence everywhere, the grass
> […]
> We tell you, it is a mystery,
> a gloomy mystery.
> […]
> A gloomy mystery?
> We'll see, we'll see.[198]

Having proven the above-mentioned stylistic features are constant in Frame's poems, and having demonstrated that Italian translators have not dealt with them properly in her prose poetry, it is evident that the verse translator has various compelling reasons to take a re-creative approach to Frame's idiosyncratic style. One way to do it would be by slavishly *keeping* the

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[192] 'How I Began Writing', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 137.

[193] 'And the Sound of the Cellos', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 59.

[194] 'Calypso', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 79.

[195] 'Promise', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 68.

[196] 'On December 31st Each Year', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 103.

[197] 'Pictures Never Painted, Music Never Composed', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 105.

[198] 'Sometimes Mr Speaker and Blanco Come to Find If You Are Home', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 106. Further examples are: 'The Cat Has a Mouthful of Larks', 'An Orange', 'Daniel', 'What I Have Seen or Dreamed', 'The Clock Tower', and 'The Clown'.

idiosyncrasies of syntax, capitalisation, and punctuation of the ST. But would this mean translators expressing their own *creativity*? The answer to these questions actually has to do with the two italicised concepts, and will be illustrated through the following translations. The first, entitled 'Canto', is a candidate TT for 'Chant':

> E insieme a estate primavera autunno inverno
> donami per sempre il gelo
> ghiaccioli su tetti pareti finestre il semprebianco
> sempreterno semprepresente sogno di un mondo e la sua gente
> [ghiacciata
> nella notte più buia, così buia che è impossibile distinguere
> il sempreterno semprepresente semprebianco sogno.
>
> Ora gli occhi ciechi seguono la loro strada.

From a rhythmic point of view, the translation reproduces the breath-taking flow without punctuation, which allows a catch of breath only in line 6. The only comma and the two full stops are positioned in the same places as in the ST. The TT also recreates the lexical inventions: 'il semprebianco | sempreterno semprepresente sogno' renders the neologisms and reproduces their alliterative sounds (the prefix element 'all' is rendered 'sempre', which further stresses the consonance in 'semprepresente').

The example shows how the precise retention of the ST's innovative features can allow for creative solution if the ST's constraints are seen as an opportunity to experiment with language. The 'semprebianco sogno' (allwhite dream) of the metapoem, as Holmes would call it, refers to the ST mimetically, as it imitates the content and form of the neologisms. Furthermore, it enacts one of the main functions of lexical creativity in poetry, namely that of creating a particular stylistic effect.[199] The second translation, entitled 'Quando il sole vive

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[199] Antoinette Renouf, 'Tracing Lexical Productivity and Creativity in the British Media: The Chavs and the Chav-Nots', in *Lexical Creativity, Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Judith Munath, Studies in Functional and Functional Linguistics, 58 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007), pp. 61–89 (p. 70).

più anni della paura', is a candidate TT for 'When Sun Shines More Years Than Fear':[200]

> Quando il sole vive più anni della paura
> quando gli uccelli volano più miglia della rabbia
> quando il cielo ha più uccelli
> naviga più nuvole
> splende più soli
> di quanto il palmo dell'amore porti odio
> perfino allora in questo stanco
> banchetto settantenne dirò Cameriere-sole
> Cameriere-uccello Cameriere-cielo
> non ho più fame:
> porta via il piatto

If one compares this TT with its source, one will notice that the original punctuation has been altered in favour of an even more unconventional approach: see the omission of the comma before the free indirect speech, and the ones that separate the different waiters. Furthermore, the last comma has been turned into a colon, and the final full stop has been deleted, as a visual-formal-stylistic resemblance to Frame's idea of linguistic non-finitude. Such alterations could be justified in an accompanying commentary to the translations (preface, translator's note, footnotes) in which the translator would state that s/he has used the TT in order to compensate for the excessively normalising approaches to punctuation in prose, and of the missed opportunity to preserve Frame's stances of stylistic non-standardness.[201]

The answer to our unresolved question requires a revision of the common notions of *keeping* and *creating* in translation. Having dismantled any claim to the originality of meaning(s) (nothing is entirely new, as our thoughts are derived from the infinite associations that the infinite meanings of intertextuality elicit), Frame's poems are not to be seen as isolated products, and nor should their translations. For this reason, the praxis of translation does

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[200] See Appendix E for the source text.
[201] Cf. Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), 176–86. See also Spivak's technique of including prefatory material and historical background in her translations as a way of participating in theoretical debates and expressing her own presence or agency.

not aim to keep features of the TT (stylistic, lexical, etc.), but rather to recreate them. It cannot do otherwise as, firstly, the reproduction of the same content-form would be equal to a non-translation and, secondly, an aseptic transposition of a feature into another linguistic-cultural system will not mean anything.

In preferring the comforting space of a fluent approach, the Italian TTs are less creative than their STs in the sense that they have prevented their literary system from encountering alterity in its most exquisite difference. Thus, while creativity is an unavoidable characteristic of the translation act, a more or less conscious approach to creativity determines the depth of the multicultural, intertextual encounter that every translation carries out. In conclusion, aware that there is no right or wrong translation, translators – and readers of translated literature – should approach the translation act as a non-finite, never-ending textual process, which provides the TL with an infinite number of opportunities. In effect, though they appear to be constraints, every limit imposed by the ST elicits a new, differential process of signification.

6.6 Lexicon: Māori and New Zealand English

This section explores Frame's approach to lexicon, particularly focussing on her use of Māori and New Zealand English terms. In some of Frame's works, the Māori-Pākehā mutual positioning in society appears to offer Frame an orientation with respect to her own identity. In this sense, her writing is ideologically and theoretically located in the diachronic dimension of Pākehā identity in New Zealand fiction.[202]

The postcolonial dimension will be approached predominantly from a lexical and translational perspective. The former will analyse the way Italian translators have dealt with Māori concepts, New Zealand English words, and any term that is particularly imbued within New Zealand culture. The latter will investigate the different outcomes of the strategies adopted so far, and will offer multiple alternatives so as to show the ideological and semantic implications of each approach.

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[202] See Christina Stachurki, *Reading Pakeha? Fiction and Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009).

Italian translators have adopted various approaches to rendering Māori words. Broadly speaking, their strategies can be distinguished into three main categories using Venuti's terminology: the predominantly foreignising, the domesticating, and those that move along the variegated continuum between the two. The contrastive analysis performed on these strategies will identify the shifts between the handling of Māori/Pākehā culture, reflecting Frame's concepts of marginality. Finally, the results of the comparison will give the translator of poetry a clearer picture of what has been done, and what can still be done in the rendering of the postcolonial elements of Frame's verse into Italian.

Frame's plots draw on postcolonial issues as an additional sphere of investigation for her quest for marginality. Her position is that of a white Pākehā woman writer (margin/centre, woman/white) employing proximity to alterity (Māori) as a way to scrutinise the metaphorical and actual borders between them. Although Frame did not propose an explicit confrontation between the two in her stories, postcolonial references are disseminated throughout her works. Mattina, in *The Carpathians*, is an American who travels to Puamahara and experiences the 'disorder of space and time' of those who 'live elsewhere'.[203] She tries to learn Māori and directly encounters Māori culture, but does not feel accepted ('I am merely the American researcher, the visiting would-be expert to whom they have fed their information – it is I, not they, who is the creature studied for *Our Beautiful World* shown in prime time').[204] Grace, the writer character of *Towards Another Summer*, experiences the migrant condition living in London, far from her New Zealand homeland, symbol of physical and cultural origins. She represents the hybridity of one who is never completely *here* nor *there*, 'a migratory bird' that is 'instantly in her New Zealand' at the sight of the *Book of New Zealand Verse*.[205] The ant Mona in *Mona Minim* travels away from her place of origin, to then return and go unrecognised because her encounter with the *other* has rendered her a stranger.

The list of examples goes on, but the common point between all her references to the postcolonial/Māori world is the subversion of the White-

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[203] Janet Frame, *The Carpathians* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), p. 89.
[204] Ibid., p. 93.
[205] *Towards Another Summer*, p. 135.

colonising approach to alterity: the Pākehā characters of her stories do not claim to understand the Māori culture-language; they are willing to learn but feel blocked by an alleged mutual diffidence. Conversely, the Māori characters welcome the Pākehā guest/researcher as a friend, and let her enter their lives. So in this mutual regard, there may be no place for full understanding (which brings us back to Frame's idea of the limits of language rather than the limits imposed by cultural difference and time-space categories), but there certainly is enough space for mutual expression.

Following a more domesticating approach, some Italian translators have opted for a rendering that assimilated typical elements of New Zealand landscape and culture. Here is a passage from *Verso un'altra estate*: 'The Friday before the weekend another stain unexpectedly marred Grace's progress through her field (she used the word "field" more than "paddock") of ventures'.[206] 'Paddock' is used here as the New Zealand English variant of 'field', and is translated into Italian as 'campo', while 'field' is rendered as 'terreno' (ground, soil, land): 'Il venerdì prima del fine settimana un'altra macchia segnò inaspettatamente il cammino di Grace attraverso il suo terreno di imprese (preferiva la parola "terreno" a "campo")'.[207]

The word 'paddock' means different things according to the variety of English. In Canadian, American and British English, it generally refers to a small enclosure used to keep animals, particularly horses. It can also indicate an area surrounded by fences where cars (or horses) are kept and shown to the public before a race. In New Zealand and Australian English, a paddock is a field of land of any size, used for farming (especially sheep or cattle). It is generally fenced, or delimited by natural borders. The British and American counterpart is 'pasture'.[208] In Italian, 'campo' is quite a broad term that refers to different areas of meaning (military, sport, educational-recreational, etc.). However, in its most frequent use, a 'campo' represents a field of any size, with or without fences,

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[206] Ibid., p. 29.

[207] *Verso un'altra estate*, p. 36. In *Giardini profumati per i ciechi*, 'paddock' is translated as 'pascolo' (pp. 15, 48, 71), and 'recinto' (p. 98). Likewise, in *Vivere nel Maniototo* 'home paddock' becomes 'il recinto di casa' (p. 148), and 'paddocks' is generally rendered as 'pascoli' (pp. 223–24).

[208] *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 3rd edition; *Oxford English Dictionary* online version; *The New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* online version (ed. by Tony Deverson and Graeme Kennedy).

which can also be used for agriculture or pasture. Its use is specified by an apposition, such as 'campo di patate', 'campo coltivato a grano', and so on. Conversely, 'terreno' (soil) is a slightly less generic term, as it is normally used to describe a specific type of soil (marshy, swampy, hilly, loose, etc.).[209]

It follows that the Italian translation presents two words that, despite belonging to the same semantic group, have slightly different meanings; nonetheless, the cultural passage from a (settler) linguistic variety to another (colonised) one is completely – and predictably – lost. The metaphorical movement from Grace's New Zealand origins, symbolised by the natural reference of the paddock, to her new life in the UK, tinted with nostalgia and uncertainty, is blurred into the indistinct movement from a generic field to an equally generic soil. The fact that Grace prefers to use the UK variant may suggest her subjection to the cultural domination of the British Empire. It also defines and locates the hybridity of the protagonist between New Zealand and English landscapes. But how could such a complex web of overt references be rendered in Italian?

Linguistically, Italy has no varieties, but rather regional languages and dialects; culturally speaking, it certainly does not have an exact counterpart of the paddock/field distinction. The value of a regional Italian, such as Neapolitan or Sicilian, though typically associated with the migrant condition, would recreate one of the textual dimensions (lexical), but it would inevitably lose the link to Grace's postcoloniality. In fact, any time-space recreation would lose the specificity of Grace's condition. This is why, when it comes to postcolonial texts, creativity becomes a particularly heated question.

Studies on English as a global language have variously demonstrated that the specificities of English varieties are often not preserved in translation (either in interlingual or intralingual TT).[210] In its application to postcolonial texts, the translation praxis becomes a process of linguistic and cultural negotiation, 'which constantly includes/excludes difference, through a constant ambivalent movement between practices of assimilation and/or the conservation of

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[209] *Vocabolario Treccani* online version.
[210] Katherine E. Russo, *Global English, Translational Flows: Australia and New Zealand in Translation* (Trento: Tangram, 2012), p. 9.

difference'.[211] According to Katherine Russo, the translation of English varieties into other languages – including Standard English – is determined either by an intention to assimilate or the desire to maintain the culture-bound traits of the varieties. Although such elements of 'difference' are generally determinant in the articulation of individual and group identities, the translation of postcolonial texts is often conditioned by publishing policies and the media, since these tend to 'prefer not to alienate readers and viewers with unintelligible texts'.[212] Indeed, postcolonial texts are often thought to be for an international audience.[213]

It follows that translation of postcolonial texts is generally influenced by a non-reciprocal relation: its practice is guided by preconceptions of the target audience's knowledge and apprehension of domestic (therefore familiar and reassuring) cultural referents, which impedes forms of self-representation as well as the diffusion and empowerment of linguistic minorities.[214] As Douglas Robinson states, the postcolonial approach to translation can make the practice of translating cultures a channel of colonisation as well as a means of decolonisation.[215]

In *Vivere nel Maniototo*, and *Verso un'altra estate* translators have opted for a strategy of borrowing: common New Zealand plants and birds have kept their Māori names (manuka, kaka beck, pohutukawa, rata, piwakawaka),[216] like names of rivers and places (Waitati, Puketeraki, Mihiwaka, and Waitangi).[217] This retains the symbolic value of endemic nature, which bears 'a "thingness" that exceeds and anticipates language'.[218] On other occasions translators have opted for what could be defined as intermediate positions between borrowing and adaptation. For instance, in *Verso un'altra estate*, the translator adds an explanation to the term 'kumaras': 'kumara, le patate dolci'. 'Kumara' is then repeated on following pages, and in those recurrences remains untranslated. In this way, the TT retains the element of foreignness, and links it to an Italian

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[211] Ibid., p. 10.

[212] Ibid.

[213] Patrick Cattrysse, quoted in Russo, *Global English*, p. 10.

[214] Ibid., pp. 10–11.

[215] Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), p. 31.

[216] *Vivere nel Maniototo*, p. 53.

[217] *Verso un'altra estate*, pp. 58, 155.

[218] Russo, p. 15.

counterpart (sweet potato). Although this might be seen as an imposition of the translator's power, it could also be interpreted as the desire to keep the Māori element, and allow it into the target culture by means of a clarifying translation. Such an approach takes into consideration both the ST's foreignness, and the importance of facilitating the introduction of the foreign term in the target language.

In other instances, the Māori word is either completely substituted by an explanation or omitted. For example, the phrase 'Maori pa' is translated as 'villaggio maori' in two different TTs.[219] The word 'pa' indicates both the Maori fortified village, a sort of fort or stockade, and the inhabitants of that place. Symbolically, the 'pa' represents the defensive settlement strategy that Māori had to adopt, and geographically locates the reference to the hills of the North Island (the area north of Lake Taupo), where one traditionally finds palisades and terraces. Conversely, the word 'bach' is completely omitted in translation.[220] A bach is a small house at the seaside or at a holiday resort, and represents an iconic part of twentieth-century New Zealand history and culture, symbolising the beach holiday lifestyle that gradually became more accessible to the middle classes.[221] Perhaps a footnote might have explained the cultural-geographical associations in these two cases, though it would inevitably have resulted in the same power discourses that can be applied to all forms of prefatory/explanatory material.

The culture-bound elements that Grace or Māori characters mention are charged with an emotive relationship to their land, which appears to indicate an indirect, allusive reaction to the hegemonic powers. As Niko Besnier points out, 'the indexical nature of affect in language makes it both an ideal vehicle for the affirmation of hegemonic structures and an ideal (often covert) tool in the resistance of these structures'.[222]

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[219] *Verso un'altra estate*, p. 99; *La laguna*, p. 4.

[220] Cf. *Living in the Maniototo*, p. 255; and *Vivere nel Maniototo*, p. 217.

[221] *Oxford English Dictionary* online version; *Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, 'Story: The Beach Culture' <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/beach-culture/page-5> [accessed 28 September 2014].

[222] Niko Besnier, 'Language and Affect', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19 (1990), 419–51 (p. 438).

Giardini profumati per i ciechi makes great use of footnoting, especially to explain intertextual references and wordplay.[223] Theorists have expresses the most diverse positions on this issue, ranging from radical opponents like Umberto Eco ('There are losses that we could consider absolute. They are the cases when it is not possible to translate [...] the translator falls back on the *ultima ratio*, introducing a footnote – and then the footnote ratifies her defeat')[224] to passionate supporters like Vladimir Nabokov ('I want translations with copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity', so says Nabokov with regard to translating Pushkin).[225] True, the use of footnotes in translation has the advantage of making contextual material available to the reader, but also the disadvantage of interrupting the reading experience and interposing an external voice into the intimate relationship between author and reader – an ambivalence that does not seem to have a solution.

An example of good practice can be found in *Verso un'altra estate*, where the translator visibly engages with the cultural references of the NZE word 'bush':

> [S]ono sicura che Cappuccetto Rosso [...] quando arriva alla casetta in mezzo al bosco (perché non parlano mai del *bush*? E perché ci sono sempre pettirossi e usignoli e mai i coda ventaglio?)[226]

The translator opts to retain the New Zealand English word untranslated and italicised. This finds a counterpart in her decision to retain all italicised words and expressions of the ST, through which Frame referred to Grace's New

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[223] To give some examples, one of the notes clarifies the patchwork of poetic quotes that Frame made, another explains the historical significance of the May Day and Maypole, and a third unties the metaphorical reference that the writer had made by playing with the word 'lighthouse'.

[224] Umberto Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: Esperienze di traduzione* (Milano: Bompiani, 2003), p. 95.

[225] Vladimir Nabokov, 'Problems in Translation: Onegin in English', Partisan Review, 22.4 (1955), 196–512 (p. 512).

[226] *Verso un'altra estate*, p. 175. 'I'm sure Red Riding Hood [...] by the time she has reached the little house deep in the wood (why don't they say the "bush"? and why are there always robins and nightingales and no fantails?)'. *Towards Another Summer*, p. 158.

Zealandness ('*il mio paese*, *il mio paese*', '*Nuova Zelanda, terra di felci*', '*Nel mio paese*, pensò Grace – sì, lo sto dicendo, *nel mio paese* – avevo cielo e nuvole sopra di me, erba e morti sotto').[227] Furthermore, her strategy is coherent with Frame's use of different formatting to express different dimensions of narration.

In the impossibility of accounting for all possible reactions of the Italian audience to the above strategies, it is certainly possible to argue that the presence of untranslated Māori words, as opposed to them being replaced by explanations or deleted, locates the TT in a foreign dimension, and pushes it closer to its culture of origin. It might be contested, though, that foreign words may repel readers and trigger a reaction of alienation, rather than empathy. Nonetheless, both identification and estrangement are effective reading experiences, albeit radically different. If one completely immerses oneself in a text, to the extent of forgetting it belongs to another culture, one can bring that experience of the *other* closer to one's own culture. But there may be occasions when, through the presence of the foreign/alien element, the reading experience is powered by the sensation of estrangement: something from the Outside has come into the reader's Inside and has shocked-enriched-subverted his/her world and, possibly, his/her approach to both source and target cultures. As Spivak says, translation is the most intimate act of reading, but reading is simultaneously an act of translation: 'the post-colonial as the outsider/insider translates white theory as she reads, so that she can discriminate on the terrain of the original'.[228] Therefore, if in the first instance the translator enhances a compassionate reading experience by deleting the foreignness of the source, in the second instance it is precisely the emphasis posed on the difference that will allow for a cultural shock/change.

Venuti's theory on the visibility/invisibility of the translator sees the first approach as a domesticating attitude towards the foreign culture, and the second as an attempt to foreignise the target system through the introduction of elements of the source culture. Venuti believes the translator is much more visible in the second strategy. However, this might contain a (further) paradox:

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[227] *Verso un'altra estate*, pp. 173–77.
[228] Spivak, p. 412.

how can the translator be more visible and employ foreignising features simultaneously, if foreignising features – at least in the Schleiermacher tradition[229] – were introduced by borrowing from the source text, rather than through the translator's (re-)creative invention?[230]

6.6.1 Translating postcolonial

When translation theories meet translation practices the risk of ambiguity is high. This is due to a number of reasons that perhaps stem from the impossibility of defining what translation actually is and what is entails.[231] Yet the very application of a translational approach elicits deep questioning and, therefore, promotes a form of textual analysis that includes, rather than excludes, the o*ther*. As Chesterman holds, every translation corresponds to a theory: the Greek word 'theoria' means 'seeing the world',[232] therefore theory, like translation, is not separate from life, but rather a way of looking at it.[233]

Whether the inclusion of Māori words in Italian TTs determines effects of foreignisation or domestication, the dilemma may be approached from different viewpoints, all of which risk becoming paradoxical. Indeed, to foreignise the target culture may not necessarily correspond to a more visible role for the translator, just as it may not result in a more source-oriented reading experience; alternatively, distancing the reader from the source culture may not imply a deformation/mutilation of the ST, but rather a creative adaptation in which the translator's role is by all means active and visible. Perhaps, the importance of theoretical perspectives on translation lies in the fact that every act of translation should be contextualised.

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[229] *Constructing Cultures. Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. 7–10.

[230] Cf. Bo Pettersson, 'The Taming of Poetry in Translation: Tua Forsström's *Snow Leopard* as a Test Case', in *Compare or Contrast? Current Issues in Cross-Language Research*, ed. by W.R. Cooper, Tampere English Studies, 6 (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 1998), pp. 329–41 (pp. 338–39).

[231] See Section 2.2.3.

[232] Herodotus uses it in this sense in his survey of the East. It generally indicates a broader looking/viewing/seeing.

[233] Andrew Chesterman, 'On the Idea of a Theory', *Across*, 8.1 (2007), 1–16 (p. 1).

In the case of Māori and Italian, the translator needs to consider that both languages can be understood as minority languages if compared to the hegemony of English. Though the notion of minority and minoritised languages has caused several problems in recent years, both Māori and Italian represent linguistic minorities when considered in international scenarios: Italian is, for instance, a minority language in the political context of Europe, and Māori represents a minority in New Zealand as well as in relation to the policies of English-language publishing.[234] In this sense, lexically foreignising translation strategies embody an approach that 'show[s] respect for diversity and the individual characteristics of different languages', rather than deleting the elements of difference.[235] Thus, translation might be used as a tool for impeding the universalisation of cultural forms:

> Whether this is a natural process of human evolution or whether, on the contrary, it is simply a case of the hegemony of certain cultures which are economically powerful over others which can be seen as minorities, a hegemony which will lead to a general impoverishment in the long run, is a question which should be pondered by participants in any terminology project, with respect to translation or to language planning.[236]

This means that any strategy translators/editors chose to adopt towards Māori terms in translation should be considered in the light of wider debates on linguistic policies, as both the introduction and the deletion of Māori from Frame's texts will have consequences in the Italian target system. If translators opt to retain the terms as they are, they avoid issues of ambiguity and, though this may not lead to the creation of neologisms, Italian readers will be exposed to terms that directly represent the foreign culture. Let us consider three candidate TTs for 'Christmas' ('Natale'), first stanza:[237]

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[234] Cf. Anna Aguilar-Amat and Laura Santamaria, 'Terminology Policies, Diversity, and Minoritised Languages', in *Translation in Context*, ed. by Andrew Chesterman, Natividad Gallardo San Salvador, and Yves Gambier (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000), pp. 73–84 (p. 74).

[235] Ibid., p. 79.

[236] Ibid.

[237] See Appendix E for the source text.

Nel mio paese Natale è
frangipani
jacaranda
pohutukawa[238]

Nel mio paese Natale è
abete
famiglia
cenone[239]

Nel mio paese Natale è
'o presepio
'e ciente stelle
'o pezzullo 'e baccalà[240]

While the first example retains the Māori words, the other two recreate, through adaptation, poems that transfer the space of the ST to generic-Italy (standard Italian) and Naples-Italy (Neapolitan). The geographical passage has called for cultural-linguistic changes, and the strategy has been to focus on the lexical items of the ST, and how they participate in the message.

The foreignising strategy of the first candidate TT certainly has a strong impact on the Italian reader, who is presented with foreign words and no explanation at all. This could trigger a number of reactions, from eliciting research and confrontation to a sensation of estrangement and refusal. Still, it

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[238] Frangipani is a plant with scented, colourful flowers. It is similar to the oleander and is very widespread in the Caribbean, the tropical Americas, Hawaii, India, and Sri Lanka. Jacaranda is an endemic South American tree and is very frequently found in Australia. Finally, the pohutukawa is a red-flowered plant which has now become one of the symbols of New Zealand. It is represented in postcards and posters, and mentioned in national songs and poems. It is the typical New Zealand Christmas tree.

[239] Literally: 'fir, family, Christmas Eve dinner'. All three elements are symbols of Christmas in Italy: the fir is used as a Christmas tree, and having the whole family gathered for the Christmas Eve dinner ('cenone') or for the Christmas Day lunch is a very strong tradition.

[240] Neapolitan word for crèche (Nativity scene), il 'presepio' is the symbol of the Neapolitan Christmas. Many traditional families only have the 'presepio' (old-fashioned word for 'presepe'), rather than the Christmas tree; many others have both. The 'presepio' is widely represented in traditional Neapolitan plays (see Eduardo De Filippo's *Natale in casa Cupiello*), songs, poems, and so on. The 'ciente stelle' (literally 'hundred stars') is a sparkler. It is made of a metal rod coated in the desired effect, and is very popular among children as it is less dangerous than other fireworks. It is one of the symbols of the Neapolitan Christmas fireworks. 'O pezzullo 'e baccalà (literally 'the little portion of baccalà') is a small portion of dried salt-cured cod, which is typically served at Christmas as part of the fish course. It is generally served deep-fried, but there are variants.

does not convey the passage from a hegemonic/central linguistic-literary system to a peripheral-minoritarian one. While standard Italian can be considered a minority language only in comparison with more widely spoken (hegemonic) languages, Neapolitan, as a regional Italian, is a minority language, like Māori. Therefore, while the second TT adapts the whole content/form to the Italian context, but flattens the passage from Māori to Standard English, the third recreates it. In each text, for each loss there is a gain: the loss of New Zealandness, Māori, and Pākehā worlds, and the gain of a new, autonomous creation, aimed at a different audience, in a different space, that hints at Frame's linguistic project.

It might be argued that the first and third TTs work at the expense of clarity. Nonetheless, the ST also ran the same risk: when Frame chose to mix Standard English with Māori terms, she consciously made a decision to create a linguistic-cultural mix instead of fluency. The choice to give space to a linguistic minority is defined by Tiina Puurtinen as an implicit ideological content. Therefore, translators cannot simply step back and avoid situating their texts ideologically (cases of omission), when there was a clear intention in the original work. Whether they choose to retain, recreate, or completely modify the ideological position of the ST, their strategy needs to be motivated and contextualised, since their TTs (whether they are perceived by readers as translations or originals) will themselves generate an infinite chain of ideological associations.[241]

Frame's 'originals' draw together Māori and Pākehā languages, and locate her writing within a complex ideological debate in which discourses of power, colonisation and, indeed, translation constantly interact. The choice to leave the Māori words untranslated responds to her idea of bringing a foreign, minoritarian element into the hegemonic spaces of English-Pākehā narratives. Thus, in this context, the choice to leave the Maori words untranslated appears a highly explicit confrontational stance. As Tymoczko maintains, the use of untranslated words and the inclusion of unfamiliar material is not necessarily a defect of the TT:

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[241] Tiina Puurtinen, 'Translating Linguistic Markers of Ideology', in Chesterman, *Translation in Context*, pp. 177–78.

> Translation is one of the activities of a culture in which cultural expansion occurs and in which linguistic options are expanded through the importation of loan transfers, calques, and the like. The result is, however, that translations very often have a different lexical texture from unmarked prose in the receptor culture.[242]

Just as poetic language is in itself foreign,[243] poetic language in translation cannot be assimilated to unmarked, standard language. The foreign element may, therefore, be conceived as a part of the semantic travels verse calls for, and as with every journey, neither the starting nor the arriving point leaves the traveller unchanged.

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[242] Maria Tymoczko, 'Post-colonial writing and literary translation', in *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 19–40 (p. 25).
[243] See Section 6.3.

Conclusions

In a passage of *Towards Another Summer*, Frame wrote:

> Teaching had been a mistake, Grace knew, remembering the Selection Committee from the College and their questions during the Interview,
> – What made you decide to take up teaching?
> And her false false reply,
> – Oh I've always wanted to be a teacher!
> (Disregarding the secret diary which recorded – I have told no one, I'm never going to tell anyone, but when I grow up I'm going to be a poet.)
> It seemed that she was not grown up yet, nor was she a poet, and if she ever became a poet it was likely that she would never have the *name* poet – it would be '*poetess*', the word which is sprayed like a weedkiller about the person and work of a woman who writes poetry – many have thus 'been put to sleep'; we are assured it is painless, there is no cause to worry then – is there?[1]

The urge to read Frame's life in those words is extremely tempting, even perhaps difficult to avoid. And it is not so wrong either. Janet Frame is in those words, as she is in each one of her books – how could it be otherwise? The point that biographical readings miss out is that not necessarily every part of those words has been part of her life. From the failed and unwanted teaching career, to the forced sleep of the mind of the lobotomy, to the precocious decision to become a poet, and the burden of inadequacy for such a label (with no inverted commas), all these elements recall part of Frame's life; but if Grace is inevitably a creature of Frame's mind, Frame is not necessarily Grace, or Istina, or Daphne.

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[1] Janet Frame, *Towards Another Summer* (London: Virago, 2011 [2007]), pp. 195–96. Italics in original.

Insomuch as the migratory bird Grace rejects categories and definitions, she longs for the *name* of poet. She wants to be named – defined, recognised as, thought of as, called – a poet. That name, however, has more in it than a label, for it is not what society would force her to become should it tolerate her absurd desire to write poetry. She does not want to be a poetess; she is a poet. Since poetess carries the weight and preconception of a patriarchal system that accepts, abides a woman who writes verse, Grace, a hybrid, cries out for her right/desire to be one who writes poems: no gender implication, no reference to a male-dominated tradition, no subordinate, needy position, just a poet with her poems.

The Italian text translates: 'da grande voglio fare il poeta. […] Era probabile che da grande non sarebbe mai stata definita un "poeta", bensì una "poetessa"'.[2] The ungendered, a-gender 'poet' is turned into the masculine (*un* poeta), but 'poeta' is one of those odd cases of Italian masculine words ending in an -a. An inherent opposition or a convergence of opposites? A desire to move *beyond* grammatical conventions? Or perhaps a liminal position that touches upon traditional views but defies them, by its very ambivalent nature.

The Italian Janet Frame manages to convey the big structures of semantic oppositions (*this* and *that*), often sustained by an unconventional capitalisation, the frequent repetition of parallel structures, or even the idiosyncratic inner monologues. Yet she is never in-between, nor hybrid. She may have unconventional traits, but only up to a certain point. Her disruptive power is dimmed, and the target system has lost the possibility of embracing a new poetic language, which moves beyond genres and above definitions. Frame's movement along the slippery borders of linguistic conventions appears to challenge the translation praxis too.

The sections of Chapter 6 have practically interrogated the subtle, porous, and risky line dividing theory from practice in literary translation.

Despite the widely shared belief that translation studies should not be about prescriptivism, but rather about description and awareness-boosting approaches, many of the most interesting studies in the field have continued to

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[2] Janet Frame, *Verso un'altra estate*, trans. by Giovanna Scocchera (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2012 [2007]), p. 215.

offer various rules and regulations for translation praxis. As Chesterman has suggested, 'a prescriptive statement is simply a form of hypothesis, usually concerning the desirability parameter'. If this is so, then 'we should incorporate it [prescriptivism] into our empirical theory, testing its hypotheses just as we would test any others'.[3] He also identifies 'the shift from philosophical conceptual analysis towards empirical research' as one of the most important trends in contemporary translation studies.[4]

To say that theoretical stances need to be tested in the practice of translation is not necessarily to be prescriptive. The link between theory- and practice-based methods is still very uncertain, and the ground in-between insecure. Perhaps a stronger emphasis on practice-driven studies might help shift the ground and provoke a more thorough, open confrontation between the two sides. It is likely that agreement will not be found, but probably many aspects will be looked at differently. The inherent complexity of the act of translation comes from the multiplicity of contexts and issues it invests, and that should be closely examined – is this prescriptivism?

A fruitful path may be to involve the grounding of methodological abundance and eclecticism within, for instance, case studies of sociolinguistic and anthropological fieldwork.[5] The particularly interesting intersection between poetry and anthropology may be approached from a translational perspective – which would add to the debate all the relevant contextual, pragmatic and theoretical issues of translation. In so doing, the interdisciplinary approach to translation that has been promoted in this work would be tested against the continuous (perhaps inevitable) contradictions that practice provides. These challenges may contribute to what Robinson hoped for the future of translation: in a creative – in the sense of proactive and constructive – reaction against the evident difficulties of translation (theory and practice), she said that 'the chance of perhaps coming to understand how translation works [...], how translation

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[3] Andrew Chesterman, 'Causes, Translations, Effects', *Target*, 10.2 (1998), 201–30 (pp. 226–27).

[4] Ibid., p. 201.

[5] Iole Cozzone and Annalisa Di Nuzzo, 'Abstracts', *Quaderni di antropologia e scienze umane*, 1.2 (2013), 163–64.

shapes cultures both at and within their boundaries, offers a powerful motivation to push on despite the difficulty of the undertaking'.[6]

In this way, the image of potentially infinite attempts that can be made in order to improve a translation, perhaps even more so for the translation of a poetic text, will not be seen as theoretically impossible and practically discouraging, but rather as a symbol of a renovated awareness so that to define Grace as 'una poeta' would imply a risk, perform hybridity and paradox, and allude to *other* infinite significations, pushing readers towards a different way of conceiving the translation act. Texts, like language, acquire sense the more they are tested against reality, which is in itself foreign and paradoxical: but meaning is not to be grasped, rather hinted at, as it develops in the constant movement towards a *third space* of signification, where everything is, like every act of translation and poetry, *almost the same, but not quite*.[7]

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[6] Robinson, p. 79.
[7] Cf. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004 [1994]), p. 122.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The Lagoon and other stories (dated 1951, released 1952) short stories

Owls Do Cry (1957) novel

Faces in the Water (1961) novel

The Edge of the Alphabet (1962) novel

Scented Gardens for the Blind (1963) novel

Snowman Snowman: Fables and Fantasies (1963) stories

The Reservoir: Stories and Sketches (1963) stories

The Adaptable Man (1965) novel

A State of Siege (1966) novel

The Reservoir and other stories (1966) stories

The Pocket Mirror (1967) poems

The Rainbirds (1968) novel (published in the USA as *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room*)

Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun (1969) children's book

Intensive Care (1970) novel

Daughter Buffalo (1972) novel

Living in the Maniototo (1979) novel

To The Is-Land (1982) autobiography volume 1

You Are Now Entering the Human Heart (1983) stories

An Angel at My Table (1984) autobiography volume 2

The Envoy from Mirror City (1985) autobiography volume 3

The Carpathians (1988) novel

Posthumous publications

The Goose Bath (2006) poems

Towards Another Summer (2007) novel

Storms Will Tell: Selected Poems (2008)

Prizes: Selected Short Stories (2009) stories (published in UK and Australia as *The Daylight and the Dust*)

Dear Charles, Dear Janet: Frame & Brasch in Correspondence (2010) fine edition, letters

Janet Frame: In Her Own Words (2011) non-fiction

Gorse is Not People: New and Uncollected Stories (2012) (published in the US as *Between My Father and the King: New and Uncollected Stories*)

In the Memorial Room (2013) novel

The Mijo Tree (2013) novella

Separately published stories and poems

'University Entrance' in *New Zealand Listener*, 22 March 1946

'Alison Hendry' in *Landfall* (NZ), 2 (published under the penname Jan Godfrey; reprinted in *The Lagoon and Other Stories* under the title 'Jan Godfrey')

'The Waitress' in *New Zealand Listener*, 9 July 1954

'The Liftman' in *New Zealand Listener*, 13 August 1954

'On Paying the Third Installment' in *New Zealand Listener*, 10 September 1954

'Lolly Legs' in *New Zealand Listener*, 15 October 1954

'Trio Concert' in *New Zealand Listener*, 29 October 1954

'Timothy' in *New Zealand Listener*, 26 November 1954

'The Transformation' in *New Zealand Listener*, 28 January 1955

'The Ferry' in *New Zealand Listener*, 13 July 1956

'Waiting for Daylight' in *Landfall*, 10

'I Got Shoes' in *New Zealand Listener*, 2 November 1956

'Face Downwards in the Grass' in *Mate* (NZ), 1

'The Dead' in *Landfall*, 11

'The Wind Brother' in *School Journal* (NZ), 51.1

'The Friday Night World' in *School Journal*, 52.1

'Prizes' in *The New Yorker*, 10 March 1962

'The Red-Currant Bush, the Black-Currant Bush, the Gooseberry Bush, the African Thorn Hedge, and the Garden Gate Who Was Once the Head of an Iron Bed' in *Mademoiselle*, April 1962

'The Reservoir' in *The New Yorker*, 12 January 1963 (reprinted in *The Reservoir: Stories and Sketches*)

'The Chosen Image' in *Vogue*, July 1963

'The Joiner' in *Landfall*, 18

'The Road to Takapuna' in *Mate*, 12

'Scott's Horse' in *Landfall*, 18

'The Senator Had Plans' in *Landfall*, 18

'The Bath' in *Landfall*, 19 (reprinted in *You Are Now Entering the Human Heart*)

'A Boy's Will' in *Landfall*, 20

'White Turnips: A Timely Monologue' in *New Zealand Monthly Review*, May 1966

'In Alco Hall' in *Harper's Bazaar*, November 1966

'In Mexico City' in *New Zealand Listener*, 20 December 1968

'You Are Now Entering the Human Heart' in *The New Yorker*, 29 March 1969 (reprinted in *You Are Now Entering the Human Heart*)

'The Birds of the Air' in *Harper's Bazaar*, June 1969

'Jet Flight' in *New Zealand Listener*, 8 August 1969

'The Words' in *Mademoiselle*, October 1969

'Winter Garden' in *The New Yorker*, 31 January 1970

'They Never Looked Back' in *New Zealand Listener*, 23 March 1974

'The Painter' in *New Zealand Listener*, 6 September 1975

'Rain on the Roof' in *The Journal* (NZ), April 1976 (previously published in *The Pocket Mirror*)

'Insulation' in *New Zealand Listener*, 17 March 1979

'Two Widowers' in *New Zealand Listener*, 9 June 1979

'Three Poems by Janet Frame' in *New Zealand Listener*, 28 August 2004

Articles, reviews, essays and letters

'A Letter to Frank Sargeson' in *Landfall*, 25

'Review of Terence Journet's Take My Tip' in *Landfall*, 32

'Review of A Fable by William Faulkner' in *Parson's Packet*, 36

'Memory and a Pocketful of Words' in *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 June 1964

'This Desirable Property' in *New Zealand Listener*, 3 July 1964

'Beginnings' in *Landfall*, 73

'The Burns Fellowship' in *Landfall*, 87

'Charles Brasch 1909-1973: Tributes and Memories from His Friends' in *Islands* (NZ), 5

'Janet Frame on Tales from Grimm' in *Education* (NZ), 24.9

'Departures and Returns' in *Writers in East-West Encounter*, ed. by G. Amirthanayagan (London: Macmillan, 1982) (originally delivered as a paper at the 'International Colloquium on the Cross-Cultural Encounter in Literature', East-West Center, Honolulu, October 1977)

'A last Letter to Frank Sargeson' in *Islands*, 33

APPENDIX B

LIST OF TRANSLATIONS

CHINESE

Autobiography*   (1993), China Times

CZECH

Selected poems translated by Denis Molčanov, presented at Café Fra in Prague (2012)

Ongoing negotiation for a translation of short-stories

DANISH

To the Is-Land	*Til Er-Landet* (hb 1991, pb 1994), Rosinante
An Angel at my Table	*En Engel ved mit Bord* (hb 1992, pb 1994), Rosinante
The Envoy from Mirror City	*Sendebudet Fra Spejlbyen* (hb 1992, pb 1994), Rosinante

DUTCH

Faces in the Water	New edition forthcoming
Selected Stories	*Je betreedt nu het menselijk hart* (2011), De Geus
Towards Another Summer	*Een andere zomer* (hb 2010), De Geus
Autobiography	*Een engel aan mijn tafel trilogie* (1997), De Geus
Faces in the Water	*Gezichten in Het Water* (1993), De Geus
To the Is-Land	*Naar het Is-Land* (1991, 1993, 2006), De Geus
An Angel at my Table	*Een engel aan mijn tafel* (1991, 1994, 2007, pb 2012), De Geus
The Envoy from Mirror City	*De gezant van Spiegelstad* (1991, 1995, 2007), De Geus
The Lagoon	*De Lagune* (1991), De Geus
Owls Do Cry	*Uilen Roepen* (1982), De Geus
Owls Do Cry	*Uilen Roepen* (hb, pb 1994), De Geus
Owls Do Cry	*Uilen Roepen* (pocketbook 1997), De Geus
The Carpathians	*De Herinneringsbloem* (hb 1996), De Geus

The Carpathians	*De Herinneringsbloem* (pocketbook 1998), De Geus

FRENCH

Towards Another Summer	*Vers l'autre été* (2011), Éditions Joëlle Losfeld
Daughter Buffalo	*La Fille-bison* (2002), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
To the Is-Land	*Ma terre mon île* (2000), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
Scented gardens for the blind	*Le jardin aveugle* (1998), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
You Are Now Entering the Human Heart	*Poussière et lumière du Jour* (1997), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
An Angel at My Table	*Un été à Willowglen* (1997), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
The Envoy from Mirror City	*Le messager* (1996), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
Faces in the water	*Visages noyés* (1996), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
Owls Do Cry	*Les hiboux pleurent vraiment* (1994), Éd. Joëlle Losfeld
The Lagoon & other stories	*Le Lagon et autres nouvelles* (2006), Des Femmes, A. Fouque
Faces in the Water	*Visages noyés* (2004), Payot & Rivages (pocketbooks)
Scented gardens for the blind	*Le jardin aveugle* (2004), Payot & Rivages
Owls Do Cry	*Les hiboux pleurent vraiment* (2002), Payot & Rivages
To the Is-Land	*Ma terre mon île* (1992), Les Belles Lettres
An Angel at my Table	*Parmi les buissons de matagouri* (1986), Hommes & Groupes
Owls Do Cry	*La chambre close* (1986), Alinéa
Faces in the Water	*Visages noyés* (1964), Éditions du Seuil

GERMAN

Towards Another Summer	*Dem neuen Sommer entgegen* (pb 2012), DTR
Living in the Maniototo	*Auf dem Maniototo* (hb 2013), C.H. Beck
Autobiography	*Ein Angel an Meiner Tafel* (hb 2012), C.H. Beck
An Angel at My Table	*Ein Engel an Meiner Tafel* (hb 2012), C.H. Beck
Owls Do Cry	*Wenn Eulen Schrein* (hb 2012), C.H. Beck
Towards Another Summer	*Dem neuen Sommer entgegen* (hb 2010), C.H. Beck
Autobiography	*Ein Engel an meiner Tafel* (1996), Piper Verlag

Faces in the Water	*Gesichter im Wasser* (pb 1997), Piper Verlag
Faces in the Water	*Gesichter im Wasser* (hb 1994), Piper Verlag
Autobiography (Voll 1, 2)	*Ein Engel an Meiner Tafel* (1993), Piper Verlag
Living in the Maniototo	*Auf dem Maniototo* (hb 1987 pb), Suhrkamp
Owls Do Cry	*Wenn Eulen Schrein* (1981), Suhrkamp
The Edge of the Alphabet	*Am Rande des Alphabets* (1963), Nannen
The Lagoon	*Die Lagune* (1962), Nannen
Owls Do Cry	*Wenn Eulen Schrein* (1961), Nannen

HUNGARIAN

Owls Do Cry	*Éjjel, ha bagoly huhog* (1999), Európa

ITALIAN

In the Memorial Room	Forthcoming
Faces in the Water	*Volti nell'acqua* (pb 2013), Neri Pozza
Towards Another Summer	*Verso un'altra estate* (pb 2012), Neri Pozza
Owls Do Cry	*Gridano i gufi* (pb 2011), Neri Pozza
Autobiography	*Un angelo alla mia tavola* (pb 2010), Neri Pozza
Autobiography	*Un angelo alla mia tavola* (pb 1996, 1999, 2008), Einaudi
The Carpathians	*La leggenda del Fiore della Memoria* (hb 2007), Robin
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il Muro* (hb 1991, pb 1994), TEA
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il muro* (1990), TEAdue
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il muro* (1991), Edizione Club
The Lagoon	*La Laguna e altre storie* (pb 1993), Guanda
Scented Gardens for the Blind	*Giardini profumati per i ciechi* (pb 1997), Guanda
Owls Do Cry	*Gridano i gufi* (pb 1994), Guanda
Living in the Maniototo	*Vivere nel Maniototo* (1992), Interno Giallo
To the Is-Land	*L'Isola del presente* (1991), Interno Giallo
An Angel at my Table	*Un paese di fiumi* (1991)
The Envoy from Mirror City	*La città degli specchi* (1992), Interno Giallo
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il muro* (1990), Interno Giallo
Mona Minim	*Cuor di formica* (hb 1998, pb 2001, 2002), Mondadori
The Lagoon	*La laguna* (1998), Fazi
Faces in the Water	*Volti nell'acqua* (1963), Rizzoli

Selected short stories	*Sull'albero una susina* (1995), Galleria Pegaso
Living in the Maniototo	*Vivere nel Maniototo* (1996), Tropea (collana Est)

JAPANESE

Autobiography	(hb, 2 vols, 1991), Chikuma Shoba

KOREAN

Autobiography	(2013), Sigongsa
The Carpathians	Forthcoming

MEXICAN SPANISH

Selected Poems	forthcoming, University Press

NORWEGIAN

Towards Another Summer	*Mot en ny sommer* (pb 2011), Forlaget Oktober
Towards Another Summer	*Mot en ny sommer* (hb 2010), Forlaget Oktober
Autobiography	*En Engel ved mitt Bord* (pb 2010), Forlaget Oktober
The Adaptable Man	
The Lagoon	*Lagunen og andre fortellinger* (1994) Pax Forlag
Faces in the Water	*Ansikter I vannet* (1993), Pax Forlag
Living in the Maniototo	*Maniototo* (1992), Pax Forlag

POLISH

Faces in the Water	*Twarze w Wodzie* (2000), Zysk I S-KA
To the Is-Land	*Na wyspę - teraz* (1999), Zysk I S-KA
An Angel at my Table	*Anioł przy moim stole* (1999), Zysk I S-KA
The Envoy from Mirror City	*Wysłannik z lustrzanego miasta* (1999), Zysk I S-KA

PORTUGUESE

The Carpathians	*Os Cárpatos no Nosso Jardim* (2004), Caminho

BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

Towards Another Summer	*Rumo a outro verão* (2009), Planeta do Brasil

ROMANIAN

The Rainbirds	*Familia Rainbird* (2013), Ibu publishing

RUSSIAN

Autobiography	Forthcoming
Selected poems	*An Anthology of New Zealand Poetry in Russian* (2005)

SLOVENIAN

You are now entering the human heart and other stories	*Vstopate v človeško srce* (2014), Lud Literatura
The Carpathians	*Karpati* (2002), Mladinska knjiga

SPANISH

Towards Another Summer	*Hacia otro verano* (2009), Seix Barral
Autobiography	*Un ángel en mi mesa* (1991, 2009), Seix Barral
Autobiography	*Un ángel en mi mesa* (1992), Circulo De Lectores
Faces in the Water	*Rostros en al agua* (hb 1970), Circulo De Lectores
Mona Minim and the smell of the sun	*Mona Minim y el olor del sol* (1994), Siruela
Faces in the Water	*Rostros en el agua* (pb 1991), Tiempos modernos
Faces in the Water	*Rostros en el agua* (1991), Ediciones B
The Edge of the Alphabet	*Al margen del alfabeto* (1966), Ediciones GP
Faces in the Water	*Rostros en el agua* (hb 1965), Plaza & Janés
The Edge of the Alphabet	*Al margen del alfabeto* (1963), Plaza & Janés

SWEDISH

Scented Gardens for the Blind	*Doftande trädgårdar för de blinda* (hb 2012), Modernista
Owls Do Cry	*Ugglor gråter* (hb 2012), Modernista
Faces in the Water	*Ansikten i vattnet* (hb 2012), Modernista
The Edge of the Alphabet	*Vid alfabetets gräns* (hb 2012), Modernista
Towards Another Summer	*Mot ännu en sommar* (hb 2010), Albert Bonniers Förlag
Autobiography	*En ängel vid mitt bord* (pb 2009, 2011), A. B. Förlag
The Lagoon	*Lagunen* (2003), A. B. Förlag
Faces in the Water	*Ansikten i vattnet* (hb 1997, pb 1998), A. B. Förlag
Autobiography	*En ängel vid mitt bord* (pb 1995), A. B. Förlag
The Envoy from Mirror City	*Sändebud från Spegelstaden* (hb 1994), A. B. Förlag
An Angel at my Table	*En ängel vid mitt bord* (hb 1993), A. B. Förlag
To the Is-Land	*Till landet Är* (hb 1992), A. B. Förlag
Living in the Maniototo	*Bodde alltid i Maniototo* (hb 1990), A. B. Förlag

TURKISH

Towards Another Summer	*Bir Başka Yaza Doğru* (2012), Yapi Kredi

Owls Do Cry	*Baykuşlar Öterken (*2010), Yapi Kredi
Faces in the Water	forthcoming, Yapi Kredi
Autobiography	forthcoming, Yapi Kredi

Individual stories and poems have been translated, in anthologies and periodicals, into many of the above languages plus Greek, Hebrew, Iranian, and Croatian.

* For reasons of clarity, *Autobiography* is used here to refer to the three-volume autobiography, while *An Angel at My Table* refers to the second volume of the autobiography, which gives the title to the trilogy.

APPENDIX C

ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLATORS

In the Memorial Room	Forthcoming
Between My Father and the King: New and Uncollected Stories*	Forthcoming
Faces in the Water	*Volti nell'acqua* (pb 2013), Neri Pozza (Lidia Perria's translation, originally published under the title *Dentro il muro.* See below.)
Towards Another Summer	*Verso un'altra estate* (pb 2012), Neri Pozza, trans. by Giovanna Scocchera
Owls Do Cry	*Gridano i gufi* (pb 2011), Neri Pozza (Laura Noulian's translation, first published in 1994 by Guanda Editore. See below.)
Autobiography	*Un angelo alla mia tavola* (pb 2010), Neri Pozza, trans. by Lidia Conetti Zazo, Giovanna Scocchera
Autobiography	*Un angelo alla mia tavola* (pb 1996, 1999, 2008), Einaudi, trans. by Lidia Conetti Zazo
The Carpathians	*La leggenda del Fiore della Memoria* (hb 2007), Robin, trans. by Simone Garzella
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il muro* (1990), TEAdue [translator not named]
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il Muro* (hb 1991, pb 1994), TEA [translator not named]
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il muro* (1991), Edizione Club, trans. by Lidia Perria
The Lagoon	*La Laguna e altre storie* (pb 1993), Ugo Guanda

[translator not named]

Scented Gardens for the Blind	*Giardini profumati per i ciechi* (pb 1997), Ugo Guanda, trans. by Monica Pavani
Owls Do Cry	*Gridano i gufi* (pb 1994), Ugo Guanda, trans. by Laura Noulian
Living in the Maniototo	*Vivere nel Maniototo* (1992), Interno Giallo [translator not named]
To the Is-Land	*L'Isola del presente* (1991), Interno Giallo, trans. by Lidia Conetti Zazo
An Angel at my Table	*Un paese di fiumi* (1991), Interno Giallo, trans. by Lidia Conetti Zazo
The Envoy from Mirror City	*La città degli specchi* (1992), Interno Giallo, trans. by Lidia Conetti Zazo
Faces in the Water	*Dentro il muro* (1990), Interno Giallo, trans. by Lidia Perria
Mona Minim	*Cuor di formica* (hb 1998, pb 2001, 2002), Mondadori, trans. by Marina Baruffaldi
The Lagoon	*La laguna* (1998), Fazi, trans. by Antonella Sarti
Faces in the Water	*Volti nell'acqua* (1963), Rizzoli, trans. by Elena Lante Rospigliosi
Selected short stories	*Sull'albero una susina* (1995), Galleria Pegaso, trans. by Franca Cancogni
Living in the Maniototo	*Vivere nel Maniototo* (1996), Tropea (collana Est), trans. by Pietro Ferrari

*US edition of *Gorse is Not People: New and Uncollected Stories*

APPENDIX D

LIST OF PRIZES, AWARDS AND

SCHOLARSHIPS

Hubert Church Prose Award (1952), for *The Lagoon and other stories*. A PEN-sponsored award and, at the time, New Zealand's major literary prize for prose (Frank Sargeson won it in 1951);

State Literary Fund or **New Zealand Literary Fund (1956)**. Thanks to this fund, Frame could travel abroad, visiting Ibiza and Andorra before journeying to London;

New Zealand Literary Fund for Achievement (1958) for *Owls Do Cry*;

Hubert Church Prose Award (1964), for *Scented Gardens for the Blind*;

New Zealand Literary Fund Scholarship in Letters (1964);

Robert Burns Fellowship (1965), Otago University, Dunedin, NZ. It is claimed to be New Zealand's premier literary residency;

Buckland Literary Award (1967), for *The Reservoir and Other Stories*;

MacDowell Fellow, MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire (1969);

Literary Fund Award for Achievement (1969), for *The Pocket Mirror*;

Residencies at Yaddo Artists' Community, New York (1970, 1971);

Buckland Literary Award (1971), for *Intensive Care*;

Hubert Church Prose Award (1971), for *Intensive Care*;

NZ Government Annuity for Services to NZ Literature (1971);

President of Honour (1972), PEN award;

James Wattie Book of the Year (1973), for *Daughter Buffalo*, 2nd place;

Hubert Church Prose Award (1974), for *Daughter Buffalo*;

Winn-Manson Menton Fellowship (1974);

Meridian Energy Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship (1974). One of New Zealand's most long-standing and prestigious literary fellowship, it is offered yearly and allows a New Zealand writer to work in Menton, France;

Honorary Doctor of Literature, D.Litt (1978), University of Otago, Dunedin, NZ;

Buckland Literary Award (1979), for *Living in the Maniototo*;

New Zealand Book Award for Fiction (1980), for *Living in the Maniototo*;

Residency at Yaddo Artists' Community (1982);

Goodman Fielder Wattie Book Award (1983), for *To the Is-Land*;

Commander of the Order of the British Empire, CBE (1983) for services to literature;

New Zealand Book Award for Non-Fiction (1984), for *An Angel At My Table*;

Sir James Wattie Book of the Year Award (1984), for *An Angel At My Table*, 2nd place;

Turnovsky Prize for Outstanding Achievements in the Arts (1984);

Sir James Wattie Book of the Year Award (1985), for *The Envoy From Mirror City*;

New Zealand Book Award for Non-Fiction (1986), for *The Envoy from Mirror City*;

Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1986). In this Academy only Academicians may nominate and elect new members, and being elected by this institution is considered the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in the USA;

Frank Sargeson Fellowship (1987), University of Auckland, NZ. The fellowship was established in this year to commemorate Sargeson and provide assistance for New Zealand writers. It aims at offering outstanding writers the chance to write full-time free from financial pressure;

Ansett New Zealand Book Award for Fiction (1989);

New Zealand Book Awards (1989), for *The Carpathians*;

Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (1989), for *The Carpathians*. This award recognises the best fiction work by both established and new writers from Commonwealth countries;

Member Order of New Zealand, **ONZ (1990)**. The Order of New Zealand is the highest honour in New Zealand's Honour system;

D.Litt., Honorary Doctor of Literature (1992), University of Waikato, Hamilton, NZ;

Massey University Medal (1994), Massey University, Palmerstone North, NZ;

Gabriela Mistral Medal, Chile (1996). The Order of Gabriela Mistral (Orden al mérito docente y cultural Gabriela Mistral) is awarded to Chileans and to foreign nationals who

have made an outstanding contribution to education, culture and the advancement of teaching;

Arts Foundation of New Zealand Icon Artists (2003), a fund supporting artistic excellence through legacies and donations;

New Zealand Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement for Fiction (2003);

Spectrum Print Design Award for Best Children Book (2006), for *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun*;

Montana Book Award for Poetry (2007), for *The Goose Bath*. It recognises the best work published in the previous year.

APPENDIX E

POEMS CITED AS ADDITIONAL

EVIDENCE

Included here is the full text of poems that are referred to briefly in the thesis, and where the full text is useful for context.

These Poets
These poets command the familiar working of
their merry-go-round of words and postures known.

Their pony or wild tiger syllables hop
terribly up and down in usual tune.

May quick Caesarian insight bring them word-cub
whimpering; toppling foal of poem one moment born.[1]

The Poet
Though the wheat is so beautifully puffed
the rice is ballooned and stuffed
and the world seems so much bigger
from a few to a marvellous crowd
of supers, the pushing and proud
with more push and pride and the prig growing prigger,
the poet still breathes with one lung
climbs a ladder of only one rung
shoots at stars with his hand off the trigger.[2]

---

[1] Janet Frame, 'These Poets', *Storms Will Tell: Selected Poems* (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2008), p. 177.
  [2] 'The Poet', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 208.

The Cabbages
The leaves that sheltered the cabbage heart became
coarse, thick, veined with the labour of growing.
They lay flat, covered with dust, invisibly seamed
to the tough low-squatting stem that, knuckled and notched,
still lived to remind the blind root that after
the tender heart has been cut out cabbages still grow.

Fate is a consuming snowfall of white butterflies, a cow's
hoof crushing, torn leaves thrust through the wire netting into the fowl run
to be pecked at, eaten.
                              Winter.
                                    All the cabbages have gone
save a few battered leaves. Each plant that gave without protest
its newly formed heart, its core of being, its growing reason,
receives the blessing of emptiness and age:
frost on a grey head;
a long thirst satisfied by glinting dewfall
returned again and again
to the sun, as treasure.[3]

The Suicides
It is hard for us to enter
the kind of despair they must have known
and because it is hard we must get in by breaking
the lock if necessary for we have not the key,
though for them there was no lock and the surrounding walls
were supple, receiving as waves, and they drowned
though not lovingly; it is we only
who must enter in this way.

Temptations will beset us, once we are in.
We may want to catalogue what they have stolen.
We may feel suspicion; we may even criticise the décor
of their suicidal despair, may perhaps feel
it was incongruously comfortable.

Knowing the temptation then

---

[3] 'The Cabbages', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 198.

let us go in
deep to their despair and their skin and know
they died because words they had spoken
 returned always homeless to them.[4]

I'm invisible
I'm invisible.
I've always been invisible
like poverty in a rich country,
like the rich in the secretive rooms of their many-roomed houses,
like fleas, like lice, like growth beneath the earth,
worlds beyond the sky, the wind, time, ideas -
the catalogue of invisibility is endless,
and, they say, does not make good poetry.

Like decisions.
Like elsewhere.
Like institutions far from the road labelled Scenic Drive.

No more similes. I'm invisible.
In a people-world of binocular vision I'm in the majority after all
as you and I walk with our tiny crescent moon of sight in our personal darkness
through a world where decisions of being and not-being
are controlled by light
helped by tears and the sleep of inattention or death.

I'm invisible.
The lovers reach through my life to touch each other,
The rain falling through me courses like blood upon the earth.
I am carried in no one's head as knowledge.
I give freedom to dancers,
to the speaking of truth.
It is this way. There's no one here to eavesdrop or observe,
and then I learn more than I am entitled to know.[5]

---

[4] 'The Suicides', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 199.
[5] 'I'm Invisible', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 41.

I Visited

I visited the angels and stars and stones;
also, adjectival poets, preferably original.
There was an air of restlessness
an inability to subside, a state of being at attention,
at worst, at war with the immediately beating heart and breathing lung.
I looked then in the word-chambers, the packed warehouses by the sea,
the decently kept but always decaying places where nouns and their
representative images lay together on high shelves
among abbreviations and longlost quotations. I listened.
Water lapped at the crumbling walls; it was a place
for murder, piracy; salt hunger seeped between the shelves;
it was time to write. Now or never. The now unbearable,
the never a complete denial of memory:
I was not, I never have been.[6]

On Not Being There

[…]
And the Steinway/ surprised, attacked by a lover (the usual comparison)
murmuring with its handfinished voice, I didn't know I had it in me,
its dream-self replying, It was given you,
the argument ensuing,
I gave it , I remember now, I invited the hands, the fingers to touch,
it was a spell I cast and cannot help.
How strange my newness is, my foreigness, my ackward beautiful shape. It took three men
to bring me home to a home I did not choose,
and I've slept standing up, canvas-blanketed like a madman
from whom violence is feared, and sometimes, slyly,
student finger-tips have lightly touched my mobile
black and white bones
that give renowned agility to my stay-at-home body.
Literally, my heart is in my mouth!
My polished skin ensures tranquillity
to all that gazes in me – I reflect lights, walls, faces, I reflect the reflected
light of the sun shining through that tall window and through
the blue gauze panel of soundless daylight.
[…][7]

---

[6] 'I Visited', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 92.
[7] 'On Not Being There', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 92.

'Three Black Mice'
Three black mice with no name,
the equivalent of healthy men in their prime,
sat in a space rocket waiting to be fired.
(Had they been men they might have expired.

Bred for the occasion – a happy breed,
plugged and wired and batteried,
they didn't run after the scientist's wife,
she didn't cut off their tails with the electric carving knife.

No, they died in the sky. See how they fly,
three black mice they fly so high
near the giant paw that cuffs the light
across ninety million miles of night

Letter
Dear friend, the here-there emphasis is made
To keep you at a distance as a write,
To fix you, no captured human specimen
in a crowded corner of a northern world
reminding only how with spear, nail, pen,
I came your way walking from paddock to field
until at noon I fell asleep in an oak's tree shade
and waking saw not manuka and the Southern Cross
but above, Orion, and at my feet, lady-white.

A skin-thin air letter, a ninepenny stamp:
(rata or manuka or koromiko)
or words on a yellow pink green or white page
are the plane I must make, the obstacles overcome
before the public service and the plane take over my rage
to speak to you, speed-shrivel the ten thousand miles to your home
in the Midlands – fire and blotting-paper damp,
spring-feverishly mourning always the sky's loss
of sun, hanging out to dry bones stained with snow,

grey snow, last winter's fall. What else have I learned
of your city since I traced the millions
crowded on a sinking full-stop as on a doomed raft
in my first geography book and read its important name

and meaning? Small arms, bicycles, heavy drift
of smoke upward all day; diesel fumes, oil-flame, then, cultural flame
from science and music where some, not all, once burned,
survived by grafting new tissue to others who, wary at first,
soon strutted proud and warm in their smart new skin.

Meat markets, medicine, dignitaries; an electrified line
to London from Central Station or Snow Hill.
Edgbaston. Selly Oak. A Chamberlain in office.
A bull-Ring. Art Gallery. Dustmen. Council Flats.
Association on Association of men in business.
Undertakers, clerks, brokers; with umbrellas and top or bowler hats.
And tarnished incomes and incomes that when polished, shine.
A city of reservoirs of resigned fluoridica thirst
suckling the sweet channels flowing from the Welsh Hills.

Men silent in trains who'd never dare risk
The five pound fine by pulling the communication cord.
Men with scientific journals; dark eyes
seeing molecules as fellow passengers
or, seeing women, tricking intelligence to tell where lies
the difference as both wrapped in genetic furs
deceive yet are worth study as a lifetime's task.
You'd think I talk of any city, not only Birmingham –
but where else into the mould are men women and bicycles poured

with equal reverence? Wheels within wheels
headlights reflectors handlebars
pumps pedals carriers hand and foot brakes,
oh and not to forget the rifles, the agricultural machines,
the bath and the kitchen sink; the articles Birmingham makes
would equip you from birth to death and after – here the touching scene
could be looked at, not through your eyes, but through locally made cinema reels,
as taking in the used label of your life, *Tear Round Here. I am*.
You replace it with *Snip, Cover and Fold. I was*.

My geography book is out of date. Following the new
recognition of humanity by humanity,
the miles of mountain chains everywhere
(you remember their paralysed snowcapped vertebrae)
have been made free, while rivers too have claimed their share
in the new deal, have changed their flow and no longer obey

the command of the geography book I once knew.
And now Birmingham, to me, is famous not for bicycles but for people.
It is the heart profits when facts are produce in an enlightened factory.

But it's no use. You are not there. The essence of your being
is you flow, lap at far coasts, enter rooms
invisibly to reassure me when I'm afraid
though it's not to be interpreted that therefore
I worship you, regard you as my private God.
When you're an old man you'll have a face like an apple in store,
a corner apple smelling of rain and wood, seeing
through narrow eyes nails taller than any steeple,
dead leaves and spiders set beside white scientific glooms

- does this image of you seem strange? You'll allow
it's not the usual glimpse of God; it worse –
a theft of a separate being to complete a torn memory;
a slave-selection more frightening, tyrannical,
than is made in any past or present book of geography;
a callup o a memory-guard I've no right to call.
Death is the only guard who's willing and free Here and Now
To stay at my door, to play the memory game,
To plead too often – A bicycle? Had you not better choose a hearse?[8]

Beach
Here's an empty bulb of transparent jelly
whose light swum within; we regret
our houses are not such even with sailing to floor
glass windows nor are we our own illumination,
yet we stay, we do not abandon house
to return to the sea that abandoned us
as flick-knife brain unfolding to cut through cell walls
and form some attachment to growing.
                              Seagrapes
cluster white on the white sand.
wave on wave tills the old wineyard; kelp
carcasses, amber and green armour still warn shifting
the dead thing from upper to lower wave in expectation of
battle of tide grenades foam-bursting blossoming

---

[8] 'Letter', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 220–21. Italics in original.

to crush what tries to grow or having died to move even after death,
to join the commotion of going that waves are, eternally.
Eternally?
                    Caution putting a sheltering end over this word
To stop it like a candle flame from going out
(though who use the candles now?)
commands, Don't. Let the word be, in its
                              corner of the world
burning forever, being what it is, without energy for sentences.
                                        Some seaweed
cast out the sea though not outcast
is like lace woven into leaf patterns; some is like a forest
of dead bulls with horns still waving.
We walk on the sand. We do not make tree-toed footprints.
How proud we are, then, of or five toes!
Dogs, run, bark at the sea, leave their forked prince; gulls fold,
unfold their paper wings poised
beyond the green glazed window.

School is not out. Four-square country school, the iron-skirted
bell swinging aloft, the dental clinic smell,
the playground caved and pitted as if alphabet in geological guise
tries against time to record time
beside the venerable sea rocks skipped on, played on
by generations of waves dancing, stamping impatient sun-filled idleness.

A woman hastens with late afternoon shopping, otherwise
the street beside the sea is deserted. The curtains are drawn
in the white holiday houses.
In the gardens young plants battered beyond their years lean
On manuka sticks and taste their tears returned by the wind and spray.
                              The tide is almost in.
No rockpools. No shells. Only the thunderous display
of waves deceptively smooth suddenly on nearing the shore
giving up tremendous ghost of their blossom
over and over and over, dragging o groan heavy, entangled as seaweed
from the throat of the watcher.
                              The groan
is the only language that without thought
will encompass the meaning.

Thinking will, in time, unravel the ancient knot of despair.
                    Words

will drop like pearls from the sheltering loops.
It is writers rather than boyscouts who must investigate the culture of knots, learn
To pitch words by the sea, to make
Fire with less than to vowels rubbed together
And name it other than this groan of despair.[9]

Thistledown

Thistledown with its white spiders-spokes
tests my windowpane –
i happened to pass
i'm looking in
this thing that is between us
is glass
i'm off now
can't stay
can't rest
away away
to break my white prick in
a dark lady's nest.[10]

I Must Go Down to the Seas Again

I must go down to the seas again
to find where I
buried the hatchet with Yesterday.[11]

Christmas and Death

Christmas and Death are hungry times
when only the foolish and the dying
with circumscribed vision of Here
learn complete praise, saying
Bravo Bravo to the Invisible.

Who knows to what in the smell yard

---

[9] 'Beach', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 192–93.
[10] 'Thistledown', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 157–58.
[11] 'I Must Go Down to the Sea Again', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 155.

sunless, the turkey gives violent praise?
Or the sick man spread
on a white plate in his diminishing world?[12]

A Simple Memory of a Poet, a Memory Shuffled Face Upward
Wearing my golden secondhand clothes I think of Mary Ellen Blair who was

partially blind

Sitting among the kowhai blossoms.
She wore dark glasses like eclipses of the moon
On the verandah at Tulliallan.

Her poems were privately collected on slippery paper that, having no printhold,
allowed the words to slide downhill into the ravine
beneath the eclipsed moon.
She wrote of kowhai blossoms, old gold, and was labelled that kind of poet,
which she was! Kowhai blossoms, roses, birds, the sky,
the sea and the people of her immediate family.
Limitless themes in a limiting limited time
when so many words lay inaccessible, lost in the ravine
beneath the eclipsed moon.

I remember my mother sighing used to say,
Mary Ellen Blair the poetess, her lovely poems. She is partially blind.
She lives at Tulliallan.

My mother had never been privately printed.
Yet perhaps one day her words would grow on the
creviced public pages; salt thorn bushes
covered with minute blue flowers.

It was a hope she had, my public mother standing at convenient corners like a
neighbourhood dairy or filling station,
while Mary Ellen Blair on the verandah of Tulliallan
in her fullpage photograph
sat proudly in the frontispiece as by a fireside
of kowhai blossom
wearing her eclipses of the moon.[13]

---

[12] 'Christmas and Death', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 206.
[13] 'A Simple Memory of a Poet, a Memory Shuffled Face Upward', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 34.

When the Sun Shines More Years Than Fear
When the sun shines more years than fear
when birds fly more miles than anger
when sky holds more bird
sails more cloud
shines more sun
than the palm of love carries hate,
even then shall I in this weary
seventy-year banquet say, Sunwaiter,
Birdwaiter, Skywaiter,
I have no hunger,
remove my plate.[14]

Christmas
In my country Christmas is
frangipani
jacaranda
pohutukawa

is the flotsam holiday court in residence;
the king of the golden river
in swimming trunks, rubbed with sun oil,
saving the stupid who would drown outside the flags.

In my country Christmas is sun
is riches that never were rags
in plenty on the plate
is nothing for hunger who came unseen

too soon or too late;
is holiday blossom beach sea
is from me to you
is from you to me

is giving giving
in a torture of anxiety
panic of pohutukawa
jacaranda that has lost all joy.

---

[14] 'When the Sun Shines More Years Than Fear', *Storms Will Tell*, p. 174.

In my country the feast
of Christmas is free;
we pay our highest price
for the lost joy
of the jacaranda tree.[15]

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[15] 'Christmas', *Storms Will Tell*, pp. 222–23.

APPENDIX F
LIVING IN THE MANIOTOTO

Chapter 12

I am Hypotenuse.
Here burdened by the weight of opposite and adjacent
proved equal to others, never to myself,
I square with myself for the satisfaction of others who
      count more than I
who lie as thin as a garden line in my fleshless body
who lie and square and cube and carry and join.
I am Hypotenuse. I close in
a shape that is nameless without my prison.
Larger than opposite and adjacent I yet suffer their
      corner – creating presence,
the shadows formed in the crook of our shepherded lives;
the corner of the paddock where the fence is propped up,
      strained,
the grass grows through the bright barbed wire; mushrooms
      appear
overnight; the old horse stands to drop his hot cone of
      straw-filled manure.

I am Hypotenuse of a southern country, I fence, perhaps, a
      farm overlooking the Tasman.
Pages turn, touch my boundaries, black print, underlinings
      underlined.
And some day I will write my still-riddling memories
      beginning,
'Pythagoras and I...'
Should time diminish me I shall become the sine, the
opposite, the cosine, the adjacent, when,
ignoring what I have been we two will play tangent aerially
among the stars shapen and mis-shapen.

Some said to me,
'There's quite a lot to write about, considering.
I've thought out lots of stories in my spare time
– you know – plots, characters, all kinds of drama,
and some day I might have a go at writing.
Plenty do
and get away with it,
and make a fortune.
It's knowing what the readers want
and having an eye on television and film rights,
something they can turn into a script
quick as a wink, like that, nothing fancy only
good old-fashioned drama
that gets you locked to the page or screen
– you know what I mean. I tell you,
I might try it.
There's a great deal to write about
that hasn't been thought of before
and I might just give it a go.'

He had a steam-cleaning business
and got rid of ants, borer, fleas as extra.
He could clean you house-walls on the outside
and kill everything inside, except pets and people. Rats
            and mice were extra.
'How do you do it,' I asked.
'It dries up their secretions. They become shells,' he said.
'See. It says on the packet.
As for the steam-blasting, you just hose, under pressure.'
'Why don't you try writing your novel?' I said.
So he wrote his novel. You might think I'm going to say
He's a mere shell now
no longer a pest,
that under pressure his old skin is peeling away.
But I'm not going to say that, although I'm tempted.
He did try. He tried sincerely,
but his *want* burned away in the exercise, his *want*
became a shell.
No, he didn't give up.
He didn't say, 'I'll stick to steam-cleaning and borer-
bombs.'
He unloaded all his stored-up drama
which fell apart at birth, lacking the life-dealing want.

No one told him 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.
Certailny, it's a rat and mouse life,
a life-burned sun
and no sweet pesticide
and no cleaning, weatherproofing,
no possible preserving from exposure;
and even words, as paintwork, won't hold under pressure.
There are so many people going the other way.
There are those who, trained to write poems,
carry a kit of tales about the prince, the princess, the beast,
and the green, ripe, poisoned fruit;
and as they pass, to keep their screaming hand supple,
they chainsaw the avenue of trees, they mow every lawn in
          sight;
knocking at the stranger's door, they ask
Please may we cut and plane the wood, hammer the nails in.

A thousand birds pass overhead.
The centre pages of the newspaper are devoted to spring
          and summer fashions.
Other pages carry rugby and racing news, and the story of
the man
who earns his claim to 5,000 acres of land
through his command of a world market in semen.
And still the concert singers Come up from Somerset,
or Roll Down regularly to Rio.
The people, so many of them, rush by,
not being able to fly.

And I open the bud of one more birthday
finding it as usual not perfect,
got at by something before I can protect what
I imagine might be its permitted integrity.

An ally of simplicity
I wake early.

The hungry cat goes out in the grey morning.
Sentences are the smallest bedrooms.
Sit, sleep, love.
Eat and write at the table.

O how all those absent are brought by force to mind,
dissected, picked over
for a stray share to put
on the table's empty page and plate.

The fed cat
sleeps on the mat.[1]

Chapter 18

My first impulse was to study the books on the shelves, and as I look over my papers of that time I find the notes I made: *Sister Carrie* and the *Natural History of Western Trees. The Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn. The Compleat Angler. Science and The Educated Man. The Notebooks of Swinburne. Women in Love.*

The Works of Rabelais. The Golden Ass. Gise's Teherese.

Pepys' Diary. Barchester Towers.

Let's Cook it Right; and (to make a rhyme) *West Coast Wild Flowers. This is Japan. The Paintings of Rembrandt. The Works of Chaucer.* Leatherbound poets locked in a row: Whitman next to Keats, Byron, and Shelley. *The Chance of Life. Of Human Bondage. Mansfield Park. The Letters of Van Gogh. The Thrones of Earth and Heaven.* Music, art, tapestry, modern, classical literature. Books from infancy and child-hood; prizes, gifts. Books in cupboards, on shelves, on tables; in groups between blocks of redwood. *The Primary Structure of Fabrics*, *The Rise of the City*, *The City of Man*, *Great Cities of the World*, *Flat Woven Rugs from the Bosphorus to Samarkand. Textiles of Ancient Peru. Butterflies and Moths. A lifetime Reading Plan.*

I found myself searching the bookshelves of each room to find the poems of Yeats, and realising that there was no Yeats, I felt an unreasonable sense of loss. I wanted Yeats as an ally which is the word nations use now instead of 'friend', implying a perpetual enemy.

A house without Yeats.

Oh, a wild swan or two and a paradisal Innisfree,
and age 'old and grey and full of sleep'
all Fleckered and Blundened, Monroed beautifully

---

[1] Janet Frame, *Living in the Maniototo* (London: Virago, 2010 [1979]), pp. 71–75.

safe in proportion within a seldom-used anthology
all written before the time of the towering fury
when even the gentle dolphins not singing but gonging like emperors,
tormented the sea.

A house without Yeats.
The prisoners surrender, go quietly.
No surprise at the sentence – what is a day, a year what
      difference

but of indifference; and age a concealment, a verbal mask.
Hark the horns of Carmel are calling us to lifetime
      tenancy,
community sleep by a calm sea!
(They will sell this house and go soon to their chosen place
      in Carmel,
the retirement home where there are suites and pleasant
      rooms, single and shared.
A medical centre will they have there, a view of the sea
      from the hill,
and a promise of ripe old age, if they are spared.

And they shall have company there in the large
      community room,
with colour TV and parlour games; and a corner just to sit and ripen as in
a kind of pretomb home
where they think and talk about death and begin to
      welcome it.
They will sell this house and go soon, for their name's on
      the waiting list,
and they've paid a huge deposit for the suite with a view of
      the shore,
where a golden age awaits them in a cloud of autumnal mist arising from
the gold decay of their deep hearts' ripened
      core.)

A house without Yeats.
A house with everything – books, geraniums in bloom,
      hummingbirds
at the throat of the morning flowers,
redwood trees, a patio, colour TV, a piano with leaves of
      music (Largo, Oxen Minuet, Für Elise)
comfortable furniture, masks, sculptured heads, paintings

and books on paintings.
Two large dictionaries.
House-trained house-plants; display alcoves, macramé
        hangings;
Mexican, Danish kitchenware: an Italian salad basket,
Australian ginger,
English conserves.

A house without Yeats.
Turning the pages of the old school anthologies
I search for the wild swan, the bean rows, the sleeping old
men.

No rage. No towers.
Only the Garretts' lives demanding
I want a Shakespeare like the real Shakespeare
I want a miraculous marble table.
We have all, all, and 'the agony of flame what cannot singe
        a sleeve'.

And even had they not told me of their passion for Italy, their book titles would have revealed it. I remembered the English exiles I had seen in Menton, how they read and reread the exploits of General Gordon of Khartoum, the *Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, dividing their love between dead famous generals and statesmen and neighbouring Italy.

I love Italy, they say, the exiles, fingering the airmail
        edition of the Times
(thin as the edible wrapping on their health-sweets),
I love Italy, but where, except in England, can you find a
        good doctor?
The exiles, like the Garretts, are gentle people
with books and paintings and imagination
and money and books and paitings
and imagination and money and
arthritis, heart failure, dropped wombs,
enlarged prostates,
fears of cancer and of dying
far from home,
                for where
except in England (and America)
can you find a good doctor?

The lovers of Italy sing in chorus,
The Italians are not like us, they let themselves go,
they dance, make love without shame
                            in daylight
as the cats and dogs of the region do
        howling among the beds of geranium, lavender,
by the walls of bougainvillea,
while we, lovers of Italy, have bodies whose flow is most
                            economical and mundane,
like soap-drops above the handbasin of a public
                            convenience
or phials of medicine or droplets of incecticide
(domestic pets only, the antidote for overdose, milk).

(Our dry riverbeds are beautiful
filled with memorial stones, tough gold-wired grass
sometimes called 'everlasting', set
among fresh flowers upon the graves of love)

but in Italy – ah, Italy –
(we love Italy
bella bella bon giorno)
Give me my Giotto, my replica
my quarried artificial light
let us taste the 'marble complexities' of the miraculous
Florentine
table!

I settled into the house, using Irving's study as a place to write, and sleeping in the adjoining double bedroom. After a certain amount of pacing in and out of rooms, inspecting, testing, exploring within the acceptable boundaries of human trust (not, as Yorkie Wynyard would have done, prying open locked drawers, but leaving the closed closed and the secret secret), I arrived at the state of being at home, and thus ready to turn my attention away from Grizzly Peak Road, Berkeley toward the Watercress family, now living in Menton to be 'near where Margaret Rose Hurndell once lived'. Unfortunately, as you will see, the house of replicas did not give up my attention gracefully, but contrived through events to compel me to return to it, and as writing is based on a carefully planned and controlled use of attention, I found myself beset upon, not knowing what to do, in a whirl of avoiding and not avoiding, haunted by the manifold, the replicas, and the originals.

There are some insects that carry a bulge of seed outside their body as the intelligence of the universe carries its planets and stars. A spider has its

milky house strung fragilely between two stalks of grass; and so God has pitched his worlds; and we who are replicas and live in the house have discovered within the manifold; and know in the repeated shaping that we are not Gods, and not avoid knowing that we ourselves have been shaped and patterned not by a shadow of light or a twin intelligence but an original, the sum of all equals and unequals and cubes and sqares; the shaping inclusion; the hypotenuse of the manifold.

(There are some who live forever in the manifold; it hangs in their lives like a wild bees' nest full of the honey of assorted flowers, unexplored and untasted, yet attended, turned to, in an act of avoidance that does not touch or shape or change but may erase; others, on an individual path within the manifold, finally escape from it, turning to themselves as original creators, thus intensifying their avoidance; and still others, within their individual patterning of the manifold, intend of avoiding its chaos, may, suddenly discovering themselves to be replicas, turn to the original, and realise that their ceaseless activity of avoiding and turning to and from has been passive with the centre of activity elsewhere, like that of the motionless yet turning world.)

I felt that it was surely enough for me, then, to have the concerns of a writer only for the problems of attending and avoiding; and yet at the same time I hoped to get away with my kind of commuting between 'real life' and 'fiction'![2]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 121–27.

APPENDIX G

ON RECEIVING AN AWAITED LETTER

Unseen archive letter from Janet Clutha to Dr Robert Cawley. Access to this letter was given to me by Ann Cawley, Robert's wife.[1]

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[1] I would like to thank Mrs Ann Cawley for her generosity in sharing her private memories of Janet Frame with those who approach her from a scholarly perspective, though never really manage to detach themselves from the intensity of her persona. I would also like to thank Dr Janet Wilson for introducing me to Mrs Cawley during the latest Janet Frame Colloquium (2013).

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