7. In the radio broadcast mentioned above Janet Frame declared: '"Housekeepers" is my word, but I was reading a poem of Rilke's "The Orchard", and he wrote of ancient springtime.' Here is the original stanza in which the ancient springtime appears:

> Nom clair qui cache le printemps antique
> tout aussi plein que transparent,
> et qui dans ses syllables symétriques
> redouble tout et devient abondant

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sämtliche Werke*, Zweiter Band (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-Verlag, 1956), p. 532.

8. In Janet Frame's *Daughter Buffalo* (New York: George Braziller, 1972), p. 27.
9. Wilson Harris, *The Infinite Rehearsal* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987).

'Boundaries and Beyond': Memory as Quest in *The Carpathians*

MARC DELREZ

From her earliest beginnings as a writer, Janet Frame has been preoccupied with the need for psychic wholeness, for spiritual and linguistic regeneration, for the individual in the contemporary world.[1] This concern has assumed several forms throughout her career as a novelist. In early novels like *Owls Do Cry* and *Faces in the Water*, she explodes the traditional distinction between sanity and madness, and explores the unsuspected wealth of imagination available to the so-called deranged, whose capacity to 'construe as miracle the hieroglyphic commonplace'[2] opens up spheres of reality usually denied the more ordinary characters. Already then, the ontological status of reality is called in question; a keen reader of Kant in her youth,[3] Frame is very much aware that the world owes its conditions of existence to a realm of being far beyond the immediately visible. Many of her protagonists engage in a relentless quest for these far-away roots of reality. Consequently, Frame's questers are often borderline figures, loosely anchored in the world of accepted rationality, poised on the edge of vision and prophetic utterance. Thus, Toby Withers in *The Edge of the Alphabet* suffers from fits of epilepsy which are as many flights into strangeness, and induce an insight into the lining of the world; Zoe Bryce, in the same novel, reaches towards the outer limits of self, that is, the largely uncharted region where people's lives intersect in a surf of personal war. This probing and plumbing of boundaries continues in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, where it takes a linguistic turn,[4] since the 'uncanny inverse newspaper report'[5] delivered by Vera Glace in this novel eventually peters out into silence. In *Daughter Buffalo*, one of the later novels, the 'border awareness' (as we could call it) developed by the character named Turnlung is probably unsurpassed among Frame's protagonists, insofar as he devotes his considerable visionary faculties to achieving a 'moment of disbelief in substance and self',[6] such as one might experience at the brink of death.[7] A pervasive symbol for this kind of frontier sensibility, one which spans Frame's work from first to last, is the image of the sea. In the epilogue of *Daughter Buffalo*, for example, Turnlung awaits his long-courted death in a chair planted close to the beach; the scene recalls the ending of *Owls Do Cry*, where Bob Withers has been consigned to a geriatric ward 'built on the cape,' so that 'all day and night the inmates moved within sound of the sea'.[8] In *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, language is compared to a lighthouse destined to search 'the seas to rescue the thoughts'[9]

from the abyss of truth.[10] Whereas in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, Toby's expedition into the unknown is prompted by 'an affliction of dream called overseas',[11] and takes the metaphoric guise of a voyage across the ocean, 'in a sailing vessel or was it round and round himself?' (*O*, p. 78). I could multiply these instances but the point is made: the sea is at once a symbolic border and an emblem for life's unvisited complexities. Frame's quester-protagonists all engage in urgent scrutiny of the 'sea of dream' (*E*, p. 233), and peer through the surface into the depths of human personality, to escape from 'the daily mesmerism of waking life' (p. 147) into a realm of enhanced awareness.

Mattina Brecon, the rich woman who travels from New York to New Zealand in *The Carpathians*, is one such quester. To her mildly inquisitive neighbours in Kowhai Street, Puamahara, where she rents a house for a period of two months, she declares herself involved in 'private research',[12] like indeed Zoe Bryce in *The Edge of the Alphabet*. There is a definite suggestion, however, that Mattina's research is at first misdirected. For though she journeys, in a hunger of exploration, to 'a region between the mountains and the sea' (p. 11), it is an effect of jet travel performance that she landed in New Zealand 'without having her mind bathed in the enduring image of seas that extend, like the seas of eternity, between country and country' (p. 95). The implication may be that Mattina is still, at this stage, 'cluttered up with her own being' (p. 44) and unable to cross the borders of self to explore outlying areas of experience and knowledge. Eventually, however, Mattina's trip to New Zealand turns into an unwitting initiation into the art of surrendering one's point of view, an endeavour which has a lot in common with Turnlung's education in death in *Daughter Buffalo*. In fact, Mattina half-acknowledges to herself that the journey originated as an 'act of panic' (p. 78) induced by the riddling suspicion that her body may harbour a secret, lethal disease. Besides, the town of Puamahara has an ageing population and is considered by some 'a home for geriatrics' (p. 54), the rumour being that 'people come here to die' (p. 39). Thus, whatever her delusions or avowed motives for embarking on the journey, Mattina is involved in a compact with death. Whatever else she may earn in the bargain, is for herself (and for me) to discover.

Officially, she came to Puamahara, a major horticultural centre in the area, to enquire into the legend of the Memory Flower, in whose blossoms the memory of the land is said to reside, and about which the town's Tourist Centre wrote enticingly at the back of a leaflet. Whether or not this urge to invest in memory derives from a sense of impending doom, on the eve of Mattina's possible extinction, the novel questions in a number of ways the legend's ability to effectively influence people's lives. Between the pretence of memory affected by those who exploit the legend for commercial purposes, and the plague of amnesia which, as Frame diagnoses, afflicts all of mankind, there is a gap through which irony flows. For example, the stone monument erected at the entrance to the orchards at the edge of town, as a memorial to the flower of the legend, displays an (almost effaced) inscription saying that the Memory Flower blooms on a plant formally used for its contraceptive properties (hardly a symbol of fertility), and administered as an antidepressant to William Cowper, an English poet mostly overlooked by posterity (p. 114). As to Mattina, for someone whose 'knowledge of plants was limited' (p. 21), she marvels on her first day in Puamahara that she had never before 'spent so much time paying attention to trees and flowers' (p. 23), an auspicious development possibly heralding the release of memory she has been coveting. This untimely optimism, however, is undermined in all kinds of ways. Mattina receives an informal call from a neighbour-emissary (a certain Dorothy Town-send) whose welcome gift is a bunch of rejected carnations, offered with the comment that 'the rejects are often better than the others' (p. 23). Although the American woman accepts the carnations gratefully, they convey a first hint that the flower of memory tended by the Puamaharians may hide some mysterious flaw in shape and colour. Frame drives this point home, later in the novel, in a series of satirical traits. For example, at the death of George Coker (Mattina's front neighbour), an auction sale is instantly organized during which the dead man's roses, lovingly cared for over an entire lifetime, are trampled heedlessly by the greedy crowd; also, while most of Kowhai Street's residents participate in the plundering (including, much to her own surprise, Mattina herself), irony verges into cynicism when it turns out that Coker's silver cups, the one possession he was treasuring above all else, were sold *for flower vases* to some acquisitive stranger (p. 100). This episode sheds retrospective light onto Dorothy's reject carnations. The passion for gardening evinced by the people of Kowhai Street appears to have a lot more to do with pruning and trimming, indeed with a process of rejection (clearly enough illustrated in the passage on Coker's death and disposal), than with the act of purposeful and inclusive retention that memory should be. As Mattina humorouly notes, the Memory Flower must have been a flower: 'A weed would have been killed long ago' (p. 37). In a sense, though, the flower did *not* survive, except in the very debased form in which the legend was revived by the Tourist Information people: a perversion of form which extends to all human mnemonic activity: the blight that settled on the Memory Flower has turned it into a growth of oblivion.

One guesses, at this stage, the true nature of Mattina's quest: to retrieve, if need be to invent, a conception of memory allowing for longer perspectives than those allotted to time-bordered, death-besieged individuals. In terms of Frame's vision, this means a conception of time in which the dead are allowed to erupt 'within the boundary of the living human state'.[13] Several times in previous works, Janet Frame has warned against the crippling of imagination caused by the forgetfulness of a society where 'the slimy jam jars' (*E*, p. 220) stand devoid of flowers over the graves of the dead. One recalls, for example, the 'memory abrasive'[14] applied to human brains in *Intensive Care*, in a post-holocaust New Zealand where the only keepsake surviving from the past, a pear tree blossoming yearly, is cut down with no feeling for the monuments of living history. Disruptions of history are prominent also in *The Adaptable Man*, where the protagonist's rigid nostalgia for the past and the fever of tomorrow induced by technical progress are equally criticized, in the name of a more organic conception of the waves of centuries. At the end of this novel, Frame offers a fantastic metaphor for what she considers the 'limits of reach and touch' (p. 277) of the human mind, as Vic Baldry (one of the few surviving characters at the close of the story) is struck with paralysis and must take stock of 'a smooth, weatherless world' (p. 277) at the surface of a cracked mirror. A rather distressing version of Plato's cave, the mirror reflects a world of simultaneous happening and rendering which lacks the profundity of a dimension committed to time and memory. Despite the hint that the hidden dimension may be present potentially within the 'star-shaped irreparable flaw' (p. 277), it seems to me that the novel's open-endedness is deceptive insofar as the break in the mirror is not confronted. In this respect, it can be argued that *The Carpathians* continues where *The Adaptable Man* had left off, as we are going to see that Mattina Brecon does descend into the mirror crack, as an attempt to recover whatever may be lurking there.

In order to fully understand the nature of Mattina's quest for an alternative to 'the allowed bloom' (p. 156) of memory that is common currency in present-day society, one needs to interrogate more closely, in its full complexity, the process of memory erosion/erasure that is at work in the world. This takes us back to the site of Mattina's arrival in Puamahara: at number 24, Kowhai Street. Mattina wonders, when first hearing of her new address, what a 'kowhai' could be; she ventures the hypothesis that it is 'a bird, a plant, a dragon, a person' (p. 20), until it turns out, quite reasonably, that the kowhais are indeed the native trees with which the street is bordered. This street, like others in Puamahara, appears to provide the ground for a mighty polarization of experience, as we read that

> The houses are arranged neatly east, west of the main highway, in streets named by the English settlers after rivers and towns they would never see again, or, by those with a sense of belonging to the land, after the native trees - manuka, rata, kowhai, kauri, the trees being the first heroes of the settlers, the conquered heroes that in time became the enemy. (p. 13)

Kowhai Street emerges here as a focus for tremendous dichotomies of repression, for a dynamics of dissociation and obliteration, in which the 'conquered' planes of reality are forced back into invisibility. The same dynamics applies to the Manuka Home, an institution for intellectually handicapped people of all ages, which is also named after a native tree, and safely kept at bay 'on the edge of town' (p. 108). It is significant that the murder of 'the penultimate Madge' (p. 27), an event judged extravagant for a passion-expurgated place like Kowhai Street, should be attributed so arbitrarily to a runaway patient from the Manuka Hospital, an eighteen-year-old 'with a mental history' (p. 33). Thus, to a large extent, the Manuka Home concentrates the history of blood and madness which the residents of Kowhai Street choose to disown and destroy, declaring 'not to exist what they do not know and have ceased to become a part of' (p. 16). Also, importantly, the Manuka Home is the place where Joseph and Gloria James, two other neighbours of Mattina's, stow away their autistic child Decima, unable as they are to carry 'the burden of their daughter' (p. 73) and her speechlessness. Again, in the glaring case of Decima, the Manuka Hospital is made into a repository for the pockets of unknown territory which ordinary people elect to eject from their normal existence. This becomes clear when Gloria, Decima's mother, complains that although her daughter is now a teenager, her resilience to language makes her utterly unknown, her life indecipherable, as if 'brand new' (p. 107). This contention, however, is immediately undermined as Decima is represented with 'a used cast to her face and body for her skin was scarred' (p. 107), probably from too many lonely encounters with the hard edges of life. There is undisguised irony, of course, in the pride the Jameses derive from their 'internal entry' (p. 73), by which they refer to their garage door, and which opposes their stubborn reliance on the external support of language to penetrate their daughter's inner life. There is disparaging irony also in the fact that Decima's parents should both be piano tuners, noted for their 'perfect pitch' (p. 70), yet unable to listen to their daughter's pregnant silences. Their disability is stigmatized by the computer they use to tune the pianos, an infallible contraption more accurate than the human ear, which is deaf nevertheless to the true sound of music, because 'although it's known as a third or fourth generation tuner'

(p. 73) it lacks the longer view offered by 'ancestral memory' (p. 73). Finally, then, the Jameses' obliviousness of their daughter and of the intact scale of life in which she obviously has insight springs from a dedication to language and computers, to the language of computers which Colin Monk, in *Intensive Care*, admires for its untouchability, since it has the 'immunity of numbers' (*Intensive Care*, p. 217) attached to it. It is in the name of this immune, life-disinfecting, 'decimal' language of numbers that Decima and people of her kind are committed to oblivion and thus, in a sense, decimated.

A good deal more ought to be said about language and the complicitous part it plays in this process of obliteration. However, suffice it for the moment to point out that the mysterious 'event' befalling Kowhai Street, with the death of language it enacts (since the letters of the alphabet fall in clutters from the sky), was amply foreshadowed in the novel by Frame's exposure of language as a set of 'packaged observations that bypass thinking' (p. 28). To this extent, even though it has been hailed as an instance of magic realism in Frame's fiction,[15] the linguistic apocalypse in *The Carpathians* strikes me more as a case of super-realism, as it were, an exacerbation in plastic terms of a change all too real in the modern world, but too insidious perhaps to be normally noticed. Whether they precipitate the advent of 'the illiterate years' (*E*, p. 17) in an era of forgetfulness, of the shift to an age of 'computer-literate' (*C*, p. 56) youth conditioned to destroy aliens on a black screen, all of Frame's disasters share this condition of enhanced realism, often to the point of painfulness. One recalls the 'commotion of quiet' (*S*, p. 222) which sets upon the narrative of *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, or the reduction of the world to the two dimensions of the mirror in *The Adaptable Man*.

The powerful process of systematic obliteration I have been describing touches yet other aspects of New Zealand society and culture, in particular the mythological dimension, in a world where swans are put to death out of fear that 'mythology will take control, that one day a swan with urgently beating wings will swoop from the sky upon the innocent young girls' (*E*, p. 154). In a disaster-ridden country where volcanic eruptions and repeated earthquakes sweep through the land in 'swarms' (p. 102), it is a wonder that geological investigation should be confined to ordinary 'shifts of landscape' (p. 12), while neglecting 'their inner spiritual equivalent, the growth and decay of myths and legends' (p. 12). Also, as a variation on a theme harped on by Toby in *Owls Do Cry*, the New Zealanders indulge in a quest for false treasure when mining their subsoil for coal and gemstones and for 'further discoveries of oil' (p. 20), even while the richer terrain of the country's overgrown mythologies remains virtually untapped. Although it is generally believed, among the white population of Puamahara, that the native Maoris

of the town cherish a more authentic version of the land memory, it appears after Mattina has 'mined their personal treasure' (p. 93) that they too were cut off from 'those elemental links' (p. 16) by their 'Pakeha' (occidental) education. The Maoris are in fact involved in their own variety of private research. Aptly, their reconstructed village community is located in the heart of the country, in an interior 'steeped in legend' (p. 82) that cannot be reached unless after travelling, beyond unmapped boundaries, along a stretch of road arched with the entwined branches of dark-green native trees, in a van rocked by the wind like 'a flimsy boat on a vast sea' (p. 82). Nonetheless, however promising the Maoris' renewed experiment in community, with its capacity to unleash 'a rich succession of memories' (p. 87), there is a suggestion in the name of Mattina's native friends (Hanuere is a transcription in vernacular of their own Pakeha name, January) that they themselves may still be fumbling with identity, at a very early stage in a cycle of exploration that must yet 'flow in its own power' (p. 82) and 'reach the shores of the Northern Hemisphere' (p. 82). More to the point, then, the Hanueres' name echoes Mattina's own, since she too stands on a dawn of consciousness, struggling to come to grips with verities that may be relevant to all of mankind yet must be approached from one's own, very personal trajectory.

For Mattina has to grope, throughout the novel, towards greater understanding of what her quest involves, in a constant fight against her own ingrained inadequacies. One thinks of her tendency to invest naively in the trinket truths of spurious mythologies, such as the forged legend. One thinks also of the very crude form assumed by her 'everlasting hunt' (p. 96) for truth, a frenzy of 'world-hunger' (p. 86) in which she buys real estate all over the globe, 'on the trail of really and its parent noun' (p. 48). Even the people she meets on her travels are finally reified to the status of 'researching material' (p. 39) or 'items of knowledge' (p. 78), passionately hoarded and herded in the course of 'her desired acquisition of so many lives' (p. 70). This greed for facts about each family in Kowhai Street is spurred by an impulse to congeal reality in a deception of fixity, by 'a longing for the "unchangeable certainty of truth"' (p. 14) which smothers the spirit of quest and is implicitly associated, in the novel, with Ed Shannon's addiction to the make-believe reality of computer detective games or flying simulation programmes, supposedly 'more real than real' (p. 110). Also, Mattina's lust for final truths finds expression in her predilection for the authoritative realism of the documentary mode, to which she resorts as she examines 'everything and everyone, filling her exercise books with notes, her cassettes with recorded sounds' (p. 79). Thus, Mattina's researching activity partakes of an impulse

to capture reality, comparable to the one informing *The Forest Families*, a television programme about 'wild creatures, birds and insects' (p. 88) whose title evokes the process of othering enforced on the country's native trees and the 'rare species' (p. 105) of people sheltered in the Manuka Home.

The realistic thrust animating the quest finds a counterpart in the philosophy of imposterism defined by Dinny Wheatstone, Mattina's artist neighbour, as an in-built capacity for 'disbelief in being, in self' (p. 51), which she considers an absolute prerequisite to vision. This skepticism, combined with a paradoxical hankering after a forever receding 'hinterland of truth' (p. 51), produces a distinctive brand of imaginative memory/vision, represented in the novel by the metaphor of the garden in the sky. Dinny Wheatstone's commitment to this conception of enlarged memory, 'the real or imagined memory' (p. 33) engendered by disbelief, is indicated by her floral-patterned dress which shows 'red roses on green-leaved stems *against a background of white clouds*' (p. 42, my emphasis); Dinny's clothing thus differentiates her from the other Puamaharian women, whose floral gowns are mere 'garden camouflage' (p. 37) or eclipse of the Memory Flower. Mattina's occasional insights into this prolonged scale of memory also take the form of a recognition that the flower of memory may not reside in the town's orchards as much as in its 'unrivalled sky' (p. 14), and that the demands of vision might require her to explore her own 'fair share of sky' (p. 63). More particularly, she realizes the vital importance attached to her role of initiator, at the earliest (matinal) stage in a tradition of remembering that must be transmitted in a continuity of quest. After the residents of Kowhai Street have disappeared, in a curious conflation of past, present and future which precipitates the process of oblivion attending all human lives, Mattina feels alarmed that already she cannot recollect them as they were before the cataclysmic 'unleashing of possibilities and impossibilities' (p. 123). Hence, once back in New York, her determination to call upon the creative memory of her novelist-husband Jake Brecon, in whose puzzled ear she pours the story of her New Zealand experience, insisting that he must visit Kowhai Street after her death, and enquire after its people. Although he is inclined at first to put down to delirium the raving narrative delivered by his dying wife, Jake takes his cue and travels to Puamahara, in order to pursue the quest.

As Jake treads upon the stage, it immediately becomes clear that the quest reaches a so-far unattained intensity and range of remembering. He is supported, in his solitary trek on the steps of Mattina, by one of the 'guardians of the inner world of searches' (p. 11), in the person of Conny Grant, the last living memory to be imprinted in the flesh with the enduring image of Kowhai Street's former inhabitants, and who therefore strikes Jake as 'one of the old women who, with the old men of myth and legend, wait by the side of the road... to warn, advise and assist' (p. 193). To this extent, Jake walks onto mythological ground in Puamahara, which is in keeping with his vocation as artist to infuse new places with legends and myths, thus providing possible redemption for human beings who could not otherwise 'live, without disaster, in both the known and unknown worlds' (p. 130) of today and tomorrow.

Also, Jake draws his redemptive powers from a protracted acquaintance with the ambivalence of words. A frustrated novelist who has had to contend with a writer's block for some thirty years, he is aware of the paucity of meaningful language in a world clotted with 'mere words' (p. 186), and of the need to protect the human tongue from the wear and tear of everyday use. In an important sense, therefore, Jake's quest must be conceived as an attempt to retrieve the density of language necessary to recover and express the scale of mythic memory. This, again, relates to his incumbent vocation as novelist: to rescue mankind from the curse of words 'linked in deadly persuasion' (p. 48), which 'have lifted the weight of centuries of knowing and carried it out of our reach' (p. 14). As Jake's quest unfolds, it becomes increasingly obvious that in order to regain contact with this 'weight of centuries' he must take upon himself the 'burden' of Decima James, the child 'with no spoken words' (p. 155) whose obliviousness of language and its concomitant erosion of 'conscience or memory or compassion or sense of outrage' (p. 192) makes a yardstick of intact humanity. Indeed, Jake's physiognomy links him to Decima in a mysterious unobtrusive relationship, since the ' "used" part of his lip', which evokes 'the trodden paths of centuries gone' (p. 165), recalls the 'used cast' (p. 107) that obscures Decima's face with a sense of dormant experience. This concurrence of affinities suggests that Jake's devotion to language and to 'the calm deliberate search for the lost words' (p. 162) may provide a bridge back into the living void of eclipsed reality which erupted so frighteningly as 'breathing invisible creature' (p. 80) into Mattina's bedroom, and which Decima embodies also within present-day society. Not surprisingly, then, the climax of Jake's Puamaharian pilgrimage is the visit he pays to Decima at Manuka Hospital. On this occasion, he acknowledges responsibility for the silent girl, symbolically lifting upon his own bent shoulders the 'weight of centuries of knowing' which she stands for, by giving her and her companions a ride in an old wooden horsecart. Although he fails to *speak* to her eventually, probably for lack as yet of a 'new language to fit and be neighbour' (p. 121) to the complement of reality she represents, Jake allows for the continuity

of the quest by handing down his and Mattina's notebooks to their son John Henry, a budding novelist also blessed with a gift for words.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize very briefly the striking similarities which emerge between the concept of memory evolved by Frame in *The Carpathians*, and the process of 'infinite rehearsal' described by Wilson Harris in his latest novel of this title. Memory, in Frame, is twofold: it is at once an image of the past recollected, and a spiritual urge to lay bare the buried bones of the past. In short, it is at once the end and the trigger of the quest. As a consequence, the harvest of memory is always a provisional, fleeting flash of vision on the way towards further visions. This principle of dialectical memory is well exemplified in *The Carpathians*. Mattina's repeated reviewing (rehearsal) of her past experience in this novel helps her delineate what Harris would call her own embattled 'obsessional ground of conquest',[16] located ironically enough not in Kowhai Street but in her native Manhattan, which is also a site for major rifts and repressions, as the title of Jake's novel suggests: *The Battlefields of New York*. Through rehearsal, however, their long story of betrayal and desertion (there is even a suggestion that John Henry may not be Jake's son by right of blood) yields tentative insights into the gossamer fabric of unity and love with which it is underlined (see p. 174). In particular, John Henry's awareness that 'he as an instrument must receive, like notes of music, the continuity of generations and other lives' (p. 173), makes him the true spiritual inheritor of his parents' memory, irrespective of genetic filiation. For it is only through the use of the creative memory, this 'naked link ... of the human race' (p. 171), that one can hope to 'renew the thread' (p. 167) that was broken and forgotten about.

Thus, Frame shares with Harris not only a total distrust of the ossifications of truth, but also a conviction that it is the role of the artist to 'break the rigid mould of history',[17] in a succession of revisionings which probe deeper and deeper into the 'crevices of centuries' (p. 173) for disregarded versions of truth. In this respect, the part played by John Henry is functionally important. A more genuinely inspired artist than his father who 'was never a writer of fiction' (p. 174), he must welcome the memory of the 'half-ruined street of the dead' (p. 174) and give it new life 'in fiction' (p. 152), as an act of creative memory destined to supply for the world's missing antipodes of the imagination, whether these are symbolized by a celestial garden or by a distant range of mountains in Eastern Europe. In fact, the divided realm of hardcore reality recedes one step further as we realize, on the last page of the book, that the narrative was actually written by John Henry, and so restitutes an already improved re-membered 'version of Puamahara' (p. 152), a record of 'events known and imagined' (p. 196) which makes no claim to final truth. In this sense, the novel, which closes on a note of genuine open-endedness, may even provide an incentive to further quest if it is true that 'it's writers who must thank providence for readers' (p. 174),[18] in stark contrast with the trick of closure masquerading as hope which typifies so many of Frame's previous books.[19]

Finally, then, it is consistent with the twofold compulsion of quest (that is, to foster vision *and* perpetuate itself) that Mattina's cycle of remembering should extend beyond the scope of her time-bound existence, into the art and craft of her artist son John Henry, and further still into Janet Frame's own practice as novelist in the world. Indeed, as I hope to have shown, an almost obsessive rehearsal of certain themes allows her, book after book, to account in fiction for the extensions of being of an 'obscure human person'[20] obliterated behind 'habitual boundaries of prejudice'.[21] Furthermore, her patient scanning of the accustomed cleavages of despair allows her to uncover with *The Carpathians* a so-far untouched vein of optimism, even on the brink of glimpsed catastrophe. In the words of Wilson Harris, she 'sets out again and again across a certain territory of primordial but broken recollection in search of a community whose existence she begins to discern within capacities of unique fiction'.[22] In the transformative potential of this fiction of quest / quest of fiction, even Janet Frame may have found hope.

NOTES

1. Jeanne Delbaere-Garant envisages this quest for wholeness or 'being' in terms of Heidegger's philosophy, in 'Death as the Gateway to Being in Janet Frame's Novels', in Hena Maes-Jelinek, ed., *Commonwealth Literature and the Modern World* (Brussels Didier, 1975), pp. 145-157; Cherry Hankin broaches the question of linguistic regeneration in "Language as Theme in Owls Do Cry", *Landfall*, 28, 2 (June 1974), pp 91-110.
2. Janet Frame, *Faces in the Water* (London: The Women's Press , 1987), p. 251.
3. 'I could never be a poet without having studied Kant', she writes in the autobiographica essay 'Beginnings', *Landfall*, 19, 1 (March 1965), p. 44.
4. Frame's concern with the limits of language is ubiquitous of course, from *Owls Do Cr* onwards.
5. Cf. Wilson Harris, p. 64.
6. Janet Frame, *Daughter Buffalo* (London: W.H. Allen , 1973), p. 159.
7. See Jeanne Delbaere's excellent study on *Daughter Buffalo*
8. Janet Frame, *Owls Do Cry* (New York: George Braziller , 1960), p. 211. All furthe references to this novel (abbreviated as *O*) are to this edition and are given in the tex
9. Janet Frame, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (London: The Women's Press , 1986), p. 18 All further references to this novel (abbreviated as *S*) are to this edition and are give in the text.
10. See Jeanne Delbaere, 'Beyond the Word: Scented Gardens for the Blind'.
11.

Janet Frame, *The Edge of the Alphabet* (New York: George Braziller , 1962), p. 49. All further references to this novel (abbreviated as *E*) are to this edition and are given in the text.

12. Janet Frame, *The Carpathians* (London: Pandora Press , 1989), p. 57. All further references to this novel (abbreviated as *C*) are to this edition and are given in the text.
13. Janet Frame, *The Adaptable Man* (New York: George Braziller , 1965), p. 122. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.
14. Janet Frame, *Intensive Care* (London: W.H. Allen , 1971), p. 341. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.
15. See Jeanne Delbaere, p. 217.
16. Wilson Harris, *The Infinite Rehearsal*, (London: Faber and Faber , 1987), p. 1.
17. Hena Maes-Jelinek, 'The Muse's Progress: "Infinite Rehearsal" in J.M. Coetzee's Foe', in *A Shaping of Connections* (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1989), pp. 232-33.
18. Susan Ash lays the emphasis on the reader's role in the construction of meaning in *The Carpathians* in a review article published in *Landfall*, 43, 4 (December 1989), pp. 518-522.
19. Patrick Evans remarks that even Istina Mavet's return to sanity in *Faces in the Water*, probably Frame's less pessimistic novel, looks like a drawback from the greater wisdom of madness. See Evans, 'Alienation and the Imagery of Death: The Novels of Janet Frame', *Meanjin*, 32 (1973), p. 295.
20. Wilson Harris, 'Tradition and the West Indian Novel', in *Tradition, the Writer and Society*, (London: New Beacon Books , 1973), p. 36.
21. Wilson Harris, 'The Writer and Society', in *Tradition, the Writer and Society*, p. 52.
22. Ibid., p. 54.

'With Myself as Myself': Frame's Autobiography

W.S. BROUGHTON

Janet Frame's autobiography wa overseas in three separate volume *Table* (1984), *The Envoy from Mirror* prizes in the years following the re principal Book Awards series in Ne republished as a single work, enti pages with 36 pages of photogr Zealand, Auckland.

Throughout her life Janet Fra self-publicising writers. Secluded a that could have accompanied her revealed almost nothing of her deduced from a poignant short ess to the series 'Beginnings'[1] in whic of important New Zealand writer careers. For readers in her own autobiography has been of as mu New Zealand.

Janet Frame's life has not yet b The nearest thing, and one of the the publication of the autobiograp Frame in the Twayne World Auth Patrick Evans.[2] In the first two cha he could an outline of Janet Fram if limited attempt at a chronicle w the reminiscences of friends and disinclination of Janet Frame to s sought. But for all its limitatio assertions about the relationship Evans presented some useful a Auckland writer Frank Sargeson, back to the year when she was w the bottom of his Takapuna gard

According to an article by Eva Janet Frame rebuked Evans for