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THE POWER OF PLACE

LANDSCAPE in NEW ZEALAND CHILDREN'S FICTION, 1970 - 1989

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ABSTRACT

*...without the power of place, without that discovery
of a special country of the mind right for this tale,
the story could not have been told...*

Eleanor Cameron

New Zealand children's fiction shows a remarkable rise in quality during the 1980s. By this time, writers have developed a post-colonial, post-provincial awareness of a New Zealand cultural identity and a confidence in their perceptions and technical skills to explore their fictional concerns in a recognisable New Zealand landscape.

The distinctive characteristics of the New Zealand landscape are a result of the country's largely tectonic and volcanic origins. The landscape is inherently dangerous. This thesis shows that writers increase the significance of their children's fiction when they choose to call on that danger and internalize its power.

The maturing of New Zealand children's fiction, though associated mainly with the 1980s, is discernible from 1970 on. The choice of 1970 to 1989 inclusive for this study, therefore, provides a time-span of two decades for comparison.

This thesis is the first of its kind. Indeed, research carried out as its foundation, and recorded in the Appendix, proves that serious critical commentary is woefully lacking for New Zealand children's fiction. Yet the genre has reached international recognition, most notably for the award-winning novels of Margaret Mahy. This thesis, therefore, makes an initial and important contribution to critical studies of an internationally valued body of children's fiction.

To highlight the thematic and technical achievements of New Zealand children's writers, this study is divided into two parts, 'Seascapes' and 'Landscapes'. The two chapters in Part One explore the way the sea permeates the New Zealand consciousness. Seascapes highlight the

isolation of island settings, the sense of betrayal when danger violates the protection of a harbour, and the contribution of beaches to the significance of dividing lines, physical and symbolic.

The four chapters in Part Two trace the impact and significance of danger in landscape features such as mountains, bush, hill country and plains, lakes, rivers, caves and tunnels, the last pair being particularly powerful through psychological associations. The emphasis is always on a 'relational' reading, exploring how the landscapes relate to the point of view or outlook of the characters or the structure or theme of the novel itself. The development of writers' literary skills, as in shifts of time, voice and tense, enhances the art of their narratives and the establishing of characters and themes in their settings.

The conclusion is that the dangerous characteristics of the New Zealand landscape have provided writers with scope to explore and develop themes and human relationships in an exciting and experimental way with a uniquely New Zealand voice. Moreover, in the highlighting of landscape and themes concerned with conservation, this study draws attention to what humanistic geographers call the fundamental problem of the Age: survival on this Earth. These are important achievements for New Zealanders. Not only do expressions of their national identity in their children's fiction contribute to their feelings of self-worth, but also this fiction on an international level can make a contribution towards increasing understanding and tolerance of different points of view.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout this thesis:

Periodicals and Newspapers

<i>CLA Yr</i>	<i>Children's Literature Association of New Zealand Yearbook</i>
<i>CLAQ</i>	<i>Children's Literature Association Quarterly</i>
<i>CLE</i>	<i>Children's Literature in Education</i>
<i>DST</i>	<i>Dominion Sunday Times</i>
<i>GP</i>	<i>Growing Point</i>
<i>JNZL</i>	<i>Journal of New Zealand Literature</i>
<i>NYT</i>	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>NZBw</i>	<i>New Zealand Bookworld</i>
<i>NZH</i>	<i>New Zealand Herald</i>
<i>NZL</i>	<i>New Zealand Listener</i>
<i>SLR</i>	<i>School Library Review</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i>
<i>WEP</i>	<i>Wellington Evening Post</i>

Organizations

ALA	American Library Association
CLA	Children's Literature Association of New Zealand
DSIR	Department of Scientific and Industrial Research
IBBY	International Board on Books for Young People (<i>UNESCO</i>)
IRA	International Reading Association
LAA	Library Association of Australia
MLA	Modern Languages Association
NZLA	New Zealand Library Association
NZPPTA	New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association
RNZ	Radio New Zealand
SLA	School Library Association
TVNZ	Television New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction to this thesis is divided into three parts. The first will state the general intention and specific aims of the thesis, and then define its scope and terms of reference. The second part will explain why this thesis is timely and necessary. It will cite the international growth in critical attention to children's literature. It will establish that a body of quality children's literature is now available in New Zealand for study, but that critical commentary upon it is small and virtually non-existent concerning landscape. It will refer to the value of landscape studies in terms of national identity and in terms of human survival on Earth. The third part of this Introduction will outline the way the New Zealand landscape itself has influenced the methodology used to organize the text. It will summarize the Appendix and outline the organization of the bibliography.

My general intention in this thesis is to celebrate achievement in New Zealand children's fiction, especially in the flowering of the 1980s, from the point of view of a critical regionalist for whom 'the distinctive features of a place are valued as something to start with, to determine strategies'.¹ In other words, my approach is what Doris Y. Kadish calls a 'relational reading' of novels, that is, a reading which goes beyond the 'pictorial' to explore, where appropriate, the ways in which the landscape is related to the portrayal of character, theme, and/or structure.² Yet, in spite of the focus on New Zealand writers and their use of landscape, no suggestion is intended that New Zealand writers should limit their settings to New Zealand.³ Nor is it my intention to be guilty of what C.K. Stead calls 'the brashness that commonly accompanies the realization of a post-colonial identity'.⁴ Rather, my motivation for this study lies in the wish to trace the growing success of New Zealand children's fiction and to find reasons for its particular power and characteristics. In the process of valuing place and identity, this study becomes part of a growing New Zealand stand against mass media pressure through books and TV from Europe and the United States.⁵

The specific aims of my thesis are two-fold. First, I will show that writers extend the significance of their children's fiction when their 'subjective vision' leads them to call on the 'objective reality' of the distinctive New Zealand landscape and so internalize its power.⁶ The reality of the New Zealand landscape is that it owes its origins to 'often violent and spectacular' geological forces, notably volcanic and tectonic.⁷ These make the landscape inherently dangerous. For New Zealand writers, therefore, it is not so much a question of the landscape having 'no inherent qualities to maintain fixed values', as Leonard Lutwack claims as a general principle,⁸ or, to misquote Hamlet, that there is nothing either good or bad in the landscape but thinking makes it so. Rather, the landscape offers writers specific and unpredictable dangers from volcanic and tectonic forces, as well as general dangers from exposure, accident, drowning, and disorientation, which they can choose to draw on for their power.

Second, I will show that, as writers have accepted the power of place in this New Zealand landscape, so their fiction has matured in confidence, perception and literary skills.⁹ For example, themes have deepened in the juxtaposing of truth and illusion, in the exposing of social and conservation issues, in the exploring of character, in the complex use of time-shifts, voice and tense. This maturing is evident particularly in the literary quality of New Zealand children's fiction in the 1980s.¹⁰

To establish the scope of the primary sources for this thesis, I made a systematic study of all New Zealand children's fiction published from 1970 to 1989 inclusive, as well as a selection of other children's literature published here and overseas.¹¹ Though the flowering of New Zealand children's fiction is associated mainly with the 1980s, it shows its promise from 1970 on. Moreover, a few interesting and sometimes valuable novels, published originally before 1970, become available after 1970 through being republished. The choice of 1970 to 1989 inclusive therefore makes a comprehensive time-span for this thesis.

The scope of secondary sources I consulted for this thesis covers a wide range of critical writing dealing with children's literature and literature in general, including studies on landscape in literature, and

on humanistic geography, geology and ecology.¹² To help establish a foundation for approaching the primary sources, I also made a survey of contemporary critical commentary published in New Zealand journals, periodicals, and newspapers from 1970 to 1989 inclusive.¹³ The results of this survey are recorded separately in the Appendix.

The phrase, 'New Zealand children's fiction', provides three terms of reference for definition and elaboration, and they are taken in reverse order. First, 'fiction' here encompasses novels, novellas, and stories commonly called 'chapter books' by teachers and children in New Zealand classrooms.¹⁴ Excluded are short stories, picture books, myths and legends, and texts written for didactic and pedagogical purposes.¹⁵

Second, 'children's' fiction includes fiction for adolescents. Just what comprises literature for children and adolescents, and even if it exists, is the subject of unending debate.¹⁶ Time, however, is commonly regarded as the main sifter in establishing the traditional English canon of children's literature which embraces novels like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Since any current output is scarcely established enough for time to sift through, especially in a relatively new branch of literature in the English language such as New Zealand's, I accept for the purposes of this thesis John Rowe Townsend's 'wholly pragmatic' conclusion that the genre does exist as defined by publishers' lists.¹⁷ Where anomalies exist, for example, in the appearance of John A. Lee's *The Hunted* (1936) on Price Milburn's 1975 Kea list for children, then such novels are omitted from the list of primary sources.¹⁸

The third term of reference is 'New Zealand'. The focus of this study is on New Zealand writers who use the natural New Zealand landscape, explicitly or implicitly, in their fiction.¹⁹ 'New Zealand' refers, obviously, to fiction set on the main islands and islands off-shore including the Chathams. It also refers, obviously, to writers living here, who happen, however, to be mainly Pakeha.²⁰ The perception of New Zealand's landscape in this fiction for study is, therefore, largely Pakeha. Yet, in 17% of these novels, aspects of Maoritanga present a point of view often sympathetic to Maori concerns.²¹ This indicates that New Zealand children's fiction published in the 1970-1989 time-span

explores a plurality in New Zealand culture more widely than might have been expected from predominantly Pakeha writers.

The second part of the Introduction shows that this study of New Zealand children's fiction is timely and necessary at this point in New Zealand's literary history for three major reasons: the development internationally of academic interest in children's literature; the development of a considerable body of New Zealand children's fiction worthy of critical attention; and the lack of critical attention paid so far to this body of fiction, and particularly to the use of landscape. Yet this approach has additional value in terms of national identity and human survival on Earth.

First, this study is part of a growing academic interest shown internationally in children's literature. In recent years, courses on children's literature have been established world-wide in tertiary institutions, including, for the first time in New Zealand, the University of Waikato in 1990. This has happened at a time when the postmodernist movement has bestowed critical dignity and value on other previously marginalized areas of literature - popular, feminist, Marxist, black, and Commonwealth. Previous critical neglect and, therefore, virtual suppression indicated a perceived lack of value in these literatures. This applied to children's literature too. Moreover, children's literature is generally associated with women writers and with nurturing, a part of women's work. Heather Roberts sees that neglect 'grows out of a society that places primary value on the experiences of a small group of people - white, healthy, young men'.²² Lissa Paul sees a connection between women's and children's literature because both 'are devalued and regarded as marginal or peripheral by the literary and educational communities'.²³ As well, says Mary V. Jackson:

Children's literature, a so-called minor area, [...] has been labeled insignificant and given minor attention because of two still potent and academic biases - a tendency to discount and devalue culture when related to the world of the child and a rooted disdain for whatever seems simple and uncomplicated.²⁴

Some children's literature is certainly simple and uncomplicated, but nevertheless interesting and often deceptive in its apparent simplicity in dealing with major human experiences such as death. Other literature for children is highly complex, as this thesis will show. But regardless of simplicity or complexity, children's literature can still be assessed in academic terms. For as Roderick McGillis, professor of English at the University of Calgary, answers those who would dismiss children's literature:

But the theory of the last 20 years should have taught us that we can bring intellectual rigor to bear on anything. It should be more important to bring it to bear on books that are being read by the next generations than on books that people are not reading any more.

We're talking about power structures.²⁵

Other critics besides McGillis believe children's literature has a part to play in 'power structures' and the ability to influence value systems. So it is all the more surprising that the genre has been marginalized in tertiary institutions and all the more important for it to be examined critically.²⁶

Indeed, in recent decades, books and articles of an academic nature have appeared, from Hugo Crago's paper on 'Cultural Categories and the Criticism of Children's Literature' in 1979, to Neil Philip's *A Fine Anger* on Alan Garner in 1981, and Margaret Meek's Woodfield Lecture at Loughborough University in 1987.²⁷ More recently, bibliographies compiled by Gillian Adams and Rachel Fordyce point to the burgeoning of critical writing in the U.S.A.²⁸ By making an extensive exploration of New Zealand children's fiction, I obviously share the belief expressed by the above writers through their work, that children's fiction warrants serious critical attention.²⁹

The second reason why this study of New Zealand children's fiction is timely and necessary is that a substantial body of New Zealand children's fiction published from 1970 to 1989 inclusive is available now for critical comment. In quantity, the output of the 1980s is almost double the output of the 1970s, 135 titles as opposed to 71. This provides two contrasting decades at a point of change.³⁰ In quality, the vigour of the flowering especially in the 1980s is exciting and

unprecedented in this country, culminating in international acclaim for the work of Margaret Mahy. Critics of English children's literature, like John Rowe Townsend, talk of the 1950s as the beginning of their second golden age, the first being the half century before 1914.³¹ In New Zealand, there is no comparable earlier golden age in terms of literary excellence and international recognition. Only a few pre-1970 novels or novellas show qualities of literary excellence, and these few, like Maurice Duggan's *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* (1958) and Elsie Locke's *The Runaway Settlers* (1965), have been republished, nine in the 1970s and ten in the 1980s.³² This makes the years from 1970 to 1989 inclusive all the more important a time span to examine, for it covers almost all fiction of value ever written in New Zealand for children, and provides 'a quality in literature' which, as Northrop Frye declares, is the prerequisite for 'a systematic study'.³³ Thus, it is now possible to undertake a 'relational reading' for this thesis.

Some endorsement of the flowering of that 'quality', especially in the 1980s, comes from comparing the number of critical essays on New Zealand writers in the different editions of the London-published *Twentieth Century Children's Writers*. The first edition (1978) contains essays on eight writers; the third edition (1989) on eighteen.³⁴

Of these New Zealand writers, the most outstanding is Margaret Mahy. Only three other writers in the world have matched her achievement of twice winning the coveted Carnegie Award for the best novel of the year to be published in English in the United Kingdom, which she did for *The Haunting* (1982) and *The Changeover* (1984). Not only did Mahy win the IBBY Honour Book Award in 1986, but also her *Memory* (1987), runner-up for a third Carnegie Medal, won the Young Observer Award for teenage fiction, and *The Tricksters* (1986) was runner-up for the same award the previous year.³⁵

Moreover, Tessa Duder's *Jellybean* (1985) and *Alex* (1987) reached the Notable Books lists of the American Library Association, Caroline Macdonald's *The Lake at the End of the World* (1989) was runner-up for the *Guardian* Award in the United Kingdom, and several novels by other writers, such as William Taylor, Maurice Gee, Anne de Roo, have received further publication overseas in English and in translation.³⁶

New Zealand itself signals what it sees of value in its children's fiction through its own awards. The Esther Glen Medal was established in 1945, awarded infrequently till 1978 since when it has been awarded almost every year. The Russell Clark Medal was established in 1978, and the Children's-Book-of-the-Year Awards began in 1982 in response to the publishing surge of the 1980s.³⁷ Mahy, de Roo, Duder, Gee, and Taylor in 1991, have all been recipients of one or more of these New Zealand awards.

What this means for New Zealand children's fiction is that the New Zealand sense of value and quality is not merely colonial or narrowly provincial; it is endorsed by international recognition. To look overseas for confirmation of local estimates, however, is not a sign of insecurity or immaturity in judgement. As C.K. Stead says, New Zealand needs 'to look to Europe [...] not to be overborne by it, or to let it be the determinant of what we value, but to act as a point of reference, a way of getting outside ourselves and our collective solipsism'.³⁸ So it is clear that New Zealanders need not fear being dismissed as mere regional writers. Those who surrender themselves to what Jorge Luis Borges calls 'that voluntary dream which is artistic creation' can produce fiction of value to their place of origin and fiction of international quality in the process.³⁹

It is important to note here that most New Zealand children's books published between 1970 and 1989 are set specifically or recognizably in New Zealand and thus reflect aspects of a New Zealand cultural identity, or, as William Taylor argues the need for, a range of New Zealand cultural identities in terms of 'behaviour, values, belief and knowledge'.⁴⁰ The benefit to both writers and readers is unquestionable. Helped by a sense of place and power gained from drawing on the landscape to express their fictional vision, writers have developed a maturity of perception and technique in making what Allen Curnow once called the 'vital discovery of self in country and country in self'.⁴¹ In other words, writers for children have developed a confidence in relating their outer to their inner landscapes, and readers can take pleasure in recognizing the familiar along with the stimulus of imaginative exploration of the previously unknown in their own environment.⁴²

The third reason why this thesis is both timely and necessary is that, as an obvious result of past critical marginalizing and neglect, critics have given little serious attention to New Zealand children's fiction. Those who have the skills to conduct literary commentary rarely discuss children's fiction even of writers famous for their adult novels - Janet Frame, Maurice Gee, and Maurice Duggan. Yet for both Margaret Dalziel and Patrick Evans, Janet Frame's *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* (1969) reflects what they find in her adult novels.⁴³ Bill Manhire in *Maurice Gee* (1986) also briefly declares that Gee's *Under the Mountain* (1979) 'fits in with the rest of [his] fiction'. The central characters 'feel the isolation of their special understanding and [...] their burden and their privilege', and the concept of mixies in *The Halfmen of O* (1982) 'fits the essentially relativist vision of Gee's adult novels'.⁴⁴ Brian Boyd is another who briefly fits Gee's *Under the Mountain* into his whole fictional world.⁴⁵ Obviously, serious critical attention to children's literature on the part of critics working with adult fiction has the potential to produce perceptive comments of interest and value.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, though literary critics have so far put little value on New Zealand children's fiction, a small body of valuable commentary has been developing since 1970. In 1972, the Children's Literature Association of New Zealand began publishing annual yearbooks including articles such as Anne de Roo's talk on idiom in 1976.⁴⁷ Library Associations published talks, especially by Margaret Mahy, given at Conferences.⁴⁸ In 1979, J.B. Ringer's historical coverage of 'Juvenile Fiction, 1833-1917' first appeared; in 1980 my critical bibliography covering children's books, 1959-1979, and in 1981 Alison Grant's brief history also appeared.⁴⁹ In 1982, Betty Gilderdale published her detailed historical coverage of 'Junior Fiction from 1833 to 1978' from a mainly sociological point of view.⁵⁰ The new editor of the *Listener*, Andrew Mason, in 1982 offered Dorothy Neal White a monthly column with a commendable amount of space for informed assessment.⁵¹ The School Library Service added Profiles of New Zealand writers to their review booklets, and newspapers like the *New Zealand Herald* and *The Press* from Christchurch began to give more space to children's book reviews. Finally, *Landfall* took up the cause of New Zealand children's literature, publishing a talk by Margaret Mahy in 1976, a psycho-

analytic and provocative essay on Mahy's *The Haunting* by Claudia Marquis and an interview with Mahy in 1987, and in 1989 my commissioned survey of New Zealand children's literature in the 1980s.⁵² Jenni Keestra included novels by Tessa Duder and Margaret Mahy in her 1988 master's thesis, and two further essays by Marquis appeared in 1990 and 1991.⁵³

In none of the publications on New Zealand children's fiction mentioned above, however, is there any extensive exploration of landscape imagery of the kind that List D in the Bibliography for this thesis shows to be well established in general literary criticism. Not even an essay exists comparable to Belle Alderman's thorough study of Australian landscape in that country's children's fiction.⁵⁴ The only comments on landscape in New Zealand children's fiction come from references in Margaret Mahy's talks,⁵⁵ from Marquis's essay on Mahy's *The Tricksters*,⁵⁶ which will be discussed in Chapter Two, and from Betty Gilderdale's summary in *A Sea Change* as follows:

[In fantasy] there is an awareness that New Zealand is geologically a young country, where volcanoes may suddenly explode into activity, caves alter shape, and land re-form after sea surges and tidal waves. [...] The greatest achievement of the adventure stories as a whole is the picture they present of the New Zealand landscape. There could be no possible doubt that this is a country of mountains, of dense forest, of rushing rivers, of tidal inlets, and of wide sweeping beaches where lupins rustle on the sand dunes. It is abundantly plain also that our rainfall is heavy and liable to come in sudden and devastating downpours, resulting in slips, floods and drownings, and earthquakes are an ever-present hazard [in] a land that is both beautiful and cruel, and with a climate that is fickle.⁵⁷

Gilderdale's summary shows the dramatic nature of the New Zealand landscape as a generalization. What I aim to clarify in this thesis is in detail how these images of mountains, forest, rivers, beaches... are represented, and with what effect - 'how it is what it is, even that it is what it is'.⁵⁸ As a result, this thesis is the first of its kind to take a 'relational reading' of the use of landscape as an approach to explore characters and their points of view, structure, and themes relating to social, political, ecological, and cultural concerns in today's society.

Although this thesis does not set out to place a special emphasis on social or political themes, at times they become important as part of a 'relational reading', for example, in the discussion on William Taylor's novels in Chapter Four.⁵⁹ But the ramifications of this thesis have another importance in the field of ecology and conservation. Humanistic geographers, who are interested in 'the contours of the landscape' and 'the kind of feelings generated by the human presence in the landscape', express a real concern for the future of the environment and see literature playing an important part in conservation.⁶⁰ The role of place in literature, says Leonard Lutwack,

is a topic of ancient lineage in the history of literary criticism. [...] The twentieth century evidences a new interest in place as an important issue in general. [...] The issue is the survival of mankind. [...] The great question is whether man can change his perception of himself in relation to his surroundings in such a way as to achieve this end. An increased sensitivity to place seems to be required, a sensitivity inspired by aesthetic as well as ecological values, imaginative as well as fictional needs. In so far as the representation of place in literature has an important influence on how people regard individual places and the whole world as a place, it may be concluded that literature must now be seen in terms of the contemporary concern for survival.⁶¹

Lutwack's perception that the survival of mankind depends upon a proper aesthetic and ecological relationship with the landscape gives literary studies a practical urgency beyond a purely literary and aesthetic appreciation. His perception is shared by other critics such as Kenneth Mitchell, who sees great need for studies of landscape and literature.

On the global level, we are beginning to realize that man may not be the superman subduing a passive planet, as he has been perceived for five or six centuries. [...] We cannot even control our own social behaviour, let alone the natural world. And nature's powerful capacity for revenge, through flood and earthquake and volcano and cancer, shows just how tentative man's pacification of it has been.⁶²

How New Zealand writers have treated the landscape's involvement with conservation issues will become clear in Part Two.

Humanistic geographers assume that literature has the power to influence readers' thinking and, therefore, subsequent actions. This, of course, is the rationale behind all acts of propaganda and didactic

writing as well as censorship and suppression of the printed word.⁶³ It is not my intention, however, that this thesis should be a piece of propaganda, but rather, that it should help to 'provide writers with good readers'.⁶⁴ Underlying my study is the hope that the process of showing what New Zealand writers have achieved in their use of landscape will help to raise readers' levels of awareness. This extends not only to the art and craft whereby writers create their New Zealand literature, but also to the land that must be valued as a prerequisite for survival.

The third part of this Introduction explains the organization of the text, sums up the Appendix, and outlines the Bibliography. Since the categories for subdivision within the text are derived from the landscape itself, some facts need to be stated concerning its origins.

New Zealand lies isolated in the South Pacific Ocean, some 2000 kilometres from Australia, some 9500 kilometres from South America, at the complex junction of two plates in the earth's crust along the Pacific Rim of Fire. The long narrow shape of the two main islands thrust up out of the ocean is the result of 'often violent and spectacular' tectonic and volcanic processes, to which must be added glaciation, erosion by wind and rain, and alluvial deposition - processes still active today.⁶⁵ These geological origins have two main consequences for New Zealand writers of children's fiction.

First, no one lives far from the sea, no more than 130 kilometres.⁶⁶ Not unexpectedly, therefore, the presence of seascapes is a distinctive quality in New Zealand children's fiction. Over half the books in each decade of this field of study contain major or minor references to seascapes - ocean, island, harbour and beach.⁶⁷ In New Zealand adult literature, too, the sea has a pervasive presence. J.K. Baxter identifies the sea, the island, the beach, among the five dominant symbols in poetry,⁶⁸ while Michael Morrissey says of fiction:

The typical New Zealand short story has given us the sea the sea the sea with sandhills and sandcastles, waves benignly lapping while men (Oh Brave Man Alone!) dutifully walk their languageless dogs.⁶⁹

By contrast, American, Canadian and Australian literatures are more preoccupied with the land. Behind all American writers, says Alfred Kazin, lies 'the land that was here before there was anything else'.⁷⁰ The land, says Kenneth Mitchell, led to the present 'frontier myth' and the 'American Dream: endless and successful conquest'. In Canada, he continues, the land is 'bitterly hostile [and] terrifying, lethal'.⁷¹ According to Sheila Egoff, following Margaret Atwood, this same land 'is overwhelmingly larger than its people; [...] our adult literature equates survival with alienation, coldness, and hostility'. But, she adds, 'our children's books equate it with challenge'.⁷² In Australian children's fiction pre-1970, H.M. Saxby identifies 'the real outback [as] vast properties in almost trackless territory', and concludes that 'most Australian novels deal with the land itself'.⁷³ Brenda Niall also concludes that 'the landscape, vast, empty, indifferent, still dominates contemporary fiction.[...] Although most Australians live in coastal cities, they cannot, it seems, forget the vast inner spaces of the continent'.⁷⁴ As if to prove her point, Victor Kelleher in *Taronga* (1986) draws on the land as well as sea and sky for images of immensity:

The great dome of the sky, black, star-sprinkled, arched above him, appearing at that moment so limitless, so vast and free, that the fences and cages of Taronga were dwarfed, reduced to the point where they barely seemed to exist - this hillside, and the huge continent stretching on and on beyond it, all part of that untrammelled space which had endured since the beginning of time. (p. 157)

He was thinking only of the vastness of the ocean from which these harbour waters flowed, and of the huge mass of land behind him, [...] the great mass of land pressing at his back. (p. 164)

Kelleher's novel thus epitomizes an important characteristic of Australian fiction. It is the vastness of the land that matters more than the vastness of sea and sky in carrying the notion of a primeval, natural, and rightful state of freedom waiting for the protagonists beyond the Zoo's artificial state of confinement.

The second consequence of New Zealand's origins is that volcanic and tectonic activity remains part of people's consciousness through either the shape of the land and/or through sporadic manifestations. The qualities of a place may well depend on the subjective responses or circumstances of the characters; a cave, for example, may be either a

womb or a tomb, a place of refuge or burial. Nevertheless, as already identified in the aims of my thesis, the landscape is inherently dangerous; it offers writers a specific legacy of unpredictable danger from volcanic and tectonic power, as well as general dangers from exposure, accident, drowning, and disorientation. These inherent dangers are particularly suited to stories of adventure and challenge in children's fiction, for danger includes whatever threatens the physical, mental or psychological well-being of the characters. It is not surprising that New Zealand writers who choose to draw on these images of danger find them a source of power to enhance their fiction.

From these two consequences of New Zealand's origins - the dominance of seascapes and the inherent power and unpredictable danger of landscapes - come distinguishing characteristics in New Zealand children's fiction. Indeed, suggests Rob Jackaman, 'perhaps the source of New Zealand literature's greatest strength [is] the immediate environment, physical and cultural'. But he warns against the dangers of becoming '*trapped* in the scenery'.⁷⁵ Jackaman is referring mainly to adult poetry. It seems to me, however, that children's literature is largely protected against such dangers through the general perception of the genre's need for the onward drive of action rather than description and contemplation. Isabel Maud Peacocke, writing in the 1930s, provides an example. Her poetry in *Kowhai Gold* features 'a trembling path of light / On the pale ripples of the tideless sea' for the revels of 'sprites and flying fays'.⁷⁶ Her novel of adventure, *The Cruise of the Crazy Jane*, is sturdier and more energetic, enough to warrant republication in 1984. At a much deeper and more subtle level, the special characteristics of the landscape are evoked by the skills of other writers, none more powerfully than Margaret Mahy in *The Tricksters* (1986). 'Fault-lines,' she calls them, and sees them representing recent history and disjointed traditions as they run through herself and New Zealanders as a whole.⁷⁷

To highlight the dominance of seascapes and the contribution of individual landscape features, the text of the thesis is divided into two parts: Part One, Seascapes; Part Two, Landscapes. Each Part is subdivided into chapters as set out in the Table of Contents. To J.K. Baxter's 'larger nature symbols' in New Zealand poetry - the Sea, the

Mountains, the Bush, the Beach, the Island - I have added the Harbour, Hills and Plains, the Lake, the River, Caves and Tunnels, regrouped for the purposes of the thesis.⁸⁰ Some cross-referencing is required, however. For example, volcanism is common to mountains, lakes, caves and tunnels. Nevertheless, the individual contribution that these landscape features have to make to New Zealand children's fiction is clarified through the separate focus on them within each chapter.

In brief, in Chapter One, the ocean intensifies both the isolation of characters from their origins and the danger of their predicaments. The island, besides being suitable in its isolation for what is commonly called 'Robinsonnades', intensifies an awareness of the mysterious, the magical, the supernatural. In Chapter Two, the harbour promises protection; it is all the more shocking when that protection is violated by natural or human forces. The beach sets up lines of demarcation, physical, temporal, and psychological, often dangerous to cross. In Chapter Three, the mountains embody danger and power, especially if volcanic in origin, and they often arouse feelings of awe and terror.⁷⁹ The bush, which appears in both Chapters Three and Four because it is common to high and low altitudes, increases the dangers of isolation and disorientation. In Chapter Four, hills and plains provide a range of experiences from holiday adventures to struggles against pollution. A relational reading highlights hills and plains in association with characters' points of view and violence in society. In Chapter Five, the lake provides a distinctive focal point, holding secret power associated with violence in proportion to the violence of its geological origin. The river takes its power from speed and sudden flooding and is often associated with drowning. In Chapter Six, caves and tunnels also draw power from secrecy to intensify physical and psychological danger. Always, throughout the land, there is the ever-present possibility of danger and power from seismic activity. In Chapter Seven, a short conclusion completes Parts One and Two.

Within each chapter, texts are discussed decade by decade in order to clarify points of change and the general development from the 1970s to the 1980s already noted in this Introduction. Page numbers and date of publication referring to primary sources are given within the text.

Where appropriate, the original date of publication precedes the date of republication or reissue that brings the book within the 1970–1989 time-span. Each chapter is followed by its footnotes with publication details in shortened form. Full details are given in the Bibliography.

The Appendix records the results of research carried out as a foundation for this thesis. It reveals that five major assumptions govern published commentaries and reviews of New Zealand children's fiction from 1970 to 1989 inclusive. One: children's literature is of little importance. Two: on the contrary, what children read is important because it can modify their thinking and behaviour. Three: fiction, therefore, has the power to help shape perceptions of national and social identity. Four: children respond to books homogeneously according to their age. Five: reviews are for adults to guide them in their selection of books for children. Its conclusion has already been pointed out above: mainly because of the first assumption, there is a general paucity of literary criticism on New Zealand children's fiction. The talks by Margaret Mahy, the sociological survey by Betty Gilderdale in *A Sea Change* (1982), and the essays by Claudia Marquis are among the notable exceptions. It is obvious from the Introduction that I do not share the first of the five assumptions, but I share the third.

Finally, the Bibliography is organized to suit the special needs of the thesis. After an introduction and list of contents, the primary and secondary sources are divided into two sections with full publication details to complement the shortened form used in the text and footnotes. Unusual typography is indicated here. The primary sources in Section I are divided further into three lists. List A records New Zealand authors and their titles alphabetically from 1970 to 1989 inclusive. List B records the same titles chronologically. List C covers all other primary sources cited. The number of pages in children's books is noted for interest. The secondary sources in Section II are divided into four lists. List D includes critical commentary on landscape in literature. List E includes books on geology and ecology. List F includes literary criticism and background on children's literature. List G includes general literary criticism and background. Further details are given in the introduction to the Bibliography. The format followed throughout this thesis is that set down by the MHRA handbook, fourth edition.

NOTES

1. The term 'critical regionalist' comes from architect Kenneth Frampton, according to Allan Smith. 'Two Cultures - One River', *Landfall*, 171 (1989), 296-308 (pp. 305-06).
2. *The Literature of Images* (1987), pp. 5-9.
3. Reginald Berry calls such a notion the 'tyranny of having to write about [home]'. 'A Deckchair of Words', *Landfall*, 159 (1986), 310-23 (p. 313). To suggest that limitations are desirable would be to suggest the absurdity that Barry Mitcalfe's *The Square Gang* (1981), or Michael Joseph's *Kaspar's Journey* (1988), is of no value to us, and that Tessa Duder's *Alex in Alex in Winter* (1989) should not have gone to Rome.
4. 'For the Hulk of the World Between', in *In the Glass Case* (1981), 245-58 (p. 255), (Auckland University Winter Lecture Series, 1960).
5. For example, Tessa Duder sees an urgent need 'to establish our own, new and fragile multi-cultural identity more strongly so that we can stand against the rising tide of 21st century internationalism and not be totally swamped'. 'Learning the Trick of Standing Upright', *Reading Forum NZ*, 3 (1990), 3-12 (p. 11). Similarly, in the United States, Jim Wayne Miller speaks of the need for the American regions to counteract cultural standardization brought about by mass media. 'Anytime the Ground is Uneven', in *Geography and Literature*, ed. by William E. Mallory and Paul Simpson-Housley (1987), pp. 1-20.
6. C.K. Stead uses the terms 'objective reality' and 'subjective vision', wanting 'the mutual accommodation of the two'. 'Ronald Hugh Morrieson and the Art of Fiction', *Landfall*, 98 (1971), 137-145 (p. 139).
7. D.J. Lowe and J.D. Green, 'Origins and Development of the Lakes', in *Inland Waters of New Zealand*, ed. by A.B. Viner (1987), pp. 1-64 (p. 1).
8. 'With no inherent qualities to maintain fixed values, [...] places are neither good or bad in themselves but in the values attached to them, and literature is one of the agencies involved in attaching values to places.' *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 35.
9. Eudora Welty even argues that 'fiction depends for its life on place'. *Place in Fiction* (1957), p. 4.
10. Allen Curnow spells out the minimal requirements for good writing as: 'accuracy, purpose, coherence of design, and original vision'. 'New Zealand Literature: The Case for a Working Definition', in *Essays on New Zealand Literature*, ed. by Wystan Curnow (1973), pp. 139-54 (p. 148), (first publ. in *The Future of New Zealand*, ed. by M.F. Lloyd Prichard (Auckland: University of Auckland, 1963), pp. 84-107).
11. The Bibliography covers primary sources in Lists A, B, and C.
12. Secondary sources are covered in Lists D, E, F, and G.
13. See List F, e.
14. These are stories at a simple level for emerging readers in which the chapters are mostly self-contained, but portray the same protagonist(s) with some small sense of development through the chapters.
15. A great number of short stories have been published over the years in the *School Journal* and in picture books. Along with recent collections, they offer scope for valuable study in their own right. See List C in the bibliography for collections by Margaret Mahy, Gaelyn Gordon, and Anthony Holcroft. Holcroft's stories, notably *The Stone*, provide particularly good examples of what this thesis shows: that an intense concern for landscape can lead to a subtle and powerful

handling of literary concerns, here mood and mystery. See also Michael Reid's unpublished M.A. thesis, *Ideology, Hegemony, and the New Zealand School Journal* (1988).

16. For definitions of children's literature, the following are helpful: Clifton Fadiman, Felicity Hughes, and others, in *Signposts to criticism of children's literature*, ed. by Robert Bator (1983), pp. 7-18 and pp. 26-36; Neil Philip in *Signal*, 43 (1984), 12-18; Peter Hunt in *Signal*, 28 (1979), 9-25; contributors to *The Thorny Paradise*, ed. by Edward Blishen (1975) and to *Writers, Critics, and Children*, ed. by Geoff Fox and others (1976). Fiction for adolescents is discussed by John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 2nd edn (1974); Kenneth L. Donalson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (1989); *Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood (1980); Belle Alderman, 'Rites of Passage: Adolescent Literature', in *Give Them Wings*, ed. by Maurice Saxby and Gordon Winch (1987), pp. 290-307. The rhetoric of fiction for children is discussed by Margaret Meek, 'The many and the few: writers, reviewers and readers', in *Variety is King*, ed. by Norman Culpan and Clifford Waite (1977), pp. 154-61. The crucial relationship between writer and reader as a means of defining a children's book - 'not what is said, but the way it is said, and to whom it is said' - is explored by Barbara Wall, *The Narrator's Voice* (1991), p. 2.
17. 'A Wholly Pragmatic Definition', in *Signposts*, p. 19 (first publ. as 'Standards of Criticism for Children's Literature', in *The Arbutnot Lectures 1970-1979*, ed. by Zena Sutherland, pp. 23-36). Of course, literature for a general readership, ranging from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) to Ian Cross's *The God Boy* (1958), can be enjoyed by any child or adolescent with the necessary skills for intellectual and emotional response, but those are not the sort of novel included in this thesis.
18. *The Hunted* is 'a boy's story for adults', as Lee says of his *Children of the Poor* (1934), p. 9. Roderick Finlayson's *Tidal Creek* (1948, 1979) and Philip Temple's *Beak of the Moon* (1981) are likewise omitted, but Heather Marshall's *Anneliese* (1988) is included. Though called an 'adult' novel on the blurb of Marshall's *Gemma, Brooke and Madeleine* (1988), *Anneliese* is marketed for adolescents.
19. The 'natural' landscape includes farmlands, but not cities, gardens and parks.
20. For the definition of a Pakeha as a 'non-Maori New Zealander' and for the spelling of the word, Bill Willmott quotes Ranginui Walker, 'Introduction: Culture and National Identity', in *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, ed. by David Novitz and Bill Willmott (1989), pp. 1-20 (p. 12). For information about writers and their lives, see collections edited by Margaret Dunkle, Tom Fitzgibbon and Barbara Spiers, Michael Gifkins, and Betty Gilderdale, in List F of the bibliography.
21. Any statistics of this kind in this thesis show trends, not numerical accuracy. Neither numbers nor percentages can measure quality against quantity. A cameo scene with one Maori character in one novel may have a much greater impact than the presence of a Maori character throughout another novel.
22. *Where Did She Come From?* (1989), p. 3. Roberts does not include writers of children's fiction, but Sue Kedgley interviews Mahy for *Our Own Country: Leading New Zealand women writers talk about their writing and their lives* (1989), pp. 133-55. Terry Sturm also criticizes the usual marginalization of other literatures and, in particular, Patrick Evans in *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature* (1990) for relegating Mahy to a footnote when she is 'one of New Zealand's major writers'. 'Introduction' to *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English* (1991), ed. by Terry Sturm, pp. ix-xviii (p. xiv).
23. 'Enigma Variations: What Feminist Theory Knows about Children's Literature', *Signal*, 54 (1987), 186-202 (p. 187).
24. *Engines of Instruction, Mischief, and Mag'c (sic)*, (1989), p. xiii.

25. Quoted by Ellen K. Coughlin in *Chronicle of Higher Education* (13 February 1991), 1-3 (p. 3).
26. Children's literature lends itself to a variety of critical approaches, including those drawn from formal and structural theories, outlined, for example, by Susan Sontag in 'Against Interpretation', in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, ed. by David Lodge (1972), pp. 652-60, or by Roland Barthes in 'Criticism as Language', *TLS*, 27 September 1963, pp. 739-40. As Kadish argues in *The Literature of Images*, the relational approach draws on structural theories.
27. *Signal*, 30 (1979), pp. 140-50. *A Fine Anger* (1981) was developed from Philip's doctoral thesis. 'Symbolic Outlining: The Academic Study of Children's Literature', *Signal*, 53 (1987), pp. 97-115.
28. Gillian Adams states that 'the bibliography for 1988 is more than double the size of that for 1987. [...] Of a higher quality than ever before, [it] points to opportunities for further writing and research'. 'The Year's Work in Children's Literature Studies: 1988', *CLAQ*, 15.2 (1990), 58-107 (pp. 58-59). Rachel Fordyce lists sixty-three annotated and twenty-one non-annotated Ph.D. or Ed.D. dissertations in 'Dissertations of Note' in *Children's Literature*, 17 (1989), pp. 212-25, and thirty-five annotated and twenty-three non-annotated dissertations in *Children's Literature*, 19 (1991), 212-20.
29. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* shows an interesting progression in acceptance of the genre. In the third edition edited by Paul Harvey (1946), children's literature is not mentioned, although individual writers like Lewis Carroll and R.L. Stevenson are covered, but in Margaret Drabble's edition (1985), the entry on children's literature takes more than a full page, pp. 192-93.
30. The rise of the New Zealand publishing industry is part of the success of the 1980s, as is obvious from the Bibliography, List B. The industry has also been helped by technological advances in word processes and in printing procedures.
31. *Written for Children* (1965), p. 151.
32. Betty Gilderdale's *A Sea Change* (1982) provides a valuable social assessment of a large number of New Zealand children's books up to 1978. But as for literary qualities in books before 1970, according to Frank Eyre, none 'has yet achieved an international sale'. *British Children's Books in the Twentieth Century* (1971), p. 173. However, the books that Eyre himself does consider 'worth mention' - Joyce West's *The Year of the Shining Cuckoo* (1961), Elsie Locke's *The Runaway Settlers* (1965), and Anne de Roo's *The Gold Dog* (1969) - have been published and/or republished in England and/or the U.S.A., as well as in New Zealand. Maurice Duggan's *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* (1959) was likewise published in London and New York. But these are hardly enough to make a 'golden age' in New Zealand children's publishing.
One strange example of quality fiction not reprinted until 1992 is Janet Frame's *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* (1969) - strange, because her adult fiction is highly valued and this children's book in 1969 was listed by the *New York Times* 'among the year's 10 best in that genre'. Quoted by Marion McLeod in her review, *NZL*, 5 September 1992, p. 52.
33. *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), p. 170.
34. Edited by D.L. Kirkpatrick. In the first edition, 'over 600' writers are listed; in the third, 'more than 800 in all' (p. vii). Included in the third edition are Edith Howes and Isabel Maud Peacocke, two early New Zealand writers republished in the 1980s. One glaring omission is Barry Faville, winner of the New Zealand Book-of-the Year Award for *The Keeper* (1986).
35. *The Changeover* was also one of the ALA's Best Books of the Year. So it is extraordinary that Naomi Lewis ignores Margaret Mahy in answer to her own question: 'Who are today's top writers?'. Lewis lists thirteen novelists, including Jan Mark,

- also a double Carnegie winner, but not Mahy. 'Introduction' to *Twentieth Century Children's Writers*, ed. by D.L. Kirkpatrick and Tracy Chevalier, 3rd edn (1989), pp. vii-xi (p. xi). In contrast, Julia Eccleshare in her list of distinguished writers in the 1980s includes Mahy as 'a New Zealander whom we always claim as our own'. 'Trends in Children's Fiction in the United Kingdom During the 1980s', *CLE*, 80 (1991), 19-24 (p. 22).
36. Anne de Roo's *jacky nobody* (*sic*), for example, has been translated into Swedish. Confirmed by letter, 7 March 1992.
 37. The Esther Glen and Russell Clark Medals are awarded annually at the discretion of the New Zealand Library Association to the New Zealand citizen or resident author and illustrator respectively for the most distinguished contribution to literature for children. The Book-of-the-Year Awards are organized and selected annually by representatives of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, the New Zealand Book Publishers' Association and Booksellers' Association. These awards, along with increased financial benefits, such as the Public Lending Rights, which compensate authors for lack of royalties, and Q.E.II Arts Council bursaries, have helped to promote children's fiction in the 1980s. See also note 30 above.
 38. 'Wedde's Inclusions', *Landfall*, 155 (1985), 289-302 (p. 290). For Michael Morrissey, another way of escaping solipsism is for the writer, like Katherine Mansfield and Robin Hyde, to undergo 'an experience of cultural displacement [to lend] a richness of focus, an internationally flavoured perception.' 'Introduction' to *The New Fiction* (1985), pp. 13-74 (p. 38). But physical exile is not always possible. Margaret Mahy, for one, has done very well without it, as her several articles on her own divided inheritance reveal. See, for example, 'A New Zealand Writer Speaks', in *Brave New World*, edited by Wendy and John Birman (1988), pp. 123-35. George Orwell makes the claim that to be an exile 'means transferring your roots to a shallower soil'. Quoted by Gillian Tindall, *Countries of the Mind* (1991), p. 163, who develops a discussion about those who have 'cut themselves off from the true sources of their creation' and 'whose creativity has thrived on the dislocation of expatriate experience', pp. 163-64. For further discussion, see Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile* (1981).
 39. Quoted by James Bertram, *Flight of the Phoenix* (1985), p. 89.
 40. David Novitz, 'On Culture and Cultural Identity', in *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, ed. by David Novitz and Bill Willmott (1989), 277-91 (p. 281). William Taylor, 'New Zealand Books for New Zealand Children: An Essential Dimension' (talk in TS privately circulated [1985(?)]).
 41. 'Introduction' to *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (1960), pp. 17-77 (p. 21). Quoted also by Christopher Smith in his unpublished thesis, *A Sacred Pattern: The Landscape in the Poetry of James K. Baxter* (1989), p. 10.
 42. Margaret Mahy first expressed her need to bring outer and inner landscapes together in 'Building Bridges between our Outer and Inner Landscapes', in *Reading is Everybody's Business*, ed. by W.B. Elley (1972), pp. 91-98.
 43. Dalziel, *Janet Frame* (1980), p. 41. Evans, *Janet Frame* (1977) p. 166. Evans claims, albeit with a air of surprise that a 'storybook for children' could be 'a basically serious work', that Mona Minim 'resembles most of Janet Frame's important characters [in] another parable of the growth of the child to adulthood, the theme which binds so much of her writing'.
 44. Maurice Gee (1986), p. 9, p. 11. But one must take issue with Bill Manhire's statement that it is wrong 'to subject Gee's work for children to the sort of close attention demanded by the adult novels' because 'the element that is consciously missing from the children's writing is the serious exploration of character' (p. 11). Gee's novels warrant close attention for that very reason, to point out what Manhire has to say, and more.

45. 'Maurice Gee: Ironies of Growth and Judgement, Part I: the Early Fiction', *Islands*, 30 (1980), 268-81.
46. Critics contribute by 'confirming a few signposts, and helping to sort out the pluses and the minuses.[...] The true critic [...] seeks to make clearer and more readily intelligible what artists have already achieved'. James Bertram. *Flight of the Phoenix* (1985), p. xi, p. 91.
47. 'The New Zealand Idiom in Children's Fiction', pp. 21-28.
48. Publications of international conference proceedings include talks by the following New Zealanders: Joan Brockett, Dorothy Butler, Elsie Locke, Margaret Mahy, and Sydney Melbourne. These talks are itemized in the Bibliography, List F, a.
49. 'Emigrants, Elves and Earnestness', *Landfall*, 132 (1979), 320-31, was followed by Ringer's *Young Emigrants* (1980), my *Off the Shelf* (1980), and Grant's 'New Zealand Children's Literature: A Brief History', in *New Zealand Books for Children: Exhibited at the International Youth Library Exhibition, Munich, 1981* (1981), pp. 5-11.
50. *A Sea Change* (1982). Betty Gilderdale reports on a surprisingly large number of New Zealand books for children. Though Margaret Mahy as a child read several which she discusses in 'Attitudes to Childhood in Early Australian and New Zealand Children's Books', in *Sharing*, ed. by Jerelynn E. Brown (1981), pp. 419-33, most adults remember few if any. For example, Phoebe Meikle (born 1910) remembers only one in 'Child as Mother', in *Through the Looking Glass*, ed. by Michael Gifkins (1988), pp. 119-36. See also other writers' comments in *Tea Tree and Iron Sands*, ed. by Tom Fitzgibbon and Barbara Spiers, 2nd edn (1989). Even during the 1970s it was common to hear teachers complain about the lack of New Zealand children's books, for the market was still dominated by imported books. One might ask whether historically this situation has helped to prolong New Zealand's colonial frame of mind, in literature anyway.
51. In a letter to D. Hebley, 10 January 1990, Andrew Mason affirms his belief in the importance of children's literature and of New Zealand literature for New Zealanders.
52. *Landfall*, 120 (1976), 291-301; 132 (1979), 312-19; 162 (1987), 186-205; 171 (1989), 340-52.
53. 'Adolescent Girls in Children's Literature' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Auckland, 1988). *Antic*, 7 (1990), 20-36. *Landfall*, 179 (1991), 329-50.
54. 'Landscape in Australian Literature for Young People', in *Brave New World*, ed. by Wendy and John Birman (1988), pp. 85-104.
55. See, for example, Mahy's talk, 'On Building Houses that Face Towards the Sun', in *A Track to Unknown Water*, ed. by Stella Lees (1980), pp. 92-103.
56. 'Principled Pleasures: Exploring Fantasy in Children's Literature', *Antic*, 7 (1990), 20-36.
57. *A Sea Change* (1982), p. 148, p. 172.
58. Sontag, 'Against Interpretation', p. 660.
59. As Peter Hollingdale remarks on ideology that is always either explicit and/or implicit on the part of the writer, and dominant in society: 'It is important simply to see what it is.' 'Ideology and the Children's Book', *Signal*, 55 (1988), 3-22 (p. 19).
60. Tom Henighan, *Natural Space in Literature* (1982), p. 6.
61. *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 2.
62. 'Landscape and Literature', in *Geography and Literature*, ed. by William E. Mallory and Paul Simpson-Housley (1987), pp. 23-29 (p. 28).
63. On the subject of censorship and children's books, see, for example, *Suitable for Children?*, ed. by Nicholas Tucker (1976).

64. 'The primary function of criticism is not to advise writers but to provide them with good readers'. Roger Robinson, 'The Victoria University Seminar on the New Zealand Short Story: Wellington 1978', *Landfall*, 130 (1979), 184-88 (pp. 184-85).
65. D.J. Lowe and J.D. Green, 'Origins and Development of the Lakes', p. 1. Off the East Cape in the North Island, the Pacific Plate is being pushed under the Indo-Australian Plate; south of Fiordland the action is reversed. This corkscrew grinding movement subjects New Zealand to frequent but irregular tectonic, volcanic and/or thermal forces, especially along the Alpine Fault of the South Island and across the Volcanic Plateau of the North.
66. Les Molloy, *the ancient islands (sic)*, (1982), p. 31.
67. The percentages work out at 57% and 54% respectively, but these statistics, as already stated in note 17, merely show trends.
68. 'Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry', in *James K. Baxter as Critic* (hereafter *BAC*), ed. by Frank McKay (1978), pp. 50-69 (p. 61), (first publ. in *The Fire and The Anvil: Notes on Modern Poetry*, Macmillan Brown Lectures, Victoria University College, 1954 (Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1955), pp. 56-78). The other two main symbols, says Baxter, are the mountains and the bush.
69. *The New Fiction*, p. 17. Similarly, Helen H. Hogan declares she 'was struck by the great number of poets [...] who wrote about the sea, its beaches, its ships, and indeed all lines of communication, and I realised that [...] we are still an insular people, "nowhere far from the sea"'. 'Preface', in *Nowhere Far from the Sea* (1971), pp. 7-8 (p. 8). Hogan's title comes from Basil Dowling's 'A Calm Day', quoted in *ibid*, p. 19.
70. *A Writer's America* (1988), p. 8. Californians may share a New Zealand awareness of earthquakes, but those in the Mid-West fear cyclones of the sort that begins Frank Baum's modern American fantasy, *The Wizard of Oz* (1900). For references to 'devastating droughts, windstorms, bushfires and floods' in Australia, see Belle Alderman, 'Landscape in Australian Literature for Young People', in *Brave New World*, ed. by Wendy and John Birman (1988), pp. 85-104 (p. 85).
71. 'Landscape and Literature', p. 26.
72. *The Republic of Childhood* (1975), pp. 154-55.
73. *A History of Australian Children's Literature 1941-1970* (1971), p. 51, p. 155. Saxby also notes that islands attract Australian writers especially in association with treasure and adventure.
76. *Australia through the Looking Glass* (1984), pp. 5-6. None of these commentators quotes statistics, however.
75. 'Introduction/Provocation', *Landfall*, 122 (1977), 99-102 (p. 100).
76. 'The Round Pond at Midnight', in *Kowhai Gold*, ed. by Quentin Pope (1930), pp. 152-53.
77. 'A New Zealand Writer Speaks', in *Brave New World*, ed. by Wendy and John Birman, p. 133.
78. *BAC*, p. 61. In this sentence, I have followed Baxter's use of capital letters.
79. Awe and terror are among the notions of the Sublime which, says Francis Pound following Edmund Burke, the European nineteenth-century settlers brought to New Zealand as part of their mental baggage. *Frames on the Land* (1983), pp. 19-20. In children's fiction, heightened emotional responses to this dramatic landscape are inevitable at times of stress and danger, but other notions of the Sublime concerning the presence or manifestation of a Western God are usually absent. Rather, any sense of a divine presence is carried by references to Maori mythologizing.

PART ONE

SEASCAPES

CHAPTER ONE - OCEAN and ISLAND

'Nowhere far from the sea'¹ - yet far from anywhere else.² New Zealand's shape and geographical position in the South Pacific Ocean have had a profound influence on the preponderance of seascapes in its children's literature. Indeed, the seascape count would be even higher than 57% and 54% in the 1970s and the 1980s respectively if it included passing references to the presence of the sea beyond the hills in novels set inland like R.L. Bacon's *Again the Bugles Blow* (1973), Margaret Mahy's *Clancy's Cabin* (1974), and Caroline Macdonald's *Lake at the End of the World* (1988). Nor does this count include urban novels like Mahy's *The Haunting* (1982) which calls on the natural world in Barney's visions of marvellous places he has never seen. For example, 'a stormy coastline where waves crashing on the rocks sent up great swirls of salt water and foam, briefly embroidering the grey air with lace and pearls' (p. 74). Collectively, children's fiction reveals an inescapable part of the mental framework of New Zealanders - that this is a narrow island country lying in an isolated position in the South Pacific Ocean.

The isolation of the 'Man-Alone' figure is, as J.K. Baxter says, 'characteristic of all modern literature'.³ Or as Kenneth L. Donelson puts it, the first of the 'four themes in good adolescent novels today [is] the theme of humanity's essential and eternal loneliness'.⁴ This chapter will show that New Zealand children's fiction gives that loneliness 'a local colour and central importance'.⁵ The island nature of the country, along with island settings offshore, intensifies stress and danger for characters involved. In adult literature, says C.K. Stead:

Images of arrivals and departure, and emotions bred out of the tensions between our New Zealand identity and our European background - these recur so frequently [...] that remoteness cannot be seen as other than deeply relevant to the discussion of our literature.⁶

The first half of this chapter deals with children's historical novels which present New Zealand itself as a remote, isolated island to which all people have originally come by way of ocean voyages. The isolation of the country increases incentives to become established, contributing to an optimism that is usually perceived to be part of children's

literature. The second half of this chapter deals with smaller islands and peninsulas, the effects of their isolation in adventure/survival stories, and the way their isolation gives rise to superstition and a sense of the supernatural in more complex novels in the 1980s.

New Zealand writers for children show a revival of interest in historical fiction during the 1960s.⁷ During the 1970s, that interest is maintained; 30% of fiction published is historical and set mostly in the nineteenth century or at the turn of the twentieth. Generally, the focus at the outset of historical novels is on the effect that arrival in this isolated land has on the protagonists who have left families behind or lost them on the way. Some exceptions are the historical adventures of E.M. Ellin and A.J. Holden, and Eve Sutton's *Moa Hunter* (1978) which explores life among the pre-European Maori. During the 1980s, the proportion of historical fiction drops to 26% as writers turn their focus towards aspects of *being* here, rather than *arriving* and becoming established, although, at the same time, they widen their interests to encompass the pre-European Maori and their origins and ocean voyages.

Before the 1970s, the particular aspect of New Zealand's isolation that concerned critics like Allen Curnow was the country's isolation from the intellectual and cultural centres of Europe. That is not the worry of writers of children's fiction. Only two minor adult characters in only two novels of the 1970s embody that concern^{both}, as singers: Mrs Peak in Eileen Soper's *The Month of the Brittle Star* (1971) and Miss Flossie Fuller in Eve Sutton's *Green Gold* (1976).⁸ Rather, what concerns writers for children in the 1970s is the stress on their characters from being far from their family origins to which, if they are working-class immigrants, they are unlikely to return. Writers obviously need to explore origins as a part of a statement of identity. The long, often unpleasant ocean voyage out to New Zealand affects the attitudes of the protagonist(s), especially when those responsible for them die on the voyage or on arrival. The protagonists become essentially outsiders seeking to belong to a new life in a new country. The novels of Eve Sutton, Ruth Dallas, Elsie Locke, Bernard Fergusson, and Anne de Roo bring European characters to New Zealand with these mind-frames. Brief references at the beginning of a novel and during its progress are

enough to give an emotional charge to both lonesomeness, the misery of loneliness, and the need to succeed in this new land.

The prototype of immigrant/settler novels in children's fiction illustrating these points is provided by Sutton in *Green Gold* (1976), *Tuppenny Brown* (1977) and *Johnny Sweep* (1977). Her young heroes of working-class origin make the long mid-to-late-nineteenth-century voyage out from England. The fact that the boys are isolated by the ocean from their origins increases their need to find an individual identity and a purpose in life in this land. Adam Sterling, whose father dies at sea during the terrible journey, feels little relief on arrival and very much 'alone, and twelve thousand miles away from my North Country home' (p. 8). Tuppenny Brown, a Parkhurst Penitent, declares he has never been 'so miserable in all my life', sailing over 'all that water, all that emptiness and loneliness [...], those waves, those great walls of black water, with the ship dipping and plunging from top to bottom, and slithering from side to side at the same time' (pp. 12-13). Johnny Sweep, hating life on board the whaling ship, thinks of his family at home and feels even more isolated from them as a deserter in New Zealand. Adam and Tuppenny find their salvation in their ability to make plants grow, Johnny in his flair as a cook. Moreover, the experience of being isolated at sea changes and intensifies Johnny's whole attitude towards killing. On the whaling ship, he cannot avoid the killing. 'I knew I couldn't stand it any longer' (p. 20). But as the ship's cook says, 'There's some that destroys, and some that makes' (p. 19). Like Cookie, Johnny chooses to be one of the latter.

Thus, by isolating her protagonists from their origins, Sutton provides them with a creative means of finding a positive identity and entrée into the adult world. As role models for readers, her protagonists are of value to our society, a counterbalance to the more usual image of the 'tough' male as analysed in New Zealand by Jock Phillips in *A Man's Country?* (1987), and condemned in American literature by Jean McClure Kelty. Indeed, Kelty argues that the 'cult of kill' as a traditional male initiation rite in commonly praised male-oriented literature is 'detrimental to meaningful survival' and more damaging to society than the stereotyping of girls in fiction.⁹

Dallas's references to family origins are even briefer in *Shining Rivers* (1979), but still help to shape Johnie's determination to succeed. Johnie is another whose father dies on the sea voyage to New Zealand. He and his mother, cut off from their origins, have to find work in Dunedin or starve. But Johnie keeps alive his father's dream of owning land, and the pressure of wanting money for that purpose fuels his fever for gold.

Locke in *The Runaway Settlers* (1965, 1971) makes a different use of the isolation of New Zealand in a portrayal of a 'Family Alone'. At first, the Tasman Sea provides the Small/Phipps family with the chance to escape from Australia and a brutal husband and father. Distance offers protection from discovery, though not from bitter, hard work vital to their survival, nor from the underlying element of stress that the sea might not protect them from discovery. But the family, headed by their remarkable mother, settles down beside the sea where the climate helps their market gardening to flourish, and the sea becomes a useful highway for transporting produce. They encapsulate the settlers' dream of success though family closeness, hard work, and eventually community involvement, although it takes nearly eight years for them to feel confident enough to change their name back to Small. On the other hand, for Mary Ann, New Zealand's isolation brings a commonly-felt wrench of the heart among immigrant/settlers. She has to let her young man go back to England without her because she was 'not able to face the thought of never seeing her own family again' (p. 94).

In Fergusson's more loosely constructed *Captain John Niven* (1972), the voyage to New Zealand ends in shipwreck south-west of Bluff where 'the seas were rolling in on the beach and drawing off again with a hiss, revealing a vicious undertow' (p. 6). However, this dangerous beginning does not deter John from deserting and transferring allegiance from his lost Scottish family to a Maori family on the small island. Here he immerses himself in sea skills and Maori lore. Eventually he becomes the widely-respected but somewhat solitary Captain of the Government patrol steamer *Marama*. The dominant image of the second part of the novel then becomes the rough and dangerous coastline of New Zealand and Niven's skill as Captain and as wise negotiator in Maori/settler differences. He 'knows the floor of the sea like the back of his

hand' (p. 64); he rescues shipwrecked sailors off the Auckland Islands; he goes through the notorious French Pass in the dark - 'there's not another man in New Zealand who'd do it' (p. 64).

As a final example of this group, de Roo's *Traveller* (1979) brings young Tom and Miss Harriet Wills on a sailing ship from England. Their first sight of New Zealand from the cold, southern ocean is of a black shape behind a sheet of cold, driving rain, 'not much of a place [...] to leave friends and families the other side of the world for' (p. 1). It presages the chill announcement at Lyttelton that Harriet's fiancé, Tom's future employer, has been drowned. Cut off from their families by the isolation of New Zealand, they feel the blow all the more acutely. Tom, learning to be a farmer, finds the isolation and loneliness of life at Summerdowns in South Canterbury a reflection of the isolation and loneliness of the country as a whole. Harriet, who carries 'the full burden of [her] loneliness with the width of the world separating her from her friends and family' (p. 7), must find work to support herself, a most unexpected task for someone of her class. But both succeed in making a new life for themselves. Both embody the essential quality required in this isolated land: 'We don't ask in Canterbury what a man has been but what he can become' (p. 8).

On the other hand, historical adventure^{novels} in the 1970s - E.M. Ellin's *The Children of Clearwater Bay* (1969, 1973) and *The Greenstone Axe* (1975), and A.J. Holden's *No Trains at the Bay* (1976) - are more concerned with exciting events which tax their characters' combined ingenuity rather than with family origins and the need to forge a place in a new land. Yet even in *No Trains at the Bay*, though Nick at one point in his adventures is momentarily homesick for England, he also voices the advantages the settlers came for: 'the sun and the fishing and the free lives people lived, working hard, most of them, but doing the things they wanted to do, and not forced to toil all day long in a dark mill or smoky factory'. The soldier he talks to does not share the settlers' dream. For him it is a 'God-forsaken land. [...] Nothing but trees and rain and mud, and pesky natives that'd eat you as soon as look at you' (p. 99). For this soldier, home remains far away across the sea, and he never lives to see it again.

For the families striving to break in the land for farming in these historical adventures, the sea also remains as a dominant force in their isolated lives. It provides them with a highway for bringing in supplies and a means of escape in times of trouble. It also isolates the children from their parents to heighten the danger of their ordeals, and nearly drowns the *Clearwater* children by holing their boat. It drives the boys in *No Trains at the Bay* during an essentially dangerous storm out into an involuntary, ebullient sequence of adventures across the Hauraki Gulf by way of an island to Coromandel, and back again after further adventures. The image of the sea as a 'spacious environment' for picaresque adventures is a memorable quality in this tale.¹⁰

In contrast to these examples of historical fiction where the ocean around New Zealand isolates European immigrant/settlers from family and origins, Eve Sutton's *Moa Hunter* (1978) is notable for being the only novel of the 1970s to portray the pre-European Maori. Set some six centuries ago, it is written with a complexity of theme and imagery derived from the oneness the Maori feel with the life-force of their environment. A canoe leaps 'like some creature born from the sea itself' (p. 70). Waves become stilled 'as if one of the gods had stretched out his hand for silence' (p. 88). The chief chants a karakia before any venture: a day's fishing, or a sea-voyage for trade. The sea plays an important, active part in their lives, providing much of their food and the pleasure of bathing and cleanliness, 'tribal custom demanded that' (p. 13).

Sutton's peaceful moa-hunter tribe expresses no memory of an earlier home other than their last camp from which they moved when moa supplies grew short.¹¹ But after all Kotiri's companions in the canoe are killed by 'the hideous power of the waterspout' (p. 44), Kotiri alone makes contact for the first time with what is known as a Classical Maori tribe - warlike, tattooed, kumara-cultivating, and living in a fortified pa. This tribe has recent memories of 'a place that's far away - many days of sailing' (p. 62). The tensions that drive the plot are drawn largely from the characters' responses to the physical dangers of the sea, including proud Tama's need to learn how to sail through treacherous Cook Strait. Thus the sea is of prime importance in intensifying the clash of the old gentle moa-hunter tribe with this new tribe. It also

highlights Kotiri's struggle to find his identity as the Ariki's son. While Kotiri's individual success provides an uplifting end for the story, his conclusion is less positive:

There has been fighting and bloodshed and killing, and I fear there always will be. The world is changing, and we must change with it. Others will come in great canoes, and their ways will not be our ways. [...]

The old fishing net is thrown away, and we must begin to fish with a new one. That new fishing net – what will it be like? (p. 112)

Sutton exemplifies Curnow's lines that 'Always to islanders danger / Is what comes over the sea'.¹² To Kotiri's moa-hunting tribe, isolation brings increasing stress, for it provides neither physical nor cultural protection from what may come over the sea to challenge their earlier security. To Kotiri, the appropriate Maori sea image of a 'new net' is disturbing because the catch is unknown. This ending is accurate historically but contrary to the more usual positive ending found in children's fiction.¹³

In the 1980s, historical novels by Margaret Beames and by Eve Sutton continue the thrust of the 1970s in exploring new arrivals to the country, but with some extension into social awareness and criticism. More importantly in historical fiction of the 1980s, a shift in focus occurs. Writers become more interested in aspects of being here rather than arriving as outsiders. This leads away from the importance of New Zealand's isolation from European family origins. For example, in Anne de Roo's *jacky nobody* (1983), set in the 1840s, home for Jacky and for Noah Miggs and his father is only Korororeka. The shift in focus to being here encourages other writers to follow Sutton's lead in *Moa Hunter* and show an interest in pre-European Maori times. The Maori, though they have had much longer to make New Zealand their home, also came originally across the ocean from homelands they never expect to see again. The writers in the 1980s who deal with this sense of isolation are Joanna Orwin and Bernard Gadd. Other writers continue in different ways with immigrant/settler themes. Books by Kathryn Rountree, Winifred Owen, Barry Faville and Anne de Roo complete the first half of this chapter. Other historical novels of the 1980s explore more deeply issues

concerning the land and will be discussed further as appropriate in other chapters of this thesis.

Historical fiction published in the 1970s, as already discussed, presents New Zealand as an isolated island to which people come for adventure or for the making of a new and, at times, lonely life. This kind of novel still appears in the 1980s in Beames's *Hidden Valley* (1983) and *The Parkhurst Boys* (1986), and in Sutton's *Surgeon's Boy* (1983). All three emphasise the distance to be sailed from Europe and the dangers of the coastal waters round New Zealand. For example, in Beames's *The Parkhurst Boys*: 'Somewhere in the mighty Pacific a lonely ship pushed on westwards [...]. They seemed to have been sailing for ever [over] endless water heaving restlessly around them' (p. 65). However, the sense of isolation, emotional and physical, is reduced by the coming and going of ships for travel and trade. Beames's Charlie, by misfortune a Parkhurst Penitent, has a sister who learns of his departure for New Zealand, sails out later with her husband, finds him, and takes him home.¹⁴ Sutton's Jamie travels abroad with his surgeon father after the death of his mother for which his titled grandfather unjustly blames his father. Although his father feels he must stay in New Zealand, Jamie plans to return eventually to England, probably not to claim his inheritance, but for medical study. He is another of Sutton's protagonists brought to a career decision as a result of facing unpleasantness on a ship. The novel's structure based on sailings back and forth across the Tasman Sea between Sydney and New Zealand is important in the widening of Jamie's experiences upon which he bases his decision. Isolation, however, does not protect Beames's and Sutton's characters from unfair aspects of the English class system. These novels, therefore, also carry social criticism.

Isolation inherent in ocean voyaging intensifies perception and criticism of social and political systems in Sutton's *Kidnapped by Blackbirders* (1984). This novel explores the shameful Pacific version of the slave-trade. Mistaken as an Islander and kidnapped along with others on an island raid, the dark-tanned son of a reputable trader records the fear on the voyage and the harshness of treatment meted out to the Islanders. Tension is increased by the impossibility of escape from a ship at sea.

The novels of the 1980s that explore the world of the pre-European Maori also draw on the isolation of communities from their origins. Hawaiki in Joanna Orwin's *Ihaka and the Summer Wandering* (1982) and *Ihaka and the Prophecy* (1984) is far over the ocean, its wild beauty remembered in the setting where the tribe now live. The stories of the tribe make no mention of returning to Hawaiki. Home is this land. Yet they still think it is important to retain links with Hawaiki. This becomes a driving force particularly in *Ihaka and the Prophecy*. When Takaroa dies, the tribe build a canoe from a mighty totara so that they can sail to meet the tribes in the north and 'renew the strands of the net that binds us to Hawaiki. [...] The bonds of kinship must be renewed so that the people are not lost in the wide emptiness of the land' (pp. 8-9). The sea which isolates the tribes from their origins provides them not only with its bounty for nourishment, but also the very means by which links may be maintained with other tribes for social and cultural reasons.

The prototype of all Polynesian voyages to islands, including New Zealand, over the immensity of the Pacific Ocean is portrayed in Bernard Gadd's *Laya* (1985). Alone on the ocean in search of a new home, maybe three or four thousand years ago, the characters face the dangers of sailing their outrigger canoes to unknown destinations through storm-winds and waves and jagged coral reefs. They know they have little chance of returning to their original home. 'And we couldn't go again the way we'd come. Not even if the true direction could be fixed and traced all those days across a world of sky and sea and wind and current' (p. 74). Thus their inescapable isolation at sea intensifies all dangers for the group and for the protagonist, kidnapped Laya, aged thirteen, who has 'nowhere to run' (p. 8). She must sail with the crew as wife to the old priest Langi. When the crew reach an island at last, they think they have no choice but to fight for the right to live there. Eventually they sail on to find another island, uninhabited. There at peace, Fose concludes: 'I'm sure that one day we will find a need for trade. We can find our way back to our father's island, show them what has become of us, and trade' (p. 128). This wish and need to maintain links with home is common to any new settlers who have travelled away across the ocean, whether early Polynesian or later European.

The natural world, especially the sea and its creatures, carry much of the imagery. The people's anger attacks Langi 'like a school of fish' (p. 57), and Mouwe is a 'cunning crab' (p. 58). The Polynesian mind frame is expressed through the personification of the sun and moon, as in: 'Sun's prow was far from the horizon' (p. 79), or 'Sun sailed his blue wind high' (p. 117). In a vivid extended moment of identification with her world, Laya responds to the first longed-for sight of land.

I was one with our craft. It was all part of me, part of my joy. The cord sang with the bellied strength of the sail. Through my soles I could feel the thudding vibration of the whole vessel, I could feel the weight and the strength of the booms. I could feel the dig of the stern into the water, and the chop chop chop of the hull through the waves. My body, my spirit trembled with the eager power of our canoe. (p. 16)

The transference of Laya's delight to the canoe itself comes as a sharp contrast to her previous feelings of misery and isolation. But her thoughts are quickly turned by Langi to danger through the chanting of prayers for a safe landing. All the inherent dangers of the open sea are compounded by superstition and a struggle for power. Langi the priest is 'supposed to be able to deal death to enemies, to talk with the ancestors, to deal with spirits, to ward off alien evils' (p. 57). Laya must learn from him to assert her own position to survive.

Likewise set in a remote past, Gadd's *Dare Not Fail* (1987) shows two girls and a boy coping with superstition and the dangers of the open sea. With the help of a young man, they set out to prove to their Chatham Island elders that they can 'work together and [...] keep the peace and never disobey Nunuku's command not to spill blood' (p. 94). Small islands off the coast are their goal. It takes them a day's paddling across the power of the sea to reach them and capture two albatross fledglings as their proof. To succeed, they must constantly appease the sea and the spirits. When Niwa's great strength fails, she thinks the spirits want to punish her for going 'where females oughtn't to go' (p. 105). Again, the 'sound' of the narrative is Polynesian in its personification of the natural world,¹⁵ and the sea dominates the novel's imagery. For example, when Papa's ordeal in the waves is ended, 'Darkness broke upon her like a wave, drawing her into its lifting, falling, lifting, falling' (p. 87).

In contrast, Kathryn Rountree's *Jessie Jenkin's Diary* (1989) is a fictional account of a European immigrant voyage to New Zealand from a thirteen-year-old's perspective. It is matter-of-fact in tone, conveying little personal involvement on leaving family in England and sailing through storms, and no feeling of spiritual involvement in either the voyage itself or the church services held for the dead. But New Zealand is described as a dream land, a desirable goal, and the account of the voyage is full of details: the crowded ship and stink of steerage accommodation, danger and death through illness or falling overboard or down the hatchway, and the horror of rats and cockroaches. The one image of isolation on the long voyage comes when the ship seems 'like a ghost ship, alone and lost in the Southern Ocean' (entry for 2 January 1842).

Winifred Owen in *Captives and Castaways* (1984) details a different sort of voyage over the ocean during World War II. At first, New Zealand is the expected landfall, holding out the hope of a new life for the passengers leaving the Chatham Islands in a modern ship. What they have to face to get there, however, is not the inherent dangers of the sea on an uncharted ocean. It is fear as a result of being captured by a German warship. Miria and her family, like the rest of the passengers, long for any island landfall, however unknown. Isolation takes the form of imprisonment until all are castaways on an island north of the Equator, from which they are eventually rescued and brought to New Zealand.

As a symbol in miniature of the portrayal of New Zealand itself as a desirable goal and the hope of a new life, Barry Faville's *The Keeper* (1986) offers an unnamed island as a solution to the troubles of his four central characters. It holds out the hope that its isolation will enable them to live there together in social and racial harmony, giving them a better way of life than that set up in the Taupo district by their erring elders.

Finally in this group, Anne de Roo's *Friend Troll, Friend Taniwha* (1986) is a light-hearted, allegorical fantasy and is virtually a reworking of the shift in allegiance to this country that she explores successfully as social realism in *Traveller* (1979). Lars the stowaway troll from Norway tries to settle here by behaving in his Norwegian fashion - hiding under bridges waiting for billy goats. But he is

from places 'far across the sea, [...] and I can't swim' (p. 19). The building of a friendship between different cultures takes a long time. But when the troll and the taniwha eventually go to find the fiords that belong here, they break through their mutual antipathy and become friends, finding fulfilment in rescuing a dolphin from stranding, some fishermen from drowning, and a young couple from a plane crash.¹⁶

Islands - treasure islands, tropical Paradise islands, islands of the blessed and of the damned - these are among the most potent of the natural landscape images in literature and the subject of the second half of this chapter. Islands 'floating in the wind-whipped blue'¹⁷ hold out the promise of pleasure, riches, and holiday happiness, magic and mystery, escape, and the hope of a better life, as already demonstrated in Barry Faville's *The Keeper* above. Yet islands can also bring isolation, imprisonment and a sense of powerlessness, even death, to those shipwrecked or marooned. Island themes, 'especially the desert-island theme from *Crusoe*,' says J.R. Townsend, 'have served for innumerable children's books and are by no means worn out'.¹⁸ Also influential in books for children is the island lure of R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) and R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857), forerunners of such widely varying publications as Enid Blyton adventures and William Golding's dark and savage *Lord of the Flies*.¹⁹

Islands and peninsulas feature in 20% of New Zealand children's fiction, but they appear comparatively infrequently in stories with desert-island or treasure-island themes. Instead, as the second half of this chapter will show, island and peninsular settings more commonly take their power from the way their isolation gives rise to a sense of the mysterious, the magical, the supernatural and/or the superstitious. The contribution made by these elements in ocean voyaging between islands has already been noted in Gadd's novels, *Laya* and *Dare Not Fail*. To explore aspects of power drawn from a sense of the mysterious, island stories are here divided into three groups in ascending order of the importance of magical power: adventure/survival stories known as 'Robinsonnades'; treasure-hunt stories; and then novels where the magic and mystery of islands help to express aspects of New Zealand's social

and cultural identity, which in turn contributes clearly to the maturing of New Zealand children's fiction.

The huge genre of stories known as 'Robinsonnades', says Margery Fisher, is 'eternally enlarged and refreshed by new motives, new circumstances, new settings, but in whatever latitude the particular desert island is located, whether it is an isolated inland valley or truly surrounded by water, some combination of sand, coconut palms and heat will usually be found'. Its essence 'turns on the sudden, unexpected juxtaposition of a person (or persons) and a place'.²⁰ Fisher also describes the junior Robinsonnade as having 'at its heart the idea of a test [...] in intelligent survival [with] that convenient separation of children from adults'.²¹

These aspects of this genre appear in New Zealand children's fiction. Some novels have internal evidence that the author sees the work as a Robinsonnade; others have the characteristics, but no declaration of the genre. Surprisingly, given the importance of isolation in New Zealand fiction, only four novels with island or peninsula settings contain this internal evidence, and of these four novels by Joyce West, Ann Holden, Edith Howes, and Winifred Owen, only Joyce West's *The Sea Islanders* (1970) is most truly a Robinsonnade. It explores the genre for the entire length of the novel, with a quotation from Defoe's *Crusoe* to introduce each chapter, and with additional strength drawn from a sense of wonder and enchantment.

The Sea Islanders, however, differs from the *Crusoe* model of an involuntary, solitary, entirely self-sustaining experience. First, after dramatic changes to family plans and a cold, miserable response from the city boarding-house keeper who threatens them with the police, the children run away to maroon themselves on a peninsula called Penguin Island, knowing their solo father will return for them in eight weeks. Second, they do not have to cope individually with the stress of solitude.²² Third, their old family bach provides them with a ready-made shelter, wood and water, and the food the sea provides is supplemented through the help of a nearby friendly Maori family. Yet in their response to the stress of isolation, its challenges and fears, West

succeeds in making convincing, if not complex, characters out of her four children. Young readers respond intensely to this sort of challenge and exploration, suggests Clifton Fadiman, because 'all children are marooned in a sea of grown-ups. They are isolated in their own sensibility'.²³ More simply, suggests J.R. Townsend, 'we all wonder how we would manage if ever we had to fend for ourselves'.²⁴ West supplies a satisfying fictional example. An additional delight comes from the appearances of a dolphin in the bay. The dolphin fills the children with a sense 'of enchantment' (p. 134), and Callie decides to call it 'Gabriel' knowingly after the angel, declaring firmly there is 'nothing irreverent about a dolphin' (p. 59).

Through such comments, West enlarges the scope of her fiction. She puts a high value on a simple way of life in the isolation of Penguin Island. The children's family house 'looked as if it had grown up out of the beach and was a part of it', whereas in other places houses are 'built of materials carried to the spot, of brick and cement and dressed timber' (p. 35). The Maori family 'milk on shares with the calf', unlike 'pakehas' who are generally greedy and 'want *all* the milk' (pp. 42-43). The warmth and kindness of the Maori family match the idyllic, unspoiled joys of an island life, a direct contrast to the dark side of life that the children had experienced from 'pakehas' in the city.²⁵ In the warmth of the Far North, the setting has an air of 'ebullience'.²⁶

A rocky bay enclosed a crescent-shaped beach of pure white sand. A small stream flowed in pale blue curves from the hill to the sea, and above it the pohutukawa trees leaned protectingly. The final touch of perfection was a long sweep of delicate seashells, which lay as the tide had left them on the rippled sand. Almost breathlessly the children descended to the untrodden beach. (pp. 69-70)

This is as idyllic an island beach setting as any in the New Zealand consciousness. The white of the sand, the blue of the stream and the red of the pohutukawa bring colour to the 'pure' and 'untrodden', Eden-like, protective isolation of the place.²⁷ The joys of the setting make the contrast all the greater when the children are threatened by dangers - a shark scare, drowning, and a storm which later brings them wreckage and a box of food, 'just like a proper desert island' (p. 86). The sea also washes up an injured young man, suffering from amnesia. Of course, they

call him 'Friday'. Callie is made sharply aware of being 'terribly lonely. They might have been at the end of the world' (p. 104).

This incident marks a turning point in the plot. It challenges the children to help Friday recover his health and memory. It increases Callie's sense of responsibility and brings her some emotional growth from her experience. It leads to the climax of the story when a rising tide threatens to sweep the children off a rock they have climbed on to in an attempt to escape a grass fire. The dolphin's appearances are structured through the plot so that the part it plays in the rescue of the children is both exciting and credible. West's novel is clearly an early example of good New Zealand fiction weaving the setting through character and theme, with optimism in its tone and with strong family relationships standing against the stress of isolation and growing through a sense of wonder and enchantment.

The other three Robinsonnades with internal evidence of the genre are Holden's *No Trains at the Bay*, already commented on above, Howes's *Silver Island* (1928, 1984) and Owen's *Captives and Castaways* (1984). All that needs to be said of Owen's interesting enough, but fictionally undeveloped, story is that it has only a partial concern for the castaway theme when a group of captured passengers on a German ship during World War II become involuntary, but thankful, castaways on an island near the Equator, there to wait for rescue. To Miria, they are 'like Robinson Crusoe [with] too many Man Fridays' (p. 115).

More competent fictionally and with a strong sense of place, Howes's *Silver Island* explicitly portrays children who choose to escape to their island, to be 'free from the restraining presence of grown-ups, to hunt and fish and discover as Robinson Crusoe hunted and fished and discovered' (p. 10). Like Joyce West, Edith Howes provides New Zealand readers with the pleasure of contemplating survival in their own environment, but it is a relatively gentle experience, unpleasant at times, but not life-threatening. The narrator makes it obvious that the children's uncle is watching over the castaways. Nevertheless, when the children find their uncle's footprint, 'Robinson Crusoe, coming on Friday's footprint in the sand, could not have been more electrified than they were' (p. 47). While not mysterious in a supernatural sense,

the mystery of the footprint and of the hermit's cave, belongings and treasure, give the children a lively centre to their formula activities. The isolated island setting delights them until the weather breaks and their food dwindles away. But under the stress of misery rather than danger, their relationships are only gently probed.

The storm in Holden's *No Trains at the Bay* washes up two boys safely on an island in the Hauraki Gulf, 'like Robinson Crusoe' (p. 27), says Nick. But since the boys are soon rescued from the island by Red Mac and Molly, the island does not bear out its potential as a place for a test of 'intelligent survival' in isolated living, nor does it supply any sense of the mysterious, other than what had happened to the dead man's treasure. But it does serve for the most intense of the boys' picaresque adventures, first as a place where they try to find the treasure, and later for a continuation of their struggle to outwit the villain they call The Man. In the end, however, at the most dramatic moment when Frankie is suspended a hundred feet above the surf, he is saved not by anyone's wits but 'by accident' (p. 135). The island then becomes a symbol of death from which the living hurry to sail away home.

The other group of island/survival stories - with Robinsonnade qualities embodied but not declared - includes Anne de Roo's *Boy and the Sea Beast* (1971), Barry Mitcalfe's *The Long Holiday* (1964, 1982) and Margaret Hall's *After the Earthquake* (1989). Only the last-named fully explores the genre in Margery Fisher's extended use of the term.²⁸ Yet, because of elements of danger, the first two novels gain an increase in significance from their brief island episodes.

In *Boy and the Sea Beast*, the island changes from an apparent place of refuge to a place of danger, but only towards the climax of the novel. Boy thinks the off-shore island will provide a safe hiding place for his dolphin when it is threatened by greedy Pakeha businessmen. His efforts to tame and befriend the dolphin are part of his plan to prove his manliness so that his father will return home. As a '*taniwha* from the sea' (p. 12), the dolphin also brings a sense of wonder into the harbour setting and then to Boy's ride out to the island. But out on the island in his isolation, Boy looks on 'the bright blue Pacific that stretched on and on until it touched the paler blue of the sky that

curved round it like the rim of an upturned cup', and finds his place of safety turning to a place of danger and stress, physical and emotional. The island taxes his ingenuity to find food to survive, and it afflicts him with homesickness, 'sharper than the ache of hunger' (p. 102). Then the dolphin is beached. When Boy tries to swim for help, he is nearly drowned. The special friendship between Boy and the dolphin, and the dangers he faces out on the island as a result, draw out Boy's heroic qualities, ending at last in freedom for the dolphin and his own longed-for reunion with his father.²⁹

In Mitcalfe's *The Long Holiday*, the Robinsonnade element features in only one episode when the old man escapes to live in Crusoe style on an island. The telling episode of what happens to him there raises a social dilemma: whether an old man should be left to live free as he chooses, or whether he should be kept safely in an old people's home. The dilemma is seen through the bait-boy Michael's eyes, and mystery enfolds the identity of the old man. But what really matters is the effect of the old man's island experience on the boy. His guilt at giving away the old man's secret leads to a perception that the old man felt 'trapped' (p. 61). So the boy decides to row to the old man's rescue 'until the breath rasped in his throat and his arms were one long ache' (p. 63).

Hall's *After the Earthquake*, however, is dominated by the awesome power of natural forces. This power convincingly subjects a family to a dangerous and stressful ordeal on a remote strip of the West Coast, cut off from all contact with other people. Marooned by earthquakes and slips and a burst dam, 'a huge tumbling wall of yellow water filled with trees and debris' (p. 65), the family are left for five days with little food or shelter. They have to cope with the stress of aftershocks, terrifyingly unpredictable rather than mysterious, and fears of a tsunami. To increase pressure on the children, Hall isolates their father through injury on his way out from the beach prior to the first earthquake. Their mother's capabilities are reduced through a migraine attack, and Search-and-Rescue attempts to find them all fail.³⁰ The novel successfully traces some development of character in response to events. The most obvious example lies in the reactions of the previously confident and knowledgeable Michael. He does not foresee that the dam will burst and wash away their hut and food, but he recovers enough from

his personal crisis to build a lean-to framework with flax and punga fronds. Anne, however, who feels 'very alone and in desperate need of reassurance' (p. 32), begins to respond to the setting and events by quietly showing courage and support for Michael, but does not develop further. Indeed, though the novel conveys the terror of events and characters' reactions, it has not managed to pursue larger psychological or philosophical concepts. Like other twentieth-century examples of its kind, it puts its emphasis on survival in a do-it-yourself adventure.³¹ Nevertheless, altogether, these Robinsonnades associated with islands or an isolated seascape setting bear out J.R. Townsend's contention that themes from *Crusoe* are 'by no means worn out'.³²

Though island Robinsonnades are surprisingly rare in New Zealand children's fiction in the 1970-1989 era, island treasure-hunt stories often associated with pirates are even rarer, in spite of being generally well-represented in children's literature, especially after the success of R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883). New Zealand treasure-island stories are represented only in realistic terms by A.J. Holden's *No Trains at the Bay* (1977) and by Edith Howes's *Silver Island* (1928, 1983), already mentioned above. However, a witty spoof on the whole genre appears in Margaret Mahy's *The Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage: Dark Doings in the Thousand Islands* (1983).³³ Of the first two adventures, only Howes's children have their perceptions enlarged on what is treasure. Their treasure is not gold, silver and pearls as they had expected, but unprepossessing ambergris. They also find 'treasure' in the books they read there and in the birdlife and the island environment itself.³⁴

By a curious coincidence, Mahy's *The Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage* is published in the same year that Howes's *Silver Island* is republished. Thus these two books provide one means of marking the progress made in New Zealand children's fiction from the date of *Silver Island*'s original publication. Howes takes a formula story, expresses it well, gives a twist to general perceptions of what is perceived to be treasure. Mahy, her strength as a novelist reinforced with each book published in the 1980s, up-ends the formula through a witty, imaginative, satirical spoof on the whole genre. Her power comes from a sense of the magical and the

hilarious, jokes and puns, allusions to literature from fairy tales to Shakespeare, dastardly deeds, misadventures, and mistaken identities.

And yet, the magical Seven Seas and its Thousand Islands stand as serious symbols of Life and its experiences and even philosophies. The would-be pirates, led by Captain Wafer whose very name suggests the frailty of mankind, escape 'real life which was full of rules and regulations' (p. 7), and go sailing round the Thousand Islands to make their fortunes. Their adventures are an embodiment of children's longings to escape from constraints imposed on them by adults.³⁵ The doctrine of determinism, expressed by the parrot's shouts of 'Doom and Destiny', is the voice of adulthood opposing the child's desire for free will as espoused by Wafer. The witty naming of the pirate ship, *The Sinful Sausage*, suggests that what is fun in life is likely to be deemed sinful. But the pirates learn one serious lesson. Success in life's adventuring depends on knowledge and the ability to read, an idea which is, nevertheless, promptly parodied. The pirates who can't read deserve to be eaten, declares the firedrake on Island Eight-Eight-Eight by number and ate-ate-ate by nature: "Oh well - that's evolution at work...if you can't read you won't get by. It's a great natural proposition," he added. "It gives a sort of nobility to your end." (pp. 42-43). The Shakespearean joke may go over some readers' heads, but it is part of the parodying of learning itself, and of philosophy too. Thus it is clear that traditional adventure and treasure-hunt stories can be enlarged through a sense of the magical, and here too the hilarious, associated with islands.

Other stories, neither Robinsonnades nor treasure hunts, use an island in a minor way. For example, Brenda Delamain's *The Pipliwais, the Possums, and the Penguins* (1978) presents a small island as a place for a day's pleasant picnic. Eve Sutton's *Surgeon's Boy* (1983), in an incident made more significant through danger, uses Kapiti Island as somewhere for Jamie and his father to swim to when they escape from a mutiny. On Kapiti, they are rescued by whalers, and there, because of their medical skills, they make important contact with Maori tribes. The major island stories, however, belong to categories established here.

Most numerous of island stories are those in the third group which focus on the delight or danger associated with islands through a sense of the mysterious. In these novels, mainly from the 1980s, the isolation of island settings gives rise to a sense of the special and magical, ranging from the nostalgic to the supernatural and/or the superstitious often drawn from the world of the Polynesian. The power of the narrative is intensified, and specific aspects of a New Zealand cultural identity are reflected in these novels which fall into three groups: novels in which the mysterious is drawn from other than Maori sources; novels in which the mysterious drawn from Maori sources plays a small role; and novels in which the supernatural drawn from Maori or Polynesian sources imbues the whole narrative.

The first group contains novels by Eileen Soper, Margaret Mahy, Isabel Maud Peacocke, Maurice Duggan, Maurice Gee, Brian Hanfling, Errol Brathwaite and Margaret Mahy again. All competently imbue the island with aspects of the special and the mysterious impinging upon theme and character, but in completely different ways, from the nostalgic to the comic and the spectacular. Stewart Island in Soper's *Month of the Brittle Star* (1971) is nostalgically evoked, smelling of 'a mixture of moss and fern and leaf and flower scents in air hot with sunshine tasting of the sea' (p. 10). Its timelessness is an appropriate setting for emphasizing old values like loyalty in friendship, easily endangered. Mahy in *The Birthday Burglar* (1984) playfully presents a mystery in Bassington's bizarre antics in splendid but bored isolation on Barleycorn Island.³⁶ Underneath the joking and frivolity of words beginning with 'B', important ideas can be perceived concerning family identity, individual needs, and adverse effects of isolation. Bassington discovers that a great birthday banquet with others is far more enjoyable than burgled birthdays on his own. He abandons 'all base behaviour' (p. 65), but keeps to the family tradition of a career beginning with 'B' by turning to bee-keeping.

Rangitoto Island, special to Aucklanders, makes three different appearances in this group. In Peacocke's *The Cruise of the Crazy Jane* (1932, 1984), the island's mysterious nature is evoked when the children try to climb to the top. A mist rises up, increasing their despair when they realize that the youngest two are lost where 'there was nothing but

rock... No track, no shade, no water' (p. 92). In Maurice Duggan's 'The Sailor from the Hill' in *The Fabulous McFanes* (1974), Rangitoto is 'everywhere in the eye, a centrepiece in every view' (p. 101). If not exactly magical, it is central and special in providing a perfectly satisfying sanctuary and home for the old sailor Irish Pat after his Quarry Mountain home is destroyed. In Maurice Gee's *Under the Mountain* (1979), the volcanic power of Rangitoto is harnessed. This will be discussed more appropriately in Chapter Three.

By contrast, Brian Hanfling's novel, *The Mind Musicians* (1987), uses supernatural fantasy elements to explore the mysterious meaning of music. The island, based maybe on Waiheke or Kawau, is treated as somewhere special, but realistically so. It provides a gentle, secure place where Jo and Dorian can relax and establish their friendship more firmly. At the same time, however, they take further steps there to solve the mystery of the Beads of Stasis. The moment of illumination comes on the beach, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Both Brathwaite's *The Flame Box* (1978) and Margaret Mahy's *Aliens in the Family* (1986) use the isolation of Banks Peninsula, already a world apart with its own dreams, to make credible a complex layering of another world, another time. Brathwaite takes his heroes through the gateway between the rocks and the eye of the South-East Wind to the fantasy world of Wend, the Island-in-the-Mists. This becomes a much more complex statement of origins than those already discussed in the 'reality' of historical fiction, for it depends on the legends and cultures brought by different peoples to New Zealand from Europe, reinforced by often witty references to contemporary life in Christchurch. For Mahy, too, the isolation and world-apartness of the Peninsula influence the experiencing of time in both the past and the future. In experiencing the origins of the volcanic area, the family come to a point where they can resolve their differences.

The second of these groups - in which the supernatural drawn from Maori sources plays a minor but important role - comprises six novels by Phyl Wardell, Joanna Orwin, Jack Lasenby, Tessa Duder, Gaelyn Gordon, and Wanda Cowley. The power of tapu becomes important in different

ways.³⁷ In Wardell's formula adventure-mystery *Hazard Island* (1976), it is merely functional, evoked by the villains simply to keep the children away from the island and the old house while they carry on with their illegal trading in paua shell. In Orwin's *The Guardian of the Land* (1985), the power of tapu is spiritual. The boys take the sacred pendant to a tapu cave for safe keeping out on the Kaikoura Peninsula where they hope isolation will be a protection. In Jack Lasenby's *The Lake* (1987), the power of tapu is also spiritual, but used for a sociological reason. The tapu island in the lake is a sacred place for Ruth to bury Tommy's body, a further sign that he is absolved from the act of incest.

Duder, Gordon and Cowley also draw on supernatural qualities of a kind particular to each novel. In Duder's realistic *Night Race to Kawau* (1982), praised by Margery Fisher for its authenticity arising from a 'unanimity of place, person and event',³⁸ the small but important supernatural moment comes towards the end. During the race, Sam's desire to reach safety on Kawau Island becomes intense. In her exhaustion, the thought of being in 'a secluded bay, bobbing quietly at anchor, was so beautiful that tears blurred her eyes' (p. 132). Once they reach the island, the only way the exhausted Sam can be driven on to get medical help for her injured father is by experiencing fear that the place is haunted, 'a place of revenge, of battles and cannibal feasts' (p. 174).

In Gordon's *Stonelight* (1988), Angela and Thomas make an extra-corporeal journey to fetch a stone, a whatu tipua, to heal what is wrong with the land. Their spirits walk across water to the island and climb a vine to an upper world. By taking Angela and Thomas to the highest level possible on an isolated island in a special experience which includes an account of the origins of the world, Gordon emphasizes the spiritual origins of the stone. But the mixing of cultural forces - the climbing of the vine, the giant, and mana in the extra-corporeal experience - sits uneasily and taxes the reader's willing suspension of disbelief.

In Cowley's *Biddy Alone* (1988), a supernatural experience on an isolated island sanctuary emphasizes the need to protect endangered native birds there. Regardless of a ban on cats, Biddy smuggles ashore her beloved Kit when her father is appointed the island's wild-life officer. Kit escapes into the wild, Biddy follows, finds him, and both

become lost. Submitting to the spell of the island in her dilemma of how to feed him, she thinks she sees fisherfolk at the water's edge.

The people became like shadow vapours and seemed to merge and swirl into a mist. [...] Biddy shook her head in disbelief, but the fish was real, slippery real. [...] Her ankles were outlined in a glowing light and, as she lifted each foot, it shone as drops of gleaming silver rained back into the sea. She dipped her hands in and out of the phosphorescence and made waterfalls of light. She tossed the water higher and higher until she stood in a scintillating shower. She felt as if she were among the stars. This must be an enchanted island. (p. 49)

The play of light - 'glowing', 'gleaming', 'scintillating' - fills Biddy with a sense of wonder, but she believes in the magic because a real fish is left for the cat. Enchanted also by the richness of the birdlife around her, she sees the value of conservation principles as a means of protecting such a wonderful place. This enables her to take responsible steps to solve the problem of her cat. Thus in miniature, this novel has the fictional power to contribute towards the conservation aims espoused by humanistic geographers.³⁹

Finally in this chapter, two novels have their fictional power enhanced through a sense of the supernatural, the superstitious, and associated dangers engendered by the isolation of an island. Superstition and the spirit world in Bernard Gadd's *Laya* and *Dare Not Fail* have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter. Now, in Joan de Hamel's *The Third Eye* (1987), a tapu island is central to the lives of the protagonists and events in the community, and in Joy Cowley's *The Silent One* (1981) a pervasive, life-threatening influence comes from the islanders' superstitious response to unusual circumstances.

In *The Third Eye*, the danger of the sea and tidal rips has caused a small island to be declared tapu, thereby keeping it a secret sanctuary for tuatara. The sacred nature of the tapu island plays an important part in the conservation of the area. Its power becomes inextricably woven through character and theme, and it provides a focus for conflicting concepts of value held by Maori and Pakeha. The fear of breaking tapu has no hold on Pakeha Jack, nor on the American scientist, Dr Kay Dean, nor on young Hemara, after the tapu is broken by Jack. Hemara wants what he sees as the good things in life, a powerful

motorbike and drugs. By offering him money, Dr Dean is able to persuade him to steal some of the tuatara for her experiments. She believes the metabolism of the tuatara holds the secret of survival for human beings in the event of a nuclear explosion. She believes her aim justifies her means, even if it means extinction for the tuatara.⁴⁰ Unprotected by the law of tapu, they are now threatened with extinction, for Jack urges Hemara to sell him the rest.

Meanwhile, protection of the island and coastal land takes on a new urgency when businessmen try to establish a seaside development in the bay. These events greatly strain personal relationships between Maori Ani and Pakeha Mitch, between them and Ani's people, between Ani and Hemara, her brother. Ultimately, on the beach, Hemara is confronted by Ani and forced to examine the values of his cultural origins. He succeeds in making restoration by foiling Dr Dean's plans. But as he returns the last of the tuatara to the island, it exacts its revenge for his earlier betrayal by causing him to break his leg. Meanwhile, the local residents try desperately to prevent the developers' plans. Superstitions and old stories become intricately mixed in the search for something sacred in the area that cannot be disturbed by law. The tuatara in modern Pakeha practice could always be transferred to another island. The solutions to the conflict are complex, and will be examined in Chapter Six.

The fullest portrayal of island life dominated in its isolation by the supernatural and the superstitious is given by Cowley's *The Silent One*. A Pacific island village is isolated from its neighbours by a difficult track of half a day's walk. Only from time to time does the copra boat call to bring and collect supplies. The two occasions when Aesake undertakes that walk and the one arrival of the launch in the time-span of the story structurally underline the difficulty of communication and understanding in this novel.

The inward focus of the villagers' lives enlarges their sense of the supernatural so that 'their lives are haunted by make-believe monsters' (p. 89). It is because of their gossiping, superstitious interpretation of anything inexplicable that the life of Jonasi, the deaf-mute boy, is endangered. The villagers blame him for the long drought and for the

hurricane. As a baby, he had been found 'in an empty canoe adrift in the middle of the ocean' (p. 19). Even then, the villagers believed 'a demon dwelled within him and held his tongue' (pp. 16-17). But Luisa wanted him as her baby. Now the villagers believe the rare white turtle the sea brings to befriend Jonasi is an evil spirit that shines 'with a light that makes men blind' (p. 48). They believe the turtle turned into a shark to kill Tasiri. The turtle must be killed, Jonasi too. Jonasi is further endangered because he becomes a pawn in the power struggle waged by Tasiri, who 'could be trusted as much as a snake' (p. 52), against Taruga Vueti, the aging, failing chief. Vueti knows he rules by community consent, but he wants to protect Jonasi, the most skilled fisherman in the village.

The isolation of this island community also highlights another problem: how to bring to simple islanders the benefits of modern technology without destroying the good aspects of their lives. The chief mourns for the better times before the effects of European greed, but this version of a commonly-held image of an Island Paradise had already been undermined by the villagers' own ignorance and irrational fears.

The sea that isolates the villagers also increases the depth of this novel through a link between itself, the turtle and the old woman Luisa as a mother-figure. As an outcast, Jonasi had received from Luisa all the love he needed to flourish and she needed to give, but older now, 'he turned to the sea for understanding' (p. 17). From the great depths of the sea comes the turtle, a 'marvellous creature, a miracle', with eyes 'pink-rimmed, like those of a very old woman' (p. 13), as rare as old Luisa's love for Jonasi. Eternity is suggested in its eyes that speak of 'a forever of yesterdays and tomorrows' (p. 24). Its face is 'that of an old woman' who has chosen him, as had Luisa many years ago (p. 26). Images of fire in the sea add a purifying, spiritual sense to the turtle's power. Its shell catches the light of the sun 'like a great white torch dropping fire into the water' (p. 14), and it shimmers 'through the water like pale fire' (p. 23). But to the villagers the turtle is the same demon that had pushed along the canoe bearing Jonasi as a baby from the spirit world, now come to reclaim him.

Clearly, this novel with its interwoven plot, characters, and themes draws strongly on the inherent dangers that isolation can bring to an island community steeped in superstition. The novel draws on the inherent danger and bounty that the sea brings to villagers who live beside it, and on the inherent confusion that the isolation of deafness brings to Jonasi. The isolation of the village, its superstitions, the fire image of stories spreading with hurting speed, the demon and the spirit image of the turtle, are gathered into a fitting conclusion. To save his turtle from being shot by Redbeard, Jonasi dives overboard from the launch to enter into the immortalizing, all-mothering sea.

People chose to forget about Jonasi and the white turtle. But beyond the village, as far away as Sevu and the outer islands, stories of the white turtle multiplied like fire. There were men who said it was truly a demon, but others claimed it to be a spirit of light. Each person, it seemed, had a different story. And each believed his story to be the only truth.

In Sevu, the crew of a Norwegian cargo ship claimed there were two white turtles. They'd seen them, they said. In the deep ocean, days out from port, two turtles swimming together. They were both white, they said, and they gleamed like stars in all that dark blue water. (p. 96)

From this chapter, it is obvious that the ocean and the island are major influences on New Zealand children's fiction. The isolation of New Zealand itself, especially from family origins overseas, impinges on the attitudes of characters in historical fiction, intensifying stress and the effort required to find an identity in this new land. In the 1980s, writers consider it more important to explore aspects of being here rather than arriving as new immigrants, and Maori people increasingly appear as central characters in historical fiction. In adventure/survival stories, islands play an important role in heightening the dangers of isolation and the stress on relationships between children who, occasionally with an adult, undergo a variety of experiences enlarging the concept of the Robinsonnade. Finally, mainly in the 1980s, the isolation of islands releases for New Zealand writers a sense of magic and mystery, superstition and the supernatural. Novels develop greater fictional complexity and power in establishing aspects of a New Zealand cultural identity, often through the world of the Polynesian.

NOTES

1. Basil Dowling, 'A Calm Day', cited in *Nowhere Far from the Sea*, ed. by Helen M. Hogan (1971), p. 19.
2. New Zealand lies some 2000 kilometres across the Tasman Sea from Australia, 9500 kilometres across the Pacific from South America, and half a world away from the cultural centres of Europe.
3. 'Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry', in *James K. Baxter as Critic* (hereafter BAC), ed. by Frank McKay (1978), pp. 50-69 (p. 62).
4. 'Growing up Real: YA Literature Comes of Age', in *Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood (1980), pp. 58-67 (pp. 62), (first publ. in *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 52.3 (1977), 241-47).
5. BAC, p. 62.
6. 'For the Hulk of the World Between', in *In the Glass Case* (1981), pp. 245-58 (p. 257), (Auckland University Winter Lecture, 1960).
7. Betty Gilderdale, *A Sea Change* (1982), p. 68. Historical fiction for children includes fiction set up to the end of the Second World War, a time beyond the memory of child readers.
8. Margery Godfrey's *South for Gold!* (1964) deals with New Zealand's remoteness from the cultural centres of Europe in an even more colourful way, but it is not discussed here because, according to National Library records, a reprint was made in 1968, that is, before the time-span of this thesis, and not in 1974 as stated in Gilderdale's bibliography, *A Sea Change*, p. 260.
9. Kelty cites Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) and Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) as male-oriented novels centred on the cult of kill. She concludes: 'The way girls are stereotyped in fiction? Important, yes. But not as detrimental to our meaningful survival as the way boys are stereotyped to regard the cult of kill as a necessary step to manhood and the world of adult reality'. 'The Cult of Kill in Adolescent Fiction', in *Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood, pp. 237-44 (p. 244), (first publ. in *English Journal*, 64 (1975), 56-61).
10. M.H. Holcroft, *Islands of Innocence* (1964), p. 43. Because of its all-embracing range of semi-historical events, *No Trains at the Bay* is a lively example of what Joan Stevens calls a 'recording' or 'rolling stone' novel. *The New Zealand Novel* (1961), p. 18.
11. The moa-hunter tribe is settled on the spit at the mouth of the Wairau River, not far from Cook Strait. W.R.B. Oliver states that this is a genuine historical settlement. *The Moas of New Zealand and Australia* (1949), pp. 43-44.
12. 'Landfall in Unknown Seas', in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, ed. by Allen Curnow (1960), p. 207. Twentieth-century readers can also see European sailing ships in Curnow's image.
13. Witi Ihimaera uses the same image as the title of a collection of short stories, *The New Net Goes Fishing* (1977). Bernard Fergusson also uses it in *Captain John Niven* (1973), p. 94.
14. This story belongs to the true, pre-Disneyfied 'Cinderella' tradition, for it fits Elizabeth Cook's definition of *Cinderella* as 'a story about Trial, Recognition and Judgement'. *The Ordinary and the Fabulous* (1976), p. 107. In Iona and Peter Opie's words, *Cinderella* is a story of 'reality made evident. [...] Cinderella is in fact her father's heir' (p. 11). *The Classic Fairy Tales* (1974), pp. 12-13.

Both Eve Sutton in *Tuppenny Brown* and Margaret Beames in *The Parkhurst Boys* take as their source the arrival in Auckland of 92 boys on the barque *St George* in 1842. Many people at the time regarded the boys' arrival as an infringement of the British Government's promise not to use New Zealand like Australia for the transportation of convicts. In effect, the Parkhurst Penitents were regarded by the authorities to have been pardoned for their petty crimes, and in New Zealand they were free to take offers of work and apprenticeships. The only convict character of note in the New Zealand novels of this study is George in Anne de Roo's *Traveller* (1979).

15. The sound of literature, says Eleanor Cameron, is the 'sound of self. It arises out of the whole concept of the work, from the very pulse-beat of the writer and all that has gone to make him'. 'Of Style and the Stylist', in *The Green and Burning Tree* (1969), pp. 137-58 (pp. 138-39).
16. The idea that it is important for European immigrants to become friends with the Maori is also developed less cohesively through fairy-folk characters in Diana Moorhead's *In Search of Magic* (1971). But in *Friend Troll, Friend Taniwha*, the emphasizing of the theme through the repeated use of Brother or Sister before the name of each character dulls the humour.
17. A.R.D. Fairburn, 'The Cave', in *Strange Rendevous: Poems 1929-1941* (1952), pp. 42-43 (p. 42).
18. *Written for Children* (1965), p. 43.
19. Golding's novel draws satirically on Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1818), but is not part of children's literature.
20. *The Bright Face of Danger* (1986), p. 293, p. 308.
21. *ibid*, p. 312.
22. Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* provides the prototype of a castaway family.
23. Anthony Arthur, 'An Interview with Clifton Fadiman', *CLE*, 17 (1975), pp. 67-75 (p. 69).
24. J.R. Townsend, *Written for Children*, p. 46.
25. Alison Grant suggests that West is expressing 'admiration mixed with yearning for those aspects of life felt to be lacking in pakeha society'. 'New Zealand Children's Literature: A Brief History', in *New Zealand Books for Children, Exhibited at the International Youth Library, Munich, 1981* (1981), pp. 5-11].
26. Curnow concludes that the warm climate of the Winterless North 'tends towards ebullience' in poetry. 'Introduction' to *New Zealand Verse* (1960), pp. 17-67 (p. 65).
27. The pohutukawa is a strong symbol in New Zealand literature. The depth and beauty of its red blooms which appear during the Christmas season lead to its association with pleasure and protection, as in this example, and with blood and sacrifice, as in other examples which will appear later in Chapter Two.
28. Fisher's extension includes any truly isolated place as a suitable setting for a Robinsonnade. This chapter confines the genre to seascape settings. *Bright Face*, p. 293.
29. The other novel to feature dolphins notably and with a sense of the mysterious is Beverley Dunlop's *The Dolphin Boy* (1982), which will be discussed in Chapter Two.
30. Hall calls credibility into question here. That the father is injured before he reaches town is perfectly credible, but one might have expected the crew of the helicopter to land for a closer look on their first sweep.

31. Ivan Southall's *To a Wild Sky* (1967) shows the extent to which the Robinsonnade genre can be taken, but as Fisher points out, his 'penetrating, stringent story [...] is an exception' in the genre in the twentieth century. 'Robinson Crusoe', in *Who's Who in Children's Books* (1975), p. 309.
32. *Written for Children* (1965), p. 43.
33. New Zealand treasure hunt stories are more usually set on the goldfields, or they involve artefacts usually of greenstone. They will be discussed as appropriate in later chapters. The Seven Seas and the Thousand Islands of Margaret Mahy's pirate fantasy easily suggests the South Sea Islands of the Pacific to New Zealand readers.
34. In reversing expected values in treasure and in suggesting values other than material ones, Edith Howes precedes Janet Frame's more deeply probed notions of treasure in *Owls Do Cry* (1957).
35. Mahy is constantly exploring the concept of respectability, especially through her pirate characters. Holcroft declares this to be 'an aspect of New Zealand life which appears frequently in childhood themes', and Janet Frame's *Owls Do Cry* (1957) contains 'a litany of respectability!'. *Islands of Innocence* (1964), p. 22, p. 56. Elsie Locke also notes that Mahy makes a 'light-hearted commentary on New Zealand in [her] fondness for juxtaposition of the ordinary and the respectable with the delightfully incredible'. 'Book Trails in a Small Country', in *One Ocean Touching*, ed. by Sheila Egoff (1979), pp. 93-109 (p. 99).
36. References to the 'bush' and to 'bellbirds' in Mahy's *The Birthday Burglar* give the fantasy a New Zealand ambience. Noted also by Kirsty Cochrane in her radio talk on Margaret Mahy in 'Of Tricksters and Trilogies', *RNZ*, 30 May 1991.
37. Tapu means 'sacred: under religious or superstitious restriction, a condition which refers to places, persons, and things. Belief in tapu was without doubt the most important of all aspects of Maori life and thought'. A.W. Reed, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Life* (1963), p. 176.
38. 'Scenes of adventure', *GP*, 24.3 (1985), 4490-94 (p. 4490).
39. The attitudes of humanistic geographers and their belief that ultimately fiction has a part to play in the survival of the world is discussed in the Introduction, p. xvii.
40. Whether the end ever justifies the means will always be a contentious philosophical problem, even though, in this situation, it is the very survival of mankind that Dr Dean believes is at stake.

CHAPTER TWO - HARBOUR AND BEACH

From ocean, island and peninsula in Chapter One, this chapter turns to consider harbour and beach. Since harbour settings usually include a beach, these are treated as one category. A heightened awareness of danger and tension drawn from these settings deepens the portrayal of characters' lives, their 'motives and passions and ideas'.¹

The harbour, a reverse image of the peninsula, is by its very nature encircling in shape. It offers shelter and protection against the inherent dangers of the sea outside. When that protection is shattered by danger of any kind, the shock to the fictional character(s) involved, and to the reader, is all the greater. The beach, by contrast, is essentially linear, a line of demarcation between land and sea, setting boundaries and limits.² It provides a place for the simple pleasures of swimming and picnicking. Like the island with which, of course, it is associated, it provides a place where the stress of isolation continues to be a powerful force. It is also a place for change and revelation, arrival and departure. As in adult literature, according to J.K. Baxter, the beach symbolizes a no-man's-land between the conscious and the unconscious. For teenagers, the beach also provides Baxter's 'arena for sexual adventure'.³

Though the percentage of New Zealand children's novels with harbour/beach settings drops from 57% in the 1970s to 48% in the 1980s, the complexity of imagery generally increases in the 1980s. Therefore, in each of the three groups of novels discussed in this chapter, novels from the 1970s will precede novels from the 1980s. The three groups increase in importance from those in which harbour/beach settings play a minor role, through those in Chapter One with significant harbour/beach settings, to those with greatest depth and power drawn from harbour/beach settings.

The 1970s novels in the first group - in which harbour/beach settings play a minor or intermittent role - are primarily concerned with action and adventure set elsewhere. However, they are mentioned here for three

reasons. One: they simply bear witness to the pervasive presence of seascapes in New Zealand children's literature. Two: characters often take pleasure in their beach environment. For example, in Margaret Beames's *The Greenstone Summer* (1977), Sandra is worried about her missing aunt, but she is still capable of 'enjoying the water and laughing' (p. 34). Three: as part of the whole, the impact of harbour/beach settings can still develop character or support theme, especially when associated with stress or danger.

For example, in Kim's *The Boys of Puhawai* (1960, 1971), a beach is a place of racial confrontation, showing the ease with which stereotyped perceptions and mischievous behaviour soon become divisive, inflaming passions and tensions beyond commonsense. In the opening chapter of Alistair Campbell's *The Happy Summer* (1961, 1975), a harbour fails to protect a family's boatshed during a storm. Sue fears she will be drowned; Jimmy is scared and then excited when water comes 'gurgling [...] up through cracks in the floor' (p. 15). In Brian Sutton-Smith's Wellington-set *Smitty Does a Bunk* (1961, 1976), Smitty runs away round to Red Rocks where he knows people have been drowned, but by making a stand for himself, he realises that in his life he can choose to cross the boundaries of what is allowed and safe, and take the consequences. In William Walters' *Hemi's Rock* (1978), a beach, or more precisely, a rock on a beach is Hemi's link with his grandfather up the East Coast. A piece of it in his pocket while he is at school in the city keeps him from feeling estranged and helps him make friends with Ioane from Samoa. For both Polynesian boys, the emotional richness of their family beach life is a contrast to the confusion and misery of city life. It is also a contrast to the impoverished life of their other friend, Pakeha Tarzan, alias David, who, as a bully with materialistic values, is more isolated and adrift in his own culture than the Polynesian boys are in theirs.

The best example in this group, however, is Maurice Duggan's *The Fabulous McFanes* (1974) in which pleasure and danger are combined in the experiences of characters on both an isolated and a crowded New Zealand beach. The McFane family plan a last beach picnic on their holiday. Undeterred by threats implied in 'dark bars', 'scattered in fragments', and 'a broken mirror', to describe the beach and the sea (p. 25), they

climb over a headland to enjoy a swim on an empty beach.

Gorse exploded its seeds on the clay cliff, and one pohutukawa, screwed to curious shapes by the wind, shed the last bright threads of its flowers. A scallop of blood-red colour marked the limit of the tide. (p. 25)

Danger is foreshadowed through the use of such words as 'exploded', 'screwed', and blood-red'. This is the first example in this thesis of the strong link made in New Zealand literature between the pohutukawa blooms and danger or sacrifice.⁴ Mrs McFane floats so far out to sea on her lilo that 'I saw the beach, just like a moon in a fingernail, and miles and miles away'. On this isolated beach, the family must save her through their own efforts. The subdued picnic lunch which follows is suitably 'showered by falling and faded flowers' (p. 29).

Later, when the McFanes climb back over the headland, the crowded, popular beach is presented as being

strewn with a confetti of dresses and towels and bathing suits of every colour. The surf-club glared white, and above it, on the look-out tower, the striped club-flag dipped and waved. The pines stood, dark in the bright day; the white lace of the low waves shone and faded and shone again. [...] At the base of the cliff, [...] they saw a dead swordfish rolling against the rocks. Its sword had been sawn off. They stared [...], a quick fish come to this end, rolling dead against the rocks. [...] It seemed to [Jennie] so pointless and cruel she could not bear to look. (pp. 29-30)

The 'confetti' of colour and 'white lace' may suggest pleasure, but Duggan quickly signals the darker side of life in the 'glare', the 'look-out tower', and the repeated 'rolling' and 'dead'. Jennie is pushed a step further in perception concerning the toughness of life when her father remarks: 'But then everything preys on something else. It's not to be altered' (p. 34). Such beach episodes, though short, support the basic premise of this thesis, that the power of fiction is enhanced when the inherent dangers of the New Zealand sea-and-landscapes make a strong impact in their relationship to character, or structure, or theme.

The 1980s novels in the first group - in which harbour/beach settings play a minor or intermittent role - include some novels which are

enjoyable in their expression of pleasure, but lack individual significance and the power to move the reader through the responses of the characters. For example, Gloria Gibson captures the excitement of a school train trip and picnic on the beach at Caroline Bay in *Mouse at School* (1983), but when budding-writer Rachel sees her brother's dog bite, it means only that the 'tone of a voice is important' (p. 15). Such novels add to the total impact of seascapes in New Zealand children's fiction, but inversely support the basic premise of this thesis stated above.

Other writers, notably William Taylor and Margaret Mahy in city-set novels, draw much more effectively, though briefly, on harbour/beach settings.⁵ Taylor's Wellington-set *My Summer of the Lions* (1986) uses the beach where the old wall 'separates the harbour from the Parade' (p. 27) as a reflection of moral and emotional boundary lines in the lives of Martin and Sam. There they debate what is God and what are the boundaries of theft, from the harmless taking of just one hub-cap to the pinching of anything at all regardless of potential harm to someone. The harbour/beach setting on a cool day with no sun reflects Martin's mood, his divided feelings at the thought of a possible step-mother, his emotional stress as he experiences a rush of tears in grief for his dead mother. His tears are held in check by humour. When Sam arrives, Martin declares his tears are only 'spray from the sea' (p. 47). Martin's expression of grief and divided feelings are important to the whole novel because, along with his rage, they drive him to a catastrophe.

Mahy's *The Changeover* (1984), the germ of which lies as far back as her *Pillycock's Shop* (1969), is set mainly in suburbia, recognisable to New Zealand readers as Christchurch, with easy access to the coast. Incidents on the beach in vision and reality help to illumine a complex layering of changeovers - Jacko's threatened absorption by an evil spirit, Laura's realistic relationship with her boyfriend Sorry, her own sexual maturing into womanhood, her acceptance of her mother's new friend Chris, and her own 'secret illness no one had ever completely recognized or been able to cure' (p. 179), her anger at her father for deserting the family. A vision of a beach where she had been once with Kate and her father brings that relationship into the forefront of her mind through its 'strange smell of salt [and] rotting seaweed' (p. 108).

A realistic visit to the estuary beach links Laura and Sorry closely to the heron, to scuttling crabs, 'scavenging and threatening assiduously', and to the kingfisher flying (p. 112). On the arena of the beach, Sorry tells her his story of harsh treatment as a child, and 'the place, the time, and the story had had an effect' (p. 119). The greyness of the estuary seeps into Laura's mood. Though she gains a better understanding of Sorry, she is also so unsettled by his advances that she offers herself to him in such a raw manner that she can acknowledge 'the breakdown of her life into pieces that no longer held to a safe pattern' (p. 119). She is then able to 'name her demon' (p. 120), her jealousy of Chris as a father replacement, and with acknowledgement of these strands in her life she can begin to move towards a 'changeover' and resolution.

Even more pervasive to the novel's theme and therefore most powerful among minor roles played by beach settings is the role of the clifftop at the beach in Mahy's *Memory* (1987). The image of 'dancing on dangerous edges' had been used in Mahy's *The Catalogue of the Universe* (1985) as a vibrant metaphor for Dido's emotional state (p. 5). In *Memory*, the image is expanded so that the clifftop becomes a line of demarcation, realistically and symbolically delineating a dangerous edge for Jonny the Wolfman, his sister Janine and friend Bonny, as explained in italics:

The first test was always the same. Climbing past the danger-sign under the chain fence that marked the path, they would scramble down on to a narrow, rocky ledge, not unlike the ridgepole of a roof. Below the ledge, a steep, crumbling slope swooped to abrupt cliffs - then nothing but sky and the backs of gulls, and the sea constantly fretting and complaining on the rocks far below. Once the ridge had been negotiated, their rituals began. (p. 24)

Here, in this inherently dangerous place where they carry out rituals to test their identities and sense of the marvellous, Janine falls to her death. Five years later, back in the city, Jonny is still haunted by a confusion in his memory. Was he, or was he not, guilty of pushing Janine to her death? Thus the novel is charged with the contribution made by this dangerous place to the sense of a dividing line between what is real and what is imagined. Jonny's memories cross and recross the dimension of Time in his efforts to sort out truth from illusion in what Mahy herself calls 'a magical encounter between two unlikely people,

both of whom are possessed, in different ways, by a dissolving rationality [in] a serious story composed of many different sorts of truth'.⁶ At the climactic moment when Jonny learns from Bonny that he really was not responsible for Janine's death, healing begins as his laughter turns to tears.

Jonny [...] wept on. The sea he had carried inside him for so long tried to make itself one with the outside sea, the same one that boomed on the rocks at Seacliff and roared invisibly at the foot of Sophie's house. 'Give me a moment,' Jonny said, lying face down on the pavement so that all the shameful tears would be hidden. But, hot as tea, they kept on flowing, dropping onto the pavement outside Sophie's house and becoming an indistinguishable part of the wet film that covered the pavement at Sophie's door. (pp. 215-16)

Exterior and interior sea images, and the clifftop, merge outside Sophie's door as he finally crosses the line of understanding to bring his story together, for helping Sophie at her place has played a part in his efforts to sort out truth from illusion. Thus the clifftop as a dividing line plays a significant part in establishing Jonny's dangerous mental state and his quest for his truth.

The second group of novels with harbour/beach settings comprises novels which have already been discussed in Chapter One, but which provide further specific examples of power in a harbour/beach setting. Three of these examples from the 1970s are by Anne de Roo and Eileen Soper. The harbour, for example, in de Roo's *Boy and the Sea Beast* (1971) is at first a place of protection and pleasure for Boy and his Maori family and for the dolphin whose arrival and departure are framed by the flowering season of the pohutukawa round the harbour beaches. On the dividing line of the beach, the two grandmothers, one modern, the other traditional, argue but work together to make money for their meeting-house from the tourists who come to see the dolphin. Then the harbour changes into a place of danger for the dolphin. The beach again becomes a symbol of division when Boy's story of attempts by Pakeha businessmen to catch the dolphin is greeted with disbelief. On the beach of the island, Boy becomes emotionally distressed through homesickness, the struggle to find food for survival, and the struggle to help the dolphin who becomes beached and endangered. There, he meets the father

he has never known and does not recognize.⁷ The beach is truly a place where boundaries are crossed and reset, where the unconscious moves to the conscious. As Boy says to his father: 'I always knew. I didn't know I knew but you - you felt the way fathers ought to feel' (p. 119).

In another early novel, Soper's *The Month of the Brittle Star* (1971), the beach becomes a place of revelation in the course of friendship. The inherent risk of being drowned in the waves makes Clair acknowledge in retrospect that she has been irresponsible, 'blithely indifferent to danger' (p. 68), and that it is not Rosalys but Lucy who is loyal, reliable and kind. The brittle star becomes the symbol of all that is fragile and precious in childhood - friendship, innocence, loyalty - challenged and endangered as time brings about change.

Lastly in this group, the harbour setting in de Roo's *Traveller* (1979) establishes a cyclic structure to the novel, most appropriate for a legend that the romantic reader wishes were true. Eight months after his arrival in Lyttelton Harbour to begin his experiences, Tom comes back to Lyttelton with Mackenzie's legendary bitch. There he returns her to her original owner who is on the point of departing from the country in freedom. Arrival - departure - and the crossing of boundaries of ownership and affection for both Tom and Mackenzie and his bitch. This scene is a well-controlled and moving moment to mark the end of the story, but a new beginning in Tom's life in Canterbury.

Of the novels of the 1980s already discussed in Chapter One, Joy Cowley, Joanna Orwin, and Barry Mitcalfe notably set some of their most important events on the beach, enhancing through danger the over-all impact of the novel. The beach and protected waters within the reef in Cowley's *The Silent One* (1981) provide a setting for a time of delight when Jonasi makes friends with the turtle - a sharp contrast to the time of terror when the evil Tasari smashes his raft and seeks to kill him and the turtle. Across the line of the beach, Jonasi makes his fateful, last journey, apparently to go to school. In effect, he goes to his death and legendary life as a turtle. Similarly, Ihaka in Orwin's *Ihaka and the Prophecy* (1984) makes a fateful, symbolic crossing-over on the beach when he submits to the physical and spiritual ordeal of being tattooed, but whereas Jonasi crosses to his death, Ihaka crosses from

life as an ordinary member of the tribe to a future life of privilege and responsibility as a tohunga.

Then in Mitcalfe's *The Long Holiday* (1964, 1982), Michael repeatedly crosses dividing lines of understanding and values. For example, he betrays his friend the seal to a circus owner in exchange for underwater diving equipment he thinks he wants more than anything else. But diving proves 'lonely, dark, frightening' (p. 75). Danger to the seal parallels the danger to Michael's inner self. He realizes 'it was not his seal, never had been his to sell. [...] He didn't want the underwater gear, never had, he only wanted Kaha back' (pp. 75-76). Again, in the last episode, when Michael runs away in misery, he has to make another kind of crossing on a harbour beach, different from the one at home.

It was so much like home that the boy sat down on the rocks by the wharf and began to remember all the funny little things about Totara North, the way the wharf seemed to move, as the tide flowed in, the old men who sat there like posts tied to their fishing lines, and the usual scow, with its two stout masts and untidy clutter of gear, creaking at its mooring ropes, waiting for the tide. [...] Just like home, all right. Except that home was a long, long way away, and he had nowhere to go tonight. Nobody knew him here. That was what he had wanted, to get so far away that nobody would know him, and now he was here it wasn't so good, with nobody but strangers in a strange place. (pp. 112-13)

Sparingly recounted through description which moves to inner monologue, the details Michael notices increase his emotional distress. They make him realize that what he really wants is to go home.

The main focus of this chapter, however, is on the third group of novels - those which draw strongly on harbour/beach settings for their power. From the 1970s, the most valued are those by Maurice Duggan, Ruth Dallas, Margaret Mahy, and Joan de Hamel.

At the time of its first publication in 1958, Duggan's *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* rose like a Botticelli Venus from a sea of undistinguished children's literature. By the time of its second publication in 1974, its excellence is still rare.⁸ This fantasy tale explores the problem of old age and death with what Freud calls 'psychic economy'.⁹ The simple opening statement - 'Falter Tom was old' (p. 3) - is reinforced by a

quibble over his exact age, and the beach represents the dividing line between this life and the next.

But just as importantly, the beach represents a dividing line between reality and imagination. Living alone in his beach cottage, Falter Tom is a compulsive teller of stories, 'a hundred which he expected you to believe; and two hundred [...] you could never quite believe' (p. 9). The reader is expected to share Falter Tom's belief in the water boy who never physically crosses the dividing line between the sea and the land, but calls to Falter Tom while Tom is taking a solitary walk along the beach. Falter Tom begins to believe in the water boy when his boot and clothes stay dry in the sea. Then he is ready for the next step across the dangerous dividing line between land and sea, if he can find the charm - 'part of a fish and a piece of gold kept all for luck' (p. 19). Rituals in folk-tale style must be maintained to cleanse Falter Tom of this world - no food, no drink, no word to anyone after midnight. But their function is also to hold tension through a constant reminder of danger. When Falter Tom loses his charm ironically among a galleon's gold bars, the material treasure of the world, he is almost drowned.

The beach also highlights a division in the perception of Time: time measured on land and time eternal under the sea. The boy is 'as old as the sea. I can remember neither beginning nor growing' (p. 42). He takes Tom past wrecks of ancient ships, 'long beak-prowed ships, pierced for oars; fast sailing ships and rusting tramp steamers' (p. 48). Enticed by visions of a splendid eternity and the friendship of the boy, Falter Tom decides to cross from land to sea. He leaves behind his watch that has no meaning under the sea, and his cap that identifies him as a sailor.¹⁰ Thus Duggan achieves in his children's novella what Patrick Evans says is one of his aims in his adult fiction: 'to create a word reality that defies realism'.¹¹

The beach in Dallas's *The House on the Cliffs* (1975) helps to support themes in common with *Falter Tom's* - the portrayal of isolation and old age, and reality versus imagination. The strongest character to emerge is eccentric old Biddy Bristow, who lives alone in a small, isolated beach community and who fossicks on the beach for the lost bell of the *Isa* so that she can ring it when she sees a ship in danger. Some people

think she should be put away in a home. But Biddy craves freedom, the symbol of which is an albatross she nurses back to health and releases. The beach marks a dividing line between its captivity and freedom. Clumsy on land, the albatross becomes a thing of beauty in the air, circling the cliff-top 'as though trying to communicate the joy it felt in its freedom' (p. 127). 'Freedom is everything', remarks Biddy. 'It's a terrible thing to be caught and caged' (p. 128). Thus the beach with its line of a cliff is linked to her state of mind.

Clear descriptions of the beach setting are provided through detail and atmosphere. For example: 'The waves in the bay were small, not like the breakers at the foot of the cliffs, further round the coast, whose thunder could be heard for miles when the sea was stormy' (p. 12). But, as in this example, the rhythmic flow of the prose is often broken by an excessive use of the comma, maybe through some mistaken idea that short phrases help young readers. Yet sometimes, the abruptness adds to the awkwardness of relationships. 'In fact, she realized, she didn't want to go swimming at all, without Brenda, and decided to wait' (p. 63).¹²

Loneliness and the division between reality and imagination involve two girls as well. Individually lonely, they forge a friendship through sharing beach experiences associated largely with Biddy. For example, Judith, whose imagination runs out of control, thinks Biddy is a witch. She has to suffer being marooned half way up a seacliff before she can cross a line of understanding. The beach becomes her place of revelation and thus provides a means of improvement in the life of Biddy Bristow.

Whereas *Falter Tom* and *The House on the Cliffs* explore the serious concerns of isolation and old age, Margaret Mahy's *The Pirate Uncle* (1977) is a gentle celebration of life beside the sea - picnicking on the beach and swimming, boating and fishing in the harbour. Yet the element of danger is still important. For example, Ludovic's mock fight with David Carter on the harbour draws its effect from what the children see as dangerous. Down on the beach, Ludovic tells Nick that getting married is 'the most dangerous adventure you can imagine' (p. 111).

More to the point in terms of boundary lines, the beach reflects one of Mahy's recurring concerns in her fiction - a blurring of the line

between what is real and what is imagined. For Caroline, it is a question of 'believing the uncle's story because she liked it and wanted to believe it' (p. 36). For Nicholas, Ludovic is a puzzle, 'flickering between being a real uncle and a story-book pirate. Where did the real leave off and a story-book begin?' (p. 47).¹³ Working with Ludovic on the beach cleaning and painting a canoe gives Nick a chance to feel 'alive with new thoughts and understandings' (p. 109), but his one question about Ludovic as a pirate remains unanswered.¹⁴ In her use of this recognisably New Zealand beach setting to reflect her recurring preoccupation with what divides truth from illusion, reality from imagination, Mahy is beginning to 'internalise the country I live in', a process which comes to fruition in her novels of the 1980s.¹⁵

In contrast to the generally bright tone of Mahy's *The Pirate Uncle*, Joan de Hamel's *Take the Long Path* (1978) is considerably more fraught with anxiety. What David Regan faces is a psychological challenge and danger to his inner being - the question of his identity. In a practical way, the beach marks the division between home and his private realm. At home, he is bullied by his father into helping with farm-work. In his private realm down on the beach, he feels important as the guardian of a colony of yellow-eyed penguins. De Hamel makes the concept of a physical dividing line clear. Whenever he wants to reach his realm, David must go through the lupins and what he calls Penguin Pass to the beach. There, after one of the time-shifts which results from Old Tama's story,

David [...] was lying with his eyes closed, his arms outstretched. An enormous feeling of peace enfolded him. He had been terrified, but now he had crossed a boundary. Rather like going through Penguin Pass, he had reached another kingdom. (pp. 97-98)

By crossing the boundary into the penguin kingdom, David can see that Mabel and her chick reflect his relationship with his mother. By crossing into this other 'kingdom' of events from the past, he discovers his paternal legacy, that he is half-Maori, half-Pakeha. The information he needs to unravel his previously unknown identity comes to him piecemeal and mainly from what takes place on and beside the beach. It is established in vivid, concrete terms.

The wind [swept] across the sand in gusts, leaving fan-shaped patterns. It skimmed off the tops of the waves as they charged the shoreline. The ranks of breakers advanced in a pincer movement, clashing as they met, scouring the sandy bottom and changing in colour from green to ochreous yellow. The spray flew. The terns rose as white as snowflakes against the bright sky. Wind and water were not alive as they were alive; but you only had to look at them to see they were not dead either. So what about Old Tama? David began to run away from his thoughts, jumping the bundles of cast-up kelp that sprawled like thick-limbed octopuses, ignoring the sting of grit against his legs. (pp. 79-80)

Moving from the belligerence of the waves that 'charged' and 'advanced in a pincer movement' through the words 'alive' and 'dead' into interior monologue, de Hamel makes a smooth transition from seascape to matching innerscape. David mulls over the information he has gleaned, and discovers eventually what he must do to carry out the family Oha, his grandfather's dying wish that his ancestor's patu should be found.¹⁶

Throughout the novel, the beach is where David faces constant stress and danger. When Abel is killed, David feels he has let the penguin family down, which lowers his self-esteem. When he and his friend Hemi go fishing round the rocks, they are almost drowned by rogue waves. When he tries to recover the whalebone patu, he has to drop to a ledge half-way down a sea-cliff, another example of a dividing line between sea and land. There he is in great danger of falling on to rocks below where the sea is waiting for him, 'hungry lips smacking and licking the boulders' (p. 112). One very important moment of perception comes to him in a poignant conversation with his mother on the beach. David tells her:

'Well, by next season the chick'll be grown-up. [...] So Mabel'd be right to think of herself first.'

'No divided loyalties?'

'No.'

'Lucky Mabel,' cried Joy with sudden passion. [...]

'And that's how it is with our family, is it, Mum?'

'That's how it is.' (p. 102)

Through relating his mother's past experiences to Mabel's current predicament as a solo parent, he understands why she married the jealous, bigoted man he had always thought of as his father. Thus he passes from unconscious knowledge to almost full awareness of his origins and a sympathetic understanding of his mother's need. And down

on the beach after the landslide, his mother comes looking for him to complete David's whole acceptance of his family identity. De Hamel's skills in interweaving the power of her setting through character and theme make this novel the richest of the 1970s.

The novels of the 1980s in the third group - those that draw extensively on harbour/beach settings - tend to concentrate less on the power of the harbour's encircling image of protection opposing danger and more on the linear image of the beach as it defines danger and tension, physical and psychological. Of course, not all novels set out to be of the complex, deeply satisfying kind. Some lean more on the genre of the adventure story, but offer value in their own way. Three novels of the 1980s, by Beverley Dunlop and Katherine O'Brien, represent this kind.

The harbour/beach setting in Dunlop's *The Dolphin Boy* (1982) makes an important contribution to the theme of the novel: that whales and dolphins are special creatures deserving protection. Dolphins 'could heal the world if man would only give them a chance' (p. 87). Yet they become endangered in the harbour. Fishermen attempt to herd them into the bay and kill them. Despite the change of heart in Python Jack and the money from the treasure for research, the dolphins leave 'because men are not ready to accept them' and their powers (p. 167). The beach emphasises the difference between boys and dolphins, each endangered by the others' element, and it also functions as a place of revelation. Python Jack's harshness in leading the attack on the dolphins is shown to be caused by grief for his son drowned forty years ago.¹⁷ Rollo takes a major step forward in self-esteem when he saves a school of whales from death through beaching by persuading his uncle to put the whale already beached out of her misery. The final moments of danger, excitement, and revelation take place in the harbour through the boys' attempt to recover treasure from an old wreck during a storm.

O'Brien's *The Golden One* (1984) provides another example of danger in a harbour when thieves moor their ocean-going yacht in a harbour in order to raid an antique shop. When Derek swims out to the *Banyule* 'to confront Mrs Riley with some sort of situation that would either clear

her or betray her' (p. 108), he 'became dismayed by the strength of the current. [...] Unused to swimming in Wellington Harbour, he had not expected the sea to be his adversary' (p. 122). The children's danger and the scheming of the thieves are nicely opposed to the jollity of the beach and recreation area, 'gay with carnival noise and colour' (p. 97), and moments of revelation concerning the thieves take place on the beach, the wharf and out on the yacht. The children's own relationships, however, are not probed for depth in this otherwise enjoyable, though formula tale.

Dunlop's *Earthquake Town* (1984) opens with the children's plans for normal, safe, holiday activities in the boating harbour. Instead, from the first major shock, the overwhelming impression of the novel is that there is nowhere safe to escape to in an earthquake. The beach where people go rushing for safety from falling buildings becomes even more dangerous because of a tidal wave. But some protection is offered by a World War II gun emplacement on the beach, a protective measure against a different sort of invasion. Yet Megan realises 'the fear in the minds of us all. Perhaps the wave would be fierce enough to smash down the wood over the gun slots and crash in through the back entrance. We might die a terrible death by drowning in the concrete chamber' (p. 50). The narration surges on with unflagging drama rather than reflection, though Megan, who is telling the story and who wants opportunities to prove herself, is aware of her divided self since she feels 'scared one minute and strong and bold the next' (p. 47). This episode drawing on the inherent dangers of a beach setting in an earthquake becomes the strongest in the novel.

More interesting and complex, however, are the novels of the 1980s which use harbour/beach settings in a variety of ways to add the fourth dimension of Time to previously discussed concepts of boundaries and dividing lines.¹⁸ The harbour/beach settings and the inherently dangerous happenings there are so strongly evoked that the reader is able to suspend ⁴⁴belief and become involved in the tale that unfolds, whether crossing the dividing line with the characters from present to past time on several occasions in novels by Caroline Macdonald and Joanna Orwin, or becoming totally involved in the past itself in novels by Anne de Roo, Jack Lasenby, and Tessa Duder, or by crossing from

another dimension or outer space in novels by Brian Hanfling and Barry Faville, or by bringing back characters from the past into the present as in Margaret Mahy's *The Tricksters* (1986).

The opening two paragraphs in Macdonald's *Elephant Rock* (1983) establish the association of the beach setting with the passing of time:

Twenty years ago, when Mum was twelve, those waves were breaking against the very same rocks, and twenty years before that, and before that. [...] They keep on going, she thought, on and on, the same way, century after century. (p. 7).

The third paragraph links this passing of time with Ann's mother. 'Mum was dying, Ann knew that' (p. 7), but her disbelief ebbs and flows like the tide. Thus the beach links the passing of time to the passing of one life to another.

Ann is on the Rock accessible only at low tide when she discovers that her dying mother can turn Time back twenty years. She can also change Ann's own physical appearance to suit the 1960s, and the physical world of landscape and buildings, but not the beach. She usually takes over Ann's consciousness as well. Several time-shifts take place - when Ann is on the Rock, on the beach, and on the beach road. They fill Ann with anxiety. She is never sure when the time-shifts will happen, nor, when they do happen, if she will be safely returned to the present. The driving force of the novel is Ann's mother's intensity in her dying days to enjoy through her daughter what she can of her past. No other device is used to turn back Time.¹⁹ This makes credibility more difficult, along with some contradictory descriptions, for example, of the Rock which is 'just visible now and then as the water churned around it' (p. 28), but, without time passing, is 'huge' as the current rushes Ann towards it (p. 29). Nevertheless, through the crossing of Time barriers on the beach and consequent revelations, Ann gains some understanding of the events that shaped her mother's life, but she is left with the process of grieving to come.

Several time-shifts also play a vital part in Orwin's *The Guardian of the Land* (1985). The dividing lines of the Kaikoura beach setting and of Time serve as a metaphor for the division that must be healed between Pakeha and Maori through the rediscovery of an ancient whale tooth

pendant, the guardian of the land. Like *Elephant Rock*, the time-shifts are controlled by the intensity of a woman. Rua's grandmother chooses David to go back into the past with Rua because David's recent illness had taken him close to another cross-over: death. David's own ideas about Maori people also have to undergo a change. However, Orwin is faced with a structural anomaly in that, for historical reasons, she has to turn David into a Maori character, Hura, the seeker, while Rua stays as himself. Yet this too becomes part of Orwin's theme, that Maori and Pakeha must learn to work together.

Details of the beach and seacoast give Orwin's writing authority. The 'austere beauty' of the 'faded colours of rock, sea and sky contrasted sharply with the rich brown, red and green of the seaweed patches splotched across the tidal platform' (p. 83) is as vivid as the whale's dash for the open sea dragging two boats behind him.

The line joining them to the whale thrummed with tension. [...] The whalers were whooping. [...] The wind of their journey whipped at the boy's hair and flung spray until his skin was stiff with salt. (p. 116)

The sight, sound, smell, and feel of place and incident build up the reader's belief in the reality of the Time-shifts that carry David and Rua between the present and the past. Each Time-shift associated with the beach serves to develop David's perceptions of Rua as a friend as a result of the dangers they face together. Their bonding becomes symbolic of the bonding needed between the races. The boys find themselves joining a seal hunt for food, hiding from Te Rauparaha's men during the slaughter of the tribe on the beach, and becoming part of a disastrous whale hunt. The boys' task of hiding the pendant after Te Rauparaha's attack requires their mutual support in a hard, dangerous journey along the beach and coastline. In particular, the whale hunt which ends with the shaming of Turehu on the beach emphasises the unjust and divisive racial conflict that the finding of the pendant must heal.²⁰

For the next three writers, Time means a complete return to the past. The harbour/beach settings in Anne de Roo's *jacky nobody* (1983), Jack Lasenby's *The Mangrove Summer* (1988), and Tessa Duder's *Alex* (1987) and *Alex in Winter* (1989) provide lines of demarcation crucial to the characters' actions and responses to their individual situations.

In *jacky nobody*, the harbour/beach setting of the Bay of Islands in the 1840s helps to express individual and public dangers and divisions between Maori and Pakeha. Most of what happens to Jacky, physically and emotionally, takes place on the beach and by the sea. Brought up by English missionaries in the station beside the sea, he believes he is European like them. But crucial to the story and his sense of identity is his discovery that he is half Maori.²¹ On the beach, Baxter's place of change 'where revelations may occur; as the no-man's land between conscious and unconscious',²² Jacky first hears he is kin to Hone Heke. Jacky's to-ing and fro-ing in boats across the bay matches his wavering as he tries to work out where his allegiance lies - with those who reared him, or with his kinsman Heke and his mother who lives further north with the tribe.

Developed as parallels to his divided self are his cousin Matiu and his new friend Noah Miggs from the grog-shop. He meets Noah on his first trip into Kororareka. Public conflict acts as a further parallel to Jacky's divided self. The harbour, which should be a place of protection and is an excellent place for ships to be refitted and provisioned, offers no protection for people in war. Heke's men arrive in canoes, loot the butcher's shop, and cut down the flagstaff on Maiki Hill. The British soldiers arrive in the *Hazard* and escalate the flagstaff incident into war with all its horror, gallantry, stupidity. The bombarding of Kororareka is the final act of violence to a dangerous harbour town, 'a place of wickedness' (p. 9) and 'the most undesirable seaport in the Pacific' (p. 30). Indeed, the fighting, the drinking, the gunning and pillage of the town confirm the need to 'grieve for the foolishness of mankind' (p. 127).

Lasenby's *The Mangrove Summer* is set a century later in the 1940s. Part 1 uses an isolated beach setting as a place of pleasure and safety for the common New Zealand experiences of swimming, sailing, picnicking and exploring. To their back on this beach, the family - George the narrator, his mother, aunt, siblings and cousins - come for safety, driven by fears of a Japanese invasion and the reality of wartime. The beach, however, turns into a place of danger through an accumulation of events and images. Urged on by Jill, who is driven by her own fear and a dictatorial quality in her nature, the children immediately feel their

safety is threatened. On the beach in war games in a sand fort, they face the possibility of a Japanese invasion. On the beach they find a flag which, Jill declares, proves Japanese spies have landed. When the Mounted Rifles pay a visit to inspect the wrecked scow that could have been destroyed by a mine, the children are convinced by Jill that the Japanese are about to make an invasion. Cousin Rod's terrible war burns are the final proof that the beach is no place of safety. Jill leads the others into making a decision to run away from this place of danger because the adults will never be able to protect them, not 'if' but 'when' the Japanese land. 'From then on, [...] everything that happened seemed unavoidable' (p. 66). Thus in Part I, the beach setting plays an important role in holding tension through the threat of danger and the need for decision-making at the time of World War II.

This novel also provides another effective example of the strong use made in New Zealand literature of the blossoming coastal pohutukawa as a symbol of danger and sacrifice.²³ Mum sees it, ironically, as a portent of good luck, but several references to the redness of its flower culminate in 'its stamens floated like blood on the new tide' (p. 56). It 'was losing its last flowers' (p. 86) when the children set out in their dinghy to escape up river. With references to 'blood' and 'last flowers', the pohutukawa contributes to the reader's expectations of danger and some terrible happening. Fittingly, when Jimmy is later carried to his grave on the cliffs overlooking the sea, 'the ground was dull red with the dead flowers of the pohutukawa' (p. 175).

Time in Duder's *Alex* means crossing back to 1959, almost history for young readers. This allows for criticism to be levelled from the point of view of the present at social attitudes that existed in the past and that still exist in the present. These attitudes are of vital concern to Alex and Andy, and harbour/beach settings are often used to emphasize stress, danger, and lines of demarcation in their personal and social lives. The whole structure of the novel, however, employs a dramatic interweaving of *histoire* and *récit*.²⁴ The present of Alex's sixty-minute race for Olympic selection is interrupted at regular intervals by past events leading up to the race, while each chapter chronologically builds up to the last moments of the race itself. This means that whatever happens on the beach, on the road, at the dance, on the stage, greatly

intensifies Alex's progress in the swimming pool. For example, between two moments when Maggie is ahead of Alex comes the 'Great Once-Only Walk' (p. 52) across the harbour bridge, still today's centrepiece for Auckland. It provides a strong metaphor to reinforce the crossing-over of Alex's and Andy's relationship into love. Their love is a major spur in Alex's efforts to win her race. The walk-over also allows the foreshadowing of Andy's death: 'Imagine your thoughts, going down. I can think of pleasanter ways to d-d- snuff it' (p. 53). Excitement takes away what the crossing-over foreshadows and allows Alex to express what the relationship means to her. On the bridge, both Alex and Andy talk of bridging adult expectations. They talk of their own desires and the conflicts and difficulties they both face. This turning point in her life is vital to what is at the core of the novel: Alex's search for her identity in terms of what it is to be female and feminine.

Later, between two moments when Alex begins to gain on Maggie, the beach becomes a powerful setting for a further development in Andy's and Alex's relationship. When Alex is exhausted after a school production, her father takes them both out to the beach for a rest.

Ahead of us the mighty beach swept in a clear curve until it disappeared into the mist. And offshore the surf rolled and broke against a hard blue sky. Hundreds of miles to Australia, thousands to anywhere else. If Andy was thinking how small my worries were against that seascape, he was right. (p. 107)

Only seascapes of this kind, or the sky above, give New Zealand writers the opportunity to use spatial immensity for their purposes, here to restore a sense of proportion to Alex's worries. There on the beach, Alex and Andy feel free to talk of the social lines of demarcation in New Zealand society, how they themselves are affected by ideas of femininity and masculinity and the Great New Zealand Clobbering Machine - 'You gotta get cut down to size' (p. 108). He talks of having to keep quiet about his liking for jazz, Gershwin and Noel Coward, and of the way his inclusion in the First Fifteen acts as his cover.²⁵ She talks of not being expected to have ambitions, such as a career in law, of being tall and having broad shoulders so that she is considered unfeminine. Such exchanges lead to commitment and Alex's conclusion: 'There must be something about beaches...' (p. 109).

We lay silently for a long time, just lying in a patch of long grass and looking out to sea, picking out the king waves rolling towards their final magnificent ending against the rocks. Andy's arm was around my shoulders, and we drew warmth from each other as the sun slid towards the horizon, a chill in the air reminding us it was only August.

What lay ahead for us? I felt like I was leaving something on that beach, saying goodbye to something. I don't know, my childhood perhaps, the carefree life? Tomorrow, tonight, we'd be back to the reality of routine, work, swot, train, towards the hardest goals we'd ever set ourselves. Here, on this craggy headland, watching the sun slide towards the sea and the sky change colour, only the sad, magic now mattered (*sic*). (pp. 109-10)

With premonitions carried in 'final', 'ending', 'chill', 'goodbye', 'change', and 'sad', the beach becomes inextricably a part of the story's power. It marks transitions in Alex's life soon to be altered by Andy's death, and it underlines the novel's social perceptions of what is feminine/female and masculine/male.

In addition, the harbour plays its part in clarifying the danger of stress in Alex's life. After Alex swims a disastrous race, Andy takes her out in his yacht, expecting relaxation. But the harbour turns treacherous when Alex, in a fit of pique, tries to prove herself worthy of Olympic selection by swimming to shore. The power of the narrative gains from the contrast between the exhilaration of sailing in a high wind in 'a seascape that glittered, silver and turquoise' (p. 123) and the power of the waves and the outgoing tide threatening to drown Alex. Andy is impelled to shout at her.

'You can't run away, you can't always be in control, and you can't always get what you want [...] The sea doesn't respect anger or any sort of arrogance. The sea will always win.' (pp. 124-25).

Through Andy's words, Alex learns more about herself, her weaknesses, her limits and responsibilities. Against the background of pleasure and danger in the harbour/beach setting, the build-up of their relationship and perceptions of each other increases the pathos of Andy's death.

Winter, right from the beginning of *Alex in Winter*, becomes 'not just a season but a climate of the mind'.²⁶ In the moment's silence before the announcement of Alex's win, 'Pacific waves crashed noisily on to the

black and grey stones' (p. 2). Sea images continue to help drive the narrative of Alex's personal life and to broaden the outlook of the novel into general social and national concerns. The turmoil in Alex's mind brings dreams of sailing with Andy, capsizing, and drowning. Back home, she seeks the solace of swimming in the sea, and finds the water soothing to her flesh wounds and her soul after she crashes dangerously on her bike. Prolonged grieving for Andy and the tension of waiting for the team to be announced turn Alex's image of herself, when goaded by Mrs Benton, from a dolphin into a shark. She feels her last anchor has gone and she is lost in a sea of people when her coach Bill Jack has to go to Australia to his dying mother. The waiting for the team to be announced is intensified by political protest and world disasters - reports of earthquakes and tidal waves in Chile and a tsunami rushing across the Pacific towards New Zealand.

Furthermore, in a structural parallel to the episode with Andy in the first novel, Alex in her grief bullies Keith into taking her sailing on the harbour again. In the real danger and tension of another near-drowning, they hang on to Andy's yacht while Keith takes the opportunity to bring to Alex's consciousness the Andy she had never recognized. 'He wasn't strong enough for you,' (p. 133) says Keith, telling her why, sharing her grief, and letting her weep freely at last for the person she realizes she only half knew. Clearly, a relational reading of Duder's two city-set novels is particularly rewarding as a clarification of the power of harbour/beach settings to enlarge the scope of Alex's competitive and personal life, and to challenge, define, and assuage some of her deepest feelings and significant moments.

Each of the final three novels of this chapter uses harbour/beach settings to emphasize both protection and danger, but each calls on something different in the sense of boundaries and dividing lines from the reality that is superbly handled by Tessa Duder. Brian Hanfling in *The Mind Musicians* (1988) explores how the mind works in music. He brings a group of pop-musicians through from the sixth dimension along with a group of soulless musicians through from the fifth dimension into our fourth dimension of time where a mystery must be solved to save a dying Equilibria. Barry Faville in *The Return* (1987) crosses the boundaries of outer space and brings in aliens to explore what the human

mind is capable of doing. Margaret Mahy in *The Tricksters* (1986) explodes the image of a harbour as protection. She draws on boundaries crossed by the supernatural reappearance in triplicate of a murdered man and by the revelation of a family secret, and she links beach images and the writing process with lines that go all around the world.

In Hanfling's *The Mind Musicians*, also mainly city-set, the beach allows the solution to the mystery of the Beads to surface. The relaxed atmosphere of the beach works on Jo's subconscious mind. On the third night of their holiday, while talking in her sleep, she provides an important clue to the Beads as seeds (p. 125). More specifically, the beach itself reflects the dividing line between the conscious and the unconscious in Dorian's mind when he and Jo are stretched out in the sandhills for a quiet read.

A sunbeam filled the hollow with radiance. [...] In the still moment, his body seemed to expand, floating. His mind was empty of conscious thought. Without words or pictures, the brain has its own way of feeling. [...]

He knew what the Beads of Stasis were. (p. 149)

Because of the radiance and stillness of the beach setting, Dorian's mind is induced to relax and be receptive to intuitive understanding. Thus the key moment of revelation is in keeping with the central focus of this novel – how the mind works in music. This is expressed in terms of divisions and dimensions, summed up as follows by Glitter of the Lethals, a multi-coloured pop-group:

We got brains that feel the answer inside. We don't feel it, we don't get it. Dynamaniacs' brains work from outside in. No intuition. You got it both ways. Only some closer to us and some to them. (p. 171)

Moreover, the beach allows the relationship between Jo and Dorian to move on to a new level. This is a gentle, warm relationship, befitting younger children, not passionate as in Duder's *Alex*. When Dorian wants to kiss Jo after a swim, he asks first. 'He got up, leaned forward to kiss her on the cheek, and sat down arms about his knees. They both stared at the sea' (p. 127). This relationship with its understated warmth and caring is carried in the compressed dry wit of dialogue and narrative to the end of the novel.

In Faville's *The Return*, an isolated East Coast beach is clearly evoked in its role of a dividing line between sea and land. It becomes a place of arrival, departure, and revelation, marking the dividing line between what is earthly and what is alien, and what 'separates the affairs of adults from the activities of children' (p. 74). A strange column of light marks the crossing of space frontiers in the arrival of the aliens, Karl/Garl and Visha. The delineation of a whole community is a particular achievement of this novel, from the old men down on the beach who conclude that 'something odd is going on around here' (p. 65), to the farmer, the teacher, Myra and her husband Frank, Jonathan, his family, and the other children.²⁷

The stress that afflicts this small isolated community comes from outside forces. Almost sixty years ago, the aliens had come to Wilkes Beach for the first time in search of an answer to the question: 'What was the human mind capable of doing?' (p. 94). They return to continue that search and find out what went wrong with the earlier experiment. On the wave-length of their probing is Jonathan, who is thus required to face mental stress and danger in his discovery. On the beach he first tries out his own powers of suggestion on Belinda and Susan and then succeeds in calling Garl down to him. He experiences nightmares sent by Garl, and he has visions of the universe and the asteroid the aliens have come from. Later he rescues Garl from being stuck on the cliff, which leads to Garl's learning something about emotion in human beings.

For the other children, too, on a practical level, the beach holds clues to what is happening. Belinda and Susan search for pebbles there for the mysterious Myra. Later, as 'children disguising ourselves as children' (p. 103) by taking the dog for a walk, they join the search for her. But more importantly, three-year-old Mary draws lost Myra on the sand, showing that her mind, like her brother Jonathan's, has developed its innate power of thought transference and communication through association with the alien pair. Jonathan realizes she is special and he has a responsibility not to tamper with her mind. But middle-aged Myra holds the key to the aliens' quest. She feels immediately that something is wrong and tells Frank in words 'like small waves washing timidly up the beach with silences in between' (p. 31). Her own mysterious ways include a private ritual of playing with her

collection of pebbles that she has significantly collected from the beach for years without understanding their link to the aliens and the fate of her family in the past. The beach not only divides earthly from alien; it also provides a link for Myra between them. Her coloured beach pebbles represent for her the glowing crystal balls in Visha's sphere, the vision of the universe. She, like the aliens, can make the colours dance.

The aliens' experiment on their first visit had failed because the leader in his pride crossed unacceptable boundaries in interference with DNA. Garl and Visha, having restored as much as possible to the wronged Myra, plan to depart from the beach immediately. Jonathan, for whom the beach has always been 'a place of endless interest where he never failed to revive' (p. 53), is called down that night.

The beach at night looked like a pale ghostly avenue stretching to darkness in either direction. Streamers of white foam grew and faded in the blackness as the breakers curled and crashed in a steady, growling rumble. Jonathan ran to the edge of the soft sand and sat down to wait. (p. 154)

Against this background, 'ghostly' and 'growling' to reflect the turbulence of his experiences, Jonathan witnesses the departure of Garl and Visha. The beach for him has truly been a revelation of his powers and of his little sister's, and of responsibility in experimentation.

Finally, in Mahy's *The Tricksters*, the harbour turns from a place of pleasure and protection into a place of psychological danger, and the beach emphasizes lines of demarcation in Time, human relationships, truth and illusion. From the beginning, the age of the harbour is established and reaffirmed. It is 'a prehistoric estuary' (p. 19), and the sea's movements are 'constant' (p. 59). 'The thousand separate voices of the sea made one voice, and it was the sound of time itself, lapping at the edge of the land' (p. 242), a sound that is 'old beyond memory' (p. 249). The sea in the harbour carries down through the ages the constant passions of mankind - love, power, jealousy, rage leading to murder, and questions of identity. Out of the sea crawls the bleeding ghost of Teddy Carnival murdered eighty years previously, made manifest in triplicate as the Carnival trio, the Tricksters.²⁸ In crossing from the past into the present and actively seeking to become whole again,

the Tricksters become more than just 'rhetorical devices [representing] a single idea or bundle of related ideas', as Judith Armstrong suggests is the usual role of ghosts in fiction.²⁹ Mahy's Tricksters develop as characters in their own right, seeking to find a balance between their divided selves. In becoming the catalyst for exposing a well-kept secret in the Hamilton family, they turn the harbour setting psychologically into a dangerous place.

In addition, the sea that is 'old beyond memory' functions as Jung's Great Unconscious in levels of human awareness and human emotions through being linked to the writing process. Harry puts a white shell ring on her finger to establish that she is married to the sea. 'Everything comes out of me' (p. 24), she claims. She knows she has invoked Teddy's ghost as the Carnival trio out of the sea.

Somehow she had crumpled things up by wishing to be the sea's wife, with everything coming out of her so that points in time, which had once been far apart, had actually folded together. (p. 26)³⁰

At the same time, Harry knows that the Carnival brothers embody aspects of the characters in the lurid novel she is writing. She had felt her villain 'flowing out of her head, down her arm and into her magical, writing hand' (p. 13), and now the Carnival trio, called up out of the sea, have 'the very quality of demonic Belen' (p. 173). At the conclusion of the novel, Harry repeats: 'I'm Mrs Oceanus. Everything comes out of me' (p. 263) to emphasize she is the source of creative power.

[She] thought that the looping line the pen made was a world line, like the one left behind by the tide, and that lines left on the beaches and pages everywhere must wind up by going all around the world. (p. 266)

In this way, the concerns of the novel gain universal significance, though set on an undoubtedly New Zealand beach where even the wind reinforces the pervasive sea images, booming with 'a note similar to that of the sea on the beach below, so in this way the sea invaded the land, flowed up the hill and washed around the corner of the house' (p. 204).

On the beach, the Carnival trio make their first appearance, greeting Harry with a statement that shimmers with implications. "'You're alone on Teddy Carnival's beach," said one, not asking a question but sounding as if he were giving her a warning' (p. 53). On the beach, that very significant place marking the boundaries 'between the conscious and unconscious, an arena for sexual adventure',³¹ Harry falls in love with Felix. In the hills above the beach she crosses into womanhood through her first sexual experience with him. Thus it is obvious that the lineal shape of the beach is intimately linked to Harry's creativity, her imagination, and her relationship with Felix. As Claudia Marquis says:

The beach is peculiarly present in this novel. [...] If we view the line aerially [...] it is not so much its connecting length as its inevitable divisiveness that impresses us. The line is a margin; so much significant action happens across it. Its appearance tends to confirm our sense of Harry/Ariadne herself as a creature of the margins in her present life at least. The book is all lines - outlines, tide-lines, lines of print on the page, the lines of a drawing.³²

Certainly, Harry crosses margins in her love-life, her awareness of lines on the page is linked to lines on beaches going round the world, and the boundary of Time is crossed by the Tricksters' appearance on the beach. Moreover, margins and boundaries also apply to other members of the family who go swimming, picnicking, and partying on the beach.

However, more important than the lineal shape itself of the beach is the kind of lineal shape that it is. The beach is not simply a margin, but 'shifting margins of sand and sea' (p. 74). The sea brings in flotsam and jetsam on one tide and takes them away on the next tide. In other words, though the sea is 'constant' and the passions of mankind are like the sound of the sea, 'old beyond memory' (p. 249), the margins of human behaviour can be as 'shifting' as the tide-lines that go around the world. Even Midsummer is the time when the year is 'about to seesaw again' (p. 93). This shifting lineal nature of the beach is fully internalized into the lives and changing relationships of Harry and the other characters too. It reflects what is the fundamental preoccupation of Mahy's fiction in general and of this novel in particular: the creative power of the imagination and the ambivalence between truth and illusion, or reality and imagination.

The distinction between truth and illusion, or between what is real and what seems to be real, is of major importance in two mysteries; one; the mystery concerning Tibby's father; two; the mystery concerning the origins and identity of the Tricksters. The 'shifting' linear nature of the beach setting where these mysteries are unravelled structurally reflects these dilemmas in their separate ways.

The first mystery concerning Tibby's father is a family secret. Harry is goaded by Christobel and the Tricksters to the point where she breaks her vow of silence and reveals that secret - Jack is Tibby's father. Incest is a breaching of margins and boundaries in accepted family relationships, and incest is what Marquis calls the 'real anxiety of the text'.³³ However, the margin defining incest has shifted from a direct father-daughter relationship with connotations of rape, to a love affair in an 'almost-father and daughter' relationship (p. 241). Emma is not Jack's daughter, only his daughter Christobel's friend who as a teenager had 'adopted' the family and they her. For Christo, the revelation is shocking. According to Marquis, she shows 'mythic, Freudian dimensions by the very extremity of [her] reaction'.³⁴ This comment suggests that Christo has crossed a boundary into a psychic despair through a desire more monstrous than Emma's part in the act itself. However, Christo is very egocentric, with intense reactions to the thought of not having all the attention she wants. In rationalizing her feelings, she makes her denials work more like a crossing-over into an affirmation of acceptable sublimation.

'It's not one of those psychological things,' she added quickly. 'I mean I'm not secretly in love with Jack myself. It's more ordinary than that.' (p. 258)

Christo defines those 'ordinary' feelings as a desire not to have to understand her father in his own personal relationships, but simply to hero-worship him. 'I just want him to be marvellous and leave it at that - blow being human' (p. 259). By acknowledging the truth of the situation in this way, in itself a crossing of another sort of boundary, both Christo and Harry find release, and Christo resolves to be positive about the future. If ever one could call this novel a moral tale, it is through Christo's desire to make herself behave in the most generous and forgiving way and 'force happy endings out of all this' (p. 260). Her reaction becomes a tribute to the power of the mind in a different way

from Harry's desiring. The lines that have been breached will now be strengthened. The family will survive, though changed in relationships.

The second mystery concerns the reality of the Tricksters themselves. A relational reading of this novel emphasizes that the Tricksters have their beginning in a sea shimmer, called up by Benny, Serena, and Harry through their own reflections in the water of the pre-historic harbour. But does Harry really see a streaming, bleeding man on the rock? Are the Carnival brothers who arrive on the beach with its 'shifting margins' (p. 74) real or imagined by Harry? Does she make love to a ghost? She declares the brothers have made themselves up out of her ideas, and, says Mahy herself: 'Nothing is more powerful than a desiring girl'.³⁵ The Carnival brothers are 'real' enough to cast shadows, 'real beyond all doubt, drawing their reality from the acknowledgement of others' (p. 61), fully accepted as real flesh-and-blood by the rest of the family. The reality of the brothers is never questioned by the family, not even at the end when they vanish with strange effects. Felix, disintegrating, flows 'like a man brought out of the sea'. He is seized by 'a terrible quivering [...], a fluctuation of his entire substance' (p. 233). But all Naomi says is: 'Thank goodness *they've* gone. [...]. They certainly outlived their welcome.' (p. 252).

Harry herself remains not sure, though she says she drew them out of her desiring.

Sometimes it seemed to her that she had had a dream, or been the victim of an intricate illusion, which had filled her with memories indistinguishable from the memories of real events. (p. 255)

In other words, Harry, whose relationship with the Tricksters is the most intense, has the most difficulty in establishing the reality of their existence, even though it is her conscious desire to change the world that has drawn them forth out of the sea of her deep subconscious longings.³⁶ The others in the family remember the Carnival brothers as 'troublesome and mischievous, entertaining, but above all, as ordinary men who had come and gone, leaving chaos behind them' (p. 255). No direct conclusions about whether they are real or imagined are offered to the reader. The ending is open, ambivalent, and extraordinarily powerful. Harry burns her abused novel on the beach, and is revitalized

through a mysterious visionary experience while bathing in the harbour.

The tide marked its furthestest reaches with a line of seaweed and shells that went on and on round the world, and she had been on one side, the sea on the other. Now she felt there was no longer the same separation between them.

Harry took off her morning clothes and walked into the sea. Once in it, it flowed over her, warm and cool at once, if that were possible, more sensuous than Christobel's silk dressing-gown. The ripples wrote lines of light around her, until Harry felt that she might begin to shine. When she spoke, glowing words would come out of her mouth. On the sand again, she turned almost instinctively, it seemed, and saw the sunrise. A little notch in the broken skyline filled up with fire, and Harry was filled with fire too. In the end she was indeed possessed by the brute blood of the air so powerfully but so delicately it was like no possession she had ever imagined. [...] She felt remarkable. (p. 263)

Tide-lines no longer indicate separation for Harry. Instead, the sea combines with air and fire so that she feels 'remarkable' and whole again, ready to repeat the 'magical' experience of writing a novel and of making 'a world line, like the one left behind by the tide' (p. 266). Thus, the exposing of the creative and imaginative process, the power of pen and desire, the balancing of reality and illusion, give this novel a complexity of levels not found in other New Zealand novels for young adults.

This chapter has dealt with harbour/beach settings in relation to character, structure, and theme. With the harbour, power comes from the opposing of danger to expectations of protection. With the beach, power comes from the crossing of dividing lines associated with the stress of isolation, dilemmas, revelation, arrival, departure, boundaries and limits. Novels published in the 1980s mainly for older readers are more preoccupied with beaches than with harbours because the question of boundaries and dividing lines becomes more pertinent for teenagers as they move towards adulthood. But all these novels in both Chapter One and Chapter Two, whether of lesser or greater emotional power, make a contribution to the pervasiveness of seascapes as a dominant characteristic in New Zealand children's fiction.

NOTES

1. 'A writer is interested primarily in human lives, in motives and passions and ideas'. M.H. Holcroft, 'Encircling Seas', in *Discovered Isles* (1950), pp. 193-281 (p. 195).
2. George Craig declares: 'In fiction, we are endlessly preoccupied with boundaries.' 'Reading: who is doing what to whom?', in *The Modern English Novel*, ed. by Gabriel Josipovici (1974), pp. 15-36 (p. 34).
3. 'Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry', in *James K. Baxter as Critic* (hereafter BAC), ed. by Frank McKay (1978), pp. 50-69 (p. 61).
4. The pohutukawa, already mentioned in Chapter One, makes a splendid flowering of red blossoms at Christmas time around the northern coasts of New Zealand. It is strongly symbolic for New Zealand writers to suggest pleasure, danger and sacrifice. For example, A.R.D. Fairburn makes Biblical allusions in writing of 'summer when the coasts / bear crimson bloom, sprinkled like blood / on the lintel of the land'. 'Dominion', in *Three Poems* (1952), p. 27. Bruce Mason in *The Pohutukawa Tree* (1963) uses the dying tree as a parallel to the decline of Aroha Mataira. Its bloom reflects racial strife. 'On the day after the battle, he planted it where the pakeha captain fell, that its red flowers might be a sign of blood between Maori and pakeha for ever.' Aroha Mataira, 1, 1, p. 24.
5. 'A Dissolving Ghost: Possible Operations of Truth in Children's Books and the Lives of Children', *Sport*, 7 (1991), 5-24 (p. 20).
6. Other novels which provide brief, effective examples of beach settings with impact are Eve Sutton's *Surgeon's Boy* (1983), Joyce West's *The River Road* (1980), and Elsie Locke's *Journey Under Warning* (1983).
7. The delay in Boy's recognition of his father is a basic but well-worked example of Peter Brooks's 'narrative dissonance', *Reading for the Plot* (1984), p. 190.
8. One near-contemporary of quality is Barry Mitcalfe's *The Long Holiday* (1964, 1982), already quoted in this chapter. *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* is noted by Frank Eyre as one of two examples of 'the best writing for children that has appeared in official publications', here originally in the *School Journal*. The other publication noted by Eyre is Roderick Finlayson's *The Springing Fern* (1965). *British Children's Books in the Twentieth Century* (1971), p. 172.
9. Fantastic worlds, explains Eric Rabkin, provide 'a saving of emotional energy [or] "psychic economy" [...], confronting as they do issues that are often hidden in the real world [...] in the service of human need'. *Fantastic Worlds* (1979), pp. 32-33. Mahy's picture book, *The Wind Between the Stars* (1976), is another example of the use of psychic economy in the portrayal of old age and death through fantasy.
10. Betty Gilderdale suggests that *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* invites comparison with Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*, but says that Duggan was 'adamant that he had never read or even heard of *The Water Babies*'. *A Sea Change* (1982), p. 130. Certainly, Duggan's novella contains no Victorian work ethic and no moralising on social behaviour, and the water boy is not part of a community, all of which are still present in I.M. Peacocke's adaptation, *Little Tom and the Water Folk* (undated). Nevertheless, the very rhythm of the title alone suggests that Duggan could have come across the Peacocke version as a child at school and that *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* is an example of Jung's 'cryptomnesia, or "concealed recognition"', a buried, unidentifiable memory. 'Approaching the Unconscious', in *Man and his Symbols*, ed. by Carl G. Jung and others (1964),

pp. 18-103 (p. 37). Both Falter Tom and the water boy are versions of a familiar New Zealand character: Man-Alone. Both want to change the solitary nature of their existence.

11. *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature* (1990), p. 192.
12. Eleanor Cameron defines 'the sound of literature' as the 'sound of self'. It arises out of the whole concept of the work, from the very pulse-beat of the writer and all that has gone to make him'. 'Of Style and the Stylist', in *The Green and Burning Tree* (1969), pp. 137-58 (pp. 138-39). This definition applies equally to Duggan above.
13. Pirate characters in Mahy's work regularly challenge respectability and freedom, with great irreverence and satire in her city-set *The Great Piratical Rumbustification* (1978). But Mahy's talk, 'The Lion, the Magician, the Hero, and the Witch', *CLA Yr*, 1976, 9-15, pre-dates her major pirate works and does not include the pirate as one of her dominant images.
14. Geoffrey Trease quotes a well-known educationalist who believed that much material for children 'depends on too much fantasy life whereas it could, and should, make ordinary life more exciting and meaningful'. *Tales Out of School* (1964), p. 127. One may take issue with the educationalist's dismissal of fantasy, but agree with the value of making ordinary life meaningful, which Mahy does superbly through fantasy. With enlivening wit and ingenuity, *The Pirate Uncle* is a good example of what can be done well with what Trease dismisses as the 'avuncular fantasy' (p. 137).
15. Mahy talks of her need for the New Zealand setting to 'be inside the character [...] to internalise the country I live in'. 'On Building Houses that Face Towards the Sun', in *A Track to Unknown Water*, ed. by Stella Lees (1980), 92-103 (p. 102).
16. Anne de Roo's *Mick's Country Cousins* (1974) is the first novel to put a part-Maori, part-Pakeha at the centre of a novel. In *Take the Long Path* (1978), the denial by David's parents of David's Maori blood accurately reflects a fairly common attitude among Europeans of the time. David's search for his origins is a driving force in the narrative, contributing both mystery and tension. Mark Williams, however, sees this kind of situation as 'a prevalent cultural wish to discover authentic belonging in New Zealand by identification with the indigenous.' In reference to Janet Frame's work, Williams calls this wish 'an inverted "post-colonial" version of the Victorian fantasy of the lost child, raised in poverty, who turns out to have concealed parents and an inheritance that has been denied him'. *Leaving the Highway* (1990), p. 200.
17. One might question whether a man would nurse such grief and fury for forty years.
18. Praise of the complex novel, however, does not imply that the direct narrative with wide appeal has no value. On the contrary, one might even argue that a direct narrative with wide appeal has greater influence and therefore importance. But such topics are not the concern of this thesis.
19. The time-shifts happen without a pattern or activating device other than Ann's mother's intensity of desire. This puts a strain on credibility in comparison with other notable time-shift novels which use some device with special power. For example, Philippa Pearce in *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) uses a clock to switch time for Tom and Hattie, and Ruth Park in *Playing Beattie Bow* (1980) uses a piece of crochet to take Abigail back into Sydney's past.
20. Mary Hall, however, sees this as a 'complicated and romantic' story with 'some wish fulfilment as David, a Pakeha, becomes a Maori'. *SLR*, 5.3 (1985), p. 16. See Mark Williams, note 16.
21. Again, de Roo is exploring credible possibilities in race relationships, which nevertheless, have given rise to 'wish fulfilment' interpretations.

22. BAC, p. 61.
23. Fairburn, *Three Poems*, p. 27.
Mason, *The Pohutukawa Tree*, p. 24.
24. The difference between 'histoire' (fabula), or what is to be told, and 'récit' (sjuzet), or how it is told, is discussed by Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* (1984), p. 13, and by Ann Jefferson, 'Russian Formalism', in *Modern Literary Theory*, ed. by Ann Jefferson and David Robey (1986), pp. 24-45 (p. 39).
25. Jock Phillips in *A Man's Country?* (1987) elaborates on the image of the Pakeha male in New Zealand society.
26. This phrase is used to describe summer in Bruce Mason's *The End of the Golden Weather* (1970), p. 26.
27. C.K. Stead implies that a sense of community is as important as a sense of place. 'Whimsical Losers', *Landfall*, 132 (1979), 351-59 (p. 358).
28. The Trickster cycle, according to Paul Rabin, is the first in the evolution of the hero myth in North American-Indian folklore. His description of the Trickster fits the trio created by Mahy. The Trickster is 'cruel, cynical, and unfeeling. [He] passes from one mischievous exploit to another. [...] At the end of his rogue's progress he is beginning to take on the physical likeness of a grown man'. Quoted by J.L. Henderson, 'Ancient Myths and Modern Man', in *Man and his Symbols* (1964), pp. 104-57 (p. 113). Harry herself, the girl in the process of becoming a woman, is also something of a trickster in the mischief of her motives for declaring who is Tibby's father. Harry, as Mahy points out, longs for 'a heightened and passionate imaginative life [...], for transformation', but she herself is 'tricked [...] by the surface of familiarity into thinking her own immediate surroundings have no power to transform her'. *Surprising Moments* (1991), p. 27.
29. Judith Armstrong claims that most fictional ghosts are not capable of change, being 'personified essences rather than rounded characters [...] who represent a single idea or bundle of related ideas [and set] the fluidity of the present against the fixity of the past'. 'Ghosts as rhetorical devices in children's fiction', *CLE*, 29 (1978), 59-66 (p. 64).
30. The concept of points in time folding together is reminiscent of the 'tessering' in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962), which takes her characters to outer space, but in *The Tricksters*, characters stay in the same place in this world.
31. BAC, p. 61.
32. *Antic*, 7 (1990), 20-36 (p. 33).
33. *ibid*, p. 31.
34. *ibid*. However, in his introduction to Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* (1980), p. xxvii, Douglas Jefferson discusses evil and warns against interpretations that go to extremes beyond the text. In the same way here, one should beware of reading too much of an Oedipus complex into Christo's reaction.
35. *Surprising Moments* (1991), p. 21. Mahy also explores the power of a desiring girl in fourteen-year-old Laura in *The Changeover* (1984). Anne Wilson also defines magic as 'a system of thought at a primitive level of the mind, where all thinking and feeling have the power to bring things about (in the mind). [...] Through depth psychology we can explore how powerful our feelings and wishes are.' 'What is Magic?', *Signal* 57 (1988), 170-80 (p. 173, p. 175).
36. This question has haunted Mahy since the publication of her first picture book, *A Lion in the Meadow* (1969), the core of which is metamorphosed into the complexity of *The Tricksters*. Indeed, in her desire to change the world, Harry is a reworking of Troy in *The Haunting* (1982) as well as of Laura.

PART TWO

LANDSCAPES

CHAPTER THREE - MOUNTAINS AND BUSH

'The mountains were always there / And the mountain water', sings Denis Glover's Harry.¹ Or as Glover in his own voice says more prosaically: 'The sea and the mountains - these dominate the New Zealand scene'.² This is the reason for choosing a study of mountains to open Part Two on landscapes in New Zealand children's fiction. Thrust up out of the sea aeons ago and formed largely by 'often spectacular' volcanic and tectonic forces, the mountains form the backbone of the country throughout the South Island and much of the North.³ On one side, the horizon is defined by the sea. On the other, it is drawn in by steep, craggy mountains or hills, either bush-clad or bare. One can lose sight of the mountains in bad weather or from valleys, but they are always there and visible most of the time.

The forces that formed the land maintain their presence today in the shape of mountains and hills and in displays of volcanic and thermal activity in specific areas. Moreover, the position of the country at the corkscrew grinding junction of two major plates in the earth's crust ensures the ever-present threat of frequent and unpredictable seismic activity.⁴ The terms 'mountain' and 'hill', however, are used casually in New Zealand. In this thesis, a distinction between them has been based on whether the landscape is wild or settled. In effect, this means that Chapter Three will cover volcanic mountains and non-volcanic wild mountains and hills, while Chapter Four covers settled land, rolling hill country down to the plains. Since bush is common to both high country and lowland, it appears in both chapters contributing to characters' feelings of isolation and disorientation.

This chapter shows that New Zealand writers of children's novels gain fictional power when they choose to draw on dangers inherent in the mountain/bush landscape of New Zealand. For it is not so much a question of the landscape having 'no inherent qualities to maintain fixed values', as Leonard Lutwack claims as a general principle,⁵ or, to misquote Hamlet, that there is nothing good or bad in the landscape but thinking makes it so. Rather, it is a question of a different kind of choice - to draw, or not to draw, on the specific and dramatic legacy

laid down in the landscape as a result of its geological origins. As well, New Zealand mountains provide writers with dangers common to all mountains - exposure, hypothermia, accident, and disorientation. Obviously important to a relational reading of novels are the responses characters make to these mountain experiences. Mountains in their magnificence are predominant in evoking awe and terror. These emotions are listed by Francis Pound among contributors to the concept of the Sublime.⁶ This concept, which includes the notion of landscape as a manifestation of the presence of God, was brought to New Zealand, says Pound, by European nineteenth-century settlers as part of their mental baggage. Children's literature as a genre, however, precludes much abstract poetic and religious philosophizing, for it is usually more concerned with action than contemplation. But where such perceptions appear, they serve to enlarge the vision of a novel and will be noted when appropriate in the following discussions.

Dominating though mountains are, they nevertheless appear in far fewer New Zealand children's novels than do the seascapes explored in Part One. Moreover, of the roughly 27% of stories containing mountainscapes, only 4% or three novels in the 1970s, and 4.5% or six novels in the 1980s, draw on volcanic power. This undoubtedly relates to the restricted regional locations of volcanic mountains and the fewer opportunities children have for volcanic mountain experiences, although Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, is built in a volcanic area.⁷ Volcanic landscapes have enormous power, yet non-volcanic but wild mountain landscapes appear more often. This chapter will focus first on novels featuring volcanic mountains and then non-volcanic mountains. As is the pattern in this thesis, novels of the 1970s will be discussed before those of the 1980s.

Three writers from the 1970s, Mary Cox, A.J. Holden, and Maurice Gee, demonstrate the basic argument of this thesis: that writers who choose to draw on the inherent dangers in the landscape intensify the power of their fiction.

In Cox's *Wild Manes in the Afternoon* (1976), a first-person narrative voice gives an immediacy to Adele's expression of her passion for the

brumbies and for the landscape: 'the isolation and the absolute beauty of everything' (p. 91). The landscape is dramatic with its thermal steam and mudpools, earthquake, and the smoking old man mountain. The brumbies are beautiful, and Adele even dreams of the wonderful stallion 'with fire blazing out of his nostrils' (p. 16). Though she captures and trains a brumby foal for her use, she wants the stallion to remain free because capture 'would break his heart' (p. 4). Appropriately, when the brumbies are threatened with round-up and slaughter, the inherent dangers of the Central Plateau north of Taupo provide the solution. Tectonic action lifts up a path which enables Adele, her mother and brother, to lead the herd up the 'steaming mountain [...] across the steaming plateau towards the great rock and [...] the wide, wonderful pastures below them' (pp. 144-45). There they can be contained in safety. The obvious danger of volcanic activity, treated by the family with respect, but feared by the hunters, becomes a positive and protective force. It enlarges for the reader the different characters of the family in their approach to their task.⁸ The mother, for example, proves to be strong and assertive in defying the hunters to cross the stream where they might find evidence of the brumbies' passing.

A.J. Holden's *No Trains at the Bay* (1976) appears again in this chapter because of the roaming, picaresque nature of the boys' adventures. A volcanic eruption, undoubtedly based on that on Mt Tarawera, helps to strengthen drama and peril in the boys' adventures, to make their escape possible, and to reinforce the idea that their survival depends upon their friendship. The eruption helps to portray this land as one of excitement and adventure.

On the other hand, volcanic forces become central to the expression of the theme in Maurice Gee's *Under the Mountain* (1979). Pollution on a cosmic scale must be overcome. The novel is more chilling because its cosmic science fiction elements become localized in the known volcanic landscape of Auckland.⁹ According to humanistic geographers, a strong sense of place helps to raise readers' awareness of the need for environmental care.⁹ The power that Gee draws from his location becomes more obvious if a comparison is made with Marc Alexander's *The Mist Lizard* (1977). Alexander shares Gee's concern about pollution in today's Age of Waste, and uses science fiction to enlarge his scope. But he

loses Gee's direct impact by taking his protagonists away from this world into outer space and back through Time.¹⁰

Through the use of volcanic forces inherent in this Auckland location and through a marked sense of duality, Gee adds his colouring to the established struggle of Good against Evil in traditional High Fantasy. Gee calls on volcanic power, 'the eternal source of creation and destruction, the primal fire', to destroy evil forces intent on destroying the world.¹¹ These evil forces, represented as huge worm-like creatures originally from outer space, have been waiting under the volcanoes of Auckland to be activated by symbiotic slugs. Their aim is to '[chew] each planet to mud [...] across a whole arm of the galaxy' (p. 74). Gee reinforces his sense of duality by choosing two volcanic cones as his destructive agents. Rangitoto Island and Mount Eden have both helped to shelter the Wilberforces and must now destroy them. The Wilberforces are a combination of huge bodies and separate brains. Two stones with special energies must be used to activate the volcanic forces.¹² Twins with telepathic powers must find enough mental strength to throw the stones into the craters. That the volcanoes have to be activated by two human beings, instead of erupting in a kind of *deus ex machina* rescue operation, adds to the tension of the story.

Rhetorically, too, Gee keeps a sense of duality. For example, at the conclusion, Theo throws his stone into the crater of Mount Eden.

A fierce wet detonation sounded in the crater. And the mountain lurched. It seemed to heave itself into the air. A rumble sounded deep inside it. Half the southern rim of its crater slipped into the bowl with a shingly roaring sound, like a great spill of concrete. For a moment a huge force pressed from below and the asphalt round the place where the twins had fallen cracked like ice on a pond. The mountain trembled, trembled. It gave a groaning sigh. Then everything was still. [...] In the air was a leaden hush, the stillness before some dreadful event. The twins felt their skin prickle. [...]

The sky was filled with concussions, with cracking, with the scream of air torn apart. The sea buckled like tin. Over Rangitoto, over the lake, towers of fire and ash reared up like monsters in a dream. The sky turned to blood. (p. 154)

The awe-inspiring power of this climactic explosion comes from the appeal to sound, sight, and feeling. The repeated use of similes reinforces a sense of duality in that similes show likeness but keep

identities separate, not letting them merge in metaphor. Yet here, Gee shows a fictional weakness. At times, similes such as 'a shingly roaring sound, like a spill of concrete' become merely explanatory, rather than expanding or extending, and reduce the power of natural forces to the level of human activity. This distracting effect suggests that subconsciously, if not consciously, Gee knows he is writing for children and does not trust his readers to understand what he is describing unless he uses known, ordinary images to clarify the extraordinary.¹³

Nevertheless, through creating the monstrous Wilberforces that can be destroyed only by the might of a volcanic eruption, Gee expresses an uncompromising theme. The Wilberforces are 'creatures of tremendous will - no imagination, no feeling, no conscience. They remind me of some of the leaders of your race', says Mr Jones (p. 74). Though at one point Rachel questions the need to destroy the Wilberforces, Gee's polarizing of Good and Evil is absolute. The only way to save the world is to destroy evil forces, and, Gee implies, politicians, before they destroy the world.¹⁴ But volcanic power is not easily controlled. At the final moment of devastation, both twins have to face the reality that innocent people have to suffer in the overthrow of evil, and it is 'right to grieve' for them (p. 155). Although Theo and Rachel as characters are not explored in great psychological depth, they are more than just conventional characters in that they must 'face the isolation of their special understanding and [...] their burden and their privilege'.¹⁵ Theo, for example, knows that he is responsible for the destruction on a large scale because he had yielded to temptation to put his stone down briefly. The great volcanic power of the natural world is symbolic of forces used in the world's political history and, uncomfortably, may have to be used again in the on-going struggle against Evil. Thus Gee draws on the inherent dangers of the volcanic landscape for the power to 'bounce' the reader into a heightened awareness of the importance of place and of struggle against the evils of pollution, crucial to the survival of the world.¹⁶

The first novel of the 1980s to draw on a volcanic eruption for fictional power is *Children of Fire Mountain* (1983) by Graeme Farmer and Roger Simpson. It is followed by Elsie Locke's *A Canoe in the Mist*

(1984), Barry Faville's *The Keeper* (1986), and Margaret Mahy's *A Very Wicked Headmistress* (1984) and *Aliens in the Family* (1986). The first is more properly called an historical adventure rather than a novel. The second is indeed an historical novel, the third a postcataclysmic novel,¹⁷ the fourth a comic, satirical extravaganza, the fifth a novel of triple timing - modern, historical, and futuristic. Most exciting, however, for its greater subtlety, complexity and power, is the last novel in this group, Mahy's *The Tricksters* (1986), already discussed in Chapter Two above. It is important to this chapter for its use of the ancient volcanic origins of Lyttelton Harbour, not an actual eruption, to herald and express the inevitable, explosive outcome of the arrival of the Tricksters.

Children of Fire Mountain is an historical adventure derived from a TV programme. It provides a possible reason for the scarcity in New Zealand children's fiction of novels featuring a volcanic eruption. Volcanic power is temptingly spectacular. For those who use it with skill, it offers dramatic moments of climax for plot solutions, theme and character revelations. But in the spectacular, there lies the possibility of tourist-style happenings and cheap thrills. *Children of Fire Mountain* does not exactly succumb to these levels. It is strong in visual appeal from thermal activity, and the pacing of its plot makes it competent in terms of the conventional genre of the adventure story. But it seems opportunist and derivative in taking some details from the Tarawera eruption of forty years earlier. For example, Sarah sees a waka wairua, or ghost canoe foretelling disaster, and the eruption of the mountain stops only when the arrogantly racist Sir Charles tears up his title deeds to the tapu land he is planning to build on.

In comparison, Locke's *A Canoe in the Mist* is a historical novel, interpreting a major historical event and social issues of the time. Structurally, the 1886 eruption of Mt Tarawera takes place almost half way through the novel, not as the major climax at the end as in Gee's *Under the Mountain* or Farmer's *Children of Fire Mountain*. The build-up therefore is short, the aftermath considerable and worked through. This gives Locke the opportunity to establish that social background is no longer important when people are faced with the power of nature, here volcanic power. This is emphasized through a growing friendship between

Lillian and Mattie, one whose mother works for the hotel keeper, the other whose parents are wealthy tourists.

The volcanic mountain and its power immediately begin a build-up of tension. The girls hear references to horror stories and meet a frightening old Maori tohunga. They learn that misfortune comes to those who break tapu on the mountain, and that the mountain god will punish the Maoris gone mad for money. Mattie marvels at the 'mud and steam and smelly stuff, it's got ... it's got such power and it isn't even alive' (p. 25). Volcanic vibrations produce a surging wave on the lake. Below the steaming cauldron on the Terraces, there lies 'that inhuman core of fiery rock. [...] So what if it raged like a beast in a pit, spitting and roaring? Out of such violence it brought a matchless beauty' (p. 45). Irony lies in Mr Hensley's previous reference to permanence in 'that solid rock of a mountain' (p. 14) when, two days later, it turns into fire, mud and stones, 'the Devil's rain' (p. 107).

Locke forges a convincing narrative that does justice to the effect of a dangerous power in the landscape on her created characters and on those of historical reality in its thrall.¹⁸ Yet the impact of the novel lies not just in the creation of characters, of Mattie and Lillian who are 'going to be friends for ever and keep writing letters' (p. 197), but more in the themes that surface as a result of the eruption. The adults, as befits events in the 1880s, see the eruption through the frame of the Sublime, and many Pakeha and Maori, publicly and privately, pray to God for help and deliverance. Moreover, a mythic quality lies in the Maori belief that Tama-o-hoi is actively taking revenge on those who have violated the land, and particularly its own Pink and White Terraces - tourists, settlers, and the Maori people themselves who have prostituted their culture for the sake of the tourist trade. As well, the English are shown to be culturally insensitive and destructive in the way they 'go all over the world and pick the fruits they find there, and if they don't like it they move on and pick other fruits' (p. 144). Here, they take an old tohunga to a sanatorium where he is treated in such a way that tapu is broken and he dies. Nevertheless, in a gesture of reconciliation, Guide Sophie says:

'I have guided many tourists. Often they are loud with exclamations, like Mrs Fazackerley, but they don't *feel* anything. To show they've 'done' Rotomahana, they scrawl their names on the Terraces and break off pieces of crystal lace for souvenirs. [...] Perhaps Tuhoto was right. We should never have made Rotomahana into a show place to fill our pockets with money. But when someone like you comes along, Mattie - and you too, Lillian - and feels its true magic, and adds a little more of your own, why then my work has meaning.' (pp. 197-98)

The eruption of the volcano and the following stress and danger show that true values lie in spiritual responses and in friendship between people of different backgrounds and race. Ironically, it is not the tourist vandals, the Fazackerleys, who have to die, but a young tourist who is gentle and devout.

Probing further into the dynamics of a community, Faville in *The Keeper* uses volcanic activity as a metaphor to demonstrate what Baxter calls the 'volcanic forces within the soul of man'.¹⁹ Faville shows that ignorance and superstition lead people to respond in primitive ways to forces they cannot or will not understand or control. A nuclear disaster places his novel of crisis in a futuristic science fiction framework that remains within the bounds of possibility as required in the proper definition of science fiction.²⁰ Over a hundred years later, survivors live on the Central Plateau in small, primitive villages of physically normal individuals. Almost all of today's knowledge has been lost. In particular, ignorance of how radiation sickness develops and fear of contamination have led to the regular expulsion of those deformed to live as loners in the wilds. Some, like Michael's father, who is physically normal, and his mother, who has a withered arm, try to return. Therefore, when the first of two volcanic eruptions takes place fourteen years earlier, when Michael is three, the villagers respond with superstitious terror, demanding Michael's parents as a sacrifice.

In the murk and gloom we saw a glow of fiery, orange light mushrooming up through the blackness, rolling and writhing in the surging storm clouds.[...]

In this pandemonium there was little any of us could do at once to ensure peace. The panic had to run its course for a while. Then I heard someone shout, 'It's the loners! They've brought this curse on us. Get rid of them! Get rid of them and we'll be all right!' (pp. 46-47)

This information is recorded not by Michael, the recorder of this story, but by his teacher as an extra commentary. Faville's double point of view maintains tension and irony, linking the natural explosion to the nuclear in people's memories. Images in 'mushrooming', 'writhing' and 'clouds', show that the irrational behaviour of the villagers is based on enormous fear. Irony is deepened because Michael never learns the truth of his parents' murder. He believes they died of sickness.

A reminder of the first eruption helps to prepare the reader for the crisis of the second, thus reducing the fortuitousness of a *deus ex machina* effect. To increase expectations and build on what Robert Westall calls 'children's love of inevitable catastrophe', he shows that the volcano is active once more.²¹

From the volcano's mouth, a thin column of steam continued to climb into the sky. [...] Would it quieten and go away? Or was this the volcano clearing its throat ready to cough out a violence brewing deep underground? (pp. 94-95)

Violence brewing 'underground' beneath the volcano is matched by violence brewing beneath the surface of human affairs. Both are about to erupt. A man arrives from the Mud Pools village with stories of fighting between the villagers and the loners. The villagers demand with menaces that Michael should give them old Daniel Proctor's map showing the location of a cache of arms up on the desert plateau. Increasing volcanic activity accompanies Michael and Andy's danger-filled approach to the plateau where some of the male villagers are waiting for them.

There was an even mightier explosion, an echoing boom, as the lava column leapt higher than before. [...] A bright orange river was spilling over the volcano's cone and flowing down the slope in broad torrents. Red hot lava was pouring towards us. [...] The bulging, orange tongues poised for a few seconds on the edge of the valley above us, then began to slither down in a rush [...], and I could not suck enough air into my lungs because it seemed to have melted into the fire that was trying to engulf me. (pp. 127-28)

The reader's expectations of an eruption are fulfilled dramatically. For structural reasons, this eruption is required so that the lava flow can wipe out the arms cache and prevent the onset of gun warfare between the

villages and the killing of all the loners. The volcano actively plays its part in the affairs of the villagers and in representing their passions and violence.

But the violence, unlike the eruption, is not over. Back in the village, Michael and Andy are accused of treason and threatened with death. Nor has there been any change in the villagers' understanding of natural phenomena.

'They said Jean was the cause of the volcano erupting,' said Andy, 'because of her arm. She's cursed by the sickness according to them. [...]'

'Who are these stupid people?' I shouted. '[...] Don't they understand the simple fact that Jean's arm was smashed in an accident?' (pp. 152-53)

Obviously, violence continues to be fuelled as much by stupidity as ignorance, for the villagers, Jean's mother included, have conveniently forgotten how Jean's arm became misshapen. She is not at all a victim of radiation sickness. Thus Faville shows by comment and analogy the nature of society's group response to what is feared and misunderstood - to lash out in explosive ways, kill, ostracize or expel.

Some hope lies in individual response, however. The loners, perhaps because they are away from group influences and are therefore less pressured and explosive, have greater wisdom than the villagers. Honi, whose family rescue Michael from the lava flow, explains:

'You know the sickness and you are afraid of it. We have always known the sickness and dread it just as much, but we do not fear its victims. We guard them and care for them and when the mountain roars and flames we do not seek a sacrifice!' (p. 135)

Michael never learns that Honi and Sarah are his grandparents. They fear that this knowledge and that of his parents' fate might be too explosive for his peace of mind. At the end of Michael's story, the reader can only hope that the island in its isolation to the north, 'the last in the line of mountains stepping across the plain like beacons' (p. 160), symbolizes for Michael and his three companions the end of violent and ignorant responses to inexplicable situations.

Volcanic activity in the South Island aeons ago left behind two cratered areas, Lyttelton Harbour and Port Chalmers.²² The former is where Margaret Mahy lives. Not surprisingly, along with the general area of Christchurch, it attracts her as a location to be explored in her novels. However, Mahy has long been regarded as a writer who does not use a New Zealand environment. This is true of many of her short fantasy stories and folk-tales and true of stories using such settings as the ubiquitous supermarket. Certainly, her fascination with her English literary heritage and European folk-tale traditions lends a universality to her fiction. But the Englishness of some of her picture books is reinforced by the work of English illustrators, whereas expressions, such as 'quick as a cockabully' in *The Witch in the Cherry Tree* (1974), indicate a New Zealandness in her thinking. Except for *The Haunting* (1982), however, her novels of the 1980s explore not only her literary heritage but also the relationship between the New Zealandness of her outer and inner world. This, she says in her talks, is important to her.²³ Her two novels published in 1986, *Aliens in the Family* and *The Tricksters*, are both set in the particular location of Banks Peninsula with its inherent volcanic qualities.

Mahy's interest in volcanic qualities is shown previously in 1984 and 1985. In her satirical extravaganza, *A Very Wicked Headmistress* (1984), a volcanic but generalized landscape contributes to her comic effect.

What with the geysers and the hot mud, the volcanic side of things was more trouble than it was worth. And then one night a volcano actually blew up in the very middle of the sugarbeet fields. (p. 790) [...]

'The milk ran into the sugarbeet and the free-range eggs, and the volcano has mixed them all together, and cooked them into the biggest caramel custard in the world.' (p. 81)

Diamonds formed in the custard at the time of the explosion become highly desirable, and efforts made by various characters to retrieve them drive the plot to its zany conclusion. More seriously, in *The Catalogue of the Universe* (1985), Mahy mentions in passing the volcanic rock of the Port Hills and she explores the dangerous nature of its road. But her serious exploration of the dangerous nature of volcanic power comes to fruition in 1986.

It would seem that *Aliens in the Family* follows on from *The Pirate Uncle* (1977), discussed in Chapter Two above, in being set recognisably on Banks Peninsula. In *Aliens in the Family*, the ancient volcanic cone provides a dramatic place for the working out of a triple-level time shift. This involves three groups of people: a family of step-parents and three children in present time; three men from the 1830s, the least developed of the three threads; and from the future, Bond, a Galgonqua from outer space, pursued for his knowledge by the Wirdegen. A pendant of greenstone worn by one member of each group pulls the groups together in the same place at the same time. The role of the volcano is to turn back time 'a million years' to when Banks Peninsula is still an island. The volcano itself erupts with a desire not to be ignored. It 'wanted people to notice it and to tremble at its force' (p. 164). It serves the purpose of bringing the family together in this strange situation. After this, they are able to sort out their particular and somewhat puzzling explosive relationships where unexpected humour, as in much of Mahy's work, highlights the complexity of relationships. 'There's nothing in the Good Parent's Instruction Manual to tell you what to do when you're lost in time with a volcano as a next-door neighbour' (p. 165), says the bewildered father. The fast-forwarding to the present leaves the family with the feeling of both an end and a beginning to their relationships. Thus with *Aliens in the Family* adding further complexity from volcanic origins to the seascapes of *The Pirate Uncle*, these two novels appear to be direct forerunners of Mahy's most astonishing novel, *The Tricksters*.

In *The Tricksters*, without an actual eruption, Mahy achieves her expressed aim 'to internalise the country I live in', as the following paragraphs will show.²⁴ Volcanic landscapes are not exclusive to New Zealand, but they are intrinsic to parts of this country. When volcanic qualities are added to gorse and lupins endemic to New Zealand, flax, native bush, the powerful nor-west wind, and the port across the bay, the setting for *The Tricksters* is clearly Lyttelton Harbour. The inherent forces of this New Zealand landscape help to increase fictional power as the novel proceeds to 'reveal a unique place' and a way of life.²⁵ Details are subtly woven through the story to be far removed from what Robin Hyde loathed in New Zealand writing of past generations – local colour applied 'as thick as a chorine's grease paint'.²⁶

To reinforce the notion of a 'prehistoric estuary' holding ancient passions, the harbour is held by 'a circle of craggy hills in the cone of an old volcano' (p. 19). The very nature of the ancient volcanic rim emphasizes the age-old 'volcanic forces within the soul of man' - love, betrayal, jealousy, murder.²⁷ Naomi remembers: 'We all got so terribly unhappy that all feelings changed under pressure, like metamorphic rock' (p. 253). As the old year runs out, it 'melted away and became another intangible part of the old volcano' (p. 261). Barbara Kiefer sees non-volcanic mountains functioning similarly in Alan Garner's *The Owl Service* (1967) to store passions and actions of human beings: 'From the beginning, the mountains support the action, like silent watchers of the drama that has been re-enacted over the centuries.'²⁸ Mahy's use of this watchful image of volcanic hills and harbour encapsulates what Peter Tomory calls 'the crouched violence of these dark volcanic hills'.²⁹ Harry realizes, Eliot-like, that 'time past was not really time past' (p. 253). All that happens in this place is captured, recorded and stored by the old volcano. One day, maybe, the forces driving the Hamilton family will be re-activated, just as the passions and actions of the Carnival family have been re-activated here after eighty years.

Mahy's use of the extinct volcanic harbour setting is obviously much more intense and complex in this novel than in *Aliens in the Family*. Indeed, the latter's science fiction element turns magical and creative in *The Tricksters*. The shimmering light and radiant changes of form undergone by Bond and the pursuing Wirdegen in *Aliens in the Family* are reworked into the seething, quivering arrival and dissolving departure of the Tricksters. And it is Harry herself, the writer, who 'crumpled reality with passionate wishes' in a masterly objectification of the processes of fiction (p. 37).³⁰ Harry draws the ghost of murdered Teddy Carnival out from volcanic rock under the sea in the shape of three, the trio of Ovid, Hadfield, and Felix.³¹ Just as volcanic forces rise up in New Zealand through the gap in the Pacific and Australian plates, so the Tricksters crawl out of 'a wrong gap in the world' (p. 53).³² At the same time, they are the manifestation of Harry's fictional hero, Prince Valery, and the wicked Belen. With the arrival of the Tricksters, the volcanic quality of the landscape begins its metaphorical transformation of the life of the Hamilton family. Ovid proves to be the catalyst, manoeuvring events towards flash-point.

Volcanic power is extended through images of fire, burning their way through the narrative from the volcano 'born out of fire' (p. 25).

Earth, air, fire and water had once played, turn and turn about, over the hills around them, like huge careless children, and the Hamiltons now sunbathed and swam in the ruins left by those games, baring their backs and legs on the shifting margins of sand and sea. (p. 74)

On these shifting margins, Ovid's fantastic curls blaze 'as if outlined with a fiery pen' (p. 101). The pressure of family and events makes Harry feel she may become 'a spirit of fire, incandescent in her pointed room' (p. 172). When she exposes the family secret, she 'burned before them like a witch at the stake' (p. 228). 'Wearing her enchantress face [...] as if she had caught fire' (p. 230), she erupts with the explosive effect Ovid is hoping for. Finally, having burned her book as an act of purging events and her creative part in them, she walks into the sea.

The ripples wrote lines of light around her [...] and Harry was filled with fire too. In the end she was indeed possessed by the brute blood of the air so powerfully but so delicately it was like no possession she had ever imagined. [...] She felt remarkable. (p. 263)

The creative process in 'lines of light' and understanding is rekindled in Harry. In the sea, symbol of Jung's Great Unconscious, she is filled with power to begin writing again, transformed to shine and glow in new creative outpouring. In this novel, volcanic power has indeed been used symbolically as 'the eternal source of creation and destruction, the primal fire'.³³

Furthermore, Mahy draws power from tectonic forces often allied to volcanic activity and thought by Harry to be 'the beast from a thousand fathoms' or 'the volcanic worm' (p. 47). An earthquake opens Part II when the challenge to truth and illusion is rising to a climax. The house seeks to turn back time to when Teddy was killed. Even its wallpaper changes as it becomes fully energized into a living thing to help solve the mystery of Teddy's death and the family's own mystery.

A missing part had been restored to an old machine, the wheels of memory had begun to turn, and when people were asleep, the house tried to turn itself back to

another time. [...] Carnival's Hide was being stretched and strained by a natural power. (p. 143)

A natural, tectonic power is the cause of an outer manifestation of the change taking place within the characters and likened by Charlie to a midsummer night's dream. The wheels of memory turn in the *Tricksters* too, as they seek to find the wholeness and balance missing within themselves. The 'homely twitching' of a small earthquake is a reminder of the first earthquake and seismic power. Thus the dramatic power of the volcanic landscape combines with the power of seascapes already discussed in Chapter Two above. A total involvement of place in *The Tricksters* bears out Eudora Welty's claim that 'fiction depends for its life on place'.³⁴ Mahy exemplifies Leonard Lutwack's 'subjective flow set in motion by the place, the amount and intensity of inwardness that external stimuli can arouse. [...] It is not knowing the place that counts, however, but knowing oneself or finding the truth about oneself in a place'.³⁵ This can be applied to all the major characters. Or as Eleanor Cameron claims: 'Without the power of place, without that discovery of a special country of the mind right for this tale, the story could not have been told at all'.³⁶ There is nothing in New Zealand children's fiction that draws more powerfully than *The Tricksters* on a sense of place to release its marvellous story, shape theme and character in its challenge to concepts of creativity, truth and illusion.

Non-volcanic mountains, which owe their origins to tectonic forces, have a different brand of power to help writers enlarge their fiction through danger.³⁷ Usually, dense bush adds to the predicament of protagonists. The second half of this chapter will show the effects of the dangers of isolation and disorientation in non-volcanic mountain country. Novels that explore this landscape fall into three main groups: adventure/survival stories of the 1970s in hostile mountainscapes: 'bridging' stories spanning the decades without change in treatment of either animal or gold-rush themes: and novels of the 1980s where mountain/bush country becomes less hostile and more accepted, but still offers challenge and danger.

The two most important adventure/survival novels of the 1970s are by Joan de Hamel and Anne de Roo. In stories which explicitly owe a debt to the Robinsonnade, they both challenge characters lost in a hostile mountain/bush environment.³⁸ Other novels worth mentioning here in passing are *The Runaway Settlers* (1965, 1971) by Elsie Locke and *The Forest Rangers* (1977) by G.K. Saunders. These two recount the dangers and difficulties of making journeys through mountain/bush landscapes in early times, and Locke shows that even brief experiences can make a contribution to the whole. But only *The Boy with the Snowgrass Hair* (1977) by Elsie Locke and Ken Dawson, a lively collection of experiences in fictional form, expresses the sheer delight of mountaineering and pays a tribute to New Zealand literature by quoting from Denis Glover's *Arawata Bill*.³⁹

The South Island mountain wilderness, however, is described most vividly by De Hamel in *X Marks the Spot* (1973). She likens it to 'a solid green quilted cushion' (p. 10), but this 'protective maternal' appearance soon turns after a helicopter crash into 'menacing and hostile powers'.⁴⁰

On all sides trees towered, moss hung in festoons, leaves dripped. A schoolboy compass was useless in primeval forest. Peter was suddenly aware of the awful threat of the bush, of his own insignificance and incompetence against its dominating power. (pp. 45-46)

The size of the bush, its rampant growth, its 'threat', its 'dominating power', fill Peter with justified alarm. Awareness of his insignificance and need to 'think' in order to survive is matched by Lou's efforts to control her terror by telling herself: 'I can think out what to do' (p. 46). Later, as they begin to cope better, Lou begins to appreciate a greater grandeur in the primeval forest.

She remembered how threatening it had seemed two nights before, how terrifying. But now there it was, just existing, as it had for thousands, millions of years [...]. She was probably the first human being who had ever seen these actual trees. She felt herself to be a speck in size, a flick in the ticking of time and the passing of the centuries. (pp. 104-05)

In these brief moments of awareness of 'man's smallness' and 'solitude', qualities of Burke's Sublime,⁴¹ de Hamel enlarges the vision of her

characters. Adding to the story's thematic power is the mystery concerning the creature that is protected by this very isolated environment that threatens the children. The creature is the endangered kakapo. Unaware of its identity, Lou discovers it and delights in recording its habits. In this way, a reader is easily persuaded that the kakapo should be protected.

Much of the power in this novel also lies in the way the three children relate to each other in their struggle to survive. Ross, who refers to himself as 'Ross Crusoe' (p. 29), meets his crisis when his carelessly tied bowline lets all their packs go down a fast-flowing river. The three are left with a rifle, a knife, matches, and the clothes they are wearing. But in the interchange over the vital shooting of a deer for food - Peter hates blood, Ross has to slit the deer's throat - the boys reach a new understanding. 'Ross's bowline was to be forgiven, ransomed by the killing of the buck' (p. 101). This is one example of the effective way de Hamel draws on the power of a mountain/bush landscape to develop character relationships. Along with her treatment of theme outlined above, this makes her adventure/survival novel outstanding in New Zealand children's fiction.

De Roo in *Scrub Fire* (1977) similarly writes of children struggling to survive in strange, difficult, North Island mountain/bush terrain. They flee there in panic after their uncle and aunt accidentally set a hillside on fire. These children are younger, however. They play Robinson Crusoe-style territorial games, and do not achieve the moments of vision granted to de Hamel's characters. But the mountain/bush terrain is terrifying and challenging, particularly in the children's fight against despair. Michelle reaches a low point.

There was nowhere to run now, just trees, undergrowth, creepers on every side. All day she had kept going [...]. Now, with terrifying insight, she realised that they might circle among the hills until they could walk no further. She sat down on the ground and for the first time in all their wandering burst into tears. (p. 77)

This extract captures Michelle's terror and the justifiable reasons for it, an example of much that is successful in character development in the face of danger. Other examples of success come from sibling rivalry,

such as when Michelle rushes off into the bush to make herself 'her brother's superior as a provider of food' (p. 52). Nevertheless, some inconsistencies reduce the power of the story. For example, after a description of Michelle's hunger pangs as 'a constant pain [...], a weakness in her legs and a dizziness in her head' (p. 33), one would not expect her to behave foolishly when the boys catch an eel. Though she tells them to put it back in the river, they cook it instead. She eats it, thinking at first it is ordinary fish, and judges it 'a banquet fit for a Queen' (p. 37). Yet she calls the boys 'disgusting, repulsive savages' (p. 46) for catching another eel. The novel's strength lies, instead, in the enormous effort made by the three children to reach help, in the relentlessness of the mountain/bush terrain, and in the children's purely physical engagement with the terror of the Sublime.

The novels that straddle the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, because of a similarity in their approach to landscape, theme, and character, are concerned with two topics: either animals in the wild or experiences on the Otago goldfields. The first comprises Philip Holden's animal-centred novels. In *Fawn* (1976), *Stag* (1980), *White Patch* (1981), and *Razorback* (1984), neither deer nor pig is anthropomorphized. Animals retain a realistic, sympathetic credibility. For these creatures of nature, the mountainous landscape appropriately holds dangers in slips, earthquake, and entangling creepers as a death trap, although the animals are, of course, at home in this environment. The earthquake in *Fawn*, for example, is described as producing 'a feeling [that] had come to them both, something purely instinctive, something which a truly wild creature would sense where only one human in a thousand might' (p. 99). They also face danger from another source - hunters. But the grandeur of the landscape and the magnificence and bravery of the deer work together to develop new feelings of respect in some of the hunters - the Sublime dissipating the cult of kill.⁴² Lance Miller in *Stag*, for example, 'was stunned and overwhelmed by what he had seen. Felt small and insignificant, compared to such grandeur' (p. 147). In this sense, these New Zealand animal stories differ little from sympathetic hunting stories set, for example, in the wilds of Canada.⁴³

The other novels straddling the 1970s and 1980s are those which focus on the gold-rush days of New Zealand's history. Anne de Roo's *The Gold Dog* (1969, 1982), Roger Simpson's *Hunter's Gold* (1976), Ruth Dallas's *Shining Rivers* (1979), and Eve Sutton's *Valley of Heavenly Gold* (1987), have in common the barrenness of gold-bearing mountain/hill country, the harshness of summer sun and winter snow, and a power in the landscape to release violent emotions in those who have caught the fever for gold. As Denis Glover describes it, gold is found

In country crumpled like an unmade bed
Whose crumbs may be nuggets as big as your head
And all snow-sheeted, storm-cloud fed.⁴⁴

De Roo's is a contemporary story. The mountainous Otago back country, tough and raw with treacherous rivers, acquires a strength to offset the slightly self-conscious portrayal of a modern boy's search for gold to buy the dog he longs for. This leads to the children's wish to help the old prospector Seb Higgins. Through this character, Anne de Roo adds the dimension of human life span, the hard life of gold-miners in times past, the problem of independence in the present for old Seb.

In the other three gold-rush novels, Simpson's *Hunter's Gold*, Dallas's *Shining Rivers*, and Sutton's *Valley of Heavenly Gold*, the rawness of the country frames the rawness of emotions - fever for gold and greed which can lead to prejudice, robbery, murder, or accidental death. The point of view in each novel is that of a boy in his early teens. All three novels are critical of callous and inhuman development in characters who are fired by lust for gold. Matthew in Sutton's *Valley of Heavenly Gold* learns also to detest racial prejudice against the Chinese. But though *Hunter's Gold* is a lively adventure/treasure story, offering some criticism of social prejudice that leads to a miscarriage of justice, its third-person narrative allows Scott no real development.

The best of these gold-rush novels, *Shining Rivers*, shows once again the power that is gained from a successful internalizing of the dangers in the landscape. Johnie sees that it is easy to get lost, drown in flash floods, or die of starvation in the sameness of bare mountain/hill country where each man is obsessed with his own hunt for gold.

We had grown callous in that inhuman landscape. (p. 102)

Perhaps we had all changed. [...] All I thought about was getting gold and even went on looking for it after I had found Tony's dead body. (p. 111)

Most of all I was tired of living among men who had grown like the stones they worked among, hard and unfeeling, and who thought of only one thing, gold. (p. 120)

These quotations progressively show Johnie's growing awareness of how, like others, he has become changed by the lust for gold into someone as hard and unfeeling as the land itself. The 'demon' of his lust is so strong that it takes Johnie a year after he perceives its 'inhuman' effects before he can rid himself of its power. But he does have another aim in life - to buy a farm. He is finally able to leave an 'inhuman landscape' for productive land and 'some things more valuable than gold' - 'friendship' and 'life' (pp. 141-42).

In the 1980s, novels that draw at length on mountainscapes generally show a shift from a perception of them as hostile to a perception of them as accepting and supportive, even though danger still lurks. This shift is developed in part because an increasingly important role is played by Maori characters in these novels. Mona Tracy and Beverley Dunlop draw on dramatic mountain/bush terrain in the Ureweras to empower their subject matter relating to the wars of the 1860s. Phyl Wardell specializes in the Sublime setting of Fiordland in two novels which, however, retain a sense of hostility in the landscape. Finally in this chapter, Jack Lasenby and Joanna Orwin create characters who are at ease in their mountain/bush setting, though still endangered at times. In addition, Orwin enlarges her fiction by drawing on tectonic power.

Both Tracy's *Rifle and Tomahawk* (1927, 1983), and Dunlop's *Spirits of the Lake* (1988), are concerned with the deeds of Te Kooti, the first in Poverty Bay, the second near Lake Waikaremoana. Both explore the nature of guerrilla warfare waged in difficult and uncomfortable mountain/bush terrain. The bush helps to hide the protagonist Ron and his sister from Maori warriors, but they have to suffer from lack of food. But Te Kooti and his men 'had been starving in the mountain fastnesses to which they had been hunted by the settlers' (p. 107). Tracy is led to express some

sympathy for the Maori cause. But her stance is pro-European, as might be expected in 1927, and she promotes the integration of Maori with Pakeha. Nor does she involve the landscape in the affairs of settlers or fighters, other than to provide hiding places from enemies.⁴⁵

More compelling through the involvement of landscape is Dunlop's *Spirits of the Lake*. Structurally, it uses time-shifts to embroil a modern-day boy in the events of the past which had led to a family curse. Part history, part myth, part fantasy, the story tells of Paul's attempts to solve the family mystery and lift the curse. The landscape, especially the forest, becomes involved with the action in the past. Paul is carried by a strange stone and the sensation of pain back and forth in time between his family's holiday at the Motor Camp and Te Kooti's struggles in the mountainous, thickly bush-clad Urewera country. The strange stone that is a mauri guards the pa from its resting place among the roots of a rata, a good example of a stone providing a dwelling place for a spirit.⁴⁶ There too, the power of the spirit Taimana is reinforced by the appearance of his 'knotted face on the rata in the clearing' (p. 122), a face that haunts both Paul and his mother. Paul, absorbed into the body of Paratene, watches with Mereaira as Te Turuki (Te Kooti) offers a blood sacrifice, the heart of a trooper, to the mauri and the spirits led by Taimana. At that instance, the chanting spirit voices and the voice of Te Turuki 'merged in a roar of sound that shook the clearing' (p. 95). A storm follows, lashing the forest 'as if in protest at the theft of the mauri (p. 98), and it seemed to Paul and 'to his wild thoughts that Taimana had given powers to the forest itself to stop his passage' (p. 106). Thus the forest looks after its own, and enables the people from the pa to escape into its protection before the troopers make their raid.

The wild mountain terrain of Fiordland as a setting attracts Phyl Wardell for several of her novels, including *The Secret of the Lost Tribe* (1961, 1986) and *Beyond the Narrows* (1985). Both draw strongly on notions of the magnificence in mountains and of challenge rather than dangers for the characters. In the former novel, an American film-maker provides an example of the imported frame of the Sublime in seeing the mountains and fiords as a glamorous, romantic setting for a long-ago romance between a sealer and a member of the Lost Tribe.⁴⁷ A running

thread of small comments maintains an attitude associated with the Sublime. For example, the forest is 'centuries-old [and] full of secrets' (p. 41), mountains are 'so steep' because they were 'gouged out by glaciers' (p. 42), and features such as waterfalls are often beautiful (p. 71). Yet the landscape provokes Lin's outburst: 'These beautiful mountains and forests - I hate them all. They're wicked. Wicked and brooding and frightening' (p. 66). Moreover, the landscape produces conventional European idealizing notions of the Noble Savage. Jinny concludes that the Lost Tribe should 'stay lost and happy for ever' (p. 72). This attitude engendered by this landscape runs counter to the more commonly-held patronizing concept that Europeans and their superior civilization bring benefits to Stone-Age Tribes.⁴⁸

Wardell obviously retains a deep feeling for mountain-bush landscape with its Sublime effects. In *Beyond the Narrows*, the 'rugged mountains with their centuries-old forests' (p. 72) are described in a style unchanged as the mountainscapes are unchanged over the twenty-four years between the publication of these two novels. Wardell makes use of drama and magnificence in 'the forested mountains rising steeply from the water [...] wild and mysterious as ever' (p. 72), in 'the vertical sides towered above us' (p. 98) and in a 'heavy, eerie silence that pressed on our eardrums' (p. 100). This magnificent mountain/bush terrain is a dramatic and fitting place for enlarging on the need for conservation of both flora and fauna, and, in particular, for an important questioning of the right of scientists to develop genetic engineering.

Finally, both Jack Lasenby and Joanna Orwin create characters, both Maori and Pakeha, who explore mountain/bush terrain with ease and a sense of belonging, confidently facing dangers associated with survival.

Lasenby in *The Lake* (1987) convinces the reader that his mountain-bush setting is rooted in his knowledge and experience, and that in about six weeks someone with luck and skill could succeed in crossing its terrain to reach a lake. Though not vast in continental terms, the terrain is nevertheless formidable, demanding extraordinary mental and physical strength on the part of anyone attempting to hack a way across.

Over the top of that ridge, there was another, and over that, another. They marched on like breakers, higher and higher, bluer and bluer, climbing towards the lake.

There were other slips, but everything else was bush. It went on and on, for ever and ever. I thought of all the bush that I couldn't see, and felt small, smaller than a robin. (p. 50)

However, Ruth Green, the protagonist, is not quite thirteen when her two-year survival story begins and she is called upon to cross this mountain/bush landscape with its Sublime impact on her feelings of smallness. Her efforts are admirable. Yet she lacks direct experience of bushcraft and succeeds with little trial and error so that her building of the hut, for example, reads like the experience of a strong, skilled, experienced man, not of a girl barely thirteen.

I levelled the site under the kahikatea, staked two heavy pongas in place, as the bottom of the walls, notched their ends, and dropped a notched log across them. When the walls were three logs high, I drove tea-tree poles into the ground on either side, and lashed the logs with split supplejack. (p. 93)

Similarly, there is little trial and error in her success at killing, skinning and cooking trout, eel and possums. Credibility in the way she copes with danger and challenge in the landscape becomes strained, until she meets old Tommy, her father's friend. The way they settle into a bush existence is much easier to accept. Although this bush-life sustains Ruth, however, the lake becomes more symbolically involved with her struggles. This novel, therefore, will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Whereas Ruth is mostly on her own or with Tommy, Orwin's Ihaka in *Ihaka and the Summer Wandering* (1982) and *Ihaka and the Prophecy* (1984) stays with his tribe. He shares the attitudes and traditions of a pre-European Maori community living in harmony with the environment, both on the seacoast and up in bush-clad ranges. This includes reverence for all living things. For example, in *Ihaka and the Summer Wandering*, the taking of food requires that the first korimako killed should be laid 'at the foot of the tree as an offering to Tane and his forest people' (p. 50). Though the forest is not hostile as it is in adventure/survival stories published in the 1970s, it still offers dangers through which Ihaka's skills and strength of mind are developed, for example, in the

climbing of a massive kahikatea as a result of an older boy's taunt. This climb marks a turning point in Ihaka's relationship with Toihau. 'They had been through too much together to remain enemies' (p. 69). Ihaka develops skills to snare enough birds to feed the men on the stone-working expedition, and he makes his first knife which he offers 'to the gods of all stone'. It is 'his first step towards manhood' (p. 110).

In *Ihaka and the Prophecy*, the relationship between the tribe and their environment continues in harmony, though natural dangers still provide challenge. Before the men cut down a giant totara to make their new canoe, the tohunga asks Tane 'to lift the tapu that prevented men from harming the children of the forest' (p. 38). The totara is so huge that even turning it presents all workers with dangers that are held at bay by chanting and team effort so that 'the gods were with them' (p. 73). Ihaka's skills at working with stone continue to develop during the carving of the canoe till he acquires the necessary qualities to become a tohunga.

In addition to general dangers of mountain/bush terrain, Orwin in *Watcher in the Forest* (1987) draws on the inherent dangers of tectonic activity to bring her novel to its conclusion. She uses time shifts to tell of great earthquakes and landslides now and in the past. The landscape itself, the enduring landscape, is the major image of the novel: 'Men come. Men depart. The land alone endures' (p. 130). The land is the means of linking past and present. It holds memories of wicked deeds committed in the past, and it grows 'restless' when the large piece of greenstone remains hidden (p. 77). Through dream and vision which fill Jen with 'horror' (p. 76), the Watcher has power to encourage her to take part in an important process of restoration. It was for the greenstone piece, itself a product of the mountain/river landscape, that crimes were committed in the past. It must be restored to lie beside the body of its original carver in a burial cave. When it is at last returned, the cave is sealed by one more earthquake and landslide with spectacular effects.

She thought she saw the giant figure of her visions standing again on the mountain top, his arms upraised. [...] The vast scale of natural change overshadowed the events in human lives. Yet the land gave of itself to the people and that gift bound together those who came after and those who had gone before.

[...] Her life had been linked to that of the people who had been here so long ago. (pp. 129-30)

To make Jen accept the importance of her task, Orwin obviously uses qualities associated with the Sublime, especially the insignificance of human beings in the face of natural forces, but she gives these qualities a Maori cultural dimension, mythic in impact. No distinction is drawn between Maori and Pakeha actors in this drama. They all share the same landscape, and the problem is a human one, transcending cultural boundaries. All that is required of the protagonists - and the reader - is a sympathetic belief in what has to be done. This is, therefore, another novel which draws its inspiration from the landscape. It could not be set anywhere else but inland from the West Coast of the South Island where earthquake, landslide and greenstone come together in the affairs of mankind.

Thus it is clear that mountains offer New Zealand writers inspiring and yet menacing or terrifying images through inherent volcanic or tectonic qualities. Several novels convey the importance of conservation and the need to fight against pollution for the survival of the world. Others evoke feelings of awe and terror and an awareness of the insignificance of human beings against the power of the landscape to extend the impact of their fiction. When images of explosiveness or harshness are internalized, for example, in Barry Faville's *The Keeper* or Margaret Mahy's *The Tricksters* or in Ruth Dallas's *Shining Rivers*, then characters are indeed created in whom the 'mind has mountains'.⁴⁹ In spite of the explosive quality of volcanic and tectonic forces, however, and in spite of recent trends overseas towards desolate endings, the novels discussed in this chapter show that New Zealand writers follow what is 'part of the perceived reality of children's books' in offering their young readers some final form of hope and reassurance. As Margaret Mahy has said of her own tumultuous *The Tricksters*, 'compassion and forgiveness triumph over betrayal'.⁵⁰

NOTES

1. 'Once the Days', in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, ed. by Allen Curnow (1960), p. 221.
2. *Hot Water Sailor* (1962), p. 81.
James K. Baxter also declares that 'any analysis of the symbolism of New Zealand literature must take into account the great part played by mountains and volcanic activity'. He puts the mountains and bush in second and third place after the sea and before the beach and the island. 'Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry', in *James K. Baxter as Critic* (hereafter *BAC*), ed. by Frank McKay (1978), pp. 50-69 (p. 53).
3. D.J. Lowe and J.D. Green, 'Origins and development of the lakes', in *Inland Waters of New Zealand*, ed. by A.B. Viner (1987), pp. 1-64 (p. 1).
4. The position of New Zealand at the junction of two major plates in the earth's crust is elaborated in the Introduction, notes 1 and 67.
5. *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 35.
6. Frances Pound quotes Edmund Burke extensively on the Sublime. The mountains are among his favourite topics, invoking 'a related feeling of man's smallness in the vast face of nature'. *Frames on the Land* (1983), pp. 19-20. The concept of the Sublime appears often in New Zealand adult literature. Pound gives several examples, and, as a further example, Wystan Curnow, refers to the 'Sublime silence of the primeval New Zealand' in M.H. Holcroft's work. *Antic*, 3 (1987), 143-63 (p. 162).
7. Areas of volcanic origin in the North Island are in Northland and Auckland. The Taupo Volcanic Zone is still active. In the South Island, areas of volcanic origin are virtually restricted to Banks Peninsula and the Otago Peninsula.
8. In this respect, the novel does not express aggressiveness towards horses or within the family as does Mary O'Hara's *My Friend Flicka* trilogy (1943 onwards), set in the high country of Wyoming in the 1930s.
9. Science fiction of value is 'speculative fiction in which the author takes as his first postulate the real world as we know it, including all the established facts and natural laws [...]; legitimate - and often very tightly reasoned - speculation about the possibilities of the real world'. Robert A. Heinlein, quoted by Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (1989), pp. 203-04. Gee, however, adds fantasy to science fiction, and magic stones give the twins power to engage the forces of the volcanoes.
10. Betty Gilderdale sums up another reason why Alexander's novel is reduced in its impact. 'His preoccupation with philosophical problems rather detracts from the human interest element of the story.' *A Sea Change* (1982), p. 136.
11. Ursula le Guin, 'The Child and the Shadow', in *The Language of the Night* (1979), pp. 59-71 (p. 68).
Auckland's volcanic forces may not yet be dead. Brian Rudman quotes Auckland University volcanologist Dr Ian Smith on the possibility that Rangitoto will not be the last eruption, because 'the impression I get is the field is only just getting going'. 'Cones of Silence', *NZL*, 15 July 1991, p. 21.
12. It is a characteristic of New Zealand fantasy novels that the activating agent is most often a stone, often greenstone, a worn or carved and polished part of the landscape. Stones are powerful symbols, says Ariela Jaffé, with 'enduring psychological significance. They are often believed to be the dwelling places of spirits or gods'. 'Symbolism in the Visual Arts', in *Man and his Symbols*, ed. by Carl G. Jung and others

- (1964), pp. 230-71 (p. 232). See, for example, R.L. Bacon, *Again the Bugles Blow* (1973); Maurice Gee's *The Halfmen of O* trilogy (1982 onwards); Margaret Mahy, *The Changeover* (1984) and *Aliens in the Family* (1986); Barry Faville's *The Return* (1987); Joanna Orwin, *Watcher in the Forest* (1987); Beverley Dunlop, *Spirits of the Lake* (1988); and Gaelyn Gordon's *Stonelight* (1988).
13. In the last chapter alone of *Under the Mountain*, twenty similes are used, interrupting at times both spatial and temporal cohesion. For example, the twins are running ahead of the Wilberforces, and the latter are described as travelling 'no more than a minute or two behind them and coming with the speed of an express train' (p. 147). If that were so, it would be impossible for the twins to stay ahead. But they do so, even when Mr Jones moves them, in his blaze of light at 'not more than an easy running pace'. These similes become 'not fit for their purpose', to use Neil Philip's terms. 'This Way Confusion', *Signal*, 43 (1984), 12-18 (p. 17).
 14. Robert Westall, however, suggests it is dangerous to polarize Good and Evil and 'blind children to the fact that there is evil in the best of us and good in the worst'. 'The Hunt for Evil', *Signal*, 34 (1981), 3-13 (p. 8).
 15. 'This is a conventional situation in children's fiction (indeed, in many kinds of narrative), yet it fits with the rest of Gee's fiction,' says Bill Manhire, and he refers to several of Gee's central characters in his adult fiction. *Maurice Gee* (1986), p. 11.
 16. 'The whole intricate question of method resolves itself [...] into the power of the writer to bounce the reader into accepting what he says,' E.M. Forster. *Aspects of the Novel* (1976), pp. 81-82. While Gee's power is diminished at times, he nevertheless succeeds in the overall power of his theme. Though one's critical stance may be altered, one's admiration for his achievement may remain. This is precisely the response Peter Hunt reports after taking a class of students through a critical experiment on the work of William Mayne. His students' adverse comments 'altered my critical approach to Mayne, if not my admiration for him'. 'The Mayne Game: An Experiment in Response', *Signal*, 28 (1979), 9-25 (p. 24).
 17. The term 'postcataclysmic' is used by Margaret P. Esmonde to define science fiction novels which speculate about mankind's possible future in our world after some major catastrophe. 'After Armageddon: The Postcataclysmic Novel for Young Readers', in *Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood (1980), 440-48 (first publ. in *Children's Literature*, 6 (1977), 211-20).
 18. To use Wayne Booth's distinction between a narrative audience and an authorial audience in terms of credibility, one may say that Locke succeeds in allowing her narrative audience to believe that the fictional girls and their families and the historical characters such as Edwin Bainbridge are real people and that Mount Tarawera erupted in 1886. Locke also succeeds in making it possible for her authorial audience to believe in the eruption and the historical characters while pretending to believe in the girls and their families. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983), p. 423.
 19. *BAC*, p. 52.
 20. Science fiction of value is 'speculation about possibilities in the real world'. Heinlein, quoted by Donelson and Nilsen, in *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, pp. 203-04.
 21. 'How Real Do You Want Your Realism?', *Signal*, 28 (1979), 34-46 (p. 44).
 22. The only novel that refers to the volcanic origins of Port Chalmers is Joan de Hamel's *Take the Long Path* (1978). This aspect of her novel is mentioned in Chapter Four below.

23. For example, 'Building Bridges Between Our Outer and Inner Landscapes', in *Reading is Everybody's Business*, ed. by W.B. Elley (1973), pp. 91-98.
24. 'On Building Houses that Face Towards the Sun', in *A Track to Unknown Water*, ed. by Stella Lees (1980), pp. 92-103 (p. 102).
25. It comes as a surprise to a New Zealander to read that Margery Fisher thinks of gorse and lupins as English when they are endemic to New Zealand. 'Variations in Time and Space', *GP*, 25.4 (1986), 4704-08 (p. 4708). It is even more of a surprise to find David Rees stating that 'with the exception of the differences between the seasons [...] we could be almost anywhere in either the northern or the southern hemisphere. This is both a strength and a weakness: one feels that an opportunity to reveal a unique place and culture has been missed'. *What Do Draculas Do?* (1990), pp. 146-47. To a New Zealander, Mahy has indeed revealed 'a unique place' and aspects of life lived here but with universal significance, as this thesis shows. Moreover, it is not the role of a critic to say what a writer should have done or what themes or characters should have been chosen. Rather, in Susan Sontag's words, the role of a critic is 'to show how it is what it is, even that it is what it is'. 'Against Interpretation', in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, ed. by David Lodge (1972), pp. 652-60 (p. 660), (first publ. in *Evergreen Review* (1964)).
26. *Journalese* (1934), quoted by Joan Stevens, *The New Zealand Novel 1860-1960* (1961), p. 54.
27. *BAC*, p. 52.
28. 'Wales as a setting for children's fantasy', *CLE*, 45 (1982), 95-101 (p. 97). See, too, Ivan Southall in *The Fox Hole* (1967), p. 12, for another example of trouble held in the landscape, here a gully, waiting eighty years to be re-activated.
29. 'The Visual Arts', in *Distance Looks Our Way* (1961), quoted by Wystan Curnow in 'Landscape and the Body', *Antic*, 3 (1987), 143-62 (p. 161).
30. Albert Wendland defines 'objectification' as 'a clarification of the methods of perception as well as the showing of the object perceived, [...] in other words, the inclusion of the observer in the observation'. Objectification lifts fiction out of conventional levels of achievement. *Science, Myth, and the Fictional Creation of Alien Worlds* (1985), p. 4. Mahy's preoccupation with the objectifying of story-making, and with reality and illusion, is evident from her first published picture book, *A Lion in the Meadow* (1969). Margaret Mahy endorses this observation. 'It now seems to me that *The Tricksters* and *A Lion in the Meadow* have the same plot and spring from the same experiences. The little boy in the picture book and Harry in *The Tricksters* both imagine or desire so strongly in their respective stories that their belief or desire makes a connection and alters reality.' *Surprising Moments* (1991), p. 27.
31. The structure of three is significantly repeated: three days for the action, the Carnival father-son-daughter, the Trickster trio, Belen-Valery-Jessica, Jack-Emma-Tibby, in particular.
32. This recalls New Zealand's position at the junction of two major plates in the earth's crust. The role of the Trickster in folklore is discussed in Chapter Two above.
33. le Guin. *The Language of the Night*, p. 68.
34. *Place in Fiction* (1957), p. 4.
35. *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), pp. 14-15.
36. 'A Country of the Mind', in *The Green and Burning Tree* (1969), pp. 163-202 (p. 168). Volcanic imagery is, of course, not confined to literatures from volcanic areas. For example, David Lodge says of *Jane Eyre*

that 'the volcanic image is extraordinarily effective in conveying the awe that colours Jane's relationship with Rochester'. *The Language of Fiction* (1984), p. 133.

37. These are far more numerous than the volcanic mountains since they comprise the whole of the Southern Alps, the Kaikouras, and the ranges in the North Island.
38. Margery Fisher extends the definition of the Robinsonnade to include any survival story in a completely isolated place. *The Bright Face of Danger* (1986), p. 293.
39. 'Arawata Bill', in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, p. 223.
40. *BAC*, p. 61.
41. As quoted by Pound, *Frames on the Land*, pp. 19-20.
42. Kelty believes that stereotyping male characters in the cult of kill as an entry to manhood and the world of adult reality is 'detrimental to our meaningful survival'. 'The Cult of Kill in Adolescent Fiction', in *Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood, pp. 237-44 (p. 244).
43. H. Mortimer Batten's *Starlight* (1946), for example, goes so far as to see Man 'reduced by a single will of God to the primeval level from which he sprang' (p. 189).
44. 'The Search', *Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, p. 224.
45. Tracy and Wardell were, of course, published originally prior to 1970; their novels are republished in the 1980s. This makes their books available for comment and influence, though it tends to disrupt generalizations concerning the decades. This will be noted where appropriate.
46. This stone is very much the dwelling place of a spirit. Jaffé, *Man and his Symbols*, p. 232.
47. Pound, *Frames on the Land*, pp. 19-20.
48. As Betty Gilderdale points out, 'Phyl Wardell is also one of the first writers to treat Maori themes more sympathetically than many earlier authors'. Editor's note, *The Secret of the Lost Tribe* (1985), p. 157.
49. G.M. Hopkins, 'Carrion Comfort', in *Collected Poems* (1953), p. 61.
50. 'It is part of the perceived reality of children's books to end with hope, but that doesn't mean such endings are impossible. [...] It is part of my direct experience and therefore I suggest on its possibility [...]. It is adult reality, built on guilt as well as experience, that suggests such endings are necessarily cop outs.' *Surprising Moments* (1991), pp. 22-23.

CHAPTER FOUR - HILL AND PLAIN

The rolling hill country and plains of New Zealand have been used throughout the years predominantly for grazing sheep.¹ Since sheep-farming is traditionally regarded as the economic mainstay of the country, hills and plains feature inevitably in children's fiction. Writers draw on these landscapes not for challenge in volatile inherent dangers highlighted in the previous chapter, but for the stress of isolation, disorientation, and conflict in human attitudes and practices associated with the land.

This chapter will show that stress and danger inherent in hill and plain, often increased by bush, have an effect on theme and character in New Zealand children's fiction. Additional dangers appear when the land is endangered through misuse. Of course, matters associated with conservation appear in novels before the 1980s, and several novels of the 1970s focus on the care and protection of animals. But issues concerning the land itself, its conservation and value to the Maori people, grow in urgency in novels in the 1980s. They relate directly to the beliefs of the humanistic geographers discussed in the Introduction to this thesis: that what is ultimately valuable about landscape studies in literature is an increased awareness necessary for the survival of mankind.² To this, the Maori people of New Zealand add that the survival of their culture is intimately linked to what happens to their land.

Children's fiction from 1970 to 1989 reflects the population drift from rural to city living. Although several novels embrace aspects of town and country living and experiences in the Great Outdoors in both decades, only 15% in the 1970s can be said to have a predominantly city/suburban setting, whereas in the 1980s the count rises to 34%. In the last three years of the 1980s, the proportion of novels with city/suburban settings is even higher at 56.5%. Conversely, rural settings, especially for holidays, are used much more commonly in the 1970s than in the 1980s. Ordinary city life often includes contact with natural landscape settings, at holiday time if not daily. But when child characters leave their city life for the country, they commonly leave for experiences in the Great Outdoors, not for a farming life.³

The range of novels covered in this chapter requires a division into four groups. One: novels published mainly in the 1970s reveal a move in treatment from settler isolation and post-settler attitudes to rural holidays and what this thesis calls 'Visitor-Avuncular' novels as opposed to 'Rural-Resident' novels.⁴ Two: novels published mainly in the 1980s reveal a shift towards a concern for issues concerning the land and its value, in short, the 'Issues' novels. Three: novels by Tessa Duder and Maurice Gee show the effectiveness of briefly relating a hill to the point of view of the protagonist, and Margaret Mahy in *The Catalogue of the Universe* (1985) draws additional strength from relating character and theme to the contrast between a rural-style home on a hill and two homes in a city on a plain. Four: a group of four novels by William Taylor shows that the harshness of rolling hills and plains reflects a harshness expressed through violence and killing in rural and small-town communities.

The first group divides itself further into settler novels of earlier and later times, and post-settler novels. Novels published in the 1970s are not divided from those of 1980s, because achievement here is not correlated to the decade of publication.

Settler novels of earlier times, by Elsie Locke, E.M. Ellin, Mona Tracy, Eve Sutton, and Anne de Roo, all convey the isolation suffered by European families as a result of the scattered nature of farming settlements. Land uncleared of bush, creepers and thorn-scrub helps to keep families isolated on their holdings. Children as well as adults work on their unquestioned right to clear this land to bring it into production. Visitors and holiday pleasures are rare. Some help in times of trouble comes from nearest neighbours, such as the gathering for fighting fire in Locke's *The Runaway Settlers* (1965, 1971), or the arrival of Captain Stanley in the *Mary Lee* to rescue the children from Maori warriors in Ellin's *The Children of Clearwater Bay* (1969, 1973). Great importance is laid on such skills as animal husbandry or bushcraft for survival, for example, in Tracy's *Rifle and Tomahawk* (1927, 1983).

Both Sutton in *Tuppenny Brown* (1977) and de Roo in *Traveller* (1979) portray protagonists who are particularly isolated because they have

arrived in New Zealand from England. Tuppenny comes unwillingly as a Parkhurst Penitent, and Tom willingly as a farm cadet. For Tuppenny, the walk through the bush to his new home north of Auckland 'seemed to go on for ever - miles of nothingness. Then the proper trees began' (p. 43). That 'awful forest' (p. 53) stops him from running away back to Jake and a life of petty crime. But after the storm, his emotional isolation is broken by his concern for the family and little Billy. His heroic rescue of Billy increases his feelings of self-worth. In conquering the 'helpless feeling of panic that the green mysterious stillness used to give me' (p. 81), he knows he wants to reject Jake for ever and go home to his friends and life on the farm.

For de Roo's Tom, aged sixteen, a sense of isolation is heightened by the stretch of the Canterbury plains and foothills cleared for sheep. On his way to Summerdowns, on the then trackless wastes of the plains in the 1850s, Tom becomes lost in the mist and in danger of starving to death. At that point, he stumbles upon a 'skeleton thin' bitch in similar trouble, having just whelped, her pups dead (p. 38). The death-dealing plains provide a metaphor for the predicament of both boy and dog; they are isolated as individuals from their respective family groups. Tom is an immigrant on his own after the death by drowning of his prospective employer. The dog, fictionally based on Mackenzie's famous bitch, is an escapee from those holding her after his trial.

The build-up of images conveys Tom's feelings of loneliness in 'a harsh, cold, isolated land' of rolling hills and plains (p.128). The very nature of the land to be cleared establishes stresses and challenges that characters must face in order to survive. When Tom reaches Summerdowns, he is almost overcome by the 'loneliness that seemed to live in the hills as if they had not yet accepted the newcomer, man' (p. 84). He refuses to go with Mr Searle to Christchurch for the winter, fearing 'he would never dare come back to Summerdowns if he left now, with no memories but of hardships and the loneliness he had guessed at when he looked at the starlit hills' (p. 85). His 'long, slow, painful journey, through wind and rain and sunshine, across the unyielding wilderness of tussock and wild Irishman and spaniards' to save George (p. 131) is all the more heroic because of the land and its weather.

Settler novels about later times, before and after the turn of the century, include Ruth Dallas's four *Children of the Bush* novels (1971, 1972, 1983); Mary Cox's *Wild Manes in the Afternoon* (1976); Phyllis Johnston's novels (1980, 1982, 1985, 1989); and Margaret Beames's *Hidden Valley* (1983). Johnston's family in *No One went to Town* (1980), a 'recording' novel,⁵ is isolated by 'steep hills [that] stretched for miles, and were covered in thick bush' (p. 7). When danger strikes, as it does when Phil pierces his eye with a knife, the results of being far from medical help are all the more disastrous. In this episode made more intense by danger, Johnston produces her best writing, recording the extra work, the grumbling, the quarrelling, and the loneliness while Father is away with the injured Phil. In the other novels named above, children are not involved in the unquestioned process of clearing the land. More normally, in today's terms, they are occupied with school and/or family comings and goings, which lessens the intensity of their isolation. In these small communities, people are generally more interdependent, notably Ruth Dallas's Bush community which rallies to help in times of flood and fire. But *Wild Manes in the Afternoon* and *Hidden Valley* depend on the isolation of their respective valleys for saving wild horses and for hiding a bull.

Post-settler novels continue to explore the stress of isolation. However, through an improvement in transport and communication and the completion of the initial breaking-in of the land, farm life is generally easier. So develops what this thesis calls the 'Visitor-Avuncular' novel. Its formula usually begins with the illness or death of a parent or parents. One or more children are sent to stay on a farm with an uncle and/or aunt or old friends of the parents, and these children join with cousins or neighbouring children to have a series of adventures which have little or nothing to do with day-to-day work on a farm. The best of the Visitor-Avuncular novels are Esther Glen's lively *Uncles Three at Kamahi* (1926, 1985); Ruth Park's *The Hole in the Hill* (1961, 1971) which introduces conflicting Maori/Pakeha attitudes to land, supports Maori pride in race and history, but is condescending in approach; Margaret Mahy's gentle *Clancy's Cabin* (1974) in which children camp out alone, but under surveillance, and solve an old family mystery; Margaret Beames's *The Greenstone Summer* (1977) which contains a mystery concerning a lost aunt and greenstone artefacts; and Ian Mune's *The Mad*

Dog Gang meets Rotten Fred and Ratsguts (1977), which is the most effective of these novels in using the isolation of the landscape to stretch the formula.

Wilson

Tony and Suey[^] are used to crowds of people in Auckland. When they travel by bus to a remote part of Otago, they find a different landscape - settled farmland at the foothills of mountains, nudging into bush.

The road got narrower, big trees leaned out over the road, supplejack vines hung down and brushed the side of the bus as it went past. Tony looked up at the misty hills and thought about the forty thousand people that walked past his house after the All Black Trials match. He wondered if he would see even forty people ever again. [...]

They heard the bus slowly winding away into the mountains, and after it was gone they still hadn't moved, but just stood there listening. It was the first time they had ever been in a place where they couldn't hear a single sound. (pp. 9-10)

The bush covering the hills makes a direct contribution to the feeling of isolation, the threat of danger, and mystery in the valley. In the dark, surrounding bush which cuts off Tony and Suey from all other people, Suey sees a pair of piercing black eyes which she believes belongs to a monster. She cannot forget this monster, especially when she hears of a killer dog causing havoc among the sheep at night.

The eyes, however, belong to 'Rotten Fred', as the children call him, the prototypical Man-Alone in Baxter's terms for adult literature. Such a character is found living 'on the fringe of society, often eccentric, sometimes criminal, aware of acute isolation from every social aim'.⁶ In children's literature, as in this novel, the Man-Alone character often appears in a secondary role, isolated in the landscape, important to relationships with a group of children, or in other novels with a single protagonist. Fred lives in an isolated shack beyond the bush-line to keep away from society after having spent time in jail. He is 'an old man, who makes his living out of clearing vermin, and doing the occasional odd-job, and he doesn't like people' (p. 33). For the children, the bushline that helps to isolate Fred marks the limits of where they are allowed to go, but in order to find out if Fred's dog is the killer monster, they disobey orders and run the risk of getting lost in the bush. In facing that danger, they readjust their relationships to

one another, find out what is meant by bravery, and discover the truth about Fred. The theme of how easily prejudice can lead to wrongful conclusions is intensified by this isolated setting of bush-clad hills. The farmers are stirred on by Bert Wilkie to believe that, in this isolated setting, only Fred's dog could be the guilty killer and it must be shot. Yet the killer is one of Wilkie's own maltreated dogs, crazed through the pain of a twisted wire round its putrefying neck. 'And we're bigger fools', says one farmer, 'for listening to you' (p. 163). Fred the vermin catcher, therefore, flushes out, as it were, the human 'vermin' in this isolated settlement - the cruelty of Wilkes and the farmers' prejudice which leads to a near-shooting and Justice too late for Fred. The novel ends on a sobering note, taking the Visitor-Avuncular formula and the usual challenge of friendship and courage in an adventure story into the realm of social criticism.

In contrast to Visitor-Avuncular novels, more depth is usually achieved in what this thesis calls ^{'Rural-}Resident' novels, that is, novels in which the protagonist is someone who belongs on the farm, who is not a visitor, who continues the earlier tradition of contributing to the day-to-day business of farming and animal husbandry. Examples that show the landscape itself relating to the development of theme and character are Anne de Roo's *Cinnamon and Nutmeg* (1972) and some aspects of its sequel, *Mick's Country Cousins* (1974); Joan de Hamel's *Take the Long Path* (1978); and Joyce West's *The Year of the Shining Cuckoo* (1961, 1985).

De Roo's Tessa in *Cinnamon and Nutmeg* (1972) sees her life woven through the farmland, farmlife and animals she adores. Helping her father to milk the cows is her pleasure, and the possibility of a new bull to improve the herd fills her with delight, 'her hazel eyes round with the glory of their future' (p. 23). Tessa's dreams of glory match her practical skills and awareness. Since her ambitions for the future rest on being her father's farm boy daughter, her despair at being replaced by her new baby brother in her father's schemes drives her to try and prove her worth. The bush helps to hide her efforts to rear a kid and a calf in secret, but it shows its dangerous side as well.

That anybody should go out into the bush on purpose to get lost was unbelievable. She had looked into the eyes of an animal that was truly lost. All that was sensible in Tessa, which was most of her, looked back in amazement at the girl

who had set out to punish her parents by getting lost in the bush. That was not the Tessa Duggan she knew and she was frightened, as if she had found a stranger lurking in her own personality. (pp. 29-30)

The wild, untamed state of the bush has the frightening power to release something of the primitive in Tessa's mind, something she was previously unaware of. The bush not yet cleared on the edge of the farm is a reminder of the wildness - 'deep in mile upon mile of uncleared bush' (p. 24) - out of which the farm was originally wrested. It takes on the symbol of the ever-present chaos out of which order and commonsense must be made in human beings. Tessa makes the decision to turn back home and not try to punish her parents, even though she feels that their treatment of her is out of order. Meeting with the young cow is enough to help her in her new wisdom to make her decision. She arrives home safely. In the wildness of the bush, the cow dies.

A sequel to *Cinnamon and Nutmeg*, de Roo's *Mick's Country Cousins* introduces something of the Visitor-Avuncular Syndrome by shifting the focus to Tessa's cousin Mick. He arrives to join his previously unknown family on the farm instead of serving a sentence for petty crime. Mick is expected to join in as part of the family, though the fact that he is part-Maori, part-Pakeha complicates problems.⁷ In the loneliness and isolation of bush-clad hills and farmland, Mick makes friends with Warren Howarth, which leads to his helping to kidnap the cow and her calf. But his fear of the lonely farm environment, especially at night, intensifies the worthiness of his efforts to right the kidnapping wrong.

In de Hamel's *Take the Long Path*, the first description of the farm where David lives mentions 'the lonely homestead', 'his father's small sheep-holding', 'the winding road leading over the volcanic hills of Otago peninsula', and 'his father's angry voice swearing at the dogs' (pp. 16-17). To David, shearing is 'hard boring work in the heat and dust' (p. 26). It makes him unwilling to obey orders given by his father, who is really his step-father. The hardness of farmlife on these hills is related to David's attitudes and to his father's character - a hard, explosive man leading a hard life on old volcanic, once-explosive land. The whole situation concerning David's true, mixed racial origins therefore becomes harder for both of them to acknowledge and accept.

The hills serve as another source of David's step-father's bad temper. An old conflict with the nearby Maoris began over several acres he had bought adjoining his run. He had been forced to relinquish these acres without compensation, only to observe their reversal to gorse through neglect. Relationships between David and his step-father and between his step-father and the Maori community are interwoven with attitudes to work and land, threads in the narrative to be unravelled along with the mystery to David of his birth. The intensity of these problems rarely surfaces in ordinary Visitor-Avuncular adventures.

The other novel of consequence in this group is Joyce West's *The Year of the Shining Cuckoo*. The hills of the family farm run down to an estuary, and the rhythm of farming life in a small, isolated community is marked by the rise and fall of the tide and the milking of the cows. Johnny is part of this farming life. He tries to earn enough money to buy the golden filly he falls in love with - 'all fire and silk and beauty' (p. 9). Many of the incidents are humorous, relating to a way of life that is as relaxed as the farmlife in de Hamel's *Take the Long Path* is hard. The novel culminates in the humour of a wild ride in Grandfather's buggy to catch a thief, in the wedding of Aunt Garance and Daryl Steward, and in Johnny's achievement in obtaining his filly.

The second group of novels relevant to this chapter comprises several with a rural setting published in the 1980s. First, three writers - Beverley Dunlop, J.H. Sutherland, and Marie Stuttard - continue to explore relationships between isolated farmland and their protagonists. Second, four writers - Maurice Gee, Joan de Hamel, Margaret Mahy, and Gaelyn Gordon - turn their attention to land values and conservation, and produce what this thesis calls the 'Issues' novels of the 1980s.

Dunlop and Sutherland both follow their protagonists through a process of maturation. In Dunlop's *The Poetry Girl* (1983), the farm is 'miles away from the school [...]. When I was home I never saw any other kids' (p. 11). The farm where Natalia lives reflects the isolation and loneliness of her whole life, her problems with her health which holds her back in class, her loneliness among other children, her difficult

relationships with her teachers. Natalia loves the animals, the farm, the river and the bush. They represent her security, matched only by her love of poetry. When her father sells the farm, she swears: 'I'll hide in the bush. I'll live on berries' (p. 58). Later, at another farm, Mount Hihikiwi with 'its sloping shoulders of thick green forest dissolving into the lower reaches of farmland' (p. 142) becomes a source of hope and joy for her, an encouragement that life will get better.

Sharing some of the same concerns but with less cohesion, less intimacy in the telling, Sutherland's *Rundle's Hill* (1984) portrays the maturing of a young teenage boy who goes to work on a hilly farm while the farmer's son is away at the Second World War. Farm life and people's feelings are related to the weather. This is the only New Zealand children's novel to present the tragedy to farming parents of their only son's death at war. The landscape to the farmer is something he has to keep farming till his son returns. From the furious way he attacks the gorse after the fateful telegram arrives, the boy helping him learns that 'for a lament you don't need laurels and myrtles brown with ivy never sere [...]. You can express your sorrow aptly enough with customary objects' (p. 94). Thus the farmer rejects an English literary inheritance as a means of expressing his grief in favour of a New Zealand way, here associated with physical labour on the land.

A farm's isolation has an entirely different purpose in Marie Stuttard's science-fiction adventure, *Children of the Dog Star* (1984). Isolation makes Gretchen's uncle's farm a suitable place for aliens from Sirius to try and make contact with people on earth. Aspects of the 1970s Visitor-Avuncular Syndrome are present since Gretchen goes for a holiday with her uncle and aunt on the farm where she meets up with local children. Her superior knowledge of astronomy enables the aliens to make contact.⁸ But the emphasis remains on TV-related, fast-paced adventure, farm-set for isolation, not related to farm life itself, nor explored further for possibilities to do with human experience.

Much more impact, however, is gained in the 'Issues' novels of the 1980s and the threat of danger to the land itself. The land is seen as a victim, and through being a victim, it becomes a source of danger to characters involved. Isolation as a focus gives way in importance to principles of conservation and/or Maori claims in the work of Maurice Gee, Joan de Hamel, Margaret Mahy and Gaelyn Gordon.⁹ Whether they are working in the genre of realism or of fantasy, these writers are well aware of the importance of conservation for the survival of mankind and for the welfare of Maori culture and identity. The dangers these issues present to their characters are sharply observed.

Maurice Gee at the end of the 1970s in *Under the Mountain* (1979) shows that the land endangered can turn dangerous. The evil Wilberforce polluters threaten to turn the world to mud but are destroyed by the land's volcanic power before they can do so, which in turn kills many innocent people. In *The World Around the Corner* (1980), he reworks his pre-occupation with conservation into a fantasy element. If Moon-girl does not succeed in defeating the Grimble's dragon, it will destroy the half of Moon-girl's world not yet polluted by the Grimbles. The dragon is 'a cloud of gas, a poisonous fog, a vapour that boiled coldly, [...] and towered like a mushroom cloud' (p. 69). Though a fantasy creature created by Grimble in a parallel world, the dragon is a manifestation of industrial and nuclear pollution currently threatening Earth.

The Grimbles have turned their half into a desert. They have cut down all the trees, levelled the hills, damned up all the rivers. They live in great walled cities. Their world is one of smoke and poison and darkness. They have factories making weapons. They fight among themselves. (p. 38)

The parallel is made all the more obvious because most of the action takes place realistically in a small town in 'the centre of New Zealand' (p. 43). This realism heightens tension and danger for the protagonist Caroline. She does not go through the gates to the world around the corner, but stays here to help charge the magic glasses in the rays of the sun for Moon-girl so that she will have the necessary strength to overcome the dragon.

Gee continues to make obvious parallels between this world and his fantasy world of O in his trilogy, *The Halfmen of O* (1982), *The Priests*

of *Ferris* (1984), and *Motherstone* (1985). Briefly, his protagonists leave a realistically-drawn New Zealand landscape in order to enter O where abuse of political, religious and military power is reflected in the destruction of the landscape. Like the people, it has become grey and blackened, harsh and sterile, out of balance.

Everything was grey: a huge grey cloudless sky, grey land, grey hills rolling endlessly down until they were lost in a haze, ashy stunted trees, twisted unnaturally, grass the colour of tin. But worst of all, most hideous of all, burning without colour overhead, a huge black sun [...]. (p. 37)

The forest was tar-black. It ran on and on like a huge rumpled blanket on the land. [...] The forest stopped over there and gave way to a grey murkiness, like an oily pond, spreading out on the horizon. [...] She guessed it was a kind of smog. (p. 48)

These landscapes are victims, their condition a reflection of the condition of the 'evil' halfmen under the rule of Otis Claw for whom 'pain is truth' (p. 39). What happens through the abuse of power on O is a reflection of what has happened or could happen in this world, New Zealand included. Indeed, as Bill Manhire claims: 'Perhaps there is a special meaning for New Zealanders in the palace of Otis Claw: it is likened to a giant beehive, buried in the earth'.¹⁰ To restore the world of O to a normal balance of the naturally mixed nature of human beings - and thereby to restore the landscape - is quickly seen as a matter of urgency for Susan and Nick. It leads them into many dangers.

Issues concerning pollution and Maori land values in de Hamel's *The Third Eye* (1987) and Gordon's *Stonelight* (1988) again show the land as victim but able to draw on forces to help itself. In *The Third Eye*, a tourist development scheme proposed by GG Enterprises requires the mainly Maori owners to sell their land. But plans for development will lead to a despoiling of the area in terms of conservation for wild life and traditional Maori life. Taua says: 'The moment you sell, strangers will bring in machines. In one swoop they could destroy the guardians [who] protect our history and our destiny' (pp. 50-51). Ani explains:

'A Maori family is entwined like trees in the bush. We support and depend on each other. We share roots and the roots are embedded in the land. If I broke faith with my family, with the land, I wouldn't be the Ani Mitch loves.' (p. 84)

Ani equates her family with the land in the entwining and embedding of roots. She would never agree to sell her land. But the land she farms with Mitch would be adversely affected by the new schemes, and Mitch considers selling out. These conflicting attitudes endanger Ani's relationship with Mitch, which in turn affects Mitch's cousins staying with them. Ross, who goes to work for the American Dr Dean, is affected particularly by having to consider questions of conscience - whether the end justifies the means. Even if the survival of humanity is at risk, should the tuatara all be sacrificed in an experiment to discover a way for people to survive a nuclear explosion? The land has some answers of its own, for when the land is endangered, so are human values, human relationships, and the lives of other living creatures. The role of the tapu island has already been discussed in Chapter Two above, and the role of the guardians will be discussed in Chapter Six. It is clear, therefore, that the conservation of the land, its creatures, and the cultural values of the Maori is the major theme of de Hamel's novel.

In Mahy's *Memory* (1987), however, Maori land values are part of a minor sub-plot. Hinerangi joins protesters whose claims are based on the perception of Maori people that, without the land they should have by right, they and their culture are endangered. Hinerangi is clear about remembered rights. Her certainty is a contrast to the uncertainties and major preoccupation of the novel: the functioning of the 'flawed glass of memory' (p. 16), or the 'dissolving rationality' of Jonny and Sophie, the one through guilt, the other through the dementia of old age.¹¹ The accuracy and distortions created by memory and explored in this novel are but another slant on Mahy's constant pre-occupation in fiction with truth and illusion.

The last example in this group of novels is Gordon's *Stonelight* (1988). Volatile, seismic forces of the land show that it is endangered. Old Henare Hu explains:

'There is something wrong with the land and there has been something wrong for a long time. Some people say that it is natural. [...] Some people say that it is because we have betrayed the land. We have sold what should not be sold and the land is punishing us for this. Some people say there is a scientific explanation - we only need to find what it is.' (p. 69)

The earthquakes and whirlwinds used by the endangered land to make an active protest turn the land into a threat to the people who, Henare believes, caused the troubles. Like Gee in *Under the Mountain*, Gordon uses stones as activators,¹² but she goes further than Gee in giving the land some autonomy of action. Special guardian stones buried in the earth hold the land in balance. When that balance is disturbed, the stones have the power to communicate by image and word with 'dumb Mowrie' Angela (p. 23) and Boys' College 'wimp' Thomas (p. 3). The stones need human help to rid the land of what has become dangerous.

The old one had lost its inner self, had become fragmented, unable to hold things in balance, and finally worked to destroy the balance. And yet its guardian, as crazed as the stone itself, protected it and held it together by the strength of his spirit. (p. 144)

A healthy relationship between the land and the people, represented by the stones and the guardian, is shown to be vital for a proper balance. Through helping the land, the unlikely pair of Angela and Thomas are able to forge their own relationship. In their turn, they are helped by Henare Hu and by the twins whose special powers were given to them by the Patupaiarehe. In other words, Gordon sees that a balance between the land and the people is held through a network of co-operation.

So that was what they were to do. Seek out the other stones. Find the one that knew the answer and offer what help they might.

They were to take the twins with them. Patupaiarehe skills might be needed, yet Patupaiarehe themselves should stay close to their own place.

Above all was the need for haste. Time had already been lost. [...] Now was the time to go fast. Find a way to mend the land before more went wrong. (pp. 78-79)

Gordon uses this urgent staccato prose, at times with humour, to drive her narrative. Her achievement is that she draws on the power of the land itself, the spiritual power of the Maori and indigenous energies like the Patupaiarehe. In New Zealand children's fiction, she breaks new ground, doing something akin to what Patricia Wrightson has done for Australian fiction. By calling on energies of the land, Wrightson creates most notably the Nargun, a huge stone that is not vicious but dangerous through being out of place.¹³

Nevertheless, Gordon does not quite fulfil her promise of dealing with a major concept in 'something wrong with the land'. Although she evokes large-scale involvement through earthquake and whirlwind, the disturbance is finally reduced without explanation to the madness and hatred of one old man, the guardian of the stone. The stone, unlike its guardian, is ready for death: it 'begged for release, for return to earth and to oblivion. All its hatred had gone' (p. 49). But the old man has to be encouraged by Henare Hu to let go too. Then the problem is over without further elucidation of what really caused the old man's breakdown.

The third group of novels in this chapter comprises Tessa Duder's *Jellybean* (1985), Maurice Gee's *The Fire-Raiser* (1986), and Margaret Mahy's *The Catalogue of the Universe* (1985). Each relates a hill above a city to the point of view of a central protagonist or theme, and offers some opportunity for contemplation from an elevated position.¹⁴ Duder's *Jellybean* (1985) does so effectively but briefly. Jellybean's daily life revolves around school and her mother's career as a professional cellist. She knows well the streets and theatres in her part of Auckland, and she develops a passion to become a conductor of an orchestra. On a rare occasion when she goes to a park with her mother, they climb a nearby hill where an obelisk shines silver on its summit. As they climb, Jellybean asks a key question: 'How do people *become* conductors?' (p. 40). From the summit, she looks out over the city.

This is Geraldine's world, and her city - houses, streets, cars, trees and hills like the one they are standing on; harbours, wharves, ships, the harbour bridge. How little she knows of it all. How tiny her world is, between home and school. [...]

One day she will escape. (p. 42)

From her vantage point, Jellybean catches a glimpse of what life as a musician might hold for her in the future. The novel's theme is that success in the music world requires dedication, talent and hard work, and here Jellybean is aware that she, like other young New Zealanders, will one day have to 'escape' overseas for study. Later, as a structural counterpoint, she runs to the top of the same hill after her first

experience conducting a live orchestra, there to try and cope with the stress of a chaotic mixing of elation and despair. Again, the obelisk signals encouragement: 'a weak sun [catches] the silver pointer on the summit' (p. 109). These two short scenes support the theme through point of view and structure in what is a beautifully crafted small novel.

The second of these novels, Gee's *The Fire-Raiser*, has as one of its concerns the belief that young Phil's only chance of escape from his life of poverty lies in education. Mr Hedges, his teacher, introduces him to the observatory on Settlers Hill. There physically above his city life, Phil discovers the universe and thinks he would like to be an astronomer. From this vantage point he also discovers he can keep watch on Edgar Marwick who, he suspects, is the fire-raiser. The hill, therefore, serves to give Phil a better outlook for his future and to move the plot towards the final dangerous confrontation between the children and Edgar Marwick. More importantly in terms of the novel's anti-racist, anti-war theme, the hill with its observatory serves to fill out the character of Clippy Hedges as a caring, cultured teacher, who sees above and beyond the racist belligerence that inflames most of his fellow-citizens into their form of public arson - nationalistic rabble-rousing and a self-righteous attack on a German music teacher.

The third novel in this group is Margaret Mahy's *The Catalogue of the Universe* (1985). It effectively contrasts a house in a rural-style hill setting with two houses in a city-on-a-plain setting to help define the main characters. But of particular vividness and importance is the linking road, 'more like a powerful force than a mere road' (p. 79), which shows yet again the power of inherently dangerous elements in the landscape to enhance fiction.

Angela lives with her mother Dido in the hills 'up above the city in a wild place under the sky' (p. 4). Their home at 1000 Dry Creek Road 'had never quite got as far as being a proper house' (p. 4), for it is composed of two cottages without an inner connecting door and with 'an outside lavatory' (p. 39). It is a house that suggests poverty, because 'we can only afford something no one else wants' (p. 61). From there, Angela and her mother look down 'to where the city twinkled, every bit as far away as the stars' (p. 6). But up on the hill, Dido feels 'free

of the rules that restricted all the houses further down' (p. 142). Her free spirit is emphasized: 'I love living up here in the teeth of the wind, right under the sky, nothing between me and the hills' (p. 178), she says. Her claims are supported by her first appearance in the novel, scything grass outside her house at two o'clock in the moonlight. The scythe is immediately a symbol of Time, of relationships and emotions that change and yet are unchanged. Angela recalls Dido's scything shortly before she begins her journey to confront her father, a major point of change in her life, and again after her reconciliation with Dido when she says: 'We'll be Old Mother Time and her everlasting daughter' (p. 179). This is a marvellous introduction to an eccentric character, living outside the city up on a hill in a primitive house because of poverty as well as inclination.

Down on the plain in the city live two entirely different people, both of special importance to Angela. First, the father she is yet to meet lives in a 'very expensive house' (p. 11), large, with big green lawns, swimming pool and tennis court, but his moral sense of responsibility is as shallow as the house is expensive. He never lifts his eyes from the flat level of the plains; he 'had never looked in their direction' (p. 91). Second, Angela's friend Tycho lives with his family in an ordinary suburban/city house of about 'forty years old' (p. 142) in a 'pleasant, unadventurous' street (p. 24), cramped but 'middle-class' (p. 25) and conservative. It is a symbol of the 'safe life [...] without pain, sorrow or despair, contented rather than ecstatic' (p. 101) that his mother has always wanted for him. But Tycho is always looking in Angela's direction, and, like Clippy Hedges in *The Fire-Raiser*, he is fascinated by the stars. From his city home on the plain, he reaches out to understand the mystery of the world through his telescope, his book *The Catalogue of the Universe*, and the writings of Greek philosophers. His relationship with Angela fills him with despair and ecstasy, far from the safe emotions his mother wishes for him.

Between these two settings of hill and plain winds the road. The higher it climbs, the more treacherous it becomes. Hewn out of 'oxidised volcanic rock' (p. 78), it has a bank on one side, but on the other, 'a great airy fall on to stony slopes far below' (p. 5).¹⁵ Indeed, this image expands into a symbol of Angela's life itself, 'a life that had

wound and lashed like Dry Creek Road, with Dido, a cliff on one side, but nothing except an airy abyss on the other' (p. 87). The 'airy abyss', the gap in her life, is the father she has never met. The road is also symbolic of the dangers run by Angela and Tycho as a result of their romantic ideas and search for truth in their love relationship. Driving down the road is 'as dangerous for me as it is for him' (p. 185), says Angela when Dido tells Tycho to take care. Dido is alluding to their relationship as much as to the physical journey.

In addition to physical dangers, the road has a mythological dimension, and Dido naturally recognizes it. Her own name sets up mythological vibrations. It recalls that other Dido of antiquity, queen of Carthage, who was deserted by her lover Aeneas as Dido May had been deserted ignominiously by Roland Chase. Dido recognizes that the road, 'rooted down in the city' (p. 4) like her love-life, actively claims 'victims just as if it were a serpent god. Hedgehogs, possums, magpies and rabbits were killed by cars' (p. 5). 'I just get the feeling', says Dido, 'it's - it's looking for someone ... that it wants blood' (p. 72). It 'certainly needs a sacrifice or two' (p. 79). It gets its 'sacrifice' through a crashed car that goes up in flames and smoke. Tycho becomes a hero by hauling out one of the boys, and Angela and Dido are brought through its drama to a reconciliation, confirming Dido's foreboding that 'someone like me might have to pay a tribute' (p. 80).

Furthermore, the road reflects Dido's psychological make-up. 'Like the road, Dido had a dangerous edge and sometimes went right out to it and danced, apparently challenging it to crumble away under her' (p. 4).¹⁶ The specifically dangerous edge to which she dances appears in the use she has always made of romantic fairy story to give Angela the security of believing she was born a love-child. Dido's own love-life is now as dry as the often repeated name of her road, but she had done her best to provide Angela with the security of feeling loved and wanted. But Angela gives Dido a push towards that 'dangerous edge' by suddenly wanting to meet her father. Angela hopes that, after all, he will be willing to acknowledge her in some way. As she discovers the truth, she finds that there is a huge 'wobble' in what she had always believed. Though the image of truth as 'an ellipse' or a 'wobble' in the symmetry/cemetery of the world is drawn from the universal laws of physics

(pp. 44-46), these symbols seem entirely appropriate to express a philosophy in a country subject to frequent seismic activity and 'fault lines', as Mahy herself calls them.¹⁷ Thus Mahy takes a hill-and-plain landscape to intensify the relationships of her characters and the discoveries they have to make about themselves and their worlds.

The last group in this chapter comprises four of William Taylor's novels: *Pack Up, Pick Up and Off* (1981); *Shooting Through* (1986); *Possum Perkins* (1987); and *The Kidnap of Jessie Parker* (1989). Taylor's contribution here to the function of landscape in New Zealand children's fiction lies in the way he uses harsh and eroded aspects of hill and plain to reflect harsh characteristics in society, particularly the nature of killing. In each novel, Taylor increases the impact of conflict besetting his characters with increasing power till in *The Kidnap of Jessie Parker* he levels the harshest direct indictment of New Zealand society in children's fiction so far.

Rolling hills define the isolation of a farming area in *Pack Up, Pick Up and Off*, Taylor's first novel. The land, especially on the Tops, has long been abused by farmers and animals alike.

The winds came through the gap and off the Tops in giant and dusty gusts [...] . The Tops; a vast spread of near-bare clay. Eroded, scarred and almost scrubless heights. A hundred years or more ago this land, right back into the Tops and even further into the mountains, had been one giant station. Overstocked and the land uncared for by those who had taken it up in the early days. [...] The Tops; too high, worn out and barren. (p. 24)

This harsh, isolated environment of the Tops rules over a small Hawke's Bay farming community which feeds on hearsay and prejudice, as does the South Island community of Ian Mune's *The Mad Dog Gang meets Rotten Fred and Ratsguts*, discussed above. The result is that Charlie's father is wrongly accused of sheep stealing. He is a rabbitier, new to the district and an outsider. Clearing the land of rabbits that have contributed to its erosion is a necessity. Taylor does not suggest otherwise, nor does he suggest the job itself has an adverse effect on Charlie's father.

By contrast, the actual sheep stealer is a young man portrayed as rough as the roads he drives over - 'a proper menace [on] a brute of a road' (p. 47). Killing his own father's sheep and selling the carcasses and skins is his way of taking revenge for the harsh treatment meted out to him by his father. For the real abuse lies in the fact that 'old man Fletcher never paid Gus. And he worked at home all those years. Nothing for all those years' (p. 145). A hard farmer in a hard land. A son's money-flow as dry as the land. The land matches the eroded relationship between father and son.

The land itself also becomes a means of exploring a social scale not often admitted to in New Zealand - the difference between those who own land and those who work on it for someone else. 'Rabbiters don't come very high up the scale. [...] I'm not too sure that everyone did consider us as people' (p. 12). However, Charlie's mother's moral standards are shown to be higher than those landowners who look down at the family, including Fletcher himself.

For Jon-Mark, in *Shooting Through* (1986), violence and killing are also an outlet for frustration, and the bleakness of the sterile Volcanic Plateau - 'a lonely place' (p. 31) - matches his attitude and emotional state. He wants to kill the rabbit he catches, not because it is a pest, but for excitement. He throws stones at birds, longs to go shooting ducks with a gun. He believes his wealthy, material-rich parents do not care for him. 'I wish sometimes they'd want me a bit more than them things' (p. 39). But later, when with Boss he shoots a rabbit and has to clean it for the table, he learns that it is an experience he does not enjoy. The bleakness of the plateau also matches August's mood. As in *Pack Up, Pick Up and Off*, Taylor reverses perceived stereotypes - the Maori boy from a financially poor environment is emotionally richer and morally superior to the boy from a materially-rich background.

However, by climbing up the 'bad old mountain' (p. 58) and up a nearby hill, both boys gain a new perspective to help them 'to stand up, face whatever it is you have to face' (p. 63). Up the mountain, sitting in the hot pools, they have the opportunity to 'observe the wonders, the natural beauty and physical features of your own country' (p. 61) while Pinkie fills them in with some background stories of the people and the

land. Up the hill, August encourages Jon-Mark to see his lust to kill as a sign of protest against his parents. As a balm for their unhappiness, the boys find warmth and care at Pinkie's house. The killing of rabbit or deer for the table is something to be done in a matter-of-fact way in order to eat. Pinkie voices the traditional attitude of the Maori to the land. 'I liked my posh life [but] I had to come back to my land. To my land, my place, my people, my roots' (p. 55). Moreover, she is able to pass on the healing powers of the land so that the boys are fortified for their return home. The message is spelled out very clearly.

Again, in *Possum Perkins*, a wasteland and a road that crosses it become the symbol of the division between the protagonists. Taylor establishes that the families of his protagonists live along Old Dump Road that 'marked the edge of a sizeable hinterland, a no-man's-land of waste land on the outskirts of town' (p. 17). Rosie Perkins finds a baby possum she takes home to rear in her emotional wasteland of a home. In sharp ironic contrast, Michael Geraghty kills possums as a source of income, though his father lays down strict rules ^{for him} to clear the traps regularly and not leave 'any animal to suffer for too long' (p. 17). Rosie sees Michael as one of those who 'take great joy in despatching the defenceless' (p. 13).

So begins a relationship that must cross the 'wasteland' of differing attitudes between two unlikely teenagers. Michael defends Rosie by knocking down a name-caller and finds himself chided by her for his violence, for doing 'the wrong thing but for the right reason' (p. 71). Michael comes from a home that is expansively warm, as is his mother, and the Catholic religion is seen as a strong and beneficial force in this particular Irish family. By contrast, Rosie's family is oddly cold and isolated from the rest of the community. 'Neither Reg nor Edith Perkins had a friend in the whole world. They, with Rosie, were a tiny island of existence complete in themselves' (p. 47). As a result of his wife's disinterest and mental imbalance, Reg Perkins develops an unnatural interest in his daughter. Incest, however, never actually takes place. Without having to deal with the starkness of the actual deed, Taylor is able to explore more easily the reasons for the breakdown in the parents' relationship. The final act of violence takes place in the coldness of an unusual winter snowfall. Rosie's father

strikes her for sledding with Michael. In his jealousy and rage he releases her possum Plum, her stabilizing emotional outlet at home. Plum is killed in one of Michael's traps, the traps Rosie had been trying to persuade Michael to replace for something less cruel in its way of killing. But the crisis leads to a resolution promising hope in the relationship between Michael and Rosie.

In these three novels by William Taylor, violence and killing have been portrayed in relationship to landscapes that are harsh, bleak, and a wasteland. *The Kidnap of Jessie Parker* (1989) presents a culmination of Taylor's views on physical and emotional violence. The events are more harshly rendered than those in his preceding novels, the characters more harshly portrayed, and the style of writing more harshly staccato. Reflecting these increases in harshness is the drought-stricken plain, a fitting metaphor for the mental and emotional aridity of the attackers and the society that has shaped them. To carry out his intentions of exploring these themes in relationship to the landscape, Taylor's narrative approach is more complex than in his other novels.

The Kidnap of Jessie Parker opens in the past tense describing the landscape that underscores the whole novel. Taylor presents a 'parched and dusty brown' plain sweltering in the heat. No relief comes from the distant snow-covered mountains, a 'mirage', nor from the river, a 'series of stagnant, shrinking pools in which fish floundered, sickened, died and dried as the heat beat down' (p. 2). The small town is in keeping with the plain. 'Paint blistered and peeled on shop fronts and town buildings. No one seemed to notice or to care' (p. 2). Dust and death dominate this setting.

The sole centre of any activity was the freezing works on the outskirts of town. The meatworks were the main reason for the town's being. [...] A massive in-pouring of living, bleating loads at one end of the plant. An equally massive out-pouring, stilled, chilled, refrigerated, at the other end. (pp. 2-3)

The whole town is portrayed as existing by and for killing. In using the freezing works as his core image of killing in society, Taylor follows the example of David Ballantyne in two of his adult novels. In *The Cunninghams* (1948), Ballantyne creates the 'living hell' of a town in which the 'symbolic meatworks' had chewed up the life of its central

character.¹⁸ In *Sydney Bridge Upside Down* (1968), the meatworks is similarly central to the formation and ruin of Calliope Bay, the place of knowledge and despair of the developing Harry. Taylor's freezing-works are directly associated with killing, physically and symbolically, but without the connections Patrick Evans makes between 'the stain of effluent', 'blood' and 'sacrifice' in R.H. Morrieson's *Came a Hot Friday* (1964) and Ian Cross's *The God Boy* (1958).¹⁹

Having set his scene on the harsh plain in the grip of a drought, Taylor proceeds with the action in the vividness of the present tense. He describes the violence of a hold-up and kidnapping of Jessie Parker. Driven roughly across 'the baked plains' (p. 5) in the boot of a car, she is trussed and dumped in a derelict cottage by a bend in the dried-up river. Flood marks on the walls mockingly add to the desolation. The boy Spike of the blond curls, wide-eyed and wild-looking, is left to watch over her while his father Hec, whose job at the works is to kill sheep, goes off with Blue to deal with money and a ransom note. In the isolation of this dried-up environment, the violence in Spike is shown immediately. The build-up is such that when the two men leave the cottage, the reader expects Spike will rape Jessie, even against orders to 'look after her real good' (p. 9). But, like incest in *Possum Perkins*, the horror of rape is expressed through threat not actuality, and the reader's attention is therefore allowed to focus on what has made Spike the violent creature that he is. Spike's upbringing by a bigoted religious aunt has been as devoid of kindness as the drought-stricken plain is devoid of life-giving water.²⁰ 'She said [...] it was God told her to whip it right out of me.[...] Our pastor [...] even helped her whip me one day.[...] I bled. Everywhere.' (p. 28). This is the learned, pent-up violence that Spike takes out on the magpie he catches, that makes him say of his father's job killing sheep: 'I'd sure love to do that' (p. 48), and later, 'That was the best time in my life' (p. 50).

Jessie herself is not portrayed as violent, apart from finding within herself the ability to knock Spike out in order to escape. But in sheer desperation and self-preservation, she can rejoice in Spike's cruelty to the bird because it diverts his attention from her and yet it carries the full horror of what could be about to happen to her. Other images of

violence are sifted through her mind, widening the impact of action, attitude and setting. She remembers her mother complaining to her father about the 'hell-hole' of the small town. 'It's dead now, Lloyd, and I'm dead with it' (p. 15). 'It's killing me' (p. 37), she keeps saying. Jessie remembers her brother's 'merciful killing' of an 'abandoned' kitten (p. 18), and the reader makes the connection between the kitten and Jessie. Jessie herself is troubled by images connecting Spike and his treatment by the minister in church, her mother's talking, her father's worrying, the magpies Spike kills. The small deer her brother Sam killed one day links him to Spike.

After she knocks him out and escapes, her ordeal continues, reinforcing the harshness of the landscape:

The flat, dry landscape and distant hills offer no clue [to her whereabouts]. She has moved away from the river and is now at the edge of what seems an endless expanse of dried-out stubble [...].

The mid-morning sun strikes back from the parched earth in an ever-increasing haze of heat that shimmers ahead of her into the distance. (p. 58)

In this unrelenting landscape, Jessie is, nevertheless, eventually reprieved. She is rescued by two policemen.

In Part II, *The Aftermath*, Taylor changes back to the past tense to trace what happens to Jessie back in town and to explore further the nature of violence. Away from Spike's threats, Jessie feels pity for him. But people in the community, and the media, in this dried-up town on the dried-up plains, display a drought of human kindness in their reactions. It seems to Jessie 'as if they all wanted a slice, a piece of her' (p. 70). They seem disappointed that she was not sexually violated, claiming coarsely that 'they should cut his balls off and that's too good for him' (p. 70). The town even feels cheated of all drama when Hec and Blue plead guilty at the trial which takes place in the autumn, the time of leaf fall and the end of the killing season at the works.

But Jessie is at last freed from her terror when Spike, damaged for life and in the care of the same religious aunt, does not know her. His aunt thinks Jessie 'did God's will and smote the evil from him'

(p. 111). The reader is asked to side with Jessie and her compassionate understanding of what made Spike into the kind of creature that he is, and to recognize the violence of ordinary folk in society and the hypocrisy of this particular religious organisation. Taylor's novel never doubts Jessie's right to do what was necessary to escape. But her act of violence is never glorified, nor is the violence shown in the novel ever praised. Such an attitude would be truly pornographic. With Jessie's generous 'I'm glad he'll get better' (p. 112), Taylor brings to an end his portrayal of violence and killing in society reflected in the harshness of the drought-stricken plain and the stifling small town it supports.

Thus it is clear that stress and danger in hill and plain contribute to the power of children's fiction. Novels of settler times probe the stressful effects of isolation, but those of post-settler times move towards lighter novels with the Visitor-Avuncular Syndrome and children in groups as protagonists. But Rural-Resident novels with one or two protagonists gain in power. Issues novels in the 1980s, reflecting society's growing concern for the endangered land and for Maori land rights, also show an increase in power. Individual novels by Tessa Duder, Maurice Gee, and Margaret Mahy sharpen character and theme by drawing a contrast between a hill setting and a city-on-the-plains setting, and the harshness in dry and barren hills and plains intensifies the vision William Taylor has of violence inherent in society. Like mountains and bush discussed in the previous chapter, hills and plains are powerfully represented in New Zealand children's fiction.

NOTES

1. The plains of New Zealand are long and narrow, only some eighty kilometres from the foothills to the sea in Canterbury, unlike the vast plains of other countries such as Australia, a 'huge continent stretching on and on beyond [Taronga Zoo], all part of that untrammelled state which has endured since the beginning of time'. Victor Kelleher, *Taronga* (1986), p. 157.
2. Introduction, p. xvi.
3. Occasionally, one finds the reverse. In *Gather Your Dreams* by Merv Dykes and Roger Simpson (1978), Kitty longs to leave her uncle's farm and return to the city and the stage. Maurice Gee's *Under the Mountain* (1979) sends his country twins for a holiday in the city.
4. This term is developed from Geoffrey Trease's 'the avuncular fantasy', used for unlikely stories in which children go to stay with a uncle and/or aunt. *Tales Out of School* (1964), pp. 136-37.
5. Joan Stevens, *The New Zealand Novel* (1961), p. 10.
6. 'Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry', in *James K. Baxter as Critic* (hereafter *BAC*), ed. by Frank McKay (1978), pp. 50-69 (p. 62).
7. This is the first novel in the time span of this thesis to explore the difficulties of mixed parentage.
8. Stuttard weakens her science fiction premise by saying that her aliens come from Sirius. A star cannot sustain life forms. Thus her novel is not 'legitimate' speculation of possibility. Science fiction of value is 'speculative fiction in which the author takes as his first postulate the real world as we know it, including all the established facts and natural laws [...]; legitimate - and often very tightly reasoned - speculation about the possibilities of the real world'. Robert A. Heinlein, quoted by Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (1989), pp. 203-04.
9. Caroline Macdonald's *The Lake at the End of the World* (1988) will be discussed in the next two chapters of this thesis.
10. Bill Manhire connects Gee's *The Halfmen of O* with his novels for adults, especially *Plumb*: 'The idea [of 'mixies'] is essentially Manichaeian - that the human lot consists of good and evil mixed [...], that the universe is a battleground for the opposed and equally matched forces of good and evil. This idea fits the essentially relativist vision of Gee's adult novels. It also serves to explain the essential flaw of a character like George Plumb'. *Maurice Gee* (1986), p. 11. Diana Moorhead's fantasy, *The Green and the White* (1974), makes an interesting comparison in that pollution of the land is caused by the misuse of political power. However, Moorhead's fantasy is outside the range of this thesis, since its setting is entirely European.
11. 'A Dissolving Ghost', *Sport*, 7 (1991), 5-24 (p. 18).
12. Stones as activators have already been identified as an important characteristic of New Zealand children's fantasy.
13. *The Nargun and the Stars* (1973). This novel is 'a turning-point in Australian children's literature for its evocation of authentic bush magic'. Brenda Niall, *Australia through the Looking-Glass* (1984), p. 5. Anthony Holcroft shows a similar trend in his short stories, *The Boy at the Door* (1991).
14. 'When a writer looks at a city from above, he is placing himself (or his narrator) and the reader in an attitude of contemplation rather than involvement'. Burton Pike, *The Image of the City in Modern Literature* (1981), p. 34. The three novels chosen as examples of narrative viewpoints from above

however, keep their characters involved by making their moments of elevation short or well interspersed with viewpoints from the flat.

15. This is the first of Mahy's novels to mention a volcanic element in a setting recognisable as Christchurch and the Port Hills. Words such as 'melt' and 'core' (p. 79) carry volcanic undertones in the expression of Angela's feelings on her way to what will prove to be an emotionally dangerous encounter with her father.
16. Dancing on the edge of a cliff is expanded into a central image and physical reality in Mahy's *Memory* (1987).
17. Mahy suggests that perhaps she perceives her world in this way because 'I did indeed grow up with a fault line running through me, but that is a very New Zealandish feature when you consider that it is a country of earthquakes and volcanoes. A fault line ran right through the town I was born in so perhaps my disjunction is part of what makes an essential New Zealander of me after all - perhaps the country has imposed its own unstable geography on my power to perceive'. 'A Dissolving Ghost', *Sport*, 7 (1991), p. 11.
18. Patrick Evans, 'David Ballantyne and the Art of Writing in New Zealand', *Islands*, 31-32 (1981), 30-40 (p. 33).
19. Evans, *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature* (1990), p. 190.
20. Writers for adults, such as Maurice Gee and John A. Lee, portray religion in New Zealand as narrow, punitive, and destructive. Mark Williams states that 'New Zealand literature has traditionally depicted fundamentalist Christianity as unrelievedly life-denying, repressive, and hostile to the natural desires of the individual'. *Leaving the Highway* (1990), p. 31.

CHAPTER FIVE - LAKE AND RIVER

The 'often violent and spectacular geological processes'¹ that pushed the islands of New Zealand up out of the Pacific Ocean and shaped them into mountains, hills and plains, also produced lakes, rivers, caves and tunnels. None of the latter four is included in J.K. Baxter's list of dominant symbols in New Zealand poetry,² but they play an influential role in children's fiction and, therefore, form the subject matter of the next two chapters. This chapter is divided into two in order to focus first on lakes and then on rivers.

Scientists define a lake as 'a body of standing water occupying a basin and lacking continuity with the sea',³ and they classify it according to how its basin was originally formed.⁴ Of the ten categories of New Zealand lakes, writers have been most interested in three with progressively violent origins: glacial, landslide (often associated with seismic activity), and volcanic. By dividing novels into three groups according to these geological categories, this chapter will show a correlation between the degree of violence in the origins of a lake and the degree of violence in the fictional deepening of character and theme. This is particularly clear in the functioning of a lake as a place of mystery, a place to hide or be hidden. The sense of mystery progresses from Sublime notions of awe at the beauty in glacial lakes to notions of great danger in volcanic lakes.⁵ Moreover, most of the novels in this chapter are published in the 1980s when writers feel confident to use lakes in symbolic and psychological ways. These novels therefore become more complex than the straightforward adventure stories prevalent in the 1970s.

Glacial lakes featured in the first group of novels owe their formation to a quiet gouging process over time, apparently the least aggressive of the three categories of lake. These glacial lakes are seemingly constant, peacefully undisturbed, which leads to their playing a somewhat passive, often small role in a novel. A lake, like an island in the ocean, provides an identifiable point of reference or goal in the unending sameness of mountain/bush terrain, wild country which by its

very nature makes it an ideal setting for novels of adventure and survival. Joan de Hamel's *X Marks the Spot* (1973), set in Fiordland, provides a clear example of this kind. Real Lake Te Anau gives her characters their point of departure into the wilderness. On their return, 'the glorious vista of the Middle Fiord leading to Lake Te Anau' (p. 157) fills them with relief to know they have found the right flight path for safety. Fictional Map Lake helps them identify the 'spot' their uncle had intended they should explore.

Four other writers, Phyl Wardell, Anne de Roo, Elsie Locke, and Jane Ryan, use glacial lakes because of their locating function, their Sublime beauty, and a sense of mystery. For example, Wardell chooses Lake Te Anau as a point of departure in *The Secret of the Lost Tribe* (1962, 1986) and *Beyond the Narrows* (1985). In the former, the shores of one small lake after another provide an identifiable route through rugged terrain for both the protagonists and the villains who precede them to plant mysterious clues. But more importantly, notions of the Sublime in the 'unearthly beauty and peace' (p. 70) of a lake combine with the magnificence of the mountains to induce a new awareness in Jinny. She suddenly realises 'how awful' discovery would be for the Lost Tribe. 'Straight away hordes of sightseers would come rushing here' (p. 71), she cries, and she concludes that the Tribe should stay lost for ever. In *Beyond the Narrows*, the fouling of a mountain lake takes place when the habits of huge browsing animals cause an avalanche to turn the lake 'into a hideous mud pie' (p. 123). It helps to make Dr West-Smith realize the threat posed by his genetic engineering to the 'beautiful primeval forest' (p. 126). These two novels, published at a twenty-three year interval, provide variations on a conservation theme rather than development in style or character.

A Sublime lake/mountain setting for a small dog's burial place in de Roo's historical novel, *Traveller* (1979), briefly underlines her theme of the enduring loyalty between man and dog.⁶

The world opened out in splendour on the shore of a lake, vast and silver in the evening light, with white mountains rearing skyward on its distant shore. [...] Tom stood a moment, looking out across the silver lake, and heard the sad music of tiny waves that sighed and crackled on the pebbled beach. It was a last resting place fit for a hero and Bobby had been that, a gay, undaunted traveller

and companion who had given his life heedlessly in the joy of meeting a friend.
(p. 122)

High-flown rhetoric in 'splendour' and 'vast', redeemed by the writer's passion, establishes that even the smallest of creatures can attain heroic status through courage and loyalty. The following 'chill that swept across the lake from the snowy mountains' (p. 123) sets the mood for another purpose in the novel: the enlarging of Tom's understanding. In this powerful landscape, the enigmatic, rather unpleasant George is moved to tell the chilling story of how he came to be transported to Australia. 'The wonder was, [Tom] thought, not that George had become a sullen man who drew his knife at the slightest provocation but that he still had the tenderness to grieve for a dead terrier' (p. 126).

Lakes, most probably glacial in origin, play a valuable though brief role in Elsie Locke's *The Runaway Settlers* (1965, 1971). They help Mrs Phipps and her son Archie in 1865 to find their way as they drive thirty-four beasts over the Hurunui Saddle via the shores of Lakes Taylor, Katherine, Sumner and Brunner, and down the Teremakau. The lake shores make their long and arduous trek a little easier.

But more than other glacial lakes, the lake in Jane Ryan's *The Glass Fragment* (1976) is linked to menace. First, it helps establish location somewhere not far from Queenstown. Then it sets a mood of strangeness and mystery. What Angus first sees as 'a brilliant mirror', Leonie sees as being 'like glass' and, almost immediately, she declares: 'I'd hate to be there when it goes black!' (p. 2). Thus a realistic lake first signals the blackness which will dominate this fantasy struggle between Good and Evil. The lake then becomes 'deep and mysterious' (p. 3), linked through 'glass' to the fragment that is the fantasy's activating agent. Its Bunyan-style name gives no comfort: Lake Desolation.

The build-up of images continues over five chapters. For example, 'the mist crossed the lake like a ghostly army slowly cut to pieces by the glasslike sheets of water' (p. 13). However, since the characters are then blown through to the fantasy world of Saris, the lake plays no further part until they return, having saved Saris by replacing a glass fragment in a cathedral window. Then the lake becomes important in relating the on-going struggle between good and evil in the fantasy

world of Saris to the same on-going struggle in this world. The lake recalls Saris and its cathedral through being like 'deep-coloured glass, with the shadows of night creeping over it' (p. 152). The children think they see the black form of the fallen dictator Gorod outlined against the lake. The story ends with the disquieting question: did Gorod escape into this world by following the children in order to continue his rule of desolation and devastation here?

It is clear, therefore, that glacial lakes play a relatively minor role in providing a point of reference and a goal in adventuring and, at times, a quality of Sublime beauty which promotes the cause of conservation. In other words, the role of glacial lakes is mainly supportive, though it offers the possibility of expressing menace.

Novels in the second group, by Joanna Orwin, Phyl Wardell, Joyce West, Marie Stuttard, Janet Slater Redhead, Jack Lasenby, and Beverley Dunlop, feature a landslide lake. Though swamps are 'not a natural grouping', they are included here among landslide lakes.⁷ They, too, provide a point of reference and a goal, as well as a hiding place for secrets. In comparison with glacial lakes, landslide lakes in fiction carry a higher level of threat and menace, reflecting an increased amount of violence in their origins.

For example, in an area near Lewis Pass where seismic action has considerable power,⁸ Orwin's *Watcher in the Forest* (1987) gives one lake an immediate importance in the opening sentence: 'Light bled from the sky lay shining on the surface of the lake' (p. 7).⁹ It points to a dangerous ordeal about to be imposed on Jen through the 'light' of her understanding of the spirit world.

The lake lay grey and silky in the pale light. White patches of mist drifted just above its surface. Jen shivered. There was no heat in the sun this early and there was something eerie about the stillness.

Suddenly she glimpsed a dark shape moving through the mist. [...]

Out there on the lake a canoe was being paddled through the water. [...] Not a sound travelled across the lake yet she could see the splash of the paddles entering the water. (p. 10)

This lake creates an ideal atmosphere for a ghost canoe to appear. Tension is raised immediately because Jen recognizes a ghost canoe's function in Maori lore: 'She had a nasty feeling they meant danger and even death' (p. 12).¹⁰ By making manifest the ghost canoe and the Watcher, the lake shows an important part of Jen's character: she has the necessary imagination to accept the reality of the spirit world. The Watcher through visions and dreams is therefore able to persuade her to undertake the ordeal of restoring the greenstone to the carver's burial place.

Since the basic theme of this novel is: 'Men come. Men depart. The land alone endures' (p. 130),¹¹ Jen and her brother and sister leave the first lake to tramp up through the forest and hills where the Watcher tightens his hold on Jen. Later, a second lake carries out the simple lake function of providing a point of reference. In an area 'like any other area of mountain and bush' (p. 96), a small lake, 'formed behind the landslide' (p. 96), identifies the place where the burial cave can be found.

The lake in Wardell's *The Nelson Treasure* (1983) carries out the function of providing a hiding place for a secret, the uncovering of which threatens both Matt Nelson, her secrets, and her land.¹² In this otherwise conventional mystery story, the lake has interesting parallels with Matt Nelson, the character of most interest. Both have secrets to hide. Matt Nelson masquerades as a man; the lake hides the wreckage of a plane, evidence of Matt's first secret, that she is really Matilda O'Neil who had flown the Tasman shortly after Jean Batten's success, but had crash-landed. Both Matt and the lake hide under false pretences to keep people away. Matilda maintains a fierce reputation as Matt; her notice-boards maintain that the lake and surrounding land are poisoned. Both need help to maintain their secrets. Matt needs her half-brother's help in daily life and the Cook family's help when she is injured; the lake, in order to keep the wreckage covered, needs teenage Ted's help to restore a flow of water after a landslide. Both are under threat from a villainous developer who is trying to force Matt to sell him the land. Thus the 'poisoned' lake adds some strength to Matt's efforts to keep people away from herself and her land, though her efforts to hide her real identity are barely convincing in physical or psychological terms.

Her other secret is just credible, but more the result of wishful thinking. Matt also protects in her patch of native bush several supposedly extinct birds: the huia, alive and well. Phyl Wardell's preoccupation with the need for conservation is as evident in this novel associated with a lake as in her other novels previously discussed.

A swamp also provides a hiding place with a measure of threat in three novels. In one episode in Joyce West's *The Year of the Shining Cuckoo* (1961, 1985), the children travel up through dense bush to look for moa bones in a swamp. Johnnie hopes that by selling them he will raise money to buy his filly. Among other episodes of much good humour, this episode turns serious to establish the intensity of Johnnie's longing for his filly, the perseverance he must show to raise money, and the strength of his friendship with Raine. The swamp is 'not a pleasant place [...]. It was very hot, the sweat ran off us and dripped into the swamp water; we were filthy with the red scummy mud. [...] "You could drown there."' (pp. 32-33). In keeping with the overall humorous tone of this novel with its penetrating characterization and unexpected twists, however, this unpleasant swamp ordeal produces a bone that turns out to be human and must be reburied, and an uncomfortable, scary, but harmless night for the children who become lost in the bush on the way home.

In the second novel featuring a swamp, Marie Stuttard's *Children of the Dog Star* (1984), the swamp also functions as both a hiding place and a threat. It is deep enough to hide the power base of a space probe from Sirius which has been waiting for 7000 years to be reassembled. A threat accompanies its discovery by a group of children led by Gretchen, who has superior skills in astronomy. Once the power base is linked to the other two parts of the space probe, it becomes a danger to the community. It wants to exercise power. Much against their will, the children have to destroy the probe. Meanwhile, the swamp is also a focus for some of the townspeople who want it drained for development in spite of the birdlife there. In other words, it becomes a focus for local conservation issues. Yet the story does not manage to rise above a competent, science-fiction adventure story, with a weak foundation for scientific speculation.¹³

The third novel featuring a swamp is Janet Slater Redhead's *Call of the Kotuku* (1986). Indeed, it features many other landscape features

encountered by a young white heron on his long flight from the Far North to rejoin his flock in the south at Okarito, the traditional breeding roost. But as well as marking the goal of White-wing's journey, swamps and lakes constantly mark out for him a location on the way for food and rest from dangers he keeps encountering - from the weather, other birds, man, and pollution. The heron's long flight path ensures a wide-ranging view of the need for conservation.

The largest and best-known of the landslide lakes, Lake Waikaremoana in the Urewera Country, encourages two writers to probe much more deeply into family relationships. Each novel, though different, uncovers a degree of violence in keeping with the violence of the lake's origins. Lake Waikaremoana appears by implication in Jack Lasenby's *The Lake* (1987), by definition in Beverley Dunlop's *Spirits of the Lake* (1988).

Lasenby's theme is incest, not only the threat and violence of incest, but a male rationale or excuse for the act. Later in the novel, the lake becomes Ruth's goal and place of sanctuary, but from the beginning, it provides a vital connection between her life and her dreams. Lasenby makes her dreams so important that he describes them on thirty occasions, not including repeated dreams over several nights. He links them directly to the lake to bring the subliminal into conscious awareness. It is therefore necessary to trace those links here.

At first, the lake is the symbol of the happiness Ruth shares with her beloved father before his death. Her dreams link him specifically to the lake when she hears her mother is to marry again. After Harry's first advances, she dreams regularly that she is sailing the boat on the lake with her father who is trying to say something to her, but she can never hear the words and cannot manage the boat. The fearful thing is this: 'The figure in front would turn around, but instead of Dad it would be Harry' (p. 30). In these repeated dreams, three aspects merge with Freudian connotations: Ruth's longing for her father, the confusion of his face with Harry's, and Harry's threat of incest. They are especially nasty connotations since her teacher announces to the class: 'You're in charge of your dream. You're making it. It's *your* dream!' (p. 30). What, then, should be assumed about Ruth's subconscious longings for her father who equates with Harry? Though consciously she

tries to protect herself from Harry, it seems that her subconscious longings are presented as an excuse for his advances, since his face merges with that of the father she wants. A complex Electra complex.

Ruth manages to run away and to escape more sexual advances - from a truck driver. She finally reaches her goal of the lake after crossing difficult mountain terrain. Once the dark man and yet more sexual advances have been disposed of, she can enjoy feeling close to the presence of her father in the peace of his beloved lake environment. She discovers his old friend secretly living there beside the lake in a tree house. In an overloading of the sexual theme, Lasenby establishes that old Tommy had also committed incest and caused the death of his daughter also called Ruth. Again, Lasenby makes incest seem excusable. Tommy is portrayed in his kindness as deserving forgiveness. Moreover, in Tommy's recounting of the Maori myth of Tane and his daughter Hine,¹⁴ incest is set on a universal level of human behaviour.

Another excuse for incest is made through Ruth's relationship with her mother, also revealed through association with the lake. From the beginning, Ruth declares her mother has never loved her and never liked the lake. Ruth blames her mother, naturally, for refusing to protect her against Harry, thus leaving her with no choice but to run away to the lake. After being there for about a year and a half and some time after the death of the forgiven Tommy, Ruth has yet another dream. While Tommy is bleeding a deer into the lake, he tells Ruth to look into the water.

Where blood from the deer's throat swirled dark in the already dark water, an eel rose and drank, as the deer died. It rose to the surface, lifted its head, and its old face, bloated and huge, looked into mine. Its ancient eyes drew me down. It was evil, I knew. I pushed myself back from the bank where I'd knelt down to its level, stood, and wept with disgust and terror. [...] I had looked into my mother's eyes. (p. 162)

In the lake, the deer's blood associated with sacrifice or maturation mingles with the darkness of the water. The 'bloated' eel with Ruth's mother's eyes feeds off that blood. Her 'ancient' evil lies in her dislike and neglect of Ruth. When Ruth hears voices, she realises she should go home to see that her little sister 'was all right' (p. 163) and not suffering from Harry's attentions because of her mother's

neglect. In spite of the apparent urgency of Ruth's mission, however, it takes her another whole summer to her birthday in March before she leaves for home.

So the role of the lake here is complex. On a simple level, it reflects Ruth's happiness with her father. It is a source of pleasure and nourishment, the goal she seeks when she runs away. But from its mysterious deeps, and brought to her attention by Tommy, himself a perpetrator of incest, comes an evil image of her mother. By her neglect and refusal to help Ruth, she is seen to share the blame for her husband's incestuous approaches. By implication, therefore, Harry is relieved of some blame, if not all, for his attempts at incest. It is disturbing, sociologically, that the novel suggests the perpetrator of incest can be excused. Yet the high occurrence of incest makes the novel overloaded and not very convincing. However, as Samuel Pickering maintains: 'It is important to examine the problems which most concern society'.¹⁵

In Dunlop's *Spirits of the Lake*, the interweaving of place and human affairs, past and present, is represented by a tukutuku panel and is centred on Lake Waikaremoana in a complex mingling of legend, history, and fiction involving time shifts from the present into the past. This landslide lake, noted for its strange, eerie mists, is the heart of the spirit world, the place in this novel where violent origins are related to fighting for revenge and survival, to mystery and treachery through an ancient curse still exerting its power on Paul's family.

The lake's turbulent origins are interpreted in Maori legend by the story of Hau-Mapuhia who was turned into a taniwha. Part of her heart became a stone mauri, protecting Pa Waikaremoana. The mauri becomes the dwelling place of the spirit Taimana, a ball of fire who can work through human beings. Formed from the violent geological origins of the lake, the mauri gathers power through blood sacrifice and intrigue. When in Te Kooti's time it is stolen by Mereaiha to take away the power of Te Kooti, a curse is laid on her descendants. The spirits of the lake kill Paul's grandmother and threaten his mother, the kuia, Paul, and his little sister Lucy. Only through the functioning of the stone can Paul experience time-shifts and begin to nullify the family curse.¹⁶ At the

climax, Taimana and Hau-Mapuhia try to drown his mother out on the lake.

The mist rolled closer, swallowing up the lake like some great ghostly taniwha. It was close to Mum. For an instant the mist formed the shape of an awesome creature with tentacle arms and legs threshing the water. (p. 120)

The form of a face was beginning to take shape, glowing red like the blood of the koru - holes for eyes with the light shining through, the dreadful grimace and the protruding tongue. [...] It was the knotted face on the rata in the clearing - the face of Taimana. (p. 122)

[Paul] aimed and flung the mauri at the heart of Taimana.

The long shrill scream that echoed through the mist could have come from Hau-Mapuhia herself. A great wind gusted. It flattened Paul against the deck. The boat twisted and turned, fighting the ghostly coils of the taniwha Hau-mapuhia. [...] Paul felt tears sting his eyes. [...] He'd beaten Taimana. (pp. 124-25)

This dramatic combination of natural mists, legend, fantasy, and the present-day realism of being out in a boat on the lake provides an end to Paul's search for a solution to the curse. The violent origins of the lake at the centre of this novel are worked through a violent tale of battle and revenge and salvation.

Novels in the third and largest of these groups associated with lakes feature lakes of volcanic origin, the most violent and spectacular of geological forces. When writers make a volcanic lake central to their story, then they draw strongly on danger and violence inherent in these origins for fictional power to develop theme and character. However, when a volcanic lake plays but a small role in a story, its volcanic nature is usually of little importance. It simply marks a location, or provides pleasure or beauty.

Five writers provide examples. In William Taylor's *Shooting Through* (1986), 'lovely' Lake Taupo merely establishes the general location of the story on the Central Plateau, highlighting the Plateau's 'bleakness wherever they looked' (p. 31). With more purpose in Tessa Duder's *Alex* (1987), Lake Taupo marks a stopping-point on Alex's way to Napier for the championships to determine Olympic selection. It also gives her a chance to relax in a quarter-mile swim, to take a step forward in accepting her challenge, and to gain further support from her father and Gran. In Mary Cox's *Wild Manes in the Afternoon* (1976) on the Taupo

Volcanic Plateau, a deep blue crater lake provides a water supply in a valley so that Adele and her brother and mother are able to save the beautiful brumbies from round-up and slaughter by shutting them off in that valley. In Lisa Vasil's *Dark Secret* (1989), the Taupo lakeside is a place of recreation where one swims, buys ice creams, or plays mini-golf. The mere mention of it heightens Connie's embarrassment over Amanda's blindness. But towards the end of the story, Connie's fear for Amanda's recovery is aptly likened to the pumice in the lake which keeps 'popping back up to haunt my thoughts' (p. 94). Further north, Lake Omapere in Anne de Roo's *The Bats' Nest* (1985) partly locates, partly protects Hone Heke's pa at Puketutu. Its peaceful waters, as Jacky runs past them, are a contrast to the battle which follows.

However, when volcanic lakes play a major role in the novels of Maurice Gee, Elsie Locke, Caroline Macdonald, and Barry Faville, they are dangerously active either physically or symbolically. All lakes in their different ways are involved in conservation issues, helping to destroy what is destroying the environment.

The first of this group to appear is Gee's *Under the Mountain* (1979). The menace of Lake Pupuke is all the greater because it is a crater lake ringed not by mountain and bush but by suburban Auckland. It takes an active and aggressive part in what has to happen to save the world.¹⁷ At first, the lake seems pleasant when the twins arrive for their holiday, 'the last glow of sunset making pink reflections on its surface. But [...] the water suddenly looked very deep, very secret', the houses seem private with the people locked away, and the place is 'spooky' (p. 9). A rotten smell pervades the place. A distant rhythmic hiss is heard. The lake is as deep, dark and dangerous as the mission the twins undertake to save the world. The Wilberforces' house on the edge of the lake gives access to subterranean tunnels. The threat in the terrifying policeman-Wilberforce scene is that one or both of the twins will be drowned in the lake. Finally, the beams activated by the twins' stones leap from Rangitoto and Mt Eden in a great explosion, and one of the five threads reaching out to other craters touches Lake Pupuke. The lake becomes part of the extra explosions of fire and ash needed to destroy the environmental Evil personified by the Wilberforces. Because Theo cannot quite control his stone, these extra eruptions had to be set

off, although they kill many people. The working out of this plot uses the lake as something deep and secret, and dangerous in its volcanic nature. But the lake is also presented as something beautiful to be valued and saved from those who would turn the world into mud.

Locke's *A Canoe in the Mist* (1984) is a historical novel about the Tarawera volcanic eruption of 1886. Locke uses the lakes as an image of beauty needing preservation and as a violent instrument of vengeance when nature moves against human beings. Lake Tarawera actively gives the first sign that something strange is about to happen. Waves rise up to wash over the landing stage as the tourist party prepares to leave on a trip to see the famous Pink and White Terraces. Shortly after, a second sign appears out of the mist - a ghost canoe, a waka wairua, an omen of disaster.¹⁸ Tension is increased through a growing awareness of its significance. At last the mountain erupts, and Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana too, completely destroying the Terraces and three villages of about 150 people. Having served their function of sending warnings of disaster and having become part of the explosion itself, the lakes play no further specific role in the following rain of earth and fire which Guide Sophia and tohunga Tuhoto see as a judgement on human beings for the despoliation of the environment.

The lake also takes vengeance through volcanic activity in Caroline Macdonald's *The Lake at the End of the World* (1989), set somewhere in an area of thermal activity and underground tunnels within radio call of the King Country.¹⁹ The year is 2025. Thanks to the care of Diana's father, Redfern Lake supports an abundant birdlife in a small area that has survived the chemical destruction of the world. Diana and her parents are apparently the sole survivors of this catastrophe. They have always used rain water, never the lake, just in case it is poisoned - an extraordinary idea, given that bird and frog life are flourishing. Hence the lake stands simply as a symbol of the purity vital for healthy survival in an increasingly polluted world.

The lake is not very big; it takes Hector only an hour or so to walk round it slowly. After Diana rescues him from the underground community, their relationship begins in suspicion and unease, first with Hector living in a hide at the edge of the lake, and later when he stays in the

house. They discover they can use the lake water for crops. They learn to enjoy swimming, and to sort out what Hector calls emotional politics. In short, the lake nurtures the relationship of these young teenagers to a point where they will combine in the face of danger and risk going back into the caves for the greater good of saving Diana's mother.

But the lake is more than a lovely, passive symbol of purity. Diana calls it dangerous. Obviously volcanic in origin, it is 'deep in the centre, very deep. It falls away suddenly like an abyss hidden under the surface' (p. 53). When threatened, it does something about its own protection. For example, a real estate agent for an American developer rows out to the centre of the lake, is caught in a terrible storm and sinks to the bottom. The couple from the Government wanting to create a tourist resort also row out to the centre of the lake and are sucked down by a huge whirlpool.

Moreover, the lake is able to protect itself from being polluted by an underground community, sealed off since 1968 in a cave system connected by tunnels to the lake. Their fanatical Counsellor believes that he has devised a way for his chosen community to escape the inevitable nuclear destruction of the world. When he plans to pump accumulated toxic waste into the lake, it sends a wall of water and a rumbling earthquake to flood the tunnels, kill the Counsellor, break his power, and scare all the people living underground into escaping. This is another example of a New Zealand novel's use of a lake's volcanic power in the fight against pollution.

Barry Faville's two novels, *The Keeper* (1985) and *Stanley's Aquarium* (1989) are set beside volcanic Lake Taupo. In the former, Faville puts more emphasis on volcanic mountain power, and yet the lake, simply called Big Lake, plays its part too. In the latter, the volcanic nature of the lake is essential to the novel's whole fictional power.

The lake is peaceful at the opening of *The Keeper*, more than a hundred years after a nuclear disaster. However, in the account of what happened fourteen years before this story begins, the lake's crashing, roaring, storm-whipped waters participate in the disturbance caused by the erupting volcano. The superstitious villagers are so terrified that

they kill the parents of three-year-old Michael to rid themselves of the curse they believed caused the eruption. Again, to mark the danger of a proposed expedition to kill a marauding tiger, the waters 'slapped on the shore like hard, leathery hands' (p. 18).²⁰ But when the loners invade the villages, the lake helps Michael and his friend Andy make a quick trip to the Turangi area. They hope to arrive in time to destroy the cache of guns and so save the villagers from war waged with guns.

After the volcano's eruption, Michael is rescued from the lava flow by the loners, Luke, Honi and Sarah, and the image of a cloak becomes dominant. Michael learns the proper name of Big Lake: Taupo-nui-a-Tia, the great cloak of Tia. He learns what had been cloaked from him -- the loners' side of the story of their existence as outcasts. But Honi and Sarah keep secret the whole truth of Michael's parents' death in order to let him flourish, though it means they can never claim him as their grandson. This, says Mr Clinton later in his footnote, is 'behaviour as among the most courageous and self-sacrificing I have ever known' (p. 142). Before Michael and his friends leave for their new life, they take a last look at the now-peaceful great cloak of a lake and know it is part of them. Thus they will take all that has happened with them into their new life in the hope of building something better.

What Lake Taupo hides and nurtures in Faville's *Stanley's Aquarium*, however, is of a sinister, malignant nature. The lakes serves to expand the character of Robyn, called Robbie, and of mad Stanley in particular, in the exposition of the novel's theme: briefly, that violence breeds violence in human relationships.

A mood and a sense of foreboding comes 'with the first cold southerly of the year scratching and clawing its way across the lake' (p. 5). Then Robbie connects the lake to what becomes an important motif in the novel, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*: 'Perhaps the image of the sunless sea soaked up for me all I had felt while staring at the cold lake the afternoon before' (p. 7). The coldness is a contrast to the heat of the lake's origins which, nevertheless, add to the sense of menace. Taupo is 'born from pumice and doomed to return to it, perhaps sooner than it imagined. Sprawled on the edge of the craters from which the lava had boiled, foaming and seething, the town spread itself over pumice'

(p. 10). The whole volcanic structure of the crater lake arouses in Robbie 'vague feelings of awe, and even dread', the stuff of 'my childhood nightmares' (p. 35). She recounts scientific data related to forecasting volcanic activity and the eruption of 1800 years ago in her attempts to keep her nightmares at bay. But she merely reinforces an awareness of volcanic potential. Pumice shooting up from the vent shows the volcano is still active, and, again, the lake is linked to *Kubla Khan*. An English poem - a New Zealand lake.²¹ Here they merge. Robbie tells the implied reader that the poem's 'words had burned into my mind' (p. 38), and invites the reader to make further connections 'if you know the poem and have read the last couple of pages with care and attention' (p. 38). She is referring to the parallel between Taupo and its lake - the pleasure town, the volcanic eruption, the depth of its crater, the weed on the pinnacle's crown - and details in the poem - its pleasure dome, the erupting fountain and 'caverns measureless to man', the 'floating hair' - all spelling out danger.²² Robbie quotes *Kubla Khan* to help with her despair over the violent road death of her boy-friend. Moreover, when Robbie hears of Stanley's plan to destroy Lake Taupo, she reinforces the enormity of his deed by quoting from *Kubla Khan* the two lines which end with 'prophesying war!' (p. 110).

The potential menace of the lake increases in association with Stanley. He first makes an unexpected comment before a fine panoramic view of the lake and mountains: 'You are looking at one of the most dangerous places on the face of the earth' (p. 24). Robbie is shocked, 'not because I found his remark outlandish, but because I had never imagined that another living soul felt the same way about Lake Taupo as I did' (p. 24). Stanley, however, not only recognizes danger waiting in the lake, but he also embodies its waiting, explosive nature in his twisted personality. Pockmarked Stanley, with scars of an explosive origin to match his personality, was persecuted as a child, became a failure as a travelling salesman, retreated into a fantasy world when he retired to Taupo, established an overgrown garden or 'jungle' (p. 22), and was further disgraced on a visit to his daughter's school, after which he assaulted her and she left home. Now he hates 'this dull self-satisfied community of sleazy money-grubbers with their motels and launches and cars and glossy houses and all the rest of it' (p. 109). In order to attack what he hates, Stanley targets the lake. If he

destroys the lake's function as a tourist attraction, he believes he will destroy the commercialization of the town. His actions are as catastrophic as any eruption, and turn the lake into a metaphorically-explosive danger to society. In his aquarium, warmed by a thermal bore, Stanley breeds piranha capable of surviving in the cold waters of Lake Taupo. Though his devious plans are uncovered and the piranha killed by his irate wife and daughter, Stanley is cunning enough previously to have hidden twelve of the monstrous 'finger-licking' (p. 109) creatures in four chilly bins. The bins could not be more ironically named. Stanley releases their contents into Lake Taupo as planned. Two years later, mutilated limbs become the consequence of paddling in Lake Taupo, now certainly a most dangerous place on Earth.

The lake also plays its part in defining minor characters, Robbie's parents, for example. Her father's emotions are expressed through what comes from the violent origins of the lake. In an effort to work through a twelve-year-old grief for his baby son, killed in a road accident, he carves pumice pieces thrown up from the lake. As part of his acceptance of Robbie as herself, he asks her to help him sand down a carving of a young man's head which he puts on display. Robbie's mother is usually as calm and placid as the lake often is, and she is sympathetic when it comes to death and grieving. But she reveals unexpected violent depths, becoming 'a killer when the trout are on' (p. 56).

The novel ends with the question of Robbie's responsibility. Was the lake really doomed? Or could Robbie have reported Stanley sooner and saved the lake from an action that is almost as catastrophic in its consequences as a volcanic eruption? Maybe she shares, subconsciously, some of Stanley's horror at the pollution of Taupo through money-making, slick tourism. Certainly, the violence of her boyfriend's death leaves her feeling like 'exacting vengeance on someone or something' and she begins 'displaying a reckless disregard for consequences' (p. 69). In volcanic terms, her 'sullen anger' and 'stew of contradictions [...] bubbled away in me at that time' in her unsuccessful efforts to provoke 'a blazing row' (p. 74). As for the piranha, she calls them 'Stanley's twelve good disciples' (p. 151). Maybe she is not just being ironic. But when she realizes the truth of Stanley's success, it is too late for action, other than to write her story.

Thus it is clear that the degree of violence in the origins of glacial, landslide, and volcanic lakes has considerable bearing on the degree of violence used by writers to express theme and character. Glacial lakes mark a location, provide an identifiable goal in the wilderness, and move characters to new awareness through their Sublime beauty. Landslide lakes continue to mark a location, but also become a place for secrets involving some degree of violence or intensity, their depths symbolic of the subconscious in the human mind. Volcanic lakes increasingly introduce menace and violence to what is hidden in deep waters and internalized within characters. Especially when a volcanic lake plays a central role in the action or imagery of a novel, powerful forces are involved, sometimes actively, in the cause of conservation.

The second part of this chapter will show that New Zealand rivers provide further examples of how inherent dangers in the landscape help writers to gain power in portraying theme and character.

The long, narrow shape of New Zealand with its mountainous backbone gives its rivers particular characteristics: on a world scale they are short, fast-flowing, prone to flash-flooding, and generally difficult for navigation. According to David Young, 'rivers figure little in our modern consciousness'.²³ Yet writers of children's fiction commonly use settings in the Great Outdoors for drama and adventure, and they often have to deal with the ultimate danger presented by New Zealand rivers - drowning. Such was the frequency of European deaths by this cause, especially in the nineteenth century, that to be drowned in a river became known as 'the New Zealand death'.²⁴ Proceeding from the threat of drowning to actual drowning, this chapter will now trace the way writers use rivers to intensify their fiction.

But before a discussion of drowning in rivers, it is important to establish two points. The first point is that in children's fiction those who are drowned happen to be European. In settler times, European immigrants came to New Zealand with 'attitudes to rivers from another hemisphere' and were slow to respond to this unpredictable and powerful landscape, whereas the Maori regarded rivers as 'central to [...]

existence, as suppliers of food and of mana, territorial markers and highways for their proud canoes. They had to know them in order to live with them'.²⁵ These Maori attitudes are at the core of Joanna Orwin's novels of pre-European Maori communities, especially *Ihaka and the Prophecy* (1984), where a river provides transport to the coast for a massive totara trunk destined to be a great canoe. Reverence is shown, too, by the boy Barney in David Somerset's *Barney and the Eels* (1981), where a great eel becomes a symbol of an ideal, the ultimate challenge. When he hooks it at last, he lets it go, rather than eat it. But Barney, unlike other characters in adventure stories, is not driven by hunger.

The second point is that no New Zealand river has inspired a writer to explore an epic quest or journey as, for example, the Mississippi inspired Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884).²⁶ Perhaps hydro dams along the longest river, the Waikato, are a barrier to such a journey. But Jane Mander's adult novel, *A Story of a New Zealand River* (1920), shows that a river can have a powerful part in 'an attempt to interpret experience',²⁷ and, more recently, Mona Anderson's autobiography vividly bears out the implications of her title, *A River Rules my Life* (1963). In children's fiction, however, Ron Bacon in his historical novel, *Again the Bugles Blow* (1973), portrays people using the Waikato as a highway at the time of the Land Wars, but Anne de Roo in *Friend Troll, Friend Taniwha* (1986) uses the Waikato only briefly as an access route. Only one story, *Wanganui Adventure* by Ken Saunders (1977), is structured mainly along a river, but it lacks epic qualities, being concerned only with hearty adventure and daring, and nothing of Maori spirituality or European historical impact which might have introduced something of the social and philosophical ramifications of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The threat of drowning in rivers, often flooded, is important in twenty children's novels, ranging from adventure/survival stories more prevalent in publications of the 1970s to novels with increased levels of psychological exploration in the 1980s. This danger intensifies battles for survival in the changing and redefining of relationships. When the threat is not acute, stories like Ruth Dallas's *The Big Flood in the Bush* (1971) and Margaret Mahy's *Clancy's Cabin* (1974) remain much

gentler in tone, the latter especially emphasizing the stream as a source of water for drinking and swimming. On the other hand, both Ruth Dallas and Joan de Hamel draw strength in their portrayal of their characters faced with a river's raging. In Dallas's *A Dog Called Wig* (1970), the 'challenging and frightening' tidal river increases Archie's need to be brave (p. 127). In an even more successful portrayal of characters under stress, de Hamel's *X Marks the Spot* (1973), the river, carrying the New Zealand understated term 'creek' (p. 62), sweeps away almost all the children's survival gear. Their ordeal is sharpened, their relationships redefined. The boys are ultimately forced to accept their own and each other's weaknesses in a new level of friendship.

Further examples of a river's raging reducing characters to despair are provided by Anne de Roo in *Scrub Fire* (1977) and Margaret Hall in *After the Earthquake* (1989), though the river also provides de Roo's three characters with food and water. An encounter with a raging river becomes a dramatic part of an adventure in Maurice Duggan's *The Fabulous McFanes* (1974), Elsie Locke's *The Runaway Settlers* (1965, 1971), Locke's and Ken Dawson's *The Boy with the Snowgrass Hair* (1976), and Roger Simpson's *Hunter's Gold* (1976). A river has a more lasting effect, however, on Philip Holden's hunter in *Stag* (1980). His escape from the 'terrible nightmare' of a flooded river, an escape that 'bordered on the miraculous' (pp. 124-26), helps to change his perceptions so that he leaves the stag to its freedom. In Maurice Gee's *The World Around the Corner* (1980), the way Caroline leaps with the magic glasses into the torrent and is swept away downstream on her tyre emphasizes her pluck, her desperation to escape the wicked Grimbles, and the importance of her mission. Joyce West's *The River Road* (1980) effectively derives tension from a river's flooding and the threat of drowning. The river bed is normally the only road access into the farm where Sarah and her aunt as the new housekeeper come to stay. Farm life activities, which West handles particularly well, undergo an exotic disruption when drug runners appear. Their capture is eventually made possible by the forces of the landscape in the river's sudden raging. But only one novel in this group, Beverley Dunlop's *The Poetry Girl* (1983), portrays a flooded river as a threat to characters in their home. Rising waters serve to reinforce Natalia's habit of retreating into her private world of poetry when she feels threatened.

Two novels which are more complex in their use of a river are Jack Lasenby's *The Lake* (1987) and Joanna Orwin's *Watcher in the Forest* (1987). Lasenby uses rivers to provide Ruth with nourishment, but they also threaten her physically through flash-flooding and near-drowning. One in particular has psychological power through its 'dark and silent' nature where something 'clutched me' (pp. 84-85). It reminds Ruth of her mother who had never protected her from her step-father's approaches. She escapes from the river as she had escaped from her mother. This discrediting of her mother as part of the theme of incest is continued later in the novel, and has already been discussed in this chapter.

The river in Orwin's *Watcher in the Forest* is also psychologically threatening through Jen's ability to 'see pictures in the water' (p. 30). As in the work of Margaret Mahy and Alan Garner discussed in Chapter Three above, the power of place in the hills, the clearing, and the river is such that what happened in the past has been stored to enable the righting of an old wrong. The river carries a knot of Jen's hair to the Watcher, who compels her through dreams and time-slips to carry out the task of restoring the tapu greenstone to its carver in a cave. Jen sees what happened in the past to the greenstone man, that he was trapped, killed, and later buried in a cave. Another vision through the spray of a waterfall makes her realize the greenstone is 'a symbol of life and continuity, a link between past and present' (p. 88), and she is convinced she must complete the task of returning it to the cave.

All these brushes with danger are treated, as one might expect, in a serious vein. Moreover, both Duggan in *The Fabulous McFanes* and Gloria Gibson in *Mouse in the Attic* (1980) and *Mouse at School* (1983) describe the tension of pulling a vehicle out of a flooded river as an important matter. Only Joyce West in *The Year of the Shining Cuckoo* (1961, 1985) sees humour in the stranding of a car and people mid-stream. Her newly-married couple setting off on their honeymoon are caught on the causeway by a rapidly rising tide. In keeping with the over-all tone of this novel, they fall into the water to the amusement of their guests, and the car is rescued by a horse team. But the disaster in the tidal river enables the novel to end with everyone enjoying the wonderful spectacle of a rare flowering of a cactus plant, the night-blooming cereus.

Actual death by drowning in a river is, of course, not as commonly represented in children's fiction as is the threat of it. Indeed, though death itself in children's novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth century at times provides emotional scenes,²⁸ death is listed as one of the taboos of children's fiction for much of the twentieth century, at least until the 1950s.²⁹ To trace the way its presence in association with rivers becomes increasingly central in New Zealand children's novels is to trace a growing acceptance of problematic aspects of the human condition and the dramatic power which danger associated with rivers can generate. Writers who show this progression are Esther Glen, Anne Holden, Anne de Roo, Phyllis Johnston, Ruth Dallas, Eve Sutton, Roger Simpson, Jack Lasenby, and Maurice Gee.

Glen in *Six Little New Zealanders*, published originally in 1917 and republished in 1983, lets bachelor Uncle Stephen tell his sad tale, years after the event, of how a quarrel sent his fiancée to her death on horseback in a flooded river. This account of a long-ago death that has lost its sting humbles Kathie into patching up a silly quarrel with her fiancé, yet keeps the general mood of the novel benign and positive. But the reader is left in no doubt about the power of a high-country river.

No narrow, winding channels now, no rushing streams nor cunning little islands - a wild waste of waters stretching from bank to bank, thundering on its way, bringing great logs and trees from the gorge higher up, tearing at its banks like a hungry creature, carrying away bridges and submerging all the low-lying land till tussock and boulder, broom and manuka, disappeared from view. (p. 158)

In flood, the river has the active force of a merciless, predatory creature from which human beings have little chance of escaping.

Anne Holden's friendly soldier in the second half of the nineteenth century in *No Trains at the Bay* (1977) suffers a New Zealand death, which causes passing unhappiness for Nick and Frankie. With greater emotional power in its consequences, Anne de Roo's *Traveller* (1979) brings a New Zealand death closer to the central characters to make a direct impact on their lives, though for the reader it is still at one remove in place and time. Tom Farrell learns on arrival at Lyttelton that his intended boss - Harriet's fiancé - was drowned crossing the Rakaia four weeks previously. The tragedy forces him to take up the

challenge of the novel: 'We don't ask in Canterbury what a man has been but what he can become' (p. 8). Tom strikes out alone across the Canterbury plains for Summerdowns, taking with him Harriet's terrier Bobby. Bobby's subsequent 'New Zealand death', however, is realised in its immediacy, though Bobby is but an animal. The effect of grief and burial by the lake has been commented on above.

By contrast, the drowning of Charlie Stag in Johnston's *Black Boots and Buttonhooks* (1982) has no effect on events in May's life. Her brother's account of finding the body becomes merely a sad incident, reducing May to 'hot' tears: she 'knew that she would never forget Charlie Stag. And she never, never, did!' (p. 141). But Charlie is never mentioned again. The story moves on to holidays and her new horse.

On the other hand, both Dallas in *Shining Rivers* (1979) and Sutton in *Valley of Heavenly Gold* (1987) increase the impact of death by letting the protagonist himself see the bodies of drowned men as he recounts in the first person his experience in Otago's gold-rush days. The harshness of life matches the harshness of the landscape, particularly in Dallas's novel. Johnie finds Tony lying further downstream dead from an earlier flooding of the river. Dan and Rex are drowned by the next flooding while he, Johnie, has the good luck to escape. Seeing his friends dead eventually helps Johnie rid himself of the fevered lust for gold that turns a man 'callous in that inhuman landscape' (p. 102). Less powerful but still told with impact, Sutton's Matthew, helped by Ah Chong, finds his father's gold, but both have great difficulty escaping from the sudden river torrent that sweeps away half the goldfield below them, drowning several diggers. Along with the viciousness gold brings out in men, this leads Matthew to conclude that 'gold costs too much' (p. 125). He chooses a positive life-time occupation: learning from Ah Chong about healing with plants and herbs. However, these perceptions that extend both Johnie's and Matthew's awareness are not part of Scott's experience in Roger Simpson's *Hunter's Gold* (1976). The death of Scott's father's friend is held at a distance from him, and the book remains on the level of an adventure story.

Except for de Roo's Bobby, death in these novels is still largely at one remove from the protagonists. It comes closer and more significantly

horrific in its consequences in Gee's *The Fire-Raiser* (1986), set in 1915. Lucy Marwick's drowning in the river thirty-five years previously works as a catalyst to tip the balance of her mother's and her brother's sanity. The psychological relationship between the eccentric Mrs Marwick and her son Edgar makes a lasting impression on the reader. Mrs Marwick has always blamed Edgar for not watching Lucy while she was swimming in the river and, therefore, for letting her drown. The way she treats Edgar as a result of her grief is pitiable, though not excusable. By frequently shutting him in a cupboard, she is responsible for his crazed desire for arson. In an energetic opening chapter, Gee describes Edgar's manic delight in 'outrage, power, pleasure' (p. 8) as he sets fire to Dargie's stable.

The river continues to play a part in the drive of the plot and the relationships between the other characters, especially the two boys and two girls at the story's centre. The teachers regularly take their classes down to the river for swimming lessons, which means, for example that the two boys find Edgar's discarded petrol cans in the river, that Edgar and Mr Hedges fight over Edgar's attempts to deny the children riparian rights, that Mrs Marwick throws herself into the river and is saved from drowning by the two girls. This last incident sets Edgar off on his last manic attempts at arson.

Again, the drowning of a sibling features in Lasenby's *The Mangrove Summer* (1988), but he makes it a climax rather than a catalyst to events in the summer of 1942-43. Nevertheless, it is not an inevitable outcome of events and character, though it is foreshadowed through hints from George's first-person narration. For example, he make this comment: 'Jill never cried at anything then. Poor Jill' (p. 7). Jimmy, aged seven, drowns while trying to escape and find his way home. His running away with Derek, however, is not a surprise in itself, for sister Jill's bossiness has turned to dictatorial harshness, especially in the way she beats Jimmy regularly for wetting his bed through homesickness. So Jimmy drowns and Derek survives. Almost immediately, the children are found.

This raises questions of credibility and structural weakness. The whole mangrove river setting and the ability of the six cousins to survive in it, because of Graham's practical skills in particular, are

convincingly portrayed, as is the motivation for their escape up river because they fear a Japanese invasion. However, searches by the Mounted Rifles and local people who know the area fail to find the six children for over five weeks, and Jill and Graham themselves fail to find Jimmy and Derek in the two days they go searching for them. Since Jimmy's 'New Zealand death' takes place at the end of the novel, there is no exploration of how Jimmy's death could have affected Jill's initial decision that the children should escape up river. Because Mrs Wheeler arrives at the moment the children discover Jimmy's body, no resolution of the developing power struggle within the group is possible. After the children and Jimmy's death are discovered, the story winds up quickly with a great deal of crying. Only the finding of their dog, lost on their arrival over the hills, provides some solace.

As a last example, Gee's *The Champion* (1989) brings death to the hero and focus of the novel. Jackson Coop, an American negro soldier, goes AWOL in 1943 after spending time at Kettle Creek recuperating from war wounds. He is forced by Mrs Stewart to take the old launch across the mangrove estuary, where it sinks. Mrs Stewart's body is found two days later, Jack's never. Rex, who tells the story, likes to imagine that Jack escapes to the other side and eventually finds his way home to Chicago. But his probable death seems to indicate that there is no place in this world, or more exactly, in a world at war in 1943, for men like Jack who cannot face the horrors of fighting. It raises questions of courage and cowardice, changing Rex's perceptions for ever.

In exposing to the reader the technical problem of story-telling years after the event, Gee as the implied narrator leads up to Jack's drowning as historically inevitable. The character Rex in the first person says: 'I'll try to speak with my Standard Six voice not my grown-up voice. I want to say how it was and not change the shape of it by putting in ideas I've thought of since' (p. 7). The reader is reminded of this implied narrator at intervals throughout the story when he gives an acknowledged stretch of perception from the present to his eye-witness account of the past. Thus Gee's *récit* increases credibility and involvement for the reader.³⁰ Rex comes to understand his longing for a hero in Jack, his shame at Jack's reluctance to fight which he interprets as cowardice, and the possibility of his own cowardice and

flight if he himself were to face Japanese bayonets. The last two chapters are introduced as if Jack's drowning is an expression of historical inevitability, not a fictional choice on the part of the writer behind the narrator:

The last part is very hard to write. I think about it often these days; and think that if I had behaved sensibly, not gone to Stewart's farm that night, shown Jack sooner that I liked him, then it would have ended the way we planned, Jack would have sailed out on the tide, over the bar and got away. but that's unreal. You can't change the past.(p. 151)

Rex in adulthood has to face the fact of Jack's death and give up his dream that he escaped. Jack's death comes as the climax to a whole experience for Rex – the maturing of his concepts of heroism, cowardice, war, and fear. He can fittingly say simply in his last sentence: 'I've never forgotten Jack, and never will' (p. 173).

'To discover a stay against death and dissolution on earth', writes Leonard Lutwack, 'is the ambition of literature as well as religion and science.'³¹ It is clear that writers who use either the threat or the actuality of a New Zealand death by drowning in a river have the opportunity to use an inherent danger in the landscape to great effect in establishing theme and character. Moreover, the tracing of actual death in children's novels, especially in the 1980s, shows an increasing tendency in children's fiction to portray the less pleasant but more resonant aspects of the human condition. Through their writing and in the memories of individual characters, writers of children's fiction in New Zealand are indeed able to provide a stay against death.

NOTES

1. D.J. Lowe and J.D. Green, 'Origins and development of the lakes' in *Inland Waters of New Zealand*, ed. by A.B. Viner (1987), pp. 1-64 (p. 1).
2. 'Symbolism in New Zealand Poetry', in *James K. Baxter as Critic* (hereafter *BAC*), ed. by Frank McKay (1978), pp. 50-69 (p. 61).
3. Quoted from Forel, Introduction to 'Morphology and Classification' by J. Irwin in *New Zealand Lakes*, ed. by V.H. Jolly and J.M.A. Brown (1975), pp. 25-56 (p. 25).
4. Scientists classify lakes of complex origin according to the dominant force. In the novels selected for study in this thesis, fictional lakes are regarded as being of similar origin to actual lakes in the same area.
5. Lakes are featured in approximately 11% of novels in the 1970s, but in 15% in the 1980s. Notions of the Sublime, such as awe and terror and overwhelming magnificence, are outlined by Francis Pound, following Edmund Burke, in *Frames on the Land* (1983), pp. 19-20.
6. Bobby is a reminder of Toots in Eric Knight's classic, *Lassie Come-Home* (1941).
7. Swamps are 'not a natural grouping, but contain a heterogenous selection of lakes that are probably late stages in the development of originally shallow lakes formed in various ways'. Lowe and Green, *Inland Waters of New Zealand*, p. 13.
8. Lakes in the Lewis Pass area may still be glacial in origin, but the area is noted for seismic movement and the second lake is said to be a landslide lake. This novel is therefore placed in the second group which suits the level of danger.
9. At first sight, this sentence makes a confusing opening because 'bled' is the form of both simple past and the past participle. Nevertheless, 'bled' signals some form of difficulty.
10. The most famous appearance of a waka wairua is before the eruption of Mt Tarawera in 1886.
11. This saying is widely held in Maori lore. It is quoted, for example, by Keri Hulme: 'People pass away, but not the land. It remains for ever', in *The Bone People* (1983), p. 336, and by Hong-Key Yoon: 'People disappear, land remains', in *Maori Mind, Maori Land* (1986), p. 19.
12. The location of Wardell's novel is inconclusive. The plane crash locates it somewhere on the West Coast of either island. The presence of the huia indicates the North Island between Taupo and Wellington, but the reference to mining and prospecting for gold suggests the South Island.
13. Science fiction of value is 'speculative fiction in which the author takes as his first postulate the real world as we know it, including all the established facts and natural laws [...]; legitimate - and often very tightly reasoned - speculation about the possibilities of the real world'. Robert A. Heinlein, quoted by Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (1989), pp. 203-04. Since the aliens are said to come from Sirius, a star, the premise of this story lacks value.
14. For one version of the legend, see A.H. Reed, *Myths and Legends of Maoriland* (1946), pp. 135-142.
15. 'The Function of Criticism in Children's Literature', *CLE*, 44 (1982), 13-18 (p.16).
16. It is stated in previous chapters that the characteristic

17. Writers have not used the relative ages of the lakes in any way. For comparison, however, the approximate ages of the lakes are given as follows: Lake Pupuke 40,000 years; Lake Rotorua the oldest at 140,000 years, the glacier lakes from 10,000-12,000 years, Lake Waikaremoana 2200 years, and Lake Taupo the largest and youngest at 1800 years. Lowe and Green, *Inland Waters of New Zealand*, pp. 16-17, p. 24, p. 32, p. 34.
18. This novel precedes Joanna Orwin's *Watcher in the Forest*, which also makes use of a warning given by a ghost canoe on a lake.
19. The distant summer-snowless mountain, the endangered bird and dead city are unnamed in the lamentable desire of publishers to 'de-locate' the story, supposedly to help overseas readers, but Caroline Macdonald states that the former two are Mt Taranaki and the takahe. 'Caroline Macdonald', *SLR*, 8 (1988), p. 4.
20. Faville's tiger is old and sickly, but it is still feared and viewed with prejudice, the focus of a hunting trip, and the means by which Michael adds to the villagers' antipathy towards him. It serves a different purpose from the very Blakean tiger in Victor Kelleher's postcataclysmic novel, *Taronga* (1986).
21. This is quite different from the use Maurice Duggan makes of *Kubla Khan* in 'Along Rideout Road That Summer', in *Collected Stories*, ed. by C.K. Stead (1981), pp. 196-209. Duggan emphasizes cultural differences for New Zealanders between their European inheritance and their direct experience in this land. For example, the image of the damsel with a dulcimer does not fit that of the wild Hohepa girl with her guitar. Faville, on the other hand, emphasizes common menace and prophecies of doom and war by linking lines from *Kubla Khan* as a motif through the novel.
22. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Kubla Khan', in *The London Book of English Verse*, ed. by Herbert Read and Bonamy Dobrée (1952), pp. 692-93.
23. *Faces of the River* (1986), p. 7.
24. *ibid.*
25. *ibid.* Peter Ireland also comments on the way European attitudes led to drownings being called the 'New Zealand death'. Introduction to Robin Morrison, *Sense of Place* (1984), pp. 7-9.
26. Young also points out that no equivalent to Twain's novel exists in New Zealand fiction. *Faces of the River*, p. 7. The length of the Amazon is 6284 kilometres, of the Mississippi 3756 kilometres, and of the St Lawrence just from Lake Ontario 725 kilometres. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The length of New Zealand's two longest rivers, the Waikato and the Clutha, are 425 and 322 kilometres respectively. *New Zealand Encyclopedia*, ed. by Gordon McLauchlan (1984), p. 473.
27. Joan Stevens, *The New Zealand Novel* (1961), p. 38.
28. For example, Ethel Turner, *Seven Little Australians* (1894).
29. Kenneth L. Donelson, 'Growing Up Real: YA Literature Comes of Age', in *Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood (1980), pp. 58-67 (p. 59), (first publ. in *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 52 (1977), 241-47).
30. The difference between 'histoire' (fabula), or what is to be told, and 'récit' (sjuzet), or how it is told, is discussed by Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* (1984), p. 13, and by Ann Jefferson, 'Russian Formalism', in *Modern Literary Theory*, ed. by Ann Jefferson and David Robey (1986), pp. 24-45 (p. 39).
31. *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 5.

CHAPTER SIX - CAVES AND TUNNELS

Caves and tunnels form the subject of this last chapter. Universally, they have long played a basic role in stories for both children and adults. On a simple and most obvious level, caves and tunnels are places of protection, concealment, incarceration, or entombment.¹ On a deeper, more powerful level, they become places for spiritual and mystical experiences, in Alan Garner's *The Stone Book* (1976), for example, or in Peter Dickinson's *Annerton Pit* (1977).² In addition, caves and tunnels may represent the general unconscious in Freudian or Jungian terms. 'The Cave,' says Clifton Fadiman, 'has an eerie, backward-transporting effect on us all, a sacral mix of awe, terror, and fascination. Whether this is linked to racial recollection, to persistent memory of the womb, or to some still undiscovered kink in the psyche, we may never know.'³ Caves and tunnels, therefore, may be places not only of positive experiences, but also of darkest deeds and mental torment, exemplified in a wide range of stories stretching from those about the mythological Minotaur of Crete to Alison Lurie's modern novel, *Foreign Affairs* (1985).⁴

This chapter will show that writers of New Zealand children's fiction gain power when they link these physical and psychological aspects of protection and danger associated with caves and tunnels to either of two distinguishing New Zealand characteristics. First, Maori myth and values allow writers to draw on spiritual experiences associated with Maori concepts, notably of tapu and oha.⁵ Second, the inherent dangers resulting from the landscape's volcanic and tectonic origins, already discussed in previous chapters, again provide writers with a means of intensifying their fiction.⁶

This chapter will also show that New Zealand children's writers who use caves and tunnels with depth and complexity are those published predominantly during the 1980s. The overall percentage of children's novels involving caves and tunnels in major or minor ways drops from 36% in the 1970s to 19% in the 1980s, which reflects a general decline in the 1980s of adventure stories set in the Great Outdoors.⁷ However, the percentage of successful novels expressing an intense experience associated with caves and tunnels rises from only 3% in the 1970s to 5%

in the 1980s, and the 3% is comprised of novels of lesser power by Ruth Park originally in 1961 and by Margaret Beames in 1977, and novels of greater power by Joan de Hamel in 1978 and Maurice Gee in 1979. The latter two writers go on to contribute to the maturity of the 5% in the 1980s. So, with few exceptions, it is not until almost the 1980s that New Zealand children's writers develop a confidence in treating caves and tunnels with depth and complexity.⁸

Novels involving caves and tunnels fall into three main groups. In the first and largest group, caves and tunnels simply supply shelter and protection from outside dangers in realistic, chronologically-recounted adventure stories. Some writers in this group increase the power of their fiction when what happens in the cave becomes important to the future of the character(s) concerned, and two writers, Ruth Dallas and Ian Mune gain a further increase in tension when they introduce an element of danger from within the cave itself.

In the second group of novels, still in a mainly realistic style, caves and tunnels are linked to more complex notions of treasure and values, including conservation. Beverley Dunlop, Phyl Wardell, Edith Howes and Rosalind Gardner are concerned with aspects of treasure and conservation; Ruth Park, Margaret Beames, Joan de Hamel and Joanna Orwin draw strength from Maori spiritual values. De Hamel and Orwin also use the more complex techniques of time-shifts.

In the third group of novels, tunnels, rather than caves, help to introduce non-realistic aspects of narrative, and take on an additional complexity through association with the uncharted and, therefore, dangerous territory of the human unconscious. Through being linked to the inherent dangers of the New Zealand landscape, tunnels make an important contribution to the novels of Maurice Gee, to Caroline Macdonald's *The Lake at the End of the World* (1989), and to the most complex of all, Margaret Mahy's *The Tricksters* (1986).

In the first group of predominantly realistic, chronologically-told adventure stories, caves simply offer shelter from outside dangers, from the weather, or from hunters. For example, in Anne de Roo's *Scrub Fire*

(1977), the boys lost in the bush are glad of a cave as just a temporary means of protection, though Michelle's refusal to sleep there too shows a surprising squeamishness in the circumstances. In Roger Simpson's *Hunter's Gold* (1977), the cave is nothing more than an uncomfortable place for Hunter who is 'tied hand and foot, and thrown onto damp ground where he lay aching and sleepless until the next nightmare day' (p. 68). But caves are appreciated for their shelter during the Land Wars in *The Forest Rangers* by G.K. Saunders (1979) and *Journey Without Warning* (1983) by Elsie Locke. Philip Holden's dogs and pigs in *White Patch* (1981) and *Razorback* (1984) are also glad to find a cave for shelter, and so is the troll in de Roo's *Friend Troll, Friend Taniwha* (1986). One unusual use for caves occurs in Graeme Farmer's *Children of Fire Mountain* (1983): they are a hidden shelter for the illicit brewing of alcohol. Another unusual use for caves appears in Margaret Mahy's wildly exuberant *The Blood-and-Thunder Adventure on Hurricane Peak* (1989). Caves provide protection for the 'Unexpected School' with a hall 'like a large cave, filled with stalactites and stalagmites and glow-worms' (p. 34). This is a fitting place for a satirical extravaganza that shows a link in purpose between magic and science. 'We both wanted to change the world. [...] But I wanted abracadabra and she wanted quantum mechanics' (p. 63).⁹

Other stories gain more power from caves when what happens in the cave is of importance to the future of the character(s) concerned. For example, in Barry Mitcalfe's *The Long Holiday* (1964, 1982), an old man goes to live alone in a cave on an island, thus proving he can live away from an old people's home and even cope with a part-time job. In Eve Sutton's *Valley of Heavenly Gold* (1987), Matthew goes to the goldfields to recover what his injured father had left in a cave. In Ah Chong's cave, warm and protected from the place outside that 'was bad, and held danger for us' (p. 89), Matthew confronts racial prejudice, hears of Chinese skills with plants and herbs, and decides to devote his life to making them available in this country.¹⁰

Two other writers, Ruth Dallas in *The Wild Boy in the Bush* (1971) and Ian Mune in *The Mad-Dog Gang Meets Rotten Fred and Ratsguts* (1978), further increase the impact of a cave by introducing an element of danger from within.

Dallas's children are at first delighted to find a cave system, though the narrator Jean is surprisingly matter-of-fact.¹¹ But the next day they fear to go in because someone unknown is living there. For the shy, 'wild' boy hiding from the community, the cave suddenly loses its feeling of protection when the children appear from inside. Then Robbie's discovery of moa bones shows the cave as a place of death, and Jean calls it 'cold and scarey (*sic*) in there in the dark' (p. 49). These references reinforce the potential danger of the cave when the stream suddenly rises and Sophie says: 'We can't get out' (p. 49). But the tone and intention of this novella is gentle. The cave is also beautiful, and since the children know the boy outside will help them when they can persuade their dog to take out a rope, their cave experience does not become terrifying in the way of Dickinson's *Annerton Pit*, for example, where powerful forces, past and present, threaten Jake's survival.

The tension in Mune's energetic and colloquial, rather than subtle, novel is tightened by the two-way direction of danger when what the cave is sheltering within becomes a threat to those outside.

[Suey] put her head inside, but couldn't see anything, it was so dark. The stench of rotting flesh was overpowering and she was nearly sick. [...] A terrible howl rose from inside the cave. It was the howl of the monster. [...] But if she stayed where she was the monster might find her, and she would be cornered, trapped under her log, so the monster could rip and tear and bite her to death. (pp. 121-22)

The cave holds the key to the mystery of the story. The 'monster' hiding from the farmers turns out to be a sheep-killing dog, previously ill-treated by Wilkins and now maddened by the continuing cruelty of tight fence-wire round its swollen, festering neck. The true 'monster' and source of danger in the story is, however, the dog's old master, Wilkins himself, a man of cruelty and prejudice. 'And we're bigger fools for listening to you. We nearly killed an innocent man today' (p. 163), admits one of the farmers. But for Rotten Fred, Justice comes too late.

Thus writers of the first group of realistic adventure novels using a chronological narrative technique draw only to a slight degree on what Margery Fisher calls the 'potent image' of the cave.¹²

Writers of the second group of novels draw more strongly on caves and tunnels to express a sense of values and spirituality through mystery and danger. Excluding goldfield narratives, most New Zealand writers of adventure/mystery/treasure stories since 1970 are concerned with Maori artefacts which introduce opportunities to develop the significance of Maori values, the concept of tapu especially, and a greater complexity in technique.¹³ The novels of Beverley Dunlop, Edith Howes, Phyl Wardell, and Rosalind Gardner associate treasure with conservation. Maori cultural values become important in novels by Ruth Park and Margaret Beames, and even more important in novels of depth and narrative complexity by Joan de Hamel and Joanna Orwin.

Caves and tunnels in Dunlop's *The Dolphin Boy* (1982) keep danger away from outside and yet threaten danger from within. While Rollo and Bob hide in the caves from Python Jack and find the map leading to the old treasure, they are also threatened with drowning if they are caught by the tide. Bob is all the more vulnerable because of his epileptic fits. More importantly for the main theme of the novel, the singing sea-grotto establishes the value of dolphins and the need for their protection from the fishermen who would kill them. The grotto is where the boys discover the mysterious healing powers and peace-loving, supportive ways of the dolphins. 'The dolphins could heal the world if man would only give them a chance. [...] There would be no wars, just love and peace between men and animals' (p. 87). Bob's miraculous recovery proves their powers. Idealistically, the dolphins are shown to be superior to human beings who, concludes Rollo, 'are not ready to accept them' (p. 167). The boys are inspired by their special experience in the sea-cave to search for the treasure not for mere materialism for themselves, but to pay off the fishermen to stop the slaughter of the dolphins.

To find treasure is one of the purposes the children have in going to the island in Edith Howes's *Silver Island* (1932, 1985), a novel which is lively, rather than deeply significant. Although Enid and Jim are lost in the blackness of a cave for a couple of hours, suffering 'an eternity of hours, and each minute was an agony' (p. 110), the tension of this potentially dangerous experience has little effect because they know, and the reader knows, that Wuffles is outside and will rescue them soon. But of greater importance is the discovery of what really is treasure. A

gentle irony lies in the way Jim and Enid take up a box in the cave, turn out the pieces of dull, grey ambergris, and replace them with what proves to be worthless mica and pyrites. Wuffles, however, who soon finds 'his treasure' (p. 100) in the beauty of birds and birdsong, has to withstand Jim's taunts when he wonders about the value of the dull, grey pieces. He is eventually proved right; Uncle Jack ultimately declares them to be worth 'over three thousand pounds' (p. 153). Such value is in stark contrast to the apparent waste of a hermit's life through drink.

But the children find another sort of treasure left by the hermit in his cave.

Most precious of all were the books.[...] Dickens, Shakespeare, and Lamb, and the delightful *Don Quixote* were devoured. [...] The immortal stories that ran like golden rivers through thick forests of wit and wisdom and humour and pathos [...] became [...] a joyful companionship, a kindling delight that left a lifelong memory. (pp. 69-70)

These books are treasure for those who value their European cultural inheritance. The children's delight in them is expressed obviously through the passionate voice of an adult narrator, which, however, serves to widen the dimensions of this adventure/survival story.

A cave virtually hatches a new environmental awareness towards the end of Phyl Wardell's *Beyond the Narrows* (1985). Because of its cool, even temperature, it protects Dr West-Smith's scientific equipment and his experiments. But when rescued from villains trying to steal his formulae, he admits: 'I've done a lot of thinking since I came here. [...] I know now that I was wrong to inflict my experiments on these poor creatures.[...] That poor beast [...], she's an oddity, and she's killing this beautiful primeval forest' (p. 126). Thus he realizes what the consequences of his experiments might be on a large scale.¹⁴

In an entirely different style, Rosalind Gardner's energetic, off-beat spoof, *The Great Jane Robbery* (1987), explores yet another aspect of environmental concerns: the danger of meddling with the weather. The story represents symbolically the sort of retribution human beings may expect if they appropriate Nature/God's function of organising the

seasons. Four villains, who conspire to steal Great Jane's season-controlling cloaks, take over the Waitomo Caves.¹⁵ Deep inside, they establish a market garden, their treasure, which is destined to become a financial success at the expense of others. To put things right, Great Jane, a Gaia/god-like figure, and her three supporters enter a tunnel.

A tunnel is nothing like a cave. In a cave, I feel I'm still able to breathe and the darkness behind me is wide and welcoming, while the darkness in front is exciting.

This tunnel made me feel sick. It closed in on us, and even walking between Tai and Great Jane, it felt as though the walls were leaning over behind us, bullying us down to some trap. (p. 48)

This claustrophobic description of a tunnel is surprisingly serious in the context, and the trap is for the villains, not the narrator and friends. But tension is maintained as a counter-balance to the slapstick surrounding Great Jane's revenge.

In novels introducing Maori artefacts as treasure, any sense of spirituality rests on the value accorded to what is hidden or discovered by the characters involved. Hazel P. Harris's *On the Trail of Te Kakaha* (1977), for example, remains on the level of light entertainment; the Maoriness of the artefacts serves only to bring Ken's anthropologist father back from England to inspect them. The novels that gain most strength in their accounts of children finding Maori treasures are those in which tapu caves and tunnels not only provide protection from danger from outside, but in their very sanctum also become threatening and dangerous. This strength appears in the work of Ruth Park, Margaret Beames, Joan de Hamel, and Joanna Orwin.

Ruth Park's *The Hole in the Hill* (1961, 1971) provides an interesting example of tension and a sense of values sharpened through danger and Maori treasures. It is a notably early novel treating relationships between Maori and Pakeha, with Pakeha characters at the end of the story showing sympathy to Maori attitudes towards land, values, and history. The working-out of relationships among the children takes place mainly in a limestone cave-and-tunnel system. Dunk and his sister Brownie gain entry by falling down a hole,¹⁷ and they are joined by Tom te Taniwha from a neighbouring farm. Because they distrust each other, they are in

greater danger of being trapped by flooding, falling down potholes, drowning in freezing streams, being stuck in tunnels, and left in total darkness never to emerge alive during their wanderings among magnificent stalactites, stalagmites, waterfalls, and glow-worms. In contrast to novels already mentioned by Ruth Dallas and Edith Howes, tension remains high because they think no one knows where they are.¹⁸ They have to resolve their suspicions of each other in order to survive.¹⁹

At last, in excitement and awe, they find *Sea-Piercer*, fictionally one of the original great canoes, symbol of Maori pride, its resting place lost and kept hidden by an old landslide. The cave system has preserved the canoe well for twenty-eight generations, but rediscovery turns protection into danger. The canoe is threatened with deterioration through changes of air temperatures if the caves are opened to visitors. Tom's last suspicions of the children are removed when they joyfully declare that their father would respect the tapu of burial caves with spiritual significance to the Maori people. 'To your people,' says Dunk, having observed how Tommy pays homage to his ancestors, 'this is just like Westminster Abbey' (p. 109). Such an awareness of relative places of sanctity is rarely achieved in children's fiction.

Flaws in this novel, however, stem from Park's romantic notions in the discovery of 'a real written language of the ancient Polynesian [on] hundreds of tablets stowed away under the canoe' (p. 111). The claim for the canoe has some credibility, but this other impossible claim, especially in combination with a now dated and condescending narrative tone, throws all into question, negating much of value.²⁰ Nevertheless, the caves symbolically carry the promise of new friendship between Maori and Pakeha.

Though writers use the discovery of bones to hint at death, no writer has dealt with a contemporary death by entombment in a cave, in spite of tectonic dangers inherent in the New Zealand landscape. However, two writers use the threat of this danger along with Maori values in their very different novels: Margaret Beames in *The Greenstone Summer* (1977) and Joan de Hamel in *Take the Long Path* (1978).

Beames keeps danger at one remove, lessening the impact. It is not her child protagonists, but their eccentric aunt who is trapped in a cave for days by a rockfall. Of course, they rescue her in time. This mystery/adventure story remains largely conventional, though with some extra dimension because of the greenstone artefacts and paintings hidden in the cave. The role of the cave as a place of danger changes promptly when the children rescue their aunt and discover marvellous rock paintings hidden safely within. The children also help to rescue the stolen artefacts from which a Maori elder must lift the power of tapu before they go to a museum. Apart from the cave paintings, however, the Maori people merely supply local colour rather than spiritual power interweaving through plot, character and theme.

De Hamel, on the other hand, uses a landslide to wall up her child protagonist in a cave at the climax of his important discovery of his identity, the theme of *Take the Long Path*. This novel has more in common with, and indeed is unsurpassed by, the novels of the 1980s in its sense of dominant Maori spiritual values and accompanying danger associated with caves and tunnels. Drawing on an enrichment of imagery, this novel also becomes technically enlarged through time-shifts in a complexity of *histoire* and *récit*.²¹

The cave, with the impact of a place of hiding in the half light out of the glare of common day, sets the image of halfness in the novel. Its entrance is surrounded by a strange ring of silence, as David's Maori-Pakeha identity has been concealed from him by a conspiracy of silence. It is a fitting place for David to begin to see into the mystery of his past, to move from the darkness of not knowing, or only half-knowing, half-remembering, into the light of self-knowledge and full acceptance of his proper identity.

But the process of discovery is fraught with physical and psychological danger, involving time-shifts as a means of gathering information. The cave down by the penguin colony near the beach shelters the ghost of David's grandfather who passes on to David the Oha, the incompleted family task of restoring their ancestor's patu to its proper resting place.²² David faces a crisis of identity in beginning to suspect his true father was Maori, and to retrieve the patu lying half-

way down a cliff is physically dangerous. When David returns to the cave having accomplished the Oha, Old Tama has already gone to his ancestors. At this point, David and a penguin chick are 'imprisoned by the rubble that blocked the entrance to the cave' (p. 118). David provokes the penguin chick's mother to make such a noise that, if his own mother remembers her promise, she will come looking for him.

David heard more floundering footsteps tripping and slipping in the mud. Joy as she had once promised, was answering the penguin cry for help. In her husband's big gumboots she stumbled and squelched to the rescue.

'I'm here, Mum,' called David. 'I'm all right. Everything's all right now.'[...] And he smiled, fingering the patu, as he listened to the approach of his own flustered but undaunted mother. (p. 120)

David's trust is rewarded in this beautifully poised and appropriate ending. The cave where he first begins to face his trials is the place where he declares the accomplishment of his physical and psychological tasks. That his mother also wears her husband's boots is a nice touch to endorse the suggestion of David's step-father's co-operation. The passion of the single focus on David's inner struggle, as opposed to struggle portrayed as an outer effort against generalised danger or archetypal evil, is important in helping to lift de Hamel's novel well above the conventional.²³

Three novels of the 1980s explore spiritual enrichment through association with Maori art and artefacts in caves - De Hamel's *The Third Eye* (1987), less complex than her previous novel, and Joanna Orwin's *The Guardian of the Land* (1985) and *Watcher in the Forest* (1987), both using time-shifts and visions. Danger is constantly present in these novels. In the latter novel in particular, the working of inherent dangers in New Zealand's tectonic landscape completes the rites.

De Hamel's *The Third Eye* is without time-shifts and less tightly focussed than *Take the Long Path*, possibly because several characters, not one, are involved with the over-riding concerns of the novel: the threat from developers to the land, to the Maori community, and to the tuatara colony on the island. What finally does save them all is the fulfilment of a prophecy centred on a local system of caves and tunnels. The final episode of discovery, which involves Lou and Ross in danger,

is the most powerful in the novel. The knowledge of paintings in underground caves and of what the old chant means had long been lost. But when Lou and Ross finally decide to explore the caves beyond where Mitch has established his coolstore, the further they go into the mountain with 'a sense of danger' (p. 124), the more they feel they are going deep into an ancient culture marked by 'centuries of silence and invisibility'. After feeling 'what it was like being born, squeezing, bursting for air', Lou and Ross find the priceless paintings of the 'old ones' (p. 125) on the walls of one of the caves.

A sense of tapu gripped Ross [...]. Now Lou [...] felt like a ghost, fulfilling some predestined obligation, entering the underworld as a spirit, intangible, invisible, but not unwelcome. (p. 126)

The experience of being born is mystical and pre-ordained. The function of the caves, to preserve the ancient paintings of the tuatara for the workings of the prophecy, becomes crucial only in the last few pages of the novel, but it provides the most intense experience of the whole novel and a fitting conclusion in that the land itself nurtures its own protection deep in the caves.

De Hamel's novels hold firmly to the primary world, though Maori spirituality and time-shifts in *Take the Long Path* take David through to a previous existence. These same attributes enlarge Joanna Orwin's *The Guardian of the Land* (1985). The cave becomes the hiding place of an ancient 'whale tooth pendant' (p. 29), the guardian of the land. This novel is about tribal and racial conflict with individual, tribal and racial survival and mana at stake. The pendant is the symbol of all this. To trace its history requires the complexity of three time-shifts, one of which takes the boys back to Te Rauparaha's raid on the Kaikoura tribe. Since the tribe is doomed, the boys are entrusted with the dangerous task of saving the pendant by journeying out along the Kaikoura Peninsula and hiding it in a sacred cave.

'We can't go in there,' said Rua. 'It's tapu.'

Hura heard the quiver in his voice. A sympathetic shiver ran down his spine.[...] Slowly, Hura took the pendant off and held it in his hand. It felt strangely warm. The old ivory gleamed softly with a light of its own. Suddenly, he was no longer afraid. He stood up.

'Come, Rua. We will go together,' he said. [...]

Lying flat on his stomach, Hura pushed the pendant into the hole as far as he could. He replaced some of the soil, then blocked the opening with stones.

'It is done,' he said. It seemed to Rua that the words were not spoken in Hura's voice. (pp. 70-71)

This moment of spiritual significance in the plot expresses the importance of the pendant and its need for the cave's protection so that one day, when it is found in present time, it will be able to restore mana to its tribe.²⁴

Once again, in Orwin's *Watcher in the Forest* (1987), a tapu cave is central to the story and the spirit of a man cannot be released for its voyage to the next world until an artefact of value is restored to its proper place. A carved piece of greenstone must go back to the cave and the body of the carver. Drawn, enslaved almost, by the strong spiritual nature of the task and enlightened by visionary time-shifts, Jen and later her brother and sister face considerable danger as she accepts the challenge to take the greenstone up the high cliff, through tunnels and into the cave. The birthing process is recalled.

Jen pushed the greenstone ahead of her and crawled after it. All too soon, the roof of the passage lowered until she could only move by lying on her stomach and pushing her feet against the rock floor for leverage. A squeeze, she thought in trepidation. This is what cavers call a squeeze. [...]

She could feel all those tonnes of rock and earth above her pressing down. [...] She had never felt such fear. (p. 122)

In a remarkable evocation of claustrophobia and mystical awareness, her long ordeal is followed in the cave by visions of the greenstone man's spirit departing north to the end of the land and into the next world in a mingling of 'spray merged with cloud shadow, salt and mist' (p. 125). Afterwards, back at the camp-fire with the others, Jen knows that what had happened in the cave 'was beyond words.[...] Her experience was not something she could share' (p. 128). Then follows the grand tectonic conclusion already discussed in Chapter Three above.

Thus it is clear that novels in the second group involving caves and tunnels gain power when danger associated with caves and tunnels is added to treasure and values and spirituality, often linked through

Maori artefacts to the world of the Maori. Though still largely realistic in approach, this group shows a move towards a complexity of technique involving time-shifts and mystical experiences, especially in the novels of Joan de Hamel and Joanna Orwin. Aspects of conservation affecting creatures, land, and Maori values remain important.

In the third group of novels, all with one exception from the 1980s, writers shift the emphasis from caves to tunnels. In moving away from the predominantly realistic approach of the previous two groups, they relate dangerous qualities in the New Zealand landscape to powerful and universal images of the underworld and the human unconscious. Maurice Gee to a varying extent in his first two novels and his 'O' trilogy and Caroline Macdonald in *The Lake at the End of the World* (1988) use tunnels in fantasy and/or science fiction to explore the threat of pollution and the abuse of power. Margaret Mahy through magical realism makes use of tunnels in her primary purpose to explore the explosive dynamics of a family, the relationship between truth and illusion, and the creative power of the imagination as it is drawn up from the unconscious mind.

Gee's first novel, *Under the Mountain* (1979), uses a vast network of volcanic tunnels under the city and harbour of Auckland for both protection and destruction. He extends the known natural features of the area into a cohesive and credible system, connecting the volcanic cones necessary to his plot so that he can move his characters swiftly from one point to another underground.²⁵ In this respect, they are protected by the tunnels for their major task - to save the world from pollution.

More importantly for theme and plot, the tunnels provide an ideal place for giant worm-like creatures to lie dormant and protected until the time is right for them to be activated by symbiotic slug-brains. These have 'no imagination, no feeling, no conscience. They remind me of some of the leaders of your race' (p. 74), Mr Jones tells Rachel and Theo. Gee's political message is clear. Such creatures must be destroyed to save the Earth. Forces in the land itself through its volcanic nature must be harnessed in its self-defence. Thus the traditional struggle of

good versus evil is represented here by the notion of environmental protection versus destruction. Gee does not establish a secondary world as such, but makes this primary world of Auckland and New Zealand a target for cosmic forces from somewhere out in the universe, wanting to annihilate all worlds, including Earth.

At the same time, by hiding his great worm-like creatures in underground tunnels, Gee draws a parallel in symbolic terms to the dangerous and destructive elements lying in the tunnels of the human mind. When activated by malignant or ignoble or immoral forces, these destructive elements cause damage and disruption in public and in private ways. In Gee's fantasy, there is no compromise to ease the consequences of evil. The damage is wide-spread. Innocent people are hurt and killed. Mr Jones symbolizes the old, wise, human counsellor who through sympathy and understanding can help others to help themselves and thus reduce the power of explosion, even though he may not be able to cancel the explosion itself, once forces have been activated. The underground tunnels represent that part of the human psyche not clearly seen and not fully understood, increasing a sense of mystery, fear and awe because the destructive energy cannot be measured. The concept of a hidden, underground, unknown and unknowable power adds considerably to the resonance of the battle of good versus evil.

Gee's second novel, *The World Around the Corner* (1980), though more gentle in its fine crafting, again engages the constant battle between the forces of evil and good to save a world from pollution. Again, it is from black depths that a traditional agent of evil, a dragon, bursts forth in the secondary world.

Caves ran into the cliffs, black caves with broken mouths. [...] And the dragon emerged. [...] This dragon was a cloud of gas, a poisonous fog, a vapour that boiled coldly, turned and writhed and twisted upon itself, and towered like a mushroom cloud out of the mouth of its cave. It would beat down the magic wall, spread poison over the valley, kill the whole world, and make it a place for Grimble. (p. 69)

The references to the primary world and technological pollution and destruction in 'a cloud of gas' and a 'mushroom cloud' are clear. In fantasy terms, Moon Girl must defeat the dragon to save the world.

Gee's trilogy beginning with *The Halfmen of O* (1982) continues his preoccupation with pollution, caused this time through the oppressive misuse of power by a political dictator in O, a fully created secondary world. Susan and Nick enter the world of O through a mine-shaft tunnel near Collingwood in 'one of the lonelier corners of New Zealand' (p. 9), drawn through by the magic of yellow carbide-smelling smoke.²⁶

It was like being sucked into a dream of red lights streaming in water; then of going deeper, until the light was water, all colour gone, until water was mud, jet black, and mud had turned to earth and earth to stone, and stone was everything, stone was the world and life, stone was air, stone was past and future, stone was the screaming sound she tried to make. And then [...] the whole process went into reverse, there was a painful climbing back, through stone, through earth, through mud, through light and water. It was like being born. (p. 36)

Gee's analogy to being born is explicit, more detailed and threatening than either Lou's sensations in de Hamel's *The Third Eye* or Jen's ordeal in Orwin's *Watcher in the Forest* quoted above.²⁷ Moreover, Susan is forced into her experiences, whereas de Hamel's and Orwin's characters are given some choice.

But after this strange experience described in Earth terms, and more solidly than the experience of 'tessering' or 'wrinkling' in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962), it is a surprise to discover that, like L'Engle's Camatzotz, this Earth-like landscape of O is not part of our Universe at all, but belongs somewhere in outer space.

The Milky Way was there, but everything else was different: no Southern Cross, no Big Dipper, no Venus in the western sky and no red Mars. One of those stars out there might be her sun. (p. 99)

In contrast to the nearness of the slugs in *Under the Mountain*, this placing of O at an interstellar distance somewhat lessens the threat that Otis Claw will take his armies through the tunnel 'to conquer your world' (p. 43). Nevertheless, the threat remains serious. Through powerful images of darkness in caverns and tunnels, O provides a chilling parallel to what happens on Earth when the evil of a fascist regime is allowed to flourish. Even more for New Zealanders, since Parliament Buildings are commonly called 'The Beehive', the landscape is related to the political message.²⁸ Tunnelled under the bedrock of Otis

Claw's palace is the Pit. It is 'like being in a giant beehive, buried in the earth. [...] Here instead of honey, poison was made' (p. 184).

Everything to do with Otis Claw, Lord Darksoul, the Paingiver, is linked with blackness and underground tunnels in the earth and psyche. He can only be destroyed when the Halves are placed on the Motherstone at the centre of the Pit, his court underground where he metes out cruelty and punishment. The evil Half is stored again deep down, and Susan must climb down through the Throat of the Underworld to fetch that stone. Out of the depths of her courage, she must put the evil stone into balance with the good in order to destroy the totally evil Otis Claw. When the world is held in balance, 'in the light there is a spot of dark, and in the dark there is a spot of light' (p. 75).

To re-enter O in the sequel, *The Priests of Ferris* (1984), Susan and Nick find the birthing process 'less painful than their first time through' (p. 15). Caves and tunnels in this novel and in the last of the trilogy, *Motherstone* (1985), also offer protection for those escaping from religious and military perversions. That the Motherstone and the Halves and the balance of the secondary world could lie so deep under violent distortions of people and ideologies presents a pessimistic view of solutions in the affairs of human beings in this primary world.

Tunnels and caves are not associated with repression and evil at the beginning of Caroline Macdonald's *The Lake at the End of the World* (1988). Using a complex technique of alternating first-person narrators in the present tense, she shows a system of tunnels and caves first as a place of safety removed from environmental conditions dangerous to human existence. The Counsellor and his chosen followers, scientists as well as artists, have lived in their isolated community underground since 1968 in the belief that they had found the only way to escape the inevitable nuclear destruction of the world.

Caves and tunnels, however, are always vulnerable to the danger of being sealed up by rockfall. So it is easy for the power-corrupted Counsellor to become a dictator and turn what was a place of safety into a prison. In the novel, this stands as a symbol for any personal or political system which imprisons, isolates, or denies freedom of choice.

By contrast, life is hard for Diana and her parents alone in the world above ground, but within its physical limits it does offer freedom of choice, ideas, and information from a huge store of books. Escaping from the tunnels is for Hector, therefore, like being born again into a new world, by now 2025. He joins Diana and her parents in a way of life generally considered normal. It supports the hazards and rewards of ordinary relationships. It offers the pleasures of sun, fresh air, and green growing things. It is restricted only by circumstances and not by someone else's will, and the land is not, after all, nuclear-polluted.

Meanwhile, the danger of dictatorial isolation underground works on the Counsellor and feeds his desire for revenge. He resolves to empty into the lake the polluted and dangerous waste from the community's storage tanks. How the power of the volcanic lake works to counteract this threat nurtured by tunnels and caves has already been discussed in Chapter Five above. It is part of Macdonald's overall statement against pollution of the environment and political or intellectual repression.

As a last example in this chapter, tunnels and caves under the sea in the cone of an old volcano play their part in Margaret Mahy's *The Tricksters* (1986). Symbolically explosive, they help to illuminate the dynamics of a family under pressure 'like metamorphic rock' (p. 253), to explore the relationship between truth and illusion, and to celebrate the creative power of the imagination.

Mahy signals immediately her interest in the subconscious and the unconscious in the labyrinth of the mind by calling her central character Ariadne, or more commonly Harry. Since the name Ariadne has never become popularized, it draws incontestably on the Greek legend of Theseus and the Minotaur.²⁹ Just as the princess Ariadne rescues Theseus by giving him a thread to guide him out of the labyrinth of the Minotaur, so Harry draws the ghost of Teddy Carnival out through the tunnel of rock under the sea of her subconscious desires and dreaming. Invoking the ghost of Teddy is a ritual game the children had often played, but on this occasion, when Harry puts her hand down into the volcanic rock tunnel under the sea, 'another chilly hand took hers and held it very lightly' (p. 25). Teddy, like Theseus, wants to be rescued. When Harry surfaces and climbs on to the rock, he is there, his spirit

materialized into a seething, bleeding, streaming man. Then he reappears as a trio of young men representing the split into mind, instinct and heart that is a result of the splintering education the child Teddy received from his father. Teddy needs to be made whole before, in the manner of ghosts, he can rest in peace.³⁰

As soon as Harry sees the trio, she knows 'at once that they had crawled out of a wrong gap in the world' (p. 53). The 'wrong gap' corresponds directly to the geological position of New Zealand at the crossing of two world plates.³¹ Moreover, Harry perceives that 'the space beyond the rock was the same space that existed behind the lines of print in her book' (p. 26), and that the trio 'had struggled through holding on to the silken clew of her own story' (p. 53).³² The pun in 'clew' is obviously deliberate and pertinent, referring not only to the mythical Ariadne's thread, but also to the unravelling of secrets and mystery associated with Teddy's death, the trio, Harry's desires and story creation, the mysterious Anthony Hesketh, and the question of quasi-incest in the family. Harry tells Felix:

'I invented you! [...] Who are you and your brothers? [...] *What* are you, more likely. You're not real people. [...] You and Hadfield have made yourselves up out of my ideas.' (pp. 125-27)

As Tricksters, the trio cause secrets to be released. Individually and as a group, they become the catalyst for changing the family in many ways for ever.

Harry herself is also the clew actively and destructively unravelling all the secrets and mysteries of this novel where fantasy on Ursula le Guin's high level of art brings a heightened reality to the life of the Hamilton family. A fantasy journey into the subconscious, says le Guin, is a 'dangerous' thing to do,³³ and Iris Murdoch also claims that 'Art is close dangerous play with subconscious forces'.³⁴ But with the inherent danger of the landscape, including that of tunnels and caves, releasing the 'power of place, [...] that discovery of a special country of the mind right for this tale',³⁵ Mahy's novel succeeds in its 'eloquence, a fertility and felicity and ferocity of invention'.³⁶

Thus this chapter shows that, in the 1980s especially, writers of New Zealand children's fiction gain power, complexity, and significance in the association of caves and tunnels with the inherent dangers of the New Zealand landscape. Novels involving caves and tunnels fall into three groups. In the first group of mainly chronological, adventure/survival stories in a realistic mode, writers use caves simply as places of safety and protection from dangers outside, but those who introduce some concept of danger within increase tension in their narrative. In the second group, with the addition of treasure and Maori artefacts and values, writers gain greater significance through associating caves and tunnels with an awareness of conservation and a sense of spirituality. The use of time-shifts leads to a greater complexity of narrative technique in the 1980s, though the most successful novel in this group is still Joan de Hamel's *Take the Long Path* (1978). In the third group of novels, all with one exception published in the 1980s, writers use the complexity of fantasy, science fiction and magical realism to associate tunnels and caves actively and symbolically with the inherent dangers of this landscape. Thus they confront the threat of pollution, the abuse of power, the dynamics of families, and the nature of creative power, in their vision of the human condition, culminating in the most complex novel of all within the period and genre under consideration, Margaret Mahy's *The Tricksters* (1986).

NOTES

1. 'Secret passages, trappings in caves, outwitting of plotters, exposure of jewel thieves,' says J.R. Townsend, 'are some of the ingredients of the standard adventure story'. *A Sounding of Storytellers* (1979), p. 19. A most obvious example is in Enid Blyton's *Five Fall into Adventure* (1950), pp. 134-40, pp. 169-79.
2. In *The Stone Book* (1976), Mary discovers the timelessness of stone 'as a symbol of truth and stability in a rapidly, changing world'. She also discovers her ancestral links through the mysterious cave paintings. The bull 'is Theseus' minotaur, and Mary's silk is Ariadne's thread'. Neil Philip, *A Fine Anger* (1981), pp. 133-35.
In *Annerton Pit* (1977), Dickinson turns blind Jake's fear into an awareness of a past tragedy still present and of a hidden part of himself, allied to a probing of the moral question: Do the ends justify the means?
3. 'The Case for a Children's Literature', in *Signposts to criticism of children's literature*, ed. by Robert Bator (1983), pp. 7-18 (p. 12), (first publ. in *Children's Literature*, 5 (1976), pp. 9-21).
4. Roger L. Green offers a short version of 'The Adventures of Theseus', in *Tales of the Greek Heroes* (1958), pp. 142-47. *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 256-57.
5. Tapu widely means 'sacred: under religious or superstitious restriction, [...] the most important of all aspects of Maori life and thought'. A.W. Reed, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Life* (1963), p. 176.
Oha is the last message of a dying chief which 'contained his instructions and last wishes for his people'. A.W. Reed, *ibid*, p. 59.
6. World-wide, caves are formed most commonly by either water dissolving limestone rock and carrying it away in solution, or by the flowing away of the molten core inside solidified basalt after a volcanic eruption. Tony Waltham, *Caves* (1974), pp. 23-24.
7. Urban settings increased from 18% in the 1970s to 37% in the 1980s. An example of a city-set treasure/adventure story is Ken Catran's *Steel Riders* (1987), where man-made pipes are used instead of traditional tunnels as a place where children hide stolen emeralds.
8. Trudie McNaughton in *Countless Signs* (1986) does not give caves and tunnels a separate chapter and, therefore, excludes such work as A.R.D. Fairburn's seascape lyric, 'The Cave', in *Strange Rendevous* (1952), pp. 42.
9. Diana Moorhead's *Gull Man's Glory* (1976), with caves on cliffs as dwelling places, is outside the scope of this thesis because its entirely secondary world is obviously European.
10. In harsher survival stories such as Ruth Dallas's *Shining Rivers* (1979), Joan de Hamel's *X Marks the Spot* (1973), and Jack Lasenby's *The Mangrove Summer* (1988), only an overhanging bank serves to shelter the protagonists.
11. Dallas holds back Jean's chance to go into the cave so that the tension of discovery should be maintained - a very simple example of Peter Brooks's 'narrative dissonance'. *Reading for the Plot* (1984), p. 190.
12. 'One of the most valuable keys to the fullness of an adventure story lies in the use of potent images'. Margery Fisher, *The Bright Face of Danger* (1986), p. 326.
13. Betty Gilderdale points out that, after survival, 'treasure is the second most common theme in the New Zealand adventure story.' *A Sea Change* (1982), p. 161.

14. In Deborah Savage's *A Rumour of Otters* (1983), a cave is also womb-like and vital for Alexa's survival in mountain cold. But since Savage is an American who fictionalizes landscape, her novels are outside the scope of this study of how New Zealand writers have drawn on their landscape.
15. The villains suggest that the glow-worms have put out their lights because of another New Zealand natural danger: 'an underground volcano' (p. 33).
16. Though all writers treat Maori artwork with respect, they put European characters at the centre of their story, sometimes with a Maori friend.
17. Like Ruth Park's children ten years earlier, Ruth Dallas's children find their caves by falling through a hole. The most famous fictional example of this means of discovery is, of course, Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).
18. The children reflect the racial tension in the relationship between Tom's extraordinary grandmother and the children's unusual great-uncle Angus.
19. Edith Howes's *Silver Island*, Ruth Park's *The Hole in the Hill*, and Ruth Dallas's *The Wild Boy in the Bush*, were published originally in 1932, 1961, and 1971 respectively. Howes and Dallas lessen tension because the children know someone outside can help them. Park tightens it because her children think no one knows where they are.
20. For example, Park in her narrative maintains Dunk's name of 'Tommy Bunyip' for Tom te Taniwha (p. 15). This is the sort of confusion Jacqueline Rose attributes to Enid Blyton, a confusion between what a character says and what the adult narrator endorses in the narrative. This, says Rose, violates the rule 'which demands that the narrator be adult or child. [...] Writers for children must know who they are. [...] What is at stake here is a full literary demand for a cohesion of writing'. *The Case of Peter Pan* (1984), p. 69.
21. For a distinction between *histoire* (*fabula*) and *récit* (*sjuzet*), see Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 13.
22. His grandfather's soul may now take the long path to Cape Reinga and the next world to join his ancestors, satisfied by the return of the patu. De Hamel's theme of unknown family identity, 'the question of fathers and sons, [...] the related issues of fraternity [...], paternity [...], and filiality', puts her in line with what Peter Brooks sees as 'perhaps the dominant thematic and structural concern and shaping force of the nineteenth century novel, ultimately perhaps constituting a theme and a structure incorporate with the very nature of the novel as we know it'. *Reading for the Plot*, p. 307.
23. Adele Schafer's *Mere's Adventures* (1978) also attempts to portray a child of two worlds, modern and pre-European, but manages to be merely whimsical in treatment. In one dream, the atua of Mere's tiki takes her down a tunnel to the cave of the Tiki-Nui who used to be a god and who 'made the first man' (p. 23). When she asks him to heal her mother he gives her a whalebone comb, which has the desired effect. Most whimsical of all is this concept: 'In each one of these flowers sleeps a baby-soul. [...] When the baby is born and opens its mouth the soul slips in and the baby begins to cry' (p. 47).
24. This whale tooth pendant is one of the few activators in New Zealand fantasy not made of stone. The cave fails to keep it safe, and the boys must go through further ordeals to find it.
25. See note 6. For a description of the known volcanic tunnels under Auckland, see G.L. Pearce, *The Story of New Zealand Volcanoes* (1977), p. 36.
26. Later, entry to the world of O is made more gently through the power of the flower Shy.

27. The birthing process is very much a 'rite of passage'. J.L. Henderson, 'Ancient Myths and Modern Man', in *Man and his Symbols*, ed. by Carl G. Jung (1964), pp. 104-57 (p. 130). The process of being born or re-born makes a particularly vivid entry into a secondary world. Other entries into fantasy worlds in New Zealand children's fiction are less of an ordeal. In Errol Brathwaite's *The Flame Box* (1978), the boys pass through a gateway between two rocks and the eye of the South-East Wind on Banks Peninsula to reach Wend, the Island-in-the-Mists. In Jane Ryan's *The Glass Fragment* (1976), the children go down through a cellar during a wild, black storm to enter the world of Saris, a black dead place ruled by a despot. Cellars and old bones were construed by Jung 'as the buried race memories below the more civilised levels of consciousness', according to Gillian Tindall in *Countries of the Mind* (1991), p. 221. Suzanne Maslin's characters in her abrasive and largely derivative *Children of Light and Death* (1988), make their entry from Wellington into the secondary world of Thanatos through a whirling black curtain; tunnels are merely a means whereby the rescuers can reach the temple.
28. Noted by Bill Manhire, *Maurice Gee* (1986), p. 10.
29. Mahy strengthens the mythological connection by naming Teddy's sister Minerva for the Goddess of Wisdom.
30. This is a particularly brilliant example of Jung's numinosity or psychic energy, that is, the concept of the multi-layers of the human mind made manifest by a trio of characters who have an explosive relationship with the other characters in the novel. 'Approaching the Unconscious', in *Man and his Symbols* (1964), pp. 18-103 (p. 96).
This trio are taken well beyond the usual static portrayal of ghosts described by Judith Armstrong in 'Ghosts as rhetorical devices in children's fiction', *CLE*, 29 (1978), 59-66.
31. The 'wrong gap' in the world relates to New Zealand's position of New Zealand at the junction of the Pacific and Indo-Australian Plates.
32. R.L. Green talks of Ariadne's 'clue of thread'. *Tales of the Greek Heroes*, p. 147.
Working on Lacan's reminder that the 'royal road' to Freud's Unconscious is dreams, Claudia Marquis concludes that 'Harry writes her dreams - her phantasy quite simply, not so simply, composes her extraordinary tale, her fantasy'. 'Principled Pleasures: Exploring Fantasy in Children's Literature', *Antic*, 7 (1990), 20-36 (p. 30).
33. The fantasy world Margaret Mahy engages is a world defined by Ursula le Guin as fantasy on the second level of game, 'played for high stakes.[...] Its affinity is not with daydream, but with dream.[...] It is not antirational, but pararational; not realistic, but surrealistic, superrealistic, a heightening of reality. In Freud's terminology, it employs primary, not secondary process thinking. It employs archetypes, which, as Jung has warned us, are dangerous things.' 'From Elfland to Poughkeepsie', in *The Language of the Night* (1979), pp. 83-96 (p. 84).
34. Quoted by Neil Philip, 'This Way Confusion', *Signal*, 43 (1984), 12-18 (p. 17).
35. Eleanor Cameron, 'A Country of the Mind', in *The Green and Burning Tree* (1969), pp. 163-202 (p. 168).
36. Le Guin, *The Language of the Night*, p. 91.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION

As Gabriel Josipovici remarks, fiction is made up out of choices.¹ Writers choose their narrative style, characters, themes, and, of course, setting. 94% of New Zealand children's novels published between 1970 and 1989 inclusive are set in New Zealand either explicitly or implicitly. This indicates the importance writers attach to the challenge of exploring their fictional concerns in their own country. Even fantasy has a foothold here. Creators of secondary worlds take their characters through some form of barrier from a declared area of New Zealand, and several writers bring aliens into New Zealand.

This thesis, too, is based on choice, depending upon what writers have previously chosen to put in their fiction. My selection of individual landscape features for detailed attention has meant that their differing roles and their similarities have both been highlighted. For example, dangers inherent in the New Zealand landscape as a result of volcanic origins are common to mountains and lakes. Though the study of individual features has required some repetition from one chapter to another, it has served to reinforce the dominant ideas evident through a relational reading. That the landscape should contribute to stress and danger facing characters is not surprising. All fiction is concerned with some form of drama and conflict. As visiting novelist Lois Lowry once said succinctly at a public meeting: 'No problem, no story'.

This thesis also reveals the high degree of concern among writers for the principles of conservation. In both realistic and fantasy novels, writers support efforts to rid the landscape of pollution and to protect creatures such dolphins and native birds. In other words, by heightening their readers' awareness of the New Zealand landscape, writers of New Zealand children's novels are playing their part in what humanistic geographers see as an ecological struggle for survival in the world.²

Through this study, it has become clear that writers have outgrown the need to label the New Zealandness of their fiction with either subtitles, such as *A New Zealand Story*, or blatant openings, such as 'The tuis in the tarire trees were voicing their welcome'.³ The

landscape is allowed to make its presence felt in more subtle and yet powerful ways, letting writers explore their fictional concerns in a more sophisticated manner. This study has documented such novels in relation to the landscape as they first appear during the 1970s and, more frequently, during the 1980s. Writers show increasing skills in using a variety of narrative techniques, such as time-shifts, two narrators, and alternating tenses. These techniques, as well as social and political topics of growing importance to city-set novels in the 1980s, have now been identified as viable for future extensive study.⁴

But if writers now accept the physical landscape and often internalize its power, they have not yet accepted the mindscape of this country's literature. Apart from a few references to Maori legend, the only New Zealand literature quoted in its children's fiction of the 1970s and 1980s is Glover's *Arawata Bill*.⁵ One may conclude, therefore, that a New Zealand literary identity has yet to be fully realized, but this is likely to happen as a result of the growing value New Zealanders perceive in their literature's recent achievements.

Through a relational reading, this thesis makes a contribution towards encouraging that literary growth by emphasizing the rising success of New Zealand children's fiction. The landscape with its inherent dangers offers writers opportunities to empower their fiction in a particular way - to explore the dominance of seascapes, the individuality of mountains, lakes, rivers and caves, the impact of volcanic power, and strength when the landscape itself joins in the struggle against pollution. In other words, New Zealand writers have the opportunity to discover in their own land 'the power of place [and] a special country of the mind right for [their] tale'.⁶ In spite of marketing efforts to de-locate their fiction, they now reach out to an international readership, contributing a New Zealand perspective to the understanding of other nationalities, important for the peace of this world.

Above all, this study has proved that there already exists a considerable body of New Zealand children's fiction worthy of extensive critical study and rewarding in the way it explores ourselves as New Zealanders in a landscape of remarkable, dramatic power.

NOTES

1. 'Introduction' to *The Modern English Novel*, ed. by Gabriel Josipovici (1976), pp. 1-14 (p. 3).
2. Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 2.
3. Edith Howes, *Silver Island: A New Zealand Story* (1928).
Mona Tracy, *Rifle and Tomahawk* (1927), p. 9.
4. Among city-set novels not examined in this thesis are the following three with very different concerns: Margaret Mahy, *The Haunting* (1982); Barry Mitcalfe, *hey, hey, hey* (1985); and Steve Dickinson, *City Night* (1987).
5. Denis Glover, 'Arawata Bill', in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Literature*, ed. by Allen Curnow (1960), pp. 223-24. Quoted by Elsie Locke and Ken Dawson, *The Boy with the Snowgrass Hair* (1976), p. 101. See Chapter Three above, p. 79. All other intertextual references made by characters to fiction or poetry are drawn from traditional literature, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
6. Eleanor Cameron, 'A Country of the Mind', in *A Green and Burning Tree* (1969), pp. 163-202 (p. 168).

PART THREE

APPENDIX

AN EVALUATIVE SURVEY of CRITICISM PUBLISHED IN NEW ZEALAND
on NEW ZEALAND CHILDREN'S FICTION from 1970 to 1989

This evaluative survey was conducted in order to establish a foundation for my study of New Zealand children's fiction published from 1970 to 1989 inclusive.¹ In my search for critical material contemporary with the primary sources of my intended thesis, I looked at all relevant New Zealand periodicals and specialist journals selected from the *National Library Index to New Zealand Periodicals*. I also took a sample of reviews from the literary pages of newspapers printed each December at five-yearly intervals.² This search revealed that critical attitudes and comments are governed by five main assumptions: one, children's fiction is of little importance, deserving little critical attention and reviewing space; two, on the contrary, what children read is important because it can modify their thinking and behaviour; three, fiction, therefore, has the power to help shape national and social identity; four, children respond to books as homogeneous groups according to their age; and five, reviews are for adults who require particular information as a guide to their selection of books for children. These assumptions will each be examined in turn. In the process, this survey will also serve to reinforce awareness of the general growth in New Zealand children's fiction up to 1989.

Of the five main assumptions governing commentary on this literature, the first is linked to the fact that at the beginning of the 1970s the output of novels was very small.³ Inevitably, New Zealand children's fiction was not considered then to be important for either academic study or for extended attention in newspapers, and little critical commentary appeared. But even as the growing output of novels began to provide scope for critical study, this first assumption is still reflected in three ways: one, in the lack of articles published in specialist journals such as *Landfall*; two, in the reluctance of New Zealand academic critics to elaborate on children's novels, even on those by established New Zealand writers of adult novels; and three, in the lack of space made available for comment, as either cause or consequence, in periodicals and newspapers. Eventually, however, this

first assumption does undergo some change when the genre becomes accepted as valuable, when readers are assumed to have literary interests, and when space for commentary is made available.

Extensive commentaries did not really appear until the latter part of the 1980s, and then they were still few. But among New Zealand specialist literary journals, *Landfall* took the lead by publishing in 1976 an illuminating talk by Margaret Mahy on influences shaping her work.⁴ This was followed in 1979 by J.B. Ringer's essay, the first of its kind, in which he makes an important assessment of early children's fiction from 1833 to 1917.⁵ Not until 1987, however, did *Landfall* publish an extended and valuable literary essay in which Claudia Marquis takes a searching, provocative approach to Mahy's *The Haunting* (1982).⁶ Marquis enlarges a reader's perception by linking the structure and impact of the novel to the theories of feminist critique, Freud, and the power, motifs and expectations of the fairy tale. *Landfall* in 1987 also published an interview with Mahy, and in 1989, a commissioned survey of New Zealand children's literature in the 1980s.⁷

In studies on established writers of adult novels, academic critics include little discussion on children's novels, even in more spacious books of literary criticism.⁸ Brian Boyd, however, includes the 'science fiction world' of Maurice Gee's *Under the Mountain* (1979) in his essay on Maurice Gee's early fiction in *Islands* in 1980. He refers to 'the evil threat [that] comes from vast personifications of such blind and stunted ambition' and 'the difficulty of disapproving of disapprovers, of wanting to curb those who curb growth'.⁹ Boyd places *Under the Mountain* within Gee's whole fictional world, but his comments are tantalizingly brief. Obviously, serious critical attention to children's fiction by critics working with adult fiction could produce perceptive studies of interest and value.

The assumption that New Zealand children's literature is not very important is also manifested in the lack of space made available for reviews in periodicals and newspapers. Joy Cowley in 1983 claims the reviewing of children's books is not taken seriously. 'Reviews are lumped together once or twice a week with a sentence for each book usually when magazines such as the *Listener* have got some space they

want to fill.'¹⁰ The amount of space, however, does increase throughout the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1970s, interviews with Margaret Mahy and her talks began to appear. In 1976, Elsie Locke made a rare and authoritative assessment of children's historical fiction.¹¹ In 1981, Alison Grant wrote an astute brief history of New Zealand children's literature for the International Youth Library Exhibition in Munich, highlighting the best publications of the 1970s. In *Reading Time*, she made one of the earliest extended commentaries on a particular author, a perceptive assessment of Ruth Dallas's use in her novels of the 'true New Zealand idiom - that idiom of character and place so difficult to convey'.¹² In 1982, Andrew Mason, the *New Zealand Listener*'s new editor, decided to print 'a regular full page once a month [to] have a more general, educative role'.¹³ Novels as they appeared throughout the 1980s were reviewed in periodicals like the *School Library Review*, *Broadsheet*, and *Tu Tangata* for their particular readerships, and in national newspapers for a general readership. Even so, in 1987, in spite of international acclaim for New Zealand novels such^{as} Margaret Mahy's and the many feature articles about her that keep appearing in this country, the lack of interest shown by the newspaper industry to New Zealand award winners moved Joan Brockett to lament: 'Why do children's book awards receive so little media publicity?'¹⁴

The general lack of reviewing space does not enable or encourage reviewers to go beyond subject matter and plot to consider literary style and technique. A comparison of reviews of Tessa Duder's *Alex* (1987) serves to illustrate the point. All are favourable and accurate enough as far as they go. But Jennie Fulton in *Agenda* calls *Alex* 'moving' and 'well-paced' without examining the technique to achieve this.¹⁵ Di Moffit in *New and Notable* thinks *Alex* is wonderful and 'most of all, about growing up female in New Zealand. [...] The plot moves well, time and place are evoked'.¹⁶ Mary Hutton in the *School Library Review* opens with a biographical interpretation, gives some details about the plot, none about technique, and concludes: 'It is good to have a novel with a genuine New Zealand flavour that is tense, entertaining and, above all, very moving.'¹⁷ Betty Gilderdale, with minimally more space in the *Herald*, agrees that *Alex* is intense and moving, but also refers briefly to its narrative method: 'Alex herself is the narrator, thinking back over the past year as she swims the vital race.'¹⁸

When more space is available, more detailed, helpful commentaries appear. Helen Watson in *Broadsheet* and my column in the *Listener* focus on the way that *Alex* uses flashbacks in a double storyline to hold the reader within the tension of a one-minute race for the length of the novel.¹⁹ Louis Johnson considers literary influences and achievements in his assessment of *Young Writing: a P.E.N. anthology*, and finds that what holds back 'the most ambitious story of all', by Ian Richards, is a technical problem: the 'most dreaded story-telling demon of all, the unresolved point-of-view'.²⁰ Jenni Keestra's study of the special use of language in the books of Margaret Mahy illuminates Mahy's 'profound love of words and the ways in which they can be used [in] an exciting art-form where words have an importance beyond their dictionary meaning'.²¹ Claudia Marquis, in her analysis of Mahy's *The Haunting* mentioned above, concludes, accurately, that 'ultimately, the governing sensibility or aesthetic of this story is female'.²²

Of course, it is not just the lack of space that restricts the level of reviews. Reviewers themselves have some choice in focussing on what is important. In the *Listener*, which does offer a reasonable amount of space, Dorothy Neal White rightly praises *The Haunting* for 'its narrative strength [and] sharply drawn characters', but, in contrast to Marquis, does not go further to assess the role of the pivotal female character, Troy.²³ In newspapers, a number of titles are often collected into one small article. Ann Packer mentions seventeen titles in one of her 1989 columns for a general readership, and therefore has room to say of Barry Faville's *Stanley's Aquarium* (1989) and Jack Lasenby's *The Mangrove Summer* (1988) merely that they are 'a must' for holiday reading.²⁴ Tessa Duder, however, with much the same amount of space, is far more searching. She comments on five novels and picks out, for example, 'the warmth of its nostalgia' as Lasenby's strength.²⁵ But undoubtedly, the lack of space and the number of widely-different books waiting for attention limit the depth of a reviewer's commentary. In short, the amount of valuable and extensive critical commentary in New Zealand is woefully small for a literature that has international standing and excites critical interest in journals overseas.²⁶

Whereas the first assumption that children's fiction is of little critical importance eventually undergoes some change, the second assumption remains constant. This second assumption, that literature has the power to influence children's thinking and behaviour, makes the neglect as a result of the first assumption all the more surprising. For ever since the first English printing of Aesop's *Fables* by William Caxton in 1484, what children read has universally been regarded as a means of overt or subtle didacticism by educationalists, writers, publishers, psychologists, parents, and political propagandists. In today's world, however, there is much less of the nineteenth-century 'religious ferocity' of the Puritans, and much more of the pleasure that first appears most notably with the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865.²⁷ Yet as Margaret Mahy observes in 1976, though she writes 'simply to entertain' children, she is also concerned 'that my story should do something for them, complete some circuit or exorcise some demon'.²⁸ In both 1976 and in 1989, she sees her work 'passing some sort of moral judgement - on the freedom of the imagination'.²⁹ Malcolm McEwan, librarian, agrees: 'The sort of imaginative identification which is required by a good novel is an important step towards the development of self-esteem and tolerance of diversity.'³⁰ Newspaper critic, Brian Healy, in 1970 also agrees: 'Books that children read are an important influence in their lives. [...] Books are the best of educative forces when they are read from desire, not duty.'³¹

Regardless of the first assumption discussed above, an upsurge in quantity and quality of novels begins towards the end of the 1970s and through the 1980s. The establishing of the Choysa Bursary for writers in 1978 and the New Zealand Book Awards in 1982, along with the New Zealand Library Association's Esther Glen Award established originally in 1945, helps to gain recognition and support for the development of New Zealand children's fiction and the increased range and frequency of commentary.

The third assumption grows directly out of the second: that children can be helped by the fiction they read to gain a sense of national and social identity. New Zealanders now generally believe that a national identity is discernible in this country through culture(s) as well as location.³² Some assume that writers know how to reveal its essential characteristics and that children derive great benefit and pleasure from

recognizing themselves in their own literature.³³ Anne de Roo's 1976 pointed assessment of the desirability, impact, and difficulty of putting New Zealand idiom into fiction concludes that 'we need books to help us find our standing place here - our turangawaewae. [...] It's a valid use of national literature to help fulfil that need'.³⁴ Moreover, claims Elsie Locke, fiction has 'a powerful bearing on the shaping of attitudes towards current problems with their roots in history. It can perpetuate misconceptions and prejudices; or it can explode those misconceptions and provide a more just perspective'.³⁵ Gill McLaren is one of many who say that 'New Zealand children are nourished by New Zealand books, and they need such nourishment if they are to avoid the damaging split between literature and life which plagued my own generation'.³⁶ Brian Easton goes further: 'This dichotomy pervades our educational system, and suggests why in later life we honour the "practical" and unlearned man. For we maintain a lack of integration between our "intellectual" activities and our "real" world.'³⁷ In 1985, Carol Johnson still feels the need to repeat for students that 'there is something special about stories which have a local flavour. They help foster a stronger sense of national identity'.³⁸ Helen Watson in 1988 agrees: 'Teachers have been crying out for years for New Zealand-written books with local settings their students can relate to. The number is growing, certainly, but there are still too few.'³⁹ Obviously, these critics see the importance of a national literature.

Of course, Watson and teachers like her wanting New Zealand books may not have known either of the numerous novels existing by 1988, nor of existing information about these novels.⁴⁰ As early as 1975, the Children's Literature Association Yearbook signifies the importance of New Zealand novels by publishing extended reviews of three: Dorothy Butler on E.M. Ellin's *The Greenstone Axe* (1975), Frances Plumpton on Maurice Duggan's *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* (1959, 1974), and Tom Fitzgibbon on R.L. Bacon's *Again the Bugles Blow* (1973).⁴¹ With mainly details of the plot, each reviewer finds qualities to praise. Yet, while Butler praises the 'resourceful and realistic children' and the 'indispensable element, entertainment', Locke is less complimentary and calls for more responsibility on the part of the writer: 'Don't let [children] think that anything really happened that way.'⁴² Alison Grant also thinks Ellin's novel 'fails on almost every count' because of the

historical spuriousness that Locke knowledgeably levels against Ellin's previous novel, *The Children of Clearwater Bay* (1969, 1973).⁴³ These charges by Locke and Grant are, indeed, serious, and should be made when justified. Grant later declares that 'New Zealandism alone is certainly not enough to attract the busy and critical youngster'.⁴⁴ Jackie Fraser's response to the Kairangi series is similar: 'A local setting will not compensate for a lack of any of the essential ingredients of a good book for children, such as convincing characterization, plot or theme, or a good writing style.'⁴⁵ Janet Maconie calls this series basically 'formula stuff'. However, in *The Boy with the Snowgrass Hair* by Elsie Locke and Ken Dawson, 'the standard rose dramatically. [...] The people, though lightly sketched in, are real, [...] and the authors have very successfully communicated the lure of the mountains and the outdoors and the warm camaraderie of the tramping fraternity'.⁴⁶ These samples show that the best reviewers are looking for quality literature as well as a New Zealand identity which they consider important.

The pleasure readers take in a New Zealand novel when the setting is successfully portrayed as part of the whole novel is evident in reviews of several novels appearing during the 1980s, such as Tessa Duder's *Alex* (1987), already quoted above. In an earlier review, Robin Fry is quick to praise Maurice Gee's achievement in *Under the Mountain* (1979). Gee has 'exploited the unusual topography of Auckland, with its group of volcanic hills, to create an original fantasy in which events of universal significance happen here in New Zealand'.⁴⁷ Joy Cowley is similarly delighted with the power this novel draws from a familiar environment. 'There is nothing self-conscious about the New Zealand character of the writing. The setting is so familiar, so 'safely' New Zealand, that the threat of destruction by alien monsters comes very close to the reader.'⁴⁸ Betty Gilderdale enthusiastically praises Phyl Wardell's *Beyond the Narrows* (1985): 'For good sound straightout action stories with a New Zealand setting she has no real rival.[...] She knows her settings well and describes them vividly, so that the rapid pace of human intrigue is put into perspective by the timeless beauty of the mountains and lakes of Fiordland.'⁴⁹ In identifying the strength of Wardell's novels, however, Gilderdale overlooks the one-dimensional portrayal of character which holds back the novels from greater success.

When it comes to the multicultural elements in literature, then assumptions of relevance and importance are also strongly expressed. Following their own editorial declaration that 'the books children read affect the attitudes and ideas they form of this society', The *School Library Review* establishes a regular column to highlight books with a multicultural focus.⁵⁰ Annabel Gormack praises a didactic purpose she sees in Anne de Roo's *Friend Troll, Friend Taniwha* (1986): 'The cleverly combined aspects of Pakeha and Maori tradition give this book a definite New Zealand identity and flavour [...], teaching us to be comfortable and take pleasure in our heritage, both natural and cultural.'⁵¹ Indeed, such is the growing general awareness of the need for New Zealand children to find a sense of national identity in their books that both Marina Vamos and Alison Neale chide Dorothy Butler for her selection in her otherwise praised *Babies Need Books* (1980). 'Not a single New Zealand book is given a mention,' says Vamos. 'There are not enough specifically New Zealand books for Maori and Pakeha children,' says Neale.⁵² William Taylor goes further to argue the need for an increase in a range of New Zealand books so that 'our less advantaged [...] receive something of themselves from the pages they read'.⁵³

However, in spite of development through the 1980s of a mature and significant use of localism, Taylor's wish for a wider range of local writing is in jeopardy through the development of a worrying trend in publishing. Caroline Macdonald calls it 'de-location'.⁵⁴ Though she herself finds a well-known location helps in the formation of character and event, publishers demand that local references be removed. They assume, says Macdonald, that 'children everywhere are comfortable only if they are reading about some unnamed place - a place which so lacks definition it could be their own backyard. New Zealanders know this is nonsense. We were all raised on novels blatantly set in countries other than our own'.⁵⁵ Tessa Duder elaborates: 'It's a major dilemma for the growing number of New Zealand children's writers being published in America and England. The losers, if a balance is not reached, and soon, will be our children, already saturated with American and English books and television.'⁵⁶ The continuing flood of imported books and television programmes adds urgency to Macdonald's and Duder's concerns and highlights the need for good reviewing to prevent good books that are of special value to us from disappearing before they are discovered, which

would justify further demands by publishers for de-location. As David Lodge remarks: 'The Darwinian struggle for survival [...] makes reviewing a cultural institution of crucial importance.'⁵⁷

Often interwoven with a desire for national identity is a desire for social identity in books children read. The assumption that novels have the power to influence children underlines Maxine Schur's disturbed response in 1977 to implications in Brian Sutton-Smith's reprinted and completed trilogy: *Our Street* (1950), *Smitty does a Bunk* (1961), and *The Cobbers* (1976). Schur casts doubt on the ability of young readers to sift values. 'Can mere *accounts* in literature of destruction and vandalism for pleasure (which create an identification in children with anti-heroes) really help children to resist those impulses by playing them out? Brian Sutton-Smith believed it did. I am not convinced it does - not without some sort of moral framework.'⁵⁸ Inevitably, these aspects of Sutton-Smith's work are not the concern of an unnamed 'junior critic' for whom these child-centred stories obviously hold the appeal of familiarity: 'The schoolboy slang helps bring out each character as their friendship grows and it makes the stories so real to the ear.'⁵⁹

An approval of socializing didacticism is revealed also in comments such as Noeline Alcorn's: 'Perhaps if we are to change social attitudes, we need new myths'. Alcorn finds four New Zealand titles to include in her search for positive novels 'that challenge empty stereotypes and reveal them as whole, complex beings'.⁶⁰ Watson, true to the feminist stance of *Broadsheet*, praises Beverley Dunlop's *Earthquake Town* (1985) for her 'resourceful, practical girl who copes well with danger and disaster', and 'the increasing number of New Zealand written books for children and teenagers'.⁶¹ She greets Tessa Duder's New Zealand novels with even more delight and praise for their strongly created female characters, both girls and their mothers, 'vividly and convincingly written'.⁶² Marquis, in her essay on Mahy's *The Haunting* referred to above, declares even more clearly: 'Unmasking or reforming ideological assumptions has become and must remain a primary task for feminist writers of and on children's fiction.'⁶³

However, by 1987 and 1988, Joan Brockett and Betty Gilderdale are sounding the alarm over an increasing 'social studies' approach, the

reviewing and selection of books based on 'whether their contents fit in with current social approval, not on whether the style is succinct, the characterization believable or the story compelling'.⁶⁴ Such comments are valuable reminders of the need to keep a balance between what is important in content and what is important in the way of telling.

The fourth assumption influencing commentary on New Zealand children's fiction is that children will respond to books as one homogeneous group having the same interests, perceptions, and abilities relative to their chronological age. While many children do respond to certain types of stories, for example, well-paced stories full of action and humour, this assumption does not allow for individuality and results in sweeping and usually enthusiastic generalizations. As one example of many claims for all children in one age group, Gwen Gawith extols Margaret Mahy's *The Haunting* (1982) and *The Changeover* (1984) with the following claims:

All children and adolescents have a sense of 'something beyond', of power and forces that are part of our humanity and at the same time beyond our humanity.[...] There is something in all adolescents that would respond to the crazy, desperate courage of Barney's last stand.⁶⁵

While Mahy's Carnegie medal win for both novels indicates a general perception of her brilliance, Gawith weakens her argument through these sweeping statements concerning all children and all adolescents. For just as applicable to Mahy's blend of fantasy and realism is Tolkien's well-known remark on fairy stories, that 'only some children, and some adults, have any special taste for them'.⁶⁶ As Tolkien indicates, it is certainly not usual for a homogeneous response to be expected from adults, but it is common enough to find all-encompassing generalizations about children's responses to books in articles such as Margaret Mooney's on what makes a 'universal favorite' (*sic*) for children.⁶⁷

Because of the assumption of a homogeneous response, it is customary for reviewers to indicate to what age group a book is likely to appeal. Some age group suggestions are narrow, some wide. Miriam Smith, for example, thinks Joanna Orwin's *Ihaka and the Summer Wandering* (1982) will appeal 'to children between the ages of 9 and 13'.⁶⁸ *The Children's Literature Association Yearbooks* are generally careful about age

recommendations. Jane Edgar in her 1981 'Animal' list and Betty Gilderdale in her 1985 'Historical' list suggest only a starting point, 7+, or 10+.⁶⁹ Reviewers in the *School Library Review* recommend books according to class groups in school. Several reviewers for the *Listener* during the 1980s leave the age group open, but Celia Dunlop imposes restrictions by arranging all books in fixed age-groups: Under 5, Age 4-7, Age 7-10, Age 13-15, Age 15 plus.⁷⁰ Reviewers in the *Press* and Gilderdale in the *Herald*, however, rarely mention age groups. As Joan Brockett wisely remarks: 'We must watch a tendency to relate fiction to reading age and forget that to the child who is an avid reader everything is grist to the mill.'⁷¹

The fifth and last assumption, found mostly in simple reviewing columns, is that commentaries and reviews of children's novels will be read not by children, but by adults mainly to help them recommend novels to children. Hence, reviews need to carry information concerning reading age, content, degree of readability, and cultural value, all already discussed above.⁷² Margaret Quigley in the *Press*, for example, has room to say of Margaret Mahy's *Young Observer* Award winner *Memory* (1987) only that it is for teenagers, as are her three 'equally unusual and imaginative' preceding novels; that it has two characters: Jonny, haunted by the memory of his sister's death, and Sophie, who suffers from a loss of memory through senile dementia; and that it is 'deeply moving, wryly funny, and perceptive'.⁷³ One only has to look at David Leavitt's half-page, though controversial, review of *Memory* in the *New York Times* to see what is a more fitting degree of attention for such an award-winning novel.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the appearance in New Zealand of a small number of more literary essays in recent years shows that not only has New Zealand children's fiction grown to make such essays possible, but also a readership has developed, ready for stimulation and illumination.

My survey thus brings me to the conclusion that the five main assumptions underlining commentaries and reviews on New Zealand children's fiction from 1970 to 1989 inclusive are interconnected and that the first and the fifth are mainly responsible for the slow development of serious, extensive critical assessment of children's

fiction in this country. In spite of international recognition of several novels in an output totalling 206 novels by 1989, serious critical commentary in the same period of time is limited to rare essays, the most complex and challenging being Claudia Marquis's on Margaret Mahy's Carnegie winner, *The Haunting*.⁷⁵ But what does exist in those rare essays, and what has been published since 1989,⁷⁶ show that the potential is there for valuable commentary. Now that the body of quality literature is continuing to grow and academic attitudes have undergone a change, the second and third assumptions, that children's literature is important for national and social identity, are likely to stimulate studies in keeping with those overseas in, for example, reader-response and narrative theory which demonstrate clearly that children's literature is worthy of serious critical attention.⁷⁷

NOTES

When an article's title is simply that of a book under review, the title is not repeated in these notes.

1. This excludes picture books and short stories, myths, legends, and folk tales, and material published for educational purposes.
2. Periodicals and magazines consulted are included in the Bibliography, List F, e. Samples from newspapers were taken mainly from Saturday editions published in December 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1989. The month of December was chosen because of an increase in reviewing for the Christmas trade.
3. List B of the Bibliography shows clearly that only three novels appear in 1970, and that the number of novels increases steadily to 71 in 1979, and to a total of 206 in 1989.
4. 'Touchstones: The interpretation of adult experience by the images of childhood reading', *Landfall*, 120 (1976), 291-301 (first delivered as a talk to a New Zealand Library Association Conference). Other talks are identified in List F of the Bibliography.
5. 'Emigrants, Elves and Earnestness: Some Early New Zealand Juvenile Fiction (1833-1917)', *Landfall*, 132 (1979), 320-31.
6. 'Feminism, Freud and the Fairy Tale: Reading Margaret Mahy's *The Haunting*', *Landfall*, 162 (1987), 186-205.
7. Murray Edmond, 'Interview with Margaret Mahy', *Ibid*, 164-85. Diane Hebley, 'Nightingales and Tuis: a survey of New Zealand children's literature in the 1980s', *Landfall*, 171 (1989), 340-52. For a bibliography to accompany the above, see 'A Checklist of New Zealand Children's Literature, 1980-88', *JNZL*, 6 (1988), 202-22.
8. Other critics who choose not to include children's novels in their discussions include Susan Ash in 'Janet Frame: the Female Artist as Hero', and Carol McLennan in 'Conformity and Deviance in the Fiction of Janet Frame', *JNZL*, 6, (1988), 170-89 and 190-201 respectively. Neither mentions Frame's fantasy novel, *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* (1969), judged for its genre in the United States to be among the ten best of its year. Peter Alcock, however, calls this novel a 'significant, suggestive and beautifully written [...] substantial children's story' and laments its absence also from *Bird, Hawk, and Bogie: Essays on Janet Frame*, ed. by Jeanne Delbaere (1978). 'A Frame for Reality? - Outside the Edge of the West', *Landfall*, 131 (1979), 251-55 (p. 253).
9. 'Maurice Gee: Ironies of Growth and Judgement. Part I: The Early Fiction', *Islands*, 30 (1980), 268-81 (p. 270, p. 280).
10. Doreen Suddens, 'In a Feminist Sense', *Broadsheet*, 108 (1983), 42. Cowley is referring to the *NZL*.
11. 'Children's Historical Fiction in New Zealand', *Historical News*, 32 (1976), 7-10, 16.
12. 'New Zealand Children's Literature: a Brief History', in *New Zealand Books for Children: Exhibited at the International Youth Library, Munich, 1981*, ed. by the Exhibition Committee members (1981), [pp. 5-11]. 'The World's Centre: Ruth Dallas and New Zealand Children's Fiction', *Reading Time*, 81 (1981), 5-10 (p. 9).
13. Confirmed in a letter to D. Hebley, 10 January 1990.
14. 'Notes from a Talk', *CLA Yr* (1987), 14-18 (p. 18).
15. 'Children's literature - an agent for change?', *Agenda*, 45 (1988), 31.

16. *New and Notable*, 5.1 (1988), 3.
17. *SLR*, 8.2 (1988), 16.
18. 'Positive girls', *NZH*, 16 January 1988, Section 2, p. 6.
19. *Broadsheet*, 159 (1988), 44-45 (p. 45).
'The one-minute novel', *NZL*, 2 April 1988, 66-67 (p. 66)
20. 'Books', *NZPPTA Journal*, (November 1980), 37-38.
21. 'A Word Witch at Work', *CLA Yr* (1987), 20-27.
In an unpublished master's thesis, Keestra includes a chapter on novels by Tessa Duder and Margaret Mahy, a significant step forward in academic attention. 'Adolescent Girls in Children's Literature' (1988).
22. *Landfall*, 162 (p. 193).
23. 'All home grown', *NZL*, 23 February 1985, 30-31 (p. 30).
24. Ann Packer, *WEP*, 9 December 1989, p. 30.
25. Tessa Duder, 'Fiction lost in no-man's-land', *DST*, 19 February 1989, p. 16.
26. See, for example, List F of the Bibliography for essays on the novels of Margaret Mahy, for example, Adam Berkin, "'I Woke Myself': *The Changeover* as a modern adaptation of 'Sleeping Beauty'", *CLE*, 79 (1990), 245-51.
27. Sheila Egoff, 'Precepts and pleasures: changing emphases in the writing and criticism of children's literature', in *Only connect*, ed. by Sheila Egoff and others (1969), pp. 419-46 (p. 420).
28. 'The Lion, the Magician, the Hero, the Witch', *CLA Yr* (1976), 9-15 (p. 10).
29. Maxine Schur, 'The Magic of Margaret Mahy', *NZBw*, 31 (1976), 17-19 (p. 19).
'Margaret Mahy', in *Our Own Country: Leading New Zealand women writers talk about their writing and their lives*, ed. by Sue Kedgley (1989), pp. 133-55 (p. 151).
30. 'The Truth about Wildfire, Weeding and Wet Weather', *SLR*, 5.4 (1985), 2-3 (p. 2).
31. 'Reading is food of other minds', *NZH*, 5 December 1970, Section 2, p. 5. Ironically, and predictably, a book is assumed to be of greater importance if the writer is already famous in another field. For example, *Land of the Long White Cloud*, by Dame Kiri te Kanawa (1989), is widely, if not always favourably, reviewed, with large headlines in the *Dominion*, 2 December 1989, p. 10; *NZH*, 27 November 1989, Section 3, p. 7; and *Press*, 16 December 1989, p. 26.
32. See, in particular, a range of essays in *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, ed. by David Novitz and Bill Willmott (1989).
33. For concepts of identification and the reader as onlooker, see D.W. Harding's clarification in 'Psychological processes in the reading of fiction', in *The Cool Web*, ed. by Margaret Meek (1977), pp. 58-72.
34. 'The New Zealand Idiom in Children's Fiction', *CLA Yr* (1976), 21-28 (p. 28).
35. 'Children's Historical Fiction', *Historical News* (p. 7).
36. 'New Zealand Children's Books: 1976 and after', *CLA Yr* (1979), 15-19 (p. 15).
37. *New Zealand Monthly Review*, 16.171 (1975), 21-22 (p. 21).
38. *Home-Grown: An annotated list of New Zealand fiction for seven to twelve-year-olds* (1985), p. 1.

39. *Broadsheet*, 159 (p. 44).
40. Information concerning contemporary fiction is available in Diane Hebley's *Off the Shelf* (1980), in Betty Gilderdale's *A Sea Change* (1982) and 'Children's Literature' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. by Terry Sturm (1991), pp. 449-90.
41. 'Some New Zealand Books', *CLA Yr* (1975), 34-41.
42. *ibid*, 34-35.
'Children's Historical Fiction', *Historical News* (p. 9).
43. *NZBw*, 21 (1976), 32-33 (p. 32).
'Children's Historical Fiction' (p. 8).
44. 'The World's Centre', *Reading Time*, 81 (1981), 5-10 (p. 6).
Grant sees little literary merit in early New Zealand children's fiction, and praises Betty Gilderdale's *A Sea Change* (1982) for being 'not primarily concerned with literary criticism', but for succeeding as a 'unique social history' that shows how 'books of little literary value can have a permanent and particular value as mirrors of social behaviour'.
'In the mirror', *NZL*, 22 January 1983, p. 38.
45. *NZBw*, 43 (1977), 32-33 (p. 32). Titles in the Kairangi series are: Phyl Wardell, *Hazard Island* (1977); Hazel Harris, *On the Trail of Te Kakaha* (1977); Ken Saunders, *Wanganui Adventure* (1977); and Elsie Locke and Ken Dawson, *The Boy with the Snowgrass Hair* (1976).
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PART FOUR

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION to the BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography is divided into two sections to record primary and secondary sources consulted for this thesis. Where a book is published by one publisher in association with another in the same place, a '/' is used to show the association. All other details follow instructions given in the *MHRA Style Book: Notes for Authors, Editors, and Writers of Theses*, rev. by Derek Brown and others, 4th edn (London: MHRA, 1991).

SECTION I : PRIMARY SOURCES

The primary sources are divided into three lists as follows:

LIST A is arranged according to author and then title in alphabetical order. It covers New Zealand children's fiction either set in New Zealand or written by New Zealand residents, and first published or, if previously published, first reprinted in book form from 1970 to 1989 inclusive. As discussed more fully in the Introduction to the thesis, the term 'children' is taken to include 'adolescent', and the definition of a children's book is taken to be what is published as a children's book. The term 'fiction' includes novels, novellas, and what New Zealand teachers and children in the classroom refer to as 'chapter books', but not picture books, short stories, myths and legends, or stories written for didactic or pedagogical purposes.

By contrast, Betty Gilderdale's bibliography in *A Sea Change* (1982) goes up to 1978 and includes picture books, novels more properly adult, such as William Satchell's *The Greenstone Door* (1914), and work by some expatriates regardless of setting. However, several details in her lists have had to be amended here. For example, evidence shows that the illustrations in Joyce West's *The Year of the Shining Cuckoo* (1961) should be attributed to Dennis Turner, not to the author as also claimed erroneously in the 1985 edition. Entries which have been amended are indicated by an asterisk. Page numbers are recorded for interest because of variation in the length of children's novels. Books first published prior to 1970 have their earlier publishing details recorded without page numbers before the details of a first reprinting. Though not the

subject of the thesis, these are of historical interest, indicating the rise of the New Zealand publishing industry.

LIST B repeats the titles in List A above, but arranged chronologically. Titles of books previously published but first reprinted after 1970 are listed at the end of the relevant year's entry. This chronological ordering also serves as a visual reinforcement of the growth in New Zealand children's fiction throughout the 1970-1989 time-span.

LIST C covers all other primary sources of literature referred to in the thesis, subdivided into a) children's literature; b) adult literature. Where appropriate, the original publication date is recorded before the publication details of an edition recently available.

SECTION II : SECONDARY SOURCES

The secondary sources consulted for this thesis are divided into four lists. If individual talks and articles are important to New Zealand children's fiction, or to landscape in children's fiction, and if they are published in a collection usually of conference proceedings, they are itemized under 'books' for the purpose of easy identification.

LIST D is arranged to suit the particular angle of the thesis. It covers the relationship between landscape and literature and art, subdivided into a) books; b) periodicals; c) theses.

LIST E covers sources of relevant information on geology and ecology.

LIST F encompasses literary criticism and background commentary relevant to children's literature. It is subdivided into: a) books, including general studies on such topics as fantasy and folk-tale; b) periodicals; c) newspapers and radio; d) unpublished theses and letters; e) lists of periodicals, magazines, and newspapers consulted for the survey reported in the Appendix.

LIST G covers other selected literary criticism and general background commentary consulted for this thesis, subdivided into a) books; b) periodicals; c) newspapers; d) a thesis.

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Mason, Andrew, 10 January 1990

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recorded in the APPENDIX

i) NEW ZEALAND PERIODICALS

Agenda
Antic
Ao Hou
Ariel
Broadsheet
Cave
CLA Yr
Designscape
Education
English in New Zealand
Infochoice
Islands
Landfall
Marae
Metro
More
Multi-Cultural School
National Education
New and Notable Books for Secondary Schools
New Outlook
New Zealand Archeological Association
New Zealand Art News
NZBw
New Zealand Journal of Education Studies
NZL
New Zealand Monthly Review
NZPPTA Journal
New Zealand Woman's Weekly
Panache
Parents' Centre Bulletin
Reading Forum NZ
Reading Time
Social Studies Observer
Spiral
Thursday
Te Karanga
Tu Tangata
School Library Review
Studies in Philosophy and Education
Wellington City Magazine

ii) NEW ZEALAND NEWSPAPERS

Auckland Star
Christchurch Star
Dominion
DST
Hawke's Bay Herald Tribune
Manawatu Evening Standard
Nelson Evening Mail
NZH
Otago Daily Times
The Press
Waikato Times
WEP

iii) OTHER PERIODICALS and NEWSPAPERS

Bookseller
CLAQ
CLE
Fiction Focus
Horn Book
GP
NYT
Phaedrus
Signal
TLS

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