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New Zealand Women Traveller Writers: from Exile to Diaspora

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The focus of this article is a group of New Zealand women traveller writers of the first half of the twentieth century who left their country of origin, and in the encounter with new worlds overseas, reconstructed themselves as deterritorialised, diasporic subjects with new understandings of home and belonging. Their work can be read as both transitional and transnational, reflecting the ambivalence of multiple cultural affiliations and redefining literary conventions. Such encounters and new points of reference from transiting through foreign lands inevitably catalyse new and unusual forms of diasporic writing, notable for a heightened consciousness of difference (Kalra *et al* 2008: 30). This article aims to identify patterns of similarity and contrast in their work, and to determine how they incorporate their varied experiences of loss and liberation into artistic reconciliations with the homeland. As Michel de Certeau says, 'travel introduces an in-between zone, a condition of moving through space with feelings of transience, rather than in identifying with place and a fixed order of positioning' (1984). Katherine Mansfield, pioneer of this group, sums up the disorientation and disembodiment of journeying, the destabilizing of fixed reference points of time and space, through the image of the pendulum:

In the shortest sea voyage there is no sense of time. You have been down in the cabin for hours or days or years. Nobody knows or cares. You know all the people to the point of indifference. You do not believe in dry land any more -- you are caught in the pendulum itself and left there, idly swinging. (Mansfield 1984: 528)

Yet, in this article, I suggest, each writer in her own way moves through the psychopathology caused by physical and mental dislocation and a crisis of rupture and uprooting, to discover ways of articulating the interior changes caused by travelling beyond the nation. In this they show that the conditions of exile (here defined as departure without return)¹ or diaspora (involving a return to the homeland) provide new points of departure in art, even while the circumstances of life are vastly overturned.

The four writers departed for England at different times, but can be linked by their migratory trajectories: Katherine Mansfield left in 1908 (aged 19) published her first volume of short stories *In A German Pension* (1911) to critical acclaim, and was

¹ This definition of the term comes from Andrew GURR, 1981.

soon recognized internationally as a foremost exponent of the short story; Robin Hyde, who consciously modelled herself upon Mansfield, left thirty years later for about 18 months in 1938 (aged 32), having already established her reputation as a poet, novelist, and journalist, having had two children out of wedlock, suffered mental breakdown and a degree of social alienation.² Travel led to new forms of social distance. Neither returned, both died in exile: Mansfield from tuberculosis in 1923 and Hyde by her own hand in 1939. Their new perceptions of homeland and (un)belonging, were captured in their art partly as a form of memorialization. In the post-World War II period were Janet Frame, who left for seven years in 1956 (aged 32) after spending eight years in mental hospitals, publishing a prize winning volume of short stories and a novel. She travelled on a state literary fund grant. The poet Fleur Adcock left permanently in 1963 (aged 29), having separated from her husband, the poet Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, by whom she had two children, and completed her first volume (published in New Zealand in 1964). Both Frame and Adcock were to develop a body of work that delineates positions of marginality in relation to more than one centre, challenging and testing out their sense of a New Zealand belonging through new reference points and multilocational attachments overseas. All four sought wider cultural and vocational horizons than provincial society could offer, and new links to metropolitan culture. In this they are comparable to Australian women writers such as Henry Handel Richardson (who travelled to Leipzig in 1888), Miles Franklin (who left for the USA in 1906), and Christina Stead (who left for England in 1928).

As canonical authors, writing either as travellers or about the effects of travel, their responses to geographical dislocation and their construction of themselves as 'other' to their place of origin constitute a significant but divergent strand of the national literary tradition.³ Although they never became part of a diasporic community in the way that contemporary Asian British writers such as Monica Ali, Meera Syal and Zadie Smith are, their writing, particularly that of Adcock and Frame, bears aesthetic, psychological and thematic comparison with more recent diasporic narratives of identity.⁴ That is, writing in transit of the twentieth century features cultural encounter and exchange, revised relations to the homeland catalysed by

² On the hostility to Hyde from New Zealand male writers of the 1930s, partly associated with her experimentalism and rejection of realism, see Stuart MURRAY, 1998; 165-169.

³ Frame, Mansfield and Hyde are often seen as belonging to an alternative tradition to the mainstream realist one of male writers; see Lawrence JONES, 1987; 6. Their work also differs from male expatriate writers who left in the 1930s, such as Dan Davin, James Courage, and John Mulgan.

⁴ See, for example, Roger BROMLEY in *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

new identity formations in the hostland; it employs striking images of selfhood and is often generically innovative, bordering on forms of life writing. In summary, although the work of these writers does not constitute a literary tradition, collectively it inflects the national imaginary with multiple outsider perspectives and perceptions of difference, implying a challenge to the monocultural and largely male oriented nationalism and the literary tradition of critical realism associated with it that prevailed in provincial New Zealand until the late 1960s. With its dialectic between the known or familiar, and the foreign or strange, such writing reconfigures national perspectives and offers resistance to the 'politics of homogeneity'. As Kalra *et al* claim, when a single sense of belonging to a nation comes under scrutiny in diaspora, the nation becomes a foil against which 'various conceptualisations such as "diasporic consciousness", "multivocality" and "deterritorialization"' are delineated (5).

The claims that can be made about the generic complexity of such writing and its alternative forms of consciousness require situating in relation to the constructions of home and belonging that are characteristic of white settler invader colonies. As outposts of the British empire — New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa — they originated as migrations from the British Isles, mostly as free settlements, and so the notion of a British diaspora remains relevant. Hence 'ideas of white racial identity, British subjecthood, and an emphasis on Englishness' (Wills 2010: 230), despite Irish or Celtic identifications, dominate. In these colonies 'Britishness' travelled across space and time to be reinvented and relocated, becoming an informing principle in the national consciousness, visible in patterns of cultural growth (Wills 2010: 230, citing Moreton-Robinson; Larkin 2006: 171; Tennenhouse 2007: 7). But writers who return from the colony to the metropolitan centre reinflect this inherited construction with voices that register conflicting perspectives of disorientation, estrangement, yet recognition. Those in the reverse diaspora, therefore, both male and female, contribute to the ongoing process of cultural transmission, a reshaping of concepts of inherited British identity and emerging New Zealand cultural nationalism.

As ethno-national diasporas the white settler colonies have a continuing symbolic relationship with the land of ethnic origin, maintained through official networks and personal ties of loyalty and affiliation (Scheffer 2006: 130-32). The Anglocentric model of national identity was for long pervasive in New Zealand, where England was often called 'home', and visits to England of varying duration were not uncommon (Wilson 2009: 129-31). Both Mansfield, born in 1888, and Adcock, born in 1934, exemplify the colonial who comes to belong to two worlds. They travelled to England with their families at an early age, and immersion in metropolitan culture and

society filled them with the desire to return to Europe. Mansfield departed in 1903 for an English education at Queen's College in Harley Street, London, and after her return in 1906 remained restless in New Zealand. Her stories and sketches from this period are starkly cognizant of the white settler's incomplete habitation of the new land and its dark, recessive atmosphere (e.g. 'Old Tar', 'In the Botanical Gardens', 'The Woman at the Store'), with hints of land appropriation and settler guilt, while her distance from England, coupled with resentment of her bourgeois family, provoke nostalgia and longing, all bathed in the glow of her fascination with Wildean decadence and fin de siècle artifice.

Adcock also developed doubled and hybrid identity structures after visiting England in 1939 at the age of five, returning reluctantly to New Zealand at the age of 13. During this formative period she fell in love with life in England, to which she later longed to return, and became alienated from the colonial *habitus* in which she and her family then settled. Her predicament at finding herself back in New Zealand after a British wartime childhood appears in a coded form in her earliest poetry which draws upon English and classical models of verse: she uses a male persona, there is longing for a geographically remote place, anxiety about being in the wrong landscape, and distorted imaging of gender relationships in rewritings of fairy tale and fable. Her responses to the New Zealand surroundings are found in a diary entry of 1 June 1959, written when she was working at the University of Otago in Dunedin:

Riding in the bus to Balclutha early yesterday morning, & back this afternoon, I had my usual feelings about the N.Z. landscape—that I would like to grasp it, belong to it, be carried away by it, but that it never says enough to me, never strikes me as sufficiently real or relevant. In fact, it is so typical of itself (in what should be a satisfying way) that it makes me slightly sick. (Adcock, Notebooks, 1959-1965)⁵

The sense of displacement blended with what later became a conflict of loyalties due to belonging to two places contributed to Adcock's stylistic range, which features contrast, paradox and an awareness of contradiction.

All four writers draw on their travelling experience to interrogate the homogeneous identity structures of the white settler that are contingent on a territorial, bounded nationalism. Mansfield was writing in Europe between 1908 and 1922 at a time before the local cultural tradition had consolidated and when New Zealand nationalism was nascent, having little purchase overseas. Her self-appellation as 'the little colonial' (Mansfield 1997: 2, 166) suggests her ambivalence; significantly she travelled at first anonymously in Europe, seemingly reluctant to acknowledge herself as a New Zealander. Yet this negativity changed, and after her

⁵ I am grateful to Fleur Adcock for giving me access to her diaries and notebooks.

brother Leslie's tragic death in 1915 she became increasingly obsessed about New Zealand often returning in memory and dream. In her late New Zealand stories she created an 'imaginary homeland', a 'myth of place' (Wevers 1995: 32), peopling the nation with the Sheridan and Burnell families, partly in an act of commemoration to her brother. Mansfield's modes of recall based on distance and longing are paralleled in Robin Hyde's perceptions of cultural difference in her brief sojourn in China and England, and her dream-driven reconnections with her New Zealand past:

Almost every night lying in the red padded quilt, I dreamed about NZ, dreams so sharp and vivid that when I woke up, it seemed the black-tiled houses were a fairy tale. (...) I was restless for these dreams and turned for them from the early shadow of sleep. (Hyde 1984: 97, cited in Leggott, 25)

Adcock's rejection of provincial New Zealand after her return to the UK in 1963, also took the form of dream, vision and nightmare initially, but within a decade of her arrival in England she started to meet the challenge of finding a new belonging by investigating her ethnic heritage and disinterring her mixed Scots-Irish ancestry: in articulating this complex ethnicity she was questioning the homogenous British or Pakeha⁶ white settler identity (McCarthy 2009: 190; Kalra *et al* 2008: 16). On her first visit to Ireland in the early 1970s she acclaims her Protestant heritage by searching for the graves of her maternal Ulster grandparents in Monneymore. In the poem, 'Please Identify Yourself', she comments of herself: 'British, more or less; Anglican, of a kind' (2000: 61), confirms a longing for ancestral ethnic identification that would later extend to her paternal Mancunian ancestors (as imagined in her volume *Looking Back* (1997). Janet Frame also ensures that the complexity of Britishness is made visible to the New Zealand traveller: the boat that Toby Withers takes to England in *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), is farewelled by a Pipe Band playing the Scottish song 'Speed bonny boat like a bird on the wing'; Toby shares a cabin with an Irishman while another character on the same boat, Zoe Bryce, later shares lodgings with the same Irishman and a Welshman with a limp (Frame 1962: 42-43, 171). As late as the 1960s and 70s when Adcock and Frame were writing such distinctions were seldom visible in the national consciousness, despite the regional character of the British settlement in certain parts of the country; and their recognition of Anglo-British ethnic diversity anticipates more recent challenges to core Anglo settler nationalism by historians and cultural critics, that emphasise the regionalism of the category 'British': the strands of Irish, Scottish and Cornish as well as English (Wills 2010: 231).

⁶ Maori word to denote white strangers of European descent (derived from pakepakeha and pakehekeha, terms which referred to white-skinned beings of the imagination, the fairy-like inhabitants of the forest known as Patupaiarehe).

If these women writers manifest a particular form of the settler restlessness found in New Zealand's literary culture in the early twentieth century, then in their reverse migration and 'return' to Europe, involving geographical and psychological distance and new perceptions of home and origins, they translate elements of alienated subjectivity into their art. In their trans-hemisphere journeys, Mansfield, Hyde, Frame and Adcock resemble the 'travelling subjects' of James Clifford who move through settled boundaries of national and ethnic belonging and whose work acquires new elements of aesthetic and artistic value; yet differences between them highlight the contrasts in approach between the writer in exile who is unable to return to the homeland by contrast to the expatriate or diasporic writer for whom the return is always an option. In Mansfield and Hyde's writing, journeys and displacement are reflected in fractured narrative structures, whereas Janet Frame and other Australian writers of early twentieth century explored the romantic idealisation of England as 'home' in novel forms.⁷ Short, discontinuous forms such as Mansfield's sketches and vignettes, Hyde's poetry and journalism, and in both cases their letters and diaries, show how mimetic, representational forms of travel writing – close to memoir and reportage – exist alongside imaginative modes such as fantasy and fable, sometimes interpenetrating them. Frame and Adcock, by contrast, rework the more established literary genres. Adcock's classical style develops a new informality after her arrival in England as she signals the intrusion of the startling and unexpected in ways suggestive of disorientation. Frame wrote three novels and two volumes of short stories during her seven years in England, similar to New Zealand diasporic male prose writers of the 1930s and 40s like Dan Davin, James Courage and John Mulgan, who wrote novels, short stories and non-fiction. Yet the points of dislocation and disarticulation that occur when the binary of home and host societies is disrupted become nodes for psychological and narrative expansion in her work, in sharp contrast to the realistic style of male writing.

The writers' reworking of space, distance and identity reflects their increased mobility once they arrive in Europe. Mansfield's two volumes of notebooks and five volumes of letters reveal the semi-nomadic state of her life, about to be cut short. Hyde, who like Mansfield died abroad, recorded her journey in ways that blur the boundaries between documentary, journalism and fiction: a semi-autobiographical novel about her experiences in China, *Dragon Rampart* (1939), was based on articles written for *Woman Today*, *The Mirror* and *Radio Record*; there was poetry,

⁷ The classic is Henry Handel RICHARDSON's trilogy, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* (1930). In Christina STEAD's *For Love Alone* (1944), the journey and exile are linked to the discovery of artistic vocation.

the posthumous volume *Houses by the Sea* (1952), and letters and journals. In the works of all four textual fracture and fragmentation appear in the records and notes of multiple journeys and visits to different countries, as Great Britain, the expected destination, became just one source of literary inspiration: Mansfield constantly travelled to Europe and lived at different times in Bavaria, Paris, Menton, Bandol, and Montana-sur-Sierre in Switzerland; Hyde travelled from New Zealand via the Eastern front in China (to cover the Sino-Japanese War), Hong Kong, Russia and Europe, before reaching England in September 1938; Adcock has travelled extensively and visited, *inter alia*, Tibet, Romania, and Ireland; Frame stayed in Ibiza and Andorra as well as England on her first overseas visit in 1958.

The sensation of being in transit, of occupying spaces between nations outside cultural norms and the usual social coordinates is manifested in a volatile, fluid, gendered subjectivity; this resembles the diasporic consciousness that stems from 'the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place' (Clifford 2006: 453; Kalra *et al*, 2008: 30). Their writing demonstrates psychological intensity and interiority; it recognises 'the relational character of subjectivity' that accommodates other viewpoints; and has its roots in alienation (Deutsche 1991: 7, cited in Blunt and Rose 1994: 5). In going beyond the grounded places where subjectivity is usually constructed and initially occupying spaces with reduced familiar reference points, the four writers move towards states associated with abjection, the crisis of selfhood and on occasion the utopian potential for literature that Bill Ashcroft associates with the transnation (Ashcroft 2010). I have identified in their work three tropes delineating a subjectivity not at home with itself, that, I suggest, is central to the kind of psychological fiction that Mansfield and Woolf pioneered in their aim to write the inner centre of what people hope, think and feel. Associated with journeys and travel and manifested through symbol, metaphor, and allusion these consist of alternative images and metaphors of the self involving masks, disguises or dissembling; the perception of the unfamiliar as 'other' and the self as a stranger; and the quest for a 'home in this world', a place from which women can speak to initiate change. Although all three tropes come from Robin Hyde, who can be seen as a successor to Mansfield and Woolf, they correspond to the typology of homelessness and estrangement outlined in Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves*.

Of all the images of the travelling self in these works, the most prominent and enduring is that of the godwit, the migratory bird that flies north from New Zealand to Siberia each year, making the long sea journey across the world to another homeland. Godwits as symbols of travel and migration provide the name by which

travellers from New Zealand are often known; it comes from Robin Hyde's novel, *The Godwits Fly* (1938), in which a hoped for but unrealised journey to England comes to represent the heroine, Eliza Hannay's metaphorical journey to understanding the inner self (Sandbrook 1982: 332-33).⁸ The migratory bird appears again in a poem by Charles Brasch written in 1948, perhaps in homage to Hyde, and the reference to its departure anticipates the settler restlessness that all four writers embody, conveyed in the last line.

Remindingly beside the quays the white
Ships lie smoking: and from their haunted bay
The godwits vanish towards another summer
Everywhere in light and calm the murmuring
Shadow of departure; distance looks our way;
And none knows where he will lie down at night. (Bornholdt *et al* 1997: 372)

The title of Janet Frame's semi-autobiographical posthumous novel, written in 1963, *Towards Another Summer* (published in 2007) comes from Brasch's poem, and the figure of the godwit is used by the novel's narrator, Grace Cleave, to represent her state of estrangement. The bird's wandering, nomadic existence and its liminality image her journey to England and state of exile; she frequently quotes from the poem in addressing this crisis of selfhood, to reassure herself of where she comes from. The loss of cultural, linguistic, and human distinctions epitomise her dislocation: 'Boundaries were not possible, where nothing finished, shapes encircled and there was no beginning: a storm raged and Grace Cleave was standing in the midst of it' (Frame 2007: 13). Her metaphoric transformation into a bird is an antidote to the sense of self-dissolution due to loss of geographical bearings:

Grace Cleave had changed to a migratory bird (...) For so long she had felt not human, yet had been unable to move towards an alternative species; now the solution had been found; she was a migratory bird; warbler, wagtail, yellowhammer? Cuckoo, shrike, bobolink, skua? Albatross, orange bishop, godwit? (15)

Identifying herself as a traveller through the migratory bird trope suggests that her identity was prone to splitting and division and required supplementation; but the trope also appropriately images nomadism, a state of flux, of being in process, rather than completeness or arrival (Golafshani 2008: 112).

By contrast to Frame/Cleave's adoption of an avian image is Mansfield's use of disguise and impersonation in her first years in Europe, noted in different styles of dress such as Maori or Japanese (Smith 2000: 46-47), and her apparent reluctance to divulge her New Zealand identity. In some early first person narratives her heroine

⁸ On Hyde's debt to Mansfield's story 'Prelude' in this novel see MURRAY, 1998; 189-190.

travels either anonymously or in disguise, no doubt to counteract the collapse and intermeshing of the binaries of self and other. In 'The Luft Bad', one of her Bavarian stories collected in *In A German Pension* (1911), the narrator is asked whether she is English or American, but remains non-committal about her unrecognizable accent. Her interlocutor then says: 'You must be one of the two. You cannot help it' (Mansfield 1984: 732). In other visits and journeys, notably in 'An Indiscreet Journey', her narrator travels in disguise. Although Mansfield became increasingly nomadic and peripatetic because of her diminishing energies and declining health, donning different masks while on the move suggests a link between travel, creativity and writing. As with Frame, the imaging of the solitary female traveller through facades or disguises implies indeterminacy of selfhood and being, the projection of the different layers of the subject's personality. Mansfield's stories about lone female travellers such as 'The Tiredness of Rosamund', 'Something Childish but very Natural', or 'The Little Governess', all turn on cases of mistaken identity, erroneous assumptions, or states of dream, fantasy and unreality.

Secondly, the female traveller's feelings of being an outsider are reinforced by arrival at foreign destinations that are linguistically, ethnically and culturally unfamiliar. Mansfield memorably dramatizes the woman's responses to cultural difference in 'Honeymoon', about a newly-wed couple who visit the Mediterranean. Such differences found in visiting European or Asian destinations contrast to those found on the long journey to the metropolitan homeland, which is uncannily familiar. The writer-traveller as a stranger or foreigner inhabiting an unknown territory develops affiliative relations, discovers new patterns of self-representation, and alternative perspectives to conventional domestic and nationalistic ones. Robin Hyde, for example, explores these concepts of difference and distance to discover, in the terms of Kristeva, that the stranger or foreigner must be known in order to find the stranger within (181-82). Hyde's engagement with alterity is most intense in her travels in China, where she was powerfully affected by the sounds and sensations of an alien culture, and they embrace Kristeva's 'ethics of respect for the irreconcilable' (182). In a poem from the sequence 'Journey from New Zealand' Hyde images the stranger as both herself and the foreigners she meets, investing the latter with ennobling spirituality:

What is it makes the stranger? Say oh eyes!
Because I was journeying far, sailing alone,
Changing one belt of stars for the northern belt,
Men in my country told me, 'You will be strange—
Their ways are not our ways: not like ourselves
They think, suffer and dream.'
So I sat silent, and watched the stranger, why he was strange. (Hyde 2003: 336)

Hyde refuses to become visible at the expense of the other, to reproduce the exclusionary ethnocentric discourse; but her subject position is shifting and unstable. She oscillates between 'being sold into strangeness' and longing for what is known: 'But my heart will only dissolve, re-form/ The circling shapes of familiar things' (332). In another poem she wishes to dissolve distance between herself and the stranger by removing gendered, cultural boundaries — 'I wished to be, for one day, a man selling mandarins' (337) — suggestive of the uncanny strangeness that Freud identifies in confronting the foreigner, who in Kristeva's words, 'I reject and also at the same time identify with' (187). In yet another poem Hyde revalues the exiles condition of unbelonging with a comprehensive vision in which all continents and seas are unified: 'it seems to me, all seas fuse and intermarry./ Under the seas, all lands knit fibre, interlock' (337); as Said says, 'seeing the entire world as a foreign land' (Said 1991: 366).

Travel in Europe, Asia and Ireland allowed Adcock to explore and make sense of the relationship between the various strands of her identity, discovering tensions between her place of origin, her new residence, and alternative destinations. In poems published in *Scenic Route* (1974) about a journey to Nepal, she implies through the semantic density of the word 'foreign' the cultural and religious differences of the Orient. In 'Bodnath' her fingers 'that twirl the prayer-wheels, [...]polishing their bronze by a fraction more' are 'foreign'; while in 'External Service', another poem written about the same trip, what is familiar to her (the sound of a BBC broadcast) is 'the foreign news' in Nepal (Adcock 2000: 79-80). By contrast is the imagined state of radical and ontological unbelonging conjured up in a later poem, 'Foreigner', about the psychological sensation of being excluded, cast down: the abject subject metamorphoses into a larva, imaged as a face floating on unguents and subordinated, pushed to the bottom of the nation:

These winds bully me.

I am to lie down in a ditch
Quiet under the thrashing nettles
And pull the mud up to my chin.

(...)

I shall lie sound-proofed in the mud,
A huge caddis fly larva,
A face floating upon Egyptian unguents
In a runnel at the bottom of England. (Adcock 2000: 107)

Linked to the image of the stranger and the state of estrangement, is Freud's concept of *unheimlich*, close to the uncanny, and the ontological condition of 'being-not-at home' as theorized by Heidegger and Sartre (1995 and 1974, cited in Mummery 30-34): these underpin the gendered female quest for 'a home in this world', in Hyde's terms. The elusiveness of the worldly home, territory or place comes to symbolize the female writer's inherent liminality and borderline existence reinforced by leaving her homeland. In pursuing the question of home, all four writers blur the *unheimlich*, associated with the diasporic state of non-acceptance and alienation, with the not-at-homeness that is part of the human condition of being in the world, as distinguished by Heidegger and Sartre; for the disruptions of selfhood catalyzed by diaspora and exile seem to call forth an innate condition of 'being-not-at-home' (Mummery 2006: 31). Hyde, for example, seems to refer to the latter in developing a utopian ambition for female change; she dematerializes 'home' as a place in which to live, to advance a discursive concept of home as a centre of achieved balance which enables movement beyond.

I now know what I am looking for. It is a home in this world. I don't mean four walls and a roof on top (...) I want a sort of natural order and containment, A centre of equipoise and an idea, not a cell to which one can retreat, but a place from where one can advance; a place from which I can stretch out giant shadowy hands, and make a road between two obscure villages in China, teach the Arab and Jew how to live together in Palestine, tidy up the shack dwellings and shack destinies of our own thin Maoris in the north. (Hyde 1984: 10)

Grace Cleave in Frame's *Towards Another Summer* also finds that travel exacerbates an archaic sense of non-belonging (associated with Heidegger's authentic *Da-sein*); according to the critic Isabel Haarhaus, this is due to her primordial exile from the mother's womb, leading to internal and then external exile, the loss of self and of language. Migration leads her to ponder the question of where home exists: 'How could you go home if you were already home? Or was home some place out of the world?' (Frame 2007: 70). She also longs to return to the place of original belonging and protected intimacy, symbolically represented by the site of the maternal; but as a migrant, in order to arrive, as Haarhaus says, she must transfer 'the desire for literal placement within one's context -- the world-- to the formulation of a desire for a transcendental and ultimately universal kind of 'being in the world' (2006: 12, cited in Golafshani 109-110). Cleave has not yet reached the point of 'subjective arrival', of having developed a sense of place in the world that can satisfy this desire for originary belonging.

Despite their differences all four writers challenge received notions of home and belonging and to that extent display the 'diasporic condition' (Kalra *et al* 30) . In particular setting out on journeys that require inhabiting new spaces entails a radical

revision of their gender roles. Each abandons certain female expectations and responsibilities when leaving the country, breaching maternal, sexual or marital relations, cutting ties with family and children (both Hyde and Adcock left young children behind). In so doing, and in substituting affiliative relationships for those of kinship, they exemplify Said's condition of 'willed homelessness' (1983: 6, cited in Wevers 1995: 36). Evidence of shifting contradictory subject positions due to intersecting gender and colonial discourses, shows them as constituting both identity and alterity (Blunt and Rose 1994: 11). They situate themselves literally as outside the nation, and metaphorically outside the gendered, cultural expectations of women, in their search for greater freedoms, new identities and 'authenticity of being', in Heidegger's terms, in the sense of not being-at-home (Mummery 2006: 32-33).⁹

Embarking on this quest also suggests a challenge to Homi Bhabha's argument about the unhomely — that displacement and disruption do not totalize experience — for the reconstruction in their art of forms of homeland belonging out of dreams, memories and generic innovation often informs a new aesthetic practice (Bhabha 1994: 5). For Hyde and Mansfield who did not return to New Zealand, their early years and imagining of home becomes the central artistic focus. Hyde's last poems about her Wellington childhood — *Houses by the Sea* — are her finest, as are Mansfield's stories about her Wellington childhood. Most were written before Hyde left New Zealand, but she revised them when in China and finalised the manuscript when living in a caravan in Kent, before she committed suicide on 23 August 1939 (Hyde 2003: 24-30). Poems written during her journey link the eastern landscape with the New Zealand one she had left, noting correspondences through geography and place as is often associated with diaspora writing (Hout 2007: 290).

I dream so much of the poems made in my youth.
 Small idle ghosts I had written, forgotten never since seen
 Slip into my brain: say 'We were a part of you'
 As swiftly gone again
 A soft might carries us on
 It is like the wind, streaming over Wellington hills
 Which, bearing all sunset's flame, scorns not the kites;
 It is like the tide, flowing out from Island Bay,
 Bubbling round dinghies, it lifts the children's boats. (Hyde 2003: 343-44)

When travelling, Hyde found the need to correlate her impressions of new locations with memories of home. Her poetry written in China shows a clarity and acute

⁹ Robin Hyde's heroine in *The Godwits Fly* also emphasises trans-gendering in order to travel, saying –when she is told she cannot go to England because she is a woman: "'I'm not a woman; not for ordinary purposes'"; Robin HYDE, *The Godwits Fly*, ed Gloria RAWLINSON (Auckland: Auckland University Press & Oxford University Press, 1974), 162. Cited by MURRAY, , 191.

observation of people, places and incident, as well as a finely tuned calibration of distance: between herself and others, between here and there.

Mansfield, from her earliest days in England, seemed to pursue a dream of home as a constantly shifting horizon, possibly a form of escapism. In April 2009, just eight months after her arrival, in the midst of a crisis in which her lover Garnet Trowell (to whom she was probably then pregnant), rejected her and she married briefly George Bowden, she went on impulse to Brussels. On the coach to Harwich she writes: 'The carriage is full but I feel I am going home. To escape England it is my great desire. I loathe England' (*Letters* 1: 90). Yet disillusionment follows. In a letter written from Brussels the following day she says, 'sick at heart til I am physically sick with no home. No place in which I can hang up my hat and say here I belong—for there is no such place in the whole wide world for me' (*Letters* 1: 91). Later, unable to settle anywhere for long as her health and finances declined, she fantasised with her husband, John Middleton Murry, about different kinds of home even inventing a mythical place called 'Heron' after the second name of her deceased brother, Leslie Heron Beauchamp; but her New Zealand stories constitute for her the homecoming which eluded her in real life, and in so doing provide a new vision of the nation. In constructing the family as locus of meaning and activity she brings a metaphorical dimension to the myth of New Zealand, one of national cohesion, according to Lydia Wevers, through achieving temporal depth rather than narrative continuity (42, 46). Mansfield celebrates the powers of memory that bring this world to life, but as her own life runs out in the process, this is both ghostly and uncanny:

It is so strange to bring the dead to life again. Theres my grandmother with her pink knitting, there stalks my uncle over the grass. I feel as I write 'you are not dead, my darlings. All is remembered. I bow down to you. I efface myself so that you may live again through me in your richness and beauty'. (*Letters* 4, 278)

By contrast, both Frame and Adcock develop an aesthetic and thematics which include their different realizations of the return. Like Mansfield and Hyde, they draw on memory, dream and the workings of the unconscious to recall their early life. In Adcock's latest volume, *Dragon Talk* (2010), for example, poems like 'Kuaotunu' and 'Linseed' describe her first conscious moments when she is two or three. Frame's heroine in *Towards Another Summer* takes refuge in memories of childhood, to overcome overwhelming homesickness in a country whose culture and history oppress her. The diasporic imaging of herself as a migratory bird eventually allows Cleave to impose some pattern on her experience as it does for Eliza Hannay in *The Godwits Fly* (Sandbrook 332). Although the image conveys a fluid subjectivity, moving across the binaries of colony and colonized, centre and periphery, homeland

and hostland, disrupting their logic, it also provides her with the return trajectory (Golafshani 2008: 106-107), to fly back to her native land 'towards another summer'. In the symbol's transformation in the conclusion this identity is completed: 'I fly alone, apart from the flock, on long journeys through storm and clear skies to another summer. Hear me!' (Frame 2007: 187).

The difference between the earlier and later writer travellers, therefore, is that both Adcock and Frame move on from their initial experiences of disruption and dislocation, to accommodate the return and homecoming in their art. Frame's migratory bird image represents a decisive break with England as her source of creativity. Even though it does not enable Cleave to feel at home everywhere and nowhere sufficient to achieve a place in this world, it figures her decision to relocate herself in New Zealand and reconnect with the emerging national culture symbolised by Charles Brasch. A shift in perception, contingent upon this shift in identity that comes with the completion of her journey, appears in Frame's use of the image in her next novel, *The Adaptable Man* (1965), begun in England and completed upon her return to New Zealand: departure and return as found in nature now provide a vantage point from which to contemplate human chaos: 'The thought that he is not a migrating bird might make a man mad'. Without migration man is subject to time's flux and the directionlessness of humanity — 'they journey [...] all in different directions, colliding, confused, distracting one another with promises, dreams and false memories' (Frame 1965: 10), in short an ontological state of uncertainty and doubt.

Adcock made her first return to New Zealand in 1976, setting a pattern of frequent visits to see family and friends over the next thirty years. Her poetry shows the 'multivocality of belongings' (Kalra *et al* 2008: 29) that come from living diasporically for over half a century: to New Zealand where her family live, to England, her chosen home, and to Ireland where her ancestors are buried. In 'Instead of an Interview', a poem written after the first return to New Zealand, she attempts to reconfigure 'home':

Home I explained to a weeping niece
Home is London, and England, Ireland, Europe.
I have come home with a suitcase full of stones
Of shells and pebbles, pottery, pieces of bark;
Here they lie around the floor of my study
As I telephone a cable 'safely home' (Adcock 2000: 115)

Despite the claim to multiple belonging in metropolitan England, Ireland and Europe, Adcock's underlying ambivalence about her original home is suggested in the

fragments of New Zealand stone and bark she has brought back in her suitcase, symbolising shreds of her former belonging. These categories point to the migrant experience of transition and translation that lack resolution (Bhabha 1994: 224), and the structure of anxiety that effects a making strange (Heidegger 1995: 189, cited in Mummery 2006: 32). Adcock's sense of not being-at-home appears in the concern in the poem's final line that she may have cast herself out permanently: 'By going back to look, after thirteen years,/ have I made myself for the first time an exile?' (Adcock 2000: 115).

Nevertheless, Adcock draws on this transitional, interstitial stage of acculturation and moves on from the initial conflict of loyalties. Like Frame who writes of the journey between New Zealand and the UK in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, she has adopted to the purposes of verse narrative the experience of long distance transnational travel. Yet this has only come about with her entrenched settlement in England, the consolidation of her reputation and after many return visits recorded in numerous poems and especially those published in *Time Zones* (1991). Unlike the poems of *The Scenic Route* which register discovery of new places and an awareness of similarities to and differences from the places she visits, those in *Time Zones* present the mobile, global traveller who makes transnational journeys, has plural locational attachments, and can relativise different places. This new characterisation is reinforced by the appearance of anonymous interstitial spaces — the waiting room, the airport lounge, customs and security checkpoints — which epitomise the transient, official world of air travel. A number of poems draw on Adcock's travel back and forth between hemispheres, and this trajectory is encapsulated in the long narrative poem, *Meeting the Comet*, about a young woman who flies from England to New Zealand to see Halley's comet when it appeared in 1988. Now the journey itself has become a topic for poetry, and Adcock redefines the travelogue poem by drawing attention to environmental issues. Like Frame who also travelled extensively away from and back to New Zealand during her lifetime, she draws on her experience of multiple journeys over time, to attain more distanced and more comparative perspectives, often relativizing differences through narrative technique. Mansfield and Hyde with their tragically shortened lives only write fragmentarily about the long journey of migration, if at all, because they lack the sense of a return, and of the completed pattern. This defines a clear shift in the perception of home and belonging between Mansfield and Hyde writing in exile in the early decades of the twentieth century and Frame and Adcock writing as diasporic subjects after World War II.

In summary, work that has been written in transit, as well as from places outside the nation, crosses generic boundaries, destabilises constructions of gender, and interrupts relationships of filiation and belonging. It intersects with mainstream images of the nation through introducing tropes of travel and estrangement, such as the godwit, a universal image symbolizing trans-hemisphere migration. The writers' explorations of home and homeland through metaphor and imagination represent both a counterpoint to and reframing of national articulations of belonging: they introduce new myths of home and nation (namely in Mansfield's New Zealand stories, and Frame's novels) and reinvigorate older ones about the ancestral homeland. The intersection with the national imaginary also comes from renewing attachments — such as by return visits (Frame and Adcock) or through memory, metaphor and image (Hyde and Mansfield) — and reintroducing concepts of difference.

The changing perspectives on selfhood, nation and belonging covered in this article, I suggest, differ from the study of how communities are made and unmade, cited as the purpose of diaspora discourse (Mummery 2006: 41, citing Tölölyan 1991: 1); for the diasporic consciousness of the writer who is alienated in travel often articulates a more radical yet subjective, complex response than that of the collective, and one that is anticipatory, a potential model for further understanding of issues of home and belonging, language, and marginality. Nevertheless the lives and work of these four writers might be contextualized through both postcolonial and diasporic perspectives: first with reference to Vijay Mishra's claim that 'imaginary homelands are constructed from the space of distance to compensate for a loss occasioned by an unspeakable trauma' (423-424). Mishra's allusion to colonisation and cultural clash is relevant to writing outside the nation that emerges in response to the shock of unbelonging, the dislocations of departure and arrival, but which does not necessarily construct an 'imaginary community'. Such categorisation is more appropriate of Mansfield and Hyde whose lives ended abruptly in Europe, from within 'the space of difference', than to Frame and Adcock who made reconnections with their origins, and developed their art by balancing the space of difference with narrativisations of the return. Frame, especially in her last two novels written before her death in 2004, *Living in the Maniototo* (1978) and *The Carpathians* (1988), and Adcock in her recent poetry are, by contrast, closer to contemporary diaspora discourse which according to James Clifford reflects an 'ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as something simply left behind, but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity' (454). Clifford's perspective, when applied to the work of Adcock and Frame, suggest that they anticipate the

approaches to travel, writing and identity found in the work of the current generation of New Zealand writers — such as Sarah Quigley, Kirsty Gunn, Kapka Kassabova, and many others since the 1980s — which continues to reinflect the national imaginary from afar. The finitude of the writers in exile whose loss of home and nation in departing for new horizons became associated with their deaths as well as their finest artistic accomplishment now seems a relic of the past. Instead the multi-directional travel of recent decades, the intersecting paths of contemporary global migration that continue to challenge and overturn binary colonial and postcolonial trajectories, ushers in an era of increasingly cosmopolitan and transnational migrant writing.

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