

FRAME, Janet (1924- 2004), Neuseeland

Owls do Cry (1957)

Dt Wenn Eulen schrein (1961), Üb: Ruth Malchow

Die - soweit es um ihre subjektive Wahrnehmung geht - in poetischen Metaphern geschilderten Anfälle von Toby Withers, leicht zurückgeblieben und einer ihrer Hauptpersonen, haben eine wichtige Funktion für die Entwicklung der Erzählung. Die Anfälle sind GTK mit Aura und beginnen mit einer Versivbewegung von Augen und Kopf. Es gibt eine Ahnung, dass man Anfälle vielleicht irgendwie stoppen könnte. Die Mutter kippt die Bromtropfen in die Toilette, weil sie nicht will, dass ihr Kind so ein Zeugs nimmt. Es ist ein respektierlich arme Familie, die sich immer grade so durchwurstelt. Die Kinder haben nichts Gutes anzuziehen und spielen auf der Müllkippe, wo sie „Schätze“ finden. Toby entwickelt sich zu einem einzelgängerischen Sonderling und Geizhals, seine Schwester, der ein bescheidener kleinbürgerlicher Aufstieg gelingt, schämt sich seiner wegen seiner Anfälle, was ihn tief kränkt.

The Edge of the Alphabet (1962)

(keine Übersetzung nachgewiesen)

Der anfallsranke und etwas beschränkte Toby Withers ist hier eine von drei Personen am Rande des Scheiterns, deren Pfade sich auf dem Schiff von Neuseeland nach England und später in London kreuzen. Viele kleine und treffende Details zum Thema Leben mit Epilepsie.

To the Is-Land. Autobiography 1 (1982)

An Angel at My Table. Autobiography 2 (1984)

Dt: Ein Engel an meiner Tafel. Autobiographischer Roman. (1993; 1 und 2)

Üb: Lilian Faschinger

The Envoy from Mirror City. Autobiography 3 (1984)

Der Gesandte aus der Spiegelstadt (1994), Üb: Lilian Faschinger

Die Epilepsiegeschichte des jüngeren Bruders der Autorin, die sie wie vieles andere autobiographische Material in "Owls do cry" und "The Edge of the Alphabet" in freier Form verwendet, wird vor allem im ersten und noch im zweiten Band der Autobiographie berichtet.

Zur Autorin (Wiki 12.1.25):

„**Janet Paterson Frame** ONZ CBE (28 August 1924 – 29 January 2004) was a New Zealand author. She is internationally renowned for her work, which includes novels, short stories, poetry, juvenile fiction, and an autobiography, and received numerous awards including being appointed to the Order of New Zealand, New Zealand's highest civil honour.



Frame's celebrity derived from her dramatic personal history as well as her literary career. Following years of psychiatric hospitalisation, Frame was scheduled for a lobotomy that was cancelled when, just days before the procedure, her debut publication of short stories was unexpectedly awarded a national literary prize. Many of her novels and short stories explore her childhood and psychiatric hospitalisation from a fictional perspective, and her award-winning three-volume autobiography was adapted into the film *An Angel at My Table* (1990), directed by Jane Campion.

Janet Frame was born Janet Paterson Frame in Dunedin in the south-east of New Zealand's South Island, the third of five children to parents of Scottish descent. She grew up in a working-class family. Her father, George Frame, worked for the New Zealand Government Railways, and her mother Lottie (née Godfrey), served as a housemaid to the family of writer Katherine Mansfield. New Zealand's first female medical graduate, Dr Emily Hancock Siedeberg, delivered Frame at St. Helens Hospital in 1924.

Frame spent her early childhood years in various small towns in New Zealand's South Island provinces of Otago and Southland, including Outram and Wyndham, before the family eventually settled in the coastal town of Oamaru (recognisable as the "Waimaru" of her debut novel and subsequent fiction). As recounted in the first volume of her autobiographies, Frame's childhood was marred by the deaths of two of her adolescent sisters, Myrtle and Isabel, who drowned in separate incidents, and **the epileptic seizures suffered by her brother George** (referred to as "Geordie" and "Bruddie").

In 1943, Frame began training as a teacher at the Dunedin College of Education, auditing courses in English, French and psychology at the adjacent University of Otago. After completing two years of theoretical studies with mixed results, Frame started a year of practical placement at the Arthur Street School in Dunedin, which, according to her biographer, initially went quite well. Things started to unravel later that year when she attempted suicide by ingesting a packet of aspirin. As a result, Frame began regular therapy sessions with junior lecturer John Money, to whom she developed a strong attraction, and whose later work as a sexologist specialising in gender reassignment remains controversial.

In September 1945, Frame abandoned her teacher-training classroom at Dunedin's Arthur Street School during a visit from an inspector. She was then briefly admitted to the psychiatric ward of the local Dunedin hospital for observation. Frame was unwilling to return home to her family, where tensions between her father and brother frequently manifested in outbursts of anger and violence. As a result, Frame was transferred from the local

hospital's psychiatric ward to Seacliff Lunatic Asylum, a fabled and feared mental institution located 20 miles north of Dunedin. During the next eight years, Frame was repeatedly readmitted, usually voluntarily, to psychiatric hospitals in New Zealand. In addition to Seacliff, these included Avondale Lunatic Asylum, in Auckland, and Sunnyside Hospital in Christchurch. During this period, Frame was first diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia, which was treated with electroconvulsive therapy and insulin.

In 1951, while Frame was still a patient at Seacliff, New Zealand's Caxton Press published her first book, a critically acclaimed collection of short stories titled *The Lagoon and Other Stories*. The volume was awarded the Hubert Church Memorial Award, at that time one of New Zealand's most prestigious literary prizes. This resulted in the cancellation of Frame's scheduled lobotomy. Four years later, after her final discharge from Seacliff, Frame met writer Frank Sargeson. She lived and worked at his home in Takapuna, an Auckland suburb, from April 1955 to July 1956, producing her first full-length novel, ***Owls Do Cry*** (Pegasus, 1957).

Frame left New Zealand in late 1956, and the next seven years were most prolific in terms of publication. She lived and worked in Europe, primarily based in London, with brief sojourns to Ibiza and Andorra. In May 1958 she legally changed her name to **Nene Janet Paterson Clutha**, in part to make herself more difficult to locate and in part to recognise Māori leader Tamati Waka Nene, whom she admired, and the Clutha River, which was a source of creative inspiration. Frame still struggled with anxiety and depression, and in September 1958 admitted herself to the Maudsley in London. American-trained psychiatrist Alan Miller, who studied under John Money at Johns Hopkins University, proposed that she had never suffered from schizophrenia. In an effort to alleviate the ill effects of her years spent in and out of psychiatric hospitals, Frame then began regular therapy sessions with psychiatrist Robert Hugh Cawley, who encouraged her to pursue her writing. Frame dedicated seven of her novels to Cawley.

Frame returned to New Zealand in 1963, though not before spending a short period of time living in rural north Suffolk (near the town of Eye) which gave her the inspiration for her 1965 novel *The Adaptable Man*. She accepted the Burns Fellowship at the University of Otago in 1965. She later lived in several parts of New Zealand's North Island, including Auckland, Taranaki, Wanganui, the Horowhenua, Palmerston North, Waiheke, Stratford, Browns Bay and Levin.

During this period Frame travelled extensively, occasionally to Europe, but principally to the United States, where she accepted residencies at the MacDowell and Yaddo artists' colonies. Partly as a result of these extended stays in the U.S., Frame developed close relationships with several Americans. These included the painter Theophilus Brown (whom she later referred to as "the chief experience of my life") and his long-time partner Paul John Wonner, the poet May Sarton, John Phillips Marquand and Alan Lelchuk. Frame's one-time university tutor/counsellor and longtime friend John Money worked in North America from 1947 onwards, and Frame frequently based herself at his home in Baltimore.

In the 1980s Frame authored three volumes of autobiography (***To the Is-land, An Angel at my Table*** and ***The Envoy from Mirror City***) which collectively traced the course of her life to her return to New Zealand in 1963. The Australian novelist Patrick White described the first two volumes as "amongst the wonders of the world". Director Jane Campion and

screenwriter Laura Jones adapted the trilogy for television broadcast. It was eventually released as an award-winning feature film, *An Angel at My Table*. Actresses Kerry Fox, Alexia Keogh and Karen Fergusson portrayed the author at various ages. Frame's autobiographies sold better than any of her previous publications, and Campion's successful film adaptation of the texts introduced a new generation of readers to her work. These successes increasingly pushed Frame into the public eye.

In the 1983 Queen's Birthday Honours, Frame was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, for services to literature. That year, *To the Is-land* also received the Goodman Fielder Wattie Book of the Year Award, the top literary prize in New Zealand.

Frame intended the autobiographies to "set the record straight" regarding her past and in particular her mental status. However, critical and public speculation has continued to focus on her mental health. In 2007, after Frame's death, *The New Zealand Medical Journal* published an article by a medical specialist who proposed that Frame may have been on the autism spectrum, a suggestion that was disputed by the author's literary executor.

During her lifetime, Frame's work was principally published by American firm George Braziller, garnering numerous literary prizes in her native New Zealand, and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1989 for her final novel, *The Carpathians*.

1990–2000

On 6 February 1990, Frame was the sixteenth appointee to the Order of New Zealand, the nation's highest civil honour. Frame also held foreign membership of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and, in her native New Zealand, received two honorary doctorates as well as the status of cultural icon. Rumours occasionally circulated portraying Frame as a contender for the Nobel Prize in Literature, most notably in 1998, after a journalist spotted her name at the top of a list later revealed to have been in alphabetical order, and again five years later, in 2003, when Åsa Beckman, the influential chief literary critic at the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*, wrongly predicted that Frame would win the prestigious prize.

Frame's writing became the focus of academic criticism from the late 1970s, with approaches ranging from Marxist and social realist, to feminist and poststructuralist. In later years, book-length monographs on Frame were published. These included Patrick Evans's bio-critical contribution for the "Twayne's World Authors Series," *Janet Frame* (1977), Gina Mercer's feminist reading of the novels and autobiographies, *Janet Frame: Subversive Fictions* (1994), and Judith Dell Panny's allegorical approach to the works, *I have what I gave: The fiction of Janet Frame* (1992). A collection of essays edited by Jeanne Delbaere was first published in 1978, with a revised edition released under the title *The Ring of Fire: Essays on Janet Frame* in 1992. That same year, Dunedin's University of Otago hosted a conference dedicated to a discussion of Frame's work. Many of the papers were published in a special issue of *The Journal of New Zealand Literature*.

In 2000, New Zealand historian Michael King published his authorised biography of Frame, *Wrestling with the Angel*. The book was simultaneously released in New Zealand and North America, with British and Australian editions appearing in later years. King's

award-winning and exhaustive work attracted both praise and criticism. Some questioned the extent to which Frame guided the hand of her biographer, while others argued that he had failed to come to terms with the complexity and subtlety of his subject. Adding to the controversy, King openly admitted that he withheld information "that would have been a source of embarrassment and distress to her," and that he adopted publisher Christine Cole Catley's notion of "compassionate truth." This advocates "a presentation of evidence and conclusions that fulfil the major objectives of biography, but without the revelation of information that would involve the living subject in unwarranted embarrassment, loss of face, emotional or physical pain, or a nervous or psychiatric collapse." King defended his project and maintained that future biographies on Frame would eventually fill in the gaps left by his own work.

Death and posthumous publications

Frame died in Dunedin in January 2004, aged 79, from acute myeloid leukaemia, shortly after becoming one of the first recipients of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand Icon Awards, established to celebrate and acknowledge New Zealand artists who have achieved the highest standards of artistic expression. A number of works have been published posthumously, including a volume of poetry titled *The Goose Bath*, which was awarded New Zealand's top poetry prize in 2007. This generated a minor controversy among critics who felt the posthumous prize "set an awkward precedent". A novella, *Towards Another Summer*, was also published posthumously, a work inspired by a weekend Frame spent with British journalist Geoffrey Moorhouse and his family. In 2008, two previously unpublished short stories set in mental hospitals appeared in *The New Yorker*. Another previously unpublished short story was carried in *The New Yorker* in 2010. In March 2011, the New Zealand branch of Penguin Books acquired the rights to publish three new editions of Frame's work. These were: *Janet Frame in Her Own Words* (2011), a collection of interviews and nonfiction, *Gorse is Not People: New and Uncollected Stories* (2012) (published in the US as *Between My Father and the King: New and Uncollected Stories*), and the novel *In the Memorial Room* (2013).

In 2010, *Gifted*, a novel by New Zealand academic and former Frame biographer Patrick Evans, was published and subsequently shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. The story is a fictionalised account of the relationship between Janet Frame and Frank Sargeson during her time living as a guest on his Takapuna property in 1955–56 – an era recounted in a number of works by Frame and her contemporaries and dramatised in Campion's film, *An Angel at My Table* (1990). In 2013, Evans' novel was adapted for the stage, premiering at the Christchurch Arts Festival on 22 August 2013, followed by extended tour of New Zealand's north and south islands. While garnering positive critical reviews, the promotion and staging of the production drew fierce criticism from Frame's literary executor and niece, Pamela Gordon, who maintained it "was designed to demean Frame." Gordon, who has also criticised Campion's film for inaccuracies in its portrayal of Frame, asserted that Evans' theatrical adaptation presented an unfaithful view of her famous relative. Festival organiser Philip Tremewan defended the play, while director Conrad Newport maintained that Gordon was "overprotective of [Frame's] legacy." Evans generally avoided the controversy, stating, "I have publicised her work and popularised it for two to three generations of students. In *Gifted*, the play and novel, you only have to look at the title to see what my attitude is. I really don't think I have anything to apologise for."

Literatur

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