APPROPRIATION, SUBVERSION AND SEPARATISM:
THE STRATEGIES OF THREE NEW ZEALAND WOMEN NOVELISTS:
JANE MANDER, ROBIN HYDE AND SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER

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A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the
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by
Elizabeth A. Thomas

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1990
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I propose to examine the relationship between three New Zealand woman novelists, Jane Mander, Robin Hyde and Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and the literary and social structures which prevailed in New Zealand at the time when each writer produced her works. My analysis is based on the contemporary feminist literary theory and criticism which highlights the importance of studying women writers' interaction with the cultural system and the literary differences which arise from the difference in gender.

I begin with an outline of the feminist literary theories which have shaped my approach. Then I deal with each of my subjects in succession. In respect of each, I outline the social circumstances, in particular the prevailing ideologies pertaining to women's roles. This is followed by discussion of the literary circumstances, once again with special attention to the position of women writers. The analysis of the texts which follows focusses on three main areas, namely the response of each to the patriarchal dominance of society, to the constructs of female identity imposed by society and to the norms of the dominant literary tradition. The conclusions I reach are that these writers adopt three main strategies in their texts in reaction to the social and literary contexts, namely appropriation, subversion and separatism.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr Patrick Evans for his sound advice and encouragement. My thanks are also due to John Crawford for his assistance in proof-reading this thesis and his constant encouragement. My thanks also to my parents for their support over the years.

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<td>AHITW</td>
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INTRODUCTION

THE PROJECT AND THE THEORETICAL APPROACH

Introduction

This thesis examines the relationship between three New Zealand women novelists and both the New Zealand literary establishment, the publishers, critics, readers and fellow novelists, and the society whose values this establishment reflects and shapes. The three writers on whom my discussion focusses are: Jane Mander who was one of the early pioneers, lacking a literary support system and going it alone in her efforts to record life in New Zealand as she saw it; Robin Hyde, who began writing at the same time as a literary network was becoming established and yet remained on the outside of that new establishment largely because of the literary misogyny of her fellow writers; and Sylvia Ashton-Warner, whose works coincided with the years when the monolithic male literary system was at its height and who was to all intents and purposes as isolated as Mander had been. Finally, I briefly outline the development of New Zealand women's writing since the emergence of
alternative literary systems, specifically the female-centred ones of the 1970s. Thus, my discussion ranges from the days when no New Zealand writer worked within a recognisable local tradition and establishment, to the founding days of such a system, its heyday, and its decline and replacement by a multiplicity of systems. My focus throughout is on the special place of the woman writer in relation to these developments.

I will begin with a discussion of the feminist literary theories which have shaped my approach to this analysis and then move on to a discussion of each of the writers. As a preface to my discussion of each of these writers' works and their place in the New Zealand literary tradition, I will outline the social and historical background to her times. This is followed by an examination of the New Zealand literary scene at the time of each writer, and finally an examination of the works of each, which focusses on the manner in which the writers have attempted to cope with these background circumstances in their efforts to write novels.

My method is, therefore, more akin to the socio-historical tradition of American feminist criticism than it is to the Francophile school which focusses on the text as primary and excludes all contextual elements, on the basis that the world is verbal and there is no outside reality to which language or the text refers. I have chosen to elucidate the contexts within which the women writers in my study worked
because I believe, as Janet Todd believes, that the woman writer, and indeed any writer, should not be taken "out of the history in which she played and intended to play a part" because "[w]omen are, after all, in history as material entities". As Todd states, the acontextual approach treats all féminine disruptions of the dominant discourse as identical, but I believe that there are, in fact, significant differences between the dominant discourses of different times and different places, and these should be taken account of when examining these disruptions.

While the deconstructive theories on which the Francophile criticism is based highlight the falsity of belief in a given reality to which language and literature transparently refer, I do not believe that this creates a case for abandoning all notions of contextuality, and even of the very notion of the author him or herself, in favour of solely concentrating on the discourses of the text. There may not be one universal reality, but each of us has our own subjective realities which grow out of, and at the same time are constructed on, the ways we experience the world and our positions and identities within it. Thus I believe that the women writers who are the subject of my thesis interacted with their social and literary context, and that their acts of writing were partly an outcome of that interaction. It is part of my project, therefore, to attempt to construct paradigms of the factors which may have constituted these women's social and
literary contexts as they perceived them, and to identify the ways in which they react to them in their texts.

What Distinguishes Women's Writing?

I have arrived at the position described above after considerable examination of what I really meant by my original proposal to write a thesis on New Zealand women novelists. There were a number of questions which I had to address in my attempt to find my own focus on this topic. The first of these involved establishing a basis for the study of 'women novelists'; that is, what is it that distinguishes women novelists from novelists in general and therefore makes them worthy of consideration as a separate category? Certainly, they can be grouped together on grounds of sex, but is this relevant to the way in which they write, and consequently, to the study of their novels? This question has increasingly captured the attention of feminist critics from the late 1970s onwards, as they turned from a study of images of women in (predominantly) male fiction, to the analysis of texts by women and the development of critical strategies suited to this task.

It has long been felt that there is a distinctive quality to women's writing. George Eliot predicted that it would develop "a precious speciality, lying quite apart from masculine attitudes and experience." This view was echoed by her
longtime companion, George Henry Lewes, who looked forward to the advent of 'women's literature', believing that it promised "women's view of life, women's experience: in other words, a new element." Later, in the early twentieth century, both Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf suggested that there is a specific 'female consciousness', and a need for women writers to develop a style appropriate to the expression of this."

Such notions have frequently led literary critics, both feminist and otherwise, to search for evidence of a distinct and recognisable "female style". Based as it is on the assumption of the uniqueness of women's writing, such an approach is riven by contradictions. Either it falls back on a reductive biological approach, that all women write the same because they belong to the female sex, thereby further confining women to marginality by biological determinism, or it is founded on the belief that women's experiences in society are so uniform that they produce a uniform literature. Although there seems to be a general consensus among feminist critics that women's experiences of life are different from men's, and that they often write out of this other perspective of experience, it is also acknowledged that the extent of this difference of experience and perspective is not the same for all women." For instance, the Marxist feminist critic Bronwyn Levy asserts that factors other than gender, specifically class and race, are crucial in influencing a writer's consciousness and hence her texts. Thus, a working class woman may have more in common with
men of her class than she does with an educated upper-middle class woman. As both Levy and Annette Kolodny point out, one cannot begin with the assumption of the uniqueness of women's writing, as this ignores the fact that differences in style between the writing of women may actually be greater than between women's and men's writing in many cases.

In addition to these inherent problems, to establish the existence of such a 'female style' would be a formidable task, entailing an immense investigation of women's writings in order to compile a checklist of stylistic features, and as a corollary, an investigation of men's writings so as to ascertain which features really are distinct. And what of the problems caused by a woman's text which does not conform to the checklist? Should it be dismissed as a fraud, and excluded from the category of women's writing? Assuming that a comprehensive list of stylistic features could be compiled, such an activity seems a 'dead end', leading merely to prescriptive and narrow boundaries. A further danger of such an exercise could be a reinscribing of women within the stereotypes traditionally assigned them within patriarchal culture, for instance, as emotional rather than rational, and chiefly interested in domestic experiences.

Another corollary of the checklist would be the ability of a reader knowing these features to accurately identify the writer's sex when reading anonymous texts. Several experiments
of this nature have been documented but in each case such identification has not proved possible. For instance, Minda Rae Amiran gave students five anonymous extracts from novels, three by women and two by men, but they were unable to identify the author's sex with any consistency, a result which she claimed indicated there is no recognisable difference between the writing of men and that of women.\textsuperscript{10} Elaine Showalter demonstrates the absurdity of such exercises by describing the tendency of Victorian reviewers to ascribe authorship of anonymous or pseudonymous novels to male or female on the basis of the predominance of either what they deemed to be masculine elements; power, breadth, and abstract intelligence for instance, or what they saw as markers of feminine authorship. The latter included sentiment, refinement, domestic expertise and a lack of humour, self-control and originality. The reviewers, however, were often embarrassingly wrong.\textsuperscript{11}

The basis for a separate study of women novelists cannot be the notion that all women write in a certain style. Nevertheless, women novelists can be studied as a group by virtue of their special relationship to literary structures and tradition. A glance at literary history as it is canonised confirms that this, like all the other institutions of our society, is characterised by male dominance. The marginalisation of the woman writer is both a consequence, and a microcosm, of women's marginalisation in social history. This parallelism means that an understanding of the woman writer's
position in relation to mainstream literary tradition is enhanced by discussion of women's position within society in general. Women's exclusion from mainstream culture has been enforced by structures which are male-centred, having evolved through hundreds of years of male domination. Kate Millett sets out her view of the consequences of this in *Sexual Politics*, asserting that: "Because of our social circumstances, male and female are really two cultures and their life experiences are utterly different...."¹²

Women are indeed in a position of difference in a society which consistently valorises male experiences and perceptions to the extent that they have been widely accepted as universal. Despite this difference, women cannot be seen as having a completely separate culture from men. Levy's Marxist analysis sees class as precluding any notion of women as a specific sub-group within society. She argues that "[w]hile there are many 'connectives' in the experiences of women, they are, nevertheless, essentially associated economically and politically with the men and with the other women of their class."¹³ Race and ethnicity are also factors which preclude any homogeneous 'female culture'. These other allegiances mean that women are in an essentially ambiguous position. Although women share the experience of being "the second sex" in relation to men of their social, racial or ethnic group, they also share experiences with, and partake in the culture of, the men of that group, and consequently share the social, economic and political
status of that group to a large extent. I believe, therefore, that women have a dual identity, simultaneously giving allegiance to both their own social, racial or ethnic group, and to other women.

The ambiguity which characterises the position of women in society points to the ambiguous position of the woman writer in literary culture. The woman writer partly belongs to the literary tradition because she partly belongs to the culture of which it is a part, and the extent to which she belongs is likely to be greater the more she is part of the prevailing social group, that is, if she is white, middle class and heterosexual. At the same time, however, her sex excludes her from fully belonging.

The marginal and ambiguous position of the woman writer in literary culture can be illustrated with reference to the novel tradition. The novel has always been a popular form for women writers. According to Rosalind Miles, it is "the only art form in which women have participated in numbers large enough to make their presence felt...."1a Despite this the novel, like other genres, has been a largely male preserve. In A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf argues that although women began writing novels when the genre was still young, they made little impact on its form, so that it came to be a male construct. Woolf contends that as a result the woman novelist of the nineteenth century was forced to operate with "a mind which was
slightly pulled from the straight, and made to alter its clear vision in deference to external authority."

The external authority was of course, male authority. Not only are the majority of acclaimed novelists male, but a glance at literary history reveals that most critics, academics and publishers are also men. Such male control of the publication, distribution and reception of literature means that men have set the standards of literature and decided what literature is. This has resulted in the 'invisibility' of many women writers; if they do not fit the male-defined canon they are relegated to oblivion. The manner in which women novelists have been 'dropped' from literary history has been highlighted by the 'archaeological' work which has been one of the main tasks of the American tradition of feminist literary criticism. Critics such as Ellen Moers in her 1976 work, Literary Women, and Elaine Showalter in her study of English women novelists, A Literature of Their Own, which appeared the following year, were concerned to rediscover the works of neglected women novelists and uncover alternative female traditions to challenge 'literary history' by showing it up as male literary history. More recently, Heather Roberts carried out a similar exercise in "bringing to life again a large number of [New Zealand] women novelists whose work has been forgotten and ignored." The marginalisation of women writers has meant that even as late as 1971, Tillie Olsen estimated that there is an average of "one
woman writer of achievement for every twelve men writers so ranked."17

How is it that women novelists have been relegated in this manner? As I have indicated above, the patriarchal nature of society means that men traditionally controlled the modes of production and reception. Examples of the impact of this can be derived from various studies of the reviewing of women's writing, which reveal the extent to which women's literary production is judged by the sex of the author rather than the qualities of the text. This has meant that women's writing has been devalued in accordance with the way women themselves are devalued in a patriarchal ideology.

One example is provided by Elaine Showalter's examination of nineteenth century receptions of women's novels. Showalter demonstrates what she calls "the double critical standard" by which women writers were defined as "women first, [and] artists second."18 Criticism proceeded on the assumption that women writers were necessarily inferior to their male counterparts because women were inferior to men in all other aspects, and because women's experiences of life were limited compared to those available to men. There was a marked dislike of the emotion and concentration on romance which dominated women's novels as a result of this vacuum of experience. Reviewers were prepared to find qualities such as sentiment, trivia and simplistic psychology in women's novels because these were
qualities widely attributed to women. Approaching novels with these aspects in mind meant that they were inevitably found, and women's novels were confirmed in the same marginal position as that occupied by women and their experiences and perceptions.¹⁹

More contemporary studies indicate the persistence of this phenomenon. Margaret Atwood cites the observation made by Cynthia Ozick in Ms magazine, that in two decades of scrutinising reviews of poetry by women, she had not seen one review which did not mention the sex of the poet. Indeed Ozack contended that the question of the poet's "feminine sensibility" was inevitably the central concern, and noted that on the other hand, the "maleness of male poets ... hardly seemed to matter". Atwood uses this observation to preface her own study of "sexual bias in reviewing" in Canada in the early 1970s. She found similar trends to those discovered by Showalter in last century's reviews; namely that traditionally masculine qualities were consistently assigned to the work of men and feminine ones to the work of women. In addition, Atwood discovered that women writers were consistently referred to as "writing like a man" if their work was considered good, and concludes that the standard critical vocabulary has no means of "expressing the concept 'good/female'". Another aspect noted is the tendency of reviewers of women's works to concentrate on domestic themes and ignore other areas which may be dealt with, thus reinforcing the notion that women's writing is limited to such areas.²⁰
A New Zealand study by Anne Else of the reviews of women's poetry in *Landfall* between 1947 and 1961 brought similar results. Else describes the criticism as "at best ... circumscribed, half-comprehending praise, and at worst ... energetic misogynist attack", concluding that it is surprising that women poets continued writing in the face of such a reception. Her comments indicate the debilitating potential of such criticism, reinforcing as it does the notion that a woman can never really be a good writer. Although both this study and Ozack's refer to women's poetry, I believe that in conjunction with the other studies cited, they can be taken as indicative of the predominant tone of receptions of women's writing in general. The bind facing the woman writer is clear. She either confines herself to the limited range of 'feminine' topics or 'unsexes' herself by encroaching on the wider world where the only hope is to be elevated to the status of 'honorary male' writer.

This tradition of trivialising women's writing comes on top of the difficulties faced by women writers of the past before they even put pen to paper. As Mary Eagleton states:

The catalogue of material problems is long - inequalities in the educational system, lack of privacy, the burdens of childbearing and rearing, domestic obligations - but equally decisive are the restrictions of family and social expectations. Even when women writers solve the material problems that prevent their writing, an anxiety about their chosen role and how they are perceived continues to surface. For many women writers what cannot be overcome is an oppressive male presence constraining their work; Woolf's irritation about the unsympathetic male reader and
[Adrienne] Rich's consciousness of following a line of male poets testify to that.²²

In the face of these factors it is not surprising that women novelists are under-represented in the traditional literary canon. As Virginia Woolf declares "(t)he problem of art is sufficiently difficult in itself" without having to take account of what is expected of the woman writer because she is a woman.²³

The Critical Task

The social and literary contexts which I have elucidated must be borne in mind in the study of women's texts because it is these which make women's writing a specific category of study. As Mary Jacobus argues

the conditions of [women writers'] (re)production are the economic and educational disadvantages, the sexual and material organisations of society, which, rather than biology, form the crucial determinants of women's writing.²⁴

Within this context, special emphasis must be given to the literary determinants of women's writing, in particular, to the fact of women's difference from mainstream literary history, because it is as Nancy Miller states "a male preserve, a history of writing by men."²⁵ On this basis, I follow Miller's contention that feminist criticism should not engage in a search
for a "fail-safe" way to determine a text's gender, but rather should be attentive to the difference of women's texts, as this is determined by women's different position from men in relation to the literary tradition. In looking at the difference of women's texts I am concerned with the ways in which they violate the dominant maxims.

The role of feminist literary criticism is, therefore, twofold: firstly, to examine the literary and social structures which have impacted on the woman writer, and secondly, to determine the ways in which women writers have attempted to deal with these structures. For the latter, I take my lead from Nelly Furman's statement that "writing is an inscription within an existing literary code, either in the form of an appropriation or a rejection", and to study women's writing is "to analyze their interaction with the cultural system, and to determine how their texts propose a critique of the dominant patriarchal tenor of literary expression." The woman writer's choice between appropriation and rejection comes about through her ambiguous position on the margins of society and literature. She may choose to situate herself anywhere on the continuum between complicity with the dominant structures and complete rejection of them in favour of separatism and the establishment of alternative female-centred structures. Appropriation can be seen as an acknowledgement that women have a place in these structures and can therefore use them to their own ends. Separatism, on the other hand, implies that the
dominant structures necessarily exclude women and no authentic female expression is possible within them.

There are difficulties in any of these positions. The woman novelist who seeks to appropriate the structures of the prevailing tradition endeavours to hide her difference in doing so. The price of this is inevitably a conflict between the self which the woman writer seeks to articulate and the structures she seeks to use, as these are designed by and for men. Virginia Woolf points to the consequences of such strategies in her discussion of early nineteenth century women's novels. She concludes that there was "a flaw in the centre" of these novels because each of the women had "altered her values in deference to the opinion of others", namely patriarchal society. A similar conclusion is drawn by Delys Bird in her analysis of two texts by Australian women, My Brilliant Career by Miles Franklin and The Getting of Wisdom by Henry Handel Richardson. These two women not only adopted masculine or at least ambiguous pen-names, they also attempted to appropriate the peculiarly male Australian literary model of the time. The result, according to Bird, is an "awkwardness and ambiguity of narrative" which shows the difficulties of a woman writing in a 'male culture'.

Separatism, on the other hand, means breaking out of the recognisable tradition. The French feminists are the main advocates of separatism. They believe women are repressed by language which they maintain is only able to express the
conscious, while repressing the unconscious. The unconscious is significant because in their view it is the site where women's difference from men becomes apparent. In the dominant, or conscious area this difference is silenced or pushed underground, as women are forced to imitate male practices, confined as they are to male language and structures. Both Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray proclaim the need for a new female language. Irigaray asserts that patriarchal discourse has "left us only absences, defects, negatives to name ourselves." Cixous urges women to liberate their bodies and their creativity from repression by patriarchal language through "writing themselves into the text." Instead of remaining 'within' male discourse, a woman must "dislocate this 'within' ... explode it, turn it around, seize it, ... make it hers ... invent for herself a language to get inside of." In other words, women must fully occupy and generate discourse, rather than be assimilated by, and locked within it.

Although the French theories are undercut to the extent that existing language must be, and is, used in order to express them, they do highlight the notion that language and thought patterns could be different; that they are constructs of (patriarchal) society, and not natural nor neutral. They also emphasise the difficulties (or perhaps impossibilities) of expressing specifically female experience through essentially male structures. In addition, a guide to the types of strategies which can be used in textual analysis may be derived
from their focus on the text and the disruptions within it which show where what they term the *écriture féminine* (the repressed female) is breaking out of the patriarchal structures. The difficulties of complete separatism are, however, manifest and it remains a utopian ideal. One of the reasons for this must no doubt be the fact that, as Sneja Gunew points out, marginalised people - in the case of her particular analysis, women and migrants - "internalise the process whereby the culture constructs them, and it requires a great deal of self-conscious analysis before they are able to step (and *only ever in part*) outside these constructs." [my emphasis].

The extent to which a woman writer's reaction to the dominant structures constitutes an appropriation or a rejection may be partly determined by the factors other than gender which also impinge on literary production, as outlined above, and in particular will relate to the individual woman writer's degree of allegiance to the society whose values are inscribed by the dominant literary code. The existence of alternatives to the dominant code will also be of significance. For instance, the upsurge in interest in women's writing and the ever-increasing volume of literature by women in recent years has helped to break down the male dominance of the literary tradition and, in conjunction with other movements such as deconstruction and post-modernism, the gates have been opened to a number of ways of seeing and ways of writing. The contemporary woman writer should, therefore, be freer of the influence of inhibiting
structures than her counterpart of thirty years ago when the
monolithic male tradition was as yet unchallenged.

In accordance with my theoretical position as established
in this chapter, my first task in this thesis is to elucidate
what Elaine Showalter calls women's "special literary history";
the social, political and literary factors acting on the woman
writer, and "the restrictions on her artistic autonomy" as
they relate to each of the women in my study. My second task is
in line with what Elizabeth Abel identifies as a major aspect of
contemporary feminist literary criticism. This is "to elucidate
the acts of revision, appropriation, and subversion" adopted by
the women writers in my study in response to the contextual
factors I identify, with an emphasis on the manner in which
"female talent grappling with a male tradition translates sexual
difference into literary differences of genre, structure, voice
and plot", and revises "prevailing themes and styles." Of
particular interest to me is the extent to which the texts are
marked by ambiguities as a consequence of the woman writer's
ambivalent position, partly within and partly 'without' the
dominant literary tradition; a position which, as Lynn Sukenick
states, "forces her to either stress her separation from ... or
pursue her resemblance to" the dominant structures. In this
manner I hope to fulfil one of the tasks of feminist literary
criticism as Mary Jacobus sees it; namely to politicise "the
'difference' [of women's writing] which has traditionally been
elided by criticism and by the canon formations of literary history...."
Notes


2 Todd, pp. 106-107.


7 See Bronwyn Levy, "(Re)reading (re)writing (re)production: Recent Angloamerican Feminist Literary Theory," *Hecata*, 8 (1982), 107, 105.


9 As Kolodny points out, if there is a 'feminine mode' there must also be a 'masculine' one. See "Some Notes," p. 78.


18 Showalter, A Literature of Their Own, p. 73.

19 See Showalter, A Literature of Their Own, pp. 73-99.


28 Woolf, A Room of One's Own, p. 71.


34 See above, pp. 9-10, 12-13.


CHAPTER I

JANE MANDER'S LIFE AND TIMES: THE SOCIAL AND LITERARY SCENE IN NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

In discussing the works of Jane Mander, Joan C Gries declares:

She was a pioneer and it is only by seeing her work against the general bareness of the twenties that it can be considered in perspective. Jane Mander made a beginning; the shape of New Zealand fiction had been set in at least one of its characteristic channels.

This quote sets the scene for my discussion of Mander. In examining her writing, my focus is on the factors which Mander had to overcome in making this 'beginning' as she set about dealing with New Zealand in fiction, and most specifically on how she reacted to the "general bareness" of the literary climate and where she placed herself in relation to the society she portrayed. As I have indicated in my Introduction, my
particular emphasis will be on her place as a woman writer in this context.

Mander began in a wilderness. She was exiled from her homeland as most New Zealand writers of her time were because of their sense of the need to get away from a land which did not foster or encourage literary ambitions. Furthermore, she was exiled from herself in her efforts to depict a society which she admired, but which had no place for her as a woman who did not accept the 'feminine' place ascribed to her. Her exile was compounded by the fact that she admired the masculine pioneering world more than anything else in New Zealand, but could not be admitted to its realm because of her sex.

Mander's Life and Works: A Summary

Mander was born at Drury, near Auckland in April 1877. She was the eldest child of Francis and Janet Mander, and she spent most of her childhood in various parts of Northland as her father moved the family around successive sites while he milled Kauri forests. Often they lived in very remote districts where Janet Mander taught the children, but at intervals the family lived nearer Auckland and Jane was able to attend school. The family moved to the north again at the same time as Jane's primary education was completed, and the lack of a high school near her new home meant that Jane began work as a pupil teacher,
a career which she pursued for the next eight years. She studied independently and passed her matriculation exams, but her father maintained that he could not afford to send her to university.

In 1902 she resigned from teaching and began work as subeditor and reporter on the Whangarei paper the *Northern Advocate*, which her father had just purchased. She effectively ran the paper, often single-handedly, until Frank Mander sold it in 1906. During this time Frank Mander was elected to Parliament as a member of Massey's Reform Party, and the family had their first settled home in Whangarei. After the paper was sold Jane began work on a novel, and later spent some time in Sydney where she met artists and writers and was exposed to many new ideas. Returning home in 1907 she worked as a journalist in Dargaville, and in 1909 returned to Sydney where she was acquainted with prominent Labour Party politician W.A. Holmans and his wife, and once again had the opportunity to live in an atmosphere of free discussion and debate on modern ideas, particularly socialism. For a time she wrote socialist articles for the *Maoriland Worker* under the pseudonym of 'Manda Lloyd'.

Her Australian friends convinced her that the USA was the land of opportunity for women, and she also learnt of the new journalism school to be established at Columbia University in New York, which made provision for the entry of those who lacked the necessary scholastic background but had relevant experience
or abilities. She returned to New Zealand and eventually convinced her father to finance her study at Columbia, and in 1912 she set off via London to New York. She took with her the novel she had written in Whangarei but it was rejected by four publishers in London.

In New York she was admitted to Barnard, a women's college at Columbia, as part of a scheme which allowed women students entry into the journalism school after they had completed two years' pre-requisite courses. (There had previously been much debate over whether women should be allowed into the course or not). During these two years she studied a wide range of subjects, including history, philosophy and politics, and her teachers were some of the noted free thinkers and radicals of the time, which no doubt influenced her unconventional mind. She achieved academic distinction and also made friends with many young American women, whom she encouraged to be 'modern' and pursue careers and other interests beyond marriage.

Her financial situation was often perilous but her friends were generous in helping her out. During the summer of 1913 she holidayed with friends and revised her first novel, and the next summer she accompanied friends to France, being present when World War I broke out. In her third year, ill health and tiredness due to the necessity to take part time jobs, caused her to miss her exams. She developed interests outside of the
University, becoming involved in the American suffragette movement and prison reform, causes which often saw her lecturing on the streets. She was also associated with the rise of new theatre groups featuring such figures as Eugene O'Neill.

During the war years she worked in a managerial position for the Red Cross in New York. She also wrote another novel, the first having been scrapped, and this work, The Story of a New Zealand River, was submitted for publication to the London firm of John Lane in 1917. The war held up the appearance of The Story of a New Zealand River until 1920, and then it was in New York, with a London publication six months later. In the meantime she had been working on The Passionate Puritan which was published in 1921, followed by The Strange Attraction in 1922. Like The Story of a New Zealand River, these novels were initially published in New York and later in London. Copies of the English editions were then sent to New Zealand, meaning that it was quite some time before Mander knew of the reaction of her homeland to her works.

In 1923 she moved to London and worked on Allen Adair. By now she almost certainly knew that her works had been poorly received in New Zealand and many see the quieter tone of Allen Adair as an attempt to win back, or rather to win, New Zealand readers. When this failed she gave up writing of New Zealand and her next two novels, The Besieging City, published in 1926,
and *Pines and Pinnacles* (1928), are set in New York and London respectively.

In London the high cost of living led her to edit and read for publishers and do freelance journalism. Although she had little time for novel writing herself, she met many of the major literary figures of the day. This experience is revealed in the articles she sent home to New Zealand papers, which presumably were also prompted by financial need. In this time she also wrote short stories and occasional pieces for English publications. In 1931 she submitted another novel for publication but this was rejected. Tired and homesick, she returned to Auckland the next year.

For the remainder of her life, her writing was impeded by the task of caring for her aged father, by lack of funds and her failing health. During these years she repeatedly expressed her intention to write at least one more novel and a book of reminiscences, but she did not produce anything which she regarded as satisfactory, and her output was mainly confined to journalism. She reviewed for the book page of the *Mirror*, and later for the *Monocle*, as well as giving lectures to various groups and doing freelance work for other papers, notably a series on New Zealand literature for the Christchurch *Press* in 1934.
She also got to know many of the younger writers who congregated in Auckland in the 1930s and frequently offered them advice and encouragement, and, despite her own lack of funds, she would sometimes help them out financially. The most significant literary event for her must have been the reissue of *The Story of a New Zealand River* in 1938 due to an upsurge of interest in New Zealand literature. The novel received a generally positive reception from the New Zealand press this time around. By the time her father died in 1942, her own health had deteriorated to the extent that she could not capitalise on this freedom. In particular, her eyesight had failed and she also suffered a stroke which left her an invalid until she died in 1949.

**Mander's Relationship with New Zealand**

Although Mander left New Zealand in 1912 and did not return until 1932, when she turned to writing novels she looked back to the country she had left as so many self-exiled writers do. Her great disappointment at the moral outrage which greeted her novels in her homeland indicates the extent to which she was not only writing of New Zealand but for New Zealanders: she wanted their approval of the New Zealand she portrayed but in the main this was not forthcoming. In discussing Mander's attempts to portray her view of New Zealand it is, therefore, necessary to examine closely her relationship with the country
which she had to leave in order to further her career ambitions, but which she nevertheless for some time continued to regard in a positive light as a progressive society.

This sense of identification with New Zealand as a progressive society is suggested by her enthusiastic portrayal of New Zealand while in the United States of America. When she arrived in New York she became "a university pet" because of her country's reformist reputation and Dorothea Turner, author of the Twayne series text on Mander's life and works, relates that she contributed to the American suffrage movement by lecturing on the benefits New Zealand had derived from enfranchising women. Another example of this identification with her country is "No Flappers in New Zealand", which was published in 1922. Here she paints an almost utopian picture of life in New Zealand. She states that New Zealand women never had need of a feminist movement because they were granted their rights early on by the country's idealistic male leaders, and goes on to report that young women are not so tightly restricted as their sisters in the old world, nor under such pressure to marry young for they are generally "bred to work afar off". The only negative aspect she documents is that New Zealanders, especially the young women, tend to be a little too complacent. She asserts that the young woman "ought to be raising her voice against comfort, against the soporific influence of insular smugness.... She ought to care more for the rest of the world."
This complaint foreshadows the vehement attack she made on the ascendance of this tendency in her novels.

The article ends on a totally positive note: "We seem to have reformed ourselves out of almost all our problems.... We are the healthiest people in the world.... We have developed the highest average prosperity and culture the world knows."

The positive tone of identification with New Zealand which is conveyed in this article is belied in her novels and in her own life. She and all her heroines need to escape New Zealand because they find that it is not really the 'land of opportunity for women'. This is an indication of Mander's self-contradictory stance towards her country, a stance which I argue below is evident in the ambiguities of her novels.

The optimism which Mander displayed in relation to the position of New Zealand women was in many respects justified by the mood of the period in which she grew up and lived as a young woman, as the social environment offered many more opportunities to her sex than earlier times. It was a time of much change, with New Zealand developing from a sparsely populated colony to a new conception of itself as a nation, with participation in World War I (after Mander's emigration) usually seen as the major event in the nation's growth to maturity. The European population became increasingly urbanised and there was a gradual correction of the imbalance of the sexes which had seen men greatly outnumber women in the colonial period. Thus, a settled
family atmosphere replaced the predominantly rural male communities of the earlier years. The lives of women were also influenced by the increased availability of contraception during the early twentieth century, a trend towards greater freedom in sexual relationships and even acknowledgement in contemporary science that women had a sex-drive.®

Dorothea Turner contends that it was a time when educational and career opportunities for women were gradually widened. She points out that Mander was born in the year in which education was legislated as "free, secular and compulsory", and the same year also saw the first New Zealand woman (and supposedly the first woman in the Empire) gain a BA degree.® Turner goes on to stress that while Mander was growing up, young women were beginning to gain the sort of education which their brothers enjoyed, though many fathers still preferred their daughters to be educated for marriage only, and indeed, Mander could not persuade her father to spend money on her education until she was 35.®

Erik Olssen's study of the status of New Zealand women between 1880 and 1920 also reveals that there was a widening of job opportunities for women in that time, with opportunities becoming increasingly available to them as nurses, cooks, teachers, clerks and typists.® The range of careers was, however, still linked to the traditional 'feminine' qualities of nurture and care of the young, so middle class women were most
likely to become teachers or nurses. This narrow range of 'acceptable' careers for women is indicated in Ethel Wilson's radio talk on Mander. Wilson had been a pupil teacher, taking exams at the same time as Mander, and remarks on the surprise she felt at hearing that Mander had given up teaching and become a journalist:

In a day when school-teaching was practically the only outlet for girls who felt the urge for intellectual effort, it was news of a more than usually interesting kind that Miss Mander had thrown up teaching to embark upon the thrilling career of a journalist.'

Keith Sinclair's study of newspapers and periodicals in the period from 1890 till the 1920s reveals that there was much public discussion on the role of women in this age. However, this did not bring about great changes to women's roles, as the more conservative tone prevailed in the debates. Although there were more radical groups of women in this period who demanded, among other things, a greater share of public power for women, Sinclair notes that there was not much support for any marked changes in the role of women. 'Blue stockings' (educated women) were usually "denounced as over-educated" and impact of this denigration of talented women is evident in an article from The Triad in 1908 which observes that there is not one "capable women [sic] journalist" in New Zealand. The writer surmises that despite New Zealand's conception of its women as "advanced", there persists "the sort of idea that a woman who does anything well cannot be quite respectable."' This is
particularly relevant to Mander, who may well have had to struggle against this notion of being "not quite respectable" during her years as a journalist.

As is so often the case when new ideas arise, a conservative backlash also emerged among those who felt threatened by these developments, and thus the potential of the age was submerged to a large degree. By the time Mander's novels began to appear in the 1920s, young New Zealand women were not being encouraged in education and careers as the trends of Mander's early life would suggest, but instead were exhorted to aspire to the model of domestic bliss. The growth of this conservatism is outlined by both Olssen and Eldred-Grigg and also by Keith Sinclair in his analysis of the growth of New Zealand's national identity, *A Destiny Apart*. Despite the increase in work opportunities for women and the fall in the birth rate, Olssen maintains that this period saw a tightening definition of the roles of wife and mother. The establishment of the Society for Promoting the Health of Women and Children (the Plunket Society), in 1907 is indicative of this new interest in motherhood, and of concern that infants should be properly cared for.

Women were actively discouraged from working outside the home, being told by 'experts', particularly doctors, that domesticity was the only proper and healthy occupation for women. The 1920s saw the establishment of organisations based
on the domestic ideal and intent upon upholding it; namely the Mothers Union, The League of Mothers and the Country Women's Division of the Farmers Union. The early feminists desired to make women's views and values of greater import in the community by promoting them first in the home in the hope that the positive influence would permeate the wider social arena. Instead, by the 1920s, women's influence was more restricted to the home than ever. Women who had worked in non-traditional occupations during the war years were now encouraged back into the home. Olsen mentions, for example, that women were pressured to vacate clerical positions in the Public Service in favour of returned soldiers.¹⁴

This exaltation and romanticisation of domesticity seems to have been much the same as that which prevailed after World War II, when the 1950s became the pinnacle of the cult of domesticity in Western societies.¹⁵ The "dream of domestic bliss" was promulgated through popular magazines. For example, an article from the Ladies' Mirror in 1922 read:

'What We Aim At': Women's supreme and unchallenged domain is the home - feminine art and grace have their abiding place here, and within its walls are mirrored the very soul of its chatelaine. We will have much to say concerning the Home Beautiful....

As Sinclair points out, such tracts were usually written by women, which probably reinforced their influence upon the women who read them.¹⁶
Post-war women had gained little from the struggles of their feminist foremothers. Indeed, a contradictory situation had emerged. Greater opportunities for women arose but they were often snatched away by the social pressure on women to remain within the domestic sphere and remember that their main function in life was as wives and mothers. The extent to which this pressure apparently succeeded is illustrated by the remarks of William Pember Reeves in 1924. New Zealand women, he asserted, usually voted with the men of their families and few worked outside the home, or if they did it was "unassumingly as school teachers, factory hands, or household servants." He affirmed that New Zealand women were not "in the least degree either 'wild' or 'new' [nor did they] ... belong to any shrieking sisterhood." Reeves's description calls to mind the minor women characters who appear in Mander's works and are for the most part scathingly portrayed as dull, narrow-minded and materialistic. The heroines who carry a large degree of authorial approval are quite a different matter.

This conservative victory created a climate uncongenial to the characters of Mander's heroines and it is particularly significant that it mainly occurred while Mander was in the United States of America and Britain. The reality of New Zealand was in fact quite different from the picture she promoted of her homeland as a liberal and advanced nation while in New York. Her sense of optimism for New Zealand is recorded in the positive tone of her first novel, The Story of a New
Zealand River, which portrays an advancing society. However, by the time The Story of a New Zealand River and Mander's subsequent novels reached New Zealand, the new cult of domesticity was at its height. Given the tendency of Mander's heroines to pursue careers and independence instead of motherhood and domesticity, it is not surprising that the novels met with a hostile reaction and were kept out of the hands of young women. ¹⁹ Such writing would have been perceived as a direct affront to the new strategies for getting women back into their place after the relative freedom and wider career opportunities they had enjoyed during the war years. Her 'modern' novels could hardly have arrived in New Zealand at a more inopportune time. Even though they came at a time when New Zealand readers were showing an increasing readiness to read about their own country (and this can be seen from the manner in which the reviews praise the realism of the scene-setting), ²⁰ the ambitions of the heroines alienated many.

The victory of conservatism in New Zealand was most evident in the prevalence of social puritanism, an ethos to which Mander's free-thinking must have been much opposed. Her anti-puritan stance is immediately apparent in The Story of a New Zealand River, which depicts the inhibiting impact of this philosophy on the central character, Alice, and locates hope for the future in her free-thinking daughter, Asia. The Story of a New Zealand River suggests that puritanism is a thing of the past. The reactions of the New Zealand reviewers reveal,
however, that this was not so. The religious fervour may have gone, but the social puritanism remained and was exemplified in narrow-mindedness and petty materialism.

Mander's novels offended the prevailing puritan climate through the characters' frankness about sex and their challenges to the traditional morality. Thus, the New Zealand reviewers concentrated on moral issues when discussing her works. For example, the Evening Post's review of The Strange Attraction objected to the impression created by this novel and its predecessor "that free love and weekends spent on the gulf are the favourite pursuits of Auckland people", concluding that:

one feels that Miss Mander's art, which is of a high order, might be put to better use than the portrayal of morbid egoists, whose lack of ordinary morality and defiance of the conventions, though common enough, is not worth making a book about.\footnote{21}

The reaction of Alan Mulgan in a 1923 article on New Zealand literature is typical of 'respectable' New Zealand. He wrote that Mander's "chief fault is her obsession with sex; a little more reticence would do her no harm.\footnote{22} Mander acquired a reputation for writing of sex and this more or less finished her as far as the puritans went, and they were the ones with the power. Looking back on her career in 1929, the Otago Daily Times reviewer commented on this aspect, judging her to be "a writer to be reckoned with, even though she may not be entirely
approved of. Her New Zealand novels smacked too strongly of sex
to win popular favour...."23

These hostile receptions are often seen as directly
affecting Mander's writing. Turner maintains that The Story of
a New Zealand River conveys a new society with an optimistic
tone, but Mander learnt of its reception in New Zealand while
writing The Strange Attraction, so the latter novel reads as if she "lost her poise for a while, though not her
determination."24 E.H. McCormick speculates that the "hostile
criticism" Mander faced contributed to the end of her career.25
Similarly, Joan Stevens suggests that:

in all Jane Mander's work you can sense the struggle she
made to find a medium adequate to her artistic intention, yet at the same time acceptable to her timidly orthodox
reading public. In the end misunderstanding defeated her, and she wrote no more after 1928.26

This attempt to balance her needs with the demands of her public
is most obvious in Allen Adair, which, as Turner observes, "is
inconsistent with the reputation Jane Mander had acquired in New
Zealand for impropriety and feminism...."27 In its almost
unquestioning admiration for Allen, the archetypal colonial
male, and the virtually complete lack of sympathy for Marion,
the ordinary woman, the novel seems to be strongly anti-
female.28
Evidence of the negative impact the New Zealand critical response had on Mander is revealed in an interview with the 
Bookman of London, where Mander is reported to have "expressed her dissatisfaction with the reception given to her novels ... especially with the apathy displayed by readers within the Dominion", and to have decided to write of other places, as she did in The Besieging City and Pines and Pinnacles. The continuing strength of the puritan ethos impeded Mander in her attempts to write of New Zealand. In the face of this it must have become increasingly difficult to portray positively the society she remembered from her youth.

Mander's belief that New Zealand's narrow morality had stifled her art is suggested in her later attacks on these attitudes. When she returned to New Zealand in 1932 she was bitterly disappointed in the society she saw. In her series of Press articles on New Zealand literature she took the opportunity to attack the society which she believed had betrayed its liberal beginning, and the promise she had preached of while in New York. Her comments include attacks on critics who confuse moral issues with literature and on women who stifle literary production with their narrow concept of morality. Of the critics she declares

it is lamentable, that people in authority over art institutions often don't know anything of their subject, but would reject a book because it had an unpleasant scene in it, or because it dealt with a controversial subject. The city fathers want books to be 'moral' without any knowledge of what morality in art is.
She was just as harsh on the women who set themselves up as moral judges of the community:

There is a certain type of female in particular, who, simply because she has brought up a family of children, arrogates to herself the right to define goodness and badness in art for the community. To sell a story about this country in this country the author must conform to the conventions in the mind of this class of person. How can we expect to develop an artistic consciousness where there is this confusion?

Her perception of the stifling impact of such narrowness is also evident in her article "New Zealand Novels: The Struggle Against Environment." Although she notes the difficulties the New Zealand writer has to face in matching up to the great European writers (presumably because of her belief that the New Zealand writer must make it in London to be really successful), her main focus is on the narrowness of New Zealand society. She claims that the artist is "odd" because of his or her introspection and sensitivity, and above all, because of his or her refusal to take a 'job' in a community which has retained from its pioneering days a preference for "practical" abilities. This observation underlines her ambivalence towards New Zealand. Her novels suggest that she identified most with the pioneer model, but here she maintains that this legacy contributes to the difficulties faced by the New Zealand writer.

In the same article, Mander goes on to attack the conformist ethos which allowed those "who deviate from the herd
mentality ... no escape within New Zealand, no centre where they may be spiritually free", so that artists fled to London at first opportunity. In addition, she argues that New Zealand is so spiritually and intellectually dead because of these pressures to conform, that there is little intellectual stimulus for the writer. In short, she states:

We have flourishing in this country all the old hangovers of intolerance, narrow respectability, fear of criticism, lack of moral courage; and, in spite of recent able and heroic efforts on behalf of freedom of speech, we really have no spiritual freedom worth the name.

Aside from the negative impact this has on the artist, Mander declares that such spiritual starvation is turning the country into "the world's greatest madhouse", a nation whose concept of 'art' is limited to cake-making for women and "chest development" for men.

The extent to which the puritan morality remained in force obviously disappointed Mander and had a negative impact on her literary production. In stressing her difference from this prevailing tone she foreshadowed the stance of the new social realist writers who emerged in the 1930s. She also anticipated them in the alternative image of New Zealand which she increasingly exalted; namely the freedom and enterprise of the pioneer spirit, which was already becoming a utopian image to the increasingly urbanised New Zealander. In choosing this path she stressed her difference from the 'feminine' society of
New Zealand, and her allegiance to the 'masculine'. The New Zealand wife and mother had appropriated to herself the position of moral guardian of society, and thus was the font of social puritanism, while the pioneer image was an exclusively male one, based on the masculine attributes of hard work, strength and physical courage. Mander's dislike of narrow-minded puritanism meant that she divided herself from women and from the respectable urban male, who was the real power in the society, and allied herself to a bygone era, which may have had the secret sympathy of many (males), but no power.

The Literary Circumstances

Jane Mander is seen by many as a pioneer figure in New Zealand literature because her novels dealt with New Zealand in a manner which foreshadowed the writing of the new school of social realists which dominated from the 1930s onwards. The obituary editorial which Holcroft wrote in the New Zealand Listener is typical of this perception of Mander. He declares: "She helped to break down artificial models of writing and to clear the way for younger writers who were to make the New Zealand scene and idiom more recognisably our own."36 This reputation rests mainly on The Story of a New Zealand River, which is often seen as the first uniquely New Zealand novel. Joan Stevens argues that despite its "flatfooted didacticism", Victorian clichés and "forced tone", it stood out in the 1920s
"as an example of a novel which is really about something, which is really attempting to interpret life." Similarly, Alan Mulgan asserts that in the general opinion "the book took the New Zealand novel into fresh ground, the realities of life."  

Although these descriptions highlight the new beginning made by Mander, her novels were in fact preceded by a substantial body of works, the earliest of which were essentially descriptive accounts of life in the new colony, making the most of the exotic appeal of the local flora and fauna and the Maori people as a source of interest to the intended English reader. These are amply discussed by chroniclers of New Zealand literature such as E.H. McCormick in his centennial work, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, J.C. Reid (*Creative Writing in New Zealand: A Brief Critical History*, 1946), Alan Mulgan (*Literature and Authorship in New Zealand*, 1943) and Joan Stevens (*The New Zealand Novel 1860-1965*, 1966), who outline the development of the different models: the Maori novels, set amidst the land wars or telling of liaisons between beautiful high-born Maori maidens and handsome settlers, the pioneer-emigrant novels which traced the fortunes of settlers from their departure for the new colony through their early years of hardship, and the later gold-rush novels, sheep station novels, lone (male) pioneer novels, and family sagas (mainly written by women). Despite being set in New Zealand, these novels were derivatory, using English techniques and models. In the words of J.C. Reid, these early works were exclusively
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populated by "the stock characters of Victorian circulating-library popular titles".

Following this initial 'recording' and 'preaching' stage, the 1890s marked the emergence of New Zealand-born novelists who made the first attempts at realistic depictions of New Zealand and focussed their interest on social themes in keeping with the spirit of their age, when New Zealand was seen as progressive and liberal, leading the world in social reform. This was the era of didactic novels, with feminism and prohibition being prominent among the causes espoused. As is to be expected from this focus, women were most frequently the writers of such novels, the best known of them being Edith Searle Grossman. In fact, McCormick refers to women as "the chief diffusers of light" when discussing the novelists of this decade.

The audience for literature in New Zealand was small. It was as yet a young country, far removed from what were perceived as the great cultural centres of the world. All of those who write of the early years of New Zealand literature describe the strong attraction which England exerted on the New Zealand writer, not only because of its status as the centre of the European New Zealander's culture, but also for practical reasons; namely, access to publishing facilities and a wider audience. To achieve success meant to be published and well sold in England. The writer had also to look elsewhere for the
sort of environment which would foster his or her literary talents. As Joan Stevens states, the years between 1910 and 1939 were a period when a writer's best hope seemed to lie in voluntary exile, which could provide both familiarity with techniques developed overseas, and that sense of perspective which could focus our experience and discipline our too provincial tone.

McCormick also comments on the reasons for what he describes as "a steady export of New Zealand talent which reached its greatest dimensions in the years after 1918", speculating that in addition to the pragmatic factors mentioned above, these writers sought in the old world more sympathetic and stimulating surroundings than those of New Zealand. They migrated to London for the same reasons that Americans of the 'lost generation' migrated to Paris. Added to these were reasons more powerful because they were intangible - reasons arising from the circumstances of New Zealand's foundation and from its status as a colony. In the first years of its history the conception of New Zealand as a 'Brighter Britain' had taken shape, and already in the seventies Anthony Trollope characterised the New Zealander as 'among John Bulls ... the most John Bullish'. This imperial sentiment, fostered by successive political leaders and further strengthened during the Boer War and the war of 1914, culminated in the nineteen-twenties, when it found permanent expression in Alan Mulgan's *Home* (1927).

McCormick cites in particular Mulgan's statement that his upbringing and literary diet fixed all his aspirations on England, asserting that
No New Zealander who grew up in the years centred in the war of 1914 would challenge the essential accuracy of this statement or its wide applicability. Education, reading, prevailing sentiment, economic interest— all turned the New Zealand writer's thoughts and ambitions towards England; and given the opportunity, it was to England he migrated.45

McCormick also uses Katherine Mansfield as an example of this generation. During her brief interval in New Zealand as a young woman she was, according to McCormick, "dominated by the desire to flee from the provincialism of Wellington, 'Philistia itself', and return to London: 'London—it is Life' she wrote in one of her impassioned diaries"; a sentiment which echoed those of "a thousand young New Zealand writers".46

The lack of conditions conducive to the production of literature is illustrated by McCormick through a comparison of the development of Mansfield's literary talent in the 'Old World' with the works of two women who were Mansfield's contemporaries but remained in New Zealand, namely Alice Webb and Blanche Baughan (who was, however, an English immigrant). Denied the backing of a literary establishment, these two women who were "at least in potentialities, ... not immeasurably inferior" to the talent displayed in the early work of Mansfield, did not get beyond fiction which was "a series of exercises", and McCormick concludes that the works of these women and much other New Zealand fiction of the period, are "evidence of the lack in New Zealand of all but the minimum conditions necessary for the creation of literature".
Mansfield, on the other hand, was able to develop her potential to a greater extent because she had "the stimulus, the critical guidance, and the material advantages" which those who remained behind were lacking." Whether or not one agrees with McCormick's assessment of these other writers, the main point to be drawn from his comments is that New Zealand did not provide a literary support system, either materially or spiritually and philosophically.

Despite the exodus of writers in this period there were some who remained. William Satchell was the most significant of those who wrote in New Zealand in the early twentieth century, although it must be remembered that he was English and therefore was not subject to the magnetic appeal of the 'homeland' in the same way as the colonial-born writer, who had been reared on the idea of New Zealand as 'second-best'. The barrenness of the literary landscape and the difficulty of such endeavours is indicated by McCormick's description of Satchell as persisting "in the face of discouragement or, worse, indifference".49

Satchell produced a number of novels in the years up until the outbreak of World War I, his success being attributed to his "unusual strength of character and tenacity of purpose".49 To succeed as a novelist in a pioneer society it seems it was necessary to share the traits of the pioneer, traits which were particularly identified with the masculine ethos.50 In his efforts to record the world of Northland as he
saw it, Satchell relied heavily on the conventions of Victorian fiction just as his predecessors had in their first attempts to portray the new land in fiction. Nevertheless, the works of Satchell did help to establish a taste for, and acceptance of, New Zealand as the topic of literary works. Indeed, he is described by J.C. Reid as "the first New Zealand novelist to be taken seriously". Despite this, the literary scene remained virtually bare until the 1920s, which heralded the fictions of Frank Anthony and Jane Mander and the poetry of Mason.

Mander's New Beginning

With writers such as Satchell to prepare the way, the time was in some aspects favourable for Mander's New Zealand novels. In addition, Alan Mulgan maintains that the fostering of nationhood caused by New Zealand's participation in World War I promoted a "growing interest in delineation of New Zealand life", and describes Mander as "the first New Zealand novelist to be read widely in her own country". J.C. Reid comments in a similar vein, arguing that although nothing of significance had yet appeared, the basic themes and the habit of writing novels had at least been established. Despite this, Mander's lack of a sense of belonging to any New Zealand tradition is evident from her failure to refer to any New Zealand literary forebears when discussing the production of New Zealand literature.
As Turner observes, Mander must have been aware of William Satchell's early twentieth century novels of Northland, as they were contemporary with her time in that area. Turner contends that she never mentioned Satchell or his novels as influences, and her general silence about Satchell and other New Zealand writers probably indicates that she "simply ... felt unrelated to earlier New Zealand fiction." She apparently did not see Satchell as a worthy model, judging by comments made in her 1936 review of the reissue of one of his novels, as she deemed his treatment of characterisation to be too conventional, so that his characters were not recognisable "people of the bush". Her dislike of propaganda novels, or novels in which the message is too obvious, probably also turned her away from the 'reform novels' of the 1890s and Grossmann's feminist novels as unsuitable models. Since there was a considerable gap between the time when Mander left New Zealand and when she set about writing The Story of a New Zealand River, she cannot have had any real sense of herself and her writing as part of a wider movement of New Zealand literature. Instead she set about searching for her own way to record her New Zealand experience.

Mander's greatest sense of a literary tradition was of the English tradition. Her later articles advise the young writer of the difficulty and importance of gaining acceptance in the English literary world and the consequent requirement that novels should not have so much local flavour, especially slang, as to make them inaccessible to the English reader. This
belief was understandable in that most books were still published in England and given the prevailing climate of her youth as outlined above. It is nonetheless surprising that she did not give more consideration to what the New Zealand reader may have wanted, given that she was so disappointed by the poor reception of her books in New Zealand, even though they were generally well received in Britain and North America. She frequently advocates the Australian, Henry Handel Richardson as a model for the New Zealander to follow, especially in terms of the patience which eventually won her recognition in the English literary world. Other writers she praises include E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson. The one New Zealander she saw as a worthy model is Katherine Mansfield. Writing of the short story, Mander declares: "no better advice could be given to anyone puzzled about this branch of his art than to study her stories."

Mander clearly took the nineteenth century English realistic novel as her model, and in this she was wholly conventional. In fact, Katherine Mansfield berated her for relying too heavily on this English model to the exclusion of her own individuality. She reviewed *The Story of a New Zealand River* in the *Athenaeum* in July of 1920, and concluded that Mander was "immensely hampered in her writing by her adherence to the old unnecessary technical devices....", which obscure "the root of something very fresh and sturdy." She equates Mander with her heroine, Alice, in that she lacks "the courage
of her opinions ... (and) leans too hard on England." Turner states, however, that Mander's use of the Victorian form was wholly in accordance with her readers' expectations, and Elizabeth Webby and Lydia Wevers's recent study of early Australian and New Zealand women's fiction confirms that Victorian literary traditions dominated until a more distinctive local style emerged, in the case of New Zealand, not until the 1930s.

The prevailing mode of the Australasian woman writer at the time Mander's works began appearing is indicated in an article by Frank Morton of The Triad, which appeared in the New Zealand Herald in 1923. Morton was probably the foremost literary critic in the region, and in this article, entitled "These Women Writers. Under a Handicap", he examines the problems faced by women writers. He argues that although there are a great number of women writers in Australia and New Zealand, they write under a "handicap", which is not related to their sex. In Morton's words women writers do not suffer from a biological restriction, but rather are impeded by "the genteel convention", which dictates that it is polite for women to write only of certain things and in certain ways.

According to Morton this limitation leads to the further handicap of imitation, as women writers perpetually copy what has been done by other women, presumably because they know they are on safe ground in this aspect and also because of the finite
range of possibilities allowed by the "genteel convention". All of this made for a literature which must have been extremely boring and predictable, written according to formula in the manner to which romances are written even today. Morton indicates the tediousness of these works in his comment that "any average dozen contemporary novels written by women might all have been written by the same woman suffering varying degrees of indigestion". The only woman writer he saw as having almost totally thrown off these "sex-handicaps" is Katherine Mansfield, whom he credited with the development of a new literary style.

The 'genteel convention' and its effect on women's writing is an indication of how strongly social conventions controlled women's lives. Women were not supposed to know or feel certain things, so if a woman did have a knowledge of forbidden topics, such as sex, then she certainly should not admit to this by writing about it. Morton attributes the inferior nature of women's art to this very factor, stating that:

if women were permitted to write with perfect candour and honesty on matters she [sic] feels most deeply and understands best, she would immediately rise to a distinction equivalent to man's. But she must not do that .... She does not ... write what she thinks, but what it is polite to admit that she thinks.
According to Morton, the only area of which a woman could write with any amount of freedom was the domestic scene: "It is in the little cloistered gentlenesses and sweeter terrors of life that our women writers are already at home. Here is something of which they can already sing, freed from their handicaps."

Women's 'freedom' to write of the domestic realm is, however, an indication of their restriction to it.

Mander clearly did not work within this mode. Indeed, if the 'genteel convention' was as prevalent in women's writing as Morton maintained it was, then Mander's works represent a marked diversion from the norm for women writers. As Joan Stevens notes, Mander was reproached for dealing with "sex problems" and told to "stick to bush fires" as a more proper subject for New Zealand fiction, a reaction which Stevens sees as indicative of the hampering effect of society's expectations of women at that time. Mander's heroines and heroes disregard conventions and frequently discuss the nature of male/female relationships with a frankness which marks them as radical and certainly not 'genteel', with the result that her works were interpreted as deliberate attempts to shock, so far were they outside the normal boundaries. Morton himself credited Mander with this intention. While describing her as achieving greater success with the novel than any other New Zealand woman, he comments that her writing is hampered by her apparent determination to shock her New Zealand readers with persistent attacks on "the queer little harmless, cramping things in the New Zealand
country that exasperated her as a young girl", although he believed she would go on to write "a very fine novel" once age has mellowed this tendency.

The comments of many American and English critics and reviewers of the time suggest that Mander's work was also different from that normally expected of a woman writer outside Australasia. For example, the New York Herald review of The Strange Attraction stated that the novel "has nothing of the vain imaginings about life as viewed by an intelligent spinster, or 'lady novelist'." Similarly, an American reviewer of The Passionate Puritan noted the individuality of Mander's treatment of sexual relations, asserting that she shows detachment from "any entangling traditions of conduct or morals and a vigor of mind that grasps the issue clearly and insists on thinking it through before forming any opinion." He or she added that it was "refreshing" to meet such a method of facing problems "squarely instead of hiding behind someone else's ready made defences...."

Comments on Mander's difference often focussed on the 'masculine' quality of her works, as was the case when the reviewer in the Louisville Courier Journal remarked that The Story of a New Zealand River and The Passionate Puritan showed Mander's ability to "use strong, 'man-sized' words". Similarly, W.S. Dale in an article on New Zealand literature in the Bookman, contends that Mander's style is "virile as befits her
subject". Later perceptions of Mander also suggest her difference from the prevailing feminine mode. In his obituary editorial, Holcroft asserts that she "brushed aside restraints that had given a lady-like tone to much of our writing." He portrays Mander as one who freed herself from an inhibiting tradition just as Morton suggests the woman writer should. Such comments indicate that Mander had crossed the boundaries set down for the 'female sensibility' and moved into the realm where, if she was good enough, she could become an 'honorary male' writer.

In setting out to write of New Zealand Mander sought her own mode, refusing to be 'handicapped' in the usual manner of the woman writer. Her own comments reveal this sense of making her own way rather than remaining within the confines of any convention. In response to negative criticism of The Story of a New Zealand River, particularly the New Zealand reviewers' focus on it as a 'sex problem' novel, Mander sent a letter to the Auckland Star, declaring that her writing was motivated by a wish to please herself and to be true to her own experiences. She also maintained that she did not purposely wish to shock people." Nevertheless, the tone of The Strange Attraction suggests that, in this novel at least, she actively set out to antagonize the New Zealand public in creating a heroine intent not only on ignoring but also on outraging her society.
As Morton's analysis suggests, Mander cannot have been entirely free from the "genteel convention", because her works seem to be such a determined reaction against it. It continued to shape her writing, if only in a negative manner. This is very likely the case given that she must have been aware of such conventions in women's writing, just as she was well aware of the conventions governing women's behaviour in general. She expounded upon the inhibiting effects of the latter in a radio talk she gave after her return to New Zealand. Referring to middle class Englishwomen she observes: "The words Genteel and Ladylike were as effective as any whiplash to scare them to death, congealing their spiritual forces, and acting like a blight upon their whole class. Women have not, indeed, yet fully recovered from it." Mander often had her heroines express this same awareness that social expectations inhibit women's self-development and self-expression, and she depicted them refusing to be bound by such conventions as I discuss below."

Mander overcame many of the practical difficulties of being a New Zealand writer by living overseas, as did many other New Zealand writers of that age. Residence in New York and London facilitated access to publishers and a sufficient audience to support publication. She set about finding her own way to record life in New Zealand as she saw it, but as was customary at that time, her vehicle was the Victorian novel form. Her difference lies in her refusal to remain within the
prescribed boundaries for women writers and her determination to portray her own vision. This ambition meant she came into conflict with significant social factors as I have outlined above.
Notes


3 Fuller biographical details are given in chapter one of Dorothea Turner's *Jane Mander*, on which this outline is based, as well as on Mander's biographical notes to J.C. Andersen and Ethel Wilson. See Johannes Carl Andersen, Papers 1911-1956, MS Papers 148, folder 29, "biographical note," WTu, and Mary Jane Mander, Papers 1925-1939, MS Papers 3404, WTu.


5 Jane Mander, Papers, NZ MSS 535, box 1, folder 2, AP.


10 Text of Radio Talk by Ethel Wilson on Jane Mander, in Mander, MS Papers 3404, WTu.

12 Olssen attributes this at least in part to the feminist movement of the early twentieth century, describing the feminists as having sought to legitimise women's demand for equality "by reference to their innate and specialised moral intuition, linking this to motherhood and domesticity, then [finding] that their own ideology could be used to circumscribe more rigorously their social and economic freedom." See Olssen, p. 180. Eldred-Grigg also comments on feminist support of traditional roles for women, and their attempt to protect women in these roles by tightening up the old moral code, particularly by abolishing the old double standard of sexual morality. See Eldred-Grigg, p. 131.

13 This is discussed by Sinclair, pp. 219-221, and Olssen, p. 179.


16 Sinclair, p. 216.

17 Olssen, p. 181.

18 Quoted by Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 92-93.

19 See Radio Talk by Ethel Wilson, in Mander, MS Papers 3404, WTu.

20 For instance, the reviewer in the New Zealand Herald asserted that The Story of a New Zealand River was "a real novel written of a real New Zealand", and in reviewing The Passionate Puritan the same paper quoted an English critic's opinion that the novel gave a "very clear picture of life in New Zealand away from [the] towns...." See Jane Mander, Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.

21 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.

22 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 535, box 1, folder 8, AP.

23 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.


28 I discuss the contradictions in Allen Adair in detail below. See Chapter II, pp. 87-93, 99-102.

29 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.

30 See above, pp. 36-37.


34 For a discussion of Mander's treatment of the pioneer ethos see Chapter II, pp. 74-94.

35 Jock Phillips argues that because the frontier experience "was the most distinctive aspect of Pakeha society" it was universalised and "[f]rom about the 1890s nostalgia and a search for national identity raised the pioneer image into a legend", whereas the New Zealand urban experience had little part in conceptions of national identity. See Jock Phillips, A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male: A History (Auckland: Penguin, 1987), pp. 38-39.

36 Montague H. Holcroft, "A New Zealand Writer," Editorial,
NZ Listener, 13 Jan. 1950, p. 4.


38 Alan Mulgan, Great Days in New Zealand Writing (Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1962), p. 84.


41 McCormick, p. 110.


43 Stevens, The New Zealand Novel, p. 35.

44 McCormick, pp. 130-31.

45 McCormick, p. 132.

46 McCormick, p. 134.

47 McCormick, p. 142.

48 McCormick, p. 142.

49 McCormick, p. 142.

50 For a discussion of the dominance of the masculine pioneering ethos see Chapter II, pp. 74-75.

52 Mulgan, Great Days, p. 95.


54 Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 110-111.

55 Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 110-111.

56 Mander's objection to novels written to convey a message is expressed in her Radio Talk, "NZ Authors" and also in one of her articles in the Christchurch Press, where she declares: "The business of an artist is presentation, not the advocacy of anything." See Jane Mander, Radio Talk 1YA, "New Zealand Authors and English Publishers," in Mander Papers, NZ MS 535, box 2, folder 14, AP, and "New Zealand Novelists: An Analysis and Some Advice," The Press, 10 Nov. 1934, p. 17.


58 See above, p. 46.


61 Quoted from Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 147-149.


63 Frank Morton, "These Women Writers. Under a Handicap," in Mander Papers, NZ MSS 535, box 1, folder 8, clippings re 1923, AP. All of the following Morton quotes are from this source.

65 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP. This is the source of all the following quotes from reviews.

66 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 535, box 1, folder 2, AP.

67 See Introduction, p. 16.


69 Letter from Mander to the Auckland Star, quoted by Ethel Wilson in her radio talk on Mander. See Mander, MS Papers 3404, WTu.

70 Mander Papers, NZ MS 535, box 2, folder 19, AP.

71 For a fuller discussion of the manner in which Mander's heroines react to feminine conventions see Chapter II, pp. 102-104.
CHAPTER II

APPROPRIATING THE MASCULINE ETHOS AND BURYING THE WOMAN:
THE AMBIGUITIES OF JANE MANDER'S NOVELS

Introduction

As the above discussion of the New Zealand literary climate indicates, leaving New Zealand in 1912 did not mark Mander out as unusual among writers, nor among many other talented people of her generation. Neither was the self-imposed exile a necessity peculiar to women. Indeed, leaving New Zealand was almost inevitable for anyone who wished to further his or her literary or intellectual ambitions; to remain at home was to remain in an isolation which few could surmount. The 'masculine' character of New Zealand society did, however, pose extra difficulties for the woman writer, simply because she was a woman. As Cherry Hanks observes, the woman writer in New Zealand has always begun from a position which is at odds with the prevailing climate:

From New Zealand's earliest beginnings, the women of this country have been forced to come to terms with a world whose
outlook has been predominantly male. It is the effort to do this which forms a distinctive - and continuing - theme in their serious writing.'

In this section my discussion focusses on the extent to which this effort to come to terms with the dominant masculine outlook of New Zealand society can be seen in Mander's works, not only in the themes but also in the ambiguities and self-contradictions in the characterisation and structures of the texts.

The inconsistencies and awkward features of Mander's texts are no doubt partly due to the difficulties she faced in attempting to use 'old world' literary conventions to depict the experiences of a new land, as is often the case with colonial writers trying to forge their own literature. They are also no doubt a reflection of the difficult circumstances under which the novels were written. Mander was always short of money and had to take on other work to support herself and therefore did not have as much time nor energy as she would have wanted to devote her to novels. Nevertheless, because these contradictions and ambiguities seem to centre mainly around her portrayal of women, I would argue that they are primarily the result of her position as a woman writer who sets her novels in a 'man's world', and who generally expresses a preference for that 'masculine' environment over the 'feminine' world which she portrays alongside it. Here I use the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' in their traditional senses.
My analysis of Mander's attempts to portray New Zealand centres on three aspects: her treatment of the masculine ethos, her portrayal of female society, and the use she made of the structures and images of the inherited literary tradition within which she worked. I focus on these three elements because I see them as crucial to the efforts of a woman to write of New Zealand at that time. The dominance of the masculine ethos in society meant that it could not be ignored, nor could a woman writer ignore the New Zealand woman if she wished to write with authenticity. The received literary tradition is always significant in reflecting society's patterns and the predominant conceptions to which a writer is inevitably exposed and which he or she must either reiterate or subvert and reject in some manner. I will concentrate on Mander's New Zealand novels, The Story of a New Zealand River, The Passionate Puritan, The Strange Attraction and Allen Adair. I will not discuss her final two novels, The Besieging City and Pines and Pinnacles in any depth because they are set in New York and London respectively and do not represent a response to the problems Mander faced in writing of New Zealand, except in so far as they indicate that she eventually found the negative reviews she received in this country too much.
Appropriation of The Masculine Ethos

New Zealand was founded, or seen to be founded, on the hard physical work of men who broke in the land. The concept of national identity which evolved was, therefore, a masculine one based on pioneering attributes. The almost exclusively male nature of New Zealand identity is evident in Keith Sinclair’s study of the development of New Zealand’s sense of national identity, for only twenty eight pages are devoted to what Sinclair terms “The Peripheral Majority”, namely: women, Maori and children. As Sinclair explains, the population imbalance meant males greatly outnumbered females, and the events which triggered feelings of national identity, rugby victories and participation in World War I, were male events; so “the central nationalist ideals were male.”

Although Mander left New Zealand before a real sense of national identity emerged, the overwhelmingly masculine character of the dominion she grew up in meant that she had to deal with the masculine ethos in order to write realistically of New Zealand. The difficulties she faced in doing so were particularly accentuated by the circumstances of her own upbringing, to which she naturally turned when setting out to write of New Zealand. Her New Zealand novels are all set in the Northland environment where she grew up and lived as a young woman. In her childhood, this environment was still very much a pioneering one, with the family often living in remote
settlements and harsh conditions. It was a predominantly masculine world as all pioneering environments are, depending on the traditionally masculine qualities of physical strength and courage, with a female presence limited to wives and children, that is, dependents rather than workers in the public sphere. No doubt the women and children also shared such attributes but in a less visible and recognised manner. The male dominance of this environment must have been underlined by her family's absolute dependence on her father. As Turner relates, they had to be ready to move whenever he was ready to move, and Mander's estimate that the family did so twenty-nine times during her childhood illustrates how much their lives were entirely subordinate to Frank Mander's business of milling timber.4

The problems faced by the early New Zealand woman writer were much the same as those of her Australian counterparts, as New Zealand and Australia were very similar in their pioneer origins. Thus some indication of the options open to Mander in coping with this masculine ethos can be derived from the examples of the reactions of other early Australasian women writers. In their study of women's writing from the period, Elizabeth Webby and Lydia Wevers point out that many avoided coming to terms with the masculine ethos by simply sticking to the conventions of the Victorian 'lady writer'. This resulted, however, in prose which bore little relation to the society in which they lived and wrote. Other early women writers submerged their identity totally by writing as men, burying their gender
behind pseudonyms and male characters who moved in a male world. Neither option was satisfactory for the woman writer who wished to record her experiences of her country.

Another means of dealing with the masculine ethos in society and literature is discussed by Delys Bird in her analysis of the works of two early twentieth century Australian woman novelists, Miles Franklin and Henry Handel Richardson. An Australian literary tradition was already recognised at this time, with the stories of Henry Lawson and the *Bulletin* school establishing the masculine model which was to dominate Australian literature in years to come. Although New Zealand literature did not reach that stage until the 1930s, the influence of the Australian tradition was strong here as well, with the *Bulletin* being widely read. Indeed, in commenting on the influence of Australian literature on its New Zealand counterpart, Alan Mulgan asserts that the *Bulletin* "has always had many readers and contributors in New Zealand." Mander, therefore, had this masculine literary model to contend with as well as the masculine nature of New Zealand society and the beginnings of a masculine national identity. Thus, there are enough similarities between her situation and that of Richardson and Franklin to use Bird's analysis as a starting point for discussion of Mander.

Bird begins by pointing out the difficulty of defining an Australian female culture because of the virtual invisibility of
women in conceptions of Australian culture. As I have noted above the same situation prevailed in New Zealand, so in both cases women can be identified only by negatives, that is, by the manner in which they differ from men and thereby from the overall national identity. This means that the woman writer in Australia or New Zealand necessarily begins from a position of silence and invisibility. This was particularly so in the earlier years when the masculine ethos was so dominant, though this remained relatively unchallenged until the 1970s and 1980s. Bird suggests that the pseudonyms adopted by Richardson and Franklin were an attempt to compensate for this negative starting point, a deferential gesture to the norm of "male superiority." She also proposes that in *My Brilliant Career* Franklin attempted to write a 'real yarn' according to the "nationalist-realist" tradition of Lawson and the *Bulletin*, this being the only Australian literary model she had to follow, and because she knew it to be a successful one.

Bird concludes that the awkward and contradictory nature of Franklin's narrative very clearly demonstrates the problems of using a model which allows no place for the author's self. The masculine model, by definition, has no place for the female, so in order to use it the woman writer must deny her self, and her heroine is also denied any chance of succeeding when her quest is to emulate the masculine ideal. Franklin and Richardson portray heroines who fight against their gender conditioning as young women, and reveal characteristics which
are traditionally 'masculine', but in the end they are shown to be unable to become part of the male world they admire, and the authors are forced to create artificial and inconsistent endings to free their heroines from this predicament. The ambiguities of these endings match the inconsistencies of the texts themselves. The heroines are shown to accept received, conventionally feminine images of themselves, and even repeat and reinforce these as natural, while at the same time they are supposed to be fighting such conditioning. Internal contradictions such as these reveal the difficulties facing the woman writer in what Bird describes as "a culture which denies her aesthetic or cultural worth." The woman writer has nothing to identify with except the male cultural ethos of her country, but because she is a woman she is inevitably excluded from this ethos.

Mander chose a similar path to that adopted by these two Australian women. As I have outlined above, she identified with a romanticised masculine pioneer image as a positive alternative to the puritan ethos. Dorothea Turner points to the dedication of The Passionate Puritan which reads, "To My Brother", and argues that in the hero of this novel, Jack, and the later character Allen Adair, Mander created the sort of character she believed her brother to be, with all her father's good qualities but lacking the "restless drive" which made him difficult to live with. (Her brother Frank managed mills for his father in the same way that Jack does for his father).
Turner concludes that Jack and Allen symbolise what Mander "most loved and admired in the native scene.... [They represent] the type of man she envisaged as the best product of the country she had to reject for herself." 11

Given the almost total authorial approval of these two male characters (Allen is only lightly pulled up for his failure to understand his wife), I would agree with Turner's conclusion. To Mander the best of New Zealand was to be found in the best of her male pioneers. Turner's conclusion also shows up the ambiguity of this identification with the masculine ethos as represented by Jack and Allen; it offered no place for a woman, as Turner states, Mander "had to reject" New Zealand [my emphasis]. This self-contradiction is the crucial aspect. The romantic male pioneer image represents the dream of freedom and equality which Mander wanted to believe New Zealand life embodied, but the reality of her experiences must have shown her that women did not have equal access to the opportunities New Zealand supposedly offered. This no doubt inspired her feminism and led her to create ardent feminist heroines who struggle for access to such opportunities.

Mander's attempt to dissolve the conflict between her admiration of the pioneer male ideal and her feminism centres on the creation of heroines who emulate this ideal. Thus her heroines are strong willed and physically active, enjoying solitary long walks and horse-riding in preference to the
indoors and company of other women. They are also rational (often attempting to suppress all feelings), intelligent, educated and determined to pursue careers. In fact, many reviewers comment that they are masculine types. For example, in reviewing The Strange Attraction the International Book Reviewer expressed dislike of the "hard realism that shrinks not at the oaths of men or the mannish traits of the heroine."

Similarly, the New York Sun reviewer of this novel regarded Valerie as "to some extent masculinized".12

Despite these characteristics, Mander's heroines cannot become part of the male world because it is what it is by virtue of its exclusion of women. In each novel the gap between the feminine and masculine worlds seems to be so wide as to be inevitable. In The Story of a New Zealand River, Alice scarcely ventures out of the house and Roland only appears in the house at mealtimes, and in the later novels the wives are similarly divided from their husbands. In The Passionate Puritan, Sophie Ridgefield has little idea of what Jack is doing and she accepts that it is better not to ask. Similarly, in Allen Adair, Marion is ignorant of activities on the gumfields and in her husband's store, and Allen berates her for excessive curiosity if she tries to find out. The inevitable exclusion of the heroines means that each one has to be provided with an escape from New Zealand. In the final New Zealand novel Mander avoids this situation by adopting a male hero/heroin. Allen Adair expresses many of the same viewpoints as Mander's earlier
heroines but his gender means that he is assured a place in society despite his opposition to its ethos. Allen also confirms Mander's admiration of the pioneer male ethos as he conforms almost entirely to this ideal.

The difficulties of the divided position created by both Mander's and her heroines' admiration of an unattainable ideal are apparent in all of the novels, particularly in the first, The Story of a New Zealand River. This text differs significantly from the succeeding novels in that there is not the same almost unquestioning approval of the pioneer male which later becomes so apparent. The focus on the experience of Alice, the pioneer wife and mother, undermines the portrayal of the pioneer male. Alice's husband Roland is the head of his family and of the community, as he owns the timber mill which is the reason for the community's very existence. His patriarchal dominance is, however, undermined by the denial of narrative attention to him. In the domestic 'female' world where most of the action takes place, he is an outsider. Although the family all quake when he rages and his every need is catered for, he is strangely out of place in his home and with his family, the children seeming to grow up quite independently of him. In fact, Bruce is in effect more of a father to Asia than Roland is, with Asia's attitude towards Roland being more one of indulgence than of respect. In this way, Roland is shown to be more like a difficult child who must be placated than as a real leader of the family.
The portrayal of Roland's frequently almost brutal behaviour to his family contrasts with the outside picture of him which is revealed in occasional glimpses through the eyes of the men or of Bruce, who knows him in both capacities, and particularly in the community's reaction to his death and the homage paid at his funeral. Those outside the family see Roland in terms which make him an ideal example of the popular image of the New Zealand male. He is a hardworking and successful practical man, and above all, he subscribes to the New Zealand concept of mateship and equality among males because he does not "parade" his superiority over the men who work for him. They admire and respect him because he works, eats and swears with them as 'one of the boys'. The contrast between the 'two Rolands' becomes apparent in the dry eyes of Alice and Asia compared to the emotion displayed by the community at his death. For Alice it is primarily a release and a new start, but for the others the sense of loss predominates.

By giving this largely negative family picture of a man viewed so positively by the community, Mander is in a sense deconstructing the type of male who throughout New Zealand's history has been widely perceived as the founder of communities. The character she presents is an affront to the accepted norm and she does this through voicing the often silenced perspective of wives and children. On the biographical level, Mander may have been subconsciously balancing the perception of her father, who was similarly a 'pillar of the community' and a tyrant in
the house. Nevertheless, the portrayal of Roland is not wholly unsympathetic. As well as the acknowledgement of his admirable characteristics evident in the community's perception of him and also in the bush scenes which display his mastery of this environment, Roland is given a hero's death, sacrificing himself to save some children. At one point Mander even allows a sympathetic insight into his feelings. This occurs when Roland finds Alice and Bruce together and expresses his sense of failure in his relationship with Alice (TSNZR, pp. 273-274).

In *The Story of a New Zealand River* it is evident that Mander's sympathies lie with Alice, the wife who is forced to endure physical hardship because of a husband who does not try to make it any easier for her. Nevertheless, Alice's continual self-denial and passivity become tiring and she cannot be seen as the most admirable character in the novel. Because admiration for Roland's pioneer abilities cannot be kept at bay, readers have often seen him as the most convincing character in the novel, especially when compared with Alice's rather dreary adherence to the puritan ethic despite the freedom offered by her environment. For example, Frank Sargeson contended that Mander created a better character than she had intended in Roland." Similarly, Katherine Mansfield argued that occasional glimpses of the 'real' Mander come through in the inner turmoils of characters such as Roland and Bruce and that these moments save the work from being tossed onto the heap of unsuccessful novels which lack such honesty."
Admiration of the masculine pioneer ideal comes through more clearly in the second novel, *The Passionate Puritan*, as there is no competing focus on a woman who suffers because of her marriage to a man who represents this ideal. This time the ideal is embodied by the sawmill manager, Jack. He has all the best qualities of the pioneer figure. He is a fair boss, a sensible leader of the community, a hard-working man with a fair dash of 'kiwi ingenuity' revealed in his construction of the dam system to bring logs down the river, and he surpasses Roland in being a faithful and loving husband.

Certainly, Jack seems to symbolise what the heroine Sidney most loves about New Zealand. Sidney and Jack represent the same qualities of individuality and inner strength, and he is the only person in the community with whom she can identify. Jack, however, remains remote from her even though he does come to recognise her professional abilities. He chooses as his wife a traditionally feminine type: Sophie who is pretty and dependent and accepts that she should not try to understand him or ask too many questions. The archetypal pioneer male's choice of a traditional wife who will not interfere in his world confirms the ultimate inaccessibility of the masculine ethos to women, even to exceptional women like Sidney. She must settle instead for the Englishman Arthur, who is consistently portrayed as second-best to Jack. He even believes this himself, telling Sidney that his upbringing has left him with a feeling of futility, and that he feels unoriginal compared both to her and
to Jack.¹⁶ Sidney's admiration of the unattainable remains. She often wishes Arthur were more like Jack, and eventually resolves to reform him along the lines of the pioneer male image, as she is troubled that he has never done any 'real' work (TPP p. 210).

The pioneer male has all but disappeared from the society portrayed in *The Strange Attraction*, and this may account for Valerie's, and Wander's, inability to locate anything positive to identify with. Valerie's father represents the new centre of power, the outwardly respectable urban businessman. Having seen the sham nature of this urban society in her youth, Valerie longs for escape. The pioneer ethos is to some extent represented by Valerie who has many traits which are more traditionally associated with men, the ideal pioneer male in particular. At the newspaper she wins the loyalty of all who work with her because of her fair attitude and hard-working nature. She is more at home in the outdoors and when she is not working likes to go out walking or riding alone. This affinity with the outdoors symbolises her freedom from artificial conventions. Dane is impressed by this when he meets her out riding and notes her "glowing face" and "uncovered head"."¹⁷ As the narrator comments, to both Valerie and Dane being on the river "was some kind of sanctuary, a retreat from the world and all its stupidities, frets and fevers..." (TSA, p. 154).
Although Dane is certainly not the rough pioneering type, he represents a similar sort of freedom from convention. This is most evident in his subversion of gender stereotypes through the display of 'feminine' traits which are an affront to the local community. The narrator comments that "All Dargaville knew that Dane lounged about like a woman on gorgeous cushions, and that his rooms were filled with colour and scent. The pioneer spirit, conveniently recent enough to be quoted, was offended" (TSA, p. 51). The visit of Roger Benton, one of the community's leaders, to Dane's home reveals the longing of the respectable family man for the freedom Dane represents. He tells Dane he envies Dane's lack of "ties" and freedom from the need to be "respectable" (TSA, p. 48). This provides a chance for Mander to comment on the inhibiting nature of New Zealand puritanism, which makes such signs of indulgence "wicked" though secretly appealing (TSA, pp. 50-51). Valerie's father, Devonport Carr, is also offended by Dane's 'feminine' behaviour, protesting that he cannot talk to Dane while he lies in his hammock "like a woman" (TSA, p. 223). It is significant that Dane is not a New Zealander, suggesting that a New Zealand male could not be so free of gender conditioning.

It only at the outbreak of World War I that Valerie begins to identify with her society and particularly with the young men who volunteer for service. In fact, she even wishes she were a man so she could be part of this movement (TSA, p. 276). Eventually she leaves Dane and once back in Auckland she
is taken up by "the sense of forward movement" which surrounds her, and the novel concludes with her setting off for the war with her countrymen. New Zealand is portrayed as awakening with the challenge provided by the War, and perhaps Mander allows Valerie to return to society as it now seems more worthy of her, being less self-obsessed and complacent. Indeed, popular conceptions of national identity assert that the New Zealand soldier in World War I exhibited a return to the strengths which had made the pioneer male succeed, and this may be the reason for Valerie's identification with the cause. This again suggests Mander's implicit identification with the masculine pioneer heritage of New Zealand rather than the feminine urban element.

The Ambiguities of the Male Heroine

As I have shown, Mander's identification with the ethos of the pioneer male led her to create heroines with characteristics conventionally seen as masculine. Since the masculine ethos held no place for even these women, in her last New Zealand novel, Allen Adair, Mander went a step further and created a male heroine. In its almost unquestioning admiration for Allen, the archetypal pioneer male, and the virtually complete lack of sympathy for his wife Marion, the ordinary woman, the novel seems to be strongly anti-female. In fact, these trends are simply a continuation of those seen in the
previous novels, but more forcefully expressed. The mild-mannered male as central character looks like a major concession to popular opinion when compared to Mander's outspoken heroines, Valerie of The Strange Attraction in particular, but the rejection of society is just as strong. Perhaps Mander believed it would be more acceptable when voiced by a type which was becoming a recognisable pioneer ideal than it was when expressed by a fervent young woman.

Allen is a male version of Sidney, Valerie and Asia, but as such he has a far greater freedom than they to pursue his alternative lifestyle. In many ways the creation of the character of Allen can be seen as an exercise in wish-fulfilment for Mander, who probably chafed against the restrictions imposed upon her as a young woman in New Zealand. Allen's similarity to the heroines is also suggested by Turner's comment that Mander saw "ardent, brainy girls like herself, and the peaceable male misfits of the frontier" such as Allen, as being equally "gratuitously misused by the New Zealand of her observation.... The same forces were bounding them both."

The description of Allen breaking away from his parents and the emotional pressures and financial obligations with which they try to withheld him is reminiscent of the situation which Mander illustrates in her article "Sheltered Daughters" which she published in The New Republic in 1916. This parallelism underlines the notion that Allen was the type of 'heroine'
Mander would have created had it been plausible for a female character to have such freedom and still have a place in New Zealand society. In this essay, she makes a stinging attack on the manner in which wealthy parents bring up their daughters to a state of dependence and passivity, almost precluding any possibility of individual action on the part of these young girls. Unlike the 'sheltered daughters' Allen has not been "bred for dependence", so despite the difficulties imposed by his father's anger and his mother's tears, he is able to break away and pursue his own way in the world.

Mander endowed Allen with the type of freedom she desired for both herself and her heroines, but she could not ignore the reality for women such as herself. Thus the dominant narrative following Allen's career is accompanied by a muted text which highlights the lesser freedom available to women. This is particularly evident in the contrast between Allen and his sister Edith, and also in the character of Geraldine Ashbury, the wife of one of the partners in the timber firm which dominates the small town. These women are members of the same social class as Allen but their freedom and opportunities are considerably less than his. They are marginal figures, and the secondary and almost silent nature of this 'other story' is indicative of the place these women are shown to occupy in society.
These female characters represent the actuality of what Mander must have felt as she grew up, as opposed to the dream represented by Allen, and their inclusion suggests an underlying bitterness and frustration at opportunities lost because of gender. In this aspect, Mander foreshadows Hyde, who uses the character of Starkie in *Passport to Hell* and *Nor The Years Condemn* in a similar manner. In these two novels Starkie's freedom of movement and lifestyle contrast with the restrictions and difficulties faced by Eliza, the fictional character Hyde created who was closest to herself.²¹

Edith is very much the 'sheltered daughter' of Mander's earlier article. She has no alternative but to remain in her father's household until she marries someone he approves of. Whereas Allen is encouraged by his employer, Field, to announce to his father that he is leaving, it is unlikely that Edith will ever have anyone to prompt her in this way, so her expression of the desire to escape will amount to no more than a whisper of support for Allen and her later avid interest in the adventures he describes in his letters home.²² Edith resembles Mander in that Allen's adventure presumably represents her suppressed alter-ego, and she encourages him so that she can at least vicariously experience escape and rebellion. This is underlined in Allen's observation that she perhaps "still hungered a little for something he represented in her mind" (AA, p.134).
Geraldine's desire to break out of her gender-defined role is expressed in her habit of riding alone in the deserted land and enjoyment of the occasional shooting trip with the men. The lack of a fixed society in the small Northland settlement gives her considerable freedom to mix with men, so it is not considered odd that she should ride alone at night and drop in to see Allen at his store. However, it does not give her enough freedom. She longs to stay and talk with Allen and Rossiter, but her gender precludes this (AA p. 137). Allen is portrayed as gradually perceiving Geraldine's inner discontent and the affinity this gives him with her, for they both desire escape from social convention and its inherent restriction. Mander does not allow Allen to acknowledge this disquieting realisation, however. Thus Geraldine and her discontent remain a muted though disturbing presence in the text. This status is symbolised by the manner in which Allen often catches unsettling glimpses of her out of the corner of his eye (see for instance AA, pp. 68).

At the conclusion, Mander attempts to submerge Geraldine's discontent under the 'happy endings' brought about for Allen and his friend Rossiter. When the families return to the city, Allen joins a club so that he can still enjoy the company of his male friends from Pahi but:

There was no place where he could meet Geraldine in peace. But it would not do to think about that. He knew now that he and she would have to live out their days with their
frustrated friendship always thrust well down below the surface of expression (AA, p. 174).

Mander allows Allen many compensations for this frustration, the friendship of other men and his trip to England to see Rossiter. Geraldine, on the other hand, is now even denied the freedom formerly attained by riding alone in the deserted land. But Geraldine's situation is not spelt out. She is dropped from sight and Mander's action in pushing her aside mirrors the way that she shows Allen trying to suppress such uncomfortable perceptions by resorting to clichés about women's nature. For instance, he asserts that he is making Marion happy by "giving her all he could afford to spend in trying to live up to Edith", even though he can perceive that Edith "hunger[s] for much in life she did not get" despite all her money and he wonders if Marion's "hectic busyness were not hiding a secret hunger." He soon overcomes these uncomfortable thoughts with the notion that "women seemed to find a lot of consolation in society, ... dressing up and rushing about" (AA, pp. 174-175).

Mander makes Allen resort to these tactics because it is the only way to bury the disquieting truths about the female characters. The irony is that elsewhere in the novel she has shown him blithely accepting stereotyped views of female behaviour and implicitly criticised him for not questioning these simplistic perceptions. Such criticism is suggested, for instance, when she has Allen note Marion's unease after their
wedding and immediately dismiss it with the observation that "[a]ll brides were ill at ease before strangers [and t]hat settled that" (AA, p. 65). Another such example is the narrator's comment that "[h]e had his little collection of facts about the opposite sex" just as Marion did (AA, p. 78). The inadequacy of Marion's "collection of facts" is frequently reiterated and this comparison suggests that his "collection" must also be faulty.

Edith and Geraldine are effectively silenced by not having a narrative of their own, and Mander's plea for freedom from role expectations is transferred to the character of Allen. Adopting Allen as the male 'heroine' allowed Mander to avoid having a perpetually isolated main character as had been the case in the previous two novels. The creation of Allen was probably also an attempt to dispel the negative reactions which had greeted her novels in New Zealand as reviewers were outraged by her unconventional heroines.\textsuperscript{23} The admiration of the pioneer male ideal which Mander wished to convey through the character of Allen is, however, undercut by the muted account of the entrapment of these two women and by the suffering Allen is shown to inflict on Marion because of his adherence to his pioneer dream as I discuss below.\textsuperscript{24} Mander's desire to portray the ideal is undercut by her compulsion to show the reality. The novel ends with Allen happily contemplating his trip to England, but the lack of such compensation for Geraldine, Edith and Marion, whose discontents are given muted expression,
remains a disquieting factor even though it is relegated to 'the corner of the eye' as Geraldine usually is to Allen.

Mander's identification with the masculine ethos matches Franklin's efforts to use a masculine literary tradition to tell her heroine's story. In Mander's case the attempt is just as unsuccessful because the pioneer lifestyle which she and her heroines admire has no place for a woman. In contrast to the heroines, Allen Adair can live both within society and outside of it, as the gumfields provide him with a retreat to a pioneer world. He fits in both spheres whereas non-conforming women such as Asia, Sidney and Valerie must escape, or be submerged as Edith and Geraldine are. The other alternative is to conform as Marion does but this brings no guarantee of happiness either, and such women are despised by the admirable men (Allen and Rossiter) and the admirable woman (Geraldine). This implies that only the man can win, a conclusion which reflects the ambivalence of Mander's attempt to write about a society in which she could only identify with an unattainable masculine ethos.

The Woman Problem

Mander's attempt to come to terms with the masculine ethos of New Zealand through identification with the image of the pioneer male had consequences for her portrayal of female
society. The pioneer ideal was by definition masculine, whereas its opposites, respectable urban society and the social puritanism which Mander despised, were associated with female society. Mander's attitude of contempt for these elements is nowhere better conveyed than in Allen Adair's association of all that he does not like - the city, society life, and obsession with status and possessions - with the 'feminine' (AA, p. 132).

Thus Mander's feminism clashed with her identification with the pioneer ethos. In some cases this resulted in an ambivalent portrayal of the representatives of the two extremes, the ordinary woman and the pioneer male. Often the ordinary woman is sacrificed to the masculine ethos and buried within conventionally negative images, a betrayal which calls Mander's feminism into question. Mander's divided loyalties are most obvious in The Story of a New Zealand River because of her focus on a female perspective which undermines the conventional view of the pioneer male. Such ambivalence also characterises Allen Adair, although this time the focus on female exclusion and restriction is submerged beneath a dominant text which exalts the masculine ideal.

In The Story of a New Zealand River Mander highlights the usually silenced perspective of the pioneer woman, or wife as she usually was, and thus offers an alternative to the notion of the pioneer experience as a peculiarly male one. The novel does not question that the pioneer world was a man's world where
women had to adapt and cope as best they could, but in focussing on Alice, Mander de-centres the normal picture of the pioneer world. The woman's domain of house and garden becomes the centre, while the bush and the men who work in it remain on the periphery. The reader more or less shares Alice's perspective, a tactic which ensures the reader's sympathy for her despite the negative aspects of her character which result from her persistent attachment to puritan beliefs.

The opening pages amply illustrate this focus on the female pioneer experience and the hardships endured by such women. As Alice journeys apprehensively up the river to her new home she is struck by the "appalling isolation", the sense of which increases as the journey goes on: "Every mile of it meant a mile further from even such limited isolation as she had just left behind.... Every bend in the river meant another fearful look forward, and another yearning look back" (TSNZR, p. 9). When Alice finally reaches her new home, her outlook is no more hopeful. She is overwhelmed by the immensity of nature which makes the house, and its occupants, insignificant: "she saw hills and gullies, hills and gullies without end..." (TSNZR, p. 13). Her experience no doubt reflects what many pioneer women must have gone through, following their husbands to the place they (the men) had chosen, having to put up with the same hardships and yet begin keeping house and cooking meals almost immediately with none of the conveniences to which they had been accustomed. The result of such a focus is to undermine the
conventional view of the pioneer male as I have outlined above, and this sits uneasily alongside Mander's obvious admiration for such characters.

Such decentering of conventional perspectives indicates Mander's feminist agenda, as does the way in which she uses Alice to illustrate the extent to which women were controlled by patriarchal social and moral codes to the point of virtually complete passivity. The puritan code instils in Alice a sense of duty which makes her constantly submit to Roland and resolutely endure her life with him. She is so confined within the passive role that all improvements to her life must be won for her by other people, usually Asia or Bruce. For example, Bruce asks Roland not to sleep with her any more in an effort to save her failing health from more pregnancies (TSNZR, p. 206). Even when she has been considerably 're-educated' she cannot actively take up the opportunities offered her, as is revealed when she turns down Roland's offer of a divorce. Alice cannot decide for herself but must look to a higher authority to guide her actions and when her faith in the old principles weakens she looks to Bruce as the new authority.

The negative portrayals of the 'ordinary' wife and mother in the succeeding novels seem like a total contradiction when placed against the understanding shown for Alice, because there is no recognition that these women are also the victims of social conditioning. But Mander portrays Alice as a special
case and therefore deserving of such understanding. She is a pioneer woman, whereas the other 'ordinary' women live in more settled conditions. Although in the later novel Allen Adair, Marion does have to put up with considerable isolation, Mander does not treat her as a true pioneer. This is evident in the contrast between the unsympathetic portrayal of Marion and the admiration shown for her mother, who obviously does meet the pioneer criteria (AA, p. 83).

Mander also makes Alice a special case by giving her a background of seduction and desertion as the reason for her extreme puritanism. As Turner observes, however, puritanism was so prevalent in the early New Zealand psyche that it was hardly necessary to explain Alice's puritanism in this way. Alice was typical of an age when "thousands of women of unblemished conduct spent their lives in ... just such a state of neurosis", and the lack of opportunities for a middle class woman to support herself in New Zealand at that time was such that even if she really were a widow she would probably still have had to marry Roland. The dominance of the puritan code among early settlers is also outlined by Robert Chapman in his essay, "Fiction and The Social Pattern". Thus, Alice was not so much of a special case, and Mander's apparent failure to recognise that most women were victims of forces similar to those which shaped Alice reveals the essential ambiguity in her portrayal of New Zealand women. In her subsequent novels the ordinary woman is no longer the central focus and, apart from the occasional
sympathetic insights in *Allen Adair*, the ordinary wife and mother is seen from the outside in a largely negative way.

Mander's loyalties clash in *Allen Adair* because, as I note above, she could not ignore the reality faced by women of the same type as her feminist heroines and she, therefore, accorded it a muted recognition in a narrative which otherwise centres on the story of a man.29 Similarly, she could not totally submerge the anguish suffered by Allen's 'ordinary' wife, Marion. Marion's situation, like that of Alice, suggests the consequences of the extreme passivity into which women are conditioned. She follows all the rules which are supposed to give women happiness. Firstly she marries someone who will raise her in the social scale; she produces a family, she is a good cook and housekeeper and she loves her husband to the best of her ability. She even tries her best to overcome the social deficiencies which initially annoyed Allen, learning to read the right books and say the appropriate things. Therefore, she cannot understand why their marriage goes wrong (AA, pp. 65, 151-152). Marion's experience suggests that even if a woman does all the right things she may still not be rewarded with a successful marriage. Under such circumstances the passivity that Marion has been brought up to becomes a source of vulnerability instead of protection.

Although the main story follows Allen and the impact the marriage has on him, Marion's viewpoint exists alongside it in
the occasional sympathetic portrayals of her loneliness and confusion (see for instance AA, pp. 73, 82, 94, 165-166). Sometimes Marion is allowed to speak for herself, as is the case when she complains that Allen always makes her feel she is in the wrong (AA, p. 93. See also pp. 159-160). In places the narrator invites sympathy for Marion showing, for instance, how she is "staggered" when she realises she has nothing without Allen's support (AA, p. 150), or making sympathetic comments which underline the manner in which Marion is a victim of the conventions by which her society defines the female. For instance, she is described as having been "fed on romantic nonsense" which has made her believe that "the-you-know-everything-about-me-dearest-harmony ... was the proper thing between a husband and a wife" (AA, p. 151).

These disturbing glimpses of female reality reveal the difficulty of preserving the mask of identification with a masculine ethos. They disrupt the positive portrayal of Allen and turn the focus to Marion, with the result that readers have reacted negatively to this admirable hero. Cherry Hankin, for instance, describes Allen Adair as a portrayal of the "loneliness and emotional exclusion suffered by women married to New Zealand men," and argues that this isolation is compounded by Allen's preference for the mateship of other males, concluding that the unhappy nature of the marriage is largely attributable to "Allen's selfish and condescending treatment" of Marion, despite his apparently sympathetic character. Turner
also points to Marion's isolation and the fact that the novel is set in a 'man's world' where women must fit in as best they can, as was also the case in The Story of a New Zealand River. Like Hankin, she notes that Allen has an escape in the company of other males, of which Marion has no equivalent. In addition, she argues that Mander, along with Allen and his friends, does not accord Marion as much sympathy as she deserves because Marion is "ordinary".  

As I argue above, Mander does accord a muted recognition to Marion's position, although it is mostly submerged by the focus on Allen and the opposing viewpoints which he represents. To Mander and Allen, whom she created as the representative of her ideal in many aspects, Marion represents the suburbia they despise, and to some extent she is "damned" by this. As Turner observes, Marion is the victim of a reverse snobbery, which praises pioneer values over urban ones, and Mander's enthusiasm for the pioneer spirit which she saw as increasingly marginalised in New Zealand made her all but forget the alienation imposed on the ordinary women Marion represents, because they did not have the imagination or inner strength to overcome their conventional upbringings.

Marion's situation is not the main focus of the narrative. It is submerged by a dominant narrative which is largely unsympathetic to Marion as an ordinary woman and exalts the pioneer male qualities represented by Allen as a positive
alternative. The dominant narrative upholds the negative stereotypes of women which are so evident in *The Passionate Puritan* and *The Strange Attraction*. The muted narrative meanwhile contradicts this unquestioning dismissal of such women as naturally inferior by showing Marion, Edith and Geraldine as victims of convention. Thus there is an unresolved conflict between the dominant and muted narratives of this novel.

In her other New Zealand novels Mander abandons the ordinary woman. This is necessary in order to stress the difference of her heroines from other women, and hence the worthiness of their special position. Mander's heroines are the 'new women' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They fight against, and break out of, the conventions which tell them they must be weak and dependent because they are women, as is demonstrated when Sidney points out the inadequacy of (the pioneer male) Jack's conventional images of women. She complains that "He just sees women as sweet young girls, or as dear old ladies in lace caps. He never sees us in that intermediate stage where we want to go adventuring with life" (TPF, p. 92).

In their arguments against such conventions it would seem that the heroines prove that the situation of women is not a necessary condition, but an arbitrary creation of social conventions designed to shape women, women's view of themselves, and men's view of women in a certain manner. Nevertheless, they
counter this by frequently reproducing received images of women. For example, Sidney accepts it as natural that the men should be out fire-fighting while the women wait passively at home, even though she has just proved this is not necessarily so by having gone out and rescued a trapped woman herself (TPP, pp. 243ff).

Ordinary women are invariably despised by the heroes, so in order to be like these heroes and worthy of their attentions, the heroines must be distanced from the other women. Asia's feminism, socialism and general freedom sharply differentiate her from her mother, Alice, who is inhibited by and confined within the conventions of puritanism. Asia is also differentiated from her sisters who are not shown to have undergone any awakening despite the same opportunities available to them. They are portrayed as being only interested in men and clothes (TSNZR, p. 314).

Like Asia, Sidney is an avowedly feminist heroine. She attacks the conventions and stereotypes which threaten to confine her within feminine roles, steadfastly resisting Jack's attempts to keep her "in cotton wool", and making him aware of her difference from other women so that he comes to respect her for her professional achievements (TPP p. 82). For the same reason she is impressed by Arthur's lack of protective inclinations. He never offers to assist her over obstacles, recognising that she is "as able as himself to jump ruts and dodge roots", and he admires her because she has retained her
individuality despite the "pruning for the social mould" which she has undergone (TPP, p. 150). The next heroine, Valerie, objects even more to being treated as a woman for she despises the sex in general. She upbraids her workmate Bob for not keeping his promise to treat her as if she "were a man and an independent stranger", and her desire to escape from the conventions of gender is evident in her lodging at the pub, where women are not usually welcome (TSA, pp. 56, 18).

The heroines are distanced from the other women by their superior qualities, similarity to the heroes and resistance of gender conditioning. Mander also distinguishes them by portraying the other women as plainly inferior and making her heroes and heroines well aware of this. Thus, in The Passionate Puritan women are revealed as mainly interested in possessions and housekeeping and they vie with each other for supremacy based on their husband's status in the community. This portrayal was foreshadowed in The Story of a New Zealand River by the brief glimpse of the wives of the senior mill workers bickering and envying each other over their relative status in the pecking order (TSNZR, p. 314). The negative effects of such narrowness are expanded on in Allen Adair with the portrayal of Marion as competitive and materialistic, but in The Passionate Puritan the materialistic women are used as a background against which Sidney's individuality and superiority are revealed.⁸⁸
This is especially evident when Sidney arrives in the village and the women look to her in a manner which suggests her inevitable distinction from them:

Of course the women of the village knew the teacher would be immeasurably beyond them, somewhere up in those lofty strata of society of which they dreamed in their moments of yearning for better things.... They knew perfectly well that all talk of their husbands about democracy, and all men being equal in socialist New Zealand was just rubbish when it came to women. They may have wondered why they were not as good as Miss Carey, but they knew they were not, and that was the end of it (TPP, p. 44).

The women's belief in their 'natural' inferiority is backed up by the corresponding attitude of Sidney, which varies between amused condescension and a faint disgust, and this seems to be shared by the narrator.

Mander's disloyalty to the ordinary woman is particularly evident in the manner in which these women are used to provide comic relief. The narrator makes mild satire of the behaviour of the three 'head women', who take it upon themselves to provide a good example for the other wives. For example, they are made to look ridiculous in the way they peer from behind their curtains to catch a glimpse of Sidney when she first arrives (TPP, pp. 45-46). Fun is also made of their belief in the importance of performing social duties. They are described as serving teas at the bowling green with the feeling of "peculiar exaltation that is the reward of patronesses all the world over when they lend their gracious presences to give
distinction to a gathering of humbler folk" (TPP, pp. 41-43). Their narrow-mindedness is revealed when they visit Sidney in her new home. They are somewhat shocked by her unusual taste in furniture and ornament, but their only reaction is to gossip and work out how they could imitate her (TPP, p. 47). Sidney notes their excessive concern for material possessions in the "oppressively immaculate" dining room of Mrs Mackenzie, where "everything [shines] aggressively in keeping." The inhuman effect of such emphasis on material possessions is indicated by the use of the terms "aggressively" and oppressively". This materialism is again shown as ridiculous when Sidney goes to rescue a woman and her children from a bushfire. The woman is so upset at the idea of losing her possessions that it seems to Sidney she would rather be burned than leave them behind (TPP, p. 245).

Sidney views the other women as "bovine" and lacking imagination (TPP, p. 285). These views are echoed in the next novel when Valerie tells Dane that although being 'normal' would make her life easier she could never be "a nice plump purring bovine sentimental ass, slobbered over by men and called 'that sweet thing'..." (TSA, p. 176). In addition, she is disdainful of women who "get their little thrill" through passive background duties like serving food at masculine occasions such as on election night (TSA, p. 198). In _The Strange Attraction_ the burying of the ordinary woman is taken further than in _The Passionate Puritan_, as she is now no longer merely a figure of
fun, but a creature to be despised. Valerie's contempt for society, and particularly for the women who are most instrumental in preserving and maintaining its standards, is most evident in her descriptions of her family. She declares that the women in her family are narrow-minded in their obsession with sin and propriety, and believes they would only be interested in her marriage "to feed their nasty dribbling sensations" and notions of sin (TSA, pp. 67ff, 242).

Whereas The Story of a New Zealand River had earlier suggested that women's behaviour is defined by social and moral conventions which cripple their individuality, and Allen Adair was subsequently to imply this again, the treatment of ordinary women in these two novels suggests that such women are naturally inferior to the heroines and thus trapped in their roles. This perspective surfaces again in Mander's last two novels, The Besieging City and Pines and Pinnacles. They are dominated by a similar type of heroine; an independent young woman, and they show a similar lack of sympathy for the ordinary woman. Mirabel, the heroine of Pines and Pinnacles, is particularly like Sidney and Valerie in that she distances herself from female society and becomes accepted as an honorary male by a group of misogynist men.

Apart from the exception made for the pioneer woman and the occasional insights into Marion's situation, ordinary women are depicted as narrow-minded, materialistic, and obsessed by
gossip and competition between themselves. It is little wonder, therefore, that the energetic young heroines do not wish to identify with female society. The absence of any questioning why these ordinary women are like that conflicts, however, with the recognition of the impact of social conditioning evident in the portrayal of the heroines. They are depicted as having struggled against social conditions which attempt to shape them to the feminine mould, and it would presumably follow that all other women must be subject to the same conditioning. Yet the women who are not seen as fighting these social codes are totally dismissed as deserving of their fate, and Mander's heroines counter their struggle to be free of gender conditioning by joining the heroes in restating received views of women.

Reproduction of Received Literary Images

Mander's refusal to be bound by the genteel convention of women's writing is demonstrated in her creation of heroes and heroines who are studied in their unconventionality and expression of views which run counter to those of polite society. Rejection of the genteel convention is particularly evident in the attitudes of her heroines towards sexual relationships. Asia flouts convention by living with Ross, who already has a wife and is not free to marry her, and Valerie is especially vehement in her opposition to the conventions
surrounding sexual relationships. She revels in the shock value of her announcements on this subject, telling the priest that the common idea of sin is "rubbish", and when she gets married she immediately takes off her ring and delivers a resounding attack on the hypocrisy of a society which thinks a three minute ceremony makes the difference between morality and immorality (TSA, pp. 32-33, 217-218).

Despite this determined unconventionality, there are many instances where Mander unquestioningly reiterates received views of women such as those found in conventional literature, and she sometimes even does this in the portrayal of her heroines. One particular instance of this is when Asia first meets her future lover, Ross. She is portrayed in an excessively romantic manner as befitting the traditional heroine. Her closeness to nature and consequent freedom are emphasised as she is depicted sailing a boat, with the breeze blowing about her "bare legs" and "her clear skin ... [telling] of the simple life, strong nerves and beauty sleep, ... [while] in her eyes there glowed the joyous spirit of the wood nymph and the water sprite" (TSNZR, p. 191). This romanticisation seems somewhat out of place for a heroine who elsewhere is a strong advocate of feminism and socialism.

In other places Mander has her heroes, who almost unfailingly speak with authorial approval, unquestioningly voice views of women which are part of the received cultural tradition. In The Story of a New Zealand River, for instance,
Bruce makes broad generalisations such as his statements that all women are emotionally attracted to doctors and that women are always swept away by love into a belief that nothing else matters, whereas he, as a man, retains a 'realistic' perspective (TSNZR, pp. 111, 145). Not only does Mander reproduce inscribed conventions, but in the creation of Allen Adair she actually foreshadows the male figures of provincial fiction. Allen shares with these characters a dislike of women, commonly expressed in clichéd judgements, and the belief that the outdoor rural life is the province of masculine freedom, while the city is a women's domain characterised by "feminine conspiracy about making men sociable, ... petty obligations, ... [and] myriad ways of compressing a man and choking the air out of his lungs" (AA, p. 132).

The extent to which Mander was still very much under the influence of inherited literary conventions is nowhere more evident than in her treatment of 'deviant' female characters. There are several such characters who rebel against the dominant society in the 'wrong' way and their ostracism is not questioned; they are shown to deserve what they get. One such woman is Mrs Hardy, the wife of the horseman in The Passionate Puritan. Whereas Sidney is an allowable deviation from the norm and as such wins the respect of the men, Mrs Hardy's difference is expressed in ways which are not so acceptable; namely slovenliness and promiscuity. Her rebellion against the
inhibiting pattern of conformity and the puritan morality is suggested in the description of her as having an

air of cheerful brazeness. She was of the Amazon type .... She glowed with fecundity. She bore the ravages of her passions with astonishing freshness and gaiety .... [and] flourished the happy results of polyandry in the eyes of all her monogamistic world (TPP, p. 70).

As is evident in the tone of disgust in this passage, Mrs Hardy's rebellion is not sanctioned by Mander. The narrative viewpoint accords with the dominant perception of the community, that Mrs Hardy is a 'bad' woman. In fact, full narrative support seems to lie behind Jack's policy of keeping her firmly in her place, even if this means covering up for her husband when he beats her for misdemeanors such as trying to seduce Jack (TPP, pp. 40-41). It is ironic that Mander should be in accord with the community on this point, as elsewhere she depicts this society as narrow-minded and puritanical. This suggests she was not as free from puritan ethics as she no doubt believed herself to be.

The portrayal of Mrs Hardy in terms of her excessive reproductive capacity echoes many male images of the female 'monster' as outlined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their discussion of factors impeding women's writing. They use the examples of Spenser's Errour, Milton's Sin and Pope's Criticism to illustrate the tendency to present the female 'monster' in terms of "eternal breeding, eating, spewing, feeding", and quote
Simone de Beauvoir in support of their argument that such images arise out of men's ambivalent feelings about their inability to control their own physical existence, and also men's ambivalence towards female 'charms'.

Mander presents a received image from the patriarchal tradition in respect of Mrs Hardy's unregulated reproductive capacity. Because it is not controlled by a man, that is, her husband, it represents an outrageous assertion of autonomy on Mrs Hardy's part, rather like a woman writing in a manner not sanctioned by the patriarchal tradition. Mander stifles such rebellion by reinforcing patriarchal denigration of the female body and reproductive ability, thereby reflecting how such images induce in women, as in men, a disgust at women's sexual nature and a fear of women's autonomy. Mrs Hardy may hold the same abhorrence of society's conventions as Sidney does, but since she lacks the intelligence, education and social standing to express this in a respectable way, she is damned to exclusion for her difference.

The Strange Attraction also contains its female 'monster' or madwoman, the doctor's wife, Mrs Steele, who is a drunk. She is like Mrs Hardy in that she arouses the disgust of all the community, while her husband incites pity and is offered sanctuary in the pub. Mrs Steele receives no sympathy from the narrator nor even from Valerie and Dane who are supposed to be free of society's judgements. Valerie thinks of her as dancing
"grinning upon the public streets to the scandal of the passerby", and the narrator does not question the general view of her as "a pathological case or a vile old hag". Similarly, Dane views her as being "as blatant as the blaring circus troupe" (TSA, pp. 19-20, 85). No explanation is sought for her behaviour; she is merely an aberration to be pushed out of sight, and it is not countenanced that she may be an outsider such as Valerie and Dane, but without their advantages. Mander has Valerie recognise how Dane has suffered for his apparent immorality, whereas her father has not had to bear the consequences of his affairs because he has the money to settle things. It is ironic, however, that she does not have Valerie perceive that Mrs Steele may be a similarly disadvantaged version of Valerie herself (TSA, pp. 36-37). The puritanism evident in this judgement of Mrs Steele is in sharp contradiction to Mander's strong anti-puritan stance elsewhere.

In addition, Mander makes unquestioning use of the traditional femme fatale device to give her heroes an unfortunate past. In The Story of a New Zealand River, Ross has a "pretty, heartless" wife who is subject to hysteria and cannot be got free of unless "she goes mad, dies or lives with some other man" (TSNZR, pp. 203-204, 239). This woman is sacrificed to the interests of the plot, being pushed into the background by the ascendancy of the exceptional woman such as Asia. Similarly, in the next novel Arthur's wife is silent and invisible, no more than "a hideous memory" which has driven him
to wander away from his home (TPP, p. 193). Arthur is allowed to recall his "trusty chivalrous youth ... [and] his cruel breaking in" without question, even though his relationship with Sidney has revealed his tendency to tell only as much as is necessary to put him in a good light (TPP, p. 280). Sidney comes to accept that he is not perfect, but there is no sign that she would question his version of his first marriage.

Dane is also portrayed as having been a "trustful" but "betrayed and terribly hurt lover" because of the treachery of scheming women (TSA, pp. 92, 181-183). This 'type' of female character appears again in *Allen Adair*, for Allen almost succumbs to the seductions of Mrs Arden. He reacts with loathing towards her after his 'escape', seeing her in terms of the traditional whore image of woman, whereas the young mother, Mrs Sawyer becomes the opposite image of the pure madonna (AA, pp. 33-37).

The appearance of these stereotyped images of women, particularly the 'monster/madwoman' types, suggests that Mander had not freed herself from the predominant images of women handed down by the male literary tradition and male society. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that such images impede women's writing because they limit women's self-perceptions. The traditional female ideal is the passive, selfless 'angel', who therefore cannot assert herself by writing. To do so would
mean breaking out of prescribed bounds and becoming the angel's obverse image, the witch/monster. They contend:

a woman writer must examine, assimilate, and transcend the extreme images of 'angel' and 'monster' which male authors have generated for her. Before we women can write, declared Virginia Woolf, we must 'kill' the 'angel in the house'. In other words, women must kill the aesthetic ideal through which they themselves have been 'killed' into art. And similarly, all women writers must kill the angel's opposite and double, the 'monster' in the house, whose Medusa-face also kills female creativity.37

Although Gilbert and Gubar's analysis refers specifically to nineteenth century women's writing, Woolf's comment shows the continued impact of such images in the early twentieth century, and the repeated occurrence of 'monsters' in Mander's fiction suggests this also. Mander has for the most part 'killed' the angel, though she resurfaces in The Passionate Puritan in the character of Sophie Ridgefield, the perfectly passive and understanding wife. The frequent reappearance of 'monsters' shows that Mander replicates and reinforces received images of women who assert their autonomy in an unsuitable manner. These characters are confined to the 'attic' of madness and left there without question.

Mander's treatment of these characters reminds me very much of Charlotte Brontë's use of Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre. Brontë's Jane and Mander's heroines are shown as superior by implicit comparison to these 'other' women.38 Rochester's story of his unfortunate marriage is accepted by Jane, and by
implication Brontë, without question, as are the stories of all of Mander's heroes about their previous marriages and relationships. There is only one story told, and that is the man's story. In *Jane Eyre* the imprisonment of Bertha Mason in the attic is shown to be the best and only solution, as is the similar treatment of Mrs Hardy and Mrs Steel.

As Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* reveals, however, there are other stories which could be told. Rhys's novel re-tells the marriage of Antoinette (Bertha is the name given her by Rochester) and Rochester from Antoinette's point of view. Mander, however, does not acknowledge that there are other possibilities for these women who are portrayed as having deviated in an unacceptable manner. She merely retells the old stories about these women, and this undercuts the plea of her heroines (and heroes) for freedom from inhibiting conventions. The outstanding young heroines achieve their goals while the 'wicked old hags' are pushed out of sight and out of mind. Their story is not worth telling. In this manner, Mander's novels conform totally to the traditional pattern.

**The Passive Heroines**

The independence and unconventionality of Mander's heroines are undermined by the narrative structures of the novels, for the heroines are confirmed in essentially passive
roles while the heroes retain the conventionally active role. This is most evident in the manner in which Mander portrays the heroes as the wise teachers, guiding the impulsive heroines towards more sensible behaviour. Throughout *The Story of a New Zealand River*, Bruce is the teacher of both Asia and Alice and at the conclusion, Asia passes on to the guidance of Ross while Alice remains under Bruce's wise protection, as they plan to marry. The same role is taken by Arthur in *The Passionate Puritan*. He disillusioned Sidney of the sentimental, romantic views of love which she had formed under the influence of her aunt, teaching her instead that love is "good company" and "companionable habits", and that her expectation of a husband she can trust completely is unrealistic, for such a man would not be a man at all, but an "anaemic, underfed, expurgated sissy." (TPP, pp. 279-280, 289).

In *The Strange Attraction* Mander again reinforces traditional dichotomies by placing her hero in the active role, for Dane is another moderate and sensible educator. Valerie is portrayed as the emotional and impulsive one. For example, she does not think it is necessary for them to marry, as she believes they can exist in their own world and live by their own standards. Dane, on the other hand, is given the voice of reason which tempers Valerie's excesses. In the marriage dispute he maintains that some sort of outward accommodation with the ways of the world is necessary to allow them the peace to inwardly live by their own rules, and it is his view which
prevails (TSA, pp. 174-176). The depiction of Valerie as being submerged by love and swept into an ideal world while Dane keeps his 'feet on the ground', echoes the conventional view of men's and women's natures put forward by Bruce in The Story of a New Zealand River as I outline above. 

The hero as teacher reappears in Allen Adair. When the narrator sums up the cause of the breakdown between Allen and Marion, the blame is laid on his failure to see her side. This replicates the basic stereotype because it still casts the male in the active role and the female in the passive one, suggesting as it does that "[h]e could have done a great deal with her affectionateness and with her teachableness if he had only known how" (AA, p. 134). When Allen finally does perceive that Marion has suffered disillusionment as he has, he is transformed into a benign patriarch and this is presented as the best solution: "He knew he was talking like a grandfather, but he had to say something, and he was trying to help her accept the inevitable" (AA, pp. 160-161).

The ambiguity of Mander's novels is also evident in their unsatisfactory endings. Her heroines and heroes are allowed to get into unusual situations because of their unconventional natures, but then it seems that Mander has to desperately search for some way of ending their stories. Examination of the endings reveals them to be conventional in so far as they return each heroine to the traditionally passive stance. Thus the
endings contradict the active role each heroine has been accorded elsewhere in the novels except in relation to the heroes. In *The Story of a New Zealand River* Asia falls in love with Ross and follows him to Australia where she will assist him in his political ambitions. The possibility that she could have ambitions of her own (after all she is an intelligent and energetic young woman) is not even countenanced and nor is the possibility that there would be a place for her in New Zealand. As Cherry Hankin argues, Mander's solutions for Asia and Alice (who is to marry Bruce) are ambivalent because she sends them out of the novel by letting them "escape" with the men of their choice.40 These solutions reinscribe the old dichotomy of active male/passive female.

The ostensible feminism of *The Passionate Puritan* is countered by the form of the novel. Although Sidney is introduced as a "career girl", teaching soon moves into the background, as does her ambition to be a journalist, and the novel develops into a fairly conventional romance as the heroine struggles to overcome the obstacles which preclude her marriage to the hero. Indeed, the narrative suggests that it only takes love to make her forget her ideas about a career. Sidney and Arthur's relationship follows the traditional pattern in many ways, for she is an inexperienced young woman, (we are told at the outset that she has never been in love), while he is an older man with wide experience of the world and relationships. The conventional nature of their relationship is revealed when
he tells her of his past, much of which he regretted for he had
done all "the usual things that young men did when trying to
learn about themselves and the world", and she listens and
forgives him "as she knew all women did" (TPP, p. 210). This
conforms to the established romance tradition of the wayward
male being reformed by a 'good woman', as does the manner in
which Sidney is led off to a new life in a new country and
presumably a 'happy-ever-after' marriage.

In both *The Story of a New Zealand River* and *The
Passionate Puritan*, determined young women surrender much of
their individuality for the sake of a relationship just as
traditional heroines always have, while in *The Strange
Attraction* Valerie is swept away in a sudden identification with
the society she has hitherto despised, and rushes to join the
war effort as a nurse. Since Valerie is portrayed as such an
unconventional character who does not accept the maxims of
society or anything else without a good deal of questioning, it
is difficult to see her becoming so readily a part of the
patriotic fervour generated by the War. She has no questions to
ask here, and although she plans to do more than the average
woman (she imagines herself leading a heroic band of nurses),
she is thoroughly conventional in her patriotic reactions.

Valerie's submersion in patriotic fervour is an
inappropriate response for a person of her type, and it appears
to be no more than a mechanism to provide her with an escape
such as the other heroines have been offered. Allowing Valerie to be taken up by 'war fever' absolves her of the responsibility of making her own decisions for the future. She becomes a part of a wider movement and in this way is as passive in determining her own future as Alice. The ending of Allen Adair also gives the impression of a compromise. The reader is asked to accept Allen's view that the women are probably happy with their possessions and social outings, even though Allen has been shown to lack introspection and to resort to comfortable stereotypes throughout the novel. In fact, the conclusion is based on assumptions about women which the muted female narrative has consistently suggested are false.\textsuperscript{41}

The nature of these endings leads me to question the assertion of Lydia Wevers that Mander's heroines are "realists" who "live in a world of actual opportunities", and make the most of these opportunities through the exercise of their "talents, intellects and wills."\textsuperscript{42} They do live in a world of "actual opportunities" and I agree with Wevers that these opportunities are shown to have increased markedly from the pioneer times of Alice's youth to the post-war days of the two non-New Zealand heroines, Chris and Mirabel. Nevertheless, as I have argued above, all of the heroines are aided in their achievements by plot mechanisms which make it easier for them. Wevers asserts that each of Mander's heroines "is liberated from traditional economic, social, and financial necessities by her own effort rather than by a deus ex machina or any other deity of
compromise." Close examination of the texts, however, shows this line of argument to be largely without foundation. Wevers maintains that each successive heroine wins greater access to her own abilities and therefore greater access to the increasing possibilities for women, but I would argue that much of the work is done for these women.

Asia is liberated by her education at the hands of Bruce and Mrs Brayton, which gives her the independence of mind to leave her home and pursue her own way in the world. She comes back, however, and only leaves for good when she has Ross to follow. Through him she will secure a place in the outside world. Both Sidney and Valerie are shown to be more or less liberated from the "necessities" Wevers outlines from the very outset. They have comfortable backgrounds so neither complains of a lack of funds or dependence on family finances, though Valerie does list the need for financial independence as a reason for her continuing to work after her marriage, and she ceases once she has independent means. She achieves this, however, by way of gifts from her father and husband, not by her own efforts. There is never any question that these young women cannot earn their livings by their careers and they are also shown to enjoy the challenge provided by their careers, so they cannot be supposed to work from financial necessity only.

Sidney cannot be really seen as liberating herself from anything except her romantic illusions. In many ways, she
allows herself to become 'un- liberated' by going off in a situation of dependence on her husband. As Ross would secure a place for Asia in Australia, so Arthur will ensure one for Sidney in England. Just as Valerie allows herself to be liberated financially by the money of the men in her life, she also lets herself be freed from her marriage by the war climate. Mander portrays her achieving a place in journalism and Dargaville through her own efforts and abilities, but the conclusion shows her as essentially passive in allowing her to be shaped by events rather than forcing her to make decisions for herself.

Despite the conscious feminism of her novels, Mander's replication of distinctly misogynist images of women and the return of her heroines to passive stances in the interests of the exigencies of the plot indicate the extent to which her feminist vision was limited by the cultural and literary images and structures through which she attempted to convey this vision. These contradictory aspects indicate the inherently ambiguous position of the woman writer who attempts to mediate her perspective through an essentially male tradition.

**Conclusion.**

In her attempts to record New Zealand as she saw it, Jane Mander had to overcome the absence of a local fictional medium
which she could accept as a model. She also had to surmount the restrictions of the "genteel convention", which generally set the boundaries of expression for 'lady writers' and resulted in imitative works bearing little relation to the kind of reality she presumably wished to convey. She chose the standard Victorian realist novel as her vehicle but reacted against the constraints of the "genteel convention". As the above discussion of her novels has revealed, she did so by creating ardently feminist heroines and equally unconventional heroes, all of whom rail against the mores of a puritan and moralistic society. Because this society was most associated with women, the ordinary woman is depicted in a largely negative way as a means of asserting the heroines' difference from such women and hence their dissociation from society.

Ordinary women and 'monsters' must be shown as naturally locked in their roles, otherwise they too could be like the heroines and there would be no such distinction. Thus, there is a contradiction between the recognition of social conditioning in the case of the extraordinary heroines, and to a lesser extent Alice and sometimes Marion, and the submerging of such factors in favour of biologically-based stereotypes in the case of the other women. The distinction of the heroines is also guaranteed by giving them characteristics normally associated with males, and the pioneer male ideal in particular, which in Mander's New Zealand novels is set up as a positive alternative to female society.
In expressing this preference for the image of the pioneer male, Mander attempted to deal with the other major impediment to her attempts to realistically depict her New Zealand in fiction; namely the masculine ethos of the rural pioneering communities which had dominated her youth and with which she identified more closely than with urban New Zealand. Later, when she became aware of the manner in which her novels had been decried on moral grounds, she had also to confront the dominance of social puritanism. The bitterness and invective of The Strange Attraction's heroine Valerie, and the more muted criticism from the mild mannered pioneer male hero in Allen Adair represent her two attempts to do so before she abandoned New Zealand life as a subject for fiction.

The conflict between Mander's advocacy of feminism and her admiration of the pioneer male image which essentially excludes women is evident in the 'lapses' which disrupt her texts. In The Story of a New Zealand River she endeavours to sympathetically portray the experiences of the pioneer woman and thereby offer an alternative view of the popular concept of the pioneer male. Despite this, her admiration for the essential attributes of the pioneer male means that the character she creates for Roland has a lot more vitality than that of Alice, who is so sapped of life by puritanism that sympathetic identification with her is inhibited. In Allen Adair Mander's self escapes in the opposite way, as the admirable character of Allen, the ideal pioneer male, is undercut by the occasional
deflections of narrative attention to the situation of the female characters, in particular Marion, whose suffering is revealed to be partly a consequence of Allen's attitudes.

I believe that the muted female text of this novel comes closest to revealing the real feelings of Mander towards New Zealand; namely that it was a society which offered few alternatives to women. This is also suggested by the conclusions of the other novels, but in each case it is glossed over by the introduction of mechanisms which offer the heroines a romantic and dramatic escape in order to end the novels on a positive note. These lapses offer a stark contrast to the stance of identification with New Zealand in the image of the pioneer male which Mander attempted to uphold, particularly in Allen Adair as her last attempt to win favour with her New Zealand audience. The lapses inadvertently reveal that there was no place in New Zealand for the sort of independent young women whom Mander made her heroines, characters who in many ways must be seen as a reflection of herself.

Thus there are many unresolved conflicts in Mander's works. The independence and success enjoyed by her heroines are aided by their fortuitous circumstances so that they do not shape their own destinies as much as they appear to. This factor, plus the almost complete refusal to recognise the entrapment of less fortunate women, undercut the heroines' assertion of individuality and their struggle against social
conditioning. These inconsistencies result in large part from the heroines' denial of their female identity in their efforts to distance themselves from other women whom the 'admirable' males so despise. Mander's self-denial matches that of her heroines. The lapses which result from this are most evident in *Allen Adair*, where the focus on the male hero and admiration of him is disrupted by the underlying 'female' narrative. The disguise cannot be completely maintained and this is the reason for the ambiguities which are the most consistent feature of Mander's otherwise inconsistent novels.
Notes

1 Cherry Hankin, "New Zealand Women Novelists: Their Attitude Towards Life in a Developing Society," *VIVR* 14 (1975), 144.

2 Mander was not satisfied with the final forms of any of her works and mostly this was because she often did not have sufficient time to revise them due to other work commitments or simply because financial pressure meant she had to send them off for publication as quickly as possible. She believed this had a great impact on her writing, telling Holcroft in 1940 that the "dreadful" need for money had "ruined [her] entire writing career ... [because of the need] to hurry up [her] books, and never be able to put them aside for revision, for that something that you can see in a cool mood after the more exciting one of creation." See Mander to M.H. Holcroft, 2 Nov. 1940, Montague H. Holcroft, Papers, 1927-1967, MS Papers 1186 folder 16, WU.

She conveys the same impression in a letter containing biographical information which she sent to Ethel Wilson, explaining that her last three novels were all hurriedly written "under the handicap of too much hack work." See Mander to Ethel Wilson, 1 Sep. 1938, Mander, MS Papers 3404, WU. She had wanted to rework *The Story of a New Zealand River* but sent it off to the publisher on the advice of a friend without doing this, and she later expressed dissatisfaction with it. The advice of a friend also influenced the final forms of both *The Passionate Puritan* and *The Strange Attraction*. She claimed she was encouraged in the "misguided venture" of writing them with film scripts in mind, and it was a mistake she always regretted. See Mander to Ethel Wilson, 1 Sep. 1938, Mander, MS Papers 3404, WU; and J.C. Andersen, MS Papers 148, folder 29, "biographical note," WU. Her dissatisfaction with the latter on this account is expressed by her autograph in the Alexander Turnbull Library's copy, which reads: "Being encouraged in New York to write a novel that would screen I made this unsuccessful attempt." The light tone of her final novel, *Fins and Pinnacles*, certainly points to an aim at the popular market. Without the exotic appeal of a New Zealand setting, Mander hoped to create a good story with enough romance and melodrama to make it sell, and above all, it was written to fulfil a publisher's contract.


5 Webby and Wevers, p. viii.

6 Bird, pp. 171-181.


8 Bird, p. 173. Miles was one of Franklin's given names rather than a pseudonym as such, though it is significant that she chose to write under this particular, ambiguous name.

9 Bird, p. 177.

10 See Chapter I, pp. 48-49.


12 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.


14 Frank Sargeson, "North Auckland Story: Review of *The Story of a New Zealand River* by Jane Mander," in Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.


17 Jane Mander, *The Strange Attraction* (1922; rpt. London: John Lane/The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 61. All further references to this work appear in the text.

18 See Phillips, *A Man's Country*, pp. 165-166. He points out
that most accounts of New Zealanders in World War I begin
the story with reference to the struggle of the pioneer
settlers, and the pioneer background was seen to give the
soldiers "unusual physical size and strength, a mental
toughness and courage ... self-reliance, initiative and
practicality", as well as egalitarian bonds of mateship.

19 Turner, Jane Mander, p. 86.

20 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 535, box 1, folder 2, AP. This article
seems to have been prompted by Mander's observations of
young American women with whom she was at university in New
York.

21 The wider possibilities offered by Hyde's use of a male
persona are discussed in Chapter IV, on p. 209, while the
restrictions faced by the female characters in the public
world and the difficulty of breaking out of gender-defined
constructs are discussed on pp. 227-228, 244-245.

22 See Jane Mander, Allen Adair (1925; rpt. Auckland
University Press, 1984), pp. 7, 15. All further references
to this work appear in the text.

23 The New Zealand Herald reviewer of The River thought it "a
weakness ... that a girl of eighteen [Asia] should solve her
love problem as she does - the standard of decision is too
early for good public morality." Similarly, the Dominion
review of The Passionate Puritan concluded: "It is a pity
Miss Mander does not give us a story of New Zealand country
life which would be free from the sex problem motif which
has been ever-prominent in the present story and its
predecessor." Moral outrage was greater at The Strange
Attraction. The Evening Post reviewer described it as "a
not altogether healthy love story", another New Zealand
reviewer summed Valerie up as "shallow, childish, fiercely
insistent on her rights, and very often ridiculous", and
there was a lot of emphasis on Valerie's feminist demands,
which were seen as selfish. The Dominion, for instance,
implies that Valerie's feminism is outrageous and also
criticises the amount of philosophizing and "cheap
smartness" of much of the dialogue, presumably in reference
to Valerie's frequent attacks on conventional New Zealand
society. The New Zealand Herald's reviewer took a similar
line, declaring Valerie's immorality in the first sentence:
"It is somewhat unfortunate that Miss Mander's heroine is so
determined to confuse the 'freedom' of woman with a much
older profession." He or she was also concerned that
Valerie's swearing and beer drinking would give the wrong
impression of Auckland's young women. See Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.


25 Turner comments that the action takes place mainly inside, in the restricted domestic world of the women, while the men's activities are usually off-stage so that we hear of them as the women do and perceive their effects on the women. See Turner, "The Story of a New Zealand River," p. 5. Lydia Wevers also argues that the novel's primary focus is on the experience of a pioneer woman and that the men are "shadowy, incidental necessaries." See Lydia Wevers, "Pioneer into Feminist: Jane Mander's Heroines," in Women in New Zealand Society, eds. Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (Auckland: Allen and Unwin, 1980), pp. 247, 252). Similarly, Cherry Hankin sees the novel as revealing the plight of the pioneer woman, stating that it suggests passivity and trying to fit in are no answer to the problems faced by New Zealand women in following their husbands to a pioneer environment, and arguing that Mander attacks class consciousness and puritanism in New Zealand society, particularly in relation to its negative impact on women. See Hankin, "New Zealand Women Novelists," pp. 149-151.

26 See above, pp. 81-83.


29 See above, pp. 89-94.


31 Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 82-85.

32 Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 75-85.

33 Turner comments that the portrayal of these women foreshadows that of Marion Adair. See Turner, Jane Mander, pp. 59-60.
34 The term "provincial fiction" generally applies to works written during the period beginning in the mid 1930s and extending through to the 1960s, the basic themes and patterns of which are discussed by Patrick Evans in his essay "The Provincial Dilemma," *Landfall*, 30 (1976), 25-36. Provincial fiction is discussed in greater detail in Chapter V, pp. 294-298.


36 Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 15ff.

37 Gilbert and Gubar, p. 17.

38 Gilbert and Gubar maintain that Bertha is a manifestation of Jane's anger and frustration as an outcast orphan, and also acts as a monitory image for Jane, warning what could happen if she lets this anger get out of control. See Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 359-361.


41 See above, pp. 92-93.


CHAPTER III

ROBIN HYDE'S LIFE AND TIMES: THE SOCIAL AND LITERARY
SCENE IN NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

The second author to be discussed in this thesis is Robin Hyde. She wrote both poetry and prose but because of the focus of this thesis, I will confine my discussion of Hyde's works mainly to her prose. Unlike Mander and many of the earlier generations of writers, Hyde did not write in isolation from other writers or self-imposed exile from her homeland. By the time the bulk of her prose works began to appear, the mid to late 1930s, the literary climate in New Zealand had changed considerably in that there was now a recognisable literary 'school', a group of writers who saw their purpose as the creation of a cultural identity and who established their own publication outlets as a means of fostering this. Many of this group resided in Auckland which was where Hyde lived during the time that she produced most of her prose, and she mixed with these writers a great deal.
Nevertheless, Hyde was isolated to a large degree as this rising literary school was a predominantly male one, with many of its writers expressing distinctly misogynistic views towards the efforts of women writers. Indeed, like Mander she suffered from being considered not quite 'respectable' by those who created and controlled the literary canon of the time, although this time the reasons were different, for it was not puritan attitudes which excluded her. (The new literary group was, in fact, strongly anti-puritanist, as was Hyde). Hyde's exclusion was based on snobbishness about her journalism, and the feeling that she retreated too far into traditional poetic language and topics, as she was consistently associated with the Georgian school of poetry which these new writers disparaged, and there was also resentment at her associations with the old centre of New Zealand literature, newspapermen like Charles Marris and J.H.E. Schroder, who continued to control the literary pages of the dailies. The perception of Hyde by her contemporaries was also coloured by their views of women writers, which in the main concurred with traditional views of women as emotional and lacking intellectual rigour.

In the following sections I will examine Hyde's relationship with the rising literary school as well as her associations with the old establishment. In particular, I will discuss her stance in relation to social realism, the dominant literary mode of the time. Aside from the literary factors which impacted on Hyde's writing, the social and political
climate were also critical. It was a time of moral conservatism, particularly in regard to the role of women, but on the political side the upheaval and hardship caused by the Depression led to a rise in left-wing sentiment, culminating in the election of the first Labour Government in 1935. Hyde clearly did not accept the traditional definition of the 'feminine' which prevailed and her sympathies were with the forces of social change through which the underclass with whom she identified hoped for greater equity. The extent to which this would lead to equity for women was, however, debatable. It is against this background that I will examine Hyde's literary production.

Hyde's Life and Works: A Summary

Hyde's real name was Iris Wilkinson and she was born in Capetown, South Africa in 1906. Shortly afterwards her family moved to New Zealand and settled in Wellington, where Iris grew up, went to school, and got her first job as a journalist on the Dominion in 1923, when aged seventeen. She continued to work there until 1926 when she became lame and went to Rotorua to convalesce, during which time she had an affair which left her pregnant. Refusing to marry her former lover, she went to Sydney and after months of poverty gave birth to a stillborn son whom she called Robin Hyde, the title which she subsequently adopted as a pen-name. Returning to New Zealand she suffered a
breakdown and convalesced for a time at Hanmer Springs, before resuming work as a journalist. She worked at a number of papers, and had another illegitimate child whose existence she tried to conceal from her family. (This time she boarded the child out.) Anxiety and guilt over this child (Derek) and her constant fear of not being able to provide for him seem to have contributed to her suicide attempt in 1933, after which she became a patient at Auckland Mental Hospital.

She was encouraged to write by her doctor, and as part of her therapy wrote an account of her life for him. For the next four years Hyde had a secure base at the hospital's Grey Lodge, from which she was able to come and go. It was during this time that her first prose works were published. She discharged herself from the hospital in April 1937, and thereafter lived and wrote in several beach cottages in the Auckland area until she left for England in January, 1938. Her travel plans changed enroute when her interest in the Sino-Japanese conflict prompted her to go to China, and eventually to the war front at Hsouchowfu. When that city was occupied by the Japanese she had much difficulty in leaving, but eventually got back to Hong Kong in a much weakened state, and shortly afterwards sailed for England where she arrived in September, 1938. There she was plagued by illness contracted in China as well as disappointments over her works, and she eventually took her own life in August, 1939.'
Hyde's literary output was considerable, especially as both her mental and physical health were often in a poor state. Three volumes of poetry appeared in her lifetime (The Desolate Star 1929, The Conquerors and Other Poems 1935, and Persephone in Winter 1937), and another was published posthumously in 1952 (Houses by the Sea and the Later Poems of Robin Hyde). In addition, she had seven prose works published during the 1930s. The first of these was Journalese, which was published in 1934. The rest in order of publication, though not necessarily in order of composition, are as follows: Passport to Hell, 1936, Check to Your King, 1936, Wednesday's Children, 1937, Nor the Years Condemn 1938, The Godwits Fly 1938 and Dragon Rampant 1939. In addition, an autobiographical text, A Home in This World, was published in 1984, along with another fragment, "A Night of Hell", and there are extant three drafts of another novel, a fantasy entitled "The Unbelievers", as well as unpublished manuscripts of short stories (which she submitted for publication under the collective title of "Unicorn Pastures"). Her papers include references to another text "These Poor Old Hands", which, however, no longer seems to be in existence. All of her novels were originally published in England and many of them reveal an awareness of a foreign audience on Hyde's part, as she takes much care to establish the local, New Zealand, setting.

Her prose works cover several genres. Journalese and Dragon Rampant are usually seen as journalistic works, the
former being an account of her life in journalism circles, written primarily to raise much needed funds, while the latter deals with her experiences in China, and was written and published while she was in England. Of the other works, Check to Your King could be classified as a biography, as it purports to be a life history of Charles de Thierry and arose out of Hyde's research on the Sir George Grey Collection at the Auckland Public Library. Passport to Hell also announces itself as a biography, the story of an outlaw, James Douglas Stark, in the years leading up to and during World War I. Nor the Years Condemn is based on Stark's life but more loosely so and would generally be classified as a novel. Its main subject is not really Stark but rather New Zealand in the "boom and bust" years of the 1920s and 1930s.

Two other novels are Wednesday's Children and The Godwits Fly. Wednesday's Children is a fantasy centering on a woman's efforts to create her own reality as an alternative to the exclusion she suffers in the 'real' world. The Godwits Fly is closely based on Hyde's own life having developed through several versions from the autobiographical account she wrote while at Auckland Mental Hospital. The autobiography is converted into fiction as Hyde transposes the story of herself and her family into that of the Hannay family, with the focus mainly on the second daughter, Eliza, whose experiences are very close to Hyde's own. In contrast, A Home in This World is a straight autobiography. It focusses on the personal sufferings
of Hyde, and women in general, because of the gender roles and associated moral codes imposed by society.

As this attempt at describing Hyde's prose reveals, her works do not fit neatly into preordained boundaries and the frequent inclusion of poetic methods and viewpoints, even in the midst of the supposed journalism of Dragon Rampant, compounds the difficulty of placing Hyde's works within conventional classifications. In addition, there is a wide variation between the different works, from the harsh realism of the battle scenes in Passport to Hell, to the fantasy of Wednesday's Children.

The Social and Political Environment

The social and political situation of the times compounded Hyde's difficulties as a woman writer. As Hyde describes it in Journals, it was an age characterised by a "restless, questioning spirit ... asking the whys and wherefores of relief works, pauperism, [and] Ministerial jaunts overseas." In contrast to such political upheaval, the moral tone of society remained largely unchallenged. The cult of domesticity whose ascendancy I have outlined above continued to dominate into the 1930s and was accentuated by the effects of the Depression. Indeed, it has been described as developing from an ideal into a "monolithic reality" in the period between the two World Wars. The promotion of the family ideal is indicated by
the demand from trade unions for a "family wage" during this time and through the increasing state support for mothers in the form of the family allowance introduced in 1926 and the provision of free maternity care and subsidisation of the Plunket Society by the Labour Government after its election in 1935.

The situation of women in the 1930s is described by Eve Ebbett in her work *Victoria's Daughters: New Zealand Women of the Thirties*. According to Ebbett, a woman at that time was "very much a second-class citizen, and her position in society and security were determined by the occupation and income of the man on whom she was dependent". As the title of Ebbett's book indicates, Victorian standards were still dominant, so "[a] girl grew up in a society indoctrinated by home and school and church." This Victorianism was particularly evident in attitudes towards sex; girls were usually kept ignorant and to become pregnant outside marriage was the greatest shame which could befall one. Information on contraception was hard to come by, especially as many doctors remained firmly opposed to the practice. Abortion was limited to backstreet operations so women continued to suffer the burden of large families, a burden which became increasingly hard to bear during the hardships of the Depression and led many to desperately seek illegitimate means to control their fertility. The moral climate of the 1930s fell hardest on women for whom "no sexual licence [was] allowed... although the traditional double standard allowed men
a certain liberty.\textsuperscript{17} The consequences of this morality
(children) perpetrated the domestic ideal, as most women were
kept so busy raising children and endeavouring to feed them that
they scarcely had time to think about or agitate for change,
although the hardships they bore did raise the extent of their
public activity in so far as many women took part in the protest
marches of the unemployed.

Hyde clearly felt out of place with regard to this social
and moral structure and indeed she offended against it in many
ways - chiefly as a working woman who was not dependent on, nor
protected by any man, and because of her two illegitimate
pregnancies. The strength of such codes is evident in the
extent to which even a 'rebel' such as she internalised them,
with the result that she suffered not only from society's
censure but also from her own feelings of guilt. Her
autobiography records the shame she felt after each of her
parents had called her a 'harlot' and her efforts to fight
against the label. She declares: "I've had that word from both
of my parents, at times almost from myself, I get so sick of
arguing against it....\textsuperscript{110}" Similarly, in \textit{A Home in This World}
she writes: "I had a past moderately scarlet .... and I took my
sins with diabolical seriousness", adding that even if she did
not actually confess, she frequently indicated her 'past' "by
action", and that like a "good many other women" she
consequently carried "skinned knuckles and [a] sometimes abject
countenance through life".\textsuperscript{11} While in hospital with her
lameness she saw the implications of such a label in the unsympathetic attitude of nurses and fellow patients to a girl who died after an abortion and another who had syphilis, commenting that it was her "first really deep draught of the feminine moral code". 12

Thus she probably knew what to expect when she was in a similar situation. Her two pregnancies cost her jobs, her relationship with her family, and to a large degree, her mental health, as they left her with a huge burden of guilt. In A Home in This World she examines the oppression of women by a morality which has little relation to actuality, and generalises her personal sufferings by viewing her own predicament as one shared with thousands of other women:

To minimise my own agony would be to slander and make a joke of thousands upon thousands of women and girls who have shut themselves up in iron cages, thrown themselves into rivers (or into the arms of complete bounders, who have felt justified in dropping them hard 'when the dance was done'), and also to lie about the education we received in our childhood. No mercy, only a thin soupy trickle of 'charity' was ever preached to us. (AHITW, p. 29).

Such statements show she was well aware of the inequalities of the system with regard to women, and there is no doubt that this awareness had been intensified by the suffering she personally experienced as a result of such structures.
Hyde's sense of how women are shaped by social structures is evident in her arguments against biological determination as the reason for women's inferior position. In an article in the left-wing journal, Tomorrow she contends that women are reduced to "hen-cackle" by "almost every social institution" in the country, that it is women's "conditions" and not their "quality or intelligence" which keep them meekly in the background and prevent them mobilising and uniting to bring about change. Her comment about the "hen-cackle" shows an awareness of how women are 'silenced' by the social structures, how they are denied access to language and the power which it confers. She was impatient with the failure of New Zealand women to fight for their own advancement and often lamented that they had not made full use of their right to vote, and that women were consequently rarely seen in politics, with the result that women's issues were not represented. Her commitment to women's political rights is dramatically displayed in an incident she recounts in Journalese. She overstepped her role as a reporter at a political meeting by leaping up from the press table to give a fiery speech on the right of women to sit in parliament even though this could have caused her to lose her job (J, p. 55).

The knowledge that she lived outside the conventions of femininity probably contributed to Hyde's feeling that she had no place in society in general. This is expressed repeatedly in her correspondence, and is summed up in her lament to John A.
Lee: "I can't get over the feeling of utter unfitness for normal society, cut-off and queer-...." A marginal perception is suggested by her sympathy with the dispossessed Maori. She was at odds with Lee over the plan to take land from the Oraeki Maori in order to build state houses, and concludes her defence of the Maori with a statement which confirms her perception of herself as an outsider: "With this final glaring indiscretion, I remain still W Z's apparently craziest bit of work." Her sense of marginality is often expressed in A Home in This World where she describes herself as being "caught in the hinge of a slow-opening door, between one age and another"; namely the "respectability" conscious Victorian age and the 'modern' world which she sees in the words of "Nietzsche and others" (AHITW, p. 28). The consequences of this door not opening quickly enough were the "nerves" from which she frequently suffered. For instance, she wrote to Lee that she was afflicted by a "minor neurosis which is no longer a way of escape, but a way of thorns." The problem of "nerves" is also mentioned in a letter to Lawlor where she complains of feeling "rotten - nervy and sick and woebegone."

The family ideal was based on the father at work and the mother keeping house and looking after the children. The woman's place was firmly centred in the home whereas the domain of paid employment was largely a male bastion. Very few married women worked and young women often stayed at home until they married. Career opportunities for women were essentially the
same as they had been in the early 1920s as I have outlined above, but the Depression aggravated the situation and had the effect of driving women even more firmly into the home. There was considerable resentment towards married women working in paid employment when men were out of jobs, the rationale being that they already had financial support from their husbands. For instance, many married women teachers were dismissed and there were "earnest campaigns to keep women out of the workforce." 

The prejudice was not only against married women working but in many cases against women working at all. Women were paid at lower rates than men on the assumption that a man had a family to support whereas a woman would only be supporting herself or supplementing her husband's income, a supposition which conveniently ignored the situation of widows, deserted wives and unmarried mothers, who had no support but charitable aid and in the case of the latter this could well be refused on 'moral' grounds. Since women were cheaper to employ many believed that working women made it harder for men to find jobs. In 1935 Truth conducted a campaign which called for equal pay for women, the motive of which was not to redress inequalities but to put an end to the situation whereby women supposedly got 'men's' jobs. This was not only bad for the men, but in Truth's opinion an offence against nature itself, as "[w]omen's function is home-making and motherhood. That was ordained by Nature herself, and there are none wiser than her." 

Hyde's
stand in relation to such arguments is evident in an article in the New Zealand Observer in which she laments the "silly" view that professional women will take men's jobs.\(^2\)

Not only were women not supposed to be in paid employment, they were also not eligible for the unemployment benefit, even though those who did earn wages had to contribute towards the tax for it. This injustice was often attacked by Hyde. For instance, in Journalease she points out that women could be taxed on every penny of their income but are not eligible for any Government relief "save a contemptibly small eking out of clumsy and inadequate charities", and although Auckland's "society girls" are now "in almost every branch of trade", the city does not "boast any provision of the barest and commonest decencies of life for unemployed women who haven't wealthy parents to back them up" (J, pp. 71, 107). The lack of equal pay for women also annoyed Hyde. She remarks that her "drudgery" at the newspaper would have earned her "twice as much if [she] had been a man", and she must have felt the impact of this particularly badly when she had to support Derek from her 'single woman's wage' (AHITW, p. 32).

In her employment as a journalist, Hyde persistently came up against her status as a second-class citizen because of her sex. Like most professions, journalism was male-dominated, and this fact plus the limited expectations of women journalists are reflected by the manner in which they were normally confined to
working on the 'ladies page'; that is covering social events, fashion, and homemaking tips. This limitation of scope was a severe handicap to the woman journalist as such matters were considered trivial by the profession. Thus even the woman who entered the professions could not escape the gender definitions which dominated her sex. The impact of these restrictions and the prevailing prejudice against women in the public sphere is indicated by the comments of one woman journalist, Olive M. Allen, in Woman Today in 1939. She notes the negative feelings which greet the woman reporter who goes to cover meetings, concluding that "a woman has to be particularly efficient to survive the knowledge [of prejudice] for long." Her description of social reporting reveals it to be equally debilitating, for it is defined as "work that becomes incredibly dull for a person with literary ambition; work which is frequently humiliating to a woman of sensibility."24

Since Hyde was both a woman of "literary ambition" and "a woman of sensibility" the effects of social reporting on her were presumably similar to those described above, and indeed her own comments indicate her annoyance at having to attend parties and social gatherings, and report on which lady wore and did what. She expresses her dislike of this task in her article on the life of a woman journalist, "Leaves from a Penwoman's Log", and also in a letter to Schroder where she says she sometimes cannot bear the "feminine drivel" she has to write in the papers.25 Again in Journalese she describes the frustrations of
this "horrible task", which relate not only to the trivia reported but also the manner in which it must be done: "The clichés of social journalism remind me with horrible vividness of the smile of artificial dentures" (J, pp. 100-101, 16). In reference to her time as a parliamentary reporter, Hyde states that she became very aware of the inferiority of women's position, as she had to endure the cramped and uncomfortable women's press gallery while her male counterparts sat in comparative luxury, and were allowed into Bellamy's, at that time a male-only sanctuary (J, pp. 32-33). Her consciousness of the rarity and hence peculiarity of the woman journalist is indicated by the subtitle of "Leaves from a Penwoman's Log" which goes on to read: "Being some of the adventures and misadventures that befall a woman journalist in a country where even today the 'lady-reporter' is looked upon by many worthy people as a rare and astonishing phenomenon."

Despite the handicaps of being a 'girl-reporter', Hyde was able to make use of some of the less conservative journals of the age to express concerns closer to her heart than social gatherings in Auckland. Most particularly she wrote articles in the cause of women's rights and was a founder writer for the journal Woman Today, which she described as endeavouring "not only to let women say what they have to say, but to help them to say it." She also contributed to the left-wing journal Tomorrow. Furthermore, she managed to overcome the 'silencing'
of significant production through confinement to the ladies pages by occasionally slipping in stories about women who did more than go to parties. Thus she wrote about New Zealand's only woman potter, a female minister of religion, and other such 'oddities' as a woman bee-keeper and New Zealand's flying women.

At other times it seems Hyde was supposed to capitalise on her gender as a means of providing sensationalism in her journalism. For instance, the editor of the Mirror, to which she contributed articles on her Chinese experiences, complained that he wanted "more sex appeal" in her writing. She explains: "He wanted me seducing Chinese generals into giving me passes. He wants my lone-woman contacts with men ... (and) demanded, to know exactly what did happen between self and some Japanese soldiers." Thus expectations associated with her gender shaped expectations as to her journalism. She was supposed to comply with traditional domestic images of the feminine as well as provide a 'sex interest' when this was considered appropriate.

Although women were mainly confined to the domestic role there were of course women who refused to accept these constrictions. In the face of so much pressure for women to remain in the home, women who were already conscious of the need for women's rights pressed with greater vigour for their cause. Theirs, however, was a voice which was so far on the margins of the patriarchal society that it was scarcely heard and had little chance of gaining credibility. The difficulties of these
women were compounded by the continued identification of women with the men of their class. This meant that working class women demonstrated alongside working class men against a system which they saw as oppressing them in terms of class but not necessarily in terms of sex.

The Depression exacerbated the situation of women, forcing them further into the home and increasing their economic disadvantage by further limiting their potential in the workforce. Women's lack of a voice in the public sphere helped perpetuate their lack of influence there. As Ian Reid describes it:

The central zone of Australian and New Zealand society in the 1930s was a male domain, a region of prevailing values and political authority from which women were kept remote. Their peripheral situation vis-a-vis the distribution of rules and rewards was emphatically confirmed by the economic pressures of the 1930s.53

As the following discussion will illustrate, women were peripheral to the literary establishment just as they were to the political life of the nation, and this compounded the difficulties which Hyde faced in her efforts to construct an identity for herself and a place within her society.
The Literary Background

Hyde is generally the only woman to be mentioned in conventional (non-feminist) discussions of New Zealand writers of the 1930s, particularly in the field of prose, although Margaret Escott's 1936 novel *Show Down* is also given some attention. The 1930s was a fledgling age. A whole new group of writers appeared on the scene, many writing in response to the social inequities revealed by the Depression. Along with Hyde, Roderick Finlayson, John A. Lee, Frank Sargeson, John Guthrie, and John Mulgan were some of the writers who had their first prose works published in this decade, and the poetry scene was especially flourishing, with Allen Curnow, A.R.D. Fairburn, Denis Glover and Charles Brasch, among those to rise to prominence. The few women who were published in this decade were mainly the writers of popular romantic fiction; Nelle Scanlan, Edith Lyttelton and Mary Scott, to name a few, and Ngaio Marsh also began publishing her detective novels at this time. These women, therefore, avoided any contact with, or threat to, the emerging New Zealand male tradition whereas Hyde attempted to match the men in terms of significant literary production, and like them she searched for a new means of portraying New Zealand in literature.

The 1930s and 1940s marked the development of New Zealand's cultural consciousness and the circumstances of the time meant that the analysis of identity which developed was a
prevailing left-wing one. Keith Sinclair observes that the Depression:

led many people to ask radical questions about the nature of their society: why had it failed? It also could lead to criticism of Great Britain, overwhelmingly the country’s chief market and source of most of its overseas loans.31

Among those who questioned society, the new group of writers was predominant. The Depression and the growing threat of fascism and war which dominated the 1930s “produced a widespread swing to the left among Western artists and intellectuals” and New Zealand was no exception in this.32 As Ruth Harley notes, New Zealand writers followed the lead of the English literary left in emphasising the social and political responsibility of the writer and viewing “retreat into private, esoteric, literary modes ... as an abdication of responsibility”.33 In addition, as Sinclair observes, the poverty which most of these writers endured would not have made them well disposed towards the existing social and political system, and was also likely to focus their attention on the lives of the poor.34

The new group saw their task as the founding of an indigenous New Zealand literary tradition. In this they rejected most who had gone before them. In fact, Sinclair observes that they “were strangely unaware that they had any precursors”, ridiculed those they knew of, and seemed convinced they had invented New Zealand nationalism.35 The concern of
these writers was to write about 'real lives' and in this they rejected poetic language and poetic topics. As the novel too was changed by the new writers. The extent of this upheaval is indicated by J.C. Reid's observation that the "Edwardian temper of gentility in fiction" was destroyed and "English subjects and attitudes now appeared unreal." As Reid notes, this "Edwardian tone" was evident in the works of Alan Mulgan and C.R. Allen, which were in the tradition of English middle class writing and as such revealed a distaste for 'crude' colonial life. However, there was no such shrinking from the harshness of life in John A. Lee's Children of the Poor which was published in 1934 and in many ways heralded the new age of New Zealand fiction with its exploration of the hitherto 'literary unknown' of the local urban proletariat.

The influence of genteel English literary models continued to be broken down in these years as writers sought a new means to portray New Zealand life, a tendency which was part of the general questioning by radical elements of the overwhelming influence of Britain as noted above. This 'weaning' from the 'motherland' is most evident in Fairburn's essay "Some Aspects of New Zealand Art and Letters" which was published in Art in New Zealand in 1934. Fairburn advocated that New Zealand writers should look to American rather than English literature as a model because of the affinities between New Zealand and America as new societies who have to find their own cultural identities. McCormick notes that Fairburn's thesis
"came to be regarded as the unofficial manifesto of the younger writers, by implication in the work of the writers themselves."

The oppositional nature of the new writers meant they needed a means of publication other than the literary pages of the dailies, which remained the chief forum for literary endeavours and were dominated by men of another age; principally J.H.E. Schroder, Charles Marris, C.R. Allen, Pat Lawlor and Alan Mulgan. They were despised by the new generation, who associated them with whimsical Georgian poetry and general adherence to 'mother England'. An alternative arose in 1932 with the launching of Phoenix in Auckland. This marked the emergence of a new literary centre. As McCormick notes, "it formed a rallying-point for writers who had little hope of publication elsewhere." Phoenix published works by Mason, Fairburn, Curnow, Brasch, Cresswell and Beaglehole, and in bringing all these young writers together it became possible for the first time to identify a 'school' of New Zealand writers."

Phoenix was followed by Tomorrow which began in Christchurch in 1934, and along with Bob Lowry's new Unicorn Press in Auckland and Glover's Caxton Press in Christchurch, helped ensure the continued influence of this alternative literary group.

The development of these presses, plus the Progressive Publishing Society, the Department of Internal Affairs Centennial publishing programme, the New Zealand Council for
Educational Research, Whitcombes, and A.H. and A.W. Reeds, meant that by the late 1930s local publication had increased substantially, with the total number of books published in New Zealand almost doubling between 1939 and 1940, although this increase must be attributed in part to the centennial publishing programme. Novelists, however, were still very reliant on English publishers throughout this period, with a few hundred copies of each edition being sent to New Zealand, although Reed's and Whitcombe's did publish the occasional novel. The impact of this dependence on English publication is noted by Alan Mulgan in his comment that the New Zealand writer is therefore tempted "to write with one eye on the British public". Publication in England meant access to a wider market, the Commonwealth, whereas local publication confined sales to New Zealand's small population, still only 1,600,000 in 1943, and therefore was not likely to bring writer or publisher great financial reward. With the rise of social realism in England as outlined below, the New Zealand novelist had also to keep in mind the demands of this mode.

*Hyde's Relationships with the Literary Establishments of her Time*

As the preceding discussion has revealed, Hyde's literature was produced at a time of much activity and much change on the New Zealand literary scene. Hyde had associations
with both the new school and the old English-oriented establishment. This must have complicated her literary status since the two were so diametrically opposed to each other, with the new writers being especially vehement in their contempt for the old school. Ian Reid notes the "ambiguity of [Hyde's] literary affiliations", an aspect which is also apparent from McCormick's statement that "[s]he was claimed by both the rival literary groups and contributed to the journals of both". The extent to which she was "claimed" by the new literary group is doubtful, however, in the light of the comments they made about her work as I outline below. McCormick sees her in terms of developing from one school to the other, noting that her earlier work was more associated with the conservative establishment whereas in her later writing she moved more towards the 'modern' school in terms of greater social content and less emphasis on "the poetic." 

Hyde's association with the conservative literary group was partly a matter of timing. As Ian Reid notes, she began publishing poetry when there was no 'modern' group to attach herself to. (Her first publication, The Desolate Star appeared in 1929). Her attachment to the old centre is evident in her persistent correspondence with Schroder, one of the mainstays of this group. This correspondence began in 1927 and lasted until shortly before her death. It frequently centred on discussion of her writing, with Hyde sometimes sending him her works, seeking his advice and expressing gratitude for his
encouragement and assistance. She also wrote often to Pat Lawlor, frequently sending him poems or journalistic pieces for publication up until at least 1937. Hyde's association with the old establishment is further revealed in her inclusion in Marris's yearly editions of *Best Poems*, from which the 'moderns' were excluded and of which they loudly expressed their disapproval. Her connections with these literary men lasted throughout her career, which would suggest that she did not realign herself with the 'moderns' quite to the extent that McCormick indicates. For instance, in a 1938 letter to Johannes Andersen, another of the old establishment, she concludes by asking him to give her love to Lawlor and Marris.

Despite these associations, Hyde is usually spoken of as typical of the new generation of New Zealand writers. For instance, Ruth Harley argues that she resembles the other writers of her time in asserting New Zealand's independence from Britain, and viewing her country not as "a picturesque, innocent new society but ... exploring it honestly and creating the terms and vocabulary to understand it." Hyde has also been likened to these other writers because of the social and political concerns which their writings have in common. Joan Stevens regards her as one of the three major "novelists of social protest" to emerge in the 1930s, the other two being Lee and John Mulgan. In particular, she shared with her contemporaries a sympathetic identification with society's underclass, which is most evident in her preoccupation with
misfits and outsiders, especially when they come into conflict
with society. Harley contends that Hyde's low life characters
are very similar to those of Lee and Sargeson and also Glover's
personae, and further likens her to Sargeson and Mason in her
especially strong contempt for puritanism.\textsuperscript{56}

It is evident that Hyde did in fact have much in common
with the emerging literary group, and in many instances she
asserted her identity with them, as was the case in the speech
she delivered at Authors' Week in Auckland during April 1936.\textsuperscript{57}
The title of this speech was "The New Zealand writer and his
audience" or "Yourselves and Ourselves" (my emphasis), and she
spoke as if voicing the opinions of all her fellow writers not
just her own, telling her listeners: "the New Zealand writers
want your lives.... We want that part of you which is
unexpressed and put aside as day-dreaming"\textsuperscript{58}(my emphasis).

Hyde's sense of identification with the other New Zealand
writers of her age is most strongly expressed in her essay, "The
Singers of Loneliness", which was published in 1938. Here she
declares of this group: "in our generation, and of our own
initiative, we loved England still, but we ceased to be 'for ever
England'. We became, for as long as we have a country, New
Zealand.\textsuperscript{59} This statement also indicates the sense of
belonging to New Zealand which characterised her generation, as
do comments she made in letters to Lee. Although she felt she
needed to go overseas, "to see the publishers, find out where
I'm making mistakes, and gather new experience", she asserted that she was not going with the "smug and forever damned 'London is Literature' idea", and that she would return because, as she says in a later letter, she does not want to be "anything more or less than a New Zealand scribbler", declaring: "I love this place and all my work is here -."60

"The Singers of Loneliness" aptly conveys Hyde's feeling of belonging to a tradition of New Zealand writing and her awareness of what has gone before, as she outlines the progress of attempts to record New Zealand in literature up until her own generation. This contrasts with the tendency of the new literary school to ignore the efforts of their New Zealand forebears. Hyde not only acknowledges these earlier writers, but shows an understanding of the difficulties they faced because of the lack of a secure cultural identity:

The New Zealander was no longer an Englishman: he did not know quite what he was, in what ideograph, or of what situations he wanted to write. He was terribly lonely, terribly self-conscious....61

The impediments facing her own generation are also outlined as she contends that they grew up in a "false, unreal atmosphere", identifying with the land but lacking any knowledge of its history so that they had to "invent" their own New Zealand. This suggests the writer working in a vacuum with little to shape his or her attempts at imaginative identification with the
land, and the immensity of this task is compounded by the lack of any human shaping of this new land, "underpopulated New Zealand" where the towns are surrounded by "barbarous grasses, over which plough and scythe have never run." In the face of this she identifies her own generation as "the restless pioneers of new means of expression."<sup>62</sup> Her illustration of this task is very close to the way Brasch described it years later when he said the writer in a "raw colonial society" has to "create order for the first time, in a wilderness that is without form and very nearly void."<sup>53</sup> In addition to the imaginative vacuum in which the writer had to work, Hyde emphasises the financial hardships of such a task in the absence of secure income, trade union award or state pension.<sup>64</sup> The indifference against which the writer must work is indicated when she notes that the writer must carry on his or her task "(h)ead or unheard", and that New Zealand's record vis-a-vis writers "is a bad one, ... the better the writer, the smaller, in many cases, has been the attention he has received from the public."<sup>65</sup>

Hyde shared her fellow writers' sense of their social function and the need to create a popular and accessible literary culture. In the Authors' Week speech she made a plea for the unity of writers and the community so that "instead of being your freaks ... we might become ... the will of the people ... the organ of the voice, given back to the body, which is the people." She stressed that the subjects of literature should be the lives of New Zealanders and emphasised the
importance of knowing and understanding our own history in an
effort to know ourselves (as she believed the Maori do when they
recite their genealogy). Thus, she described New Zealand
history as our "living fibre" and lamented New Zealanders'
addiction to shallow American entertainment instead. "The
Singers of Loneliness" reveals this same sense that a writer's
task is to record his or her own country:

every head of ... grass has a story to tell, something to
say, of the past or for the future. To tell it lucidly in
his own way - that is the New Zealand writer's most
essential concern." 

Despite the factors which Hyde had in common with the new
literary school and her assertions of identity with this group
she did differ from them in a number of significant ways.
Although Hyde sought an authentic means of conveying New Zealand
in literature just as the other new writers did, it is apparent
that she did not adhere to their general views on the manner in
which this should be done. This difference with regard to
poetic endeavours is revealed in her article "Poetry in
Auckland" which appeared in Art in New Zealand in September
1936. " Here she clearly conveys a sense that New Zealand's
poets are divided on the basis of gender, commenting that the
male poets generally do not like sentiment and imagination and
believe that the lyric mode is "a weaker sister in poetry". The
works she praises most, on the other hand, are those of women
poets who do show such tendencies. One of these is Eve Langley,
whom she describes as "a poet of sound and sense", devoted to imagery rather than the "strength and intellectual purpose" which the male poets strive for. The difficulty of publishing such an alternative literature is highlighted as she notes that Langley's work is seldom seen in the papers, nor is it "suited to the darksome chimney-corners of most journals...." This signifies the limbo state of those who did not fit entirely with either school, a position which Hyde occupied herself. The exclusiveness of these schools is suggested by McCormick's comment that although "the 'literary cabals' of London might be scorned, New Zealand was not slow in developing its own".60

In this article, Hyde argues against the male poets' devotion to what she terms the "propagandist trend", for although she concedes that material conditions do influence art, she believes that "it is intellectual suicide to determine on one mood and one intention as the be-all and end-all of poetry", as this can only result in "an inaccurate and partial interpretation" and "limits the output very severely." In fact, she takes on the male school on a number of fronts in what can be seen as a deliberately confrontational manner, ridiculing Fairburn's attacks on the 'Kowhai Gold school' (the derogatory term often applied to the Georgian style New Zealand verse which dominated up until the 1930s) by recalling that he himself wrote the "one really exquisite kowhai poem" and likening his criticisms of such verse to "kicking a dead dog" because it is very nearly extinct anyway. She even goes so far as to conclude
that Fairburn is really an "inspirational poet" whose best
course in the search for an appropriate poetic form would be to
combine his lyric and satiric modes. 70

In prose as well she did not necessarily adhere to the
predominant style. Frank Sargeson is generally credited with
the development of a prose style which successfully captured the
New Zealand idiom. For instance, McCormick describes him as
"the exponent of a local tradition that had long been
inarticulate", 71 and from the late 1930s onwards Sargeson's
laconic realist fiction became the model for New Zealand writers
to follow, both in style and in its prevailing perspective of
the lonely outsider exposing the repressiveness of puritan and
materialist New Zealand society. As Ruth Harley points out,
however, Sargeson's style was only appropriate to the depiction
of a certain type of New Zealander; the rural, usually
uneducated, often unemployed Pakeha male, who has little
comprehension of his own situation or capacity for self analysis
(in other words, Sargeson's standard protagonist), and as such
Sargeson's fiction only presented a "snap" of New Zealand life.
Nevertheless, Sargeson's contemporaries accepted his "fictional
world because it accorded with aspects of their experience
literature had previously not dealt with, as well as their own
political and nationalist views." 72 For Hyde, however, the
acceptance may not have been so complete, for her devotion to
the imagination and her experience as a woman had no place in
such a literary mode. Her reservations in this regard are
suggested in a letter to J.H.E. Schroder in 1937 where she wrote: "I like Frank's mind better than his literary results as yet...." 

Part of the reason for Hyde's reservations about Sargeson's "literary results" may have been her distrust of the social realist mode or at least, her reluctance to see it as the mode as the other writers apparently did. Her belief that one means of expression is inadequate was expressed in the essay on poetry, as outlined above, and her refusal to follow such a policy is signified in the variety of styles and genres she chose in her attempts to express her vision. Social realism was, however, the dominant mode of the age, with the rise of the left-wing demand for the creation of a 'popular' literary culture. The impressionism of the modernists, who had dominated European literature in the previous decade, was viewed as elitist and there was a general move away from writing which gave primacy to experimentation with language and technique and emphasised the subjective, imaginative and private world, in favour of depiction of the material, public world. This move is signified in the works of 1930s novelists such as George Orwell and Graham Greene as opposed to the novels of Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence in the 1920s.

The ascension of the realist mode is conveyed in "The New Realism", a pamphlet by Stephen Spender, one of the new English literary left. This essay appeared in 1939 and states: "there
is a tendency for artists today to turn outwards to reality, because the phase of experimenting in form has proved sterile."
The artist is said to have "discovered that inspiration depends on there being some common ground of understanding between him and his audience about the nature of reality, and on a demand from that audience for what he creates." This common ground is the basis of realism. As David Lodge notes, realist fiction is narrated from a secure, usually third person, or sometimes first person perspective, and relies on the "assumption [by author and audience] that there is a common phenomenal world that may be described by the methods of empirical history..."; namely, the use of realistic language which is not greatly foregrounded through the use of imagery, any of which will generally be in the form of simile rather than metaphor, which is usually more disruptive of 'normal' language usage.

It is clear that Hyde did not fit in with this prevailing mode in many ways. Patrick Sandbrook notes that she declared that her writing was "realistic" and goes on to examine her use of the term, particularly as she attempts to define it in the short story, "In Search of Reality". In this story reality is determined by what the characters believe, as is also evident in Wednesday's Children. Sandbrook argues, therefore, that to Hyde reality was a personal concept and she refused to accept outside imposed constructions. Given that realist fiction depends on shared public assumptions, it is difficult to see her writing comfortably within this mode. As Sandbrook notes, Hyde's
concept of personal reality drew fire from many of her critics and readers. Since many of her books had a factual basis, she was often attacked for a failure to adhere to that basis. This was particularly so in relation to *Passport to Hell* when she was accused of not doing adequate research. Her reply to such criticism indicates again her personal vision of reality as she declared she endeavoured to write "from inside out" not the other way around.\(^7\)

In her attempts to write fiction, Hyde had to address the issue of realism and indeed had it thrust upon her by the demands of publishers. In a letter to W.F. Alexander, the editor of Dunedin's *Evening Star*, she mentions that she has written a "dream/philosophy book" (probably "The Unbelievers") but does not expect it to be published because of publishers' continual demands for realism, adding that they are worried that *Wednesday's Children* is too imaginative and imploring her for a realistic book.\(^8\) She made the same complaint to Schroder in an earlier letter, writing that the publishers "refuse to understand" her novel "The Unbelievers", and adding: "They are a little dubious about fantasy, and want me to give 'em a realistic book, which I will do...." (This was *Nor the Years Condemn*, which she wrote in the next few months).\(^9\)

Social realism does not seem to have been Hyde's first choice of mode. Her letters to Schroder reveal her preference for fantasy, the short stories and "The Unbelievers" in
particular, none of which were accepted for publication. In April 1935, she wrote that she would prefer "the fantasies among the short stories" to be published before "the thunderous war-book". (This was obviously a reference to *Passport to Hell*). The importance she attached to these prose fantasies is also indicated in a letter from December of that year, in which she comments that the publication of the stories would assure her "that the sort of thing which is [her] own natural medium in prose has some value; and that would be much." It is apparent, however, that there was pressure to write in a certain manner, that the publishers played a large part in this and that Hyde's failure to comply highlighted her difference from the new literary group.

Hyde's career as a journalist further contributed to her alienation from the new literary school, especially as it put her in the company of other journalist/authors such as John Guthrie, Hector Bolitho, Nelle Scanlan and Alan Mulgan, all of whom were associated with the old literary establishment. Ian Reid argues that these associations may have affected the perception of her by the new writers, and speculates that they may have thought it "improper" that Hyde should be impenitent about "having one foot in the newspaper world", particularly as she had "shamelessly" exploited it in *Journalesse* and often wrote for what were considered third-rate magazines such as *The New Zealand Artists' Annual*, and *Rata: A New Zealand Annual*. This view is certainly evident in Glover's satire of Marris and the
'lady poets' represented in Best Poems, as he ridicules Hyde by juxtaposing her different types of writing. Hyde is introduced as a Robin Hood:

who ranges round among the greenwood trees from classic style to rabid journales, who turns her pen from sonnet or from ballad to gossip pars, or recipes for salad.

Hyde's own letters reveal an awareness that she was not a part of the New Zealand literary establishment. While in England in 1938 she wrote to Johannes Anderson that she had guessed he did not altogether "approve" of her, and went on to add "very few people do, some of the best literary friends I had at 23 won't even read review copies of my books now, and if there were any New Zealand reviews of 'Persephone in Winter', I never saw them." Although she goes on to say that she does not approve of herself either because she keeps writing prose despite verse being her first love, the above comment about her lack of "literary friends" is a very poignant picture of Hyde as a literary outsider, shunned by those on the inside and with the power to make or break her reputation.

A note made by Lee on the bottom of one of her letters to him also indicates her outsider status among the literary establishment:

I would never fight Iris. She fought all others and they stopped communicating. I gave her license to bawl me out
any time she desired and I'd keep on helping her. In a sense for a while I became a sort of lifeline for her.\cite{Lee was one of the few who supported her and it is significant that he was not really a part of the new school either. This difference is noted by Peter Alcock who describes the new literary group as a "young and radical intelligentsia, largely university-based", whereas Hyde and Lee "had their essential roots apart from any intelligentsia ... [and] were impervious to, even hardly aware of, Yeats, Eliot, Auden, 'the moderns' of the British Isles."\cite{Lee, Hyde was also noted for his realism, describing himself as being inclined to "roll up their sleeves to hack off thick slices of raw life, and sort of poke it at you on a silver charger"; a comment which reveals the common perception of Hyde as being a mere recorder of life rather than an artist able to shape her material into a literary entity.\cite{Lee, Sargeson's reputation centres on his role in New Zealand's social realist tradition, it is important to note that his concept of realism was shaped by literary conventions, and he and the other university-based writers looked down on the more literal, journalistic form of realism evident in the works of Hyde and Lee. Hyde and Lee were, in the words of Hyde herself, "grubby" in the eyes of the respectable.\cite{Lee, Hyde's literary works received mixed treatment from reviewers. Her lack of favourable reviews is commented on by
Schroder in the obituary he wrote for her, as he attributes her lack of self-confidence and self-assertion in part to the many "spit-ball" reviews of her works in this country. Evidence of this negative impact is suggested by her reactions to the reviews. She mentions her hurt at the "faint praise" accorded by Jane Mander to *Passport to Hell*, and also comments that she has been "feeling slightly grazed by one or two of the reviews (of *Passport to Hell*), but much more by the celerity with which people seem to bring to [her] notice anything disparaging, writ at home or abroad...." On the other hand, she was heartened by the favourable comments made by Lee and Downie Stewart on the novel, and notes in particular that Lee was the first to do what she wanted, namely to pay some attention to the actual structure of the book.

Such comments reveal her sensitivity to reviews and how important critical comment on her works was to her. This stemmed from her continual uncertainty about her writing ability, an uncertainty which is voiced many times in her correspondence with Lee. Following her mention of the disparaging reviews which people are so keen to point out to her, she remarks: "and I'm not quite sure yet that I'm a good writer at all (in prose anyway)." It is unlikely that such reviews would provide encouragement. Her evident need of encouragement is also indicated by her appreciation of what she did get. When telling Lee of her travel plans she thanks him
for the encouragement provided by his letters during what was "a
downcast and lonely year, 1937, studded with absurdities...."

Hyde continually anticipated unfavourable receptions to
her works. In thanking Lee for his comments in the *Standard* on
*Passport to Hell*, she states that his article "takes up and
helps what the other N Z reviewers decry - and what, I think,
the dailies will all decry -". When *Check to Your King* was
about to appear she remarked: "I expect to be slammed by the
historians for informality." She seems to have been
constantly in an adversarial position; on the margins and
fighting for recognition and self-preservation. When *The
Godwits Fly* was released she declared to Lee that she was not
surprised by the "hostile criticism", and reveals a feeling of
resignation to such:

That happens every time - I think 'Journalese' annoyed the
daily Press, but apart from that much of the really unfair
criticism (you're [i.e. Lee] not the first to mention it,) is based on sexual grounds, and they are quite right to
attack, because although they are mostly too dumb to know it
clearly, I'm attacking - and have, and shall, with luck."

This comment indicates her perception of gender as a common
basis for literary criticism and also her refusal to be bound by
such conceptions, but rather to "attack".

Her frustration at the reception of her novels is again
suggested in a letter to Schroder where she remarks on the
"idiots" who review her works, adding:
I know some of mine is very poor, but if God specially constructed them for missing and misinterpreting points, they could do no better. There are so few I can trust even an inch, as far as their opinions are concerned.\textsuperscript{35}

This comment suggests the extent to which Hyde's writing was not appreciated by her contemporaries, probably because it failed to comply with prevailing literary perceptions. The impact of such poor receptions must have been particularly damaging to one who claimed, as Hyde did, that her lack of self-confidence was her "greatest enemy in every way, but most in writing."\textsuperscript{36}

The Misogyny of the New Literary Establishment

The reasons for Hyde's exclusion from the literary establishment can often be traced to her gender. Her male counterparts frequently judged her and her writing in gender-stereotyped ways and in a manner which suggests they could not see past such stereotypes, and were offended by her efforts to overstep the conventions which define the feminine. Fairburn, Glover and Sargesson, three of the key figures in the rising literary school, were all well known to Hyde and since they came increasingly to set the terms for New Zealand literature, especially through their virtual control of local publishing and reviewing, to be on the outside of their group was to be on the outside of New Zealand literature. The comments exchanged between these male writers are suggestive of a battle between
the sexes for ascendancy in New Zealand literature. The number of comments, and the energy these men spent in maligning their female counterparts suggest that they perceived the woman writer as a very real threat to their supposed superiority. As Lauris Edmond suggests in her edition of Fairburn's letters, "it seems he [Fairburn] was excessively sensitive to the encroachments of women writers...."\(^\text{37}\) Although most of the comments referred to in this section relate to Hyde's efforts as a poet, the stereotyped view of the woman writer which they convey suggests her prose would be judged in a similar manner.

Early in Hyde's literary career, Fairburn seems to have thought highly of her talent. Speaking of *Journalese* he remarks that she "would have been happier writing verse - which is what God made her for", and he therefore detests *Journalese* as a "misdirection of valuable energy."\(^\text{38}\) Later, however, he seems to have come to see Hyde as a competitor for poetic honours, as throughout his correspondence and also that of Sargeson, there are a number of references to Hyde which express a desire to put her in her place and therefore betray an uneasiness about her poetic talents. This change of heart may in part have been occasioned by annoyance at Hyde's book of poetry, *The Conquerors*, being published by the London firm of Macmillans as part of their prestigious Contemporary Poets series, especially as Hyde was the first New Zealand poet to achieve this honour.
Examples of Fairburn's disparaging attitude towards Hyde's poetry include his June 1936 letter to Glover, in which he declares that Mason is the best poet in New Zealand so far, adding that he "makes Robin Hyde seem very thin and treacly, in spite of her technical gift". The need to compete with and better Hyde also comes through in his 1937 comment to Glover that until the two of them can publish some poetry "Robin Hyde must wield the steering-‘ore undisputed." Although Fairburn remarks that Hyde should be "encouraged" in her efforts to leave "the orchid house" (of Georgian poetry, presumably), he qualifies this by remarking: "any attempt to set the menstrual school of poetry on a pedestal has my severely phallic disapproval." Fairburn's choice of terminology (he coined the term "menstrual school" to describe the women poets) makes the conflict firmly one of sex rather than of school of poetry, and this disapproval of women poets was evident among other members of the school as well.

The answer the new literary establishment made to those they disapproved of frequently took the form of ridicule and satire. Their venom was especially directed at Charles Marris for excluding their works from his annual Best Poems collections, and the point which specifically upset Fairburn and Glover was that a number of women had been included while they had been excluded. This is revealed in a letter from Fairburn to Glover in June 1935, in which he refers to the "Menstrual school of poetry" being "in the ascendant", and adds that "a
mere male is treated with scant respect." He goes on to suggest that male writers will only be able to achieve success by turning into hermaphrodites.101

Marris's supposed favouring of women poets precipitated Glover's composition of The Arraignment of Paris, which was published in 1937. This work shows that the 'menstrual school' were viewed in the same light that the eighteenth century 'blue stockings' were seen in by the male poets who were their contemporaries; that is as ridiculous creatures who overstepped gender boundaries in attempts at intellectual effort.102 The women poets are denigrated by reference to their gender rather than their works. Glover begins: "Alas New Zealand literature distills / an atmosphere of petticoats and frills", and continues in the same vein throughout. The "lady poets" are at first mistaken for "the ladies sewing guild", and are elsewhere referred to as "shrews", a "valiant spinster crew" and a number of other terms, all from the familiar vocabulary used to trivialise women.

Hyde, however, is singled out from the "crew" as one who perhaps shows some promise, though the overall tone of Glover's references to her is very patronising - she would be fine if she just 'settled down', and she is ridiculed for the wide range of writing she attempts, from journalism to verse.102 Hyde is also mocked for taking herself seriously and thinking that her work is deserving of recognition:
A pity she should lack a sense of humour; if she is roused beware! she's like a puma thie lassie who is never quite the same without her daily teaspoonful of fame. But let her be - she's still a giddy gel; if she keeps on she should do fairly well.

The use of diminutives and the friendly 'fatherly' advice conveys the sense of Hyde as a precocious little girl who over-aspires. It suggests that Hyde caused offence by attempting significant literary production and also inspired fear that she would be able to match or better her male counterparts at their own game.104

The use of diminutives to refer to the women who were being more than women by writing poetry was frequent among these writers. For instance, Fairburn refers to the "girlie poets", and the same attitude is conveyed when he refers to an argument he had had with Jane Mander about temperance, and concludes "If she were a hundred years younger I'd say she wanted her bottom smacking".105 Sargeson uses the same terms. In writing to Clover of his enjoyment of The Arraignment of Paris he comments: "The girls of course will all have hysterics" and eagerly looks forward to this.106 A woman writer was acceptable if she did not pose a threat. This is probably the reason for Fairburn's conclusion that Jane Mander is the best of the literary women in New Zealand because she is not 'literary'. In other words she was closer to what was 'normal' for a woman and did not unsex
herself by daring to compete in the field of high literary endeavours. As such she was innocuous and posed no threat."

Hyde was also satirised by Sargeson, this time in "Ticket to Heaven or Cling to Your Cheque" as part of his "New Zealand Anthology" series in which he ridiculed a number of writers, including Alan Mulgan whose Spur of the Morning was satirised as "Spur of the Moment" and John Guthrie whose The Little Country was parodied by Sargeson's "The Teeny Land". Sargeson makes fun of Hyde's poetic style of prose, mimicking the imaginative descriptions which occur throughout the otherwise harshly realistic portrayal of war in Hyde's novel. In particular, Sargeson sends up the 'feminine' perspective which characterises many of these passages. Thus he describes the landscape with images of women's underwear. For instance, the daffodils have "frilly little yellow petticoats", the jasmine displays a "white negligé" and other flowers are "shaped like little panties". He also implies that Hyde writes in an excessively romanticised manner by describing the captain on his dashing black stallion and the emotional reaction of the men to the officer's gesture of goodwill: "a husky cheer burst from every throat and there wasn't a manjack among them who didn't forgive him for nearly everything...." It seems that Sargeson also thought the realism of Passport to Hell too harsh as he makes black comedy of the hero's obliviousness to the death and destruction around him when he comes across the red mud which is
the remains of his regiment. This conception of Hyde as too literal in her realism as well as too poetic was also expressed by Sargeson in his correspondence with Glover as I have outlined above. 109

The male writers made frequent comments on Hyde's supposed lack of control over her writing and their tone was a patronising one as if they were the masters imparting their wisdom on the deluded young girl. Fairburn notes that he had tried to convince her that "poetry needn't necessarily consist exclusively of opium dreams. (But her new opus, or opium, seems to ... be tainted with the fumes.)" 110 There was a belief among these men that Hyde's writing consisted of emotion and hysteria, as evidenced in Sargeson's comment in a letter to Glover: "I've told Iris bluntly that being hysterical on paper isn't writing." 111 On another occasion Sargeson described her recently published poetry as "a sort of orgasm in 3 stanzas", adding "I wouldn't mind so much if they weren't so obviously masturbatory agonies" 112 He later sums her up as "hopeless" and seems to feel that her writing would be shown up if printed side by side with Glover's verses. 113 Hyde was not considered quite respectable because she did not write in the approved manner. Indeed it would seem she was actually offensive, as is indicated by Sargeson's comment above and another made by Fairburn in a letter to Charles Brasch in 1947. Fairburn comments "I have my strong suspicions of Robin Hyde. I knew her well. The vulgarity of her writing hardly compensates for its volume - and
certainly gives small evidence of any 'promise' of development."

The dislike of Hyde's literary endeavours seemed to extend to a personal dislike of her. In the letters of Sargeson this is often expressed quite vehemently. He calls her a "silly bitch" for her supposed intention to give Glover's and Rhodes's collection *Verse Alive* an unfavourable review in the *New Zealand Observer* and goes on to add that he is fed up with her. Hyde seems to have represented little more than a persistent nuisance to Sargeson. He comments on how much he has had to put up with from her, and outlines how he let her believe he had left a present for her son because of the need "to induce her to behave while she was meeting a few friends" of his. He appears to have found her misplaced trust in him amusing. In an obviously disparaging comment he described her writing as "fairytale writing" and then recounts (with what sounds like glee) to Glover that this pleased her. This is perhaps an indication of how far Hyde's literary aspirations differed from those of the 'Caxton set'. On the one hand she was accused of being too much of a realist and on the other, her literature was called "fairytale writing." It seems she could not get it right.

Hyde's views with regard to this male literary school are clearly expressed in a letter to Glover where she tells him: "I want no more of Caxtons or Tomorrows, even as fires", and defensively declares that Glover and his set are of no
significance to her, concluding: "Just keep your self-advertisements off my grass." After she had read Glover's lampoon of Marris and the 'lady poets', she displayed the same defensive invective and awareness that Glover's 'Caxton school' was a closed shop as far as she was concerned. She suggests that she will send Glover one of her poems so that he can reject it and "then the Tomorrow group can sing their little round song", and concludes that she will not attempt to anthologise New Zealand poetry because "Caxton will prematurely bring out some one-eyed one-idea'd thing and wreck the show". As a parting shot she assures Glover that she laughed at Sargeson's lampoon (of Passport to Hell in Tomorrow), and that she has been approached by "the quite respectable 'Poems of Today, Third Series'" and by the University of Buffalo Memorial Library for corrected manuscripts of poems even though "as Frank will tell you I write most on the backs of envelopes." 

The fact that Hyde does not seem to have been particularly liked by these literary men has more than just personal significance because of their status as 'literary men', and more particularly the literary men on the New Zealand scene for years to come. This group had a large part in establishing the New Zealand literary canon, so what they did not like did not get in. Their negative attitude towards literary women is aptly conveyed in Fairburn's term "the menstrual school", which clearly indicates that their perceptions of women writers were bound by stereotypes which reduced women to a physical status
rather than an intellectual one. In their view, the woman writer could not overcome her biological 'handicaps' to become a 'real' writer, thus her writing would always be 'hysterical' as the menstrual woman was traditionally supposed to be.

This view of Hyde was handed down to succeeding generations by this school, especially, as Hardy and Bunkle note, via Allen Curnow's comments in the "Introduction" to his 1945 anthology of New Zealand Verse. In Curnow's words, Hyde's writing was near hysteria and exhibitionist, guided by impulses that she did not understand. The other view of Hyde handed down by this generation was that she was a journalist and no more. For instance, Charles Brasch described Passport to Hell as the work of "a capable journalist, not of an imaginative writer", and he assessed Dragon Rampant in a similar manner as "good reporting". Like the 'hysteria' perception, this view conveys the impression of one who lacks artistic control and the capacity for analysis, and therefore is less than a 'real' artist.

The attitude of these men was also significant in that it meant that Hyde did not have the support of the literary group she tried to believe herself a part of. The identification with the group which she expressed seems rather forlorn when compared to the comments they made about her and her work. Although she fought back at their jibes, she also relied on their support in the absence of little else. Her exclusion from
the rising literary school gave her something else to fight when she already had quite enough to grapple with: the morality of her society, lack of money, and poor mental health to name a few. Lee's comment that "she fought all others" aptly conveys Hyde's relationship with both her social and her literary world.¹²²

Hyde's Position as a Woman Writer

Mary Eagleton describes the woman writer as repeatedly finding "herself at a point of tension, aware that her writing both challenges the conventional view of what is appropriate for women and encroaches on what some see as a male preserve".¹²³ For Hyde this "point of tension" was certain to be a frequent phenomenon as the gender roles of her time confined women to the domestic world and the literary climate accentuated this exclusion of women from the public sphere because of the strongly masculine and anti-female ethos evident among the new writers.

An awareness of the exclusion and difference of the woman writer is displayed in Hyde's declaration that the Auckland poets are "anti-feminists" and her advice that those "who want to investigate the woman writer's viewpoint might read Virginia Woolf's 'A Room of Her [sic] Own'".¹²⁴ This suggests a sense of herself as in a position of difference and an identification
with the exclusion of the woman writer as outlined by Woolf. The anti-women stand of the new school was confirmed in Glover's *The Arraignment of Paris*, to which the poet Eileen Duggan responded: "I did not know until recently that the Tomorrow Group was fascist and anti-feminist." A patent example of prevailing attitudes towards women writers is provided when Hyde recounts that the parliamentary librarian wrote to Mr R. Hyde, the author of *The Desolate Star*, in connection with the edition of *Who's Who* he was compiling, but when she replied and corrected his mistake, she never heard from him again (J, pp. 96-97).

Hyde was clearly conscious of herself as a woman writer, particularly as her field of employment, journalism, had taken her into a male dominated area from an early age. She was well aware of other women writers in New Zealand and wrote several articles specifically on the subject, as well as devoting a chapter of *Journalese* to them. At least in the early 1930s she seems to have had contact with other women writers, particularly journalists. She met with, and was impressed by another woman journalist and poet, Jessie MacKay, and also knew Jane Mander and Eileen Duggan, greatly admiring the latter as a poet. Her chapter on women writers in *Journalese* includes a reply to a tirade against women poets by D'Arcy Cresswell. She counters his "little sidelights on the obscure position of women writers in this their 'ain countree'" by outlining the writing of women in New Zealand to demonstrate that despite frequent claims to
the contrary, there have, in fact, been many women writers whose works show "what woman hadn't done, woman would none the less do" (J, p. 70). This comment shows that she had a sense of belonging to a tradition of women writers in New Zealand, something which may have been fostered by the formation in 1932 of the New Zealand Women Writers' and Artists' Society.¹²⁶

In another article, "New Zealand Authoresses", she responds to Glover's The Arraignment of Paris, which she describes as "apparently written with the purpose of depreciating New Zealand women writers and those crude enough to publish them..." In reply she applauds the efforts of New Zealand's literary women, "who manage, against a serious local prejudice, to take their part in building up a third stratum of letters here."¹²⁷ Earlier, in "Women Have no Star", she had noted the common prejudices against women writers, remarking that women writers are often considered to be "second writers", and recounting a conversation with a reviewer who claimed "that women [writers] never quite reach" the "kind of serenity and breadth of vision" which is evident in the novels of men like E.M. Forster and L.H. Myers. The reviewer dismissed the works of several women they discussed as "neurotic", to which Hyde replied that a woman's life is bound to make her "neurotic". This suggests Hyde perceived the 'nerves' she suffered from to be at least in part a consequence of her position as a woman in a man's world where her perspective and experience were not acknowledged, and where she was continually confronted by
structures which attempted to define her within the traditional feminine role.\textsuperscript{126}

In this article, Hyde further explains the particular difficulties of the woman writer because of her position of difference in a male-defined tradition, and the need to accommodate or overcome that difference. Her description is evocative of the tensions Eagleton argues are the lot of the woman writer, as she writes:

Perhaps the overwrought, over-taut vision of the woman writer, at her very best, touches a humanity and an insight which the serene male writer has not, because he has never been obliged to look at life with the perpetual crick in his neck, like Lot's poor lady.\textsuperscript{129}

Her "crick in the neck" reminds me of Virginia Woolf's observation that nineteenth century women novelists seemed to write with their minds "slightly pulled from the straight, and made to alter [their] clear vision in deference to external authority."\textsuperscript{130} This is a clear illustration of the woman writer's marginalisation through cultural and literary structures.

The predominant picture Hyde paints of the woman writer is of one who must struggle against adversity but achieves nevertheless. She declares that women writers' "lost battles with health, circumstance, humour and common sense ... [are] insignificant beside the real if chancy, good of the literary
work that women have done". Such achievement, however, is not enough, for Hyde also notes the negative impact of the receptions accorded most women's writing: "Some of it's lost, some buried, some embalmed, which is worse.... Either women are too blindly rejected or too overwhelmingly accepted, and neither state suits their peculiar style of beauty."  

This comment illustrates the inadequate critical reception of works by women, probably an outcome of the male dominance of criticism. It also suggests Hyde's belief in women's writing as a distinct literature; a "peculiar style of beauty". The effects of such partial criticism are evident in Hyde's comments on Mansfield. She draws attention to the political and sociological value of Mansfield's writings but observes that nobody ever seems to notice this particular "aspect of her genius". This is no doubt a consequence of the tendency I noted above to limit criticism of women's writing to discussion of the subjects thought to be the 'proper' realm of women's literature.

Hyde seems to have been well aware of the boundaries which define the 'feminine' and that she overstepped them in her life and in her writing. For instance, she wrote to Schroder: "D'Arcy Cresswell doesn't like me any more because I'm too uppish for a woman...." She identifies the business of writing as a 'non-feminine' activity (that is, outside the bounds of traditional female passivity because of its active nature), for she explains the "neurotic" quality of women's
writing and the fact that literary women often die young or give up writing after a brief period by pointing out that:

The mere effort of ceasing to be a woman - lacking in artistic expression - is so great and usually joined with so much opposition that a long summer is infrequent and an Indian summer almost impossible.\textsuperscript{135}

Once again, this description is highly evocative of the "point of tension" at which the woman writer is placed in her efforts to produce literature.

Hyde's discussion of Jean Devanny also suggests a knowledge of the prescribed boundaries of women's literary production. She describes Devanny as "courageous and independent, liberated from most of the 'frills' which are apt to hamper women writers...."\textsuperscript{136} In addition, it seems that the pitfalls which await the woman writer due to common prejudices about women's nature were very clear to her. For example, in a letter to Lee she admits that she kept Dragon Rampant light because "if I let go with emotion throughout, a very large section of the public would yelp 'emotional woman'."\textsuperscript{137}

Hyde's awareness of these factors clearly had an impact on her writing as the above comment reveals. Like the nineteenth century women novelists of whom Woolf wrote, Hyde was forced to write with a "crick in her neck" because of pressure from external authorities and her awareness of the consequences
of outsider status if she differed too much from those authorities. A clue as to the means she adopted in her efforts to overcome these tensions may be derived from the account she gives in *Journalesse* of a Marlborough woman who secretly wrote tracts for women's rights while living with a husband who abhorred both women writers and women voters. Hyde describes her as this "little overshadowed lady", who covertly wrote "a woman's secret thoughts, her personality and her demands", and then went demurely downstairs "and played little limp well-chosen moment musicale sort of items for her lord on her spinet" (J, pp. 70-71). Such comments point to an understanding of a woman's need for camouflage and caution in a 'man's world', and thus make it not unlikely that this was a tactic she herself would use, especially as she was well aware of attitudes towards women writers which distorted receptions of their works, as is evident in both "Women have no Star" and "The New Zealand Woman in Letters".

Being a woman was one of the primary determinants of Hyde's position as an outsider. As I have outlined above, women were excluded from significant political, social and economic activity, and Hyde was also excluded from the family and domestic sphere allocated to women because of her refusal to comply with the gender roles of her society. Furthermore, the manner in which the literary establishment constantly reminded her of her female identity meant that she had to deal with this in her literary endeavours. Her marginality was further
confirmed by her reluctance to accept the predominant literary mode of social realism and the 'truths' it embodied as the one way of seeing, due to her belief that reality was a personal and subjective concept rather than a shared public one. In the next chapter I will examine the consequences of these factors as they are revealed in Hyde's writing.
Notes


4 See Chapter I, pp. 40-42.


8 Ebbett, p. 6.

9 Ebbett, p. 121.


12 Wilkinson, NZ MSS 412, AP, p. 49.


15 This speech is also described by Pat Lawlor in a manner which shows her passion for her topic was very evident. See Pat Lawlor, Confessions of a Journalist: With Some Observations on Some Australian and New Zealand Writers (Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1935), p. 213.

16 Robin Hyde to J.A. Lee, 23 Oct. 1936, Letters from Iris Wilkinson to J.A. Lee, NZ MSS John A. Lee Collection, folder 3, AP.

17 Hyde to Lee, 17 Jul. 1937, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 4, AP.

18 Hyde to Lee, 29 Apr. 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 2, AP.

19 Robin Hyde to Pat Lawlor, 27 Jul. 1935, Iris Guiver Wilkinson, Papers from the Pat Lawlor Collection, MS 637, DUHO.


22 Phillips, A Man's Country, pp. 233-234. See also Ebbett, pp. 5, 43.


24 Quoted by Ebbett, pp. 48-49.

25 Robin Hyde, "Leaves From a Penwoman's Log," NZ Observer.
26 See also Hyde, "Leaves From a Penwoman's Log," p. 20.


28 Hyde to Lee, 6 Oct. 1938, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 5, AP.


30 Margaret Escott published her only New Zealand-based novel Show Down in 1936 but as she only used the initial 'M. Escott' many readers were unaware of the writer's gender, especially as the novel focusses on a first person male narrator. Hyde refers to Escott as "he-she" in her discussion of Show Down in "New Zealand Authoresses", though the fact that she discusses the novel in this article would indicate her suspicions as to Escott's gender. See Robin Hyde, "New Zealand Authoresses," The Mirror, Feb. 1938, p. 21.

31 Sinclair, p. 247.


34 Sinclair, pp. 247, 250.

35 Sinclair, p. 246.

36 Sinclair, p. 250.

38 J.C. Reid, Creative Writing, pp. 41, 56. See also McCormick, p. 173.

39 McCormick, p. 171.

40 McCormick, p. 171.

41 Sinclair, p. 246.

42 See Barrowman, p. 163.

43 Mulgan, Literature and Authorship, p. 41.

44 Mulgan, Literature and Authorship, pp. 40-41.

45 See below, pp. 164-165.

46 I. Reid, Fiction and the Great Depression, p. 73, and McCormick, p. 175.

47 See below, pp. 174-179.

48 McCormick, p. 183.

49 I. Reid, Fiction and the Great Depression, pp. 74-75.

50 Letters from Hyde to Schroder, MS Papers 280, WTu.

51 Letters from Hyde to Lawlor, MS 637, Lawlor Collection, DUHO.

52 See my discussion below, pp. 174-175.

53 Robin Hyde to J.C. Andersen, 13 Nov. 1938, Iris Guiver Wilkinson, Papers 1936-1939, MS Papers 1724, WTu.
54 Harley, p. 7.

55 Stevens, *The New Zealand Novel*, p. 50, and Gries, who declares that Hyde used her fiction for social purposes because her purposes were social, p. 139.

56 Harley, pp. 6, 12. It is sometimes suggested that Hyde's preoccupation with such characters is a consequence of her feeling of being an outsider herself. See for instance Felicity Riddy, "Robin Hyde and New Zealand," in *The Commonwealth Writer Overseas: Themes of Exile and Expatriation*, ed. Alistair Miven (Brussels: Librarie Marcel Didier, 1976), pp. 189-199.

57 Sandbrook argues that she actually attempted through her writing to break down all divisions between herself and others, to become part of a "spiritual community" and thereby overcome her sense of isolation. See Sandbrook, p. 50.

58 Iris Wilkinson (Robin Hyde), "The Writer and His Audience," Speech delivered at Authors' Week 1936, in NZ Authors' Week 1936, Papers, Copies of Lectures Arranged by the Auckland Centre, NZ MSS 542, AP.


60 Hyde to Lee, 1 Dec. 1937 and 27 Dec. 1937, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 5, AP.


63 Quoted by Sinclair, p. 254.

64 Hyde, "The Singers of Loneliness," p. 22.


69 McCormick, p. 175.

70 Hyde, "Poetry in Auckland," pp. 29-34.

71 McCormick, p. 182.

72 Harley, pp. 109, 126-129.

73 Hyde to Schroder, 2 Sep. 1937, MS Papers 280, folder 7, WTu.


75 Lodge, p. 40.

76 Sandbrook, pp. 117-118.


78 Robin Hyde to W.F. Alexander, 1 Sep. 1937, Iris Guiver Wilkinson Letter to W.F. Alexander, MS 311, DUHO.

79 Hyde to Schroder, 25 Apr. 1937, MS Papers 280, folder 7, WTu.

80 Hyde to Schroder, 26 Apr. 1935, MS Papers 280, folder 6, WTu.

81 Hyde to Schroder, 10 Dec. 1935, MS Papers 280, folder 7, WTu.

82 I. Reid, Fiction and the Great Depression, p. 73.

84 Hyde to Andersen, 13 Nov. 1938, MS Papers 1724, WTu.

85 Hyde to Lee, 11 or 18 Aug. 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 8, AP.


87 Frank Sargeson to Denis Glover, 5 Nov. n.d., Denis James Matthews Glover, Papers, 1928-1970, MS Papers 418 folder 18, WTu.

88 Hyde to Lee, 14 Jun. 1939, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 8, AP.


90 Hyde to Lee, 3 Jul. and 7 Aug. 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 3, AP.

91 Hyde to Lee, 7 Aug. 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 3, AP.

92 Hyde to Lee, 27 Dec. 1937, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 5, AP.

93 Hyde to Lee, 7 Aug. 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 3, AP.

94 Hyde to Lee, 30 Mar. 1939, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 6, AP.

95 Hyde to Schroder, 4 Dec. 1936, MS Papers 280, folder 7, WTu.

96 Hyde to Schroder, 27 Dec. 1937, MS Papers 280, folder 7, WTu.


100 Fairburn to Glover, 21 Sep. 1936, MS Papers 418, folder 15, WTu.


102 See for instance Pope's portrayal of such women in *The Dunciad*.

103 See my discussion above, p. 168.


105 Fairburn to Glover, 6 Nov. 1937, MS Papers 418, folder 15, WTu.

106 Sargeson to Glover, 24 Aug. 1937, MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu.

107 Fairburn to Glover, 21 Sep. 1936, MS Papers 418, folder 15, WTu. Hyde also observes that Mander is "almost the only literary female liked in Auckland for reasonable reasons." See Hyde to Lee, 8 May, 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 2, AP. The favourable attitude towards Mander seems in some ways to have been related to mercenary considerations. Sargeson comments to Glover that he needs a patron and concludes: "There'll be great possibilities in Jane Mander when she comes into a share of her old man's money." See Sargeson to Glover, 14 Jul. n.d., MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu.

109 See above, p. 169, note 87.

110 Fairburn to Glover, 6 May, 1936, MS Papers 418, folder 15, WTu.

111 Sargeson to Glover, 5 Nov. n.d., MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu.

112 Sargeson to Glover, n.d., MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu.

113 Sargeson to Glover, 4 Aug. n.d., MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu.

114 The Letters of A R D Fairburn, p. 158.

115 Sargeson to Glover, 5 Nov. n.d., MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu.

116 Sargeson to Glover, n.d. and 2 Feb. 1938, MS Papers 418, folder 18, WTu, and see above note 87.

117 Hyde to Glover, 20 Aug. 1937, MS Papers 418, folder 22, WTu.

118 Hyde to Glover, 16 Jan. 1938, MS Papers 418, folder 22, WTu.

119 See Linda Hardy and Phillida Bunkle, "Robin Hyde," Research-in-Progress Seminar, Stout Research Centre, Wellington, 7 Nov. 1984 (cassette tape made by Dr. J.C. Phillips).


121 See above, pp. 158-161.

122 See above, note 85.


125 Eileen Duggan to Glover, 2 Jan. 1938, MS Papers 418, folder 22, WTu.

126 See Ebbett, p. 157.


129 Hyde, "Women Have no Star," p. 17.

130 Woolf, A Room of One's Own, p. 71.

131 Hyde, "Women Have no Star," p. 17.


133 See Introduction, p. 16.

134 Hyde to Schroder, 2 Sep. 1937, MS Papers 280, folder 7, WTu.

135 Hyde, "Women Have no Star," p. 17.


137 Hyde to Lee, 14 Jun. 1939, NZ MSS Lee Collection, folder 8, AP.
CHAPTER IV

SUBVERSION OF THE DOMINANT MAXIMS:
ROBIN HYDE'S "REBELLIOUS, STRIDENT AND EXPLORATORY" NOVELS

Introduction

Hyde's writing is marked by its wide variation in style, form and subject matter. Her prose resists strict classification as either fiction or non-fiction, and she challenges the idea of one way of looking at things by offering a number of competing viewpoints. The tone of narration is often very personal, getting the reader on-side and involved. Indeed, the reader is recognised as an integral participant in the work, particularly in her last work Dragon Rampant where, as Hardy comments, the reader undergoes very much the same experience as Hyde, for the fragmentary style of the narrative mirrors the nature of Hyde's experiences in China.1

The narrating voice is never consistent, but wanders in and out of the novels in a variety of poses, sometimes intrusive, at other times withdrawing, and often sounding very
much like Hyde herself. Again and again a desire for a new order is reiterated through dreams and visions of a community where all divisions between individuals are broken down. There is also a constant underlying concern with the position of women in society, which becomes bolder and moves more to centre stage in the works in which she deals directly with her own life, initially in the guise of Eliza Hannay in The Godwit Fly, and later as herself in A Home in This World. Her literary texts encompass all of her inner divisions and her conflicts with her world as she attempted to create an all-encompassing vision in which fantasy and reality, male and female are compatible parts of a greater whole, rather than competitive, mutually exclusive and warring elements.

The great variety of Hyde's literary output and its constantly changing style and mood have resulted in a perception of her as a writer of talent whose fiction was nevertheless flawed. This view is perhaps best summarised in Joan Stevens's description of Hyde's novels as "rebellious, strident, (and) exploratory, rather than assured", but with a "strength" derived from their "poetic perception ... imaginative courage ... sense of pity, (and) the richness of their social observation ... which overrides their technical weaknesses." McCormick's assessment is similar. Describing her as "this most bewildering and most versatile of New Zealand writers", he emphasises the varied nature of her output: "Now she was a writer of fantasy, now a chronicler of life at its rawest; one book was written in
the flashy jargon of cheap journalism, the next maintained a
good workmanlike level with only the occasional lapses into
poetic prose or glib reportage..."3

There have been many attempts to explain these 'lapses'
in Hyde's writing and what has been seen as her failure to
develop a settled prose medium through which to express her
vision. Although Joan Stevens at least concedes that Hyde faced
difficulties due to the lack of a "literary tradition which
might have helped her to better shape her personal myth", and
remarks that she suffered from "the colonial dilemma" in common
with the rest of her generation of writers,4 the bulk of
critical opinion leans towards the view that Hyde's literary
'failings' resulted from her own personal failings. She is
generally seen as lacking control over her material and this is
attributed to the unresolved tensions which beset her attempts
to write. These tensions are most often identified as conflict
between the worlds of dream and reality, and the corresponding
competition between poetic and journalistic impulses. Winston
Rhodes, for instance, argues that her mind worked best "in a
dream world of its own", and cites *Wednesday's Children* as
evidence of this. He contends that the fantasy could not be
sustained because "[t]he journalist and the social historian
were always creeping round the corner to take charge of her
story and bury her theme."5
Whereas Rhodes believes that realism intrudes on and detracts from Hyde's fantasy, most other critics have held the opposite view. This is evident in McCormick's remark above about her "lapses into poetic prose" and in Stevens's comment that Hyde "was always in peril on the border between reality and fantasy (so that whimsy, especially in imagery or would be flights, disfigures her fiction again and again)." Another who believed Hyde lacked artistic control was Downie Stewart who wrote after her death that if she had lived "she would probably have disciplined herself more as her exuberant imagination seemed ... to make some of her work cloudy and unfinished, but she certainly had great gifts."

The notion that Hyde lacked self-control is highlighted in James Bertram's description of her life as "a rather embarrassing record of dangerous living and over-stretched ambition", with the result that none of the works published in her lifetime were "quite first-rate." The same perception lies behind J.C. Reid's argument that her early works are marred by her immature tendency to shock and show off, (although she later grew out of this, so that The Godwits Fly exhibits a more "settled" style), and it is also evident in Birbalsingh's contention that The Godwits Fly contains "numerous digressions that are irrelevant to the author's main theme of cultural ambivalence". Birbalsingh argues that even though biography provided a ready-made plot for Hyde, she was unable to discipline herself enough to confine the text to this." These
explanations have been summed up by Patrick Sandbrook as a dismissal of Hyde as being no more than a journalist who just dashed off her works because she was "unable to exert any more control over the form or style of her work than was dictated by the conventional expectations of feature writing or popular fiction." However, as Sandbrook's careful examination of Hyde's manuscripts and literary criticism reveals, her texts were subjected to numerous and careful reworkings and informed by her definite theories on the nature and purpose of art.

Until the recent work of critics such as Phillida Bunkle, Linda Hardy, Jacqueline Matthews and Susan Ash little had been done to highlight and analyse Hyde's position as a woman writer in a masculinist society and a masculinist literary tradition and the ways in which this is revealed in her writing. This redirection of attention plus Sandbrook's analysis of Hyde's manuscripts and consequent detailing of the theory and process of her writing have challenged the common perceptions of Hyde which I outlined above. In their analysis of Hyde as a woman writer, Hardy and Bunkle maintain that her writing reveals the tensions created by the intolerable sexual constraints which her society placed on the woman writer, because of its strict adherence to the dichotomy which associates women with nature and instinct and men with culture and reason. In trying to be a woman writer Hyde had to seek to bridge that gap, and her works, they argue, demonstrate her relentless efforts to come to terms with this divided identity. They contend that her initial
attempts to do so centred on the masculine guises of her earlier works, while later, in the Chinese poems and Dragon Rampant, she tried to "diffuse the issue of sexual identity by promoting a vaguely idealised universalism" which she was never able to sustain, so that she always fell back again on the image of the isolated and transitory individual.¹²

In reply to this, Sandbrook maintains that Hardy and Bunkle's argument amounts to a conception of Hyde as lacking self-control and self-awareness equal to that evident in the traditional views they attack. Sandbrook points to Hyde's belief that the rational mind divides people and that unity is, therefore, only possible on the imaginative level in order to support his view that her dissolving of identity was part of a consistent philosophy rather than an escapist solution to a problem which she could not handle. He further argues that Hyde rejected any specific discussion of male versus female because her concerns were for the social and political situation of society as a whole, and although her feminism is evident in the way she drew attention to the plight of women and in her attempts to break down prejudices against women's writing, this was part of her wider social and political concerns. He contends that Hyde rejected the idea of a "female perspective" as a simple reversal of existing prejudices which would perpetuate the divisions in society which she yearned to overcome, pointing to Hyde's comment in "New Zealand
Authoresses" that "Any deadline between the thought expression of the sexes is regressive."¹³

I do not see the views of Sandbrook and Hardy and Bunkle as mutually exclusive. Like Hardy and Bunkle, I believe that Hyde's efforts to be a writer of serious literature brought her into conflict with her identity as a woman. This occurred because of the manner in which her society defined the two as opposing identities, as is especially evident in the way Hyde's gender excluded her from the new literary establishment. Hyde describes just such a tension herself in her comment in "Women Have no Star" that women writers often do not have long careers because the "effort of ceasing to be a woman - lacking in artistic expression - is so great and usually combined with so much opposition...."¹⁴ Hyde's position as a woman who transgressed meant that she felt the impact of society's divisions more than most. Had she not been so excluded she would not have been so aware of the exclusive nature of these structures and traditions.

Nevertheless, the woman/writer and male/female polarities were not the only ones she wanted to eliminate. As Sandbrook argues, her concern was that all people were divided from each other by just such arbitrary creations of the rational mind. Thus her final strategy of dissolving and diffusing identity was the inevitable outcome of a quest for complete unity. It would, nevertheless, seem that the inner and outer conflicts she faced
as a woman would have been central to her desire to eliminate the social constructs which produced such conflicts. While she did not attempt to set up a "female viewpoint" to counteract the predominant male one, she tried to establish the validity and richness of many viewpoints, and in so doing sought a place for women's views and women's experiences which had been silenced by the patriarchal culture she lived in.

The attempt to dissolve the male/female dichotomy was central to Hyde's concept of the unity of humanity. This is heralded by her choice of a pseudonym which is ambiguous. Robin Hyde is a genderless name which offers a chance to escape the "man-and-woman habit"; a desire her heroine Eliza expresses in *The Godwits Fly*. Her writing of 'men's stories' in *Passport to Hell*, *Nor the Years Condemn* and *Check to Your King* is also an attempt to escape this "habit", to show that it is possible for a woman to imaginatively live in a 'man's world'. The difficulty of such an escape was compounded by the rigidity of gender conceptions in her society. Ian Reid points out in his essay on Australian and New Zealand women writers that "the male-oriented assumptions were so pervasive in Australian and New Zealand society in the thirties that a completely alternative point of view must have been inconceivable." Thus there was a need for Hyde to minimise her difference from the prevailing ethos, and thereby make her alternatives more conceivable. Writing of the traditionally masculine world and adopting male personas was one means by which Hyde endeavoured
to do so, as this accorded with the maxims of her society better than a female-centred perspective would. In other instances, she dealt more directly with her experience and identity as a woman and offered alternatives which were less conceivable to her society. The following two sections discuss these different means adopted by Hyde to deal with her female identity in her literary endeavours.

Finally I will examine the literary consequences in terms of form and style of the questioning and oppositional stance which Hyde adopted towards the society which held no place for her. This was a trait she shared with many of her fellow writers, who also frequently revealed society's ugliness from the perspective of the poor and the outcast. Hyde's extra exclusion is, however, evident in texts characterised by persistent acts of revision and subversion of the tenets of both her society and its literary culture. They are also marked by ambiguities which no doubt reflect her position as an outsider who longs for acceptance in society, but at the same time rejects its narrow social codes as destructive of the inner self.

**Appropriation and Subversion of the Masculine Ethos**

In her two novels based on the life of James Douglas Stark, *Passport to Hell* and *Nor the Years Condemn*, Hyde adopts a
similar tactic to that of Mander as discussed above, namely appropriation of a romantic male image of freedom. Hyde created Starkie as an itinerant male along the lines of the myth which Phillips documents as representing the non-respectable but secretly admired pioneer male ideal of toughness and spirit which had been revived by World War I. Starkie was not at one with his society. Indeed, in Phillips's words he "was the male who represented all that the official culture of New Zealand had found most objectionable: the drifting fighting criminal." Nevertheless, the similarities which the Starkie persona bore to the pioneer myth meant that he was more conceivable, that is, less of an affront to the prevailing ideologies, than any female hero. The creation of the Starkie character helped Hyde to minimise her difference from the dominant masculine ethos.

Furthermore, as Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews comment, Hyde needed to adopt a persona such as Starkie in order to convey the panoramic view of New Zealand society recorded in *Nor the Years Condemn*. A female persona with such freedom would not have been credible. Her adoption of this persona did not, however, result in a submerging of her self, as Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews observe. Indeed, she subverts the masculine values on which the persona rests by showing up the hollowness of these values and the harshness of the world they create. She also uses this male myth as a vehicle to convey alternative female-centred viewpoints which undercut the validity of much of what the novels purport to uphold. Most significantly, her act of
imaginatively identifying with and recreating conventionally masculine experiences challenges the very dichotomy on which her society rested, and she takes this further by depicting characters who cross or merge the divisions which supposedly define gender identity.

*Passport to Hell* was Hyde's first published novel, and it grew out of Hyde's interviews with Stark.²⁰ No doubt Hyde's journalist's eye made her quickly aware of the possibilities of Stark's story, particularly as a vehicle for conveying the extent of the social injustices perpetrated on the already dispossessed. This is evident in her later comments about the novel and the character of Starkie. For instance, she told Lee that in *Passport to Hell* she had written of "the vanquished" as he had suggested she should,²¹ and to Schroder she declared: "I wrote this book because I had to write it when I heard his story, and because it's an illustration of Walt Whitman's line - "There is to me something profoundly affecting in large masses of men following the lead of those who do not believe in man."²² As D.I.B. Smith notes, it is likely she was also drawn to Stark's story because of her childhood memories of World War I, in which her father had served and her uncle had died.²³

In a society where gender barriers were so rigidly drawn, Starkie seems to represent the extremes of masculinity: the tough, ruthless and itinerant male who is a survivor against the odds in wartime as in peacetime. Nevertheless, in her ability
to imaginatively identify with and recreate his world, Hyde shows that the masculine and the feminine spheres are not so irredeemably separated. Indeed, her success in recreating Starkie's experiences in both *Passport to Hell* and *For the Years Condemned* has occasioned some astonishment. Both John A. Lee and Downie Stewart, who were veterans of the campaigns, attested to the realism of *Passport to Hell*’s battle scenes, with the latter declaring that “it is hard to believe the author was not at the front.”⁵² Similarly Joan Stevens describes the two novels as "remarkable" for their picture of "the tough male world which Robin Hyde could only know of by hearsay and reconstruct only with imaginative sympathy."⁵³ J.C. Reid also comments that they are a "surprising achievement for a woman", and Joan Gries remarks that they are an "impressive achievement" because the character of Stark is so different from Hyde herself.⁵⁶

Hyde's challenge to the accepted dichotomies went further. Her refusal to simply reproduce the world which Starkie inhabits through conventional masculine perspectives is evidenced by her occasional use of feminine perspectives within this man's story. At the beginning the narrator describes going to Starkie’s house, speaking as a woman and to the readers as women, when she comments that the Carpenter's Arms, a pub which she passes, "is conveniently wide-windowed so that you can observe whether your husband happens to be one of the drowning flies ... in the bar."⁵⁷ In places, traditionally feminine metaphors are used to portray the harsh masculine environment,
with smoke from the destroyers described as working "a pattern in cross-stitch" on the "grey-quilted satin of Marseilles harbour", and the French countryside depicted as a "diminutive sampler" (PTH, pp. 137, 140). These are probably not the terms Stark would have used and they disrupt the generally masculine nature of the experiences described, thereby undermining the divisions between the masculine and feminine spheres.

Hyde subverts the conventional view of women as the weaker sex. For instance, the women the troops see as they march through the French countryside are not portrayed in the usual way as passive victims of a mass of pillaging and raping soldiers. Instead they are shown through Starkie's eyes as being firmly in control. He observes that even the old women seem to imply that after the Germans have been beaten, the soldiers "might as a great treat be permitted to seduce them" (PTH, p. 141) [my emphasis]. Significantly the use of "permitted" makes the women the active subject of the sentence rather than the passive object as is normally the case in descriptions of sexual relationships. The women's strength seems such that they are indifferent to the men around them. They appear to think no more of embracing a soldier than they would of "patting a useful dog" (PTH, pp. 141-142).

Such strength and self-sufficiency in women is incompatible with the traditional view of women as sex objects, as is underlined when Starkie has difficulty in imagining "one
of these Hecubas surrendering herself to a *gendarme* with a wax moustache and patent-leather hair" (PTH, p. 142). Here there seems to be almost a reversal of traditional gender roles, with the narrator making fun of such conceptions, as is also the case earlier, when New Zealand courtship rituals are portrayed. In an ironic tone, the narrator describes young people going walking, with the boys lingering so that "the frailer limbs of femininity could catch up...", and immediately undercuts this assumption of female frailty by going on to refer to the girls as "very aloof and splendid, like a bunch of wild mares..." (PTH, p. 43).

Many of the female-centred aspects of the novel are not well integrated into the rest of the action, being set mainly in the realms of fantasy in contrast to the harshly realistic world where Starkie's adventures are usually set. This distinctness in many ways reinforces the male/female dichotomy which Hyde elsewhere endeavours to overcome. The world in which the action is set is a very masculinist one; the hotel, the reform school, the coal ship and the streets as well as the battlefields. Starkie is frequently imbued with a view of women which is very romantic and idealised, and women are often associated with dream-like intervals away from the 'real' world. In these female-dominated retreats, Starkie is portrayed as being accepted and happy. The world in which Starkie suffers is built on masculinist values and Hyde shows up the brutality of these, even to one who apparently symbolises these values, whereas the
women often symbolise alternative values of peace, romance and freedom. They are on the fringes of society, however, and only provide a brief respite.

One example of this is Starkie's youthful relationship with May which is presented as an idyllic retreat from the harshness of the world. May is portrayed as a child of nature; at home amidst "the tangled bracken", and on the beach, where they enjoy naked but chaste moonlight swims together, their chastity emphasising the idealised nature of their relationship (PTH, p. 44). During his time at the war, Starkie also has dream-like intervals with women which momentarily eclipse the horrors of the battlefield. He sits all night with a crying prostitute in Alexandria, and muses: "it seemed so queer to think that it was all real, that they were two people touching each other - and what would happen to them soon" (PTH, p. 125).

The women who live amidst the battlefields are portrayed as though they are divorced from the male-centred action around them, and to Starkie they provide a symbol of normality. There is a convent where the nuns still worry about dirty boots on the floors, and the little farm where Starkie spends a day helping an old woman and her two granddaughters. He feels just "like a farm boy", and in many ways it is like a return to an idyllic childhood. The escapist quality of this experience is underlined, for Starkie feels as if he is "lying on a cloud", and finds it hard to believe that he has just come in "dripping
from the war (PTH, pp. 211-212). Similarly, his stay in an English hospital is perceived by him as an idealised retreat, a "little circlet" where he is accepted by 'respectable' people, and is happier than he has ever been before, especially in the company of one of the nurses, who affectionately calls him "Choc'lit Soldier", a name which has overtones of fairy-tales and so reinforces the escapist tone (PTH, p. 230).

There is a continual contrast between these intervals and the harsh reality of Starkie's life in both war and peace, and as the above examples indicate, women are often associated with these retreats whereas the real world is a distinctly masculine one. The fact that women remain very much on the fringes of Starkie's world may be a reflection of Hyde's perception of the marginality of women in society. The contrast reinforces the extreme manner in which the experiences of men and women are so separated by convention, for Hyde endows Starkie with a perception of women's experiences as idealised dreams. It may also be an implicit plea for the inclusion of female-centred values in the male realm which is shown to be so harsh and dehumanised.

Although Starkie seems to be in his element in war, the ultimate masculine experience, he does not really fit in. Despite his strong desire to get back to the battle and fight it out to the end with his mates, he is portrayed as happiest during the dream-like intervals he spends with women. Starkie's
essential exclusion is emphasised on his return to New Zealand, when he thinks to himself that civilian life will not be any better than being in the war, because "[e]verything ... life even ... is a field punishment, except for those rare moments when you're in love with a nice girl, or having fun with the boys." (PTH, p. 256).

In showing Starkie as perpetually excluded and allowing the reader to glimpse the pain of this exclusion, Hyde does not, as Felicity Riddy claims, "accept and endorse ... [the] romanticization of masculinity, ... [and] see it as an essential freedom of the spirit" in the manner of Mulgan's Johnson and Glover's personae. 22 On the contrary, she emphasises the harshness of a world built on masculine values, particularly by showing how one who apparently subscribes to these values is nevertheless alienated from the world they create and longs for something more. This 'something more' is symbolised by women and in many ways Hyde subscribes to the conventional masculine myth which sees women as the stable centre of equipoise for the restless male. This conflicts with the manner in which she attempts to break down gender stereotypes elsewhere in the novel as I have outlined above. This means that despite Hyde's success in recreating Starkie's experiences, the worlds of women and men are still very much separate entities in this novel.
Written during 1937 after Hyde had left Grey Lodge, and published in 1938, *Nor the Years Condemn* is regarded as the sequel to *Passport to Hell*, as it takes up the story of Starkie after his return from the War. The main difficulty in Hyde's use of Starkie in this novel is that the persona is that of a 'man of action' rather than self-analysis or contemplation of the society he lives in. Thus the novel's social comment, which is so central to Hyde's purpose, must be conveyed in observations which often seem inappropriate to the character of Starkie, or through the idealised characters of Bede and Macnamara who glide through the novel like wraiths in contrast to the much more 'concrete' Starkie. As a result there is an obvious gap between Starkie's story and what Hyde wished to convey through recreating it. This shows up the limitations of Hyde's appropriation of the masculine persona to convey her own vision, especially as this is very often a specifically female-centred vision.

In *Nor the Years Condemn* Hyde uses Starkie's story to depict a society which is rigidly divided on gender lines. This is succinctly illustrated in the disapproval which greets the young woman, Susan, when she enters the masculine sanctuary of a bar in search of Starkie.²⁻⁵ The War is shown to have exacerbated these divisions, with soldiers returning to "a woman's world which had not been able to take part in their four years, and which had at last learned to drag along without them" (*NTYC*, p. 33). Hyde portrays such divisions, but then goes
further to subvert them by showing up the destructive and divisive effect of gender stereotypes and the incomplete images of the opposite sex which they promote.

This is demonstrated in the account of Starkie's first marriage. Terry becomes Starkie's wife in an attempt to flee the confinement of her normal family life. Recognising that Starkie is not part of society's stifling normality, she thinks "it would be fun to run away with Starkie; really to live for a while like a tramp" (NYC, pp. 88-89). Starkie also wants to marry her as a means of escape from his reality, the very lifestyle which she sees as a dream. He has a vision of her as a conventional wife, "in a little house, bending over the stew pots" (NYC, p. 86). The failure of their marriage is inevitable because it is only their dream images of each other that they marry and these dreams are incompatible. Their real selves are hidden beneath conventions, and Hyde uses them to stress the gap in comprehension produced by the false visions which men and women have of each other because of these conventions.

In many instances, stereotyped views of women are reproduced, but these are implicitly challenged by the insights into women's experiences which are offered elsewhere. Starkie is very like the later protagonists of Sargeson, and Mulgan's Johnson in *Man Alone*. He is a restless figure with no commitments or responsibilities, and the novel often presents
women in ways which are similar to the images of women presented by these male novelists. The male characters have an image of women as continually nagging and restricting men's freedom. For instance, an ex-soldier celebrates the fact that his English wife has not yet caught up with him, declaring that "It was nothing but nag, nag, nag, while I had her", and Starkie spends a day fishing with a man who has similar complaints (NYTC, pp. 41, 141).

As a contrast to these male views of women, the novel also offers the other side, and in so doing Hyde subverts these conventions. This is often done through the narrator's comments. For instance, in a descriptive passage on the social and marriage scene of the 1920s, the narrator points out the difficulties faced by young women, directing the reader's sympathy towards the young bride whose groom shoots himself in despair, noting that everyone says "Poor old Jack, ... but nobody thought, in the same degree, poor young Laura or Mavis..." (NYTC, p. 118). For those who do marry and retreat from each other in incomprehension, the narrator again gives the women's side. We have heard the men complaining, but now are told that for the women it is much worse, for they are "more untrained, and consequently more easily bewildered" (NYTC, p. 119). Such passages convey a very definite sense of Hyde's agenda in using Starkie's story as a vehicle for her wider concerns.
At the same time as she uses the symbol of masculine freedom embodied by Starkie in order to convey the width and breadth of New Zealand, Hyde challenges the validity of such extreme masculinity and undermines it by giving Starkie traits incompatible with the image and showing him sharing the experiences of women. For instance, she sometimes uses Starkie and even some of the other men as spokesmen for women's issues. This occurs when the relief workers find the body of a young woman who has committed suicide. Their discussion highlights the lack of relief work for women and also the problems of sexual bribery, unwanted pregnancies and of fending for families, but it is obvious that these views are Hyde's and the male characters' expression of such insights into women's lives is less than credible (NTYC, pp. 269-270).

Despite his very tough, masculine character, Hyde endows Starkie with sympathetic insights into women's situations, and the power of imagination to enable him to construe alternatives to their current role, rather than seeing it as inevitable. Thus she has Starkie imagine women working on the hydro dams and believing that they could manage this because they are "tough as horses, most of them, and Christ, mustn't they get bored, fiddling about in those houses..." (NTYC, p. 152). This contrasts with his earlier vision of Terry bending contentedly over the stew pots and seems remarkable in the light of this earlier misconception. As the novel progress, however, and Starkie has more contact with women, he is portrayed as gaining
a greater understanding of their lives. This suggests that it is possible to heal limited and limiting gender-bound perspectives by a greater sharing of experience between men and women.

Hyde's concern to redress the balance is evident in the portrayal of Starkie's second wife, Ritehei. This counters the negative male impression of women and marriage seen earlier. Ritehei makes no demands and expects nothing for herself. Starkie is not tied down by her nagging, but by his love for her and the children. At this point a woman's perspective becomes more central as the narrative moves into her consciousness as well, and this shows that women too can see marriage as limiting. She dreams of her youth when she was as wild and free as the "womansand" of the far north, but her reality is babies and washing, which leave her "wrists and fingers worn almost to olive-skinned bone" (NTYC, pp. 280, 284).

The portrayal of Ritehei during an unwanted pregnancy suggests that women become less than human when trapped within traditional roles under the control of men. Deprived of the right to control her own reproduction (when Starkie will not let her have an abortion), Ritehei feels symbolically alienated from her own body, so that her arms and hands do "not seem to be part of herself" (NTYC, p. 301). Her loss of identity through childbearing is further emphasised by the depiction of the birth. In hospital she is dehumanised. Her body is moulded by
the doctor "as if she had been brown plasticine", she loses "all shape and character" from her face, and her eyes become "like those of a bullock knocked on the head" (NTYC, pp. 311-312).
The comparison to a beast awaiting slaughter is very telling, emphasizing her passive, victim status; the control of her life is taken right out of her own hands.

It is in passages such as this that Hyde's consciousness comes through very strongly and Starkie's story is very much secondary to, and little more than a vehicle for, Hyde's expression of her personal concerns for both her society and the individuals within it. The discussion of male/female roles is brought out into the open in a manner which was not evident in Passport to Hell where women are seen mainly from the outside and through Starkie's eyes. In Nor the Yeats Condemn, male and female lives are shown to be separated by society's conventions but once these conventions are overcome the points of contact become more evident and shared experience brings shared understanding. Starkie's position as an outsider gives him the opportunity to escape these conventions and Hyde uses him to demonstrate their arbitrary nature in the latter stages of the novel when he crosses the established gender barriers.

As an outcast, Starkie has much in common with women in society and Hyde's portrayal highlights this. His identification with women and with women's situations is heightened after Ritehei's death, and as Hardy, Bunkle and
Matthews point out, he actually takes on a woman's role in his struggle to care for his family and keep them from the welfare home. He has already been used by Hyde on occasions to speak for women, but at the conclusion of the novel Hyde transforms him into a character who begins to speak and act as a woman. Starkie becomes "scared of the Welfare people, scared of everyone" like the women the relief workers had discussed who move "like shadows" around the various aid agencies (NTYC, pp. 270, 325). Now that he has taken on Ritehei's functions, he grows more like her: his eyes become "as dull as Ritehei's had been when she breathed under the oxygen funnel" (NTYC, p. 328). His will for life leaves him, just as Ritehei's did, and he makes suicide plans. The Fruit Lady's observations emphasise his crossing of the gender barrier, as she tells him that he is behaving "like a girl in trouble with her first", and in a reversal of the conventional romantic pattern, she saves him: a heroic woman rescuing a trapped man (NTYC, p. 342).

In Starkie, Hyde created a character very much defined by gender conceptions but she shows him developing by crossing the traditional gender lines through shared experiences and this is depicted as an enriching experience. At the conclusion he has found a place to belong: in a family which by no means conforms to the nuclear model but the warmth of which is symbolised by the contented cat and sleeping household with which the novel ends (NTYC, p. 352). This contrasts markedly with his life in cold, bare huts in the earlier stages of the novel while he was
still heavily imbued with the masculine role. In creating this alternative but happy 'family' Hyde suggests that positive relationships are possible once one steps outside of society's moral codes. This contrasts with the destructive conventional relationships she has shown elsewhere in the novel. Indeed, the new type of family she depicts anticipates that portrayed by Keri Hulme almost fifty years later at the conclusion of The Bone People, as this family also represents an alternative to society's conceptions of gender roles and relationships.

In these two novels Hyde sought to make her own perceptions more conceivable to her audience. A measure of her success in this is the fact that Passport to Hell went into six impressions between April and July 1936. Her success is also evident in the manner in which she did not allow herself to be submerged by the 'men's stories' she told. In Nor the Years Condemn in particular, she used Starkie's story as a means of portraying women's reality, especially in the passages centred on Ritehei. She challenged the gender conceptions which inhibited both her life and her writing by demonstrating her ability to imaginatively overcome such barriers and by showing characters who take on roles associated with the opposite sex. Thus Hyde used an apparent gender stereotype, Starkie, to subvert the very notion of such stereotypes. The difficulties of such a strategy are also clear. In Passport to Hell the divisions between the male and female worlds remain distinct and thereby undermine Hyde's success in suggesting that such
divisions are not inevitable through her vivid recreation of Starkie's experiences. The obvious gaps between Starkie's world-view and that which Hyde imposes on him are further evidence of the difficulty of this strategy. Hyde's imagination enabled her to vividly recreate Starkie's world but infusing her own perceptions into his story could not be done with such unobtrusive ease.

"How sad it is to be a Woman"

In the novels just discussed Hyde used the male persona to covertly undermine gender conventions. In other instances she attempted to deal much more directly with the limitations imposed by her female identity by writing from a female-centred perspective and presenting a woman's view of the world. She did this to differing extents and through various means in both her autobiographical texts and her fiction. Journalesse and A Home in This World provide two different autobiographical accounts of what it meant to be a woman in a society where the female identity was fixed and the boundaries of acceptable female experience quite immutable. The former is predominantly an account of what this meant in the public, political realm, while the latter reveals the inner conflicts and traumas which result from deviation from the norm.
The *Godwits Fly*, on the other hand, is a fictionalised portrayal of Hyde's experiences as a young girl growing into womanhood and working out the relationship between her female identity and her development as a writer. *Wednesday's Children* is Hyde's only 'straight' novel and the position of women in patriarchal society is one of its central themes, revealing the significance of this issue to Hyde's literary endeavours. I will now examine the ways in which Hyde portrays female identity and the manner in which it is affected by social constructs in these works, the dominant impression of which can be summed up in the line Eliza, the heroine of *The Godwits Fly*, recalls from a Chinese poem: "How sad it is to be a woman, / Nothing on earth is held so cheap."  

Journalese clearly conveys a sense of what it means to be a woman in the public sphere of a society where women are supposed to be confined to the private realm of home and family. Although it is primarily made up of entertaining anecdotes, the nature of which signifies Hyde's intention to write a book which would sell well and make her some money, it also contains serious comments and criticisms of aspects in New Zealand society which Hyde felt strongly about, many of which relate to the position of women in society. Thus she bemoans the fact that women are not eligible for the unemployment benefit even though working women must contribute taxes towards it, and she stresses the need to get women into parliament to help rectify such inequalities, lamenting in particular that New Zealand
women had not already made use of their voting powers in order to do so (J, pp. 55, 71).

Her account of her life as a woman journalist highlights the exclusion and inequalities which result from such an attempt to enter the masculine world. The precariousness of this position is most aptly summed up in the description of her days as a parliamentary reporter. Excluded from the inner sanctum of the (male) press gallery, the woman reporter is relegated to the uncomfortable and noisy (because it is part of the public women's gallery) women's press gallery (J, pp. 32-33). She is not just a journalist, but a woman journalist, and as such she must remain on the margins. This marginalisation is also clear in her confinement to the trivia of the 'Ladies' Pages', the normal realm of the woman journalist (J, pp. 100-101).

The idea that the public world is a man's world is confirmed in The Godwits Fly. Eliza and the other women who venture into this sphere are out of place, and thus 'silenced' so that they sit solitary in the cafes, seeking refuge in books, while the men chat heartily in groups. The men's confidence in the public world and the women's position of difference are evident in Eliza's observation that the men converse "on a harder, crisper plane than feminine talk" (TGF, p. 140). These women can be seen as reflecting Hyde's own position as a woman writer; that is, as a woman in a man's tradition who cannot join
in and become 'one of the boys', but rather must sit by, "unobtrusively as a cat" (TGF, p. 140).

The inequitable positions of women and men are also shown by the fact that men always have a place in the world even if they feel alienated to some extent. In _Wednesday's Children_ Mr Bellister longs to escape from society but in contrast to Wednesday he is still 'respectable' and not merely a nuisance to his family even though he is not married. Similarly, Timothy, Eliza's elusive lover, has greater freedom than Eliza does to pursue his alternative lifestyle and comes and goes just as he pleases. As Felicity Riddy notes, although _The Godwits Fly_ deals with "the essential loneliness" of all individuals in society, and even within the family, men are shown to at least have an alternative "mateship" which the women, Augusta in particular, are denied. Timothy finds this in the workmen's camp, and for John it exists in his sense, or dream, of brotherhood with the working man.³

There is a clear sense that women cannot win whether they conform or not. Wednesday is excluded because she does not conform to the accepted codes for women. She is not pretty or feminine enough, not 'normal' enough, and therefore, not married. As such she has no place but in her brother Ronald's house, which is ruled by his wife, Brenda, a woman who behaves according to society's dictates. Wednesday's answer is to create her own world and her own family outside this society.
Her imagination provides her with a home whereas society had merely discarded her.

While Wednesday's exclusion is attributable to the fact that she does not conform and does not even try to, Brenda does her very best to be 'normal' in terms of society's gender constructs. Even so she is not 'at home' in the world. Brenda survives only by creating her own world within the prescribed sphere for women, namely the home. In fact, Wednesday and Brenda illustrate two ways in which women can create a home for themselves: Wednesday's is outside the world, while Brenda's is within the world. In her house, Brenda rules everyone and creates them just as much as Wednesday invents her family. She has "whittled away at Ronald's little eccentricities and stuffed out his good parts, until he ... was about as natural as a carp under glass." In addition, she has "very nearly created [the butler] Beagle ... in the image of the ideal butler" (WC, P. 27). Even a conforming woman such as Brenda is shown to need "a safe place in which Brenda's interests and Brenda's people could live for ever secure ...." (WC, p. 229).

Once again in The Godwits Fly Hyde shows women reacting in different ways to the limitations imposed on them by society's expectations of women. Eliza does not even try to conform, but her elder sister, Carly, does not question society's dictates and tries her best to follow the rules. Similarly, their mother, Augusta, has sacrificed her self to
conformity, while Eliza's friend, Simone, shows yet another way of coping. She decides that the only way for a woman to get anywhere is to exploit the system to her own ends by marrying a rich man.

Carly is the perfect 'average' girl, the kind for whom the system seems to have been designed. As a child she is always "the little housekeeper", eager to please, quiet and passive: "folded away still, not asking for anything" (TGF, p. 10). Although she does all that society asks of her, Carly receives nothing in return, and eventually retreats from the world after the true "horror" of women's lives, specifically sex and childbirth, has been revealed to her. This is an even greater disillusionment than the failure of her long-time suitor, Trevor Sinjohn, to actually marry her. She now realises what her friends have endured since the day when they stood as happy, confident brides, victors in the game society leads them to. This 'truth' about womanhood is too violent for Carly, and, as Riddly notes, she retreats into a childlike dependence on her mother. In her strenuous and unquestioning efforts to comply and the subsequent failure of society to reward her in the way she has been taught to expect, Carly is very like Marion in Mander's *Allen Adair*.56

Augusta shows what happens to a woman who 'succeeds' where Carly failed. Such success does not bring fulfilment. Since her marriage Augusta has had no life of her own; her
existence is instead dedicated to her family. She bitterly laments that she has been John's "unpaid slave for twenty years", and has "wasted a lifetime" cooking and bringing up his children (TGF, p. 86). The extent to which motherhood has sapped Augusta's self is signified by her failure to walk around the hills; a failure occasioned by her constant toil for the family when younger, and her lack of energy for such pursuits when she finally does have the time. It is too late for Augusta to live for herself now, her life has been too long submerged in the lives of others (TGF, pp. 174-176). At the conclusion of the novel Eliza is in the most positive position while her mother and sister seem confined to empty and frustrated lives. Simone is about to marry but there is a sense that this is the second best choice for her (TGF, p. 230).

A Home in this World also shows that women are unlikely to find happiness even if they do conform. Hyde portrays her own suffering and the trauma of her second illegitimate pregnancy but her observations of other women's lots are equally negative, even for those who have apparently complied with society's dictates. For instance, she muses that both she and her friend Gwen are "sick of body and sick of mind, the one through childbirth under the best auspices of laws and morals, the other because of what laws and morals had to say concerning her child" (AHITW, p. 71). The idea that conformity does not necessarily bring ease or fulfilment for a woman is also suggested by Hyde's portrayal of her mother. When she worries
about providing for Derek on a tight budget it reminds her of
the anguish her mother went through over family finances. Once
again marriage does not seem to make too much difference as both
"[m]arried women [and] unmarried women with babies [must be] ... 
money spiders" (AHITW, p. 61). The essential emptiness of
Hyde's mother's life is indicated by her disappointment that
none of her children have turned out as she wanted them to,
despite the fact that she "had worked and sacrificed, gone
hungry, gone lonely" in the hope of their success (AHITW, p.
74).

Hyde suggests that she may be better off in her marginal
position through the portrayal of the Snapes of Dumont Island,
with whom she stays early on in her pregnancy. This family
symbolises the extremes of women's oppression in patriarchal
society. Their subjugation is so complete that her friend Eve,
who was romantic and high-spirited at training college, can now
only be happy "in a woman's half frightened way." Despite her
own anguish, Hyde concludes that Eve's "was too much a life
under the heel to have suited" her (AHITW, p. 45). Attempts at
conformity result in emptiness, frustration and bitterness as is
aptly illustrated by the characters of Brenda, Carly and
Augusta, whereas Wednesday and Eliza (and Hyde herself) suffer
the pain of marginality, but also enjoy the freedom of being
partially outside the structures of society.
Although marginality is shown to offer freedom, Hyde does not omit the guilt, trauma and outcast status which result from infringing moral codes. When Eliza is in hospital, the treatment accorded a woman suspected of having VD is harsh, and the sister of the maternity ward where Carly tries to work has a similar attitude, punishing the unmarried mothers by waiting as long as possible before calling a doctor to assist with the birth (TGF, pp. 169, 221). Eliza is portrayed as undergoing a similar experience when she becomes pregnant, and again in A Home in this World Hyde portrays the anguish she faced because her pregnancy was not sanctioned by marriage. The pain of this position is most vividly portrayed in Hyde’s image of herself being trapped in

a slowly opening door .... [B]etween the tradition of respectability, which was very strong in [her] household and had cut [her] off from all real family love the moment [she] infringed it, and the new age, foretold by Nietzsche and some others (AHITW, p. 28).

The strength of social codes is such that Hyde comes to see herself as not deserving of life because she does not comply with the accepted models. With a note of bitter irony she comments:

In films and novels, the mothers of illegitimate children invariably died; or, with a fade-out scene of sacrifice, went on the streets and passed unrecognised, their remarkably good-looking, intelligent and able children, who had meanwhile been adopted by rich women or by famous scientists. I remained inconveniently half-alive, with insurance policies of several hundred pounds, suicide-proof. It wasn’t natural (AHITW, p. 100).
Society's dictates have transformed a natural process, pregnancy and mothering, into something unnatural and unbearable in the pressures it imposes on Hyde's life. This is the most vivid statement Hyde makes of her suffering through her biological and gender identities.

The Inner Solution

Hyde not only illustrates the negative quality of women's experiences in the world, but also offers possible solutions. While Journdalese emphasises the necessity of political change to improve the position of women in society, Hyde's later works point to change at the personal level as the means of freeing women from their entrapment by social codes. The public and political emphasis of Journdalese is no doubt a reflection of Hyde's intention to deal with the public world rather than her private struggles, but the other texts all reflect aspects of Hyde's inner struggles as she sought to come to terms with the world and the roles it ascribed to her. The alternatives these texts propose relate to women finding their own inner strengths, as Heather Roberts points out in her study of New Zealand women writers, Where did she Come From?.

The imagination and creativity are put forward as positive alternatives to accepting the limiting gender roles ascribed to women. This is most clearly revealed in Wednesday's
Children and The Godwits Fly. The former has been described by Susan Ash as an "allegory of the female artist in a hostile, male-dominated society ", while the latter is Hyde's portrait of the artist as a young woman, as Eliza strives to overcome the conflicts between her artistic impulses and the roles society has mapped out for her.

In Wednesday's Children the imagination is shown as the instrument of salvation for a woman trapped by society's conventions. Wednesday's life is transformed (and saved, as she was contemplating suicide at the time) by the fortune-teller, Madame Mysteria, who opens up the world of the imagination to her. This allows Wednesday to escape an existence which would have turned her into "either a maniac or a mummy" if she had continued in it much longer (WC, p. 234). After the death of Madame Mysteria, Wednesday decides to become Madame Mysteria herself and to carry on her work of offering solace to the women of the poverty stricken back streets. She believes that without the romantic fictions offered by Madame Mysteria these women would have absolutely "no escape" from the yards where they "lived, moved and had their being..." (WC, p. 117). Wednesday symbolises the power of the imagination and her role is to offer at least a momentary alternative. This echoes the comment made by Hyde in a letter to Schroder that she would like better than anything else "[t]o be able to create a momentary other world for the tired...."
Wednesday is able to straddle the real world and the world of the imagination by taking on the guise of Madame Mysteria when she enters the real world. In this role she is able to retain the protection of the imagination and as Ash points out, "functions as the artist in the external world."\textsuperscript{40} The precariousness of such a position is signified by her arrest. Wednesday is charged with taking money under false pretences, which suggests that the alternative she represents is unacceptable to society. This has also been indicated by the manner in which she casts herself as a "sorceress", looking back to the ancient roots of witchcraft (WC, pp. 112-114). Such roles have frequently been seen by the dominant patriarchal society as a dangerous and disruptive female force, but they also represent a positive alternative for those without power within society.

The incompatibility of Wednesday's imaginative world and the external world is emphasised at the conclusion when Wednesday must choose between the two. Mr Bellister offers her a conventional 'home in the world', that is, one acquired through marriage. Wednesday, however, is not prepared to sacrifice her imaginary home and family for this and dies in order to retain her imaginary world. As Ash argues, the imaginary world is the realm where Wednesday has control.\textsuperscript{41} She creates and shapes her own experience, whereas marriage to Mr Bellister would mean going back to the position where social
constructs determine her role. Wednesday has retreated too far from the world to go back.

Sandbrook argues that at the time Hyde wrote *Wednesday's Children* she was in a phase when she tended towards "self-absorption". He points out that the other fantasy she wrote at this time, "The Unbelievers", goes "so far as to assert that the private world is entirely self-contained", and that *Wednesday's Children* shows a "recognition of the fact that there was no future in introspection divorced from its social context." He states further that this self-absorption was also revealed in the first draft of *The Godwits Fly*, which Hyde had finished in 1935 after completing *Passport to Hell*, as this version ends with Eliza's death on "the Road to Solitude". Sandbrook's thesis is that Hyde developed from such a rejection of the external realities of life to more of a balance between the imaginative realm and recognition of her place in society. He contends that this is illustrated by the ending of the final version of *The Godwits Fly* where Eliza is simultaneously part of the society and empowered by her own creative abilities. In contrast to this view, Ash contends that Wednesday's suicide is positive and does not represent "a failure to live in the 'real' world, but rather a disavowal of a society which marginalizes and trivializes female experience." In her view, Wednesday's imaginative world is not a 'cop out' but a "valid, powerful means for creating alternatives to unacceptable possibilities in women's lives."
I agree with Sandbrook that the ending of *The Godwits Fly* shows a positive development from that of *Wednesday's Children* in demonstrating that some sort of compromise with the world is possible while retaining one's inner reality. Ash's argument that Wednesday values her private reality more than the public world which Mr Bellister offers her is also valid, but I do not believe that Hyde presents Wednesday's solution as the best alternative for women. Following Wednesday's total rejection of the external world in favour of the inner realm, the novel moves on to portray Pamela and Derwent, the young couple who represent the future and hence the opportunity to overcome the factors which have locked the previous generation into their roles. In reaction to Wednesday's suicide Pamela is ready to reject society as well. She thinks that "Life, solid life [is] like the [Gilfillan's] glossy table, a sleek beast demanding too many sacrifices to provide the polish for its surface" (*WC*, p. 284). Along with this comes a rejection of society's institutions because she sees them as "beastly, graceless, undignified, [and leaving] some people out in the cold" (*WC*, p. 284). In this mood she is also ready to call off her marriage to Derwent. Their relationship is only saved by the imagination, and significantly it is primarily Derwent's imagination, which suggests this realm is not only the province of women. He demonstrates that they need not be stifled by social codes for he carries her off to their secret retreat in the hayloft, joking that marriage will not prevent him from having affairs,
and insisting upon being called "Tommy", the dream name to which he had previously only reluctantly acceded (WC, pp. 284-285).

Pamela and Derwent portray the promise of an existence in the real world which will be made bearable by the power of the imagination to free them from the danger of being submerged by the social codes which are shown to have dehumanised Ronald, Brenda and Crispin to a large degree. This solution looks forward to the balance Eliza achieves between the two worlds in The Godwits Fly, but it is significant that such a solution is only shown to be open to an attractive young woman who has a male partner, and not to an older, less conventionally attractive and lone woman such as Wednesday. The suggestion that the release of the imagination can make life more bearable is also conveyed in the reaction of the other family members to Wednesday's death. Discovering Wednesday's 'reality' demonstrates the power of the imagination to them, and this seems to release the humanity which has hitherto been squeezed out of them. This is signified by the tears of Ronald and Brenda and the fact that even Brenda's puritanical brother, Crispin, will pray for Wednesday's soul (WC, p. 283). The novel's final scene is of Mr Bellister paying his tribute to Wednesday and her family, the 'reality' of which is confirmed by his mind picture of Attica running along the beach (WC, p. 286). His search for the "route back to the island" and the imaginative realm it represents will presumably provide respite for him in the external world (WC, p. 282).
As these examples show, the imagination is not the sole property of women, but while these other characters offer the possibility of a balance between the world of the imagination and reality, Wednesday has been driven too far off the edge to find such a compromise. The men always have a place by virtue of their gender, Pamela and Brenda are given a place through their relationships with men, but society allows no place for Wednesday so she creates her own place in her own world and by the time society, in the person of Mr Bellister, is prepared to give her a place, the freedom and self-assertion she has discovered in her marginal position outweigh any desire to be part of the world.

In contrast to Wednesday, Eliza of *The Godwits Fly* lives in the real world, being afforded only momentary relief through poetry and dreams, as was the case for Hyde herself. The imagination and creative activity are portrayed as an alternative to the conventional futures offered to young women. The notion that creative activity and conventional female roles are opposing aims is most clearly conveyed through the juxtaposition of the aspirations of Eliza and her sister Carly. Eliza's attention is focussed on her search for the "glory hole", the site of the imaginary realm beyond the material world. Carly on the other hand aspires to the conventional role as symbolised by her sewing for her "glory box".
To Eliza conventional roles are second best. When she is kissed by a boy for the first time as a teenager she is disappointed and would "have preferred it to be like - The Glory Hole again" (TGF, p. 110). Later Eliza mostly argues "against matrimony, and to fame via London and unlimited poems", while her friend Simone plans "to marry, and marry well" (TGF, p. 127). The relative values of relationships and creativity are confirmed by the fact that Eliza's involvement in heterosexual relationships proves to be destructive to her mental health, while it is the return of her creative power which enables the novel to conclude on a positive note. Her creative abilities surfaced while she was a child and unaware of her sexual identity. They are submerged during the time that she wrestles with her sexuality in her relationship with Timothy and while she suffers the consequences of her sexuality during her pregnancy in Sydney. After the still-born birth of her baby these powers return so that:

words ran into her mind, measured themselves, a steady chain of which no link was weak enough to break .... It was years since her poems had fallen into a foolish little rumble of shards and ashes.... This was different. It was the old power back; but with a stronger face, an estranged face, [and] it sat down in the house of her mind (TGF, p. 207).

Eliza's recovery from the trauma and guilt of her pregnancy and loss of the child is heralded by the publication of her first book of poems and her pursuit of the vocation of a poet even though it can only be done covertly and late at night.
The novel concludes with a celebration of the special vision her imagination confers on her and the link this gives her with others, as symbolised by her feeling of affinity with the tramps on Oriental Parade. It is significant that she identifies with others who are outsiders as she is and it is also of note that these outsiders are men, signifying that it is not only women who are excluded from really belonging in society. Eliza's imagination enables her to rise above the conventions which define such people as worthless and to see in them an alternative beauty so that they look "holy and wise as ancient hermits" (TGF, p. 232). Her creative ability means that she will not be submerged by social constructs. The ending suggests it is possible to live in society but retain control of one's own mind and thus create one's own world views. This is the strength by which Hyde shows it is possible for a woman to survive in society while making the most of the freedom conferred by her marginality.

Escape from the "Man-and-Woman Habit"

The other solution that Hyde offers in the face of the limitations imposed by sexual identity and the gender roles which go with it is the state of "sexless companionship". In society marriage is clearly associated with respectability. This is indicated when Mr Bellister tells Wednesday that in New Zealand "holy wedlock" and being a Rotarian (significantly a
men-only organisation) are "seal[s] on respectability" (WC, p. 187). Under such conditions an unmarried woman such as Wednesday has no hope of qualifying as "respectable". Her rejection of such notions is shown in the world she creates for herself. Here conventional relationships as sanctioned by the marriage and family ethic have no place. Wednesday's lifestyle is based on alternative concepts of human relationships. She accepts that her lovers will come and go, for to her "the main thing" is that she always manages "to retain the friendship of her lovers". Friendship is crucial and sexual relationships are secondary because, as Wednesday puts it, "[t]here was always another lover where the first one came from but how in the world could one replace a friend? To lose a friend, that would be like having an arm or leg torn off; that would be like having the heart removed from the body" (WC, pp. 18-19). Her attitude is a deliberate affront to the social and moral codes which govern love and marriage, but the vitality and warmth of her family and of her relationships with her lovers and former lovers confirm the validity of her viewpoint when compared with the sterility of Brenda and Ronald's marriage.

In *The Godwits Fly* genderless friendship is again presented as a positive alternative to sexual relationships. Eliza expresses little optimism for relationships between the sexes, as all are so locked into "the man-and-woman habit" - the term "habit" indicating a social, rather than a natural division. Eliza clearly perceives the destructiveness of gender
divisions, and therefore believes that couples can never be happy until they are old and reach a state of "sexless companionship", when they can be people instead of men and women (TGF, p. 140). The alternative to such escape is a bleak one. Those who have "got ... thoroughly into the man-and-woman habit" can only find solace in "patience, and a withdrawing into the frail and battered shell of the body" (TGF, p. 140). Eliza's observations of her parents' marriage confirm this view of the essential loneliness that exists within relationships which are supposed to guarantee happiness and fulfilment. Her parents are described as:

Two people, solitaries, dreamers, (who) winning out of their first environment, find a dog-chain twisting their ankles together. Still they fight for their escape.... They are young when it begins; their words, like their veins, are hot and full of passion. They share a double bed, and have children. One day an ageing man looks round, and finds himself wrestling with an ageing woman, her face seamed with tears (TGF, p. 47).

Eliza believes it is "[m]uch more important to be friends" with Timothy than to be in love with him (TGF, p. 161). She wants to accompany him on his planned tramps through Europe, but this ambition is incompatible with the gender roles assigned her. Timothy tells her "[y]ou can't, a woman couldn't," but her reaction is to deny her sexual identity, telling Timothy "I'm not a woman, not for ordinary purposes" (TGF, p. 162). Travelling with Timothy in a state of genderless friendship represents the ideal to Eliza. However, it is the seemingly
inescapable "man-and-woman habit" which keeps Timothy and Eliza apart. He views her in terms of social constructs as the ideal and pure woman, who must be preserved as such, in contrast to the other woman in his life, Damaris Gayte, who represents the opposing construct of woman, the whore figure.

The difficulty of escaping from the predominant codes and the gender identities they confer is particularly well conveyed in the passage of *The Godwits Fly* where Eliza secretly attempts to play marbles in the more aggressive manner of the boys. She finds that she cannot quite master it, and anyway it is not much use when all the rest of the girls will continue in their own way of playing. The narrator's concluding comment underlines the arbitrary nature of such gender divisions, thereby offering an implicit questioning: "There wasn't any set reason why it should be so, it was just the way it was, like wearing pinafores and frocks instead of trousers..." (*TGF*, pp. 30-31).

The denial of sexual identity which Eliza sees as offering the only possibility for positive relationships between women and men is also suggested as an escape in *A Home in this World*. Hyde portrays herself as overcome by guilt and self-torment at the loss of her virginity so that she allowed it to dominate her life and laboured through relationships with the burden of the sign "Not a Virgin". She surmounts this problem by escaping from her sexuality, stating that she:
took the happier road .... [and] became less than a woman again, a figure attached to white trees and crackling brown leaves.... For a body I had something that walked, and ate as little as possible, and consorted with furry things, with bright-black wings and a throat flung back sipping honey from flax in the forest (AHITW, p.30).

This is probably a reference to the time she spent in Hammer recovering from the breakdown she had after her first pregnancy. Here she finds release by denying her physical nature and communing with nature rather than people, remarking: "I was happy then, and companionless" (AHITW, p. 30). But this state cannot be maintained for physical needs, namely money, arise and return her to the world. The comfort she finds in nature as an alternative to human society is again evident during her second pregnancy when she derives warmth from the earth at Picton, and surrenders herself to it in contrast to her need for disguise and the rejections she receives in human company (AHITW, p. 50). As always, however, she must return to human society where she is inevitably defined by her sexual identity. Her awareness of the seeming inescapability of such definition is suggested by her observation of the way male and female babies are divided into rows in the maternity hospital and her comment that "segregation of the sexes [began] rather early in life" (AHITW, p. 62).

Hyde constantly battled against the limitations her female identity imposed on her. As a journalist it meant that she had to write social gossip and her rebellion against this is
clear in her comment to Schröder that she could not bear the "feminine drivel" that she had to write in the papers, adding: "I may look feminine but I'm not in the least really."**4**

This desire for escape from the confines associated with female identity is most strongly expressed in a poem she wrote while in China, "Written at Hsuchowfu", where the refrain in each stanza is "Next time let me be born with no breasts." The poem's speaker is a woman trapped in the domestic sphere, weaving at her loom and observing her brother's life through the window. This calls to mind the "Lady of Shallot", an extreme image of female entrapment in the passive role. The desire expressed by the speaker is to escape her confinement and be her brother's companion just as Eliza had wished to accompany Timothy:

I will be your strong companion, hold the jingling bridle
Near your sword arm, sleek the hides of our little stubborn horses,

We would watch the silent planets in their courses,
In the silver-threaded hours of the idle,
I should learn from you the laugh a warrior knows-
Brother, the lightloom flashes, whirs and rests-
I would learn to hold the lance and leave the rose-
Next time let me be born with no breasts.**45**

This poem may have grown out of the fact that she was again reminded of the limitations of being a woman while among Europeans in China. As she records in Dragon Rampant, the foreign male journalists were initially friendly when she met them in Hankow, but their attitude changed when they realised she intended to go up to the battle front with them, their one thought now being identified as: "Will we really have to
handicap ourselves by taking this along?" She did go to the front but inevitably encountered more hostility from male journalists who immediately labelled her as an "encumbrance" because of her sex (DR, p. 206).

Hyde wrote later that she felt at home in China and that she wanted to go back there. "Her feeling of being 'at home' in China may have been, as Hardy argues, due to the fact that she was no longer in a society where her place was rigidly defined. China offered her a chance to be a person rather than a woman, once she had escaped the limiting perceptions of the male Western journalists. Apart from these incidents, the sense of kicking against conventions is gone, and she seems to have been able to achieve a genderless participation in events that are traditionally defined as masculine, such as Eliza had dreamed of in her desire to turn up her hair and tramp around Europe with Timothy. In Dragon Rampant Hyde describes herself living out the kind of experiences she had imaginatively recreated by taking on the male persona of Starkie. Thus she was able for a time to overcome the divisive nature of gender conventions in life as she had sought to do in art.

**The Subversion of Realism**

Hyde's rejection of the rigid forms and structures of her society is mirrored in, and symbolised by, her refusal to be
bound by the forms and structures accepted by the literary establishment. Her reservations as to the adoption of one mode of telling have been outlined above, as has the manner in which she moved between the extremes of journalist, novelist and poet, both between and within her texts.⁴⁸ Having suffered from fixed concepts of reality which excluded her vision and her experience, Hyde was concerned to encourage her audience to see that there were other possibilities. Thus she did not confine herself to the realist mode which depends on one fixed and shared concept of reality. Nevertheless, she made use of the popularity and accessibility of this literary mode by appropriating and constantly subverting it to her own ends.

This technique is most evident in Passport to Hell and Nor the Years Condemn. It is significant that these are the two works whose central persona most closely resembles the heroes of the developing Sargesonian tradition. As Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews assert, both Passport to Hell and Nor the Years Condemn contain "remarkable performances in that harsh, laconic, bitten-off masculine dialect that Sargeson and Mulgan later installed as the dominant discourse of New Zealand fiction."⁴⁹ The novel's status as a precursor to the dominant male tradition is also noted by Peter Alcock, who describes it as "perhaps the first, most mordant treatment of a major local theme of 'man alone'."⁵⁰ Hyde uses Starkie in a similar manner to the way Sargeson and Mulgan later used their male heroes, namely to show up the 'underbelly' of New Zealand society from the outcast's
perspective. In addition, the nature of Starkie's experiences and the raw honesty with which they are portrayed in both novels is similar to that seen in Lee's *Children of the Poor* which had appeared shortly beforehand and which marked the onset of a New Zealand tradition of proletarian fiction.

*Passport to Hell*, therefore, was not markedly different from the new tradition of social realism which was emerging at the time. Nevertheless, Hyde does not uphold the one point of view and the one way of telling, for even in this text she seeks a place for the imaginative and the poetic. These aspects are disruptive of the realistic telling of Starkie's story and they have generally been viewed as subjective intrusions by the author. E.H. McCormick, for instance, does not approve the "occasional lapses into poetic prose"^[my emphasis]. I believe, however, that these 'disruptions' represent a deliberate attempt to allow for alternative truths. They suggest that Hyde's appropriation of the realist mode was ambiguous because she simultaneously reproduces it and subverts the very foundations on which it rests, namely acceptance of a shared notion of reality as represented by the phenomenal world.

The material world of the novel is often contrasted with visions and ideals which are portrayed as much more attractive. As the soldiers leave Gallipoli, for instance, the narrator moves into the realm of the imaginary, appealing for the institution of a new order, where "man may truly dwell and act
in that loveliness which haunts the hidden places of his mind" (PTH, p. 130). The imagination can recover this hidden "loveliness", as is illustrated when the narrator discovers the beauty of some larch trees in a forest which is filled with rotting corpses: "Along twigs black and madder-rose depended the slight and softly tinted drops of dew, necklaces of clear moonstone. After a shower of rain the larches were in full regalia of jewels ... nature's gift to her shyest and most secret trees" (PTH, p. 176). In this extremely poetic passage, which may seem inappropriate in the midst of realistic descriptions of war, pain and death, the narrator seems to offer a retreat from the horror of the war scenes, as if she is saying that the world of the imagination can always provide a refuge from the trauma of reality, if only it is given the opportunity. She asks the reader to look further than the corpses: "But if you came through the wood to the far side...", there you would see the bejewelled larches (PTH, p. 176). Metaphorically she makes a plea for the exercise of the imagination as an alternative to the ugliness of the material world as exemplified in the death and destruction of war.

The essential ambiguity of Passport to Hell rests in the fact that although it is set very much in what readers would identify as the 'real' world it constantly shows this up as a hostile and alienating place, in peacetime as much as in war. The imaginative 'interruptions' are the most positive elements even though they appear to be extraneous to the story. From a
realist point of view they are, but the novel suggests that realism can only represent the harshness of life and society. Starkie remains an outcast in the essentially masculine real world and is only really happy during the dream-like retreats into an alternative female-centred realm as I have outlined above."\(^{59}\) Although the methods of this novel are predominantly those of realist fiction it suggests that the imagination provides the only positive retreat, a theme which is also taken up in *Wednesday's Children* and *The Godwits Fly*.

Hyde's appropriation of the realist mode in *Nor the Years* *Condemn* stemmed very clearly from her awareness that she had to make concessions to the prevailing literary climate of her time or else risk not being published. As I have outlined above *Nor the Years Condemn* was partly the result of publishers' demands that Hyde "give 'em a realistic book".\(^{64}\) As noted by Sandbrook, however, the novel's realism is largely confined to its ostensible telling of Starkie's life story, while the main thrust of the novel is to use "both naturalistic and non-naturalistic conventions to portray a general spiritual condition."\(^{59}\) More so than in *Passport to Hell*, it is apparent that Hyde appropriated Starkie's story and the realist mode as a vehicle for her own concerns. It is much more loosely based on Starkie's experiences and she creates several other main characters, Bede Collins and Macnamara, to bear the main burden of conveying her vision. Indeed, in contrast to *Passport to Hell*, there is a greater predominance of what appear to be
Hyde's personal visions for the reorganisation of society, visions such as were briefly evident in the narrator's intrusions in the Gallipoli passage and the forest description, as discussed above.

These utopian visions convey Hyde's longing for an alternative to the society which she so realistically portrays elsewhere in the novel. They are particularly associated with the characters of Bede and Macnamara, who are at odds with use of the realistic mode as they are markedly non-realistic. They drift through the novel like wraiths, appearing suddenly and improbably to convey visions which it would have been inappropriate to impose on the character of Starkie. Thus, Bede dreams of a world where the walls of individualism are torn down and replaced by a "great meadow", which is "spangled, and wild with light, and completely unselfconscious", and Macnamara desires an underlying unity in society, as expressed by his wish to stabilize "The scent of people" (NTYC, pp. 114, 309-310).

In Nor the Years Condemn Hyde subverts the realistic form she employs by conveying a vision of society in which the imagination is central. As in Passport to Hell, the fantasy appears disruptive, but it is in these diversions that statements are made about the real need to reorganise society, "from the groundwork up" (NTYC, p. 114). These 'disruptions' can therefore be seen as deliberately included by Hyde as part of her strategy of constantly seeking space for alternatives.
The fantasy is not divorced from the world she realistically portrays and contains comments on the integral nature of this 'real' world. For instance, embedded in a fantastic scene in an icy tent is an apparent statement on women's rights, which warns that the revolution in gender roles must be complete (NYTC, pp. 294-295). Such visions offer a counter to Starkie's fatalistic assumption that some people are "born right, born wrong", but it is not worth "howling about", and reveal the arbitrary nature of such divisions (NYTC, p. 43).

In *Passport to Hell* and *Nor the Years Condemn*, Hyde subverts supposed biography and realistic fiction by asserting the primacy of the imaginative realm, and in *Check to Your King* she shows again that biography, and history, must be informed by the imagination. Although *Check to Your King* is ostensibly a piece of non-fiction, the life-story of Charles de Thierry, Hyde blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, between biography and novel, much as she also does in *Passport to Hell*. The subtitle describes the text as a "Life History", and it is based on historical documents, but in the "Author's Note" which precedes the text, Hyde admits that she has had to invent, to use a "novelist's licence" to fill in the gaps although "nothing has been deliberately invented or mis-stated." As a hint as to the role the imagination must play in the making of history, as in all human activity, is given in the opening passage. Here the nature of kingdoms is discussed and the spiritual ("dreams") is accorded precedence over the material ("ashes") as Hyde
declares that dreams are the basis of our societies; our arts, morals, and social codes, and in a mocking tone includes "omnibuses" in the list (CTYK, p. 1). This assertion of the primacy of the imagination in society subverts the materialistic views of her time.

Charles's enterprise was based on a dream, and Hyde gives dreams a place in the telling of his story. Thus she does not confine herself to 'realistic' invention. Indeed there seems to be no limit placed on the imagination, and dreams are integrated into the story along with the 'factual' elements as just another way of telling, and another way of showing Charles to the reader. Thus, at one point she asks the reader to imagine "some affable Djinn, astray from the Arabian Nights" asking Charles what he would like to be, and at another point she recreates Charles's childhood experiences as a stage play (CTYK, pp. 22-23, 4).

Hyde also subverts the notions of history which her society believed in. She does so by according attention to traditionally marginal figures in New Zealand history: the Baron, the Maori, and women. In fact, she re-writes history in much the same way as many contemporary marginal groups are attempting to re-write, and 'write-in' a place for themselves in history and literature. In particular, she challenges the dominant notion of history as the province of white males, and indeed, by writing of a Frenchman she deviates from the usual
focus on English settlement in New Zealand. One of her stated aims in writing *Check to Your King* was to "re-varnish" Charles's reputation, for Charles had been marginalised by those who had defined New Zealand's European history (which was the only history it was generally considered to have at that time). His idealism was mocked and marked him out as eccentric in the eyes of other colonists, so that by Hyde's time he was little known and lay in an unmarked grave.

Furthermore, she attempted to give the Maori a greater place in history, thus deconstructing the pakeha version of the 'story'. There is a sense in which Hyde seems to really want people to know about the Maori way of life and she uses Charles's story to encourage this. She remarks that the few excellent books on the subject have been little read, and, as if to rectify this, is always ready to interrupt with a descriptive account of Maori practices, as when she outlines the Maori way of cooking in the midst of an anecdote (CTYK, pp. 116, 120).

Hyde not only attempts to give the Maori a place in New Zealand's history, she also questions beliefs about their place in contemporary New Zealand. On one occasion, Charles's relations with the local Maori are used as a cue to discussion of contemporary laudatory opinions of the race. Hyde proceeds to subvert these conventional assumptions of the nobility and adaptability of the Maori people, by pointing out the disparity between the supposed and the real - that the Maori is little
seen in Pakeha society and lives mainly in conditions "both wretched and slovenly" (CTYK, p. 116).

Hyde's efforts to write women into her history highlight the extent to which women are normally invisible in such accounts, and the consequent need to use the imagination to fill in the gaps. Of Charles's father there are records, but of his mother, there is no more than "a casual mention that she played the spinnet" (CTYK, p. 14). This woman typifies the status of women in history. There is no mention of her Christian name, nor any record of her death. She is simply the wife of the Baron, the mother of Charles, and "A pair of white hands on a spinnet. Nothing more" (CTYK, p. 14). Similarly, Charles left behind his letters, journals and various pronouncements, but there is no such record of his wife, Emily, nor of their children; they are only visible as seen from the outside and more often than not invisible. Indeed the only relic of Emily is a dried bunch of flowers, preserved between the pages of a book, and attached to a note in "a woman's hand", which bids England fond goodbye; a mute and buried message in comparison to Charles's bold statements (CTYK, p. 33).

In bringing the marginal into the centre, Hyde also, necessarily, de-centres, or deconstructs, those who formerly had pride of place. The 'great men' of our history are deflated by irreverant treatment. Thus the colonisers' laudable intentions to 'civilise' the natives are undercut by the casual mention of
a land purchase made for missionaries and paid for with twelve axes, and by Charles's (and/or Hyde's) lament that colonisation will only be of commercial and political benefit to the European powers, and certainly of no advantage to the Maori (CTYK, pp. 135, 137). The most subversive passage is perhaps the dramatic re-creation of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the 'founding of the nation', which is presented as little more than a farce. All the 'great men' in the cast are undermined by the character outlines which precede the action. Captain Hobson is a "gentleman" true, but "[I]later again, an untimely corpse". Nias has "a cold in the head", and Mr Busby, British Resident, is "superman among the clerks", the class who, in the narrator's opinion, really "made the British Empire"; an assertion which deflates the whole colonial/imperial enterprise and its history before the Treaty proceedings are even on stage (CTYK, p. 138). These examples demonstrate Hyde's attempts to overcome monolithic conceptions of right and wrong, fact and fiction. She reveals that there are other ways of looking at things and the imagination is shown as the instrument by which predetermined conceptions can be undermined and alternatives suggested. As Joan Stevens points out, Check to Your King illustrates the unanswerable nature of the question "What is truth?" by showing that it all "depends on how you look at it."

As with Check to Your King, Hyde's concern in Wednesday's Children is with truth, or rather, truths. The subjective
nature of reality is emphasised and the primacy of the
imagination is sanctioned by the narrator. The novel opens with
a very detailed description in which realism is taken to the
extreme and thus subverted. Time, date, place and an external
description of a woman are given, so that it is more in the tone
of a newspaper report than of a novel. However, the narrator
then proceeds to undermine notions of what is real and what is
not by suggesting that New Zealand is only real to those who use
their imagination, describing those who do not as "Flat
Worldians" (WC, pp. 13-14). By portraying New Zealand as a
fantasy land to those who live elsewhere, the narrator reveals
the subjective nature of 'reality', that one person's reality is
another's fantasy, and that it is only through the imagination
that this narrowness can be overcome.

The juxtaposition of Wednesday's world against the rest
of society shows up different truths, and allows for an
investigation of the various ways in which the same 'fact' has
different meanings to different people. For instance, the
letter which Wednesday writes to her family explaining how she
is living with Mr Agrapoulus is interpreted in a number of
different ways, ranging from "flippancy" (Ronald), to depravity
(Crispin), and a rather good joke (Mr Bellister), but to
Wednesday it is "the truth" (WC, p. 51). Wednesday's 'truths'
do not fit in with society's, but when explained from her point
of view, they seem perfectly reasonable, perhaps more so than
conventional opinions. This is the case with her seemingly
outrageous statement that she cannot marry Mr Agrapoulos because they do not agree on breakfast foods, the fact that he already has a wife being of only minor importance (WC, p. 37). Nevertheless, when Wednesday's experience is portrayed, it does indeed seem that a wife in Sydney is "a pale and distant shadow" in comparison to the reality of feeling ill every morning due to cooking odours, especially when pregnant (WC, p. 53).

Wednesday explains the problem of multiple truths to Mr Bellister in her letter of farewell. She declares: "I was always in bad trouble ... with the truth. Not so much knowing what it is, as knowing which it is. My truths ... had second selves, split personalities..." (WC, p. 273). Realising that her truth will sound ridiculous to him (that her dream children are 'real'), she gives him "the seeming truth", that they are not real because they are dreams. Although she sees this as "inadequate", she knows it is the most acceptable to people who are part of the world. The reader discovers this 'truth' at the same time as Mr Bellister, and thus is in the same position as he is, having to choose a truth, or perhaps accepting both, in the recognition that each has his or her own truth. The novel leaves us in a position of choice or multiplicity, not in one of certainty.

As the ending of Wednesday's Children suggests, Hyde's texts are also foregrounded by the manner in which she undermines the notion that the narrator is the all-knowing
creator of the text, and instead makes it clear that the reader must participate in creating a meaning for him or herself. In Check to Your King she absolves herself of the responsibility of creating 'truth' for the reader by presenting a packaged history, and instead makes the reader an active participant. She quotes from Charles's account of his meeting with Captain d'Urville, and then tells the reader: "About that you must decide for yourself" (CTYK, pp. 161-162). Throughout the text the reader is frequently asked to "imagine" or "suppose", and since the narrative is not conclusive and authoritative, such activation of the reader's imagination is a crucial aspect of the work. In some ways the reader undergoes a similar experience to Hyde, weighing up the evidence and drawing possible conclusions. This involvement of the reader is integral to Hyde's notion of overcoming preconceived ideas and ways of seeing. As Stevens comments, she "drew her pictures so that [the reader is] compelled to look with greater understanding," and presumably come to new insights or at least to question former conceptions.  

Again in Wednesday's Children it is immediately made clear that the reader's active and imaginative participation are required. The opening pages outline how the "ideal listener" (or reader) would interpret the scene Hyde describes. Such a person would not merely accept what is given but would use his or her knowledge and imagination to fill in the gaps and reconstruct the scene. Indeed, the "ideal type of listener" is
described as "the man who knows a bit and can believe or imagine much more" (WC, pp. 13-14). This provides a blueprint as to how the reader should approach the novel. The imagination must be engaged.

In this novel Hyde plays with the expectations readers have of realistic fiction. The reader's dependence on the narrator to convey reality is highlighted when the narrator is revealed as having tricked the reader by not telling everything as she pretends to do. The narrator appears to take the reader into her confidence, often addressing him or her in the intimate second person voice and indicating what will happen next (see for instance WC, pp. 105-106, 160). However, the narrator does not let the reader know until the end that Wednesday's children are dream children. Hyde plays with the reader in a similar manner to Janet Frame in *Scented Gardens For the Blind* and *Living in the Maniototo*, where the reader is also led to believe in characters who turn out to be dreams. All through the text, the reader is made aware that there are many ways to interpret things, but it is only at the conclusion that the real implications of this are clear. The reader is now faced with a dilemma. He or she has believed in Wednesday's world, just as the 'normal' characters in the novel have. Now all discover it is 'not true'; or is it?

The reader has believed in Wednesday's world, just as he or she believes in the world of any realistic novel, though each
is equally a creation of the writers' and the readers' imaginations. In this way, Hyde shows up the fictitiousness of all fiction, just as she exposes the subjectivity of 'history' in *Check to Your King*. At the same time, she reveals the 'reality' of fiction once it lives in peoples' minds. She challenges the world-view of the reader, as re-vision is necessary, unless he or she wishes to be even more inflexible than Crispin and Brenda. The reader is left in an ambiguous position, reflecting the ambiguity of the text.

The lack of a stable narrative viewpoint contributes to the evershifting and fragmentary nature of Hyde's prose. These characteristics have often drawn unfavourable critical reactions. *The Godwits Fly*, for instance, has been attacked for the fragmentary nature of the narrative, the lack of a plot to hold it all together and round it off, the "irrelevant" digressions, the "confused", "random" and "insignificant" action, and the disparate nature of the novel's various themes. As Rawlinson comments, however, the disconnected style of *The Godwits Fly* is suited to the novel's content. Life is portrayed as a series of confused, and often confusing, events, which do not follow one after the other in an ordered fashion, but rather occur 'at random', and in a manner which cannot be easily ordered and understood by a young girl such as Eliza, through whose consciousness the majority of the narrative is mediated.
As in Hyde's other works it is difficult to pin the narrator down; the voice is both Eliza and not Eliza, with the added complication that Eliza is closely modelled on Hyde herself. Sympathy and understanding for her father, John, are induced by the occasional passages which move into his mind, showing his disillusionment and frustration. Combined with insights into Augusta's mind, these passages illustrate the multiplicitous nature of truth, demonstrating that the rights and wrongs of their relationship are not easily decided, thereby backing up Eliza's own inability to choose between them.

The confused nature of the narrative often mirrors the confused nature of the action. When Augusta takes the children to Australia, the trip to the wharf is largely taken over by a collection of memories, as it is these which dominate the children's minds. The narration then moves abruptly to the children's direct speech as the voyage begins, recreating the atmosphere of excitement and discovery, a mood in which the father on the wharf is forgotten just as quickly as he disappears from the text (TGF, pp. 52-54). Later, Eliza's confusion at waking up in hospital is dramatically portrayed by the confusion of disembodied voices with which the scene opens (TGF, p. 165). The reader also has no idea what is going on at first, again making the experience more immediate. Eliza's affair with Jim is a "quick, careless" one; a relationship which does not go beyond the physical surface, and thus the portrayal of it is dominated by surface impressions rather than feelings,
as is evident in the description of them as: "two shapes lounging, walking, gesticulating, serving out cool salad..." (TGF, p. 187). The birth and death of Eliza's baby, and her eventual return to New Zealand are portrayed in a disconnected manner, but this is a quality which aptly reflects Eliza's dazed state at the time. In the final chapter, however, the tone of the narration becomes more settled, resigned as Eliza is, to being a "stock ... of various goods" (TGF, p. 231).

Hyde demonstrates that there is more than one way of seeing and consequently more than one way of telling. Monolithic perceptions are accompanied by monolithic means of expression and her rejection of such standardisation is heralded by the techniques she employed. She appropriated the forms of social realism and biography which were acceptable to her society. Then she subverted them in a manner which questioned their very basis; namely, the acceptance of fixed universal 'truths'. It is Hyde's insistence that the imagination is integral to both art and life which disrupts such conceptions. This belief is very clearly conveyed in a passage from Wednesday's Children where she has Wednesday explain to her son, Dorset, that good literature gives us glimpses of the way things "could be and ought to be", as they are revealed momentarily to the artist; that is, to one with 'vision'. Furthermore, in what could be seen as an attack by Hyde on her contemporaries and an in-built defence of her own techniques, Wednesday goes on to say that "bad books" are written by those who lack this vision, and
instead treat "facts as if facts were truth, instead of being only the littlest part of truth..." (WC, pp. 143-144). This self-reflexive comment questions the very techniques on which the dominant fictional mode of the time was based and succinctly encapsulates Hyde's literary marginality.

Conclusion

The dominant theme of the texts discussed is the desire to overcome fixed concepts by making room for alternative possibilities. I believe that this striving on Hyde's part resulted from her position as an alternative whom the fixed concepts of her society did not make room for. The struggles portrayed in her texts are, therefore, representations of her personal struggles to gain the acceptance and tolerance which would enable her to create for herself a 'home in this [public] world'. This position was very much related to her female identity. As I have shown in the Chapter III, being a woman confined Hyde to a marginal position in both society and the developing literary establishment, which was a microcosm of the wider society in terms of the gender conventions it sustained and reinforced. This meant that in her literary endeavours Hyde could not ignore the constraints imposed by her female identity. This understanding plus her perception of the falseness of the images imposed on her, led to a wider recognition of the arbitrary and inhibiting nature of all of society's 'truths'.
Thus the marginality conferred on Hyde by reason of her sexual difference from the male norm by which identity and official 'truths' in New Zealand were still measured became translated into literary differences as she questioned these norms and explored alternatives in each of her texts.

In seeking a means to overcome the limitations imposed by her female identity, one option Hyde explored was to bury it to an extent by taking on a male persona. Hyde's attempt to do this in the Starkie novels calls to mind Mander's identification with the pioneer male as a means to overcome the constraints female identity had imposed during her youth, and also Mander's act of wish-fulfilment in making Allen Adair the central character in her last New Zealand novel. There are significant differences, however. Hyde never truly buries the woman as Mander so often does, even if inadvertently. Instead of putting the male image forward as a positive alternative and a model for women to emulate as Mander does, Hyde's agenda is clearly to appropriate this persona to her own ends and in so doing subvert the very notion of male and female identities. Although there are difficulties in this strategy as I have outlined above, Hyde generally retains the control which enables her to use the male persona to serve these purposes. Aspects of women's experience are covertly slipped into men's stories and the boundaries between the experiences of women and men are whittled away in Nor the Years Condemn, thereby suggesting that such boundaries are not necessary.
The other means by which Hyde dealt with her female identity was by confronting it head on and making it the subject of her texts. In putting female experience at centre-stage Hyde challenged the established tenets which defined such subjects as insignificant, the stuff of romantic or domestic fiction at best but certainly not of serious literature. By her very acts of writing and publishing Wednesday's Children and The Godwits Fly, Hyde battered against the structures which sought to confine her. She took this challenge further by suggesting within these texts means by which such structures could be dismantled and women, and everyone else, freed from their dominion.

Hyde's discarding of fixed concepts and pursuit of alternatives could not be achieved within fixed literary forms which reinscribed the very values she strived to deconstruct. The result, therefore, was a subversion of literary conventions which matched her treatment of social tenets. The questioning of gender and social constructs and the relentless changes of style, voice and genre are part of the same process and all are consequent upon the release of the imagination. This is shown by Hyde to be the chief weapon in her battle for 'a home', as it is the means by which the individual can conceive alternatives to society's truths and thereby begin to create his or her own authentic identity.

Hyde does not imply that women should emulate a male ideal as Mander does. Rather she suggests that the answer for
women as for men lies in gaining access to one's own inner strengths as represented by the imagination. Because she does not locate the solution in an unattainable ideal her texts are not subject to the same contradictions and inconsistencies as Mander's are. The lapses and disruptions which occur in Hyde's texts are for the most part deliberate as they are part of her strategy of undermining the concepts and structures which condemned her to exclusion by virtue of their seemingly immutable nature.
Notes


3 McCormick, pp. 174-175.

4 Stevens, "Introduction," Check to Your King, pp. vi, ix.


7 Downie Stewart to Schroder, 16 Oct. 1939, MS Papers 280, folder 11, WTu.

8 James Bertram, "Robin Hyde: A Reassessment," Landfall 7 (1953), 182.

9 J.C. Reid, Creative Writing, p. 55.


11 Sandbrook, p.1.

12 See Sandbrook's discussion of Hardy and Bunkle's analysis, p. 282, and Hardy and Bunkle, "Robin Hyde."

13 Sandbrook, pp. 169-170.

14 Hyde, "Women Have no Star," p. 17.

15 See below, pp. 243-245.


18 Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews, p. xii.

19 Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews, p. xxiv.


21 Hyde to Lee, 10 Mar. 1936, NZ MSS Lee Collection, AP.

22 Hyde to Schroder, 26 Apr. 1935, MS Papers 280, folder 6, WTu.

23 D.I.B. Smith, p. xxi.

24 See D.I.B. Smith, p. xviii.


26 J.C. Reid, *Creative Writing*, p. 55, and Gries, p. 140.


28 Riddy, p. 190.

29 Robin Hyde, *Nor the Years Condemn* (1938; rpt. Auckland: New Women's Press, 1986), p. 50. All further references to this work appear in the text.

30 Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews, p. xxvi.

32 In a letter to Schroder she described Journalese as a "very lightweight, chatty sort of prose book", which "has nothing personal as regards my muddled affairs in it naturally, and it's really rather fun ...", adding that she was writing it to raise money to get to England. See Hyde to Schroder, 27 Jun. 1934, MS Papers 280, folder 5, WTu.

33 Riddy, pp. 189-192.


35 Riddy, p. 192.


37 Roberts, *Where did she Come From?*, p. 86.


39 Hyde to Schroder, 14 Feb. 1935, MS Papers 280 folder 6, WTu.


42 Sandbrook, pp. 44-45.


44 Hyde to Schroder, 1929, MS Papers 280, folder 4, WTu.


47 Hyde to Lee, 9 Nov. 1938, and 14 Jun. 1939, NZ MSS Lee Papers, AP.

48 Hardy, "Critical Note," p. xvi.

49 See Chapter III, pp. 137-139, 163-166.

50 Hardy, Bunkle and Matthews, p. xxiii.

51 Peter Alcock, "The Writing of Women in New Zealand," *WLWR* 17 (1976), 246.

52 McCormick, pp. 174-175.

53 See above, pp. 215-216.

54 See Chapter III, p. 166 and notes 78 and 79.

55 Sandbrook, pp. 316, 322.


57 Robin Hyde to Buick, 12 Mar. 1935, Thomas Lindsay Buick, Papers, 1900-1938, MS Papers 58, WTu.

58 Stevens, "Introduction", *Check to Your King*, p. vii.

59 Stevens, "Introduction," *Check to Your King*, p. vii.

CHAPTER V

SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER'S LIFE AND TIMES:
THE SOCIAL AND LITERARY SCENE IN NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

Sylvia Ashton-Warner has an international reputation as an educationalist and to a lesser extent as a novelist. Her fame in the former was particularly great in the United States of America during the 1960s and 1970s following the publication of her educational treatise Teacher, which outlined the 'organic' reading scheme she believed to be the key to teaching children to read. My main interest in Ashton-Warner is, however, in her career as a novelist and her relationship with New Zealand society and New Zealand's literary traditions as it is revealed in her texts. Like Hyde, Ashton-Warner's works cannot be readily classified as either fiction or non-fiction. In fact a most accurate description of this aspect of her works is conveyed in Joan Stevens's comment that Three, which is one of her later works, is "another slice of [Ashton-Warner's] autobiography, in which as in her other work 'something of
reality escapes into fantasy'. "There is a blurring of reality and fantasy which breaks down the distinctness between the two and suggests that this is an arbitrary distinction, as is also the case in Hyde's works.

Ashton-Warner also resembles Hyde in her refusal to live according to the prescribed roles for women. Like Hyde's works, her writings contain evidence of the anguish and self-recriminations occasioned by this refusal to 'swim with the tide'. Significantly, both of these women initially wrote their autobiographical fictions on the advice of doctors treating them for nervous breakdowns and depression. Writing was a means of responding to the need to confront and manage internal conflicts, which were no doubt partly a consequence of living outside of the prescribed roles. The other point of similarity between Hyde and Ashton-Warner is that they are of the same generation. Ashton-Warner was born two years after Hyde, in 1908. Thus she grew up in the same climate as Hyde did and experienced the same conservative attitude towards the position of women as that outlined in Chapters I and III.

The crucial difference is that Ashton-Warner lived beyond that age, whereas Hyde did not. In addition, Ashton-Warner did not begin writing until much later in life. She was 40 when her first short story was published and 50 when her first novel, Spinster, appeared. Whereas Hyde wrote at the height of a conservative age with respect to women's roles, Ashton-Warner's
writing spanned this period to the late 1970s, by which time the
new feminist movement had begun a concerted attack on the
conventions which prescribed women's lives. Furthermore, during
the later years of Ashton-Warner's writing career there was a
sudden growth in both women's writing and the reading of women's
writing in New Zealand as in many other parts of the world, such
writing having been politicised by the feminist movement.

Ashton-Warner, therefore, wrote at a time when
alternatives were becoming more conceivable than they had been
in Hyde's time, although at the time when her first novels were
published the literary establishment was still monolithic. The
influence of this establishment on Ashton-Warner was probably
decreased by the fact that she remained remote from it. Whereas
Hyde had close associations with the literary schools of her
time, even if they were not always supportive, Ashton-Warner is
more like Mander in that she worked for the most part in
isolation from the New Zealand literary scene. This isolation
was largely of her own choosing, however. She began writing
during the years she and her husband spent teaching at Maori
schools in isolated rural districts. Nevertheless, when they
later moved to Tauranga and she became widely acclaimed for her
first novel *Spinster* and also for *Teacher*, she maintained a
determined aloofness from the world around her, including the
literary world.
Ashton-Warner's freedom through isolation probably contributed to the extent by which her works subverted the maxims of New Zealand literature of the time. Their difference from the norm was partly due to her very idiosyncratic vision of the world. Like Robin Hyde before her and Janet Frame whose first novel was published the year before Spinster, Ashton-Warner was not 'at home in the world' and this is revealed in the difference of vision which characterises her novels. In setting out her individual vision in literature, and creating characters who were flamboyant females very much like the images she presented of herself in real life, she challenged the masculine literary tradition characterised by earnest, diffident males and a low-key style using plain language and little imagery.

In the next chapter I will examine the manner in which Ashton-Warner challenged both the masculine literary tradition and the masculine dominated society. Firstly, however, I will summarise Ashton-Warner's life and works and then proceed to outline the social scene of the time, especially in relation to the position of women. Finally I will outline the literary background against which Ashton-Warner's works appeared and whose maxims her works very often violated. My discussion of the literary and social background will focus on the years spanning the mid 1950s until the early 1970s, as this was the era when most of Ashton-Warner's published works were written or revised for publication.
Ashton-Warner's Life and Works: A Summary

Sylvia Ashton-Warner was born at Stratford on December 17, 1908, the sixth child in a family of nine. Her family were poor and socially isolated, especially as the father was a cripple and the mother the breadwinner. The family followed their teacher mother to a succession of country schools, and at times had to be split up because of the difficulty she had in getting positions in an age when men were always given preference. Early on, Ashton-Warner learnt to live in her own fantasy world, through the influence of her story-telling father and because of her lack of friends and material goods. After high school she became a pupil teacher in Wellington and began Training College in Auckland in 1928, even though teaching was not her real ambition and she constantly dreamed of, and sometimes attempted, escape through art or music.

She graduated during the Depression and had only temporary teaching positions before she married Keith Henderson, a fellow teacher, whom she had met at Training College. In their early married life she fulfilled the traditional role as housewife and mother while he taught at country schools. After five years of marriage and just before the birth of their third child, she pressured Keith to allow her to take up teaching again. There were few teaching opportunities open to married women, so they applied for a Maori school (known at the time as 'Native Schools'). These schools were located in remote rural
areas and required teaching couples. The husband worked as headmaster, while the wife took charge of the infant classes and was responsible for teaching domestic skills to the older Maori girls. Although this was initially supposed to be a short term measure, Ashton-Warner and her husband eventually taught together at a succession of Maori schools, during which time she developed the 'organic' reading scheme.

Ashton-Warner always claimed that her efforts to achieve official recognition from the Department of Education for this scheme met with hostility, as did her efforts to publish the scheme in New Zealand. She eventually rewrote the scheme in fictional form and published it as the novel *Spinster* in 1958. Following this, she resigned from teaching to devote herself to writing, and thus followed her other novels: *Incense to Idols* (1960), *Bell Call* (1964), *Greenstone* (1966) and *Three* (1970). The teaching scheme appeared as *Teacher* in 1963. Her ostensibly autobiographical works are *Myself* (1967) and *I Passed This Way* (1979). Another autobiographical/educational work *Spearpoint*, also published as *Teacher in America*, appeared in 1972. A short story collection, *Stories From the River*, was published in 1986, two years after her death. Following the publication of *Spinster* she was awarded the New Zealand Literary Fund's Scholarship in Letters, although she was reluctant to accept it for some time. In later years *I Passed This Way* won the Educator's Award of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, thus adding to her recognition in the United States of America,
and it was also acclaimed in New Zealand, being awarded the New Zealand Book Award for non-fiction in 1980. Two years later Ashton-Warner was honoured with an MBE.

It was due to Teacher that Ashton-Warner received many invitations to lecture overseas, and after the death of her husband in 1969 she left New Zealand in response to some of these offers, going initially to Israel. From there she went to London where her son Elliot was very ill. A fictionalised version of this period is presented in Three. After her return home to Tauranga, the death of her daughter's husband and her wish to help support the family, led her to take up an appointment at an experimental school at Aspen, Colorado. Spearpoint tells of her work there and the difficulties she faced trying to implement her 'organic teaching' programme in a new environment.

The year which Ashton-Warner spent in Aspen was neither a happy nor a successful one for her and she eventually escaped to Vancouver where she took up a position in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Her task was to teach student teachers the techniques of her 'organic' method. After several years she returned to Tauranga where she lived out the rest of her days, writing her life-story, I Passed This Way between 1975 and 1978. Her health deteriorated markedly from the early 1980s onwards when she was diagnosed as having cancer, and she eventually died in 1984.
The story of Ashton-Warner's rejection by both the educational and literary circles of her own country while she was acclaimed overseas has persisted over the years, and this is certainly the impression she conveyed in *I Passed This Way*. The recent biography of Ashton-Warner by Lynley Hood suggests, however, that she received more support in these endeavours than she liked to believe. Hood contends that Ashton-Warner developed a persecution complex as a means of keeping the world at bay because of her overriding fear of the world. The lonely and neglected artist was one of the many masks she created for herself as a means of coping with the world. Thus she ignored the acclaim which *Spinst er* brought, refusing interviews and invitations, even turning down an honorary membership of the writers' group PEN. This says Hood, " ensured that before long the invitations dried to a trickle and she was able to settle back into her favourite role of neglected genius." Hood also argues that Ashton-Warner's belief that she was singled out by the Director-General of Education as an undesirable element was unfounded and was a part of her general persecution complex. Ashton-Warner's stance towards both the literary and educational establishments in New Zealand is perhaps best summed up by Louis Johnson's comment that "Sylvia needed rejection more than she needed support - because that's what she fed on."
The 1950s were a period of ease following the hardships of the war years. Society was largely unruffled except for fear of communism, fostered by the 'Cold War', manifested in the Korean War, and coming closer to home in the turmoil of the 1951 Waterfront Strike, which was treated by the government as a serious threat. Bill Pearson's 1952 essay, "Fretful Sleepers", portrays New Zealand of the time as a materialistic, conformist society whose central ideal of equality was one where "[e]verybody acts the same, receives the same amount of the world's goods, [and] everyone moves in the same direction." In this climate "evil is to disagree or be different."=

Being an artist or intellectual was one way of being different, and so was being a woman, for society was male society. In fact, Jock Phillips refers to the 1950s as the era which saw "the triumph of the New Zealand male stereotype" of the "strong, resilient, and modest ... man who could hold his drink, and enjoyed yarning with his mates, but would eventually settle down as a loyal family man." Six o'clock closing and All Black victories intensified the bonds between men, bonds which many of them had relied on during the war years, and this masculine culture was typified by the popularity of Barry Crump's bush stories about 'real blokes', the hero worship of prison escaper George Wilder, and general amusement (rather than
outrage) at All Black forward Peter Jones swearing on national radio in 1956.⁷

Since New Zealand at that time was a relatively classless society, apart from some prejudice against Māori, (though the Māori male was accepted if a good worker, rugby player or soldier), the subjugation of women was important because it was the only way in which the New Zealand male could assert his superiority.⁸ This was also necessary because of New Zealanders' mistrust of those who excelled over others. Men had to be mates, and the ethic of male solidarity was founded on a conception of equality based on the lowest common denominator, as outlined by Pearson. It was unsociable for a man (and I do not use the term generically here) to think he was better than others, or to even be better. Robert Chapman's 1953 essay "Fiction and the Social Pattern" outlines gender relations in New Zealand, describing the growth of the male culture of mateship. He attributes this mainly to the urbanisation of society which gave the man little outlet for his 'pioneer spirit'. With his role limited to work and the garden, the man turned to the mateship of the male environment of pubs and sports clubs, while his wife managed the household, children and finances.⁹ In this environment the worlds of women and men remained quite separate just as Hyde had shown them to be in post-World War I New Zealand.¹⁰
The aggressively masculine ethos described by Phillips had reasserted itself after World War II when its dominance had been disturbed. During the war years, women went into the workforce and took on many of the roles previously assigned to men, but the return of the servicemen brought an end to this. Women "appeared content to relinquish the responsibilities they had accepted in wartime and to revert to their traditional roles as wives and mothers, as was evidenced by the high birth rate in the years following 1945." Whether women were content to do so or not, they were encouraged to revel in domesticity and the family. As Deborah Brosnahan remarks in her study of women's roles during World War II, domesticity was held up to young working women "as the fairy tale ending and they wanted it."

Thus most New Zealand women followed the examples of their American counterparts in seeking suburban bliss through the many new household gadgets made available through peace and prosperity. The consequences of this cult of domesticity for American women are outlined in Betty Friedan's study *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan writes of the conflicts faced by the American housewife of the 1950s and 1960s as she tried to conform to the model of ideal femininity - the 'feminine mystique'. In contrast to society's view that being a wife and mother was a woman's highest goal, Friedan contends that many women were left empty and depressed. She outlines the means adopted by women in the attempt to overcome these feelings. They include constantly expanding the housework to fill the time
available, so that the woman's identity was based on a 'spic and span' house. Alternatively some women sought an identity through playing the role of sex-object, while many mothers became overly involved in their children's lives as a substitute for their own.\textsuperscript{13}

Striving for the 'feminine mystique' seems to have produced similar consequences in New Zealand, judging from a survey conducted by the Society for Research on Women in 1972. Twenty percent of the urban women interviewed "admitted that depression was a problem [and t]he numbers of women admitted to psychiatric in-patient units outnumbered the male admissions by 915 to 499 in 1971."\textsuperscript{14} The 1975 Report of the Select Committee on Women's Rights also noted the poor mental health of New Zealand women, stating that:

Research on the subject has related this situation to depression caused by the pressures of domestic and social conditions on women, particularly those fully engaged in the home, the reality of which is reinforced by the fact that women treated for mental disorders are overwhelmingly in the childbearing age group.\textsuperscript{15}

The Select Committee's report commented further that although it was still widely accepted that a woman's primary role was as housewife and mother, "the importance of this function is given little active recognition."\textsuperscript{16} This lack of a public value for their work compounded the situation of women trapped in conventional roles. Although these studies relate to the
position of women at a later time than that on which my discussion is focussed, the continuing dominance of traditional values suggests that there had not been much change over the whole period in respect of women's roles.

In keeping with this emphasis on the domestic role of women, there was little in the way of political action among women during the 1950s and 1960s. Joyce Herd notes that there were few women in political positions and those that were often suffered criticism for being overly "ambitious" and "unfeminine" in taking on such roles. As is to be expected in such a climate, the women's organisations which did exist were largely concerned with the home and family. Despite the preservation of the domestic ideal, women did begin to enter the workforce again in increasing numbers. This began to occur in the late 1950s and flourished during the 1960s, which was a period of national prosperity. Expanding industries and labour shortages combined with a decrease in maternal obligations, as women were able to exert more control over their fertility, to encourage more married women into the workforce. The rising cost of living also played its part in forcing many married women into paid employment. From the 1950s to the 1970s the number of women in the paid workforce rose dramatically although the range of jobs open to women remained quite restricted, with the Public Service providing some new opportunities. This entry of women into the public world of paid employment sowed the seeds of challenge to conventional roles, as did the expanding
educational opportunities opening up to young women at that time.

An essay by Phoebe Meikle under the pseudonym of Lesley Hall which appeared in *Landfall* in 1958, indicates that chinks had already begun to appear in the patriarchal armour, at least in the relationships between educated women and men. According to Meikle, these women had begun to question their traditionally inferior status, especially in the workplace. This challenge was an upset to the fragile notion of superiority which Meikle claims was nurtured in the New Zealand male since birth. In addition, professional women, seeing that they could match men, were no longer prepared to put up with and accept them as they were. Many of these women were, therefore, beginning to reject marriage in recognition of the difficulty of finding suitable partners, even though this remained an unattractive option, for the spinster was still stigmatised as a failure.¹³

The dissatisfaction of many women with their traditional roles was politicised by the feminist movement which arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s, following the growth of such a movement in the United States of America and Europe. The predominant cry was for greater equality for women and the removal of both the legal and the social barriers which confined women to traditional roles. These years instituted the greatest challenge yet to the patriarchal nature of New Zealand society and it is one which is ongoing as women continue to batter
against the social structures which define male and female in particular and unequal ways.

Ashton-Warner's Relationship to the Dominant Social Codes

Where did Ashton-Warner stand in relation to both the traditional conception of a woman's role which predominated throughout most of her life, and the challenges which increasingly came to be mounted against this? At least at the time she came to write I Passed This Way, which was during the height of feminist activity in New Zealand, she seems to have been aware of the constrictions imposed by gender roles. Writing of her high school days, she remarks that the boys were funny and asks why the girls were not. The reply she gives is that the "capacity for humour goes hand-in-hand with creativity and creativity belongs to freedom of the mind. And there you have it really: what had this society done to its women?"20

She goes on to observe that the school was "male-oriented" but that it was all right for girls as long as they did not "rock the boat" (IPTW, p. 112). Even if girls did conform that was no guarantee of success, as is demonstrated when the headmaster's favourites fail their exams and she remarks: "What price being reliable good clever useful charitable and beautiful in a world made by men for men?"; a statement which shows a clear awareness of society's power
structures (IPTW, p. 127). This perception of male power is reiterated when she frequently blames what she termed "the Permanent Solid Block of Male Educational Hostility" for the failure to get her teaching scheme published in New Zealand.

In the same text Ashton-Warner also records her impression that choices for women were restricted in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As a young woman she believed it was marriage or career, perhaps because, apart from her mother whom she knew to be at odds with the norm, virtually the only career women she had acquaintance with were the spinster teachers she admired so much (see for instance IPTW, pp. 155, 167-168). She dreams of fame as an artist, pianist and even as a swimmer but as these avenues gradually close to her and teaching becomes the one career left open, her thoughts turn more towards marriage, so that she no longer considers whether she will marry but rather whom she will marry. She comments: "of course there was only one real unwavering goal for any girl who called herself a girl and that was Holy Matrimony, never mind careers or freedom or anything like that" (IPTW, p. 193).

When she does marry, she conveys the impression that marriage, motherhood and domesticity involved a loss of identity for her. Of her marriage she observes: "I was no longer my own self, Sylvie, but a part of someone else, of a man, of a stranger; even my own name had been swept away. I was now Mrs K.D. Henderson" (IPTW, p. 239). This sentiment is reiterated
when, after the first five years of marriage submerged in husband and children, she decides there must be more to life than "kisses and nappies and finding yourself pregnant" (IPTW, pp. 247-248). She sees teaching in Maori schools as a way of saving herself from the fate of the many "young wives who went down under marriage and babies, swamped, never to be of any account again, signing their names in down-at-heel slippers" (IPTW, p. 266). From this point on she faces the new challenge of reconciling her conflicting roles as wife, mother, teacher and artist.

These comments suggest that Ashton-Warner was uneasy in the roles society assigned to women, or at least that she portrayed herself in this way. Marriage and domesticity only became attractive to her when they offered an escape from teaching, but after experiencing this life she oscillated back to teaching as a means of escape. According to Hood's biography, Ashton-Warner increasingly neglected her role as mother and housewife and when not teaching devoted her attention to art, writing and music instead. As a result her husband had to take on these feminine roles as well as his own masculine ones as father and primary breadwinner. Whether Ashton-Warner's refusal to comply with what was expected of her was selfishness or an essential survival technique, it is clear that she was not prepared to remain within the conventional realm of women, just as she was not prepared to be conventional in any other way.
The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s may have helped her to analyse her position or it may have given her yet another excuse for her stance of alienation from society. She does, however, appear to have seen the opportunities it opened up as a form of release, as is indicated in a comment she made in a letter of 1977 to Moira Taylor, who was organising a display of the works of New Zealand women writers. Ashton-Warner wrote: "It is good to hear first-hand of you people taking a stand for women though for a writer of my generation it's far too late", adding that she would "like to have supported this strong women's movement thirty years ago."

Ashton-Warner's difference as a woman in a patriarchal society came on top of her generally outcast status. According to Hood's analysis she developed this mentality as a child. Within her family she felt she was the odd one out and to cap this off her family were also outsiders in society, being poor and itinerant with a fierce tempered mother as the breadwinner and a crippled father. Her outsider status was exacerbated by her refusal to conform with what she calls in *I Passed This Way* the "steel straight-jacket [sic] of tradition", which she believed was reinforced by an education system which stifled all individuality (*IPTW*, p. 137). She sums up the consequences of this in her description of New Zealand as characterised by "[r]igidity, timidity, beneath the crinoline: stale mouldy air. Inbred thinking."
While she and Keith lived in isolated country areas there was plenty of room for her eccentricity and her refusal to conform did not cause too much conflict with mainstream society, as mainstream society had only a limited presence in these areas. When they moved to a less remote school in Hawke's Bay the conflict was more evident, especially as their move coincided with the beginning of the conservative 1950s. Hood states that this "climate of conformity" confirmed Ashton-Warner's "sense of alienation and her belief that New Zealand was an uncultured colonial backwater", quoting a letter Ashton-Warner wrote at the time declaring that New Zealand society to be "a ghastly thing" and stating her intention to leave the country. It was after this return to society that Ashton-Warner wrote most of her published works, all of which reflect this sense of alienation and the conflicts it occasions.

The Literary Background

In Chapter III, I documented the rise of social realism as the fictional mode for New Zealand writers. In the period between the 1930s and the 1960s this mode consolidated its hold to such an extent that it seems to have been considered the natural mode for New Zealand writers. Cherry Hankin, for instance, has described realism as being "almost inseparable ... from ... the establishment of a national literary identity", while Lawrence Jones has commented that "realism involves a way
of looking at life that seems congenial to New Zealand."

A similar perception is evident in Vincent O'Sullivan's observation that New Zealand writing since 1945 has been dominated by "insistent social realism, with often enough deliberately uneventful prose as the most appropriate instrument for expressing a no-frills society." In a more disparaging tone, Michael Morrissey has described such fiction as demonstrating that the "writers accepted the (Sunday) school standards of both decency and non-difficulty - which ... they imposed on themselves.""Commentators on New Zealand literature generally refer to the era in New Zealand literature between the 1930s and the early 1960s as the provincial period. The manifesto for New Zealand writing in this period is set out in Chapman's "Fiction and the Social Pattern" which appeared in the early 1950s. He called on the writer to first create "the illusion of realism", favoured the use of the first-person narrator as a means of drawing in the reader, and affirmed the tendency of New Zealand writers to enhance their works by drawing on their childhoods as "the period of fullest union with [their] community." He further stipulated that the writer must stop short of analysis and explanation, this being the province of the critic."

In summing up New Zealand writers' examination of their society, Chapman notes the predominant concern "with the isolated individual, isolated in every sense, who may or may not
explode into violent gestures under the distorting weight of the pattern he does not understand...." Chapman's use of the term "he" to describe such characters is appropriate in this context because he also notes the paucity of non-conforming female characters. He attributed this to the fact that most of the writers were male, and also to what he termed, women's more clearly defined role in New Zealand society and the "avenue of satisfaction [they have] in the children". In his view this meant that women did not attempt escape from social constructs so often as males, whose role in life had been stripped from them by the urbanisation of society, as I have outlined above. This argument, however, ignores the obvious escape attempts of Hyde's heroines Wednesday and Eliza. Furthermore, in light of the situation of New Zealand women during the post-war era which I have outlined above, I would argue that, contrary to Chapman's assertions, women did indeed have very good reason to at least attempt escape.

The literature of the provincial period was very much male dominated, just as I have shown the society of this time to be. This was particularly exemplified by the dominance of Sargeson as the main literary influence along with the distinctly masculine American prose tradition of Hemingway and Sherwood Anderson. Lawrence Jones terms the period 1935-1951 "The Age of Sargeson", and J.C. Reid comments on the strong influence of Sargeson in the 1940s, "both stylistically and in the repudiation of second-hand puritan values." Apart from
Sargeson, the other main novelist acknowledged in this period was Dan Davin. During the 1950s there was a crop of war novels by writers such as Davin, Guthrie Wilson, Errol Braithwaite, M.K. Joseph and Gordon Slatter. Jones implies that during the period up until the late 1950s the mainstream realist tradition was so much of a male province that female writers generally did not try to take part. They retreated instead to popular romantic fiction. This was the province of writers such as Rosemary Rees, Mary Scott, Dorothy Eden and Essie Summers. It was not until the end of the decade that writers such as Ashton-Warner, Janet Frame and Marilyn Duckworth arose to challenge this male dominance of the mainstream tradition.

A feature of this male dominance is the way in which women are portrayed in provincial fiction as representative of the dominant puritan morality. Most (male) writers portrayed women as dominant, and conformist, bolstered by their adherence to the official moral code, while the men (usually their husbands) were weak, impotent figures as the result of their inability to believe in the materialist puritan ethic, and hence their failure to achieve in society. The answer was escape into male mateship and Chapman illustrates the predominance of this in the fiction of this era, one of the key situations being the efforts of male characters to escape the confines of domesticity. Sargeson is the most obvious model, but the trend is also reflected in the war novels of Wilson, Slatter and
Jim Henderson, where there is a preference for male company over the confinement associated with a wife and family.

According to Patrick Evans's discussion of the provincial novel, such fiction is usually set in a small town and often perceived through the eyes of a child, who gradually recognises and rebels against the repressions of his or her puritan environment. The consequences of this repression are most evident in the treatment of sexuality as covert and sinful, and often linked with violence. Indeed, an undertone of violence is another feature of these novels.²⁷ The novels of Ronald Hugh Morrieson are good examples of this, as is Ian Cross's The God Boy, and Janet Frame's Owls Do Cry. Although not mediated through the consciousness of a child, Bill Pearson's Coal Flat is also provincial in its concentration on small town repression and underlying violence and sexuality.

Women writers participated in this provincial tradition to a limited extent. As well as the example of Frame given above, Hyde's The Godwits Fly is provincial in many aspects, including the child's perspective of, and growing alienation from, the adult world. She also portrays the father figure as weak and an outsider in the family while the mother is strict and puritanical, although the occasional insights into her mind show the bitter frustrations which have driven her to adopt this stance. Ashton-Warner's Incense to Idols also shares some of the characteristics of the provincial novel, with its
concentration on the perspective of the isolated individual, anti-puritan stance and portrayal of the town's repressed violence and sexuality. The crucial factor about this and other women's novels which appeared during the provincial era is, however, their difference from the norm.

This difference is often defined in terms of a concentration on an inner 'reality' as opposed to the external world which features in the male novels. J.C. Reid, for instance, commented in 1970 that "[w]hile most of the writers who use childhood experience as the stuff of fiction are men, most of those who deal with abnormal states of mind are women." Patrick Evans in his 1968 review of Joy Cowley's Nest in a Falling Tree notes the tendency of the New Zealand woman novelist to "risk the exposure and analysis of that [emotional] core which different and perhaps lesser writers are concerned either to cover or to avoid." Evans goes on to say that the fictions of both Ashton-Warner and Frame take such "voyages into the interior, and [bring] back stories of individual anguish or suffering, of torments whose total importance is spiritual, not social." Similarly Peter Alcock concludes that "for whatever reasons ... [New Zealand women writers] have struck deep into private reality rather than public living."

While these critics refer to difference in terms of subject matter, Jones locates difference in style, contending that
women who wrote serious fiction such as Robin Hyde and Janet Frame differentiated themselves sharply both from the Sargesonian male realists and from the popular women writers [by] using a more intense, impressionistic, inward and modernist mode....

Hyde's difference of style from her male counterparts has already been discussed, while Frame is widely acknowledged as having broken new ground in the New Zealand novel tradition in both her mode of writing and her subject matter. That the novels of New Zealand women are characterised by differences in either mode or subject matter, or sometimes both, is perhaps not so significant as the manner in which this difference has been perceived and discussed in ways which echo the stereotyped perceptions of women's writing which I have outlined in the Introduction.

The treatment accorded women's writing which differed from the (male) norm, and therefore could be identified as 'feminine', contrasts with the reception of women's works which bore sufficient similarities to this norm. This is exemplified by comparing the provincial school's treatment of Mander and Katherine Mansfield. As I have demonstrated, there was no place for Mander's novels in 1920s New Zealand, but The Story of a New Zealand River in particular did win a place during the provincial period. This came about because of the aspects Mander's works had in common with the social realist tradition. Many of the new writers were in fact friends of Mander, and it was with their encouragement that she arranged for the New
Zealand edition of the novel in 1938. *The Story of a New Zealand River* fitted in with the literary ideals of the new school in many ways, particularly in its attack on the inhibiting effects of puritanism, as well as in its realism and documentary value. Thus, Frank Sargeson's review discusses *The Story of a New Zealand River* mainly as a portrayal of life in Northland, and judges Mander's "solid realism" to be her "greatest strength as a writer."**

The literary group to which Sargeson belonged endeavoured to establish an indigenous literary tradition, and in this effort they took Mander 'on board' as a 'respectable' forerunner of their works. In promoting Mander, they promoted the concept of New Zealand literature. This is evident in a *New Zealand Listener* editorial in 1955, written in response to a letter complaining about a radio play Oliver Gillespie had written on Mander's life. The correspondent questions the merits of making a play about Mander just because she was a New Zealand writer. The reply of the editor, Monte Holcroft, and that of Fairburn in a subsequent letter to the editor, affirm Mander as deserving of attention because "she was one of the first New Zealanders to write novels with a genuine flavour of life in this country."** Mander is deemed to represent the struggle of New Zealand writers to forge a literary identity, with Holcroft describing her story as an exemplification of "the turbulent youth and the frustration, the travels abroad, the attempt to establish an imaginative hold upon a country in which not enough people have
lived and died." Fairburn uses his support of Mander to make a case for the importance of a national literature as a counter to what he sees as the increasing trend towards mass production of "international literature" which has no distinctive "social or geographical context." He judges Mander to be significant if only for her part in countering this trend.

The acceptance of Mander as part of the New Zealand literary tradition, or at least a forerunner to it, contrasts markedly with the dismissal of Mansfield. These two women were contemporaries, though Mansfield began writing much earlier and died in 1923, just when Mander's career was beginning. In both cases, their writing was done overseas and they looked back to their New Zealand childhood and youth for inspiration. In this manner, they were both pioneers in New Zealand literature, attempting to convey a new world of experience. In terms of the dominant social realist tradition, however, only Mander is accorded this status because some aspects of her works foreshadowed the writing of the 1930s and the provincial period.

The exclusion of Mansfield, on the other hand, was almost inevitable given the extreme nature of her difference from the prevailing norm. The imaginative, impressionistic portrayal of feminine, urban, upper class life which is the mainstay of Mansfield's New Zealand fiction was too different from the provincial 'no-frills' norm. In consequence Mansfield was 'dropped out' of the New Zealand canon. This process is
succinctly conveyed in Frank Sargeson’s essay on Mansfield, which argues that her works belong to the "feminine tradition" stemming from Samuel Richardson’s Pamela. Sargeson goes on to document what he sees as the shortcomings of this feminine tradition and concludes that is a "minor" tradition compared to the "masculine" one established by Richardson’s rival, Fielding. The implication is clearly that Mansfield does not fit in to the New Zealand tradition because this tradition is a development on the 'major' masculine model."

There are other examples of such reactions to what was perceived as 'feminine' writing. Jones points out that Holcroft, who held a position of considerable influence on New Zealand writing as editor of the New Zealand Listener for twenty years up until his retirement in 1967, disliked the impressionistic method as "'feminine' and too subjective." Holcroft’s use of the term 'feminine' here makes it obvious that he saw it as an inherently negative term."

Stevens recounts that the male reviewers of Ruth France’s 1958 novel The Race praised the realism of the yachting scenes and the "taut sea drama" between the men on the yachts, but the scenes among the womenfolk at home ... [were] variously dismissed as 'sentimental', 'padding', 'tiresome interruptions in the flow of an exciting narrative', [and] 'flat transcription of irrelevant incidents and commonplace conversations'."
The equation of 'feminine' writing with bad writing is especially evident in J.C. Reid's description of Bell Call. He remarks that despite its "moments of truth", the novel is marred by its "shapelessness ... its rattling feminine style ... [and] chip-on-the-shoulder-feminism." All of these comments show how the difference of the woman writer is disparaged and imply that she should write 'like a man'.

Ashton-Warner's Literary Tradition

Ashton-Warner's writing fits into the subjective and impressionistic mode generally identified with women novelists in New Zealand, and many of the comments about her works betray stereotyped conceptions of this 'feminine' mode similar to those just described. Critics of Ashton-Warner's work frequently see her as lacking control over her work, so that it becomes overburdened with emotion to the point of hysteria, or else she is perceived as a mere recorder of life lacking the ability to shape and transform events into 'art'. These comments are reminiscent of the terms used to describe Hyde's works, showing the same perception of women's writing as somehow not quite coming up to the mark.

The common perception is that emotion is the disruptive element in Ashton-Warner's fiction just as it is often seen to be in women's writing generally. This is most clearly seen in
Dennis McEldowney's argument that the chief problem in the work of Ashton-Warner and most other New Zealand women novelists, and indeed for New Zealand women in general, is that of "embodying emotion in an acceptable form, or any form at all; as it were, of grounding it." While acknowledging that women have been among the most innovative in New Zealand writing, he contends that they often risk "overburdening their writing to the point of breakdown with emotion", and goes on to state that the poor mental health statistics for New Zealand women suggest that this overburdening with emotion is a characteristic of New Zealand women in general. Although McEldowney's treatment of Ashton-Warner is generally positive, these comments reveal the extent to which she, and other women writers, are perceived as different, so that they are and will remain on the outside unless the critical canon can be widened. The implication is that they should 'tone-down' their work to make it more acceptable.

The conviction that emotion is disruptive means that most praise of Ashton-Warner's writing is tempered by concern about such disruption. H. Winston Rhodes, for instance, sums up her work as showing:

concern with the world of sense experience that in itself constitutes a criticism of modes of sophisticated behaviour. [But t]he latent emotionalism associated with this emphasis is not always so controlled that it does not disturb or irritate the reader.
J.C. Reid's analysis is similar. He acknowledges that Ashton-Warner has something to say, stating that "she does possess valuable intuitions and a conviction that the New Zealand milieu represses and distorts artistic and spiritual impulses...." He feels, however, that these insights are obscured by her style, for he judges her to be "an eccentric writer, largely undisciplined, prone to indulge in fanciful romantic excursions and to abandon reality in the interests of wilful fantasy...."\(^54\) Allen Curnow on the other hand does not seem to see any redeeming feature but comments only on what he sees as excessive emotion, stating that "[t]he voice of Spinster rises to a scream, and ends with a sentimental shuffle."\(^55\) Significantly, he refers to the text as if it were a woman, attributing to it the traditional patriarchal 'put downs' of screaming and sentiment. This tendency of critics to treat texts by women as if the texts themselves were women is one which has been noted by feminist scholar Mary Ellman in her discussion of male reactions to women's writing, to which she applies the general term 'phallic criticism'.\(^56\)

The other perception of Ashton-Warner as a mere recorder of life, is commented on by Stevens. She notes that Spinster came to be judged "as a transcript of fact" because of the authenticity of the school scenes and the fact that Ashton-Warner was known to be a teacher with a background in schools such as the one which features in the novel. As a result, Stevens comments, "[t]oo many discussions of Spinster ignored
its creative aspect." McEldowney also points out the damage which the obvious 'real life' background of Spinster did to Ashton-Warner's standing as a novelist, especially after the publication of Teacher, the diary entries of which are very similar to some of the classroom scenes in Spinster. He comments that this "appeared to give confirmation to a feeling which some people carried away from a reading of the novel, that it was pedagogical propaganda in fictional form", adding that the diary passages "appeared to confirm [the widely held opinion] that the Maori children were not only the best things in Spinster but simple reportage at that." There was an overall perception of Ashton-Warner's works as strikingly different from the norm. C.K. Stead describes both her teaching and her writing as offering "passion, style, extravagance, [and] a lavish public expenditure of the self, as her form of rebellion against ... uniformity...." Such a style of writing is certainly a contrast to the "deliberately uneventful prose" which characterises most fiction of this era. Not surprisingly perhaps, readers were confounded by this difference. Stevens comments, for instance, that Incense to Idols "bored, baffled and angered readers [and somehow put it down half-read, unable to penetrate the turgid prose...." A similar reaction is evident in McEldowney's summing up of Greenstone as "often engaging, sometimes irritating; but how, in the end, does one discuss fantasy?" Stead suggests that Ashton-Warner's difference is so extreme that readers often
misinterpret her comedy as melodrama because "they are not prepared to believe she is black-hearted enough to be asking them to laugh at matters so grim and serious." Like Stead, Jack Shallcrass points to the unsettling nature of Ashton-Warner's fiction, remarking that she had "the gift of raising uncomfortable issues, frequently from a baffling viewpoint." These differences have prompted the tendency to see Ashton-Warner as writing in "Her Own Tradition", to quote the title of David Hall's review of Greenstone.

The conventional view of Ashton-Warner in the post-provincial age is indeed that she wrote in her own tradition, having been forced into isolation by a literary establishment which disparaged or ignored her. Jones sums up this view in his contention that in her writing Ashton-Warner "encountered a block of male hostility, for the New Zealand literary world, dominated by male rebels against their society, did not grant this female rebel status", adding that "even after she had achieved world attention rare for a New Zealand writer, [she was] ignored in New Zealand literary journals." The most often quoted 'put down' of Ashton-Warner by the literary world is that of Charles Brasch, long-time editor of Landfall. He publicly attacked McEldowney for writing a critical article on Ashton-Warner, implying that her work was not worthy of such "serious consideration."
As I have briefly outlined above, Hood's biography contests this view of Ashton-Warner as being deliberately neglected, arguing that after the publication of *Spinster* she was in fact accorded much attention, which she refused to acknowledge. Despite her determined aloofness, Ashton-Warner was visited by and kept up a correspondence with a number of New Zealand writers including Maurice Shadbolt, Hone Tuwhare, Noel Hilliard and Louis Johnson. She gave the impression to each one that she was ignored by all others except himself. Eventually according to Hood, the "New Zealand literary community responded to the general disillusionment with Sylvia by downplaying the significance of Sylvia Ashton-Warner's writing," and she cites as evidence of this, the rebuke delivered by Brasch to McEldowney.

Hood's work also points to possible reasons why Ashton-Warner's works did not receive much attention in New Zealand journals. She argues that Ashton-Warner "resisted having any of her books after *Teacher* distributed in New Zealand, claiming that she could no longer face the venom of New Zealand reviewers." Hood points out the inconsistencies in this because *Teacher* was very well received, whereas it was the previous work, *Incense to Idols*, whose reviews had been generally unfavourable. She notes that Ashton-Warner may have wanted to keep her works out of New Zealand for fear of being sued by the acquaintances she had written about." Certainly it does seem that New Zealand journals tried to acquire Ashton-Warner's
works, at least in the early days of her career. Brasch, for instance, wrote to Ashton-Warner in 1964 urgently requesting that she ask her publishers to send him a review copy of *Teacher*, suggesting that this would be essential if the book were to be "widely noticed in New Zealand."  

An example of the unavailability of Ashton-Warner's works is provided by *Bell Call* which was published in the United States of America in 1964, but when Joan Stevens wrote the second edition of *The New Zealand Novel* in 1965 was still not available in New Zealand.  

Even in 1969, Dennis McEldowney remarked that the novel was little known in New Zealand, attributing this partly to the expense of the American edition and the lack of an English publication.  

No doubt this unavailability accounts for the fact that I have been unable to locate any New Zealand reviews of *Bell Call*. Reviews in the *New Zealand Listener* and *Landfall* usually provided (and still do provide) a forum for the introduction and discussion of new local novels. Without such assistance it is not surprising that *Bell Call* made little impact on the literary scene or the popular market.

The view that Ashton-Warner was deliberately ignored cannot be accepted unquestioningly in light of Hood's work and the evidence of efforts such as that of Brasch to review *Teacher*. It would seem that Ashton-Warner encouraged this view of herself as part of the general stance she presented to the
world. This attitude can be seen in a letter she wrote to Rhodes in August 1961. She states that she is preparing her 'Maori' stories for publication, and was thinking of sending them to Caxton or Pegasus because of her desire to publish in New Zealand, declaring that this would satisfy her "idiosyncratic inclination ... to know what it is to be received by a publisher in [her] own country, other than an odd short story." This stance contrasts with the extensive efforts of New Zealand publishers, particularly, A.H. and A.W. Reed, to publish her reading scheme; efforts which she always thwarted.

Although Ashton-Warner seems to have clung to the notion of rejection by New Zealand, the obvious difference of her works from the norms of New Zealand literature, as is indicated by the critical comments above, would suggest that the literary establishment would not have been over-ready to admit her to the canon even if she had been more accommodating. This attitude would have especially hardened after the publication of the novels subsequent to Spinster, as each of them retreats further from 'reality' as it was known in New Zealand literature. The dropping of Ashton-Warner after Spinster was, therefore, a consequence both of her determination to remain aloof and of her violation of the established maxims of fiction in New Zealand. In the case of Incense to Idols, it was also a consequence of her violation of New Zealand society's standards of 'decency'.
While Ashton-Warner's early works appeared during the provincial period, it is important to note that they appeared at the end of this period, and as a whole, her writing career spans an era of considerable change in the history of the New Zealand novel. *Spinter* appeared in 1958, at much the same time as the first novels of Janet Frame (*Owls do Cry*) and Marilyn Duckworth (*A Gap in the Spectrum*). These two women also issued a challenge to the male provincial tradition, both in their difference of view and their difference of mode. Throughout the 1960s, and especially in the 1970s, new novelists continued to appear and the fact that many of these were women, while some were Maori or Pacific Islanders (Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace and Albert Wendt being among the first), led to a gradual breakdown of the white male dominance of the literature of the provincial period. In the case of women's writing, the influence of the feminist movement was particularly relevant as it created a wide audience for writing which conveyed women's experience of life, and a consequent willingness among publishers to market such material.

The literary canon was being 'blown apart' in these years and alternatives were becoming more acceptable by the time the last two works to appear in Ashton-Warner's lifetime (*Three* in 1970 and *I Passed This Way* in 1979) were published. Up until the late 1960s, however, there was not much room for difference such as Ashton-Warner's. Difference was, however, a primary characteristic of Ashton-Warner's relationship to both society
and the mainstream literary tradition. She was a woman in a
country whose national identity was a aggressively masculine, an
artist in a community which valued practical skills, and she
constantly asserted the importance of emotion amongst a people
who valued a 'cool, calm and collected' reticence. She was an
individualist and a non-conformist in a society which tolerated
little variation. The difficulty she faced as a consequence has
been described by Stead as having "to bring her native
flourishes down to the space New Zealand society permits for
individuality - never enough to swing a cat in." Stead
remarks that she was unsuccessful in this, but I would contend
that she very often did not try, and that this was the cause of
her many violations of the literary and social standards.
Notes


3 This biographical account is drawn from Sylvia Ashton-Warner, I Passed This Way (1979; rpt. Wellington: A.H. and A.V. Reed, 1980), and Hood, Sylvia.

4 Hood, Sylvia, p. 158.

5 Quoted by Hood, Sylvia, p. 121.


9 Chapman, pp. 82-84.

10 See Chapter IV, p. 217.


16 The Role of Women in New Zealand Society, p. 65.

17 Herd, pp. 242-243.

18 For more details see Herd, pp. 247-251.


20 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, I Passed This Way (1979; rpt. Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1985), p. 112. All further references to this work appear in the text.


22 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, I Passed This Way (1979; rpt. Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1960), p. 414. This edition of the text is longer than the one previously quoted as the former ends in 1969 with the death of Ashton-Warner's husband, whereas the latter concludes in 1978 after her return to New Zealand from North America. All further quotes will be from the former edition unless otherwise specified.

23 Hood, Sylvia, p. 130.
24 See Chapter III, pp. 164-165.


29 Chapman, pp. 76-77.

30 Chapman, p. 95.

31 Chapman, p. 92.

32 See above, p. 284.


36 Chapman, pp. 84-86.


42 See Chapter IV, pp. 248-266.


44 Mander Papers, NZ MSS 534, Reviews of her Novels, AP.


46 Fairburn to Editor, *NZ Listener*, 18 Jun. 1955, MS Papers 1128, folder 22, WTh.


51 This accords with Atwood's discovery that reviewers often refer to women 'writing like a man' if their work is considered good. See Introduction, p. 16 and note 20.


54 J.C. Reid, "New Zealand Literature," p. 203.


57 Stevens, The New Zealand Novel, p. 103.

58 McEldowney, p. 231.


60 See above, note 26.


62 McEldowney, p. 244.


68 See above, p. 262.


70 Hood, *Sylvia*, p. 185.


72 Charles Brasch to Sylvia Ashton-Warner, 7 Mar. 1964, Charles Brasch Papers, MS 996, DUHO.


74 McEldowney, p. 241.


CHAPTER VI

"UNCONVENTIONAL AND CONTROVERSIAL":
THE SEPARATISM OF SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER'S NOVELS.

Introduction

In her obituary to Ashton-Warner, Lynley Hood describes her as "always unconventional; unconventional and controversial," and the previous chapter has borne out this observation as it applies to her life and especially to her writing. It is my task in this chapter to examine this unconventionality and controversiality as it appears in her texts. My focus will be on two of the areas which were discussed in relation to both Hyde and Mander. Firstly, I will analyse Ashton-Warner's reaction to the norms for women as they were defined by her society, both because of her reputation as a rebel against such norms, and also because as I said in my discussion of Mander, the New Zealand woman writer cannot ignore the New Zealand woman if she wishes to write with authenticity. Secondly, I will examine Ashton-Warner's treatment of, and reaction to, the dominant literary tradition which she
inevitably confronted because, like the social structure, it had a strong conformist influence.

In contrast to my discussions of both Mander and Hyde, there will be no examination of Ashton-Warner's attempts to appropriate the masculine ethos, because she made no such attempts. Although she did most of her writing and most of her works appeared during an age which was dominated by the masculine ethos, as was also the case with the other two writers discussed, Ashton-Warner's reaction to this was more one of separatism than appropriation. She set her texts firmly in a female-centred emotional, imaginative and natural world as opposed to the male-centred materialistic and pragmatic society in which she lived. Unlike Mander and Hyde, she made no attempt to disguise her difference and make her alternatives more conceivable. Rather, she emphasised her difference from the social and literary maxims of the age and thus made her alternatives as inconceivable as possible.

Women: Examining the Options

In her examination of the position of women in society and the options open to them, Ashton-Warner resembles Mander more than Hyde in that her attention is focussed on the individual and exceptional woman rather than on women in general. Whereas Mander made her heroines exceptional by giving
them characteristics associated with the ideal of the pioneer male which she so admired, Ashton-Warner distinguishes her heroines by making them artists and accrediting them with a special vision such as that which characterises Hyde's Wednesday and Eliza, and Janet Frame's heroines. While Ashton-Warner does not present a disparaging picture of the ordinary woman as Mander did, it would seem that the ordinary woman meant so little to Ashton-Warner that she scarcely appears at all in the novels. The heroines' relationships with other adults are primarily relationships with men. The exceptions to this are Angela in Bell Call, who has a particular function as a foil to the heroine, Tarl; Opal in I Passed This Way, who is the object of the narrator's emotional outpourings for a time, and Angelique in Three, who represents the alter-ego which the narrator tries to repress.

Although Ashton-Warner's was a very individualistic vision, her portrayal of her heroines reveals an understanding of the dynamics of sexual politics and the relative power and powerlessness which accompany gender roles. Her heroines all feel themselves to be on the margins of society and each of the works examines ways in which women who are outsiders can attempt to cope with this position. In many instances Ashton-Warner's heroines attempt to gain power by asserting themselves in the roles traditionally accorded to women, that is, as mothers and sex objects. In other cases their strengths are identified as being derived from women's 'instinctive' affinity with nature
through their reproductive and nurturing function. In such instances motherhood is portrayed as a natural function rather than a socially constructed role.

Heather Roberts describes Ashton-Warner as the only novelist of the 1950s to take the idea of women's paid employment seriously, declaring that Ashton-Warner considered painting, music and writing "at least as important as being a mother and wife." I would dispute that this conclusion can be drawn from her novels, however. In *Spinster*, Anna's conception of her success as a teacher is very much dependent upon the acceptance of her work, and of herself, by Mr Abercrombie, the inspector whom she comes to look upon as a father/lover figure. Her dependence on male approval is evident in her collapse when it is not forthcoming. Teaching is abandoned at this stage as it no longer promises to bring her love and approval. Anna's creative work in "Selah" is certainly the most vital element in her life as Roberts contends, but this is not paid employment and there is no suggestion that she can make her living as an artist. When she contemplates leaving teaching the alternative is laundry work, not art. Her art's significance is more as a temporary escape from the world which she finds so oppressive, as is also afforded by the brandy bottle. In this context it is worth noting that the title of the novel, *Spinster*, is an immediate indication of one of the primary determinants of Anna's life; that she has no man.
Roberts also contends that women's paid employment is shown to be significant in the next novel, *Incense to Idols*. She states that Germaine's "seeming obsession with men is merely a diversion in the end from her true vocation as a pianist." I would assert, however, that the novel's primary focus is on Germaine's relationships with men, as it is through them that she attempts to secure a place for herself in society. Her vocation as a pianist serves mainly as a background detail, adding to her profile as an eccentric, 'artistic' type in a conformist, materialistic town. It is not an essential element of the novel for it is not essential to her character. Although she may have made her living as a pianist in France, we certainly never see her doing so in her new home. Indeed, the idea of showing Germaine actually working to make a living does not seem to have occurred to Ashton-Warner.

In the later novels there is also little question of paid employment being an important concern in the heroines' lives. In *Bell Cleft* Tarl does make some money as an artist but she is largely dependent on the earnings of her husband, Gavin. Careers are of more significance in *Myself* as the narrator's concern is to balance all of the competing aspects of her personality; mother, wife, lover, teacher and artist. *Three* on the other hand centres almost entirely on the narrator's role as a mother and her attempts to adjust to the fact that her son is grown up and has a life, and a wife, of his own. I agree with Roberts that "Ashton-Warner saw that the significance of women's
lives did not lie solely in their relationships with men", and that in many instances her heroines' relationships with men are secondary to their relationships with children and their creative endeavours, although Germaine in Incense to Idols is somewhat of an exception to this. The heroines' engagement in paid employment is, however, an incidental rather than an essential element in their lives.

In her novels, Ashton-Warner plays out a number of options for women seeking a place in the world. In most cases, however, the strategies fall down because they are posited on, and confined within, the very conventions which Ashton-Warner rebelled against, a rebellion which she dramatises in the creation of her heroines. This inability to step outside the constructs of society indicates the extent to which these constructs have been internalised. In some instances Ashton-Warner points to the extent to which her characters are confined in this way, but in others it is her text which is confined by the inability to step outside the dominant ethos. Thus her apparent determination to create characters who are recognisably different is undermined, because they almost invariably cannot claim this difference as their identity.
The Difficulty of Difference

Ashton-Warner's determination for difference is especially evident in her first two novels, as she emphasises the extent to which her heroines are outsiders by giving them a number of characteristics which confer on them differences from the mainstream society, additional to the fact of being women in a patriarchal society. This exaggeration of difference may reflect her own exaggerated sense of difference from the society in which she lived. In effect she gives her heroines extra excuses for the alienation they feel, excuses which she perhaps wished she had herself in order to justify her tenuous relationship with society.

In Spinster, Anna's outsider status is confirmed by the fact that she is a spinster at a time when society still viewed marriage as a woman's primary goal. To make her even more of an affront to the norm Ashton-Warner gives her a background of having refused to marry the man she loved at a time of an oversupply of women and having pursued a career instead. She is also a foreigner (a Russian émigré) which adds to her alienation, especially as it is constantly reinforced by the children's inability to pronounce her surname (Vorontsov) properly. In addition she is an artist, another oddity in a country of pragmatic people, and her passion for European music confirms her as a high culture alien in a community where the main street on a Friday night is the centre of social activity.
Despite these external trappings of difference, however, it is Anna's insistence on the validity of her personal vision, symbolised by her fight against the educational establishment for recognition of her reading books, which is the truly distinguishing thing about her, along with the fact that in the world of teaching, her primary milieu, she is the lone female.

This need to distinguish her heroines very clearly from the norm is again evident in *Incense to Idols* where the heroine, Germaine, is French. There seems to be no real need to make Germaine French. Just as Anna's idiosyncrasy distinguishes her in a way which is more significant than her Russian ancestry, so too does Germaine's behaviour and her individual vision make her an outsider in smalltown New Zealand anyway. As McEldowney comments, Germaine's conflict could be that of "any Hastings lass", but I would dispute that she is solely upset, as he maintains, by the challenge of Methodism "to her liking for smart clothes, copulation and cocktails." Her primary 'trouble' is how, as a non-conforming woman, she can find a place in society.

Not only is Germaine's Frenchness unnecessary as a justification for her difference, it is also unconvincing. As McEldowney points out, Germaine's command of New Zealand idiom betrays her as a 'native' in disguise. Germaine's struggles are less representative of those of a Frenchwoman in New Zealand than they are of the inner life of a non-conforming woman in a
narrow-minded and puritanical society. This was noted by James K. Baxter when he declared that Germaine embodies "the fullest, clearest, most precise document of a woman's interior life to appear yet in New Zealand literature."

Ashton-Warner seems to have been determined not to write about ordinary New Zealand women and this is probably a measure of the extent to which she did not feel herself to be an ordinary New Zealand woman. The determination to rebel against the social constructs of women is especially evident in *Incense to Idols*. In the creation of Germaine, Ashton-Warner thumbs her nose at New Zealand society as she saw it. Germaine dramatises the way Ashton-Warner would have liked to, and sometimes did, react to the community she lived in. As Hood documents, Ashton-Warner had a penchant for shocking people,¹⁰ and it would seem that in drawing the character of Germaine she excelled herself in this respect. It is the sexuality of Germaine which is most designed to shock the New Zealand reader, and at least one reviewer responded to this by describing her with the normally disparaging term of "nymphomaniac."¹¹

Having established the difference of her heroines, Ashton-Warner portrays the anguish of their marginal position and their attempts to create a home for themselves in some sense of the word. *Spinster* follows Anna's attempts to widen the scope of the dominant circle so that the different perspectives of both herself and the Maori children, as represented by the
reading scheme, can be included. The dominant circle, however, is not so flexible. It is made and maintained by one group: white middle class, middle-aged men, as represented by the Education Department officials, and it is in the interests of this group to uphold existing boundaries. If Anna and the Maori children wish to fit in they will have to do so on fixed terms. The consequences of this for the children are clear; the imposed reading material inhibits rather than assists their learning, and this excludes them from ever entering the dominant circle. The rejection of Anna's reading scheme suggests that she too cannot be part of the dominant circle while retaining her individual vision. Rather than surrender her individuality, she retreats from the world.

Anna's story highlights the extent to which even those on the margins are constructed by the dominant society and the difficulty this creates when there is an attempt to break away from the norm. Despite her difference from the norm, Anna is shown to allow herself to be constructed by the norms. This is evident in the recurring image of "Guilt ... born from What Other People Think". "Guilt" appears to Anna as a monster which tightens its legs around her throat and threatens to strangle her. This signifies the inhibiting and stultifying impact of the dominant tradition on those who deviate. It illustrates the argument of Gunew which I referred to in the Introduction; namely that those on the margins of society such as women and migrants "internalise the process whereby the [dominant] culture
constructs them, and it requires a great deal of self-conscious analysis before they are able to step (and *only ever in part*) outside these constructs" [my emphasis]. Anna comes to see "Guilt" as an integral part of her identity, as this description of her struggle reveals:

Although I struggle with [Guilt] I just can't get him off.... It seems to me that getting rid of him is not a matter of courage after all, as I so often think, but that it is has something to do with surgery, in the way that one has a life-long growth cut out. 

Whenever Anna comes into contact with authority, or even contemplates it, she is overwhelmed by the monster. She judges herself against the standards of 'the system' as these are the standards she is most aware of, and as such she can only judge herself to be in a position of deficiency, identifying herself as "Miss Anna Fail" (S, p. 12). The novel ends when Anna's attempts at appropriation end. She is defeated by the system and retreats. McEldowney comments that the ending is unexpected and unprepared for. He is surprised that grading should matter so much to Anna. This is, however, the reason for her failure. Despite her avowals of difference, she has internalised the dominant standards to such an extent that she accepts their assessment of her. She does not succeed in changing the boundaries of the dominant society because she does not realise how strongly they influence her conception of herself. Ashton-Warner's portrayal of Anna seems like an
admission of defeat by the power of the dominant standards, as an infantile retreat is all that is open to Anna in the end.

Germaine’s story demonstrates another way of coping with outsider status. Anna attempted appropriation, but for Germaine the tactic is initially to emphasise her difference as much as possible, and subsequently to seek a place within one of society’s sanctioned roles, namely as a mother. She outwardly lives in defiance of society and secure in her own world, as is indicated in her assertion that she lives by her “twenty-three private commandments ... in place of the famous Ten...”\(^5\) Furthermore she identifies with Gomer, the sinful wife of Hosea against whom the Reverend Guymer rails in his sermons, and also equates herself with the “a-whoring City”. With this stance, Germaine takes on a traditional role assigned to women, the whore, but it is a role which confirms her on the outside of society. She makes herself an object of the male gaze, a strategy which calls to mind Friedan’s arguments about the attempts of American women to find an identity during the 1950s and 1960s.\(^6\)

Like Ashton-Warner’s other heroines, Germaine is an artist, in this case a pianist. Her main work of art, however, is herself. The first-person narrative vividly conveys this process of self-objectification. She is always conscious of her dress and her “Style”, and feels very uncomfortable if she is caught by a man when not properly dressed and made up (see for
instance ITI, pp. 84-85). As she is only confident of her outer self, she devotes a lot of her narrative to describing herself as she appears from the outside. It is obvious, however, that this construction of her image has necessitated self-denial and too much of her attention goes to her dress, not enough to her piano playing. She tries to erase the soul and her feelings and live wholly in the physical, material world. This represses her artistic self, as is suggested when her piano teacher, Léon, constantly tells her that her piano playing is soulless. Germaine is portrayed as having to sacrifice her art and even her humanity in order to play the role of sex object. This falsification of the self is also represented by her determined worship of the false god Baal, and it is challenged by Guymer and his emphasis on the soul, so that she begins to fear the emergence of her buried "second self", that is, her feelings.

Ashton-Warner points to the falsification of the self and the denial of the soul as the negative aspects of Germaine's sexual role. The other reason Germaine cannot create a secure identity in this role is that although she appears to be a very unconventional woman in the way she uses men with no regard for conventional morality, even in this role she conforms to the traditional stereotype of a woman as passive and dependent. Thus she shows up the inherent contradictions which exist in the woman's role as sex object. On the one hand she exudes an air of confidence and control so that she can 'manage' the men in
her life to her own best ends, but on the other she is essentially empty and passive in her dependency on others for an identity. Confidence is conveyed in the way she notes her impact on men. She often remarks, "he looks at me the way men do". This is also evident in her determination to show herself off to the best advantage. When she arrives at church late, she walks to the front to "prove the potential" of her coat (ITI, p. 30). The impression of control is also created by her dispassionate comparisons of the faults and virtues of the men in her life, and how they can be useful to her (see for instance ITI, pp. 63-64, 185-186). In contrast to this stance, however, the reality, and fragility, of her position is best summed up by her description of herself as "a long-stemmed glass holding the ingredients of men within" her (ITI, p. 57). Her identity has no substance without men and she has no security either, as she realises when she comments: "But men always go ... however much they love you, unless you are married to them" (ITI, p. 142).

Germaine is then shown to try the other alternative, to become a madonna figure by marrying Gordon and mothering his daughter, Corinne. This role cannot be sustained either, as it is another falsification of herself, as is evident when she does not contradict Gordon in his belief that her reluctance for physical contact is due to her inexperience in such matters (ITI, p. 228). This role also belies her real passion for Guymer. Germaine is finally destroyed by her internalisation of the dominant standards. All along she has played the role of
identifying herself with Gomer and the "a-whoring city", but when Guymer appears to confirm this, her new conception of herself as the worthy object of his love is destroyed (ITI, pp. 278ff). She now believes in her sinfulness, and takes her life. Stead describes Germaine as being defeated by the puritan ethic which sees her as worthless,17 and this certainly seems the case. After determinedly trying to construct her own identity, Germaine's self-concept is invaded by the dominant conception of her. The failure of her attempts has, however, been inevitable, given that Ashton-Warner has constructed her wholly within the only images of woman provided by the Christian ethic: the virgin and the whore.

Ashton-Warner shows Germaine trying to live behind self-constructed masks, but being destroyed when these masks are ripped away by real feeling, that is, her passion for Guymer and his exposure of her soul. The irony is that these masks were her only protection against the dominant society's conception of her and without them she becomes prey to these conceptions. While Ashton-Warner shows Germaine as failing because of her falsification of the self, she does not acknowledge that the text points to her real destruction as coming about through her exposure to the puritan ethos from which she had tried to protect herself; firstly by attempting to establish a position outside, and in defiance, of it as a whore, and later by trying to live within it as a madonna. The text suggests that the denial of feeling is perhaps the best survival mode for a woman.
When Germaine drops the pretence she is too vulnerable to the dominant morality and it defeats her as it defeated Anna.

**Woman-Centred Alternatives**

In other instances where Ashton-Warner shows her heroines as being confined within the traditional feminine sphere, she makes this into a source of strength rather than vulnerability. This foreshadows the efforts of contemporary 'cultural feminists' to accord status and value to what are seen as *naturally* female aspects such as motherhood, closeness to nature, sensitivity, intuition and pacifism. While this strategy seeks to valorise elements traditionally devalued by patriarchal culture, it also upholds the traditional male/female dichotomy which places reason against sentiment, society against nature and the conscious against the unconscious. As such this strategy runs the danger of confining women to socially constructed roles even though it seeks to revalue these qualities on the basis that they are *natural*.

Both Anna and Tarl are portrayed as representing the female elements of the traditional male/female dichotomy. Anna's world view is very organic. She identifies with and talks to the flowers in her garden, the condemned cabbage trees and other natural elements such as the rain. Her narrative is structured by the seasons, suggesting the repitition of the
natural cycle and putting her life within this context. Furthermore, she views nature as a compensation for and alternative to society, as is revealed when she comments: "It's true I'm not insensitive to the cold of isolation, but Nature keeps me informed; as I walk through the wintering garden I can translate what is said and am warmed" (S, p. 237).

The pursuit of creativity and art as an option for escape is valorised by its association with natural qualities. This is conveyed by its comparison with motherhood. Birth imagery occurs frequently in connection with Anna's reading scheme, which is a form of art in that it expresses her vision. For instance, she declares

I believe that I have after all conceived in the spring just like any other of God's creatures, have carried developing life through the summer until now; here ... are my dream infant room and my nearly completed books. Although the flesh of my person grieves tightly for what might have been, ... there is, nevertheless, a relaxing of tension in the womb of my spirit, just as in any other animal. And in this at least I am like others (S, p. 231).

Her urge to recreate becomes one of creation instead, and the idea that art provides women with an outlet for active creation is again evident when Anna resists the stereotyped role of the woman as the passive muse and inspiration of the male artist, as exemplified in her fellow teacher Paul's story of Balzac and his mistress (S, pp. 146-150). This story reminds Anna of the consequences of such surrender, and by having Anna refuse to
give herself to Paul "to devour", Ashton-Warner reverses the literary model set by Balzac, one of the masters, both in his life and his works. In Spinster the woman is the artist, the active creator instead of the passive muse, and she refuses to relinquish this role to prop up Paul's dreams of escape through art.

Tarl is also an artist, this time a painter, and her closeness to nature is most evident in the frequent use of animal imagery to describe her. She resembles Hyde's Wednesday, whose difference from society is also revealed in her affinity with nature (see for instance, WC, pp. 16-17). When Tarl first appears, she walks silently, like "[s]omething with padded feet", and she is likened to a "furred animal" which sneaks in and out of the dark, grabbing what it needs from civilisation and then racing back to freedom. The animal images particularly relate to Tarl as a mother, and Angela also, which underlines the idea of motherhood as a natural process giving women an affinity with the natural world (see for instance BC, pp. 21, 34-35). Whereas Anna's identification with nature as opposed to society does not prevent her being defeated by society, Tarl is shown to have greater resilience as she is able to step further outside the dominant realm. Her efforts amount to an attempt at separatism such as Germaine had originally attempted, but Tarl seeks to do this through her natural identity as a mother rather than through a constructed image as Germaine did.
In Bell Call motherhood is shown to be a powerful and supreme state. Both Tarl and Angela represent ideals of motherhood, being constantly surrounded by their children, almost always without their husbands, and portrayed as glowing with maternal satisfaction. Tarl's strength and invulnerability are demonstrated by the children over whom she has dominion and whom she uses to confront society's norms, principally by refusing to make her son, Benjamin, go to school if he does not want to.

Tarl's power is further conveyed by her refusal to play any role as an object for the male eye. This is in direct contrast to the tactic which Germaine was shown to try, and failed with. Tarl wears baggy clothes which do not "give a man much" (BC, p. 14), and this disregard for the accepted gender conventions upsets Daniel, who is representative of the norm in respect of his conception of gender roles. His reaction is indicative of that of the dominant society as he dismisses Tarl for neglecting such traditional feminine arts as shaving her legs or wearing silk stockings (BC, p. 16). He attempts to re-create Tarl as a sexual object, imagining her "soft-voiced, low-tongued, silent-footed, large-eyed, appealing in white matadors outlining her tender thighs" (BC, p. 204). In reply, the narrator deflates this vision of Tarl as muted and passive by attributing it to Daniel's blind "vanity", and Tarl further undercuts it by continuing to talk about her own problems and think of herself first (BC, pp. 204-205). Tarl's refusal to
submit to, or even acknowledge Daniel's sexuality deconstructs his image of women, and she evades objectification, remaining an active subject instead.

As a further affront to the conventional view of women, the narrator portrays Daniel's sexual desire as contrary to nature. Tarl as a mother is compared to "the modern image of woman, the lean lone siren designing herself for sex....", and the conclusion is that the love between a mother and her children is more natural and lasting than that between a woman and a man, as the latter is only prolonged by artificial means (BC, p. 35). The view that mother/child relationships are more enduring and therefore more important than the sexual bonds between male and female mirrors that expressed by Hyde's Wednesday Gilfillan. Wednesday realises that her lovers will not remain her lovers and that her primary relationships are with her [dream] children, while her lovers have most significance as friends. Both Hyde and Ashton-Warner, therefore, challenge society's view of women's identity being predicated on relationships with men.

Ashton-Warner uses Tarl to shock New Zealand, just as she had done with Germaine. This is another instance where she plays with and sends up accepted gender roles for women. In effect, she deconstructs the 'proper' woman. Germaine was too sexual, and indeed was described as a "nymphomaniac". Tarl on the other hand takes the role of the mother too far so that it
excludes the woman's role as companion to man. Once again, Ashton-Warner seems determined to rub this violation in the face of the reader, with Tarl being described as "no follower of a man .... no material for a harmonious man-woman relationship" (BC, p. 15). Furthermore, in portraying Tarl as unashamedly concerned only with herself (see for instance BC, p. 37), she creates an affront to the moral code all profess to live by, which is especially offensive in a female character, as the feminine ideal is one of self-sacrifice.

Ashton-Warner also undermines the ideals of femininity through the character of Angela who is the epitome of the ideal woman; feminine, fragile and approved by society, as she is adored by men and "live[s] with kisses" (BC, p. 19). In Angela, Ashton-Warner created a character who complies with society's ideals of womanhood but she suggests that this femininity is achieved at the expense of extreme passivity. In comparison to Tarl's strength and determination "Angela is a willowy-wandy girl swaying all ways...", so impressionable that Daniel has to be careful what he says in front of her (BC, pp. 19, 83). Authorial approval for Tarl is not unreserved, however, and Angela is also shown to exhibit tendencies which win approval. In fact, these two characters are set up as foils to each other from the very beginning.

Furthermore, Ashton-Warner uses Tarl to attack the ideals of domesticity held up to Western women, and especially
reinforced in the 1950s as discussed above. Tarl's hatred of suburbia and domesticity matches that of Sarah, the narrator in Jean Watson's first novel *Stand in the Rain*. This was published in 1965, the year after *Bell Call*, although it is doubtful that Watson would have read *Bell Call* since it was not readily available in New Zealand. Like Tarl, Sarah prefers to live in the bush and be constantly on the move, and both heroines dream of 'housekeeping' in the open air over log fires (*BC*, p. 147).

Like Germaine, Tarl is constructed within a traditional role, motherhood, but her efforts are more successful as she is shown to convert this position into one of strength. The implication is that motherhood is a better role to adopt because it is natural, whereas predicating identity on the role as sexual object is not. The final images of the novel emphasise the link between women and nature and suggest that this is how women may surmount the roles assigned them. The narrator describes Angela and her children as part of the natural world, and Angela tells of seeing the Pracket children free and happy, with the last sentence indicating the supremacy of natural values: "Wild they were ... superb" (*BC*, p. 317). Although Tarl is imprisoned at this time, the ending gives an impression of victory for her, as her children appear as living examples of her philosophy, and her previous tenacity suggests prison will not stop her fight. Through Tarl, Ashton-Warner demonstrates another way of coping with society, in this case by not coping
with it. Tarl rejects society, but not without taking what is useful to her.

The *Inner Battalions*

Whereas motherhood was shown to be a source of strength in *Bell Call*, in Ashton-Warner’s diary, *Myself*, the traditional women’s roles of wife and mother are portrayed as threatening the narrator’s creativity and individuality. This aspect was hinted at in *Bell Call*. We learn for instance that Tarl paints while her children sleep (BC, p. 15), and there is an implicit contrast between Tarl and Daniel, who is free to pursue his art (writing) in the absence of such family ties. The emphasis on the strengths conveyed by motherhood means, however, that such restrictions are not really spelt out. In *Myself*, motherhood is more identified with domesticity, as is obvious in the narrator’s comment that she does not want to “go down under marriage and babies as glamorous girls do, never to be heard of again”.22 The art and study which Ashton-Warner’s narrating persona does in "Selah" is the means by which she maintains her individuality and counters the threat she believes is posed by these gender roles. The narrator describes this process of liberation as she moves away from society and towards her creative zone in "Selah”:

Off fall the wife, the mother, the lover, the teacher, and the violent artist takes over. I am I alone. I belong to
no one but myself. I mate with no one but the spirit. I own no land, have no kin, no friend or enemy. I have no road but this one (M, p. 148).

Ashton-Warner reinforces the idea of conflict between gender roles and individual desires by also having the narrator's husband, K, remark that the narrator is "sidetracked" by marriage, whereas people like her "with talents and ideas should be undisturbed by marriage" (M, p. 93). She also makes the conflict more vivid through the use of battle metaphors. These recall Germaine's use of such images in connection with her 'battles' (see for instance, ITI, pp. 7, 31), and in both cases the images highlight the trauma occasioned by the marginal position in which women are placed. For instance, the narrator remarks: "There are four battalions in action today: those of the mother, the woman, the artist and the weather", and continues the military imagery by concluding that there must be "No surrender" (M, p. 78). On another occasion she resolves to try to heal the divisions between "the woman and the artist or the conflict between them will blow [her] asunder, [and] scatter [her] pieces to the ends of the Pacific..." (M, p. 115). In essence, Myself is a personalised version of the battles portrayed by Ashton-Warner's more ostensibly fictional heroines. The text is another demonstration of the pain and precariousness of being perched on the borders of the dominant society, craving acceptance in the interests of security, but paradoxically clinging to the freedom and vision afforded by this marginality,
in the recognition that this would otherwise be swamped by the dominant society.

Ashton-Warner's last novel, *Three*, centres once again on a woman seeking to cope with the world. This time the narrator is older and not under the pressures of marriage, small children and career as was the case in *Myself*. Like Ashton-Warner's other heroines, she wants both independence and security and has difficulty reconciling these two demands. The narrator is alone as Anna and Germaine were, and the novel begins when her independence is disrupted by the illness of her son, Julian. Her first person narrative portrays the dilemma of a woman who is no longer secure in the gender roles which previously structured her life. The passivity inherent in these roles is evident in the extent to which they are dependent on her relationship with others. With her husband dead and her children grown up and married, she no longer has a specific place or function. This allows her freedom to pursue her own ends but also deprives her of the certainty of fixed roles. This lack has been noted by Roberts, who asserts that the narrator is nameless because she has no role.

The extent to which Ashton-Warner's examinations of women's attempts at self-fulfilment are confined within existing gender roles is especially evident in *Three*. The narrator attempts to find a place for herself within the limits of accepted roles and she tries to place her daughter-in-law,
Angelique, within these as well. The narrator's attitude towards Angelique seems to be an external manifestation of her own conflict between duty as defined by traditional gender roles and the demands of her own individuality. The closeness of the events in this text to events in Ashton-Warner's life, as is indicated by the comments of her family, suggests the extent to which this is another dramatisation of Ashton-Warner's own internal conflicts as to her role as a woman. Inconsistencies abound, making it seem that such conflict is irresoluble. For instance, the narrator declares it is a wife's duty to look after her husband, but at the same time perceives that Angelique's uniqueness would be stifled by conforming to such a role, advising her not to change as she would become a mere "copy" of other women (T, pp. 35-36).

Although the narrator, and presumably Ashton-Warner, can appreciate the destructiveness of traditional roles, both to herself and to Angelique, the strength of social structures is revealed in her persistence in upholding them. This is most evident in the novel the narrator writes about the white health inspector who marries an Indian woman and then has to beat her because she does not do the housework or look after him. This introduces a metafictional element into the text. The novel within the novel expresses the narrator's alter-ego, which disapproves of Angelique's failure to conform and also of her own desires to break away, and this parallels the probable function of Three within Ashton-Warner's life. In particular,
the violence of the health inspector reveals the vehemence with which the narrator attempts to stifle these non-conformist tendencies in both herself and her daughter-in-law, and by implication Ashton-Warner's reaction is the same (T, pp. 216-217, 220).

Three demonstrates the precariousness of the lone older woman in society when she defines herself by society's standards. These standards define her in negative terms so this is how the narrator sees herself. She sees images of marriage everywhere, which signifies her heightened awareness of being single in a society of couples (see for instance T, p. 85). Her age leads her to describe herself as "the non-young in the non-living room" separated from the young in the living room by "the Generation Gap" (T, p. 49). Although she does recognise the falseness of at least some of the images projected onto women, declaring that mother-in-law is "The most misused, mis-rated, mis-understood term in the language" (T, p. 84), her rebellion against these is regressive as she tries to avoid the clichés by becoming invisible and silent, losing herself in service to others. She observes that harmony is achieved when she is "industriously being no one", and she even offers to be Julian's "workhorse" (T, pp. 102, 165). The self-denial involved is indicated in her use of the term "vanish" to describe this process (T, p. 84).
This is an extreme adoption of the traditional woman's role which she advocates for Angelique, and the futility of trying to escape negative perceptions of women's roles by taking on even more restrictive ones is clear. Despite her self-denial she still calls herself a "sour old devil", the very image she has been seeking to avoid (T, p. 102). Because the narrator is trapped in her role she wishes Angelique to be similarly confined, and her aggressiveness towards the other woman's freedom surfaces in her silent complaints and the tales she tells to Julian, as well as in the novel she writes. In short, her attempt to submerge herself in the traditional role makes her a very unpleasant person. She denies so much of herself that violence and unpleasantness become her only real means of release.

The roles which women are locked into divide them from each other. Angelique and the narrator establish a warm rapport when they are alone together while Julian is still in hospital. After his homecoming, however, they become fixed in their roles as his mother and his wife and as such they are rivals because this is how mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are constructed by social roles. Just as the narrator behaves in the classic mother-in-law manner as Angelique's rival after Julian returns, so too does Angelique conform to the stereotyped views of women which Julian expresses. The narrator recalls Angelique's capacity for reasoned argument when they were alone, but notes that in Julian's presence she behaves in the illogical and
passive manner which he attributes to all women (T, pp. 80-81, 136-39).

Both of these women seem to be unable to break out of social constructs despite their individuality and these constructs are enforced by the man, Julian, as they are given meaning by his presence. His power and their relative powerlessness are succinctly illustrated by his ownership of the house. He can tell them to come and go as he pleases, so the narrator has little security, only a "precarious home" in her room (T, p. 223). The implication is that without the patriarchal system, represented by Julian, women could behave differently towards each other because they could act outside their normal roles.

The situation of these two women is reminiscent of that of Snow White and her wicked stepmother as analysed by feminist critic, Mary Carruthers. Snow White wins out because she is young and beautiful but when she ages she will be replaced by a younger rival, unless she dies first as her own mother did. Either way, the situation is not positive for the older woman, and the narrator's position in Three points to the future for Angelique, who also has a son.

In Three Ashton-Warner centres women's identity on the roles of mother and wife. As in Bell Call, there is a certain beatification of women in the role of mother, or at least young
women in this role, for Angelique is referred to as being like "a flower in bloom" when she has her son with her, whereas without him she is "the stalk of a flower in bud" (T, p. 226). This exaltation of motherhood is not borne out by the novel, however. Angelique does not use her mothering role to fight society as Tarl does, and the narrator has to leave with a feeling of "bereavement" when her son no longer needs her (T, p. 237). Thus the main impression conveyed is of the vulnerability of women in these essentially passive and dependent roles. The two men in the story, Julian and his actor friend, Carlos, also deconstruct the exalted view of motherhood which the narrator seeks to convey. Julian proclaims the mother/child attachment to be a potentially "ruinous" myth, and Carlos demonstrates this when he says he was "smothered" instead of mothered and so now avoids any potentially possessive women (T, pp. 187-188).

Three demonstrates how gender roles and images restrict women's individuality and inhibit relationships between women. It illustrates Carruthers's proposition that relations between older and younger women, specifically as manifested by mothers and daughters, "are typically difficult because [women] have not the ability to articulate them otherwise", being confined within the "entrenched metaphors" of language which enforce the notion "of the essential unreliability of all women everywhere in interfemale relationships." Ashton-Warner's awareness of the power of these "entrenched metaphors" is evident when she has her narrator comment on her powerlessness against the negative
implications of the term 'mother-in-law'. She remarks: "We're so frightened of it we change our nature to avoid it and in so doing we end up the classical mother-in-law we feared in the first place; so gravely have we twisted ourselves" (T, p. 84).

Despite Ashton-Warner's ostensible protest against social roles and her portrayal of the conflicts they produce, she does not offer any alternatives, and Three ends with an apparent acceptance of the loss faced by the narrator because her roles as both wife and mother are over. This ending is similar to that of her first novel, Spinster. Both imply that the dominant morality cannot be defeated even though it imposes terrible conflicts on women. The message of Three is that women have to live with it.

Breaking Away from the Provincial Novel

Although she eschewed contact with the literary establishment to a large extent, Ashton-Warner cannot have helped but be aware of what New Zealand literature there was, especially as there was not a great volume of it at that time. She does not give any indication of having read any New Zealand fiction in either Myself or I Passed This Way, although she mentions her study of philosophical and educational books and also some overseas fiction writers. Her silence about reading the works of New Zealand authors may, in fact, have been similar
to her silence about meeting other New Zealand writers. She may well have not wanted to admit to any such contacts. She certainly was aware of New Zealand reactions to her works, as she claimed that J.C. Reid's review of *Incense to Idols* "drove [her] work from New Zealand forever." This means she was almost certainly cognizant of the dominant literary standards. Her works reveal, however, that she was not prepared to 'buckle under' to such standards, just as she was not prepared to do so in respect of New Zealand's conformist social standards.

Ashton-Warner broke the rules by not writing in the social realist mode. That is, she did not attempt to convey New Zealand in a manner which conformed to the accepted view of reality. Rather, she wrote in a manner which conformed to her own 'reality', as indeed did Hyde. This difference of reality was perplexing to readers. In reviewing *Incense to Idols*, David Hall called it "an exercise of the imagination", adding that it "would shatter its effects to attempt to grasp them in a firm clutch of reality." Similarly Paul Day differentiated *Incense to Idols* from the other novels subject to his review (*Maori Girl* by Noel Hilliard, *Tangahana* by Peter Davies, and Robin Muir's *Word for Word*) by stating that with the exception of *Incense to Idols*, all are "concerned with some aspect of life in this country."

The extent to which a shared public conception of reality was expected in fiction of this era is perhaps most evident in
the comparison of the reception of Ashton-Warner's texts with that of Bill Pearson's Coal Flat which appeared in 1963. Coal Flat was seen as an embodiment of the social realist school's maxims, and was used by members of this school to defend New Zealand literature against the encroachment of other literary modes. Thus Rhodes, who is described by Jones as "one of the most important editorial and critical spokesmen for [the] provincial age", took the opportunity in his review of Coal Flat to hit out at the demand for "symbolism, interior monologue, treatment of time, and point of view", and expressed his preference for the sort of realism displayed in Pearson's novel. Curnow also attacked the new trends in his review, especially as they were evident in Spinsters. He declared: "There is something starved and formless about the novel where characters lack precise orientation within a world whose limits are known ...", arguing that this "precise orientation" is missing in Spinsters so it does not achieve "[p]ermanence, the art of original fiction...." That these men felt the need to make such comments indicates that there was a challenge to the standards they upheld, with both Ashton-Warner and Frame being prominent in this.

The Inconceivability of Ashton-Warner's Heroines

Most of Ashton-Warner's novels do share some aspects in common with the dominant tradition of the provincial novel,
especially the perception of society as conformist, materialistic and hostile to individuals who differ in some way. The difference of her novels from the provincial norm is, however, apparent in the characters she created as her isolated individuals. Not only are her central characters female, but as I have indicated above, they are not even the type of female who could possibly be the equivalent of Sargeson's 'ordinary bloke', and nor are they the representatives of puritan morality as women were often shown to be in the fiction of this era.\textsuperscript{37}

This is immediately apparent in Spinster. Anna is an outsider, and thus conforms to the predominant pattern of the provincial novel as David Hall noted when reviewing the novel. Nevertheless, she is clearly a different kind of outsider, and not, as Hall claims, "what we have come to expect in the New Zealand novel...."\textsuperscript{38} She is not the itinerant bloke, but rather what critics have frequently described as a 'neurotic spinster', or variations thereof.\textsuperscript{39} Implausibility is another term often applied to Anna, and it is even more frequently used in reference to Germaine. McCormick describes Anna as a "highly original - if sometimes extravagantly implausible - character",\textsuperscript{40} while Paul Day contends that "Germaine emerges not as a woman but as a preposterous series of bogus attitudes, a magazine-reader's fantasy of high-fashion, sophistication and sin."\textsuperscript{41}
The lack of an ordinary narrator in both Spinster and Incense to Idols is matched by the lack of a settled narrative. McCormick accordingly sums up Spinster as "a loose, rich, rhapsodic work that owes nothing to precedent", while J.C. Reid describes Incense to Idols as "hysterical prose, turgid pseudo-poetic rhetoric, and ... pretentious philosophizing..."). In both novels the narrative style is in keeping with the personality of the narrator. In Spinster, Anna is confused and riven by doubts, and thus the narrative is not straightforward and logical, but wanders as her thoughts do. She feels out of place and cut off from the world, so events are related in a disconnected manner. Often the children's voices take over and Anna's narrative is submerged beneath them, reflecting how she is able to lose herself in the chaos and life of the classroom. She describes this process: "I've mislaid who I am. Sensuously and accurately I vibrate and respond to the multifold touch of my Little Ones....", and the voices of the children dominate the next few pages, demonstrating this obliteration of her self (S, pp. 24-29). Since the narrative is supposed to be Anna's creation it reflects her reality.

In the same manner as Spinster is shaped by Anna's personality, Incense to Idols is totally dominated by Germaine, and therefore is as rambling and disordered as she is. Germaine's narrative is an extension of the personality she has constructed to fight the outer world, and she is self-conscious in the writing of the story just as she is in dressing herself.
Thus she breathlessly remarks on the length of the sentence she has just written, and regretfully settles for a paragraph when she could "do with a whole page" (ITI, pp. 30, 56). In both cases the texts are narrated in a continuous present tense which contributes to the heightened tone, vividly conveying the impression of the frantic nature of these women's attempts to create their 'homes in this world'.

The narrative style of *Incense to Idols* is particularly characterised by a wit and extravagance due to Germaine's exuberant gestures and expressions. This contrasts with Chapman's contention that New Zealand fiction generally has "a sour-discordant ground-tone", resulting from the bitterness of protagonists who are habitually trapped and frustrated by the puritan ethic, and that the writing is "conspicuously plain and straightforward." Ashton-Warner's protagonists are trapped and frustrated by the puritan ethic as well, but the narratives she creates for them foreground her novels.

In contrast to the pattern of the provincial novel, in *Incense to Idols* it is the woman who is anti-puritan and the men who adhere to the code, although most do so only superficially as is the case with Gordon. (The Reverend Guymer is the exception in that he really believes, but he becomes life-denying in his seriousness and denial of human love). Ashton-Warner creates a character who shocks, especially in respect of her sexuality and promiscuity. Reactions to this included the
comment that her "sexual and spiritual hunger ... is so obsessive as to drive action and character rather too wildly about", and Stevens's remark that "in places (as in the episode of the baby in the wine-glass) the novel is incredibly and unnecessarily unpleasant." Thus Stead sums up *Incense to Idols* as "too much for [Ashton-Warner's] readers in New Zealand", while Ashton-Warner makes a similar observation in *I Passed This Way*, calling the novel "a shocking business which weeded out my fans overnight" (IPTW, p. 351). Her tone seems to suggest that she wanted to shock, or at least was glad when she did. Certainly, the novel irreverently challenged New Zealand readers in the same manner as Germaine unsettles the town.

In having such an unusual narrator, Ashton-Warner disrupts the idea put forward by Chapman that the New Zealand writer should use the first person narrator to draw on "the homogeneity of experience in New Zealand" and so draw in "the reader, who will have felt with the 'I'..." Although the reader, and especially the female reader, may "have felt with" Ashton-Warner's narrators in some aspects, the extent to which she distinguishes Anna and Germaine from the mainstream suggests that such identification was not really sought. Ashton-Warner confronts society through a character who represents the extreme of difference from the 'typical' New Zealander. In making Germaine French, Ashton-Warner plays on the artistic and amorous Gallic stereotype, a complete contrast to the reserved, pragmatic stereotype of the New Zealander, particularly with
regard to the latter's furtive attitude towards sex. Germaine centres her relationships on sexual attraction, and the narrative tells of her battle to win Guymer by this means.

In focussing on such a sexual main character, and thereby making sexuality overt in the text, Ashton-Warner breaks with the tradition of the New Zealand novel as identified by Peter Alcock in his article: "Sexual Inadequacy in the New Zealand Novel." The title says it all, for Alcock points out that there are few portrayals of successful relationships in New Zealand literature, with surrogate violence and an emphasis on mateship or solitude arising instead. He cites Man Alone and Spinster as indicative of this sexual isolation, and the shying away from sex in Janet Frame's fiction as typical of the lack of "sexual reality" in New Zealand novels. Alcock concludes that this arises because New Zealand is not yet mature enough for the "sexual ex-hibition" of contemporary Anglo-American writing. Incense to Idols is not discussed in this essay, however. Although it cannot be said to show satisfactory sexual relationships, and it also shows violence associated with sex, it differs from the trends he identifies in that it does at least go some way towards "sexual ex-hibition". Germaine cannot be dismissed as a nymphomaniac, but her sexuality is one of her most obvious characteristics, and it is the reason she makes such an impact on the town, as she uncovers its hidden obsession with sex. Germaine shows up the sexual inhibitions of New Zealand society with her sexual exhibition.
Despite these differences from the provincial pattern, *Incense to Idols* does conform in some aspects. It is set in a small town and examines the repressive puritanism, materialism and spiritual dearth of the society from the perspective of an outsider. The town’s attitude towards sexuality is typically provincial, as are the eruptions of violence resulting from pent-up emotions. Germaine, however, does not gradually become an outsider through her perception of puritanism. She is already one, and thus starts at the point where most provincial protagonists end. She seeks a place on the edge of this morality by identifying with the ‘evils’ it professes to despise but secretly desires. Later, however, she makes an attempt to win a place within society by being as hypocritical as the rest of the people. Thus Ashton-Warner uses Germaine to expose the hypocrisy of small-town puritanism as do many other provincial authors, but the way she does it is the inverse of the norm.

Like Germaine, Tarl is the antithesis of the life-denying puritan woman of provincial fiction. With her brood of children, she celebrates fertility and life, as does Angela, who conforms to the conventional roles but represents the reproductive power of women just as much as Tarl, for her family continues to expand throughout the novel. Both of these women are an assault to the puritanical Christian association of sex with sin and the subsequent denigration of the natural forces which are most evident in women because of their reproductive capacity.
Tarl also reverses the provincial image of the female homemaker restricting the male in his longing for freedom and escape from domesticity. In Bell Call it is Gavin who tries to make a home for his family and Tarl who continually packs up and leaves for somewhere more remote and 'uncivilised'. Indeed in both Bell Call and Jean Watson's Stand in the Rain the female protagonists take on the stance which is normally the province of the Sargesonian male. They refuse to settle down to materialism and the work ethic and adopt a roving lifestyle instead. Tarl declares that she wants to save Benjamin from "the living death of suburban domesticity", and her contempt for suburbia is expressed in her disappointment at friends who once shared her ideals, but now live in "little suburban boxes", the physical confinement matching their philosophical narrowness (BC, pp. 154, 251). These opinions and the lifestyle of Tarl mean that the text issues a direct challenge to provincial preconceptions about women.

Staking a "Claim to Unreality"

Dennis McEldowney observes that in Bell Call Ashton-Warner seems to stake "an immediate claim to unreality, ... [through using] the somewhat bizarre contrivance of narration by a dead woman, who watches events from some other sphere...."82 This highlights the degree to which her texts broke with the convention of creating a picture of life which conforms to the
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average reader's view of reality", a feature particularly notable in Greenstone. Virtually the only connection Greenstone has with the provincial tradition is its concentration on childhood experience and its portrayal of society as a hostile and materialistic place. Ashton-Warner's creation of such a heavily romanticised fantasy gives the impression that she went out of her way to be as non-realistic as possible in this novel. This is particularly suggested by the very contrived 'master/servant' relationship between Richmond Considine and the storekeeper Dunn, and Dunn's miraculous repentance and reversion to loyal service again.

in addition, Richmond's stories are like fairy-tales, and the Considines themselves are more like a fairy-tale family than a real one; living deep in the forest, battling the 'evil' landlord, and even having a Maori princess (Huia) in their midst. To add to the non-reality of the text, Richmond's stories and the family's life frequently merge so that "the line between reality and fantasy" is blurred. The extent to which this novel is a fantasy is especially evident in the fairy-tale ending where everyone's wish comes true. Mumma returns from hospital, no longer a graceless and work-weary woman but exactly like the dream mother of Richmond's stories: "She is slim now and white of face, her hands are soft and she wears a pretty dress and shoes..." (G, p. 210). The family leave the clearing bound for a fine house with "balconies and balustrades" just as
Richmond had always promised in his stories, and the Maori princess Huia is able to settle back among her own people.

In many ways this novel is similar to Hyde's *Wednesday's Children*. Fantasy is allowed to take full possession and the clearing is like Wednesday's island in that it is almost totally cut off from reality. It is similarly threatened by intruders whose values are in tune with the outside norms. The clearing and the island are the metaphors Hyde and Ashton-Warner use for the dream world with which outsiders combat, and cope with, the 'real' world. They are externalised versions of "the room two inches behind the eyes" in which Frame's Malfred Signal decides to locate herself in *A State of Siege*.64 In these refuges, outside reality is suspended and the reader has to accept that anything can happen.

In reference to this novel, reviewer David Hall notes the romanticisation of Maori culture and the use of clichés from early twentieth century New Zealand fiction - the remittance man with no remittance, and the Maori princess,65 and Pearson also objects to the sentimental portrayal of Maori life, asserting that it contains "some of the clichés of the popular historical novelists."66 McEldowney counters such remarks to an extent when he points out that the romanticised treatment is in keeping with the age in which the novel is set, suggesting that it is a deliberate strategy rather than a lapse on Ashton-Warner's part.67 His argument points to Ashton-Warner using conventions
of a tradition other than the dominant one of her time, and thereby rebelling against the notion of the one way of seeing and one way of telling.

The other conventions which Ashton-Warner claimed she called upon in writing *Greenstone* were those of her own family. Critics found the story of the Considine family implausible. Hall, for instance, finds it hard to believe that the family could be so poor despite having a teacher's salary to live on. Similarly, Rhodes refers to the Considine family as hard to accept at a realistic level, as well as noting that many readers were annoyed by Ashton-Warner's "whimsy." Ashton-Warner replied to Rhodes's review with a letter in which she explains that the family he finds it so hard to believe in is closely based on her own family, with only the younger half rearranged since most of them are still alive. She also claims that most of the incidents are factual and much of the conversation verbatim due to the capacity of her "freak memory". Incidents she claims as factual include her mother knocking out her father's eye and the landlord tipping over the water tank and taking out the windows. A reading of *I Passed This Way* seems to confirm this, as the portrayal of her family is very similar to that of the Considines. This at least was her reality as she recalled it.

Ashton-Warner also accounts for what Rhodes terms her disposition towards "whimsy". She explains that her father told
stories as Mr Considine does, and concludes: "Can you wonder that a disposition to whimsy would arise from a family like that." Story telling was a status symbol in her family. Everyone told stories all the time, so her family all developed "this whimsy", and she adds: "Some people try to bash it out of me, roll me out into mediocrity - which is murder". This is a statement of Ashton-Warner's awareness of her difference and her determination to dramatise and emphasise it as much as possible, as is particularly evident in Greenstone. Ashton-Warner's comments on this novel show that her 'reality' is different from the norm, but the demand for realism in New Zealand fiction was for a certain type of realism, namely one which was readily accepted by the reader.

In Greenstone Ashton-Warner does not give the reader clear answers, but rather choices, as is also the case in Bell Call where a multiplicity of views is put forward regarding Tarl's stance and the reader is left to choose. As McBride observes, Greenstone resembles the stories told by Mr Considine in that it generally does not "commit itself". A clue as to how the reader should respond may be found in the example of the children's various attempts at interpretation at the conclusion of the story of Rikirangi and the sun (G, pp. 104-106). Another possible clue as to how the novel should be read is to be found in the narrator's description of the clearing as governed by fantasy which is "quite un-pin-downable by the fingertip of reality, quite undirectable by the cold winds of reason" (G, p.
This suggests that the imagination has to be engaged in reading this text. If not, the reader will be confounded.

Just how the reader will be confounded is illustrated by the character of Jenny Egantline, a former high-society love of Richmond's. She enters the clearing armed with concepts from the outside world, such as a linear view of time, and tries to argue her case with them, not realising they have no relevance in the clearing. Richmond tells her she "interrupts" and as if to punish her for this, nature replies with a rainstorm which soaks her. Her voice is drowned by the storm, further emphasising the insignificance of society's values in this environment (G, pp. 194-200). This interchange acts as a metaphor for the relationship of this text to interpretations in the critical realist tradition. It is a warning against the inappropriateness of any such attempts.

Blurring the Boundaries: The Subjectivity of Truth

Ashton-Warner's ostensibly autobiographical texts, Myself and I Passed This Way, demonstrate the blurring of fiction and autobiography which Stead sees as typical of Mansfield, Ashton-Warner and Frame. Stead states that "all three worked uneasily in (and always breaking out of) the fictional mode. The fictions of all three are forms of autobiography while autobiography tends towards fiction." Ashton-Warner purports
in the preface of *Myself* to tell it "how it was", but in *I Passed This Way* the same events are told differently, though both are supposed to be 'true'. For instance, in the latter text her main friendship is with the nurse Opal, and it is her that she sculpts. In *Myself* the narrator is upset at the cooling of her friendship with the nurse, but her predominant relationship (aside from her marriage) is with Saul, and it is him that she sculpts. Ashton-Warner chose to reveal different aspects of herself and in different ways, which reflects both the fictionality of autobiography and the autobiographical nature of fiction, such as has recently been revealed in the publication of Frame's three volumes of autobiography, and the connections they have with *Owls Do Cry*, and *Faces in the Water* in particular. This blurring is also obvious in the works of Hyde as mentioned above. The challenges these writers make to the boundaries between fiction and autobiography betray such divisions as arbitrary.

*Three* is another example of the close link between fiction and autobiography in Ashton-Warner's texts, as I have noted above. In its concentration on the experience of an older woman *Three* is also a deviation from the body of women's literature which was beginning to emerge by the time it was written. These texts tend to focus on the younger years of a woman's life, when relationships and roles are seen to be forming or changing, perhaps overlooking that this can also occur in later years. One of the few examples of fiction which
shows the conflicts of an older woman is Canadian novelist, Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, in which a 92 year old woman looks back on her life. I cannot recall any other New Zealand novel which shows a woman in a similar situation, and the trend among New Zealand women writers as identified by Aorewa McLeod is, in recent years at least, to "write prolifically of girlhood and puberty, and of the fortyish woman...", who looks back and rethinks her life, often leading to a breaking away from the accepted roles.  

Ashton-Warner's autobiography *I Passed This Way* reveals again the close link between her fiction and her life, as many of the incidents correspond to those in the novels and *Myself*. But there are also significant differences. Thus the texts all combine to suggest the arbitrary nature of divisions between fact and fiction. Once again the text centres on a woman coping with the world, but this time Ashton-Warner ostensibly removes the disguises and portrays herself. Her narration is self-conscious as she often interrupts to speak directly to the reader and frequently switches to a more recent time, telling of her return visits to places she had formerly lived in or the circumstances in which she ostensibly wrote the text. At other times she comments on the actual composition of the text and the difficulties she faces. She makes it clear that her autobiography is a subjective creation rather than 'the truth' by drawing attention to the way in which memory romanticises
childhood and her tendency to dwell only on the good, for which she constantly pulls herself up (IPTV, pp. 9, 21).

This dramatisation of the process of writing subverts the idea of autobiography as objective truth and gives a clear idea of the selection processes at work in this, and by implication, all other forms of writing. As was the case with Ball Call and Greenstone in particular, the reader is not presented with a finished product which purports to represent 'reality'. The presence of the author behind the text is emphasised, reminding the reader that Ashton-Warner is creating her truth.

Conclusion

In her efforts to write fiction in New Zealand, Ashton-Warner faced a masculine society as both Hyde and Mander had. This society was also an extremely conformist one, although this changed throughout the period in which she wrote, as feminism and the general radicalism of the 1960s challenged the old ethos. Unlike these other writers she did not try to appropriate this ethos to her own ends, neither identifying with it as Mander did, nor subverting it as Hyde did. Her tactic was instead to flagrantly assert her difference from this ethos and all other norms of society by creating protagonists who differed as much as possible from the norms and who deconstructed these
norms in a manner which often seems deliberately designed to offend her New Zealand readers.

As Hyde does in *Wednesday's Children* and *The Godwits Fly*, Ashton-Warner puts female experience at centre stage and in particular the experience of the non-conforming woman. Although she locates possible escape from the confines of gender conventions in the exercise of the creative imagination as Hyde also does, she does not attempt to overcome the "man-and-woman-habit" by indicating that it is possible to break out of existing gender roles. She does make some moves towards this in her deconstruction of the accepted images of womanhood. Germaine is too sexual for good taste, Tarl takes things too far in her mothering role and Angela is used to counter the ideal of femininity through her obvious vulnerability. Furthermore, she portrays the pain inflicted on women by social constructs and the conflicts they occasion, and the harmfulness of these roles is especially evident in the manner in which they are shown to cause women to falsify themselves. Germaine, the narrator in *Three* and Angelique all provide good examples of this.

Only in *Bell Call* does Ashton-Warner show a woman who is able to get outside society's constructs and attain some sort of victory, even if she is always on the run because of it. Ashton-Warner does this by ignoring to a significant degree the costs of motherhood to the self, costs which are not submerged in *Myself*. *Three* presents another view of motherhood, this time
suggesting that there may be a temporary period of fulfilment, as is indicated by the flower image of Angelique, but the price is loss and rejection when the mother is no longer necessary to the child.

The portrayal of art and motherhood as the most likely means by which a woman can escape from restrictive social constructs is clearly linked to the natural quality of these options, for Ashton-Warner constantly sets up nature as a positive alternative to society. She upholds the traditional male/female dichotomy, but gives value to conventionally disparaged female elements. In her emphasis on motherhood, both literally and as a metaphor for art, Ashton-Warner appeals to the biological destiny of women as a means by which to escape their social destiny. The irony is that this natural function accords with women's social roles.

Although Tarl attains a freedom and a victory of sorts through her assertion of the power of motherhood, the experiences of the other heroines suggest that hers is a romanticised escape. In the case of each of the other heroines, social constructs are shown to be too powerful to be surmounted, mainly because they are internalised by the heroines. Although Ashton-Warner's portrayal of Anna points to this internalisation of dominant standards, in Germaine's case it is less clear that Ashton-Warner sees this as the destructive element, although the text suggests it is. In the case of Three there seems to be a
complete capitulation to the dominant standards despite the damage they are shown to do to women and their relationships with each other. This novel functions in effect as a metaphor for Ashton-Warner's examination of women's roles and possible alternatives. Just as her narrator tries to throw off the conventional role as mother-in-law but cannot succeed, so too does Ashton-Warner set out to write about women getting outside of society's gender constructs, but finds that these are too dominant, so that she continues to construct her female characters within the traditional feminine sphere.

In contrast to Mander and Hyde, Ashton-Warner did not write in a barely existent or fledgling local tradition; the decades of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s had firmly established a 'New Zealand literature'. This tradition was, however, a strongly masculinist one and her reaction to it was similar to her reaction to the strongly masculinist society; she asserted her difference in works characterised by excess in the characters she created as her protagonists and the style of the narratives, particularly their emotion, passion, wit and extravagance. She made little attempt to portray 'reality' according to the accepted standards but rather, did so according to her own conceptions which she knew to be different. This resulted in the what appear to be deliberately non-realistic settings and techniques. Her writing is also foregrounded by the self-conscious style and the refusal to create one convincing truth for the reader.
In all of these techniques Ashton-Warner's determination towards separatism, writing in her own tradition, is clear. She perceived reality differently and was determined to dramatise this difference at all costs, as is illustrated in her comment about the unpublished work, "Greenstone 3". She describes this work as "the most impassioned and turbulent of the lot", maintaining that it remained unpublished because publishers find the characters too incredible. Her separatist stance is clear in her contention that this is only to be expected as the characters are "all portrayed live from the River ... [where] no-one was credible..." (IPTW, p. 359).

By flouting the accepted literary modes Ashton-Warner used her writing as a means of expressing her difference not only from mainstream society as other writers did, but from the mainstream literary tradition as well. This disruption of the conventions meant that Ashton-Warner's texts invited accusations of implausibility and extravagance. Such reactions are in line with what Nancy K. Miller argues is the characteristic response to writing which does not adhere to the underlying maxims of fiction. Miller quotes Gérard Gennetté's essay "Vraisemblance et Motivation", in which plausibility (vraisemblance) is defined as "respect for the norm"; that is, "a given, general, received and implicit maxim". Miller extrapolates from this that "[i]f no maxim is available to account for a particular piece of behavior, that behavior is read as unmotivated and
unconvincing", and she proposes that there is a feminine
tradition of such violations. In breaking with the underlying
maxims of New Zealand fiction in the many ways I have described,
Ashton-Warner's novels amount to such violations, and thus
contradict what Miller describes as the demand that "art should
not imitate life but reinscribe received ideas about the
representation of life in art." Ashton-Warner was one of the
first to challenge the "received ideas" of the provincial period
of New Zealand literature.

Why did she issue such a challenge? Jack Shallcrass puts
it down to a difference of view which came about because she saw
the world from the inside, whereas New Zealand culture is
"aggressively external and physical." I believe this can be
 traced further to her difference of view as a woman in a society
which valorised male experiences, a difference all the more
notable because there were few other women writing 'serious'
fiction when her works first began to appear. I would also
contend, however, that in many respects the marked extent of the
difference was deliberate on the part of Ashton-Warner, just as
the difference in her life seems to have been exaggerated by her
determinedly individual stance.
Notes


2 See Chapter II, p. 73.


5 Roberts, Where Did She Come From?, p. 117.

6 Roberts, Where Did She Come From?, p. 117.

7 McEldowney, pp. 239-240.

8 McEldowney, p. 240.


10 See for instance Hood, Sylvia, p. 149.


12 See Introduction, p. 22 and note 33.


14 McEldowney, p. 237.

15 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Incense to Idols (London: Secker and Warburg, 1960), p. 128. All further references to this work appear in the text.


21 This accords with Heather Roberts's argument that there is a move away from male/female relationships in Ashton-Warner's later novels, as her heroines primary relationships are with children, and mothering is shown to be instinctive and more natural than relationships between men and women (Heather Roberts, Public and Private Realities: The Subjective Novel in New Zealand (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1979), pp. 148ff.


25 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Three (London/Christchurch: Robert Hale/Whitcombe and Tombs, 1970), see for instance p. 82. All further references to this work appear in the text.

26 Roberts, Public and Private Realities, p. 152.


28 Mary Carruthers, "Imagining Women: Notes Toward A Feminist


30 See for instance *Myself*, p. 42 where she claims to have read Freud, Adler, Lipmann, Olive Schreiner, Jung and Bertrand Russell. Hood also records her as having studied Virginia Woolf, Mary Coleridge, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Katherine Mansfield and Robin Hyde. See Hood, *Sylvia*, pp. 91, 130.


32 See Chapter III, pp. 165-166.

33 Hall, "Review of *Incense to Idols.""] p. 13.


37 See above pp. 325-327 and Chapter V, pp. 296-297.

38 David Hall, "Reviews of *The Orange Tree and Other Stories* (Helen Shaw), *Immanuel's Land* (Maurice Duggan), *Owls do Cry* (Janet Frame), *Spinner* (Sylvia Ashton-Warner), and *The God Boy* (Ian Cross)," *Numbers*, 4, No. 2 (1958), 61.


41 Day, "Review of *Incense to Idols*," p. 91.


43 Both Stead and Baxter see this wit and extravagance as the novel’s most vital features. See Stead, "Sylvia Ashton-Warner," p. 63, and Baxter, p. 44.

44 Chapman, p. 93.

45 Copland, p. 228.


48 Chapman, p. 77.


51 I agree with Baxter’s contention that sex to her is a means of ensuring the admiration of men which she deems so essential, rather than an end in itself. See Baxter, p. 43.

52 McEldowney, p. 241.


54 See Janet Frame, *A State of Siege* (1966; rpt. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1982), pp. 8-10 where Malfred Signal resolves to rearrange her view of life according to the standards of "the room two inches behind the eyes".


57 McEldowney, p. 244.


61 McEldowney, p. 244.


64 See Chapter III, p. 138, and Chapter IV, p. 203.

65 See Chapter V, pp. 275-276 and note 1, and above p. 344 and note 27.


68 Miller, "Emphasis Added," p. 36.

69 Jack Shallcrass, "Teacher, Writer: Review of I Passed This
CONCLUSION

DRAWING TOGETHER THE THREADS

AND WHERE TO NEXT?

Introduction

I began this thesis with the statement that I would examine the relationship between three New Zealand women novelists and both the literary establishment and the wider society of their times. Each of the three novelists, Jane Mander, Robin Hyde and Sylvia Ashton-Warner, wrote at a different stage in the evolution of New Zealand's literary history, ranging from the days of virtually no literary support system, to the development of a new male-dominated establishment, the consolidation of this establishment's authority and the eventual beginnings of its decline. The social context in which the works of these women were conceived and appeared is characterised by continued patriarchal dominance. This was periodically loosened by the liberalism of the latter years of last century and the exigencies of both World War I and World War II, but at the time when Mander and
Hyde’s works appeared and when Ashton-Warner first started writing, the patriarchal dominance was especially strong, reinforcing the traditional gender roles and putting strong pressures on women to remain in the home. This situation meant that the works of all three women are characterised by a marked difference from, and a strong rebellion against, the prevailing ideologies pertaining to women.

My task in this section is to draw together the responses of these women to the social and literary contexts they had to overcome in their attempts to write New Zealand fiction, and to analyse the elements of similarity and difference between them. Finally, I will provide a brief outline of the way New Zealand literature, and in particular women’s fiction, has developed in the 1970s and 1980s, as these decades have seen some significant changes and therefore make an interesting postscript to the development of New Zealand literature as I have described it in this thesis.

The Responses to Patriarchal Dominance

All three writers had to respond to the masculine ethos and patriarchal dominance of the society which formed the context to their works. Mander identified with the masculine ethos of a bygone era in preference to the social puritanism of the contemporary society, but this identification sits uneasily
with her advocacy of women's rights and attack on inhibiting gender conventions. This is particularly so because she set up the pioneer male as the ideal to be emulated, and established the ordinary woman as the opposite of this image and representative of the repressive and materialistic elements of social puritanism. In between sit Mander's heroines, who are forced to imitate the pioneer male as the only positive role model, and despise other women. Their striving in pursuit of the pioneer ethos falls down because it remains a male-only ethos, while their rejection of other women calls into question their supposed feminism and contradicts the portrayal of them as confined merely by social codes, suggesting as it does that the other women are naturally confined to their roles.

Mander's attempt at appropriation of the masculine ethos resulted in the creation of novels of compromise. This is most evident in the endings of the novels which provide the heroines with the means to escape from their precarious position of striving for an unattainable ideal. In so doing, the heroines are confirmed in the position of passive object, whereas they had earlier promised to be active subjects. The compromise and contradictions resulting from appropriation are especially evident in Mander's final New Zealand novel, *Allen Adair*, where she tried to bury her feminist concerns and her female identity even further through focussing on a male central character, but even so could not prevent a muted female-centred text emerging to undermine the conclusions she tried to uphold.
Hyde also attempted to appropriate the masculine ethos of society to her own ends. As Mander did in *Allen Adair*, she used a male central character in two of her novels in an effort to make her alternatives more conceivable. That is, she made a concession to the patriarchal nature of the society in which she lived and about which she wrote. Unlike Mander, however, she used this strategy of appropriation to subvert rather than celebrate the masculine ethos. In both *Passport to Hell* and *Nor the Years Condemn*, Hyde exposes the weaknesses of the masculine ethos and issues a general attack on gender roles by exposing their falsity and destructive impact on individuals. This strategy was not without difficulties for Hyde, although she used it with greater awareness than Mander, who was to some extent trapped by it. In the case of Hyde, the difficulty is evident in her failure to fully integrate the masculine and feminine aspects of the former novel, thereby undermining the attempt to break down this very dichotomy. In the latter novel, the difficulty of appropriation and subversion is also clear in the differences between what Hyde wished to convey and the character she used to convey it, for Starkie's 'feminist' insights do not always seem authentic.

In contrast to the other two novelists, Ashton-Warner made no attempts to appropriate the masculine ethos. Her reaction was instead one of complete rejection of this and most other aspects of the society in which she lived and wrote. To all intents and purposes, she actually ignored the tough and
taciturn males who represented the masculine ideal in the New Zealand of the 1950s and early 1960s. The men she did portray are certainly shown to be at the centre of power in society, and this is especially evident in the male-dominated education establishment which features in several of her works. *Spinster* in particular, highlights this in its focus on a lone woman battling what turns out to be an inflexible middle class male establishment. Nevertheless, the men who populate her novels are often outsiders to an extent as well, and show some sympathy for, and understanding of, the heroines who are inevitably on the margins. In this Ashton-Warner is similar to Hyde, who also portrays men on the margins of society, especially Starkie, John Hannay in *The Godwits Fly* and Mr Bellister and Ronald in *Wednesday's Children*. In the case of both of these writers, however, the portrayal of the alienation of these male characters is tempered by clear indications that despite this, they also have a place within the structures of society, whereas the alienated female characters remain on the outside.

*The Responses to Female Identity*

Mander grew up in an age of considerable liberalisation of attitudes towards the place of women in society, but by the time her novels appeared in New Zealand this had been stemmed by a conservative backlash. Her feminist heroines reflect the optimism of the earlier age and thus were out of place in the
climate of 1920s New Zealand, where domesticity was exalted. This is reflected in the concern New Zealand reviewers expressed at the feminism and independence of Asia in The Story of a New Zealand River. Mander's reaction to this outrage was given some vent in The Strange Attraction through the creation of Valerie as such a fiercely independent character who despises all feminine stereotypes, and in the invective which Valerie directs at society. In this and in the especially negative portrayal of the ordinary woman in this novel, Mander can be seen as directly confronting New Zealand society's concept of the feminine. A leaning towards a more conciliatory approach is, however, evident in the obvious authorial approval of the hero, Dane, who seems to be confirmed in his views that there is no point in attacking society head-on as Valerie does.

Mander's conciliatory approach is even more evident in the next novel, Allen Adair. As I mention above in my discussion of Mander's response to patriarchal dominance, in Allen Adair, Mander makes an attempt to bury the problem of female identity by focussing on a hero constructed in the pioneer male image and voicing her criticisms of society through what she hoped was this more acceptable character. The 'woman problem' could not, however, be completely submerged and the muted female narrative disrupts the text. Overall, Mander's response to the issue of female identity and how it is constructed by society was a contradictory one, complicated by her identification with a masculine ideal and her refusal to
recognise that all women, and not just her chosen heroines, are victims of convention.

Hyde's response to her female identity and its clash with society's constructs was to deal with it both directly and indirectly. Her principle focus was on dissolving gender constructs just as she wished to dissolve all other arbitrary divisions in society, which she saw as locking people into false and inhibiting roles and alienating them from each other. Her appropriation of the masculine ethos was, I believe, a deliberate strategy in her attempt to break down such divisions, by demonstrating her ability to imaginatively cross gender lines and recreate the experiences of a man, even in the most masculine of male arenas, the battlefield. It was also a means by which she could obliquely show up the falsity of male images of women and vice versa, and the limitations imposed on male lives as well as female lives by the arbitrary rules which define different types of behaviour and experience as male or female.

In other instances, Hyde dealt with the 'woman problem' by putting it at centre stage and dramatising the conflicts she felt in her own life through both her autobiographical and her fictional personas. In the characters of Wednesday and Eliza, she highlights the imagination as the means by which a woman can create her own world on the margins of society and so overcome her perilous position. The ending of Wednesday's Children
indicates just how perilous this remains, although The Godwite Fly points more optimistically to the possibility of achieving some balance between the inner and outer worlds. This novel, like Nor the Years Condemn, is particularly strong in its plea for a dismantling of the "man-and-woman habit", especially as it shows not only the anguish of women who break society's rules and therefore must live on the margins, but also the bitterness and disappointment which accrues to women who constantly strive to do the 'right thing' and then do not receive the promised reward of a 'happy-ever-after' marriage; a conclusion which also inadvertently escaped through Mander's portrayal of Marion Adair.

Ashton-Warner resembles Hyde in this direct response to the question of female identity through the creation of heroines who dramatise her own conflicts in many respects. Her heroines are all non-conforming women, and with the exception of Tarl, they all seek a means by which they can overcome their marginal position. In each case, however, their attempts are thwarted by their inability to escape the constructs of the dominant society which they have internalised. Tarl seeks to make her marginality into a strength and she is able to do so and claim victory for fleeting moments, but hers is an ongoing battle and her escape is romanticised. Germaine also attempts to make a place for herself on the margins, but she does so within the socially constructed and essentially passive image, as a whore, and therefore, despite her apparent strength and defiance, is as
unable to step outside the dominant constructs as are the other heroines.

In summary, Ashton-Warner fails to suggest any positive alternatives for women and her conclusions can be summed up in the rather negative ending of Three, where the narrator accepts society's constructs despite the fact that her text has constantly highlighted their destructive effects. In this respect she resembles Mander, who similarly portrays heroines who rebel against gender constructs, but then can offer them no alternative but an engineered escape, usually on the arm of a man, which confirms them in the very passive position they have ostensibly been fighting. Another element these two authors have in common is their creation of non-conforming heroines, who, even though they are ultimately overcome by the dominant standards, start out in very defiant positions and in this sense offer a direct challenge to society. This similarity is most evident between Mander's Valerie and Ashton-Warner's Germaine and also Tarl. In the creation of these characters both Mander and Ashton-Warner appear to have gone out of their way to be as different as possible from the norm of the New Zealand woman as perceived by the dominant society.
The Responses to the Literary Maxims

The literary circumstances which each of these writers confronted were quite different, as I have outlined in my introductory comments to this chapter. In the case of Mander, the main constraining factor was the genteel convention which imposed limits on the subject range and the manner in which women were supposed to write. Mander reacted with defiance towards this and determinedly struck out in her own direction, claiming that her aim was to remain faithful to her own truths. Her independence in this respect was not matched in others, however. Her fiction replicates many images of women and conventions from the received English literary tradition and these contradict the supposed feminism of her novels. This is most evident in her portrayal of female 'monsters' and unquestioning use of the *femme fatale* device, which are part of her generally negative portrayal of women other than the heroines. This was a conscious strategy to the extent that it distinguishes her heroines from the other women, but unconscious in that it shows how Mander had not freed herself from many of the prevailing images of the social and literary culture, despite her stance of defiance. The extent to which she had not freed herself is most clear in the manner in which even her heroines are put into the traditionally passive position of romantic heroines, reformed and rescued by the heroes.
The other two authors both had more of a New Zealand literary establishment to confront than did Mander. Their difference from their predecessor is also revealed in their unwillingness to remain within the realist mode which Mander practised and which became the dominant mode of New Zealand fiction up until the late 1960s following the establishment of the social realist school in the 1930s. While they share some of the themes of their male counterparts in the dominant tradition, particularly in their attack on social puritanism and the conformist society, Hyde and Ashton-Warner both differ from the norm in their impressionistic, subjective style and the fluid mix of (auto)biography and fiction which characterises their texts. Both authors resist notions of foreclosure and absolute truth and, especially in the case of Hyde, this is frequently achieved through the lack of a stable narrative viewpoint. In addition, the reader is often left in a position of choice so that he or she must actively participate and create his or her own truths from the text.

Both Hyde and Ashton-Warner were determined to write according to their own inner realities rather than the external concepts enshrined in the social realist tradition. Hyde, nevertheless appropriated this mode in her two Starkie novels. As was also the case with her appropriation of the masculine ethos in these two works, she used this appropriation as a means to subvert the mode. She did this by showing up the 'real' world in which the mode is based as a hostile and alienating
place in comparison to the inner worlds of the imagination. Her subversion of accepted maxims is also evident in Check to Your King where she debunks accepted ideas about history, while in Wednesday's Children she sends up the idea of realism by taking it to the extremes and making quite clear that 'truth' and 'reality' are entirely subjective concepts.

Ashton-Warner cannot be seen as having made any such attempt at appropriation, as this would have been out of keeping with her determined individualism. In many ways she set out to be as different as possible from all norms, including the literary ones. She made no attempt to write about ordinary New Zealanders with whom her readers could easily identify. Instead she created female characters who deconstructed the image of the puritan woman which predominated in provincial and to a certain extent in post-provincial fiction, and she wrote in an extravagant, exuberant and turbulent style in contrast to the norm of a plain and restrained prose. In other instances, Greenstone in particular, she appears to have set out to be as non-realistic and escapist as possible. Her response to the literary norms can be characterised as one of separatism as she set off in her own tradition. The reaction of one of her heroines, Germaine, to the norms of the society in which she lives perhaps best exemplifies this response on Ashton-Warner's part. In her life and the narrative she creates, Germaine treats the underlying maxims of society with defiance, just as
Ashton-Warner did in her works in respect of the maxims of fiction.

Appropriation, Subversion and Separatism

In broad terms the responses of the three writers studied can be classified in terms of appropriation, subversion and separatism. In the case of Mander, appropriation is the central strategy which emerges, whereas Hyde appropriates but the crucial factor is that she uses this strategy as a means to subvert the very structures which she appropriates. Hyde also moves into the realms of separatism in the works which she sets very firmly in a female-centred world and where she gives full reign to the imagination. Ashton-Warner's works are characterised very markedly by the tendency towards separatism as she makes no concessions to the norms and standards of either New Zealand literature or New Zealand society and strikes out very deliberately in her own tradition.

These differences in strategy no doubt come down to differences in personality, to some extent. Ashton-Warner was noted for her determined stance of difference, and her separatist strategy is consistent with that. Mander on the other hand was not such a determined rebel and her works are much more conciliatory, while Hyde is notable for her preference for the poetic and the realms of the imagination. The part
played by the contexts in which these women wrote is, however, also significant. All three clearly rebelled against the aspects which they saw as having the most constraining influence on them. With Mander it was the genteel convention and social puritanism. In Hyde’s case, pressure was put on her to write in the realist mode and she also very keenly felt the restrictions imposed on her by the gender constructs which dominated in her lifetime. Ashton-Warner’s rebellion was really directed at the world in general, but her texts show a particular focus on the position of the non-conforming woman, a position she occupied herself.

Whatever the reasons for the strategies these women adopted, my study of the contexts in which they wrote and of the texts they produced has confirmed that as women writers they did occupy a position of difference in relation to the norms of society and literature, and that their texts are characterised by differences from, and indeed violations of, the social and especially the literary norms. Mander and Hyde made attempts to overcome these differences, while Ashton-Warner set out to emphasise her difference. In Mander’s case the attempt resulted in unresolved contradictions and ambiguities in respect of her portrayal of women, while Hyde was generally more successful in overcoming such difficulties, and pointing towards alternatives for women and alternatives to the set notions of truth and reality, which characterised the society and literary establishment of that time. Ashton-Warner’s works are ambiguous
as Mander's are because of her similar inability to free herself and her characters from the dominant structures against which they fight. Thus Hyde was the most successful of these three novelists in overcoming her position of difference and expressing her alternatives in fiction.

The Women Who Followed

In my discussion of Ashton-Warner I have already made reference to the rising tide of women's writing which appeared in New Zealand from the early 1970s onwards and was one of the developments which broke down the dominance of the white male literary establishment and the preference for social realism. Indicative of this change is Linda Hardy's comment in her editorial to a 1985 issue of Landfall, where she describes "editors, publishers and literary funds ... all scrambling to publish, acclaim and reward that most desirable commodity, the woman writer."

My discussions of both Hyde and Ashton-Warner have indicated that realism was the mode identified with the male writer, whereas both Hyde and Ashton-Warner, and of course Frame, wrote in a more subjective manner. One feature of many of the new women novelists has, however, been their preference for the realist mode, which they have given a new twist by centring it on the experiences of women, and domestic
experiences in particular, in this way building up a new literary concept of reality just as the Sargesian school developed its concept. Novelists such as Margaret Sutherland, Marilyn Duckworth, Sue McCauley and Fiona Kidman have written from the point of view of young women growing up to discover the limitations imposed on them by socially constructed gender definitions and of older women trapped in unsatisfactory relationships and domestic situations. These novelists resemble Mander in that they have pushed out the boundaries of fiction to make women's domestic experiences and social criticism from a woman's perspective acceptable topics for fiction, while not being innovative in terms of their use of language and narrative techniques.

The prominence of realism in the novels of New Zealand women has drawn considerable comment in recent years, particularly as it stands out against the more technically innovative writing being practised by many of the new male writers and some of the new women, though Frame of course has been leading the way in this since the publication of her first novel and has increasingly challenged the boundaries of language, truth, fiction and reality. Male writers have tended to assault the realist tradition through adopting the post-modernist mode, resisting notions of meaning and depth behind the text and questioning the prevailing cultural ideologies, with writers such as Michael Morrissey and Ian Wedde at the forefront in this.
Both Karl Stead and Michael Morrissey have sought to account for the lack of technical experimentation on the part of New Zealand's contemporary women novelists by pointing to the political nature of feminist writing and its consequent need to be accessible. Stead contends that feminist "fiction becomes a means by which a woman discovers herself and by which she speaks for the 'submerged population' ... of her sisters."\(^2\) Morrissey's comment is similar, maintaining that many of New Zealand's women writers are creating a "New Realism" because of their concern with social and human issues and consequent impatience with the "inner agonies and ... the high formal concerns of modernist or post-modernist writers."\(^3\) Both of these comments point to a continuation of the tendency to push women's writing into a minor role. In contemporary times, the formal experimentation and questioning of the master narratives of Western culture which characterises post-modernism is privileged over realistic portrayals of women's experiences in a way which is reminiscent of the former privileging of male 'realism' over the subjective and 'emotional' writing of women.\(^4\) Indeed, as Lawrence Jones points out, this division carries on the rational/emotional dichotomy which has traditionally divided male and female. He describes post-modernism as a takeover bid by male writers for the growing nonrealist sector, replacing the modernist 'depth and essence' feeling-based models of the predominantly female nonrealists with 'decentred' fictions based on 'surface' models and involving formal and intellectual games more suited to the male mind according to New Zealand sexual typologies.\(^5\)
This is not to say, however, that there have not been women writers in New Zealand who have experimented with the modes of fiction in recent years. Aside from Frame's continuing innovations, the most obvious example is Keri Hulme with her novel *The Bone People* and also her short fiction. The difference and consequent difficulty of categorising the fictions of these two women writers is such that they are each claimed by rival schools. Frame's concentration on the artist's special 'vision' and the symbolism of her novels have placed her in the modernist camp, while her questioning of the representativeness of language and the metafictional quality of her more recent novels have resulted in readings of her works as post-modernist. Similarly Hulme is seen as modernist by some, but post-modernist by others in her decentering of the central discourses of society, and as this applies to her rewriting of cultural and racial identities, she is also deemed to be writing in the post-colonial mode.

From a feminist point of view, perhaps the most significant aspect of *The Bone People* is Hulme's deconstruction of traditional binary oppositions and gender constructs through her refusal to define her two main adult characters, Kerewin and Joe, in terms of such constructs. Of further significance is the novel's conclusion, which moves away from the nuclear family and heterosexual relationships, and creates instead a new kind of multi-racial 'family' based on a type of genderless
friendship, such as that posited by Hyde as a solution to the problems occasioned by the "man-and-woman habit".

Hulme's inclusion of the Maori perspective and consequent decentring of the Pakeha is in line with another of the main trends in New Zealand writing of recent years, namely the rise of a Maori voice. Patricia Grace is another who challenges the hegemony of Pakeha culture in this way, with her novels showing a progressive move from a form of 'Maori realism' in *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (which equates with the 'female realism' which I have noted above), to the mythic mode which predominates in *Potiki*, and thereby challenges Pakeha notions of 'reality'. This historical mythic mode also features in the fiction of Yvonne du Fresne, who contributes to the growing post-colonial voice in New Zealand literature by adding not only a woman's voice but also the voice of a minority group among the colonisers (the Danish), who were themselves subject to the colonising force of the dominant English culture in its enforcement of conformity.

While women writers with other cultural or ethnic backgrounds have called on the myths of their own cultures, some women writers who are otherwise of the dominant culture have looked to the future, creating their own myths and thereby widening the possibilities available to their characters. Rachel McAlpine has done this in her two novels, *The Limits of Green* and *Running Away from Home*. These works can both be
described as 'fabulist', as the events and characters are in no way constrained by conventional reality. She moves away from the predominant tendency of New Zealand women novelists to concentrate on private worlds and personal relationships, although she does show up conventional relationships as destructive from a woman's point of view. Her main themes are, however, public ones of national and international importance, in particular conservation, the threat of nuclear destruction and the dangers of superpower intervention in the politics of other countries. In this respect the novels' closest New Zealand predecessor would be Frame's Intensive Care, which expresses similar concern at global developments through a futuristic mode.

Others to adopt the futuristic mode during the 1980s have been Lora Mountjoy and Sandi Hall, whose novels also take us out of New Zealand as we know it and into an imaginary world offering a myriad of possibilities for their women characters. These wider possibilities contribute to the optimistic tone of all of these novels, as the characters are not only able to overcome the wider forces ranged against them, but also achieve personal happiness. The utopianism of these novels is similar to that which marks the conclusion of The Bone People, where all conflicts are resolved and Kerewin's rebuilt home becomes a symbol of community rather than isolation as her tower had been.
The optimism which characterises the escape from realism by women novelists in New Zealand today suggests that this is the way ahead in offering up new possibilities for women in fiction, especially as these works offer such a positive contrast to the fictions which seek to depict women's lives in the realistic mode and result in what Aorewa McLeod has described as a general picture "of a woman's life in New Zealand as grim, limiting and depressing." These realistic interpretations of women's lives have, nevertheless, played an important part in breaking down the hegemony of the male literary establishment, just as the growing number of non-realist novels, whether in the fabulist, mythic or post-modernist modes, have contributed to the eclipse of the once dominant social realist mode. The diversity of discourse which now exists in New Zealand's literary culture(s) suggests that women writers will not be faced with the same position of extreme difference and marginality as I have shown both Hyde and Ashton-Warner to have confronted, while the corresponding widening of general social constructs means it is easier for the contemporary woman writer to offer her alternatives than was the case for Mander, Hyde and Ashton-Warner.
Notes


3 Morrissey, p. 67.

4 See in particular my discussion of the consolidation of the social realist tradition from the 1930s to the 1950s, Chapter V, pp. 293-294.


6 For an outline of this debate regarding Hulme, see Jones, "Modernism, Myth and Postmodernism," pp. 201-202

7 McLeod, p. 8.
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