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'Coded in a Code of the World': Minor Literature and the Time-Image Hidden in Janet Frame's Late Fiction?

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Introduction

This article seeks to demonstrate how Janet Frame's late fiction can be read as a theoretical engagement with the conceptual investigations of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, especially the notions of minor literature and the in her late novels *Living in the Maniototo* (1981) and *The Carpathians* (1989). For this reason, my approach must be sharply distinguished from a more commonplace analogical framing of Frame or a simple one-to-one translation of her fiction into alternative terms. By weaving theory through her fiction, Frame makes a significant contribution to literature that responds to the still-emerging field of Deleuzian literary critical theory.

The episode of Brian Wilford's watch described in *Maniototo* is an unmistakable clue to the significance of time, not just in this text but arguably throughout Janet Frame's fiction. As the multi-faceted narrator of this novel describes it:

On his recent travels to a conference he had bought himself an elaborate watch, the temporal equivalent of a hotdog "with everything on it", but unfortunately it was five years ahead in time and his problem was to return the date to the present' (30).

This, therefore, is time 'with the lot', augmented by 'everything'. 'The only thing to do, we supposed, was to wind the watch back through the hours and days and years' (30-31). What follows is a process of 'progress or regress' to 'shed those five years of inadvertent time' and arrive 'back in the present' (31).

This article argues that *Maniototo* and *Carpathians* are preoccupied with the discovery of this 'other way' of engaging time. Time, in Frame's texts, is 'inadvertent' from the start, never distinctly either 'progress or regress'. Its conventional derivation from movement has been given the slip, as suggested by the phrase "My fingers are worn out" (31). Moreover, time's alliance with future-directed chronology has been severed: "To think that I have to go through every second of the next five years" (31). Frame's texts thereby extend towards a notion of time that, in Western cultural contexts at least, is largely alien.

In this, of course, she is not unique among fiction writers, but what distinguishes Frame's interrogation of temporality is the simultaneous drive in *Maniototo* and *Carpathians* towards what I refer to, drawing on Gilles Deleuze, as the 'cinematization of literature'. Deleuze's key studies of time and cinema, provide the most provocative critical apparatus for considering time in these texts of Frame's. Certainly Frame's fiction is replete with a rich stock of images that

could easily be read as a screenplay for a visual production. What makes her work truly cinematic, however, is in some sense exactly the opposite of the image: that is, language, specifically the disintegration of language (an encounter with a 'language beyond linguistics') that Deleuze connects to the 'irrational cuts' of the time-image, which is the 'crystal' from which time emerges. Quoting from *Carpathians*, my article title—'coded in a code of the world' (171)—references this idea of language disimplicated from the standard framework of the linguistic sign, and allied with the world and the workings of a time of the world. Such an alliance merges language with the non-linguistic 'Real Order,' defined by Alan Sheridan as 'that over which the symbolic stumbles, that which is refractory, resistant' (1997: x).

To the same extent that Deleuze's concept of the time-image meets Frame's writing in a productive encounter, her fiction also responds to the model of a minor literature as described by Deleuze and Guattari (1986). Noticing this double 'framework' for Frame does more than underscore how receptive her texts are to a portfolio of critical approaches; it also speaks to Claire Colebrook's provocative observation that the specifics of a Deleuzian literary criticism remain 'an open question' (2002: 150). It must be immediately noted, however, that what is at stake here is not a *naïve synthesis* (in Frame's fiction) of minor literature and the time-image. Deleuze and Guattari powerfully resist the 'identity of beings' that such a critical gesture would depend upon. Minor literature is not the time-image. Rather, the nature of their connection is signified, to quote Tom Conley, by Deleuze's "'method of AND", of "this and then that"' (2000: 264). 'In this conjunction [and . . . and . . . and . . .] there is enough force to shake up and uproot the verb "to be"', write Deleuze and Guattari (1983: 57-58). Frame's fiction is the space of this 'AND' because it is the 'in-between' of minor literature and the time-image.

To that extent, this paper proposes that Frame's concerns are not bounded by the concerns of New Zealand narrowly conceived. What follows therefore are fresh connections, suggested by Deleuze and Guattari's study of minor literature, between her writings and the European modernist tradition of such writers as Franz Kafka, James Joyce and Ezra Pound. Similarly, Deleuze's time-image conception—heavily freighted as it is with examples of modernist cinema—connects Frame's texts to an international cinematic tradition. This article foregrounds the larger literary, cinematic and intellectual conversations of which Frame's work partakes.

Janet Frame and Minor Literature

For Deleuze and Guattari, a minor literature is a literature made strange to itself because of its difference from the major language whose boundaries it nevertheless inhabits. 'The three characteristics of minor literature', they write, 'are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation' (1986:18). A deterritorialized language, to gloss the first characteristic, presents a maximization of affect and 'non-sense' as a result of having evacuated the 'territories' of meaning and sense. The second characteristic denotes individuals not as rigidly produced identities, impervious to the conditions of their own emergence, but as woven through political experience and, above all, through the pre-political domain that is the crucible of fresh forms of politics. Closely related to this, the third characteristic raises literature to the level of the territorializations, deterritorializations and reterritorializations that impel new forms of social organization. All three aspects of a minor literature are significant because they sustain a refashioning of language, politics and social organization in the interests of, as Deleuze expresses it, 'inventing a people who are missing' (1997: 4).

Maniototo and *Carpathians* entertain scenarios of literature and language that replay, and reconfigure, the ideas introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1986), especially the problem of the relationship between a literature and a language. One crucial issue in Frame's work is how English might be leveraged to new heights of expressiveness through its interactions with the indigenous Maori language, European 'imposter' languages besides English, and even with one

type of artificial language. To explore such issues, I begin with *Carpathians*, a novel that narrates the journey to New Zealand of the wealthy New Yorker, Mattina Brecon, describes the encounters with her neighbours in Puamahara, and relates her response to the upheavals of time and space that make her stay so eventful and that are traced to the coincidence of cosmic and mythical circumstances in the forms of the Gravity Star and the Memory Flower.

In *Carpathians*, the ‘deterritorialization of language’ emerges, firstly, in the affects introduced into English by way of the colonial and post-colonial relationship the settler language has with the indigenous Maori language. To say that Frame’s text is simply a novel about the ‘rise’ of the Maori language (and by extension Maori consciousness) begs the question of inter-language relations. Soon after her arrival in Puamahara, Mattina goes shopping at local Maori woman Hene Hanuere’s store. Their encounter creates a deterritorialization of English against a narrative backdrop of the cultural resurgence of Maori, which leaves English—Frame’s language—available for what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘strange and minor uses’ (1986: 17):

She [Mattina] bought her groceries, speaking slowly as the woman had difficulty understanding her words while she herself had to ask for some words and phrases to be repeated. What strange English, she thought’ (25).

Mattina meets Hene at the politically crucial moment of the latter’s transition from a late colonial to a developing post-colonial identity. Hene is on the cusp of abandoning her shopkeeper employment to go ‘up country’ with her husband Hare (25). Later, Mattina joins Hene for a trip to the marae, a place in which Maori culture, society and economy offer distance from, if not necessarily resistance to, the Pakeha way of life. Learning the Maori language but not yet speaking it—“‘I get by with English’” (26)—Hene’s circumstances suggest ‘a high coefficient of deterritorialization’ with regard to the English of Frame’s novel (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:16). Writing specifically of Kafka and his situation, Deleuze and Guattari link such deterritorialization to a ‘triple impossibility’: ‘the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise—[meaning other than in German]’ (1986: 16). Importing this ‘triple impossibility’ into *Carpathians* suggests the following: Hene must write (or speak) because ‘national consciousness’ (or, more precisely, Maori consciousness) demands it (first impossibility) (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:16); and Hene must write or speak in English (third impossibility) because it is “‘the language [Hene has] always spoken’” (26). All the same, Hene cannot write or speak in English (second impossibility) because, as presented in *Carpathians*, English remains a language imbricated in colonial power relations, and so is increasingly divorced from the narrative of post-colonial activity (specifically the cultural rise of the Maori speaker) proposed by the novel. Still, this impossibility of writing in English translates, not into impossibility as such (obviously not into Maori pure and simple), but into massive deterritorialization: a strangeness where, in Frame’s text, English becomes detached from the circumstances of its own reproduction as a national language through its encounter with Maori. Besides this example, further instances of this version of a minor literature include the aphasia of two other New Zealanders Mattina encounters: Decima James and Hercus Millow.

Thus far, *Carpathians* generates a minor literature consistent with Deleuze and Guattari’s explicit definition of it: ‘A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language’ (1986: 16). Because it inhabits a major language, a minor literature is deterritorialized with meaning open to becoming other than what it is. To the comparison of Frame with writers like Kafka and Beckett, who operate as privileged examples in Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a minor literature, we can therefore add a connection to Joyce, Joyce’s reterritorializing fiction could apply equally to Frame’s: it ‘never stops operating by exhilaration and overdetermination’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 19). It reterritorializes new linguistic affects. Some sense of this ‘exhilaration and overdetermination’ is evident in the line from *Carpathians* (a dribbling of ‘a’, ‘r’ and ‘i’) that

‘Puamahara has its factions, frictions, fictions and fractions’ (13) and, from *Maniototo*, in the rich description of ‘the carpets named Sky Planet, Dream of the Night, Forest Splendor, Classic Plains, Mountain Glory’ (57). This writing creatively reconfigures the world and the things in it in ways reminiscent of Joyce.

In *Maniototo*, ‘deterritorialization of language’ is a function of a quite different scenario of language to that generated within *Carpathians*, one which begins to play itself out almost from the very beginning of the novel, when the narrator provides thumbnail sketches of her two deceased husbands. Most recently deceased is ‘Lance Halletton, the French teacher at the local girls’ school who, though never having been to France, was kept alive by the daily consumption and distribution of the French language’ (11). French here replaces Maori as the language English encounters and the nature of the encounter itself also changes. At one level, there is an ‘out-of-placeness’ to Lance’s French evident here. But the line ‘his life built of French verbs in their tenses and moods, safely fattened by his never having traveled out of New Zealand’ also suggests a disconnection of English from New Zealand as its national place (42). This is a kind of deterritorialization of English. On yet another level, however, this same narrative thread in *Maniototo* introduces a perverse model for language’s operations founded in the dualism of debt and credit, which brings about the emergence of a second ‘deterritorialization of language’. Lance abandons French to become an (English-speaking) debt collector, a fact that is combined with his voice and language, the two elements blurring together:

His obsessive interest in debt and its payment combined with his persuasive voice, which in the past could move at a breath from subjunctive to dative to imperative to copulative mood, apparently convinced the firm that employing him would result in the payment of the many bad debts lurking behind the venetian blinds and ranch-sliders of Blenheim (43-44).

Nothing so simple as a metaphoric relationship between French and English as ‘creditor’ and ‘debtor’ languages frames Frame’s text here. Rather, there is an imposition on English—exported from the discourse of finance—of a mode of organization foreign to it: English is thus deterritorialized to the extent that the shift from French to English is implicated with the shift from teacher to debt collector: ‘the financial “baddies” . . . like the incorrect answers in an examination’ (Frame *Maniototo* 50). Still more explicitly, language is directly figured as an instrument of debt collection, as when Lance’s wife claims “‘At least a novel doesn’t prosecute or haunt anyone,’” to which Lance replies: “‘I wouldn’t be too sure’” (59). Frame’s text replays here the modernist interest in usury encountered in the work of, for example, Ezra Pound, and runs this into the notion of a minor literature to the extent that English is destabilized by the encounter with the language of money (Pound 1937: 1222-1223). The superficial metaphor of debt collection is intersected by a ‘deterritorializing’ division between ‘natural’ (English or French) and ‘artificial’ (financial or economic) languages. Again, it is not within the ‘minor language’, French, that a minor literature is created, but within English itself, through the encounter of French with English, an encounter that deterritorializes English to the extent that it constrains it to the shape of a balance sheet. Some of the features of this minor literature are its appeal to collective consciousness and the repetition of terms, which unsettles the linear progression of most language acts:

I was growing used to [Lance’s] new language with its descriptions drawn from advertising of furniture and appliances, with the recurring phrases which, I knew, more than lines of poetry could set the heart of the citizens of Blenheim beating with desire for possession—particularly if the phrases were in fashion, in a language where fashion changes quickly (51-52).

In a similar vein, the following passage from *Carpathians* invites attention for its repetitive nature and its collective elements:

It was midnight when Mattina was awakened by the cries. She sat up in bed, alarmed, listening to the chorus of screams, shrieks, wailings from Kowhai Street: a clamour such as she had not heard since the days of the riots in Park Avenue when thousands raging for freedom and equality of opportunity, attacked the department stores and carried away goods, clothing, appliances, books, records, leather jackets in particular; a riot of have-not trying to transfer identity by acquiring a mass of goods that clicked, spoke, opened, shut, played, cooked, heated, cooled, switched on and off, transformed, gave pictures, sounds, voices; and warmed, warmed (125).

Both the repetition of terms and the appeal to a collective consciousness here amount to an anticipation of Deleuze's (postcolonial) 'people to come' that is disarticulated from notions of pre-determined, individual selfhood: 'a riot of have-not trying to transfer identity' (125). Politics enters Frame's novel through the deterritorialization of minor literature.

This emergence of the political in *Carpathians* reminds us that 'The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:17). Deleuze and Guattari argue that in major literatures 'the individual concern' is paramount, with 'the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background' (1986: 17). In a minor literature, on the other hand, the situation is

completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it (1986: 17).

The most obvious equivalent to this characteristic in *Carpathians* would be Kowhai Street itself, 'an ordinary street in an ordinary cluttered ["cramped"?] town' (15), which is to say, the town of Puamahara, with 'its factions, frictions, fictions and fractions' (13). Kowhai Street exists within the confines of a 'universe without universality', a 'cramped space' of an immensity:

You may shiver with a sudden inkling of eternity as you sense or imagine that perhaps your street is unique in the world, with the last two houses at each end facing not a noisy frontier of State Highways but a verge of darkness on the furthestmost boundaries of the earth (15).

At the same time, it opens outwards towards the world, towards politics, towards what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the 'commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical' (1986: 17). The residents of Kowhai Street are presented as persons roughly transplanted from this site of the 'commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:17). Madge McMurtrie, for example, a few weeks before her murder, thinks of her band of relatives in their institutional settings:

The schools of the cities were filled with her nieces and nephews and their children born and not yet born; the administrators were her family, the traffic controllers, the police force, the librarians in the library, all were her family, and the Mayor was her son, long absent and silent, and the dream-city was Puamahara (27).

Frame's text evokes 'individuality' as a mass of connections without origin or endpoint.

This introduces a key characteristic of minor literature: 'in it everything takes on a collective value' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 17). This is evident in both *Carpathians* and in *Maniototo*, not least in the form of the multitude and layering of narratives in these two texts. Deleuze and Guattari argue that 'There are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that "master" and that could be separated from a collective enunciation' (1986: 17).

Maniototo is also a ‘collective enunciation’ that destroys belief in any one ‘master narrative’. In this novel, proper names multiply, disseminate and disintegrate: ‘Violet Pansy Proudlock, Alice Thumb. A scattering of Mavises and Susans’ (14). Even Trinity, Irving Garrett’s wife, bears a name that signifies one proliferating into three. In this way, Frame’s writing is what Deleuze and Guattari might call a ‘character-less fiction’. Her texts are ‘becomings’ that, occasionally, coincide with (provisional) ‘being’, instances which might be called personae rather than characters as such. Claire Colebrook proposes that ‘Literature transforms the political space from a relation “among men” to the production of inhuman affects and intensities’ (2002: 145). Frame’s text is ‘inhuman’ to the extent that it explodes notions of individuated character; relatedly, her fiction, to quote Colebrook again, ‘expresses a power of literature: the power to perceive differently by tearing perception from its human home’ (2002: 136).

Such affects at the level of Frame’s character construction are replicated in her prose, characterised as it is by intricate sentences that frequently create sensations rather than strictly defined sense. It is in the ‘microscopic’ instances of language nestled within her sentences that we encounter the ‘cinematic’ juncture of the irregularities of time with linguistic formations that erode the boundaries of language.

In the next section, I want to demonstrate how *Carpathians* and *Maniototo* engage Deleuze’s concept of the time-image in order to support my proposition that Frame’s late fiction is the site of an endless play of differences between, and within, a minor literature and the time-image. Frame’s texts are this ‘in-between’ without borders; they are simultaneously the expression of a minor literature ‘AND’ the presentation, in a ‘language beyond linguistics’, of time in itself. It is in the space of this ‘AND’, or ‘in-between’, that Frame’s contribution to the formation of a Deleuzian literary critical theory may be found. Her texts function as a hidden theory, as a transference of the pure conceptuality of the philosophical into the more experimental realm of the theoretical. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari argue that philosophy ‘involves creating concepts’ (1994: 5). Jonathan Culler’s definition of theory distinguishes it from philosophy: the creation of concepts is replaced by an ‘interdisciplinary’ and ‘reflexive’ feature; theory is ‘thinking about thinking, enquiry into the categories we use in making sense of things’ (1997: 15). Frame’s ‘AND’ introduces this greater multiplicity into philosophy by bringing together the time-image and minor literature, which makes (Deleuzian) philosophy re-encounter its own alterity.

Janet Frame and Cinematic Time

Brian Wilford’s time-related problem in *Maniototo* is a literary shorthand for the argument Deleuze pursues in his two-volume study on cinema. Deleuze proposes a jump ‘out of time’ figured as linear chronology into an encounter with a notion of time ‘in itself’. Wilford’s ‘other way’ of setting his watch to the present—the ‘untold’ conclusion to this story element within the novel—signals the possibility of this second category (31). As Constantin Boundas observes,

Deleuze claims that around 1950, an older, “organic” cinema, in which temporality was governed by the movement of action and the linear development of the narrative, is separated from “crystalline” cinema, where time offers itself directly to thought’ (1997: 21).

Because they extend the consequences of the Brian Wilford scenario, my main examples below will come from *Carpathians*. As a placing shot, we note that, in this novel, the shift Deleuze signals parallels the conceptual gap separating the Memory Flower and the Gravity Star. The former indicates linear time, while the latter brings about an encounter with the ‘in itself’ or ‘irrationality’ of time.

Puamahara’s Memory Flower is most obviously related to the time of legend. Legend

conventionally stands remote from historical time and enforces a structure of meaning for history. History may work variations on legend, but legend persists as the framework for history: 'The legend of Puamahara . . . was seized, retold, enhanced, illustrated' (12). The time of legend might be called eternal time. The interrogation of the nature of this legend in the first chapter of *The Carpathians*, however, problematizes such a notion of eternal time. One aspect of this interrogation concerns the narrativization of the legend; the other draws attention to time having 'gone off its hinges', as Boundas expresses it (1997: 28). Not content simply to relate the legend of the Memory Flower as an hermetic, hermeneutic entity, Frame's account signifies, firstly, the implication of the legend with the linear construction of narrative:

A young woman, chosen by the gods as collector of the memory of her land, journeys to a region between the mountains and the sea to search for the memory The journey is one of choices, judgements, of logic—if . . . then . . . and also . . . if not . . . therefore; the small words that have little use alone become instruments of power (11).

In the same vein, having by now 'released the memory of the land', the young woman 'called together the people of the land. For many years with no human function but that of a story-teller, she recounted the memory' (11). Time here, quite clearly, is time derived from movement and linear narrative, which is how Deleuze describes it. Indeed, Frame runs these two things together in her version of the young woman's journey as a trip and tale made up of a 'grammatical linearity'. Later in the chapter, the young woman is reduced to the function of mere narrative re-production: a story-teller caught in the groove of linearity and grammar. Frame's text here replicates Patricia Tobin's proposition that in (linear) language 'sequences imply their own terminations, and closure can be traced back to origin' (1978: 9). Time in this instance is literally 'straight-forward', derived from direct movement, in contrast to the 'spring-time' found elsewhere in *Carpathians*.

At the same time as it derives time from movement, however, this passage also derives (aberrant or borderline) movement from time. Companions to her search,

the helpers, human, animal, insect or vegetable who are themselves guardians of the inner world of searches, *make or find time to stand at convenient places—corners, crossroads, shores, boundaries*—to offer advice, to warn, to encourage and inform; and many times to demand a sacrifice with no promise of reward (11 [emphasis added]).

Here, time comes first, and the 'movement' of the language springing from it changes accordingly; it is radically less linear, with causes unlinked from effects, as in the phrase 'a sacrifice with no promise of reward' (11). This second aspect of Frame's interrogation of the Memory Flower legend (and of related eternal time) encourages a consideration, in the text's own words, 'from time to time', with those words signifying time's internal torsion (11). Nowhere is *Carpathians* more obviously a text and test of 'time', cornering movement itself in a confrontation with the conveniently available 'false continuity' of the 'crossroad', 'shore' or 'boundary'. In summary, the Memory Flower constructs time as legendary or eternal time, but it is flanked by two other 'chronologies' that are antagonistic to each other: time as linear chronology and 'cause and effect' narrative beckons across the space of the legendary or eternal time to a notion of time 'gone off its hinges'. In this way, the first chapter of *Carpathians* provides an illustration of Deleuze's cinematic thesis that, in the modern cinema, time derived from movement has been replaced by the direct presentation of time itself, which relegates movement to a secondary and subordinate role.

The case of the Gravity Star takes us even further into the problematics of time, those previously 'recognized, but warded off', as Deleuze would have us believe of cinema (1989: 39). Claire Colebrook encourages us to 'think of time as the power of difference or becoming

whereby we move from the virtual to the actual, from all the possible creations and tendencies to actualized events' (2002: 33). I suggest that the Gravity Star is this 'power of difference' prior to its expression in anything that approaches language. In the Note by J.H.B. prefacing *Carpathians*, the Gravity Star is explained thus:

"A survey of distances to galaxies has revealed something that at first seemed implausible: a galaxy that appears to be both relatively close and seven billion light years away . . . the paradox is interpreted as being caused by the focussing of light from a distant quasar (starlike object) by the gravity of an intervening galaxy" (7).

Light encountering gravity: an exquisitely rarefied image—almost an image of an image—highly suitable for the expression of difference in itself. More specifically, it comprises that abnormality of movement, of space and distance—"relatively close and seven billion light years away"—that reflects time's liberation as pure difference, jettisoning its previous form (7). As another example of Frame reconfiguring Deleuze, the next passage entertains the movement from the virtual to the actual consequent on the Gravity Star, with the variation that (in something of a counter movement to Deleuze's) here the actual generates the virtual, which suggests that the virtual persists within manifestations of the actual as a continuous element of difference in itself:

the prospect of the sudden annihilation of the usual perception of distance and closeness, the bursting of the iron bands that once made rigid the container of knowledge, the trickling away of the perception of time and space, although at first the shape persists as if still bound, yet if you examine it you see the widening crevices in what was believed always to be the foundation of perception. Near and far, then and now, here and there, the homely words of the language of space and time appear useless, heaps of rubble (14).

I will address the significance of these 'heaps of rubble' in more detail shortly, but not before citing another passage from Frame's novel that draws even nearer to the presentation of time in itself as motor for the collapse of movement. Here, we encounter one of Mattina's neighbours, Hercus Millow, 'retired sergeant-major', in the midst of his stroke-affected, mad envisionings of wartime—as if, in literature, derangement or madness might be the precondition of the time-image (64). Hercus' delirium, which drags the Gravity Star into itself, also involves a destruction of perspectives and a multiplication of personae in the 'inhuman' style of a minor literature:

"Wouldn't it be beaut if they abolished distance?"

"They?"

The prisoners, soldiers, the civilians, forever in the grip of "them".

"I should say," said the scholar among them who made a daily trade of the serial he wrote on scraps of paper and cloth, and who recited long passages of prose, "that you'll have problems if you interfere with the perception of distance. You'd interfere with time. You'd have yesterday and tomorrow breathing down your bloody necks . . ." (66).

For Deleuze, according to Boundas, 'the crystal reveals and, in a sense, engenders time. It is the annihilation of time, the negation of the action-time of duration and of the event-time, and the elimination of description and narration. It is time without time' (1997: 20). Hercus' discourse expresses the same notions of disrupted narration and time. As Deleuze expresses it: We see in the crystal the perpetual foundation of time, non-chronological time, Cronos and not Chronos. This is the powerful, non-organic Life which grips the world. The visionary, the seer, is the one

who sees in the crystal, and what he sees is the gushing of time as dividing in two, as splitting (1989: 81).

Frame criticism has largely left behind the reductivism of positing the author herself as ‘visionary or seer’. If the fiction itself represents (as in Hercus Milow’s ‘intra-narrative’) the experience of subjectivities similar to those Deleuze references in the previous passage, it does so within a theoretical rather than within a naively romanticist context.

Ultimately, however, it is within language—or more precisely within something that approaches or founds language—that time in itself is presented in Frame’s later novels. Deleuze’s linguistics is most peculiar, as is Frame’s. Thomas Wall begins his article on the time-image with the statement that ‘Although Gilles Deleuze’s two volume study of cinema is resolutely anti-linguistic, it is nevertheless an approach to that which is internal to language as well as to that which modern cinema directly presents’ (2004: n.p.). Colebrook extends Wall’s comment into concrete description: the time-image

yields *singularities* . . . the impersonal events from which we compose the world into actual bodies. A cinema of singularities would present colours, movements, sounds, textures, tones and lights that are not connected and organized into recognized and ordered wholes (2002: 33-34).

This recalls the Gravity Star because, like the school of cinema referenced here, it presents us with the differences from which life emerges. Calling time ‘the explosive complex of pure potential’, Wall argues that

time is [also] that in which we primordially dwell; it is our “beginning”. Cinema, insofar as it directly presents time, “saves” this beginning. That which is held in the time-image . . . is equally that which is held in language: the beginning, the thing “ipse”, the threshold, or the “perhaps” (2004: n.p.).

This sense of Deleuze’s cinematic ‘anti-linguistics’ and primordial time is taken further in *Carpathians*. After Mattina dies, her husband Jake enters into a reflection on memory, that is, on the recovery of past time. Mattina, he muses, ‘had talked of memory not as a comfortable parcel of episodes to carry in one’s mind, and taste now and then, but as a naked link, a point, diamond-size, seed-size, coded in a code of the world’ (171). It is this ‘code of the world’ that connects the time-image of cinema to the presentation of ‘language-before-language’ in *Carpathians*; both seek to recover a primal rapprochement between word and world—an alliance of language with the non-linguistic ‘Real Order’—by exploiting the notion of a sign that only signifies incompletely. To this extent, Frame’s writings participate in the debate Julia Kristeva fosters concerning the (im-)possible origins of language: ‘From myths to the most elaborate philosophical speculations, the positing of the problem of the beginnings of language—its appearance, its first steps—has not stopped’ (1989: 43). Defending what she calls ‘the hypothesis of the sudden appearance of language,’ Kristeva quotes Claude Lévi-Strauss’ observation that “‘language could only have been born in a single stroke’” (1989: 46). However, even he allows that “‘the universe signified well before man began to know what it was signifying’” (cited in Kristeva 1989: 46). Investigating as it does the borderlines of language, Frame’s fiction falls within the scope of that hidden form of linguistics that dares to contemplate a ‘time’ before the word.

The stunningly descriptive passages in Chapter Twenty-Two of *Carpathians* present a language that no formal science of linguistics is able to capture. Here, Mattina has just been woken by the strange sounds in Kowhai Street at midnight—that regularly arriving, uncanny time of the ‘splitting’ of yesterday from tomorrow:

Listening, Mattina realised that no part of the chorus had words of any recognisable

language. The sounds were primitive, like the first cries of those who had never known or spoken words but whose urgency to communicate becomes a mixture of isolated syllables, vowels, consonants; yet within and beyond the chorus, recognisable as long as the human brain held some stem (of crystal, bone, iron, stone, gossamer), there came a hint, an inkling of order (126).

Expressing the notion of the ‘pure possibility of language or language “perhaps”’, this passage also suggests a ‘code of the world’ as distinct from a code of language set off from the world (Wall 2004: n.p.). Such a suggestion is made more explicit in the next passage:

Mattina looked up at the sky. She thought, surprised at such a natural event, “Why, it’s raining.” Yet the falling rain was not “real” rain. Specks, some small as carrot seed (George Coker had shown her his packets of garden seed), others as large, mapped purple and grey, as beanseed, some like hundreds-and-thousands, others like dew-drops set with polished diamonds, rubies, emeralds; or plain dew-drops that flowed in changing shapes among the layers of seeds and seed-pearls and jewels white and brown and red pellets of clay and then earth-coloured flecks of mould; smears of dung, animal and human, and every “raindrop” and mixture of jewels and waste, in shapes of the “old” punctuation and language—apostrophes, notes of music, letters of the alphabets of all languages (127).

A certain state of language and life has, in Frame’s novel, been replaced by pure virtualization—heaped rubble as it were. From the deterritorializing ‘disaster of unbeing, unknowing’ resulting from the loss of language as a framework for the ‘old’ world, emerges the infinite possibilities of ‘new knowing, new thinking and feeling . . . transforming life on earth to a new stage, unknowable yet’ (129). Still it is not as simple as this, for in company with the ‘splitting’ time of midnight, the world—the ‘code of the world’ perhaps—is also split. Elsewhere in Puamahara—‘sleeping peacefully enough’—things seem calm alongside the turmoil in Kowhai Street (127). It is as if a split in time has also led to a split in the material world, suggesting Frame here envisions something that, according to Boundas at least, Deleuze never fully achieves: what we might call an ethics or ‘a reorientation of thought and action “for the sake of a new earth and of new men”’ (Boundas 1997: 28). Deleuze fails to achieve this because, as Boundas bluntly reminds us, ‘we cannot assume that time, having gone off its hinges, will be on our side’ (1997: 28). In forcing attention back to this division in the town of Puamahara, Frame acknowledges that such virtualized transformation as she imagines may well operate differentially across the socio-economic landscape of New Zealand; in doing so, she stays tuned to the alterity of the material aspects of life and thus ultimately discloses an ethical stance.

Conclusion

Frame’s literary engagements rarely stray far from such a consideration of how to ‘live a life’—in this she is very Deleuzian. Her fiction invites us to connect framings of the world to the world itself in ways that challenge normative appropriations of philosophy as explanations for the circumstances of history and society. Rather than pandering to impositions of abstraction onto the practice of living, Frame’s fiction constructs literature as it were ‘from beneath’, which generates a constant and complex implication of the material world with the world of ideas. And it is through the constant interplay of a minor literature and the time-image in *Carpathians* and *Maniototo* that Frame keeps philosophical concepts in a high state of multiplicity. By transforming concepts through the literary, Frame introduces a measure of alterity into her fiction that is crucial to her ethics. Frame underscores the point that theory—‘coded in a code of the world’ (*Carpathians* 171)—is itself ethical because, attuned as it is to the irreducible alterity of the materiality of life, it maximizes difference.

This article has suggested that as much as Frame fits into philosophy, philosophy can be fitted into Frame (see Gildfind 2008: 149). As literary expressions of the time-image as *well* as of a

minor literature, *Carpathians* and *Maniototo* create the space in which the differences of and between these two philosophical concepts are kept constantly in play as theory. Unrestrained by the imperative of creating concepts, literature can constantly unpeel the ‘infinite onion’ of difference, thereby feeding theory into philosophical concepts such as Deleuze’s. For David Odell, ‘Theory is more portable, more piecemeal, more idiosyncratic, more bricolable, than philosophy’ (1992: 150). To this list we might add: more open to alterity (and thus to ethics). Frame’s fiction is theory on these definitions, which differs from the kind of philosophy as strongly wedded as Deleuze and Guattari’s is to the *creation* of concepts. Frame’s late novels differ because they replace conceptual restraints and relationships with invention.

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