

Imagining New Zealand/ Aotearoa: A Century of the Short Story

The Short Story Conference

Invercargill 1st September 2017

I should like to start by thanking Bec Amundsen of the Dan Davin Literary Trust for inviting me to give this keynote paper- I am honoured and delighted to be here-and to have the chance to talk to you. This is my first visit since I was here in 2007, a decade ago, to launch my Dan Davin short stories edition with Otago University Press *The Gorse Blooms Pale*, so this is a kind of anniversary. It is particularly fitting that this, the first Short Story conference ever held in New Zealand, should be in Invercargill and associated with Dan Davin who was a pioneer- not just in the stories he wrote which are his finest writings and unique in their portrayal of a Southland Catholic family, -- but also in the way he promoted NZ literature overseas , encouraging visiting NZ writers and scholars (like myself) as a point of contact in the UK, through his role as publisher of the Clarendon Press, at Oxford UP, editing one of the early anthologies *The Oxford Book of NZ Short Stories*. Pleased to say I am currently working on his war stories and Robert McLean via Cold Hub Press and its director, Roger Hitchin are bringing out Dan Davin's poetry much of which has been found among his war papers. This will be called *Field Notebooks* .

This event commemorating the whole national short story tradition- is a reminder of the beginning of that tradition in 1907 the year that Katherine Mansfield was publishing her earliest short stories written in Wellington, in the Sydney *Bulletin*. In the 1930s the first stories of Frank Sargeson were published, the beginning of the cultural nationalist literary tradition in this genre. So in 2017 we are looking at 110 years of the vernacular NZ tradition because most short story anthologies begin with one by Katherine Mansfield-and the long shadow of these two supreme writers is cast over the New Zealand short story for much of the 20th century.

I. The New Zealand Short Story Tradition: 1907-2017

Tonight I want to talk about the way we consider this genre insofar as it relates to NZ as a country- through the brief insights/sidelong glimpses provided by stories that help us to trace the pathway of the nation. In fact, the short story until the 1960s was **the** genre by which NZers came to see themselves and some would say it still is. Witi Ihimaera writes: "'It is our most pervasive and enduring prose form" (*Where's Waari*, 9). For this reason it has fed centrally into what is called in cinema studies the **national imaginary**.

By this I mean when thinking of stories in relation to life, they present a testimony as to what was happening or imagined, what could happen or be imagined, they constitute an archive of people's minds, thoughts and feelings. This testimony or archive shows how we consciously conceive ourselves as a group sharing a common identity that differentiates us from other nations (like Australia). It involves privileging certain images, voices, and groups, at the expense of others; but it is not necessarily fixed. The concept of a single collectivity or unity is illusory -- in fact the 'imaginary' is more fluid than it looks, and focus can be on some groups more than others at different times according to their public visibility.

The short story was formative in presenting the 'social' dimension by conveying the sense of how people speak, the distinctive sounds, accent and idioms which only began to be noticed about 1912 as being different from Australians). This one of the reasons that Sargeson was so influential, for he was taken to be a representative voice even though his was inflected by class, gender and ethnicity. Here is a piece of his dialogue. We don't all quite speak like that now, but some men did in the 1930s - this about the end of a relationship between two men --

Terry [...] just sort of steadily went downhill. And there was hardly a thing I could say or do, though he never went short of tucker if he felt like eating.

I'd look at him lying there.

Terry I'd say.

What is it boy, he'd say.

Nothing I'd say.

And then I'd say Terry.

And instead of answering he'd just have a sort of faint grin on his face

Terry I'd say

But I could never get any further than just saying Terry.

I wanted to say something but I didn't know what it was, and I couldn't say it.

Terry I'd say

And he'd sort of grin. [...]

And one night I came back and looked at him and I knew it was the finish.

Terry I said, and he didn't answer

Terry, I said and I said I was going to get the priest.

Cheers boy, is what I think he said, and I rushed off without even saying goodbye.

(Frank Sargeson, "That Summer", *Stories* pp. 207-08)

These characters are drifters, unemployed men during the 1930s depression. He conveys distinctive turns of phrases, and vernacular idioms - like Cheers boy, and short of tucker, in a particular Kiwi accent

By the late 1950s and early 1960s there was a move away from this core of the prose tradition, as represented by Sargeson and his school, writers like A.P. Gaskell, Ronald Finlayson, Dan Davin, Ted Middleton, Philip Wilson, Owen Marshall, called 'The Sons of Sargeson' -- largely male writers working in the realist tradition. There were more suburban or cosmopolitan settings alongside rural

one, notably in the collection by Maurice Shadbolt, boldly entitled *The New Zealanders*, about how New Zealanders at home and abroad behaved which had a big reception in London when first published in 1959. By the late 1960s new groups were becoming more visible and vocal, namely women writers and Maori. I refer here to the work of J.C. Sturm, the first Maori writer in English whose stories were published in 1966, Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera and Keri Hulme who appeared in the 1970s writing stellar stories before moving on to equally powerful novels. Interestingly they too like Sargeson place the same emphasis on speech, accent and idiom, and voices in dialogue. But there's greater emphasis on family relation, the shift between generations, the Polynesian heritage. Patricia Grace does just this – for her aim in writing, she says, is to tell people who we are. Maori diction inflections- this is two small boys wanting to get money to go to the picture, speaking to their uncle

Uncle Harry was hoeing up the dirt round his kumara plants. They see him from the willows at the back of his place.

"All that and he might be broke like Aunty Myra."

"Wait a bit longer. When he gets to the last two rows and we'll go and help."

"If he's broke we'll have to try to get Aunt Connie in a good mood."

"That's too hard."

"Mmm. Worse than hoeing up uncle's kumera"

"All this trouble and its only a sloppy love one."

"Yes, la, la, la."

"Shut up, He'll hear."

"Anyway he's nearly finished, Let's go and help."

"Hello uncle. We come to help you hoe up your kumera."

"Hello, boys, Good on you. Get another hoe from the shed and one of you can have this one. I'll sit down and have a smoke. You two can be the workers, and I'll be the boss."

[...]

Uncle?"

"Ay?"

"You know what Charlotte and them are doing?"

"No."

"Looking at their ugly selves in the mirror,"

"And ironing their clothes, ay?"

"And they think they're bea-utiful like ladies in the pictures."

"And their hair is all done up funny like rags."

"And they got banjo feet and gumboot lips, but they think they look beautiful, la,la, la."

"Hey, Uncle."

"Ay?"

"You know why Charlotte and them are ironing their clothes and washing their hair?"

"No."

"They're going to the pictures."

"Ah the pictures. What's on tonight?"

"Well, it's a good one... a good cowboy one."

"Yes a good cowboy one, Uncle.... All those lazy kids are going."

"All of them, ay?"

"Yes, all."

“Well boys, you’ve done a good job there.”
What was the matter with uncle Harry? Wasn’t he listening?

(Patricia Grace, “The Pictures” in Owen Marshall, sel. *Essential New Zealand Short Stories*, pp. 220-21)

Other women’s writing takes a more interior, subjective perspective, using densely patterned style with metaphor and imagery in contrast to the realist mode of masculine tradition. Janet Frame, in her opening story of the collection called *The Lagoon*, published in 1953, hints at a more complex society than Sargeson or Grace, with multiple voices and ethnicities in different settings: the white settler by the lagoon, Maori at the pa, singing to the guitar, a mixed marriage. The narrator suggests that oral stories, when handed down from one generation to another, often distort or conceal truths, making facts impossible to disentangle from fiction, because of the unreliable play of memory and the wish to embroider in retelling. This is reinforced with the metaphor of the Lagoon itself, a site that is shifting, layered, allusive, hiding truths or half truths or lies in the silt at the bottom. Unlike the male writers, Frame and others who were reworking the earlier tradition suggest that telling stories also involved concealment, covering up of other untold or buried stories, - that the long domination of Sargesonian realism meant that other voices were ignored or invisible.

Then at end of century and into new millennium— more writing from Pacific migrants, especially Samoan with the stories and novels of Albert Wendt, Sia Fiegiel and now Selina Tusitula Marsh, there is writing from descendants of Chinese migrants like Alison Wong (Chinese), from European migrants, like Kapka Kassabova (Bulgaria). There’s Gen X writing associated with Emily Perkins (her collection *Not her Real Name and other stories* was published in 1996), whose lifestyle and way of speaking reflect that generation’s sense of betrayal by their parents, the baby boom generation who gained social advantage and financial security. And there has been a real explosion of stories from 2nd and 3rd generation Pacific Islanders and others who learn the craft by attending creative writing classes and entering national competitions such as *The Sunday Star Times one*. The range of story types also reveals the complex makeup of these groups, women’s writing includes feminist, lesbian; there is also gay writing – migrant writing include writing from the NZ diaspora overseas, such as Sarah Quigley in Berlin and until recently, Paula Morris; and there are sub genres such as travel writing, ghost stories or romance fiction.

So the emergence of the short story on the surface seems to follow this chronological pattern that shows growth and diversification and changing models of national identity as NZ moved from being monocultural, to bicultural and then multicultural. However alongside this linear history marked by

growth and multiplicity, is also a more circular model -- of recurring obsessions and preoccupations with living here – as different generations encounter similar problems and deal with them using various artistic techniques and thematic solutions .

These might be described most obviously in relation to NZ's settlement – both Pakeha and Maori, its geography as a pacific rim island nation, remoteness from Europe, its wild, sublime landscape... with Maori writing different preoccupations, the, loss of culture and language under colonisation , the Polynesian heritage, issues the whanau or iwi, historical, social marginalisation etc

Will come back to this.

II. The Short story, the Novel and the Contemporary Milieu

The biggest competitor to the short story is of course the NZ novel which rose to dominance in the late 50s and early 60s – and then gained world recognition with Booker-prize-winning novels: Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* in 1985 and Eleanor Catton's *Illuminations* in 2014. So it is usually agreed that the story has been eclipsed as the dominant genre, although many novelists are also short story writers the momentum in production has not noticeably slowed (if anything increased) . In terms of more fluid entertainment market, they are both at risk of being overshadowed by the visual media – cinema and even TV with miniseries like *Bro Town*, Jane Campion's *Head of the River* and the *Angel at My Table* which can transmit images of the nation- and hence a national imaginary- more instantly than the print media. And now there is the internet and social media, which provide more easy access and wider dissemination; We can go online to find particular stories now, and even download entire anthologies. As a result of these new technologies, traditional publication outlets like *Sport*, *Landfall* and *Takahe* (usually backed by university presses and/or Creative NZ) appear less regularly and usually as special guest edited issues; the *NZ Listener* has also just about ceased publishing stories, while Radio New Zealand National which publishes c 80 stories a year usually under 2000 words . Yet little magazines like JAAM (Just Another Art Movement, since 1995); *Glottis*, *Bravado based in the Bay of Plenty*, *Byline* (from Tauranga Writers) *Turbine* /Kapohau (International Institute of Modern Letters) help sustain a flow.

In the last thirty years creative writing classes – and the workshop format which suits the story more than the novel- and publication opportunities have largely increased, as the genre has become more professional and mainstream. Bill Manhire's MA in Creative writing -- now the International Institute of Modern Letters in Wellington -- has been a model for others around the country which are taught by distinguished writers – Emily Perkins, Paula Morris, Owen Marshall, Fiona Kidman, John Cranna and Tina Makereti (coeditor with Witi Ihimaera of a newly published edition, *White on Black*). There

is greater public exposure: annual literary festivals such as the Writers and Readers Festival in Auckland, as well as festival in Wellington and Christchurch, are venues for readings and to hear overseas stars read. And there are many national competitions like the **Sunday Star Times** one, running since c 1984, and competitions run by literary associations: e.g. the Dan Davin Writing Competition here has been running for at least two decades; Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc (RWNZ) which has several annual competitions advertised on its website: the “Chapter” Short Story Competition, (of a romance short story), The “Great Beginning” contest; the “First Kiss” Contest, (first kiss scene) and indeed next August in Auckland will host a conference called “When Love Comes to Town”; the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Society Inc, runs a competition for school children, and in addition through KM House and Garden, host a lecture series which Bill English opened last month with a talk on the power of story telling. There are also the **Pikihuia Awards** hosted by the Maori Literary Trust which cover short fiction in both Maori Te Reo and English and the commonwealth Short Story prize run by the Commonwealth Foundation. Winners and finalists usually get to be published in book form (as the Huia short stories series, the Sunday Times Series,) the 4 volumes of *100 Short Short NZ Stories*, ed by Graeme Lay and Stephen Stratford (submissions are called for and judged), while other/ bigger anthologies also contain work previously published like Owen Marshall’s *Essential NZ Short Stories*, Paula Morris’s *Penguin Book of Contemporary Short Stories*, Fiona Kidman’s *Best NZ Fiction* and most recently Witi Ihimaera and Tina Makereti’s *Black Marks on the White Page* (2017).

This flourishing local culture is an extraordinary turnaround from the story’s beginnings in the 1930s when its explorations of insularity seemed entirely appropriate to NZ’s place on the edge’ of the Pacific, its isolation and loneliness as a nation: the genre was associated with a coterie of artists - who saw themselves as ‘marginal’, at odds with the rest of society, a contradiction given their influence, that was ultimately beneficial, for it made them into resisting writers, dissenting from the mainstream and critical of its Puritanism, and philistinism, giving their stories a sharper edge. Now with ever more practitioners representing a wider spectrum of class and socioeconomic status, being on the outside suffering discrimination or victimisation, often appears alongside other class, gender, or ethnic positions or with a challenge to social hierarchies and assumptions: e.g. in Tracey Slaughter’s story “Consent”, the narrator fancies a boy at school as well as the older man who seduces her and says of her actions as ‘I’ve been reading about consent lately and it seems to me when the made up that idea they left spaces for way too much pain, too much pressure’ (*Some Other Country*, 487). So marginality is represented alongside normative positions (never the case in Sargeson who always kept them apart). Equally there are writers who look more ‘mainstream’

because they point to middle class values and behaviour even if they don't in the end subscribe to them: I think here of Barbara Anderson's stories of retired sea captains and their wives and Fiona Kidman's lovely story "The Hat" whose unconventional moments culminate in one of family harmony.

But the question then arises that in representing diverse communities, contradictory, competing, contesting voices, being more accessible via electronic media, do these stories any longer paint a picture of social cohesion? A recent article by Dougal McNeill on the New Zealand short story has commented on the sense of fragmentation in contemporary writing by contrast to the 1930s when the circles that produced and read stories were narrower, and Fiona Kidman says the same, that the fictions she selected for her anthologies, shared nothing in common except their excellence. This probably means that their impact is less focussed but more widely dispersed than in the earlier period. But does professionalization mean that there is a higher quality – suitable to today's marketplace- but also more standardisation of theme technique? i.e. 'more of the same'? There have been comments (e.g. by Patrick Evans, Paula Morris) that many of today's successful stories run to a formula because they are written in a workshop; or according to the criteria of a particular editor or judging panel not with the general reader in mind. So a shift in expectation comes along with the dethroning of the genre from its premier position. Whereas in the 1930s writers commanded public taste, now the expert's view of what makes a good story determines a certain style or brand. In the global marketplace; it is the publishing industry that solicits new audiences by commissioning subjects and topic areas to create a demand, a thirst for consumption- hence the story is inevitably formulaic because seen as a 'product'.

Tastes change over generations and inevitably canny writers can catch the zeitgeist, judge what readers want. So the shifting national imaginary since the 1930s includes shifts in self perception, redirections of the gaze outward and upward (not inward and horizontal), and an eye for the formats of popular culture. E.g. the story by Tim Jones, called "The New Neighbours" about aliens who come to live next door and change the views and lives of others in the street ends in the fantasy of inhabiting a different galaxy – which might owe something to the many Alien films, TV programmes

We swing our telescope towards the patch of sky, dark and almost empty, where we know our son now lives, studying, learning. Sometimes we get a message: Josh smiling and telling us that he's fine against a background of lights, or of bodies with too many legs or places we cannot recognise or even comprehend" (Paula Morris ed. *Penguin Book of Contemporary Short Stories*, pp. 68-69). -

This different space of habitation brings to mind the phrase "some other country" from Dan Davin's Southland story called "The Quiet One", where the narrator wishes to be "in some other country

somewhere, where things mightn't be like that at all and people would see what I really was instead of what I'd always been (Marshall, *Essential NZ Stories*, 52)- in other words seeking a better version of himself. Bill Manhire and Marion McLeod chose "some other country" for the title of their collection, *Some other Country: New Zealand Best Short Stories*, because, they suggest, it presents many jostling versions and images of NZ - (the first to represent the national tradition without badging it with the name of the country.) This phrase, which also suggests a utopian place where things might turn out better (as in the new galaxy of the Tim Jones story), resonates today because we are able to imagine or access ever more new, unfamiliar images of other countries and spaces (including outer space). It raises questions about how New Zealand's 'otherness' (invisible sides) might be discovered ,how New Zealand might figure as a utopian/ dystopian place, or seen by others (visitors, tourists migrants), as exotic or foreign

3. The Global Marketplace and Translation

These questions have relevance for how New Zealand is represented through its literature when actively participating in a global or world culture that circulates or flows beyond its shores (Damrosch, *World Literature*) . There has recently been an explosion of New Zealand arts overseas, mostly sponsored by Creative New Zealand: in 2012 New Zealand was 'Guest of Honour' at Frankfurt Book Fare, the most prestigious global market place for literature (although in Germany where it is held it seen as one of the most culturally insignificant nations because so small and far away – compared to Iceland or Finland); in 2014 New Zealand featured strongly at the Edinburgh Festival, after Creative New Zealand ranked international performance as a strategic priority, and acknowledged the importance of translation in promoting the country's literature by introducing a translation grant scheme in 2011.

So how do short stories travel when embedded in a national specificity, if at all? As the different parts of the world are increasingly interconnected by multi-directional travel, circulation of information, products and culture due to the new technologies, and a global youth culture is hooked up on social media, there are stronger incentives than ever before to produce literature that speaks across national boundaries. The national imaginary which relies on local references, speech patterns and sounds of individual voices, to define what we call New Zealandness, in cases of cultural mobility becomes secondary to other features –. international references, exotic settings, cosmopolitanism, ethnic chic (not resistance and identity)- for global commercial trends are often non literary --these feed into an economy of prestige belong to what we call a 'global imaginary'.

I turn to our anthology of stories that I coedited with a Spanish colleague, Paloma Fresno Calleja, the very first translation of NZ stories into Spanish.

OHP: Title is *Un Pais de Cuento: Veinte Relatos de Nueva Zelanda* and it was published by the University of Zaragoza press, and it has won a prize for the quality of the translation. So this anthology was prepared for the Spanish speaking marketplace, and can be described in terms of the 'world literature' model of culture, one in which production and dissemination of writing is sponsored by big business interests of global capitalism : included in their corporate responsibilities is the importance of philanthropic giving. Our sponsor was the Spanish based, Santander Bank that aims to promote a global culture through the provision of educational opportunities that includes translation. I was fortunate enough to win through competitive bidding at the University of Northampton where I am based, £1300 towards the project- which enabled us to meet, and cover most of the permission costs.

We were aware of the pitfalls of breaking into a completely new marketplace: NZ literature is hardly taught in Spain (except at the University of Oviedo), and the Spanish are not great readers of short stories anyway. Conscious of needing to attract new readers by making the book marketable, we produced instantly recognisable images, so that the New Zealand brand was visible. In English the title is *A Fairy Land Tale (A Country of Tales): 20 Stories from NZ* - playing with the idea of NZ as a 'fairy tale' place of amazing landscapes (reminiscent of the movie trilogy *Lord of the Rings*). Paloma used a photo of a fern -- an iconic symbol of New Zealand for the cover. Among the paratexts (i.e. the texts added to ensure the text's reception and consumption) were the **Translator's Notes** on culturally specific words or concepts that might not have had exact Spanish equivalents --e.g. bush, store, bach, dairy, Chunuk Bair, Maori creation myth. Also **Notes on the New Zealand context**, such as Richard Seddon, Gallipoli, the Plunket Society, and the geographical areas unfamiliar to those outside NZ like the Marlborough Sounds. But we left Maori and Samoan names untranslated -- and included a Glossary for Maori, Samoan words mainly, though this is usually unfashionable in Aotearoa/NZ. **Back cover**, a summary of the volume 100 years of the NZ short story, covering the country geographically, north to south, urban and rural, main identities and ethnic groups, (excluding Asian authors) -- we aimed to stress that the collection allows both for individual readings of the stories or a reading that considered them in dialogue- talking to each other. The back cover also stresses the importance of the short story in New Zealand.

As this was planned as an introduction to Spanish readers who may never heard of New Zealand writers apart from Janet Frame, Katherine Mansfield or Witi Ihimaera (because of success of *Whale Rider*), we aimed to be canonical, to showcase the most iconic stories about NZ. As well as our own preferences we drew on anthologies such as Davin's *Classic NZ Short stories* (1953), Vincent O'Sullivan's *Oxford Book of Short Stories* (1978) and Manhire and McLeod's *Some Other country* (2008), We began with Katherine Mansfield's "The Woman at the Store" as this was first published

in 1912 almost exactly 100 years earlier (when we were making our selection), and it is now seen as a rewriting of the pioneer, frontier, bush story, which is usually the beginning of the colonial short story tradition in new colonies (like Henry Lawson in Australia). Our end point was "Velocity" by Sue Orr, published in 2008, because it invokes features of the earlier short story associated with the Sargeson tradition (mateship, heterosexual awkwardness, limits of speaking, and trust) but told from by a female narrator, from a woman's perspective, so contributed to the image of a conversation or dialogue between different authors, at beginning and end of the period. Apart from this we aimed for a gender balance (10 male/female), different social and ethnic groups (Maori and Samoan: Wendt, Grace and Ihimaera), urban/rural settings, north/south island locations and landscapes, child and adult protagonists and narrators, short story modes such as realism, fantasy, magic realism modernism, the gothic. We preferred shorter stories (as hard work translating) and this made it difficult to choose from contemporary stories difficult as they tend to be longer.. We emphasised the earlier period when the story was most influential nationally, which meant we had to omit recent Maori fiction as found in *Huia Short Stories*, or European migrant writing such as Greville Texador (Spain) Yvonne du Fresne (Denmark) Renato Omato (Italian) Amelia Battistich (Dalmation) or recent Chinese writing (Alison Wong). For similar reasons (of length etc) we had to bypass the achievements of new writers like Karl Nixon, Craig Cliff, Charlotte Grimshaw, Julian Novitz and Jo Randerson, transnational writers like Paula Morris and Sarah Quigley, X generation writing like Emily Perkins, and gay writing like Peter Wells.

How do these stories comprise the New Zealand national imaginary?

Nevertheless the earliest stories can be seen collectively as contributing to a particular imagining of New Zealand, in that they express what seem to be shared group values and identities: they are steeped in the rural world, questioning of settler New Zealand Puritanism (Sargeson and Maurice Gee), primitive uncivilised impulses terse and limited lexicon (Sargeson again), which is recognisably Kiwi, they are about family dysfunction, memory, guilt and history (Shadbolt), racial tension and difference, ethnic heritage (Polynesian myths), issues of Pacific identity, queer sexual appetites, gothic undercurrents (Marshall) -- on the other hand are stories of domestic drama/comedy (Ihimaera, Kidman), issues of old age (Gee and Cowley); a feminist magic realist vision (Fiona Farrell); the capacity of language to deceive (Anderson),

The earliest of the stories have in common rural settings and 'plots' of sexual betrayal and murder, the destabilising of gender and ethnicity, associated with the outback or bush- a place of lawlessness, illegitimacy, inauthenticity. But when I looked at Mansfield's "The Woman at the Store", at Sargeson's "A Great Day", and at Frame's story "The Lagoon", and ignored their stylistic

differences I realised that they all have in common one extraordinary event: a murder. In “Woman at the Store” and “The Lagoon”, this has occurred prior to the text and the ‘point’ of the story is the revelation of this crime-- Sargeson’s story is about the actual murder taking place- the protagonist abandons his mate who can’t swim on a reef which will be covered up at high tide- rows off with his eardrums stuffed with cotton wool so he can’t hear his mate’s cries for help. By sheer chance we had chosen stories that all turned on a single crime. Ideas of sudden death are also present in others like Owen Marshall’s “Mumsie and Zipp” and Dan Davin’s “The Quiet One” and in all these tales of suspicion and jealousy, marriage is questioned, disowned or maligned.

This coincidence, suggesting exposure of civilising surface under which society’s passions and hatreds seethe, confirms that in the early story tradition the same recurring images of New Zealand society were being represented from several different angles. Maybe that it was about murder is not surprising, The Australian writer, the Nobel Prize winner Patrick White said he found the most extraordinary feature of New Zealand society was its murder cases. But even such iconic stories by well known writers, won’t necessarily sell in the global market place, where commercial success comes from the ability to appeal to multinational youth culture, or relies on a writer’s international reputation like winning a major literary prize, or author appearances at international book fairs, festivals, or launches. Our collection has sold only 102 copies since it was published in 2014 and I doubt whether extensive marketing exposure, favourable promotion in the media and strong selling points would have made any difference. An entirely new market place like the Spanish speaking world requires instantly recognisable themes, or niche formats that people can identify with like popular romance, travel or ghost stories, and those associated with the visual media, pop culture. Indeed it is not surprising that one of the greatest commercial successes in the Spanish-speaking marketplace today is the “landscape novels” or historical romances of Sarah Lark, a German born author who once worked as a tour guide in NZ and capitalises on ‘Brand New Zealand’ – whose family saga trilogies such as *In the Land of the Long White Cloud* all feature covers with a lonely figure contemplating a sublime but empty landscape.

In conclusion, today’s short story is flourishing as never before according to Stephanie Johnson at the 2016 Sunday Times Awards, who as a 3rd time judge said “without a doubt the entries last year surpassed all the others—“the art of the short story is alive and well in New Zealand”. But acclaiming a vibrant national culture, does not necessarily indicate its mobility --how stories individually or in collections might circulate in the global marketplace. The contemporary cultural climate, enlivened by increased migration, tourism, world travel, international celebrities, writers and readers festivals, confirms New Zealand’s more frequent contact with the world beyond its shores. So the trend towards more international perspectives is already happening - as evidenced in

the more limited local references in stories and novels by writers of the Bill Manhire MA writing classes (now the International Institute of Letters),-they are more placeless, and might be set anywhere. More evasive concepts gain prestige because not pinned to a particular nation or society (so less specific local realities have greater purchasing powers). If the current scene is one of fragmentation and lack of a dialogue between writers, as McNeill points to in his article, then this suggests that stories are being written with different, more diverse audiences in mind- to those who are outside as well as within the country. So in conclusion my view is that if our anthology, *Un Pais de Cuento/ A Fairy Tale Land*, presented a nation imagined of an insular and inward looking society, then there is room for another volume of New Zealand stories in Spanish translation, foregrounding the work of younger writers that will represent NZ as constructed from the outside looking in, as both like and unlike other countries, a nation that is slowly taking its place at the table of what is called global or world literature.

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