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## **Invention and reinvention: Greville Texidor meets Frank Sargeson**

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‘It isn’t England and it isn’t anywhere else. It’s null, it’s dull, it’s tepid, it’s mediocre: the downunder of the spirit’ said one dismayed visitor of the cultural life she encountered on arriving in New Zealand in 1941.<sup>1</sup> While Anna Kavan’s verdict struck many as condescending, ill-informed and more than a little solipsistic, it nonetheless helped set the tone for persistent imaginings of the decade as a site of unmitigated drabness.

But according to John Newton, at the same time Kavan was encountering this vision of dreariness, Allen Curnow was experiencing a very different cultural moment. In the light-filled Wellington house the modernist Austrian architect Ernst Plischke designed for his fellow-refugees Joachim and Gertrud Kahn, Curnow was listening to a Beethoven quartet. Much of his poetry of the preceding decade had proclaimed the limitations and insecurities of these ‘stone-deaf islands’.<sup>2</sup> Along with the ardent young founders of *Phoenix*, *Tomorrow* and the Caxton Press, Curnow had thus helped create an unsettling ‘anti-myth’ that challenged what they saw as the complacent national story passed on by their elders.<sup>3</sup> Far from a prosperous paradise populated by ‘Better Britons’,<sup>4</sup> Curnow’s generation saw New Zealand through eyes similar to Kavan’s — an unformed and spiritually arid place where, as Charles Brasch wrote, ‘The plains are nameless and the cities cry for meaning’.<sup>5</sup> The role of the artist, they asserted, was to articulate that unrealised meaning, using an idiom that was local,

vernacular and authentic. But now at the Kahn house, listening to ‘these tuned / Strings’, Curnow heard something else — intimations of the larger world to which he was also connected, the possibility of crossing ‘motionless horizons as if not marooned’, of finding a more sophisticated, expansive and international cultural space within which a New Zealand artist might construct a home.<sup>6</sup>

Newton’s essay ‘Allen Curnow at Joachim Kahn’s’ (2010) draws attention to this moment and its transformative possibilities. He argues that the wartime arrival of European refugee artists — bringing with them new talents and perspectives, an assured conviction of the value of ‘high culture’ and intellectual life, and an understanding of the creative and formal possibilities offered by modernism — is ‘the most pressing untold story of the cultural nationalist era’.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, he characterises the coming-together of European exiles and New Zealand’s cultural nationalists as a key catalyst for ‘a new cultural tuning’ that calls into question the well-worn legend of New Zealand literature’s ‘invention’ by the brave young men of the 30s and 40s.<sup>8</sup> If such an invention did indeed occur, it was considerably ‘more complex than our favourite historical narratives imagine: more transnational, more dialectical and — crucially — more in the debt of non-Anglophone cultures’.<sup>9</sup>

Newton is not alone in wanting to reimagine the cultural landscape of the 1940s as something other than a place of provincial torpor, its literature as something more than a drab fortress of sameness guarded by a team of self-appointed ‘bouncers’ — Curnow, Brasch, A.R.D. Fairburn, Frank Sargeson and Denis Glover.<sup>10</sup> Alex Calder, Jonathan Lamb, Stuart Murray, Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, Lydia Wevers and others have all adduced evidence of unexpected meeting points, antecedents, contradictions and impurities in the era’s literary landscape.<sup>11</sup> Such scholarship has helped reframe our understanding of the 1940s, refiguring it as a time of cultural adjustment in which the orthodoxies of the previous decade — the self-declared dawn of

a new age where ‘ideas were worth fighting for and the world could be saved by weedy young men of letters’<sup>12</sup> — are beginning to retreat. The nationalist regime is loosening its allegedly monolithic grip and Newton’s new cultural tuning starting to resonate. This subtle shift is being nourished by a range of sources, not least the émigré and exilic artists arriving in New Zealand since the late 1930s. They included Greville Texidor, the peripatetic Englishwoman who transformed herself into a writer in New Zealand and produced what Sargeson would call ‘one of the most beautiful prose works ever achieved in this country’.<sup>13</sup>

This essay explores the fertile literary interaction between Texidor and Sargeson throughout the 1940s. Like Curnow’s evening at the Kahn house, this was another telling encounter between the cultural nationalist project and the forces of internationalism. But it was also an exchange between two writers launching themselves on very different literary trajectories — one embarking on a lengthy period of reinvention, the other intent on turning herself into a writer.

Texidor sailed into Auckland in May 1940 after a hazardous journey from England, accompanied by her husband Werner Droscher and her daughter Cristina Texidor.<sup>14</sup> Having recently fought with the Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War, Greville and Werner had returned to England in 1938, only to be interned at the outbreak of the Second World War on account of Werner’s German nationality. Released with the help of well-placed contacts, they took ship for New Zealand, its main attraction being ‘that it was as far away as possible from the trauma and disappointments of Europe’.<sup>15</sup> Soon after arriving, they were again branded enemy aliens and banished to Papanui, a small farming settlement near the Kaipara Harbour.

Although she had been many things by this time — Bloomsbury insider, globetrotting dancer, Anarchist militiaman — Texidor was not yet a writer. All this changed when she met Sargeson who, in 1941, impulsively hopped off a train at

Paparoa to visit the ‘refugee people’ he had encountered briefly some months before in Takapuna.<sup>16</sup>

### **‘All would be new’: Sargeson’s turning point**

Sargeson was by then the acknowledged master of New Zealand short fiction. The collection he had just published, *A Man and His Wife*,<sup>17</sup> became a local best-seller and his work appeared regularly in magazines and journals in Australia, Britain and America. He was a public figure of sorts; admirers might catch a glimpse of him at the Auckland Public Library or on the streets of Takapuna, conspicuous with his ‘haversack, tweed jacket, knitted tie — a living writer, in disguise’.<sup>18</sup>

His standing rested on the bespoke narrative idiom and form he had developed during the 1930s to deal with ‘the material of New Zealand life’,<sup>19</sup> and with his own peculiarly conflicted sense of being both at home and an outsider in his own country. While this self-described ‘new way of writing’ had the plainness, directness and purposefulness of documentary journalism, it also offered ‘[a] kind of disguised poetry’ that ‘impl[ie]d much more than the plain representation which usually accompanied plain narrative’.<sup>20</sup> This was the premise behind the thirty-odd stories and sketches he had published since the mid-1930s, from the concentrated homily ‘Conversation With My Uncle’ (1935) to the more discursive and cryptic ‘The Making of a New Zealander’ (1940). To local readers, his account of pākehā New Zealand life — its leitmotif a particularly joyless and punitive puritanism — seemed familiar, yet strangely disturbing. Some recoiled from what they saw as the harshness of Sargeson’s vision, one critic describing it as an ‘impossibly brutish concept of New Zealand life’.<sup>21</sup> But others found his stories accorded perfectly with the awakening consciousness of an indigenous national culture. Praised more for its ‘authenticity’ than its aesthetic qualities, his

work was thus eagerly yoked to the nationalist project; as Vincent O'Sullivan has observed, 'Sargeson's personal fable became the assumed fable of his country'.<sup>22</sup>

But in the early 1940s, Sargeson was beset by self-doubts. He was hard at work on what would become the novella 'That Summer', seeing it as a farewell to the tightly compressed form and demotic idiom that had become his hallmark but was now feeling like something of a straitjacket: 'I think it probably occurred to me that I couldn't go on writing in this way indefinitely,' he said later of this time.<sup>23</sup> His frustrations lay both with his method and his material. While still committed to representing, recreating and critiquing 'the New Zealand scene',<sup>24</sup> he craved a more expansive narrative canvas, a more articulate idiom, the chance to experiment with a wider range of narrative techniques and strategies than he had hitherto permitted himself. Writing a full-length novel became a consuming ambition. But could his stripped-down prose with its habitual ellipses and silences, sly hints and glances — not to mention the jobless drifters and inarticulate farmhands who populated it — deliver the substance and coherence the longer form required? There were no quick solutions. 'That Summer' took him four years to write, the full-length *I Saw In My Dream* (1949) was not well received, and critics wondered if Sargeson was capable of making the transition.<sup>25</sup> In fact, it was not until *Memoirs of a Peon* in 1965 that Sargeson really hit his stride as a novelist. Characterised by a loose, elaborate syntax, language both orotund and supple, and a cast of outrageous, often grotesque, characters, here at last was what he had been seeking: new fiction for new times.

Sargeson's desire for reinvention was compelled not only by artistic frustrations. In the 1940s, he was well aware that the New Zealand he had sought to fix on the page a decade earlier was vanishing: in the post-war era, it would become increasingly affluent, urbanised, educated and cosmopolitan. Denis Glover confirmed this when he returned home from war service, telling Sargeson that 'the 1930s and all that was over [...] all would be

new, a new generation with different interests': he advised his friend to 'forget [he] had ever put pen to paper' and to begin anew.<sup>26</sup> But Sargeson was already refashioning his world in ways that Glover probably did not apprehend. As Newton shows, the personal and professional relationships he had forged in the 1930s were gradually unravelling. As a homosexual writer (albeit well-camouflaged), his place in the aggressively masculine and misogynist 'gang' that revolved around Fairburn and Glover had always been precarious, and it now became increasingly unsustainable. Glover had reacted violently against the 'homoerotic loading' of 'That Summer' and refused to publish it.<sup>27</sup> Nominally, Sargeson's split with Fairburn was over the merits of state patronage, but Fairburn's homophobia almost certainly played a part.<sup>28</sup> And so Sargeson began to drift away from their 'jock-strappy, "gentlemen only" world',<sup>29</sup> to which he had only ever belonged through a vigilant strategy of concealment and over-compensation. Increasingly, many of his most important literary relationships would lie elsewhere — with women (Texidor, E.P. Dawson, Christine Cole Catley and, soon, Janet Frame); with his London contacts, especially the publisher John Lehmann and the South-African born poet and critic William Plomer; and (particularly after *Landfall* began in 1947) with Charles Brasch. Like Plomer, Brasch was a cosmopolitan with a distinctly exilic sensibility. He had allegiances to multiple communities beyond the national — the Jewish diaspora and the Otago intelligentsia among them. He was also, like Lehmann and Plomer, homosexual.<sup>30</sup> As Newton remarks, Brasch's aestheticism, international outlook and mandarin sensibility made him the perfect audience for Sargeson's new literary strategies. Another ideal reader was Greville Texidor.

## **The beautiful Texidor**

Texidor was probably already working on her first stories when Sargeson visited Paparoa in 1941. Alone and unoccupied for much of the day, she clearly had the opportunity. But quite where the motivation came from remains unclear, as does her method of working: she left no diaries or letters from this period, and her drafts are haphazardly dated. She was certainly extremely well-read, had earlier kept a journal and had written propaganda literature during the Spanish Civil War. But Werner was later adamant that she had never tried her hand at fiction before New Zealand.<sup>31</sup> We can only speculate (as Sargeson did in his obituary for Texidor) that, once adrift in the alien backwater of Paparoa, writing fiction became a surrogate for the intense and sometimes visceral existence she had left behind in Europe. Perhaps, too, it was a chance to expiate whatever crimes Texidor felt she had committed by taking up arms in a vicious war, or her sense of having failed the Spanish people; an increasingly equivocal attitude to her own engagement with Spain permeates the unfinished Civil War novel she began drafting in New Zealand.<sup>32</sup>

By the time the family was permitted to move back to the North Shore seven months later, Texidor was showing Sargeson some draft stories. Whatever the initial impetus for her writing, Sargeson now ensured its ongoing momentum. By his own account, 'without my encouragement, my suggestions and proddings, not to say occasional scornings, and even downright condemnings, Greville Texidor would never have become a name to add to the list of distinguished literary people who have visited our country'.<sup>33</sup> His claim seems indisputable. According to Texidor's younger daughter, Rosamunda Droescher, Sargeson was the crucial enabler of her mother's writing, coaxing it into life, sentence by sentence. '[Greville] had the stories,' she recalled, 'and Frank made her write them down'.<sup>34</sup> In a few years, Texidor became an author published in three countries, an increasingly

sophisticated practitioner capable of mastering considerable technical challenges. This artistic growth corresponded directly with the years of Sargeson's mentoring, and her career as a published writer essentially ended when she removed herself from his influence. She certainly continued writing after leaving New Zealand in 1948, including three unfinished novels, but she published nothing more apart from a handful of Lorca translations.<sup>35</sup> 'The sad truth is that since you gave up being responsible for it I have never written another thing,' she wrote to Sargeson from Australia. 'Rather I have but I'm never satisfied with them — [I] write several drafts and then chuck in the sponge'.<sup>36</sup>

Of course Texidor was not Sargeson's only protégé at this time. Other emerging writers — including Maurice Duggan, David Ballantyne, John Reece Cole and G. R. Gilbert — had all passed nervously through the famous hole in the hedge that led to his Esmonde Road bach, eager to imbibe his stimulating brew of bookish conversation, advice and Lemora. Sargeson was well aware of rumours he was training a group of slavish acolytes 'to write in words of one syllable', and of the potential risks to their resilience and development — and to his own productivity.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, he continued to dispense counsel, encouragement and practical advice, his undeniable generosity spiked with occasional envy and self-doubt.

But his relationship with the woman he called 'the beautiful Texidor'<sup>38</sup> was different, seemingly free of such anxieties. While they could be mutually malicious, they shared genuine companionship and affection. The record shows them bottling tomatoes together, visiting disreputable Auckland pubs, holidaying at Mount Maunganui.<sup>39</sup> A contemporary remembered them 'walking together and ha[ving] fun making up parodies of the Georgian poets'.<sup>40</sup> Texidor was even invited to join Sargeson on a trip to his Uncle Oakley's King Country farm, Sargeson's 'most truly spiritual place', but the visit was called off at the last minute.<sup>41</sup> His letters are tender and funny: he addresses her as 'La

Texibubble' or 'Dearest Greville you lovely Thing', adopting a very different tone from the bluff masculine manner he uses with his younger male protégés.<sup>42</sup>

Their literary relationship also seems to have played out somewhat differently. Sargeson could be light-handed when critiquing his protégés' work: recalled one, 'It was one of Frank's principles to shun adverse criticism in case it hurt the learning writer into silence'.<sup>43</sup> Such determined neutrality belies his alleged role as the 'god father-midwife' of mid-century literature: it could also be irksome to those, like Duggan, looking for more concrete guidance. 'Are you still sticking to that idea of not criticising my stories?' he wrote to Sargeson from London in 1951. 'It seems a pity — if it didn't make me change anything it helped me see'.<sup>44</sup>

In Texidor's case, however, Sargeson was more hands-on. He gave her paper, in desperately short supply in 1940s New Zealand: several of her stories from this period are typed on the familiar green paper, sometimes even on the back of Sargeson's own drafts. More importantly, he provided close and exacting criticism. Reviewing her initial draft of 'An Annual Affair' (1944), he recommended abandoning the knowing first-person narrative voice: 'I think I unkindly said, "look, you make it appear that [the teenage narrator Joy] must keep a copy of Chekov in the cowshed — which she reads instead of doing her share of the milking."' Texidor duly produced another version in which the painful comedy of the community picnic unfolds through free indirect discourse, a sophisticated authorial voice now mediating Joy's guileless impressions. Sargeson later said 'An Annual Affair' would be remembered as 'her most beautiful piece of New Zealand writing'.<sup>45</sup>

Sargeson's interventions went only so far, however. Again contradicting the charge he demanded sycophantic imitation from his protégés, he was generally tolerant of Texidor's stylistic experimentation and idiosyncrasies, even when privately appalled (as when editing the 1945 anthology *Speaking for Ourselves*, discussed below). Nor does he seem to have prescribed particular

subject matter. Although Paparoa yielded a wealth of distinctly Sargesonian material, which Texidor duly addressed in essentially realist stories such as ‘Home Front’ and ‘An Annual Affair’, Sargeson was equally — if not more — receptive to her ‘European’ work such as ‘These Dark Glasses’. There, she deploys all the accoutrements of high modernist prose — fractured chronology, slippages in narrative viewpoint, verbal and syntactical inventiveness, the vocabulary of symbolism — to render the agitated sensibilities of an extravagantly self-absorbed group of artists and intellectuals unmoored on the Riviera as Europe drifts towards war.

So, while Sargeson could subject Texidor to exacting critique, he also indulged her ‘delinquencies’, foreshadowing his literary relationship with Frame nearly a decade later. Both women benefited greatly from Sargeson’s support (although Frame, a more assured, experienced and disciplined writer than Texidor, emphatically resisted the textual criticism he offered, finding it pedantic and unsympathetic).<sup>46</sup> Yet neither took his work as an unalloyed model. Texidor was certainly willing, more so than Frame, to ‘do’ Sargesonian realism when required and grapple with ‘the New Zealand scene’, a task her mentor considered mandatory. But, like Frame — and Duggan, another of Sargeson’s least imitative protégés — Texidor was ultimately interested less in the national project than in ‘animat[ing] the independent life of language on the page’.<sup>47</sup>

### **His ideal reader**

Did Sargeson’s relationship with Texidor unfold differently simply because she was a woman, a foreigner, more mature than his other protégés (a year older, in fact, than Sargeson himself), or because she came trailing a lifetime of enviably exotic experiences?

Sargeson's receptivity to Texidor was certainly partly a response to who she was, but it was also a product of timing. The period in which they were closest was one of searching literary and personal self-examination for Sargeson, set against a backdrop of subtle yet profound cultural recalibration. Increasingly stifled by the very tradition he was creating, he was seeking strategies that would let him strike out in new literary directions. At the same time, he was rubbing shoulders with the wartime immigrants and refugees who had established clusters of cultural influence in the major centres, including in his own North Shore neighbourhood. New Zealanders returning from war service (Cole and Gilbert, for example) also became part of Sargeson's postwar world, injecting a new sense of internationalism and a heightened antipathy to 'the narrowness of the scene [they'd] returned to'.<sup>48</sup> And of course Sargeson's overseas contacts such as Lehmann, Plomer and even (fleetingly) E.M. Forster were giving him access to the sunlit uplands of the English literary life he had always craved and, like Brasch, to communities beyond the national — homosexual, post-colonial, aesthetic, transnational.

Like Karl Wolfskehl, the legendary German poet whom Sargeson befriended during his improbable wartime exile on the North Shore, Texidor embodied the full force of European culture within which, as a young man, Sargeson had tried — and failed — to find a place. It still filled him with yearning, but now also revulsion and a sense of inadequacy. Indeed, Sargeson eventually withdrew from the elderly Wolskehl, 'overpowered' by the weight of civilisation embodied by this anachronistic figure whom Thomas Mann had called the 'last European man'.<sup>49</sup> Texidor, though, embodied something else. She was the epitome of European modernity; restless, transgressive, financially independent, twice divorced. Her literary connections and interests were decidedly 'Modern' too. Part of the Bloomsbury artistic milieu in her youth, she had modelled for Mark Gertler and knew D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. She had been in Spain with left-wing writers like Humphrey 'Hugh' Slater and Tom

Wintringham; corresponded with Rosamond Lehmann; talked art with Georges Kars and music with Virgil Thomson. The Europe to which Texidor offered so enticing a bridge was a site of modernity, an altogether alluring destination to a writer seeking to reinvent himself.

The seemingly contingent nature of Texidor's rootlessness may also have struck a chord with Sargeson. She had not experienced the tragic irreparable exile forced on Wolfskehl and others; more what has recently been called a kind of nomadic 'homelooseness'<sup>50</sup> — a state that Sargeson might well have recognised. Sargeson's classic stories show he was all too familiar with the colonial predicament, defined by Plomer as 'the whole tragedy of the colonist who has not taken and perhaps cannot take root'.<sup>51</sup> Sargeson also knew that both his vocation and undeclared sexuality made him an isolated oddity in mid-century New Zealand, one of the 'beleaguered few' setting their faces against 'the persecuting many'.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps in Texidor's rootlessness, and her repudiation of the alien environment around her, he saw a reflection of his own marginality, his inescapable apartness from the national community to which he was nonetheless committed.

But Texidor's *work*, uneven though it was, left its impress on Sargeson too. When he read her European-inflected fiction like 'Santa Cristina' and 'These Dark Glasses', he saw an enviable appetite for modernist experimentation and lush verbal play ('she is like Father Christmas in the way she pours out a succession of brightly coloured striking images', he told Dawson in 1944).<sup>53</sup> And in the stories she wrote about New Zealand, he saw modernist literary practices serving alongside critical realism as tools with which to inscribe 'New Zealandness' — a stratagem that would increasingly find its way into his own fiction.

The porous nature of the Texidor-Sargeson encounter, and the imprint it left on each, is nowhere more apparent than in his 1945 short story anthology *Speaking for Ourselves*.<sup>54</sup> It is a landmark publication, significant for what it has to say about both the state of New Zealand literature and Sargeson's own literary turning-

point. His workmanlike introduction explicitly addresses a community of readers he expects to share his distaste for New Zealand's cultural philistinism and mediocrity (for the time being, the best we can hope for in our fiction writers is 'a very decent competence'). It also announces a new myth of origin for local short fiction, comparable to that claimed by Curnow in his *Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-45*, published the same year. However, Sargeson's Year Zero is somewhat later than Curnow's (only two contributors, Roderick Finlayson and Sargeson himself, had published before 1940) and reveals itself more in his selection policy than in editorial polemic.

While the anthology thus explicitly aligns itself with the cultural nationalist project, it also sets out to reconfigure it. Here, Sargeson's selections announce, is the postwar future: young, in some cases modestly experimental, and surprisingly feminine (more than a third of the authors are women). The anthology looks confidently to the outside world, even including an Australian writer: Max Harris, the editor of the infamous journal *Angry Penguins*. The self-consciously modernist contributions by Harris, Duggan (the febrile 'Notes on an Abstract Arachnid'), Gilbert ('Mrs Pornog's Afternoon', an erotically-charged surrealist fable) and, to an extent, Texidor, broaden the anthology's range beyond critical realism and declare its affinity with international literary practices. As Sargeson personally disliked most of these stories, their inclusion is an important editorial announcement.<sup>55</sup> Just as the anthology can make space for women writers and youthful talents, it can also accommodate modernism, with all its attendant demands and provocations — and, by implication, so too will New Zealand's postwar literary culture.

If, then, we approach *Speaking for Ourselves* as an expression of some kind of national sensibility, it is a sensibility that Sargeson acknowledges is increasingly diverse, female, urban (or at least suburban), emotionally and sexually alive, aesthetically sophisticated, and connected to the world beyond New Zealand.

The anthology embodies, in effect, all that Sargeson found in Texidor.

Fittingly, their respective contributions — in which the recent war figures not as a sphere of violent combat but an agency of psychological and social disturbance — function as companion pieces. The enigmatic ‘The Hole That Jack Dug’ suggests the directions Sargeson’s fiction will take in the postwar world: increasingly equivocal and oblique, less tendentious, more daringly subversive (particularly in its treatment of romantic and sexual love), reverberant with a greater range of idioms and narrative voices, responsive to a larger world beyond the circumscribed New Zealand scene. And if Sargeson’s story thereby registers the new possibilities that Texidor, among other influences, had opened up to him, her contribution ‘Anyone Home?’ returns the favour. In this account of a war-damaged soldier returning to his fiancée’s family farm, Texidor deploys all the strategies she has learned from Sargeson: economy, suggestiveness, a delight in dark social comedy, fidelity to place. Once again, she evinces her disdain for the ‘petty hell’ of rural New Zealand.<sup>56</sup> But the story’s Sargesonian elements coexist with passages which her mentor would never have written, at least not in the early 1940s. Texidor anatomises her protagonist’s shattered psyche, collapses time, distorts language and syntax, uses the vividness of the material world less to assert local authenticity than as a symbolic language for the ‘horror of nothingness’ Roy’s wartime experiences have laid bare. As if in conversation with Sargeson’s story, ‘Anyone Home?’ likewise skirts around a defiantly unfathomable void; here, a pool becomes Roy’s personal abyss, his fiancée’s reflection floating there like ‘an angel in dark ice. The blue space behind the skull was staring through eyes like crystal’.<sup>57</sup>

Texidor, like Kavan, publicly arraigned 1940s New Zealand, portraying it as ‘a leper colony’ whose intellectuals and writers ‘had the sad look of a cow gazing over a fence seeing all the juicy pastures of civilisation’.<sup>58</sup> Yet it was in this uncongenial environment that she found the tools, discipline and confidence

to transform herself into a writer, and produced the only fiction that ever brought her recognition and satisfaction. Sargeson enabled this transformation, but the traffic did not travel in only one direction. Theirs was a mutually productive encounter, a catalyst for reciprocal acts of invention and reinvention in a time of cultural flux.

## Notes

- 1 Anna Kavan, 'New Zealand: Answer to an Inquiry', *Horizon: A Review of Literature and Art*, 8 (1943), 156.
- 2 Allen Curnow, 'At Joachim Kahn's' (1943), *Collected Poems 1933-1973* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1974), p. 128.
- 3 Allen Curnow, author's note, 'At Joachim Kahn's', p. xiii.
- 4 James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 2001), pp. 76–78.
- 5 'The Silent Land' (1945), *Collected Poems*, ed. by Alan Roddick (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 218.
- 6 Curnow, 'At Joachim Kahn's', p. 128.
- 7 John Newton, 'Allen Curnow at Joachim Kahn's', *Landfall*, 220 (2010), 28.
- 8 John Newton, 'Surviving the War', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 31 (2013), 94.
- 9 Newton, 'Allen Curnow at Joachim Kahn's', p. 28.
- 10 Patrick Evans dubs Curnow a 'literary bouncer' in *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990), p. 106.
- 11 Stafford and Williams, for example, argue that earlier Maoriland writers anticipated many of the nationalist preoccupations and tropes said to have emerged anew in the 1930s, in *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872-1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006). Murray writes persuasively of the internationalism intrinsic to the

nationalist project in *Never a Soul at Home: New Zealand Literary Nationalism and the 1930s* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998). See also Alex Calder, 'Unsettling Settlement: Poetry and Nationalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand' in *REAL: Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature 14, Literature and the Nation*, ed. by Brook Thomas (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1998), 165–181; Jonathan Lamb, 'Problems of Originality: Or, Beware of Pakeha Baring Guilts', *Landfall* 40.3 (1986), 352–358; and Lydia Wevers, 'Speaking for Ourselves in 1945', *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 16 (1998), 97–111.

<sup>12</sup> Evans, *Penguin History*, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Frank Sargeson, 'Greville Texidor 1902-1964', *Landfall*, 19 (1965), 135.

<sup>14</sup> Greville had earlier been married to a Catalan businessman and entrepreneur, Manolo Texidor: their daughter Cristina was born in Argentina in 1930. Greville and Werner's daughter Rosamunda Droscher was born in New Zealand in 1947.

<sup>15</sup> Farrell Cleary, 'Introduction', in *Free Society: A German Exile in Revolutionary Spain*, by Werner Droscher (London: Kate Sharpley Library, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Frank Sargeson, *Never Enough: Places and People Mainly* (Wellington: Reed, 1977), p. 60.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Sargeson, *A Man and his Wife* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1940).

<sup>18</sup> Maurice Duggan, 'Beginnings', *Landfall*, 20 (1966), 334.

<sup>19</sup> Frank Sargeson, 'Writing a Novel', in *Conversation in a Train and Other Critical Writing*, ed. by Kevin Cunningham (Auckland: Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Frank Sargeson, *More Than Enough: A Memoir* (Wellington: Reed, 1975), pp. 51, 92.

<sup>21</sup> Pat Lawlor, writing in *New Zealand Truth* (23 December 1940). Quoted in Lawrence Jones, 'Frank Sargeson [Norris Frank Davey], 1903–1982', *Kōtare*, 7.2 (2008), 166.

- 22 Vincent O’Sullivan, ‘Funnier, Meaner Sargeson Beyond This Good Life: Review of *Frank Sargeson: A Life* by Michael King’, *New Zealand Books*, 5.5 (December 1995), 4.
- 23 Michael Beveridge, ‘Conversation with Frank Sargeson (I)’, in Sargeson, *Conversation in a Train*, p. 157.
- 24 Sargeson, ‘Writing a Novel’, p. 61.
- 25 For example, Lawrence Baigent in *Landfall*, 4 (1950), 157–60.
- 26 Sargeson, *More than Enough*, p. 113.
- 27 Newton, ‘Surviving the War’, p. 87.
- 28 Denys Trussell, *Fairburn* (Auckland: Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 249.
- 29 Newton, ‘Surviving the War’, p. 95.
- 30 Newton, ‘Surviving the War’, pp. 85–92. For more on Brasch’s ‘exilic temper’, see Bruce Harding, “‘Man of Words’: Charles Brasch”, *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 17 (1999), 71–73.
- 31 Werner Droyscher, *Free Society*, p. 19.
- 32 Multiple drafts of this novel are held with Texidor’s papers at the State Library of New South Wales (ML MSS 5235).
- 33 Sargeson, *Never*, p. 62.
- 34 Author’s interview with Rosamunda Droyscher, Spain, 17/3/2014.
- 35 Two radio plays were also broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1953.
- 36 16 June [c. 1952?], Frank Sargeson Collection, MS Papers 0432-182, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
- 37 Frank Sargeson to E.H. McCormick, 20/12/45, quoted in *Letters of Frank Sargeson*, ed. by Sarah Shieff (Auckland: Vintage, 2012), p. 89.
- 38 Frank Sargeson to E.H. McCormick, *Letters*, p. 89.
- 39 See John Reece Cole, ‘Letters to a Protégé’, in *In Celebration, for Frank Sargeson at 75*, ed. by Robin Dudding *Islands* 6: 3 (Auckland: Dudding, 1978), 261; Greville Texidor to Frank Sargeson, 26/9/53, Frank Sargeson Collection, MS Papers 0432-182; Frank Sargeson to E.P. Dawson, 6/2/44, Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin. E.P. Dawson Papers, MS-2404/002.

- <sup>40</sup> Unnamed correspondent to Michael King, Michael King Collection, Research Papers for *Frank Sargeson; a Life*, 97-042-20/2, Turnbull Library, Wellington.
- <sup>41</sup> Sargeson, *More than Enough*, p. 111.
- <sup>42</sup> See, for example, Frank Sargeson to Greville Texidor, Auckland, University of Auckland Library, 16/10/50 and 3/4/45, Greville Texidor holdings, MSS & Archives A-198.
- <sup>43</sup> Kendrick Smithyman, “A Sort of Poet Too”, in *In Celebration, for Frank Sargeson at 75*, ed. by Robin Dudding *Islands* 6.3 (Auckland: Dudding, 1978), 300. Other recollections of Sargeson’s mentoring are less generous — see Ian Richards’s account of Duggan’s disappointment with Sargeson’s critique in *To Bed at Noon* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997), p. 148 and elsewhere; and also Janet Frame, *An Autobiography* (Auckland: Vintage, 1989) p. 249.
- <sup>44</sup> Maurice Duggan to Frank Sargeson, 8/5/51, Frank Sargeson Collection, MS Papers 4261-044, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Sargeson described himself as a ‘god father-midwife’ in a letter to A.P. Gaskell of 29/5/45, quoted in Shieff, p. 79.
- <sup>45</sup> Sargeson, *Never Enough*, p. 63.
- <sup>46</sup> Janet Frame, *An Autobiography* (Auckland: Vintage, 1989), p. 249.
- <sup>47</sup> W.H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence — The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 160.
- <sup>48</sup> Beveridge, p. 164.
- <sup>49</sup> Sargeson, *More than Enough*, pp. 111, 105.
- <sup>50</sup> James Wood, ‘On Not Going Home’, *London Review of Books*, 36.4 (2014), 6.
- <sup>51</sup> William Plomer, ‘Some Books From New Zealand’, *Penguin New Writing*, 17 (1943), 149–54 (p. 153).
- <sup>52</sup> O’Sullivan, ‘Funnier, Meaner Sargeson’, 1.
- <sup>53</sup> 16/2/44, Michael King Collection, Research Papers for *Frank Sargeson; a Life*, 97-042-20/2 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
- <sup>54</sup> Frank Sargeson, ed., *Speaking For Ourselves: Fifteen Stories* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1945).

- <sup>55</sup> Sargeson revealed his views in a letter to E.P. Dawson on 18/5/45, quoted in Ian Richards, *To Bed at Noon* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997), p. 78.
- <sup>56</sup> Sargeson, *Never Enough*, p. 63.
- <sup>57</sup> Greville Texidor, *In Fifteen Minutes You Can Say a Lot: Selected Fiction*, ed. by Kendrick Smithyman (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1987), p. 93.
- <sup>58</sup> See Texidor, 'Goodbye Forever', p. 209.