

NEW ZEALAND WRITERS: PART ONE

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All quotations are taken from The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature (Ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie)

KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Portrait of Katherine Mansfield: A Women and a Writer (extracts)

Marigold Productions 1986. Duration 11:26

Katherine Mansfield is New Zealand's best known writer and her short stories have been translated into 25 languages. Born in Wellington in 1888, Mansfield moved to London in 1907. She was part of a literary circle that included some of the most famous writers of the time; John Middleton Murray, D H and Frieda Lawrence, Dora Carrington, T S Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Siegfried Sassoon, Leonard and Virginia Woolf and Bertrand Russell. She died at Fontainebleau in 1923 of tuberculosis. Mansfield's writing relies on a slice of life technique, running together "symbolism and realism with a vivid emotional resonance". Using a structure derived from cinema sections of narrative are often cut and overlapped.

These extracts from a documentary on Mansfield's life include readings from her journals and interviews with Ida Baker, Mansfield's life long friend and Cherry Hankin, a New Zealand Literature expert.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD

New Zealand's Top 100 History Makers (extract)

Visionary Films 2005. Duration 3:17

In this television programme New Zealand's Top 100 history makers are determined by a select panel. Mansfield's contribution to literature and her life are briefly outlined using archival photographs and interviews with experts.

FRANK SARGESON

Perfectly Frank. The Life of a New Zealand Writer (extracts)

Morrison Grieve 1998. Duration 10:26

Born Norris Frank Davey in Hamilton, 1903, Frank Sargeson was the first New Zealand writer to establish a distinctly New Zealand vernacular. His writing style, which reflected his interest in social realism and his male working class protagonists was stark... “an economic delineation of character, minimalist narration, and an understanding of the tight range of idiomatic vocabulary and syntax appropriate to his characters”. He died in 1982.

In these extracts biographer Michael King talks about Sargeson’s experience in London and the development of his writing style. The footage includes other New Zealand writers discussing his life, and excerpts of archival footage show a re-enactment of the short story A Great Day.

JANET FRAME

New Zealand’s Top 100 History Makers (extract)

Visionary Film & Television 2005. Duration 3:17

Born in Dunedin in 1924 Janet Frame is New Zealand’s most distinguished writer and was a nominee for the Nobel Prize in literature. Her life epitomizes the popular myth of artist as outsider: she spent years battling with an intense shyness and anxiety that was misdiagnosed as schizophrenia. In 2004 Janet Frame died of leukemia in Dunedin. Frame’s writing establishes the outsider as the visionary, in opposition to those who conform to society. It is also concerned with the power of language; both in it’s capacity to heal and “the ultimate failure of language to breach the eternity that lies beyond the hieroglyphic experience”.

In this television programme New Zealand’s Top 100 history makers are determined by a select panel. Frame’s contribution to literature and her life are briefly outlined using archival photographs and interviews with experts.

PATRICIA GRACE

Rua Taitea: The world is where we are (extracts)

Nautilus Productions 1990. Duration 6:10

Patricia Grace was born in Wellington in 1937. She is of Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa descent. In 1986 Potiki won the New Zealand Book Award for fiction. It has been translated into several languages. Her writing, sometimes strongly political and steeped in historic events, interprets the world from a Maori perspective, examining the diversity of Maori people and employing Maori oral tradition in the structure of her narratives.

In these extracts Patricia Grace talks about learning to write about the world around her, and addresses critics who say her Maori characters are too 'nice'.

KERI HULME

Frontseat Series 01, Episode 18 (extract)

Gibson Group 2004. Duration 7:28

Keri Hulme was born in Otautahi, Christchurch in 1947. In 1985 she won the prestigious Booker Prize for her novel *The Bone People* and gained international attention. Hulme, who is one eighth Maori, writes about New Zealand's struggle to form a post colonial cultural identity. Criticized for her negativity, some view her pessimism as a response to the failure of Maori and Pakeha to form a bicultural identity. "Hulme's post-coloniality, it is argued, accounts for her persistent use and subversion of binary categories (whether Maori/Pakeha, male/female, realism/fantasy or life/death) and her multiplicity." (NZ Book Council)

Keri Hulme is interviewed about Maori Writers Festival, whitebaiting, her daily routine, the internet and blogging. The extract includes Hulme reading from the short story *Kissing it as it Flies*

WITI IHIMAERA

Witi Ihimaera (extracts)

Seannadice Productions 1997. Duration 7:17

Witi Tame Ihimaera–Smiler was born in 1944 in Waithi. He is of Te Aitanga–a–Mahaki descent. By his own account the initial purpose of his writing was ‘to establish and describe the emotional landscape of the Maori people’. His later work concentrates more on describing political and social realities. The Whale Rider first published in 1978, was released as a feature film in 2003 to world wide acclaim.

In these extracts Witi Ihimaera discusses growing up in Waituhi Valley and tells us why he wants his writing to be sentimental. Paul Reynolds, Bruce Stewart, Albert Wendt and Keri Hulme are also interviewed about his work.

MAURICE GEE

Frontseat Series 01, Episode 19 (extract)

Gibson Group 2004. Duration 8:52

In 2003 Maurice Gee was among ten New Zealanders to be named as Arts Foundation of NZ Icon Artists. Born in Henderson, Auckland, in 1931, Gee writes both adult and children’s fiction. His children’s book Under the Mountain was made into into a television series during the 1980s. Two of his novels have been made into feature films – Crime Story and In My Father’s Den. Gee’s writing deals with “tension between family members, the failure of community leaders to grow up, violence as a normal element of social life, social constraint and inner freedom and the moral courage of individuals who oppose powerful taboos.”

This studio interview with Gee includes a discussion about Gee’s early days as a writer, ‘the darkness in his stories’, the screen adaptation of In My Father’s Den, and Blindsight his next novel.

MICHAEL KING

The Write Stuff: Programme 20

Pinnacle Producing 1997. Duration 8:30

Michael King was born in Wellington in 1945. A writer, historian and biographer he was committed to remaining accessible to the public, and to explaining New Zealand's bicultural history to a country who had previously encountered the past as stories that happened somewhere else. In doing this he wanted to "make Maori pre-occupations more intelligible to some non-Maori New Zealanders". In 2003 Michael King was awarded the inaugural Prime Minister's Awards for Literary Achievement for Non-Fiction

In this studio interview King talks about his book *God's Farthest Outpost: A History of the Catholic Church*.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

Frontseat Series 01, Episode 06 (extract)

Gibson Group 2004. Duration 5:50

Vincent O'Sullivan, born in Auckland in 1937, is a poet, short story writer, novelist, playwright, critic, editor and literary professor. In 1993 the novel *Let the River Stand* won the Montana New Zealand Book Award. With a poet's eye for detail O'Sullivan writes about the art of living and what it is to be human: exploring issues of betrayal, rejection, loss, estrangement and death.

In this extract O'Sullivan is interviewed on winning \$100,000 in the Michael King Writers Fellowship. He talks about New Zealand writing and his study of the author John Mulgan.

C K STEAD

Backchat: Series 01, Episode 24 (extract)

Gibson Group 1998. Duration 5:20

Christian Karlson Stead born in 1932, was a protege of Frank Sargeson. He is a novelist, critic, poet, essayist and literary professor. He is best known for his novel *Smith's Dream* that was released as the film *Sleeping Dogs* in 1977.

Critics suggest that an awareness of the relationship between Stead's literary and academic roles is the key to understanding his body of work. Stead writes of his academic work "there is no important difference in tone, in vocabulary, or in the demands they make, between my academic papers and my reviews for journals. I am not interested in arcane dialogue. I would like, where possible, to be understood." While his writing has been referred to as metafictional or self-referential, it is also highly personal and fundamentally realist.

Karl Stead takes a camera to Crete and records thoughts on the landscape where the World War two battle that his latest book is set in.