

**Learning to Stand Upright Here  
Who are We  
And  
Who is Our Land?**

**Helen McNeil**

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Primary supervisor: Paul Mountford**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

### **THE EXEGESIS:**

Attestation of authorship.....	page 3
Acknowledgements.....	page 4
Abstract.....	page 5
Introduction.....	page 6
 A Conceptual Framework.....	page 7
 Part One: the Macrolevel – historical and cultural.....	page 8
(a) Laying out the territory	
(b) Occupying the territory – the novel	
(c) Occupying the territory – the characters	
(i) the father	
(ii) the mother	
(iii) the younger daughter	
(iv) the older daughter	
 Part Two: the Microlevel – ecological.....	page 15
(a) Laying out the territory	
(b) Immersion in the territory	
 Conclusion.....	page 19
 Bibliography.....	page 20

### **THE NOVEL:**

Learning to Stand Upright Here – A Novel.....	page 23
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**Attestation of Authorship:**

**“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Learning to Stand Upright Here* is a novel about an immigrant family who come from the United Kingdom in the 1950s to a small town in New Zealand. It is a mill town, built on the volcanic plateau, on a land that is unstable and, at times, inhospitable. The novel traces the difficulties that each member of the family have in settling. Betty, the mother, never leaves the England she has brought with her. Ian, the father, finds his place in the world of work and the local pub. Amy, the younger child, develops a deep connection with the landscape and is consumed by it. Sandra, the older child and the protagonist, reaches out to the land through her connection with Maori. She returns to the town in the 1970s, and finds that she must deal with the past in order to begin to develop a sense of home.

The exegesis that accompanies the novel draws on the fields of cultural geography, philosophy, architecture, and literature to explore a conceptual framework for the development of spirit of place. There are three levels of expression for the characters in the novel: ecological (sensual experience), historical/personal story, and cultural assumptions. They each have a differing degree of expression of these levels. At times the historical/personal stories differ because they are culturally bound.

The exegesis also explores ways of languaging relationship with the landscape, using multisensorial description, second person narrative, and sentence structures in which the landscape feature becomes the subject of the sentence. One of the areas for further development of the novel is envisaged as being in the refinement of this languaging.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

There are threads to every story. I was an immigrant to this country. My family arrived when I was four years old. To them, Britain was home. To me, its signifiers were blue aerogrammes, parcels of out-of-date English and Scots newspapers and sweets, and distress when someone died and there was no money to return. I grew up wild in the Volcanic Plateau, in Kawerau, a town that was made from scratch. At a time when it was full of hope and ambition. I am a deep green. I am of the persuasion that until we repair our deep spiritual and physical connection with the earth, we will not be able to stop our willful destruction of her.

Writing, for me, is a deeply personal experience and these are the personal threads that wove ‘Learning to Stand Upright Here.’ They will surface in this exegesis as I examine the relationship my novel has with other literature, and how it attempts to express a deeper thinking about place and how we develop spirit of place.

‘Learning to Stand Upright Here’ is a story about an immigrant family in the 1950s. Each member of the family has a different experience of trying to come into relationship with a land that is foreign. In this exegesis I will reflect on the writing process, how much I was able to engineer the story so that certain elements emerge, and the fickleness of the creative process that sometimes took the story another way entirely.

I will draw on philosophy, cultural geography, and architecture, as well as critical reviews of literature, on fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The common ground that I am exploring is spirit of place and how to language the relationship of the landscape to the people within it. Although works from other countries will be cited, the main focus will be on New Zealand: on writing that expresses Maori concepts of *manawhenua*, and on *pakeha* writing and its evolution in expressing settling into this land. I will explore the difference between these cultural overlays.

And over-riding it all is the idea of the landscape as a potent force in and of itself.

This exegesis is in two parts. The first part uses a conceptual framework to discuss the novel at a macro-level. The second part examines the language used, and is thus a reflection on the novel at a micro-level. In both sections, reference will be made to other works of fiction, in particular New Zealand fiction.

## **A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:**

Migration and exile can be conceptualized as a kind of trauma (McDonagh in Beaumont, 2007). Elements of attraction and alienation, belonging and exile weave together unevenly in literature about migration. In 'Learning to Stand Upright Here' I was interested in how to explore how a family dealt with this trauma and how this uneven process of settling manifests.

Before I began writing this novel, I thought about a framework to explore the process of settling into a new land. My diverse reading is neatly summarized by Park in Stephenson, Abbott and Ruru (2010) as three imperatives to create an emotional sense of place: ecological, historical and cultural. Although I found Geoff's words later, the three elements of this framework were in my mind before I began and formed a loose matrix for the experience of my characters.

'Learning to Stand Upright Here' covers a time frame from 1950 to 1960, with a framing story of returning that is temporally placed in 1975. This novel explores the cultural and historical conceptualizations that the characters bring with them to their new land. These are time specific and would not be applicable to 2010 as place images change over time as the inhabitants and their experiences change (Ashworth & Graham, 2005; Stephenson et al. 2010).

In **Part One** I will comment on the major themes and symbols used in the novel and the journey of each of the characters using this conceptual framework.

Another layer is added to the novel by the interaction of Maori and Pakeha and their differing cultural stories. Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) conceptualizes the two cultures as essentially Christian (Pakeha) and Pagan (Maori). I am unsure if the dichotomy is quite so pronounced but this does present a starting point.

In **Part One** I will also comment on how the plot signifies these different perspectives and how this relates to spirit of place and the conceptual framework I am using.

In **Part Two** I will unpack the third imperative that Park names: the ecological and the ways in which I have tried to capture this imperative in my novel.

## **PART ONE: The macro-level – historical and cultural:**

### **(a) Laying out the territory**

In this section I will address the historical and cultural imperatives of spirit of place, and how this manifests in my novel.

I have interpreted the historical imperative to mean the personal histories and stories that are told and written about a place, by both Maori and Pakeha. Because I grew up in this town, I relied heavily on my own memories.

‘Learning to Stand Upright Here’ is essentially a story told from a Pakeha point of view. In investigating the Pakeha settlement of the area I visited a museum newly established in the town and frequently consulted a local history (Moore, 1990). I also tracked down a memoir by the first Catholic priest in the area (Paton, nd). At times I had to decide not to force the narrative into a story about the town, but to allow the characters to take it where it needed to go. Although I have tried to be as true as possible to the actual place in the actual time frame, historical veracity is not guaranteed.

In order to further investigate this imperative, I read as much as I could find about the history of Tuwharetoa settlement of this area. Much of the deep connection of Maori to a specific place is in waiata, whakatauki and the oral stories held in whaikorero which weave histories and values about family connections, natural resources, commitments to a specific place, and its people (Smith in Stephenson, et al. 2010). I did not have access to these. Settlement in this area was disrupted by the Tarawera eruption and the community is small. Unfortunately the elders from this small community are now people of my age, and many of the stories from the old people have been lost. My sources had to be tribunal reports which record some of the stories of the significance of certain places (Waitangi Tribunal, 1999; Ngati Tuwharetoa (Bay of Plenty) Claims Settlement Act, 2005).

I have interpreted the cultural imperative to be the deeper level of story that is embedded in a world view. This is where there is a conflict of paradigm. The Pakeha perspective on landscape comes from a world view Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) characterized as ‘Christian.’ There are two threads to this world view: landscape as idyllic wilderness, and landscape as a terrifying force that must be tamed (Short, 1991; McNaughton, 1986; Stephenson, et al. 2010). Both of these world views manifest for the immigrant family in my novel. The Maori perspective on landscape Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) characterized as ‘Pagan’ in that it has elements of animism, pantheism and



anthropomorphism. This is closer to my deep green philosophy and is the means I have used to give the landscape a voice in its own right.

**(b) Occupying the territory – the novel**

The embedding of a historical story in my novel begins with the title ‘Learning to Stand Upright Here.’ Its source is the last two lines of a poem by Allen Curnow called ‘The Skeleton of the Great Moa in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch. 1943.’

*‘Not I, some child, born in a marvelous year,  
Will learn the trick of standing upright here.’*

(Curnow, 1974).

At the time I chose the title because it resonated strongly with my idea of what I was writing. I later found the rationale for this resonance. The poem itself was written in 1943 and dates to a time when a group of poets (Charles Brasch, Robin Hyde, Denis Glover, A.R.D. Fairburn and Allen Curnow) were looking to find inspiration in New Zealand. As Allen Curnow is quoted to have said ‘self in country and country in self.’ (Allen Curnow quoted in McNaughton, 1986, p.9).

C K Stead (2002) maintains that Curnow’s poetry has two features. The first feature is a sense of depression built into a generation who had travelled far, could not and often did not wish to return, but still carried a sense of loss and alienation. The second feature is allusion to something missing – an ideal that does not get realised. Both of these features are pertinent to the McLeod family who come to New Zealand and cannot return, and who come with high hopes for their lives in the new land.

The story reflects the dominant immigrant/settler/pakeha mythology of the time. The dominant story for 1950/1960 in New Zealand for immigrants was one that persisted from Wakefield’s time of the myth of utopia in the South Pacific (Eggleton & Potton, 1999), although it had shifted to become one of nation building and prosperity through modernity rather than the English pastoral Arcadia that was promulgated in the nineteenth century. Within my suitcase of family memorabilia is the advertising material that my father obtained from New Zealand house. It clearly enunciates this utopia and this was the myth that the McLeod family arrived with. The story is then about their individual

attempts to 'wrestle meaning' from an 'alien landscape.' (Eggleton & Potton, 1999, p.8). The volcanic plateau is indeed an alien landscape to the characters. A pumice plain, devoid of vegetation, laid waste and vastly changed by the Tarawera eruption of 1886 – a landscape that offers neither stability nor domesticity. Members of the family experience the landscape much as it was described by R.A.K. Mason in his poem 'The Sonnet of Brotherhood' *'this far pitched perilous hostile place/this solitary hard-assaulted spot'* (quoted in Eggleton & Potton, 1999, p.7).

There is a major theme in the novel about mothering, and failure to mother. This theme manifests at the cultural or world view level, where belief systems are in conflict. The family story reflects a commonly held symbolism of earth as mother. The earth is assaulted in this case, by the building of the mill and the pollution that this incurs. There is a female spirit/apparition that appears to one of the characters. This spirit is not benign. This character looks for a benign mother figure (Mary) in the Catholic Church but is unsuccessful. Her search for salvation through her imported religion represents an overlaying of a foreign belief system on the land. My deep green belief system is apparent here, with the natural world as a force independent of the needs of humanity, and reactive to humanity's destructive acts.

There is another major theme in the novel about the meeting of two cultures: the local people who have lived in the area for many generations, and the immigrants who have just arrived. This theme manifests at the personal historical level. In Chapters 4 and 5 there is a clash of stories about the caves on the mountain. For Maori these have been burial caves, their story of these caves and the bones held there is one of tapu. For the Pakeha children they are a place to be explored, and have resonances of Jesus's tomb and of Emma Edgecumbe, a story from Europe of a woman buried alive that was ascribed to the wife of the Admiral whose name was appended to the mountain by Captain Cook (wiki/George\_Edgcumbe, wiki/Lady\_with\_the\_Ring). A similar conflict in how the landscape is storied occurs in Chapter 35 when the kaumatua uses the story of the mountain to talk about the protagonist's pregnancy to his mokopuna and the Pakeha father loses his temper at this story telling. This theme of the two cultures meeting continues during the book with the major protagonist meeting the land through meeting its indigenous people.

Migrants bring with them stories of their place of origin. Elements within the landscape are overlaid with the imported stories and beliefs of the immigrants. In Chapter 2 the volcanic area of Sulphur Hill is a place to re-enact World War II, in Chapter 16

when the children are in the volcanic area across the other side of the creek, their conversation is of purgatory. In Chapter 19 the mother tries to find the familiar landscape she left behind in the fierceness and the possible oblivion of the volcanic area near the mill.

It is the landscape that brings resolution. In Chapter 37 the protagonist meets her child and the kaumatua again. This opens her to the possibility of resolution. It is when she returns to Falls and allows herself to become one with the landscape that settling and homecoming is possible.

### **(c) Occupying the Territory – the characters**

Each of the characters in this story has a different experience of coming into relationship with the land and of settling.

#### **(i) The father:**

The father, Ian, comes with his attitudes to ‘other’ intact. He imposes these beliefs on the people he meets – his racist attitudes, his judgement of Catholics. In Chapter 4 when he is introduced he experiences the natural world as alien, for him the mountain broods. He sees it in terms of how it will change when he has built things in it. For him, the landscape is the mill, where he finds a place of sorts in the world of work. He comes to New Zealand with the utopian ideal of prosperity. His later disillusionment is foreshadowed by the instability in his landscape. Note the use of the motif ‘Now you see it, now you don’t’.

In Chapter 11 (p. 81):

*‘Smoke from the mill drifted across the windowless buildings, smudging the lights, hiding them – now you see it, now you don’t. Sometimes the mill seemed almost alive. Left to itself, its workers all safely swallowed, it listened to the deep, fissured rocks under it, and translated the noise of tiny shifts in bedrock into a constant rumble. It was permanence on shifting earth.’*

He becomes disheartened, and withdraws from the family as the novel progresses until finally he is broken by the failure of this utopian ideal.

Ian was conceptualized as a fairly typical migrant of the time; one for whom the world of work is paramount, and who continues to read newspapers from 'home'. And one for whom the natural world is irrelevant. I think he keeps integrity as a character.

**(ii) The mother:**

The mother, Betty, never leaves England. She brings her difficulties with her daughter with her – symbolic of her own difficulties with mother earth. She has been unable to bond with her youngest daughter, she never bonds with her adopted country. She mostly lives in the house, and later in the novel, in one room. Her environment is an impoverished one. Her major interaction with the landscape is in Chapter 21 (p. 131):

*'The warmth of the steam was soothing her and her self slipped away, little by little so she floated in the place between the water, the earth and the grey clouds. The steam wetting her face tasted of sulphur and it pulled her to streets where the gas lights haloed and the grey stone houses came and went with the fog, now you see them, now you don't. And they were leaving the grey stone house, to go to some other place, far away, where the fog smelt of sulphur and the steam bores raged at the grey clouds – come back, they said, come back.'*

Her experience is one of annihilation when she goes to the volcanic area near the mill. The motif of "Now you see them, now you don't" is repeated.

Betty was conceptualized as a victim of migration. It is she who carries much of the trauma. It was difficult to judge the speed and extent of her disintegration. I think she succeeds. Her isolation is believable, there was only letters and visits (often promised and not made) in the 1950/1960 period. She is a callous mother – this defining aspect of her character had a life of its own. I did make another minor character (Bea Simperingham) into a much nicer mother to try and bring some balance.

**(iii) The younger daughter:**

Amy was four when the family arrived in New Zealand. This country is all she has known. She is a fey, otherworldly child. She has a strong relationship with the landscape at a deep level. She is alienated from her own mother, because she is imperfect. From the beginning she has a connection with water. In Chapter 4 (p. 20):

*‘They say that once the water has seen you, seen into you, you will never fear it again. Amy would always remember the caress of the cold creek water, the way it filled her ears, her nose, the way it held her, carried her. Her body would remember the cold. The cold that shocked her warmth from her, then insinuated itself into her veins. She would remember the entrancement of manuka against blue sky, twisted, stroked into movement to mimic the water. And the feeling of water pushing her eyelids open. Look. See. This is the real world. This is what eels, trout and koura see. And you. Now, you. Remember, remember me, you once swam like this. Before your birth. Before. This is who you are. You are the creek. You are the water.’*

This connection continues. She is haunted by an old woman who is both the landscape and the earth-as-mother. It is a troubled connection and she searches for a Pakeha (Christian) solution to this – Mary. In the end she is swallowed by the water, and digested by the land.

Amy was conceptualized as a sacrifice to the new land. She is the cost of migration, and her identification with the landscape that is foreign and other to her causes her a conflict – the spirit of the new land versus the spirit of an imported religion. It was difficult to drown her and caused me some grief. I grew to really like Amy.

#### **(iv) The older daughter:**

Sandra is the protagonist. She has been a shadowy character, difficult to develop. For her, the landscape attracts and repels. Her interactions with it are of this world, inhabited by people with whom she interacts. In Chapter 23 (p. 145)

*‘And his big, soft lips landed on her smile which seemed to know how to change to meet the soft sweet sensation of being kissed. And kissed again. The fantail flicked in the willows, chirping at the feast of insects disturbed by these two melting each other into the pumice bank. The gritty pumice bank, warmed by the sun, shifted under their weight, remembering eruption and the lightness of flying. Their bodies pressed, softness holding and yielding to urgent hardness. Almost. Almost. Shame, shame, pregnant, shame ....the fantail scolded.’*

She is the one who resists, and steps forward (both elements of the migrant). She makes the connection with the kaumatua over the bones, she becomes pregnant with a Maori boy and she runs away, coming back reluctantly to meet the land. She must live in love with it. She carries the possibility of homecoming, but it is her daughter who is the one who will ‘Learn to Stand Upright Here’, even with her imperfection.

Sandra was conceptualized as the one who has the possibility of actually settling in the land. The story followed its own logic in developing how much she does actually

settle and in making her daughter the one who does. The framing story came in later, and is the story of her self discovery and openness to home. I had difficulty with her because Amy became such a strong character. In contrast, Sandra seems to be in reaction all the time. I think further work on the novel is in this area – the strength of Sandra as a character.

The family story has its own potency as a story. Whilst the deeper themes were always in my mind, the characters in the story had to breathe and have the space to unfold the story without me imposing my framework. The same could be said of the landscape features that I selected – they also had to have room to breathe and become themselves. I hope I achieved this.

## **PART TWO: The Microlevel – ecological**

### **(a) Laying out the Territory**

I have defined the ecological as the inter-relationship of people and landscape. I have been heavily influenced by the work of David Abram, a philosopher who has had a major impact on the environmental movement. He discusses reciprocity between living things and the possibility of a unitary life force beneath the culturally different expressions of relationship with landscape. He uses shamantic concepts such as shape shifting, maintaining that ‘*At the level of our spontaneous, sensorial engagement with the world around us, we are all animists*’ (Abram, 1997, p.57). He holds with a sentient landscape – one in which the world experiences itself through us. He is interested in the shifting patterns of this reciprocal relationship and maintains that human experience of the world must be through an intertwining of the senses – all the senses are engaged and something he terms synaesthesia occurs where we listen with our eyes and watch with our ears.

This is the pagan world view that Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) identifies.

In relation to language Abram references the work of a linguist, Edward Sapir who states that the language habits of our culture predispose what we look at and how we interpret it. I am interested in how these language habits can be disrupted so that the inter-penetration of people and landscape can be captured, and the landscape is experienced as a sentient, shape shifting entity.

I found two relevant terms that relate to literature. The first is ‘felicitous space.’ This term, from a philosopher called Gaston Bachelard, was used in a connection with American women authors post World War I – it is space that concentrates being (Fryer, 1986). Fryer adds her own definition – she sees felicitous space as psychically innovating and transformative. (Fryer, 1986). The second term is ‘inscaping’ which is a term coined by the English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. The most sensible definition I found was ‘the unique configuration of the sensuously transient’ (Fryer, 1986, p.382).

A common thread for these terms is the recording of sensual experience – using all of the senses rather than just the visual.

So, how to make the landscape a character in its own right. I read widely and the following authors helped inform my search for how to do this. The first was Graham Swift. In his novel ‘Waterland’ (Swift, 1983) the Fens of England permeate the structure

of the novel, the experiences of its characters, the symbols and the language which flows and silts up, just like the canals. The second was Alan Garner. In his novel ‘Thursbitch’ (Garner, 2004) he is more blatantly pagan in his approach. The landscape is represented as a god that requires interaction and propitiation. The story moves seamlessly from the mythic to the ordinary, with the language moving register and dialect. The third was Keri Hulme. In her novel ‘The Bone People’ the landscape is intrinsically woven with the fate of the characters, with the violence, and the healing that occurs. It is embodied in the elders who assist two of the main characters to heal. It is personified and addressed as the ‘wairua.’ The fourth was Kirsty Gunn. In her novella ‘Rain’ (Gunn, 1994) not only is the landscape personified, but the language is different. The landscape becomes the active agent in the sentence:

*‘The water has them, those people you pretend were your life. It has you. Its water pulse beating in your wrists now. You know it too. The lake, she’s your lovely body now, with all her openings. Close your eyes, she’s still there.’*  
(Gunn, p.94)

I found the same thing in the novel Reconnaissance by Kapka Kassabova. Interestingly, it is the water again.

*‘Water takes you when nobody else wants you. Sometimes she takes you by force, before you are ready. Sometimes she comes to you in big mighty crashing waves. She breaks you, then she soothes you.’*  
(Kassabova 1999 as cited in Eggleton & Potton, 1999, p.39).

## **(b) Immersion in the territory:**

I began not wanting to personify the landscape, not to turn it into some kind of mythic being. I wanted to give it a more direct voice. So I began with the omniscient voice. Some of the early drafts of ‘Learning to Stand Upright Here’ had passages in omniscient voice at the beginning. It didn’t work. Feedback from my mentor and fellow students said so. I was attached to my prose, it was difficult to shift gear. After a class on voice, I decided to try second person in order to get into the character of Sandra. I was writing the framing story, and it worked. In consultation with my mentor, I decided to keep the framing story in second voice. This unusual voice allows the point of view to be somewhere between the reader and the character. It is intense. It fits this ecological imperative in that it works best when it is steeped in the moment to moment experience of the character.



I took on board the idea of writing intense multi-sensorial passages when I wanted to express immersion in landscape. What follows are two passages in which this is more developed. They are both followed by another technique that I used, that of a disembodied voice that could be eschewed as coming from the land.

In Chapter 6 (p. 48) Colin is in the burial cave:

*‘The torch had a narrow beam, and he could see, directly in front of him, a way through the jagged rocks, places to put his feet. He jumped as the noise of his scrambling and the noise of his heartbeat bounced against the edges of the passage, and the edges of his own body. He was being swallowed. He could hear someone whimpering, small sounds, magnified in the confined passageway. He wondered who it was. He turned back to the light of the entrance, ready to run back. It seemed a long way away. “Scaredy cat, scaredy cat.” It could be Luke, it could be Luke’s voice, or it could be inside his own head. He took a breath and it shuddered out. He turned towards the dark. A few more steps and the light stopped bouncing from rock edges. There was a smell of damp, and of age. There was space which holds.’*

This voice is in his head – or is coming from stories of the land:

*‘Jesus loves all little children, Colin. Jesus died for you because you’re a bad boy, Colin. Jesus was in a cave for three days, for three days he was shut in a cave. And he wasn’t even dead, Colin. And then he came out as the Holy Ghost, Colin, and he’ll come and get you if you’re bad. And then Colin, there’s Emma. And when the thief went to cut the ring off the finger of Emma Edgumbe, she woke up. She’d been dead, or had she, and she woke up and the thief died of fright. And she, well, she went back home and they didn’t believe that she was not a ghost.’*

In Chapter 37 (p. 209) Sandra is at the Tarawera Falls:

*‘There’s a hissing under the insistent roar of water, a hissing you can almost hear. You strain to listen. Maybe she’ll tell you, Amy’s old woman, maybe she’ll tell you what happened here. The roar of the water, the hissing persist, fill your head until you feel yourself dissolving, becoming particles of shining wet obsidian. But it will not let you understand. Your gaze is wrenched away from the violent water to the small remains of river that catch the sun, and dance around an islet.’*

This is at the end of the novel, and the voice is directly from the land itself:

*‘These waters are the tears of Tarawera. That mountain, she will always cry for her child, the one that was taken from her. She split herself apart with the grief of it, that mother. It is the way of the mother, to do that, and to eternally lament for her child. It is greedy, that grief, it will consume everything. It was the way of your mother, and of you, and it will always be the way. That is how it is.’*

The nature of the story of the land has changed to become a direct communication of the features of the landscape to the protagonist. I have mixed the stories – some of them are imported Pakeha stories, some are Maori stories. But I think I have achieved the idea that these are stories.

I have tried on the technique of making the landscape the subject of a sentence, rather than the object. I have done this to give primacy to the sentient landscape. Examples of this are:

*‘It (the mountain) leans on you.’* (Chapter 5, p.12)

*‘The hills breathe in your voice.’* (Chapter 5. P.40)

*‘You turn the corner of the deeply etched track and step into the roar of the river. It buffets you, pushes at your edges, echoes through your head and your belly. The sound sweeps you towards the Holden with its open door and Robert sitting behind the driving wheel. You’re washed into the car...’*  
(In Chapter 8 p. 66)

I have particularly done this in the framing story, when the protagonist is being stalked by her own memories and by the landscape in which they dwell.

In the second to last chapter of the novel, Sandra returns to the Tarawera Falls. It is here that the landscape makes demands of her. This is where I am trying for the felicitous space described by Judith Fryer – the transformative space.

This novel is early in its stages of development. I particularly want to focus on the language used, to try for more moments of felicitous space – and I am hoping this will further develop Sandra’s character as they occur in the framing story when she has returned. I also want to aim for the ‘inscaping’ that Gerard Manley Hopkins captures in his poetry.

## **CONCLUSION**

‘Learning to Stand Upright Here’ is an investigation in how to give landscape a voice. Both McNaughton (1986) and Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) say that the landscape, our place in it and our identity because of it, is an obsession for New Zealand writers, particularly Pakeha writers.

McNaughton (1986) refers to C K Stead who commented on the contradiction of imported collective identity (which I have interpreted as cultural belief systems) and the shaping of an individual who has grown up in a particular environment. Stephenson et al. (2010) describe landscape as immersive – it is just not a locale but has become an active part of our lives. They make the point that a landscape is always local and that adjustment over time has allowed us to come into relationship with it. The family members in ‘Learning to Stand Upright Here’ are at different stages in this journey into making relationship with and identifying with our land.

Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) comments on the work of Keri Hulme, Witi Ihimaera and Patrica Grace as Maori writers in which the landscape is integral to the story and the characters. He also discusses the work of Maurice Gee and Ronald Hugh Morrieson in linking person and landscape. And C K Stead (2002) makes the comment that Janet Frame appreciates the natural world but tends to process it into metaphor that is about the internal state of the character. Eggleton (Eggleton & Potton, 1999) observes that the landscape has become increasingly urban with the work of Rosie Scott, Tina Shaw, Maurice Gee, Damien Wilkins.

New Zealand literature has increasingly moved towards a sense that the writer and thus the characters are comfortable within the landscape, building their own personal/historical stories and, increasingly, tolerating a cultural diversity.

This year has been a wonderful opportunity to begin to learn a craft and start an exploration that has become an obsession. Who are we, and who is our land?

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