

Annotation of Valérie Baisnée's "To Ibiza: Separation and Recreation in Janet Frame's Island Narrative", *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 26 (2008), pp. 59-72.

Daria Tunca, University of Liège

In this article, Valérie Baisnée examines the motif of the island in the autobiography of New Zealand author Janet Frame. She more specifically concentrates on the third volume of Frame's life story, *The Envoy from Mirror City* (1985), and argues that in this book, the Spanish island of Ibiza, where the writer spent several months in the mid-1950s, is not simply presented as a place in the physical sense of the term, but also as a space with multiple discursive functions.

To buttress this claim, Baisnée first of all demonstrates how Frame's account of her stay on Ibiza shares patterns similar to those found in traditional island adventures such as *Robinson Crusoe*. The scholar focuses on several topoi, including the main character's chaotic arrival, episodes foregrounding conquest and romance, and the isle's transformation in the eyes of the protagonist. Baisnée subsequently delves into Frame's more complex poetics of space, and, taking her cue from a theoretical statement by Gilles Deleuze, suggests that the double yearning for separation and recreation induced by islands in the human imagination also lies at the centre of the New Zealand writer's literary strategy. The essay then takes a Freudian turn, and proceeds to show how Frame's narrative at first depicts Ibiza as a "Heimlich" (that is, simultaneously friendly and secret) locus that acts as a fertile symbol for memory and timelessness, before the island acquires uncanny features and is eventually perceived by the author as a cliché that impedes her imagination.

This article offers many valuable insights into the importance of the island as a discursive trope in the Ibiza episode of Frame's autobiography. The poststructuralist and

psychoanalytical perspectives adopted by the critic are combined with often perceptive textual analyses, making Baisnée's essay a stimulating piece that should be of interest both to scholars specialising in the interpretation of Frame's work and to those studying the significance of space in literature.