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Abstract

Although critics have been quick to identify the literary lumber Satchell brought with him to New Zealand in his reliance on outworn British plot conventions, such as the discovery of long-lost relatives and convenient legacies, little has been made of the one item of baggage Satchell borrowed and adapted to his own use in his fourth novel, *The Greenstone Door*, 1 which has generally been admitted to have had the greatest influence on later New Zealand novelists, including Sargeson.

The *Bildungsroman* Tradition in *The Greenstone Door* and *I Saw In My Dream*.

Man can never wipe the slate clean and begin anew. He carries all his lumber with him, good, bad, and indifferent.

Although critics have been quick to identify the literary lumber Satchell brought with him to New Zealand in his reliance on outworn British plot conventions, such as the discovery of long-lost relatives and convenient legacies, little has been made of the one item of baggage Satchell borrowed and adapted to his own use in his fourth novel, *The Greenstone Door*,¹ which has generally been admitted to have had the greatest influence on later New Zealand novelists, including Sargeson.

When Philip Wilson, in his first study of Satchell, *The Maorilander*,² points out that the novel in some ways resembles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, he suggests the clue to the novel's identity and the reason for its impact on other writers. Cedric, Helenora, and Purcell, Wilson says, can be compared to Pip, Estella, and Magwitch. He goes on to say: 'This resemblance is largely of technical interest — in the same way, Balzac took over the pattern of King Lear and his daughters to use in *Père Goriot* — and once Satchell's *debt* [my italics] on these points is acknowledged little further comment is needed, for the impact of the two books is vastly different.'

Wilson begs the question, and then, in this and his subsequent Twayne study,³ avoids the issue by examining Satchell's work as an historical novel, casting Purcell as its principal protagonist.

The case, I believe, is otherwise. The relationship between Dickens's novel and *The Greenstone Door* is more than a matter of 'technical interest'; 'further comment is required' (my emphasis) if we are to determine the kind of novel Satchell was writing. My thesis is that

Satchell, like Dickens, was working in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*; that Satchell, the expatriate Englishman, was forced both by his New Zealand material and by his deliberate intention of making his hero a New Zealander (or Maorilander, as he would have called him) to adapt the form in a number of important ways; and that Sargeson, recognizing in the 1914 novel a fable of what it was to be a New Zealander, developed that fable further in his own largely autobiographical novel, *I Saw In My Dream* (1949). The two New Zealand novels, taken together, are landmarks in the literary history of the *Bildungsroman* in New Zealand fiction written by men, and provide a useful index to the pattern of individual growth and awareness exemplified in other novels of the same type written by both men and women in New Zealand.

Great Expectations may be read as a classic English *Bildungsroman*. First published in 1860-1861, it traces the career of a young man some forty years earlier whose progress from blacksmith's apprentice to gentleman living on the capital of others' labour encapsulates the myth of upward social mobility that was the product of a society embarked on rapid social change and industrialization. Pip, like the rest of his society, is blind to the real source of his unearned wealth. So long as he sees his 'expectations' in crassly material terms he is doomed to a life of spiritual poverty and a cramping of all sense of generosity and concern for his fellows. Although he makes some provision for Herbert Pocket in recompense for the financial straits his own style of extravagant living has led his friend, it is not until the convict, Magwitch returns from Australia and reveals that Pip's fortunes depend entirely on his colonial labour that Pip is given the opportunity to reconsider his behaviour and attempt to remould himself.

Feelings of guilt, terror and inadequacy having been early instilled into the young Pip, it is small wonder that he has but little grasp of his own nature. His being sent to Miss Havisham's for the purpose of playing with Estella is prompted by bitterness and jealousy, encouraged by envy and obsequiousness on the part of Pumblechook and his cronies, and unresisted by his own impressionable and too compliant self. Whatever small graces and accomplishments he has — he has enjoyed the companionship of Biddy at Mr Wopsle's great-aunt's school and has endeavoured to help Joe identify at least the letters of his name — are forgotten as he submits to Estella's contemptuous treatment and willingly accepts her estimate of himself:

'He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy!' said Estella with disdain, before our first game was out. 'And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!'

I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before; but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair. Her contempt for me was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it.⁴

Pip's self-contempt converts easily into contempt for others, especially those he considers inferior to himself. Having been given the opportunity of being made apprentice to Joe, he feels himself the moral and intellectual superior of Biddy who has now taken over the management of Mrs Joe and the Gargery household. Dazzled by Estella, he is blind to Biddy's sterling qualities and fails to detect the irony of her reply to his questioning her how she manages to both carry out her domestic work and keep abreast of him in whatever he learns:

'How do you manage, Biddy,' said I, 'to learn everything that I learn, and always to keep up with me? ...

'I might as well ask you,' said Biddy, 'how *you* manage?'

'No; because when I come in from the forge of a night, any one can see me turning to at it. But you never turn to at it, Biddy.'

'I suppose I must catch it — like a cough,' said Biddy, quietly; and went on with her sewing. (p.153)

Even when Biddy points out to him that she was in fact his first teacher he can only respond to her by being patronizing and condescending. When with a great rush of magnanimity he embraces her and proclaims that henceforth he will tell her everything, she silences him with the words: 'Till you're a gentleman.' (p.157)

Without Magwitch's money Pip cannot afford to live the life of a 'brought-up London gentleman' on which Magwitch has set such high stakes. He can, however, learn to recognize that true gentlemanliness depends less on the possession of property than on the exercise of concern for others. In this respect the faithful Joe is more of a 'true Christian gentleman' than men like Compeyson and Bentley Drummle whose behaviour ill sorts with the rank which birth alone has entitled them to.

The dilemma facing Pip and Dickens, however, is that without money there is no place in the hierarchy for such a 'natural' gentleman that does not include a loss of status. Pip, faced with a choice between London (and imprisonment for debt) and the country (a return to Joe's forge) has no alternative but to go overseas, at least temporarily: until another source of colonial wealth can be found.

The displacement of men such as Pip provides the colonial novelist with his first raw material. Satchell's familiarity with Dickens's work is nowhere in doubt. Sarah Brompart remarks in *The Greenstone Door* that she has been reading 'Mr Dickens's new book' which, from its date, we might speculate is *Little Dorrit* (1855-7). And Satchell's novel, like his earlier *The Land of the Lost*,⁵ exemplifies a belief, comparable to the one that Dickens expressed in both *Little Dorrit* and *Great Expectations*, a belief in the healing power of love.

Purcell has, like Magwitch, made his fortune in the colonies. He gives Cedric, whom he has brought up, the princely — and incredible — sum of fifty thousand pounds in English Consols. But he is not a convict nor a criminal, unless to share a Maori way of life, marry a Maori woman, and choose to fight with the Maoris be adjudged a crime in British eyes.

Cedric, rather than Purcell, is the focus of the novel. Orphaned by the death of his father, who had espoused the Maori cause in the sacking of the Te Kuma *pa*, Cedric's first impressions of life are of hiding in the tall ferns and of his rescue by Purcell.

The opening chapters of *The Greenstone Door* bear comparison with those of *Great Expectations*. The flat Essex marshlands, with the grim outlines of the hulks discernible through the gloom, which Dickens evokes as *mise-en-scène* for the criminal activities of Magwitch and the furtive, guilt-laden discoveries of the young Pip, are, in Satchell's novel, transformed into the no less mythic luxuriance of the New Zealand bush. What is remarkable about Cedric, in comparison with Pip, is his total lack of terror and guilt. His vision, like Pip's, is limited, but not by the miasma of desolation, which emanates as much from the noxious works of man as from the marshes themselves, but by the abundance of natural leafy foliage. Both children are surrounded by recent reminders of death, and there is something majestic and awe-inspiring about the echoes of Maori war-cries which sound in Cedric's mind compared with the bewilderment that is Pip's lot in the face of those pitiful little foot and a half long mounds and the stark inscriptions on his parents' grave in the Essex churchyard.

Pip's name is as abbreviated and inconsequential as the lives of his family; Cedric Tregarthen, though he finds difficulty at first in saying his name, is identified by that name as a person of some substance. The fact that his rescuers think he is saying 'Eric' is perhaps Satchell's way of intimating to the reader that he is a boy who 'little by little' will grow up to prove himself worthy of his inheritance. His parentage known, he is educated by the knowledgeable and enlightened Purcell to live up to the standard set by his paternal namesake who rejected England, an English

woman and a fortune for the New Zealand he loved. Neither Pip nor Cedric are what the nineteenth century called 'self made men'; both are what their education and 'expectations' encourage them to be. But from the start Satchell makes it clear how much more expansive and generous are the models available for Cedric the New Zealander to build on than those available to Pip.

Cedric's early years in the Maori *pa* teach him respect both for himself and for others, regardless of wealth, sex, or social background. Under Purcell's able tuition he is also taught the best the nineteenth century can offer in terms of the mastery of modern languages, science and mathematics. The choice of subject matter alone distinguishes his formal education from that of the conventional English gentleman, as Purcell and Satchell intended it should:

At that date, and even for fifty years thereafter, what was called education was limited to the facts of human history, so that a man might be ignorant as a savage of the whole cosmos, and yet, if he were fairly conversant with Greek and Latin, he was regarded as an educated man. (p.40)

What Cedric's education is manifestly unfit for, of course, as well he knows, is the world of commerce and competition in the city for which Purcell originally intended him. In Auckland for the first time, Cedric quickly assesses the behaviour of his host's family to be worse than that of savages and, despite the press of humanity on the city streets, is 'impressed, as [he] had never been impressed among the Maoris, by a sense of the isolation of the human unit' (p.149).

Cedric's *Wanderjahre* (which last three years in fact) — and Satchell's use of the term identifies clearly enough his awareness of the tradition he was using — begins in much the same way as Pip's earlier essay into the world of Satis House. He has not seen a horse nor a white girl before but has a ready answer to those who would judge him a savage because of that. When Helenora attempts to play Estella to his Pip he counters with a straightforward explanation of his admiration for her, and when he cannot mount his horse the right way does just as good a job from the other side. Cedric may be 'The Little Finger of Te Waharoa' but he is his own man. Unlike Pip, Cedric hardly falters from the high standard of conduct inculcated in him both by Purcell and his friend Rangiora.

Cedric's character is grounded in the compact he and Rangiora made as children, with Puhī-Huia, his half-sister, in the cave. The compact of the greenstone door, from which the novel takes its name, asserts the unity of Maori and pakeha and establishes a system of values which overrides partisan claims:

Let us forget that we are of two races ... and remember that we are also of one — the race of mankind. Never shall my hand be raised against you and yours. Let not your hand be lifted against me and mine. Let us rather make between us the compact of the Tatau Pounamu, and if in the years to come one of us should reopen that which is shut, on his head be the loss and the shame. Behold, the Greenstone Door is closed. (p.71)

Having already saved Cedric from drowning, Rangiora shows the solidarity of the pact when he later volunteers his own life to save Cedric when he is about to be killed by the vengeful ariki.

Cedric's own position is tested when war breaks out again between the Maori and the white man. Purcell is forced to choose between them and justifies his siding with the Maori both in a letter to Cedric and in his eloquent testimony before the hastily assembled military court. Purcell denies he is a British subject, having been in New Zealand before it became a colony and never having seen any evidence of British civil authority in his district. Cedric's non-partisanship, which may appear at first as fence-sitting, is not that. His is the first generation, Satchell is saying, for whom the conflict is not between Maori and British but between Maorilander and Maorilander. He cannot take sides because he belongs to both.

That the conflict is internalized is made clear in the final section of the novel when Cedric, like Pip after Magwitch's death, temporarily loses his reason following Purcell's merciless killing in cold blood on Fred Brompart's orders. Having been imprisoned and led captive through the forest in charge of a wretched idiot (whose incapacity is token of an equally brutal abuse of Maori authority), Cedric's mind wanders and finds solace in bucolic fancies culled from his juvenile reading of Wordsworth with Helenora.

Unlike Dickens, who is uncertain what to do with Estella, Satchell brings Helenora back to Cedric and to New Zealand. The lure of an earldom and a fortune in England notwithstanding, Cedric's identity as a New Zealander is confirmed by his refusal to recognize his home as anywhere but New Zealand.

But if England exerts little pull on Cedric, for Satchell the novelist, the weight of his New Zealand material isn't quite strong enough for him to resist the pressure of the *Great Expectations* archetype; or, to put it the other way, he isn't strong enough to trust his own material. Structurally, there is no need for Helenora to reveal a carefully concealed and gratuitous vindictiveness in her love for Cedric; nor does the characterization of Lady Wylde, Cedric's father's first love, support the notion of her being an embittered Miss Havisham figure.

Satchell faces two related problems in his characterization, one having to do with his male protagonist and the other with his creation of female characters. Both are similar to the problems faced by Dickens in *Great Expectations* and derive directly from the two authors each having to adapt the *Bildungsroman* form to his own use.

Since Carlyle's translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in 1824 the *Bildungsroman* in England developed as the principal vehicle for the expression of masculine endeavour to effect a *modus vivendi* between the individual and his society. By 1860, as Dickens's novel reveals, there is no place *within* society available to a man such as Pip. On his return from the colonies he is a man set apart, for whom there is little other function than that of the writer by default. He writes his own *Bildungsroman* out of the material of his own life.

The relationship of the *Bildungsroman* to the *Künstlerroman* is a complex one but one which begins, I maintain, with the kind of *impass* Dickens was beginning to become aware of in *Great Expectations* and which Satchell was not entirely able to avoid: the problem of what to do with one's protagonist. Cedric's decision to stay in New Zealand, while it confirms his own personal integrity, given the parameters in which Satchell allows him to operate, virtually condemns him to the life of a dilettante. Unable quite to make Cedric a writer (for whom at that stage in New Zealand's history would he be writing?), Satchell, at the risk of turning him into a colonial Casaubon, makes him unpaid amanuensis to Governor Gray. Cedric's description of himself as Helenora's pedantic pedagogue (p.205) does not make amusing reading.

Both Dickens and Satchell isolate an increasingly priggish male protagonist at the expense of their female characters, a process which, given the overwhelmingly masculine mode of the nineteenth century *Bildungsroman*, is difficult for any writer to avoid. Although women writers such as Charlotte Brontë (*Jane Eyre*, 1848) and George Eliot (*The Mill on the Floss*, 1860) had already opened up the *Bildungsroman* to include a range of female experience in their use of paired male and female protagonists,⁶ Dickens resists the logic of his own material even at the expense of doing violence to his women characters. Bidley's marrying Joe provides Pip with a salutary moral lesson but it also ensures that her influence and intelligence are kept strictly within the domestic sphere and lower down the social scale. Magwitch's estranged wife is reduced to a terrified creature who creeps round Jagger's table, her once powerful wrists engaged in nothing more strenuous than passing dishes, their scars to be exhibited on demand to curious guests. Even the waspish Mrs Joe is rendered incapable by a convenient seizure and is as effectively removed

from society as Miss Havisham is by her 'self-imposed' stagnation. Only Estella cannot be so summarily silenced.

Her reappearance in *The Greenstone Door* as Helenora/'Herenora' Wylde represents Satchell's attempt to provide an effective complement for his singular protagonist. With the substitution of a lingual her English name becomes convincingly Maori while her surname puns on the notion of savage versus civilized which is one example of the balanced opposites (light/darkness, lost/found, freedom/captivity are others) around which Satchell structures his novel. What is so revealing however in Satchell's portrayal of Helenora, the woman who returns to New Zealand in time to coax Cedric out of his temporary insanity, is that he makes his hero first of all mistake her for a man, and an idiot at that, and then when finally he recognizes her and his madness passes, he likens her to 'an angel of heaven'. The real Helenora of the ready retort and patient conversation is, by the end of the novel, reduced to silence: 'She nodded, and lifted her lips mutely to mine' (p.398).

A similar unsatisfactoriness surrounds Cedric's relationship with his half-sister Puhi-Huia. Although Cedric admits to his own jealousy in his early feelings of possessiveness for her, he is happy that she is loved by Rangiora. Nevertheless, only by allowing her a dramatic and sacrificial death — she is shot in battle by a stray British bullet as she stands silhouetted on the parapet of the Maori redoubt — does Satchell finally allow her to join her slain lover.

Even so, if we examine Satchell's women characters in their relationship with men it would seem that they complement each other more equitably than those of Dickens. We remark that Rangiora's mother, Tuku-Tuku ('The Spider's Web'), is capable of restraining her husband's violent impulses and that Lady Wylde, despite Helenora's asseverations, appears to have suffered no very serious blight as the result of Cedric Tregarthen senior's desertion of her. Even Purcell's wife Roma, whose subservience is as much an embarrassment to him as it is to the reader, distinguishes herself in her unfaltering declaration of the truth at her husband's court martial.

More subject to the whims and caprices of their men are the Brompart women, mother and elder daughter, whose lives in the city are manifestly narrow, the result, Satchell makes it clear, of their clinging to a spurious gentility imported wholesale into New Zealand along with their piano and their family's proclivities for trade. Sarah Brompart alone is distinguished from them, principally, as we have seen, by her delight in Dickens, out of whose pages the rest of her family might well have stepped. As Mr Brompart, complaining of his sons' bullying and domina-

tion, says to Cedric: '«They want to return to England, Master Cedric; that's their constant cry»' (p.207).

The future of New Zealand lay, however, with the Brompart sons, a generation committed to trade and profit, callous and hypocritical in their dealings with Maori and pakeha alike and committed to an urban society in which the Cedrics would feel increasingly alienated. An episode in which a Maori boatman attempts to cheat Cedric provides Satchell with the opportunity to expatiate on the character of this new breed and the effects of their attitude on New Zealand society:

I am not now speaking of those hardy and courageous settlers, true chips of the ancient Anglo-Saxon block, who, taking their lives in their hands, had gone forth into the wilderness, there to hew out for themselves the homes the old land denied them — they, at least, were compelled by their necessities to hold the original owners of the soil in respect; nor of the men of culture and understanding who were able to pierce the dark skin of ignorance and observe with admiration the natural strength of the brain beneath; but of the mass of the townsmen, themselves of no particular education, of narrow, insular views and absorbed in the petty issues of trade. Many of these had come direct from the cities of England and Sydney, hired or purchased a shop or office immediately on landing, and entered on business, as though they had merely shifted from one street to another. Never moving from the narrow limits of the town, seeing only the worst side of the natives in their midst, they could form no adequate conception of the qualities of that race without whose continued forbearance and goodwill their lives were not worth an hour's purchase. (pp.155-6)

Satchell makes no attempt to fit Cedric, his ideal New Zealander, into this new pattern. The novel ends with Cedric and Helenora embracing outside the cave which has served Cedric as a place of retreat and recalling memories of the compact made earlier in that other cave: '«You remember,» I said, «the image of the Greenstone Door?» She nodded and lifted her lips mutely to mine. And so at last for us two also the Greenstone Door was closed' (p.398).

Despite the positive image Satchell wishes to convey in this reiteration of the compact, such an ending is at best highly ambiguous. The very words of the compact, with their reference to a door closing, set up negative overtones which Satchell's vocabulary does little to dispel. Cedric and Helenora quote Wordsworth and Schiller to each other and then, we are told, 'turn their backs on Pirongia' and make for the bush, actions all of which suggest that Satchell, while seeking to distinguish them from the increasingly materialistic and philistine strains in New Zealand society, is unable to offer them any convincing alternative. Although the compact establishes a shared concern and sense of equality between man and woman, the breakdown of the earlier compact which

sought to establish such a relationship between Maori and pakeha augurs little hope for Cedric and Helenora, except on a purely personal level. One wonders what Cedric and Helenora will do with their lives beyond reciting poetry. In effect Cedric is left as he was found: a man alone on the fringes of society, facing an unknown and potentially hostile future with few of the resources which enable less sensitive and high principled individuals to survive.

New Zealand society by the time of Sargeson's *I Saw In My Dream*⁷ has become so thoroughly permeated with the petty-bourgeois values Cedric and Purcell remarked on in the early days of Auckland that for his protagonist any kind of affirmative response to life is virtually impossible. A repressive puritanism, evidenced most clearly by prudery and hypocrisy in sexual matters, has created in the Henry of the first part of the novel an overwhelming desire to retreat to the safety of the womb ('*snug as a bug in a rug*') and to the false security of an innocence based on ignorance and fear:

no no the book he found on his bed that afternoon after school, mother must have left it there and it was a hard job trying to look her in the face for days, birds flowers and the 'shining creature' a girl who said I have kept myself pure for you, and he said and I for you, and you could get diseases worse than leprosy, yes and secret vice please NO (p.38)

Nothing could be further from the frank and open delight in each other that characterized the relationships between the young men and women in the Maori *pa* in Satchell's novel than Henry's stammering embarrassment and sense of guilt at the very thought of a woman. His behaviour, if we can judge by his own father's furtive watching of Aunt Clara and his Uncle Bob's too assertive bonhomie, is but one expression of a deep-rooted schizophrenia endemic in his society, the kind of split Dickens observed in his society and portrayed in the character of Wemmick, whose journeys to and from Walworth demand the assumption of two mutually exclusive personalities, and which Satchell noticed as already having begun to appear in urban Auckland, in the disharmony in the Brompart household and in the behaviour of the Maori boatman whom city life has all but corrupted.

It is significant that Henry, unlike Pip and Cedric in the earlier novels, cannot even use the first person when talking about himself but shifts uneasily between second and third person pronouns so unable is he to accept his own thoughts and behaviour or to identify them as single aspects of his own personality. The compartments into which he

separates the different parts of himself mirror the literal enclosures, the confined spaces, into which he tries, more or less successfully, to put other people, and reflect his inability to make coherence of his own experience. Only by means of a complete physical and mental breakdown is he given the means to achieve some sense of wholeness. His rebirth as Dave in Part Two of the novel is a measure not only of the distance he has had to travel in his own mind but also of the difficulties facing Sargeson in his attempt to write a *Bildungsroman* based on his own experience as a writer in New Zealand.

Becoming unsatisfied with the vague optimism suggested by the final sentence of Part One, the original end of the novel, with its promise of a new job in an office starting, appropriately enough, 'after the Easter holidays', Sargeson thrusts a new-born protagonist into the trauma of discovering himself anew at the beginning of Part Two: 'Why am I oh why am I here in the cold and the dark? Cold bed rolling over to the sun, cold embryo waiting to be born. Why am i waiamihea' (p.85).

Dave's question, ending with the Maori-sounding *waiamihea*, voices Sargeson's own awareness that Henry's life, such as it was, had existed without reference to that other aspect of New Zealand life and culture, the Maori experience. But it too, in common with pakeha life, has become shallow and artificial, motivated by no more noble ambitions than white society.

If, unlike Henry, Dave's quest for wholeness takes him beyond the confines of his immediate family to participation in a wider society and from the city to the country, Sargeson avoids, is indeed at pains to point out as false, the supposition that all society's evils stem from urban life and that in the country all is restorative and tranquil. None of the persons Dave meets during his period of sheep farming, the Macgregors, the Andersons, Johnny, the Maori neighbours, is any more whole or adjusted than individuals in the city; the Macgregors, with their curiously omnipresent but never visible son Cedric and their talk about a cave into which they have tried to confine him, are probably more repressive than his own family; Rangi, erstwhile companion to this Cedric, is no noble scion of a warrior race but an ailing consumptive, dying at twenty-one, with his brood of children clinging poverty-stricken around his legs while his wife labours to harvest a few potatoes.

Sargeson's displacement of Cedric, his cave, and Rangi/Rangiora to an off-centre and yet crucial place in Henry/Dave's *Bildungsroman* is his tacit acknowledgement of Satchell's work and his recognition of the earlier writer's attempt to come to terms with the deepening alienation and isolation of the individual New Zealander in his own time. Where

Satchell tried to locate a measure of wholeness in the past, in rural values and Maori/pakeha solidarity, Sargeson recognizes that neither Maori nor pakeha society offers a viable way of life to the individual when the whole country seems to be split. As Mr Anderson remarks to Dave:

Jack says it's our home but sometimes it'll strike you a different way. As if the white man never should have tried to settle it at all — though it might be all right for a few Maoris living along the rivers. They'd make it a good enough home, granted. But as for the white man he's only got it on a sort of lease, with the wear and tear all the time getting him down. So he either has to give up and shove off somewhere else, or else he just hangs on until he gets kicked out. (p.128)

This part of New Zealand, Anderson is saying, is subject to landslides: 'it's country that slips' (p.118), producing an 'awfull mess' of tangled lives, left, like so many lumps of clay, 'hard now, dried out and cracked by the sun ... uprooted' (p.117). Rather than face the prospect of working such brittle material in such an inhospitable environment the New Zealand writer had traditionally opted for Anderson's alternative, had given up and shoved off somewhere else, usually to England. Sargeson, setting himself goals similar to Joyce's, to forge the uncreated conscience of his race, determined to stay in New Zealand and work out in his life and in his writing a solution to his discovery that in New Zealand '[they] talk about people leaving home, but round these parts it's more a case of home leaving them' (p.118).

Henry/Dave's *Bildungsroman*, which in its physical details closely resembles its author's own *Wanderjahre*, is Sargeson's attempt to come up with a positive statement on the place of the writer (and himself in particular) in this society. In some respects he is Pip confronting the hollowness of Satis House without a Dickens to provide a Magwitch and his material wealth, endeavouring like Satchell's Cedric to find meaning in words and symbols (the compact and the cave) when he has discovered that the cave is really empty and that the ground on which he stands is liable to shift unexpectedly at any moment. Unable to produce a sustained narrative he pushes his hero by an exertion of literary will, as it were, past the impasse of Dickens's dubious endings and Satchell's inconclusiveness by the stratagem of having three separate but related narratives in which he allows himself deliberately to pick up and play around with the lumber and debris left by his predecessors. He seizes on Cedric's cave bequeathed him by Satchell and is no more averse than Satchell to introducing convenient coincidence to assist his narrative. That a New Zealand writer should make use of landslides and caves in his work is not surprising: climbing into caves is a fairly commonplace experience for

most New Zealanders and landslides *are* a feature of the country. Nevertheless Sargeson's reluctance to let go of the cave symbolism in particular suggests an inability fully to comprehend what Henry/Dave's new life will be beyond his initial affirmation that he will be embarking not on a journey with Johnny to England but on 'something special', in his own way. Too often, the reader feels, Sargeson is submerging himself in a welter of Joycean literary allusion and association to bridge the weak point in his narrative rather than using it to point up his protagonist's own indecisiveness. Bookish bastards both, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the two. Just as Satchell felt the need to bolster his already viable material with props from Dickens and German literature, so Sargeson, inheriting the 'form' of Satchell's novel, cannot develop it without throwing out an arm for support to yet another British novelist. The problem of discovering 'the right me in the right place', which both novelists thrust upon their central characters may thus be seen as a projection of their own dilemma as New Zealand novelists for whom an unequivocal YES is still something to be striven for.

NOTES

1. William Satchell, *The Greenstone Door*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1914; Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1935; reprinted Golden Press, 1974. All references are to this latter edition.
2. Philip Wilson, *The Maoriland: A Study of William Satchell*. Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1961.
3. Philip Wilson, *William Satchell*. New York: Twayne, 1968.
4. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972, p.90. All further references are to this edition and are included in the text.
5. William Satchell, *The Land of the Lost*. London: Methuen and Co., 1902.
6. I have argued elsewhere that the pairing of Jane and Rochester in *Jane Eyre* and Maggie and Tom in *The Mill on the Floss* are the transitional modes by which nineteenth-century women writers move towards a wholly female *Bildungsroman*.
7. Frank Sargeson, *I Saw In My Dream*. London: John Lehmann, 1949; Auckland: OUP, 1974. All references are to this latter edition.