

## Janet Frame: *Faces in the Water*

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### Janet Frame (8/28/24-1/30/2004)



“For your own good’ is a persuasive argument that will eventually make a man agree to his own destruction” (*Faces 72*).

- > NYT Obituary Jan. 30, 2004
  - Approved Biography
  - Schizophrenia v. Asperger Syndrome v. high-functioning autism
  - Post-Mortem Diagnosis Rubbish?
- > Narrative style: explores problems of realizing experience in language

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## Eugenics & Mental Hygiene

- > Adrienne Hoult: Institutional responses to mental deficiency in New Zealand, 1911-1935: Tokanui Mental Hospital (2007)
  - Categories: Imbecile, feeble-minded, etc. (Hoult 13)
    - Tokanui statistics chart.
  - “...gender played a key part in committal and subsequent categorisation and treatment within Tokanui” (Hoult 38).
  - “For high grade defective females, control, rather than care, was the main reason for their committal” (68). (Frame 76)
- > Mental Defectives Act, 1928 (Frame 43)
  - Illusion of Safety (9)

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## POV: Istina Mavet

- Social withdrawal / delusions / hallucinations, loss of hygiene, loss of appetite (Frame 10, 12, 55, 94-5)
- Depersonalization, sense of being controlled by outside forces (16)
  - “The Evenings” & Daily life (Frame 29, 38-39, 40)
  - Death & the Mortuary (34, 78)
  - Humanity (112)

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**Table 2.1 Category of mental defectives admitted to Tokanui, 1912-1935 (number of admissions and percentage of total sample)**

<i>Males %</i>	<i>Females %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
<b>Idiot</b>	2 2	6 5
<b>Imbecile</b>	30 27	20 18
<b>Feeble-minded</b>	26 23	7 6
<b>Social defective</b>	1 1	2 2
<b>Other</b>	10 9	7 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>69 62</b>	<b>42 37</b>

\*The most common classification was imbecile: 50 patients, or 45 per cent of defectives. Of these, 20 were female: more female patients were classed as imbecile than any of the other categories. Just 7 per cent of all defectives were idiots, most of whom were female. Of the 33 feeble-minded patients, the majority were male. The smallest group were the social defectives, 1 male and 2 females, or 3 per cent of the sample. The category 'other' was the third largest group with 17 patients, or 15 per cent, evenly split between male and female patients" (38).

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