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Metafiction in New Zealand from the 1960s to the present day

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

While studies of metafiction have proliferated across America and Europe, the present thesis is the first full-length assessment of its place in the literature of New Zealand. Taking as its point of reference a selection of works from authors Janet Frame, C.K. Stead, Russell Haley, Michael Jackson and Charlotte Randall, this thesis employs a synthesis of contextual and performative frameworks to examine how the internationally-prevalent mode of metafiction has influenced New Zealand fiction since the middle of the 20th century. While metafictional texts have conventionally been thought to undermine notions of realism and sever illusions of representation, this thesis explores ways in which the metafictional mode in New Zealand since the 1960s might be seen to expand and augment realism by depicting individual modes of thought and naturalising unique forms of self-reflection, during what some commentators have seen as a period of cultural ‘inwardness’ following various socio-political shifts in the latter part of 20th century New Zealand.

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