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**Bridging the Gap Between Traditional and Experimental
Poetry: Dramatic Monologue and Dramatic Lyric
in Contemporary New Zealand Poetry**

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

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Abstract

This study examines contemporary innovative dramatic monologues and dramatic lyrics; it is based on close reading and analysis of Bill Manhire's and Lynn Jenner's work. Typical dramatic monologues allow for what some critics call a "split" voice, where the poet's views can be sensed behind the character's and poem's words. Dramatic lyrics are poems in which the emotional distance between the poet and the speaker is not as significant, where the speaker could conceivably be the poet, but the title or circumstantial details reveal that someone other than the author is supposed to be the speaking "I" of the poem. This study examines and demonstrates ways in which traditional genres—dramatic monologue and dramatic lyric—can be used in contemporary, questioning and critical ways, resulting in a postmodern lyric poem: exhibiting aural and structural properties of a lyric poem, combined with a purely linguistic, textual postmodern voice.

The creative portion of the thesis applies many of the strategies discussed in this critical part to explore the range between the lyric "I" and dramatic speaker; focusing on subjective expression while experimenting with diction, form and "found" material.

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