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Narrative Bending:

The Subversion of *Watakushi Shōsetsu* in Ruth Ozeki's
A Tale for the Time Being and an abstract from *My Amy*

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

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is comprised of two sections: a critical research essay focusing on Ruth Ozeki's novel *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013), and the first part of a novel entitled *My Amy*. Both sections focus on the fictionality of fiction, as well as narrative structure and the effect of space and time on content, structure, and the organisation of a non-linear narrative. In the critical portion of the thesis I read *A Tale for the Time Being* in the context of narrative theory, Buddhist philosophy, and the traditional Japanese literary form of *shōsetsu*, examining how the structure and content of the novel originate from multiple literary and religious traditions. I argue that Ozeki appropriated the form of the Japanese 'I-novel' (*shōsetsu*) in an innovative re-imagining of form and tradition, whilst juxtaposing the duality of her hybridised identity as a Japanese-American writer in the meta-textual, non-linear, montaged, semi-autobiographical text, which focuses on the reader-writer-character relationship. In *My Amy* I employ a non-linear narrative structure to support the flashbacks and trauma experienced by a woman raised in a religious cult, and her later self-destructive behaviour which is a result of her seclusion in the cult and limited life experience.

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