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**THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
MASCULINITY IN GREG MCGEE'S  
FORESKIN'S LAMENT**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English  
at Massey University

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## **ABSTRACT**

McGee's play interrogates contemporary constructions of masculinity centred around the national game of rugby. With the play being set in the late 1970's, rugby was still central to the national ethos in a way that would no longer be thought universally valid in the 1980s.

The play presents an exploration of male Pakeha New Zealanders at a time when the ethos was steadily being corrupted. Elements of the comradeship that the game could promote are noted together with its more negative effects - the attitude of the team to women being one of the foremost and including the derogatory attitudes to homosexuals and people of other ethnicities. The eponymous Foreskin is seen as someone who tries to unite in himself the rugby ethos and intellectual life. In the Lament he addresses his failure at this endeavour.

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