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WHAT POLITICAL AND THEATRICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO  
WRITE A PLAY INSPIRED BY ELIZABETH COLENZO AND THE VICTORIAN  
SUFFRAGISTS IN ORDER TO SHOW THE CONFLICTS OF EMANCIPATION  
FOR 21ST CENTURY WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER.

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

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in English**

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## *Abstract*

I am intrigued with the question of whether 21<sup>st</sup> century liberated women who have broken the glass ceiling are able to sustain positions of power within current social and political contexts. In planning this thesis there were two objectives. Firstly, I wanted to see whether I could write a New Zealand play that showed some aspects of the cost of emancipation through the social and political powers enacted upon both 19<sup>th</sup> century and 21<sup>st</sup> century women and create a narrative that would be relatable for a contemporary audience. Secondly, I wanted to reflect on the research and writing process.

*Stand in Her Shoes* has employed both literary and historical research. To be able to write with any understanding of the social and political factors which affected 19<sup>th</sup> century suffragists and 21<sup>st</sup> century women in power I have drawn research from books, scholarly articles, photographs, internet databases and the National Library. My thesis essay provides an analysis and overview of my findings.

My thesis reports the artistic and dramatic choices made as I shaped my findings *Stand in Her Shoes* into a theatrical play. I focussed briefly on two seminal plays during my literary research *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill, and Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children*. I have chosen these two plays to see how they might inform the construction of my female protagonists as well as to enhance my thematic around gender politics.

This thesis also provides an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the play script provided by participants at the first play reading workshop 9 February 2018 at Greytown Little Theatre, South Wairarapa, New Zealand. Finally, I critically reflect on the overall process of writing the play.

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