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# So Let it Fall

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

Master of Creative Writing

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## **Abstract**

*What are you?* This Master of Creative writing thesis seeks to explore this question and other questions it leads to. The thesis consists of a collection of linked autobiographical stories that explore identity, “So Let it Fall” (80%), and an accompanying exegesis, “What Are You?” (20%).

Through the writing of “So Let it Fall” I tell the story of my own experiences as a multi-ethnic woman growing up in New Zealand with mixed Māori, Chinese and Pākehā heritage. I explore this mixed identity throughout my project through evoking contrasts and contradictions within my own personal experiences. Specifically, I tell a story of living between two parents, and I focus on the separations that developed within my life and my identity as a result of living between two cultural upbringings. When evoking different identities in “So Let it Fall,” I wrote in scene to highlight formative moments in my life as well as scenes that illustrate important characteristics in each of my parents that have been formative of my own identity. In the creative work as a whole I delve into the different roles that I have moved through as I grew up, and by doing so discover who I am.

The accompanying exegesis “What Are You?” places “So Let it Fall” in context by exploring the driving questions behind this project and explicating the creative process involved. The purpose of this exegesis is to

illuminate the ideas and research that went into the production of “So Let it Fall.” This is done first by outlining why I chose the the form of autobiography, then examining a range of recent autobiographical writing in New Zealand and the various perspectives these works offer. Specifically, I discuss how the nonfiction writing of Witi Ihimaera, Manying Ip, Alice Te Punga-Somerville, Tina Makereti, Tze Ming Mok, Ashleigh Young and Tracey Slaughter have informed my work.

The intent of this combined creative and critical project is to find value in personal experiences and to create a wider pool of experiences within creative nonfiction writing in New Zealand. This thesis is not constructed to represent or speak for any ethnic groups or identities. This is formation of an identity through autobiographical writing that is my own.

*For Jordan,  
who encouraged me.*

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