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Ganefs and Prophets, Philosophers and Fools: Literary and  
Genre in Contemporary Fiction

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## Abstract

This thesis comprises two sections: a critical research essay focusing on Michael Chabon's 2002 novel *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* and the first ten chapters of a detective novel entitled *Te Ngaio Road*. In both sections, I explore the critical evaluation of literary and genre fiction and the influence different genres have on literary authors. The critical portion of the thesis investigate the historical, cultural and ideological underpinnings of the perception of knowledge, contemporary perceptions of literary and genre fiction, including the formation of the canon and the postmodern concept of innovative literary fiction. Using Chabon's novel *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* as a focus, I argue that the dismantling of boundaries between literary and genre indicate a post postmodern trend and a new literary form rather than a continuation of postmodernism. In *Te Ngaio Road* a detective genre framework is used along with a modernist stream of consciousness and multiple points of view. There is also a postmodern focus on the aesthetic form and innovation, and an overlap of literary and genre influences to trace the investigation of the murder of a small girl in a conflicted community.

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