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FRAGMENTS OF FEMINISM : A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF TWO NEW ZEALAND WOMEN
WRITERS, 1882 AND 1926.

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requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This critical examination of *Everything is Possible to Will* (1882) by Ellen E. Ellis and *The Butcher Shop* (1926) by Jean Devanny provides a comparative analysis of their representations of the feminist vision in New Zealand fiction. The comparison seeks to establish the thematic continuities and discrepancies between both texts and to determine whether Jean Devanny's feminist perspective is a developmental progression from that offered by Ellen Ellis.

Chapter One examines the apparent similarities between both texts; their mutual experience of censorship, their mutual concerns with similar themes, their mutual use of the romantic genre, and their mutual preoccupation with the truth or realism of their narratives.

Chapter Two examines the representation of paradise as a manifestation of romantic ideology within Ellis's text, noting the strategic connections Ellis creates to link the subjection of women with the subjection of Maori in New Zealand.

Chapter Three argues that Ellis's depiction of women and marriage within *Everything is Possible to Will* has a particular emphasis on the relationship of female autonomy to patriarchal power.

Chapter Four examines Ellis's representation of female sexuality within her novel, with particular attention given to her presentation of the archetypal Angel in the House.

Chapter Five begins the examination of Devanny's *The Butcher Shop* and notes her treatment of paradise and romanticism as individualistic constructs.

Chapter Six analyses Devanny's image of women and marriage, particularly her perspective on adultery and her attempt to sexualise the Angel in the House.

Chapter Seven argues that Devanny's representation of female sexuality is posited on eugenic ideology and the creation of a sexual hierarchy that privileges the white European female.

Chapter Eight concludes the argument by suggesting that the comparison of thematic concerns in both texts indicates a continuity with the image of woman as the Angel in the House which both authors modify with varying degrees of success. It further argues that both texts offer a fragmented vision of feminism, and a fragmented image of woman, which denies any progressive development of feminism and fiction.

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