

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

SPINNING IN MY MOTHER'S GARDEN
a search for subjectivity

An exegesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Justine Walker

2009

Abstract

Is female subjectivity possible within a patriarchal system? The following discussion investigates feminist thought through equality, difference and androgyny, mapping the achievements, setbacks, advantages and disadvantages of each through the theories of Luce Irigaray, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and others.

Discussing Irigaray's thoughts on disrupting the symbolic with mimesis and hysteria, how intersubjectivity might be possible through a syntax appropriate to women and the possibility of female genealogies through craft and the work of artists such as Louise Bourgeois and Eva Hesse.

Derrida's theory of *Différance* is used in relation to Irigaray's ideas of difference and morphology. And allows for Kristeva's thoughts on the essential meaning of language being in a constant state of flux and therefore fixed definitions of identity are pointless.

Virginia Woolf's use of androgyny and modernist style in her writing is considered in relation to Kristeva's ideas of revolutionary writing, and how destructive fixed gendered identities can be. The deconstruction of masculine and feminine identities is advocated by Kristeva to allow for individuality and subjectivity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Andy Thomson for your generosity and guidance, Maddie Leach for consistently challenging the work and Simon Morris for your continued interest and enthusiasm. Thank you to my peers and the rest of the Fine Art staff for your support and critique.

Thank you to friends and family for your interest and support. Particular thanks to Catherine for your voice of experience and Caroline for your help and enthusiasm.

To Philip my rock, thank you for your unwavering faith in me and the work.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Illustrations.....	v
Postscript.....	2
Mimesis	5
Morphology.....	15
Metonymy	29
Preamble.....	41
Appendix A – Installations	46
Appendix B – Words of Experience	48
Appendix C – DVD.....	49
Bibliography.....	50

Illustrations

Figure 1.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Shuffle)</i> , 2008	1
Figure 2.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Performance #5 - #8)</i> , 2008 – 2009	4
Figure 3.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (APPLAUSE)</i> , 2008	7
Figure 4.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled</i> , 2008	10
Figure 5.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Drawing)</i> , 2008	13
Figure 6.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Countdown)</i> , 2008	16
Figure 7.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Landscape)</i> , 2008	19
Figure 8.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Cross Stitch)</i> , 2009	22
Figure 9.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Headstand)</i> , 2009	25
Figure 10.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled</i> , 2009	28
Figure 11.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Bud)</i> , 2009	31
Figure 12.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Bud #2)</i> , 2009	31
Figure 13.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Drawing Performance #1 - 15)</i> , 2009	34
Figure 14.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Bulb)</i> , 2009	37
Figure 15.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (Rainbow)</i> , 2009	40
Figure 16.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (LAUGH)</i> , 2009	43
Figure 17.	Justine Walker, <i>Untitled (APPLAUSE #2)</i> , 2009	45