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MOTHER TONGUE

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

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I could not have achieved this without your wisdom and support,

Thank you for believing in me!

ABSTRACT

By adopting Post-Modernist methods, Feminist theory, and Post-Structural aesthetics, I critique western cultures' institutionalised phallogocentric doctrines which exclude women from most areas of musical practice.

Through the self production of my own album in the domestic space, I subvert the gendered dualism of feminine object and masculine subject within contemporary electronic music. This fully autonomous process merges the oppositional binaries of gender essentialism, through which I am both the active subject (composer and performer) and the creator of the art object (the album).

My creative work, *Mother Tongue*, is an eight track album which was written, recorded and produced in my bedroom. It is designed as a concept album and should be listened to in its entirety from start to finish.

The work is a site for becoming, the album is a map, and you are able to interpret the musical rhizomes as you wish.

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INTRODUCTION

“...our mother tongue and every language in the world: all thoughts and feelings that have been expressed out loud in history are structures made out of air.”

(Grammatikopoulou, 2011)

Drawing from my first-hand experience of the New Zealand (NZ) music scene, combined with my research this year, I have composed, recorded, and produced an album, *Mother Tongue*, which renegotiates the passive¹ female body in contemporary electronic music. My work does not attempt to portray an objective “reality”, but rather presents a reflection of my own personal experiences as a female, NZ European/Pākehā musician.

Throughout my career, I have observed patterns of binary oppression that produce the androcentrism of society which, in turn, informs the exclusion of women in most areas of musical practice. My observations were supported by studies released in February of this year that maintain that women are significant minorities in composer, performer, and producer roles in the UK and USA. Across seven years and 700 popular songs in the Billboard top 100 charts, 12.3% of songwriters and 2% of producers were female, of this 2% only four out of 871 producers were women of colour (Smith, Choueiti, Pieper, 2019).

Interviews conducted as part of these studies identify the low representation of female songwriters and producers as a reflection of an industry that sexualises and stereotypes, concluding that the industry “does not seem to believe that women are valuable assets in these roles” (Smith, Choueiti, Pieper, 2019, p.30).

Closer to New Zealand, studies show that Australian women continue to be underrepresented in key roles of the music sector, making up only 21.7% of APRA AMCOS’ overall membership (Strong, 2017). In NZ, cursory data from APRA shows that women represent only 23.8% of New Zealand members (Kelly, 2017, as cited in Behan, 2017).

These trends in production can also be observed in New Zealand. Although there are no specific statistics available; there are currently no female producers associated with the New Zealand Association of Music Producers (NZAMP, personal communication, 2019). Women are routinely marginalised in music-related professions (Koza, 1991), music technology (Bosma, 2003), music scenes (Cohen, 1996), musical public spaces (Sterling, 2016), record collecting (Maalsen & McLean, 2018), and music production (Wolfe, 2012), and their bodies and voices rendered as resources for a patriarchal industry (Reddington, 2018). This literature offers compounding evidence of women’s marginalisation in the music industry, and this body of work underpins both my creative work and exegesis.

By disassembling, reassembling and juxtaposing fragmented sonic perceptions of ‘Gender’; I critique traditional and historical representations of the “woman” in popular music. I rupture the links between language and signifiers which perpetuate the otherness of woman, and manifest sonic becomings mediated by technology.

¹ The passivity I critically deconstruct is formed by Judith Butler (2006), who asserts that “sex” and “gender” are performative acts. Her famous work; “*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of Identity*” declares that “the body” appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interruptive will determines a cultural meaning for itself.

STRUCTURE

This exegesis collates and reflects upon the key issues and concepts that underpin my work, providing a critical accompaniment to my Masters project *Mother Tongue*. It is structured in three key sections, which critically map the conceptual development and practical execution of *Mother Tongue*: Part 1: Context; Part 2: Methods, and Part 3: The Work.

In Part 1, I reflect on my own musical experiences and explore the context through which my work is produced. I analyse pertinent studies on gender and electronic music as they intersect with my own experiences in the NZ music industry, and consider how these have impacted the production of this work. This first section represents a review of literature and key concepts, albeit one in which I present these works in a way that ties into, and reflects upon my own creative journey, both past, and throughout the course of my MFA studies and emphasises the critical and contextual position which underpins my album.

In Part 2, I extend the key conceptual frameworks explored in Part 1 into a discussion of the methods which shaped and produced *Mother Tongue*. Here I explore the tools and processes for production, particularly as these were mediated through the space of the domestic studio, my bedroom. In this section, I analyse my domestic production as a method which sought to bridge my body with my work. The composition and production of *Mother Tongue* was a process which was deeply entangled with the social production of space and its often fluid boundaries, as I discuss in this section. These notes and reflections serve as an accompaniment to the recording, which once released, will be listened to within popular music norms and conventions, over which I have little control. Songs are played in cars, through Bluetooth speakers, through consumer hi-fi systems, through PAs. Unlike exhibition and studio-based artworks, once released, the digital nature of my release means that the consumption contexts will be forever outside of my control. Such potentialities are key to the methods I explore in Part 2.

The final section, Part 3, presents the lyrical content, and reveals how my personal experiences, combined with critical research and methodologies, have informed the aesthetic and compositional choices in my creative work, *Mother Tongue*.

The album comprises eight tracks which cover three main themes; myth, gender production in the studio and the musical machine. These themes reflect on the androcentricity of popular music culture and the subsequent gendering of musical environments.

PART 1:

THE CONTEXT

This section contextualises my approach to composition by reflecting on my own experiences of the NZ music scene, whilst using these experiences to critically engage with the sexualisation and exclusion of women in most areas of musical practice.

THE BODY AS AN INSTRUMENT

As a jazz vocal major, I was trained to think of my voice as an instrument, an entirely separate entity, which required hours of training and polishing, and was subsequently subjected to constant critique. This institutionalised mental disconnect between self and instrument was quite damaging, as I developed a self-deprecating relationship with my body.

A defining moment for my musical expression occurred when a tutor attached a vocal pedal to my microphone during improvisation class. With the help of the machine, I was freed from my bodily constraints, and able to communicate what I was internally trying to express. This was the start of a new relationship with my voice as an instrument, and directed my critical research toward the hybrid relationship between body, instruments, and machines. A similar, personalised, usage of machines is noted by Rogers: "Samplers, arguably more than other instruments, offer musicians the opportunity to articulate a personalised 'aural' history - an archive of sounds that can be employed to express specific musical and political statements" (Rodgers, 2003).

Throughout my Masters, I have created vocal works which explore the embodied relationship I have with technology. These works were originally intended to connect my musical expression with a more embodied approach to my vocal delivery and timbre, and have now informed larger works on *Mother Tongue*.

The basis of these experiments consist of individually recorded vocal takes using the mouth shapes; Ah, ee, mm, and ooh. I juxtapose long and short tones, harsh and soft attack, falsetto and chest voice, and the inhale and exhale of breath. Initially born through vocal improvisation, the structure I created for these works eliminated expectations of traditional musical structure, signature, and harmony. This creative freedom encouraged a more somatic approach to music making, and allowed me to focus specifically on the breath, mouth shape, vibrato, hiss, grain and the ambience that the microphone offers the voice.

THE MACHINE AS AN INSTRUMENT

In 2016 I became immersed in the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) genre through a collaborative composition project with a notable NZ producer² - and through national touring. Through my interactions and relationships with members of this scene, I recognised in EDM similar gendered patterns to those of my experiences within my jazz community.

My formal training in composition was focused primarily on acoustic instrumentation and jazz harmony. When I began collaborating with electronic artists and producers I realised that my training encompassed only half of the skills needed to have complete autonomy over electronic composition. Throughout the duration of this Masters project, I have explored the embodied relationship I have with technology, and how these tools have changed my approach to composition and performance.

Electronic music composition collapses the traditional distinctions between the musician (who plays an instrument) the composer (who crafts the structure of a piece), the producer (who shapes the quality of the recorded sound), and the engineer (who handles the technical aspects of recording and mixing).

Although computer assisted composition provides expansive opportunities for composition development, the gaps in my knowledge of music production meant that I had to dedicate much of this Masters project to learning how to communicate my ideas via computer systems and software, learn basic sound theory and engineering, and have the ability to communicate my ideas when working with mixing and mastering engineers.

In this way, I felt my compositional process developed a likeness to scientific experimentation, emphasising the process of accumulation and sorting through sounds before the “making” begins.

I would like to clarify a few terms which I will use; I consider myself an *electronic musician*, because I use Digital Audio Workspace (DAW) and electronic instruments as a major part of my compositional process - I could not create or produce my current work without computer assistance. When I talk about *music production*, I am referring to the creative and aesthetic decisions made (such as texture, instrumentation, dynamic, flow, and general mixing) which generally happens once the basic harmonic/rhythmic form and lyric have been established.

² Heights, P. (2016). *The Stillness*. New Zealand: Warner Music.
This project went on to win a NZ Music Award for Best Electronic Album in 2016.

MY EXPERIENCE OF THE NZ MUSIC SCENE

Dominant scholarly trends have identified the marginalisation and low representation of women in music production. My experiences as a Pākehā woman in New Zealand's music scene have echoed these trends, in ways that are entangled with both local and more far reaching nuances. This musical sphere, in my context, amplifies and intensifies wider experiences of women's marginality in social settings. Such frameworks have been definitively presented in Fredrickson and Roberts objectification model, as outlined by Symanski et al. (2011). Using their four requirements for the environment of sexualisation I reflect upon my own experiences as a woman in the NZ music scene, and investigate how dichotomous understandings of gender in western society affect women within areas of musical practice.

A HIGH DEGREE OF ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE SEXUAL/PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF WOMEN'S BODIES

Even my earliest childhood memories of vocal performance are saturated in hours of makeup, sequins, bobby pins and hair spray.

Not only is this attention to stage presentation considered "industry standard", but in most cases in formal Jazz competition and exam criteria, it is considered an assessable category. During performances and exams at Jazz school, I remember wanting to wear black like my male band mates, but I was told by tutors and other musicians to wear heels (as I am 5ft), dresses, and more colour.

Boone (2017) argues that "when one performs music, one is also performing gender simultaneously." My musical experiences and critical research hence indicate that the relationship between the performing body and gender is inextricably linked.

Western cultural capitalism teaches us the value of a polished appearance, namely through media channels, and these 'ideals' of feminine beauty are highly valued attributes within the music industry also (Stirling, 2006). The standard of female body as 'symbolic goods' is observable within music practice, by a social order of symbolic capital held by men (Bourdieu, 2001). In this capital, men are "the holder(s) of the monopoly of the instruments of production and reproduction" (p. 48). Women are expected to adopt 'feminine' practices (basically anything opposite to masculinity) in order to maintain the hierarchies' roles of masculine superiority.

Gender binaries such as masculine/feminine, mind/body are "inscribed in bodies and in a universe from which they derive their strength" (Bourdieu, 2001). In turn, this affects women's participation, representation, and success within areas of music practice, resulting in the positioning of women as aesthetic objects, rather than aesthetic makers, fuelling a cultural feedback loop perpetuating the notion of 'woman as amateur musician'.

Bosma (2003) deconstructs how gender roles are assigned within music technology and electronic music. She outlines how women's roles are primarily realised in association with the body, performance, tradition, non-verbal sound and singing. This is categorically opposite to the masculine field of technology, innovation, language and authority. These dualisms reinforce and the gendered stereotype of 'male producer' and 'female vocalist' in electronic music.

THERE IS APPROVAL AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE MALE GAZE

"Like the male gaze, the male ear is hidden and its power exercised behind the scenes."

(Reddington, 2018, p. 60)

Prior to this project, I had very limited experience in the production of music. My compositions were always mediated by male instrumentalists, engineers, and producers. What I found most frustrating was the lack of autonomy I had over the way my voice was treated in post-production. This process manifests a hierarchical dualism which supports the facilitation of the feminine experience, arbitrated through masculine discourse.

My experiences, and those of other women, reveal the ways in which the feminine exists as a studio-based object. Through the categories of 'sex, gender, sexuality, desire and the body as identity categories' (Brady & Shirato, 2011) women are expected to perform in the studio as natural actors in a phallogocentric economical system of heterosexuality.

The pressure to exist as an actor in a phallogocentric system is commented on by electronic artist and educator, Abtan (2016). Abtan notes that women in electronic music are faced with the ultimatum of sexualising themselves or not getting recognised. This presents a need to 'exist first through and for the gaze of others' (Bordieu, 2001), creating a split between the body as "practically experienced and the legitimate body" (p. 65). This filter of disembodiment is often unconsciously ingrained socially, contributing to a masculine domination of the female body, where women become dependent on its' requirements to achieve success.

By controlling my own methods of recording and production, I eliminate the approval of "the male ear" in my work. I argue that my album breaks the phallogocentric connections between technology, and the performing body.

AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES EXIST

I am fortunate to have had many supportive male mentors, teachers, and band mates, who have provided me with many opportunities for collaboration, performance and touring. However, I often question why I am often the only woman in any given musical environment, whether it be as a performer, session musician, or touring musician.

The 'ideal woman's' relationship to music is historically constituted, as outlined in the 19th century American magazine, Godey's Lady's Book (Koza, 1991). Women are considered submissive participants within musical courtship, confined to the domestic sphere as musical hobbyists. The exception to this rule, is when a singer or instrumentalist demonstrates "extreme talent", although composition requires not just talent, but genius, rendering it a male domain.

Satirical stories in Godey's Lady's Book, offer humiliating social consequences for "ambitious female amateurs". My experiences of masculine hierarchical judgement in musical environments affirm that these ideologies still pervade the music industry. I have observed that in most instances "beginner", "untrained" or "experimental" female musicians are more likely to be critiqued and made fun of, and have a much harder time gaining the respect of their musical community. My normalisation of this hierarchy through my own participation within these conversations highlights how deeply rooted these doctrines are within musical environments.

WOMEN TYPICALLY HOLD LESS POWER THAN MEN IN THAT ENVIRONMENT

Due to the lack of other women in my environments of musical practice, I often feel that I hold less power than my male peers. This dynamic presents an underlying professional hierarchy. My research has confirmed other accounts of female producers, composers and performers who feel they need to be better than their male counterparts to reach critical acclaim and respect (Abtan, 2016; Koza, 1991; Lane, 2016; McClary, 1994; Smith et al, 2019).

For this exegesis, I will focus on the professional studio space as a gendered site of creativity, where studio producers, mixers, and engineers are assumed normatively male (Bradby, 1993). Such spaces are made exclusive by heavily coded production methods, tools, spatial organisation, and discourses. Warner (2003) notes that "In the

popular imagination the recording studio is, somewhat unfortunately, regarded as a mysterious place – a fiercely guarded environment full of expensive, complex technology, arcane processes and riddled with jargon” (p.35).

McIntyre (2008) further observes how the recording studio adopts socially embedded notions of agency, structure and power within its’ field. These structures are based on struggles for economic, cultural, and social dominance. Male gatekeepers such as technicians, producers, and engineers assert their power by reproducing these socially constructed gendered stereotypes.

Williams (2007) observes how studio design facilitates and maintains recording engineer’s status at the studio hierarchy of technician as male. He argues that the walls of glass which divide the performance space and the control room uphold the mysterious mastery affiliated with technicians. Isolating wall baffles are “designed to shift power from musician to technician’ through solitary confinement. This “relational understanding of space” is echoed in Gibsons research (2005), who believes a recorded product is influenced by a series of affective exchanges between musicians, producers, engineers and technologies, and the built environments where these networks are inscribed. Wolfe (2012) notes that technological tools commonly found in the commercial recording studio are ‘shaped by men for their own uses’, and Bradby (2003) confirms this through the observation of women’s relationships to technology as passive and male controlled.

A HIGH PROBABILITY OF MALE CONTACT EXISTS (PHYSICALLY SPEAKING A MALE-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT)

“musical assemblages get ‘stuck’ to conceptions of maleness through repeated histories of male contact/ association, and female distance/disassociation.”

(Stirling, 2016, p. 145)

As outlined in my introduction; statistical studies reveal that women are minorities in most areas of musical practice today.

Research into women’s work in music production is limited, and Wolfe (2012) notes that the research into gender imbalance within this field remains similarly under-represented. Women are “primarily marked for their absence in the field” (p. 2). Even when there are confirmed accounts of female participation, women are almost always excluded from electronic music magazines and history books (Rodgers, 2010).

Fredrickson and Roberts objectification model, as outlined by Symanski et al. (2011) thus provides a framework for approaching how dichotomous understandings of gender in western society affect women within areas of musical practice. I use this model above to assert the contextual foundations which underpin my project, and inform the proceeding discussion of the conceptual development of *Mother Tongue*.

THE DOMESTIC STUDIO

"A woman must have money and room of her own if she is to write fiction."

(Woolf, 1928, p.3, as cited in Wolfe, 2012)

Wolfe (2012) references Virginia Woolf's 'Room of ones own' as a metaphor for the creative agency provided by the domestic studio space. Similarly, Jones (2019) identifies the home studio recording space as a vehicle for subverting gender roles within music recording and production. Through domestic recording and production spaces, women are able to reclaim the studio space, a space for female sexuality, agency, and technological engagement. Gibson (2005) suggests that through a process of decentralisation, "the means of production is likely to decouple associations and affective relations between recording studios, cities and technologies, and reconstitute these in new ways", eradicating the networks of "association, power and influence" of metropolitan recording studios.

Lane (2016) attributes the low numbers of women in music technology, sound arts, and contemporary music to the education institutions teachings, which re-iterate a masculinised music history canon, and deny women their "feminine" approaches to composition (p. 35).

The link between the private space and women's creative work present a way to 'seek refuge' from these institutionalised gendered spaces of musical creativity.

Through access to technologies in the domestic space which provide methods of self-production, Kehily and Nayak (2008) argue that the post-modern woman can realise her potential through new media resources and globalised virtual social networks. This doesn't take away from the solitary experience of the composing and producing process (Wolfe, 2012) but creates new opportunities for female friendship and connectedness, something which current male-dominated culture lacks. Cascone (2000) regards the internet as a non-academic alternative to gain understanding of computer music, providing women with an alternative to the gendered spaces of institutions and recording studios.

Taking a wider fine arts perspective, feminist artwork and the private sphere has been used as a platform to critique stereotypical roles of women in patriarchal society, and to highlight the interplay between the corporeal, identity, and space. In response to 1971 women's health book; *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, Zapperi (2017) concludes that it is our architectural environment which forms the social and cultural environment in which our bodies inhabit, our environment produces us, and it is the role of any space to "contain and control human activity." (p. 17).

Feminist art installation, *Womanhouse* (1972), explored the link between the private and public in both the exhibition space and the domestic space. In relation to this work Morineau and Pesapone (2017) suggest that our homes and shelter generate stereotypes that inhibit our freedom. The womb-like³ nature of my bedroom studio, made the process of composing, recording, and producing *Mother Tongue* an enjoyable and refreshing experience.

I share a flat with the mixing engineer, Ben Lemi, so the album didn't have to physically leave the domestic space until it was fully complete.

³ Feminist art work often features "womb" symbology (Morineau, et al. 2017). The parallels between the human body as our first piece of architecture and the domestic space of creativity is explored in Atelier Van Lieshout's 2004 work, *Womb Room*.

POST-HUMANISM AND ELECTRONIC MUSIC MAKING

The ever-increasing symbiosis of human and machine opens up new sonorous possibilities for embodied and authentic female experience, this is supported by Cyber-feminism which aligns itself with post-structuralist theories (Hayles, 1996). My work explores the “semiotic ocean” (Dyson, 1996) of Cyber space, and through digital re-sampling I am able to challenge popular music’s phallogocentric ontologies.

The process of splitting a physical source (body or instrument) from its signal subverts the hierarchical gendered associations between bodies and sound. Dyson further notes that “[t]he body of the sounding instrument is replaced by the midi array and sample bank, the body of sound is replaced by data, the body of the indexical trace is evacuated, leaving only the shell of a sign” (p. 80).

Such musico-technical developments have accompanied wider shifts in women’s social and cultural positionality. Now that the modern woman’s role is no longer restricted to “mother” Bradby (1993) argues that women’s identity has become fragmented, mirroring the form of contemporary computer music which “is composed of stratified layers that intermingle and defer meaning” (Cascone, 2000). Rodgers (2003) argues that the very tools used in electronic music production can articulate a more personalised ‘aural’ history or authentic political statement, compared to the traditional instrumentation of Western art music.

In the wake of these enmeshments with computers, cartesian perspectives on the notion of the ‘human experience’ comes under scrutiny. Post-humanism’s literary philosophers believe that “the human has been misconceived by nearly every thinker in the Western tradition” (Snaza et. al, 2014). Human-machine assemblages challenge the anthropocentric views upheld by western society, and the gendered divisions it creates. By adopting this philosophy humans can ally themselves “with the politico-pedagogical projects of feminism, post colonialism, anti-racism, and queer activism as it confronts the systematic dehumanisation of people under the hegemonies Western from of political right” (p. 49).

“A Cyborg Manifesto” (Haraway, 1985) provides new models for experimental politics and communities, based on the increasing integration of technology and the human in every day life. This hybridisation challenges the dichotomies between mind/body, public/private, nature/culture and man/woman (p.163). Haraway’s work has influenced various contemporary electronic musicians, including Holly Herndon who through the cyborg metaphor “reimagine(s) what music can sound like...(which) frees us from the tropes and archetypes of the past” (Herndon, 2015).

In spite of these liberatory possibilities, Loza (2001) however challenges the utopianism of post-human ideologies by observing the negative effects of disembodiment and bodily reconfigurations that electronic music has been known to produce.

She argues that human-machine interface in electronic music production regenerates gender in a “diva loop” which rearticulates hyper sexualised stereotypes of women (p. 350). This is prevalent in the working model of male producer, and female vocalist, through which ‘fembots’ are constructed in a masculine surgery of orgasmic loops and climaxes. Loza’s research reveals the need to analyse successful practices by women who deconstruct the nature/technologies binaries within music and emphasise the importance of music technology and production within larger critiques of feminism and digital culture.

Hayles (1996) similarly questions the gender politics of “inscribing the female power of reproduction into a technological scenario of (male) parthenogenesis”. Hayles’ work thus suggests that the masculine attributes privileged in hegemonic society; mind, computer, male, could lead to the erasure of the feminine; body, organism, female. However, I argue that “woman” has only ever existed as “other”, a by-product of masculine construction. “In relation to homo sapiens, she is the foreign body, the immigrant from nowhere, the alien without and the enemy within.” (Plant, 1996). The virtualities of Cyberspace challenge the fixed identities of our androcentric culture, thus, providing a plethora of new intersubjective experiences for women.

WESTERN LANGUAGE SYSTEMS

In addition to the potentialities of cyberspace, this project was profoundly driven by a desire to remap the ways in which women's embodiment is inscribed in language. Western values, I argue, are encoded in patriarchal linguistic narratives, and these are supported by philosophical ideas and consumerism which support the mind/body split and gender dualisms.

The internal structures of language expose a heteronormative gender binary system through which we "define, anchor, legitimate, and contextualise interpretation" (Agha, 2019). This system of categorical opposites (Austern, 1993) is considered a "symbolic machine" through which Bourdieu (2001) surmises that everything in the world is deductible to the male/female opposition. Cossutta (2019) identifies the 'masculine' as a gender-neutral marker which promotes maleness as the standard/definition by which all humans must measure themselves within western society.

Salvatore (2018) similarly identifies the binary relationship 'man/woman' as an enduring characteristic trait of western society, a symptom and result of the social structures within which such dichotomies are determined. These dualisms are amplified and reproduced through old habits, literature, systems of education, myths and science, which Salvatore identifies as patriarchal guidelines for the "ideal woman". These notions translate to music genres and production contexts, as noted by Strong (2017): "the idea that men and women have fundamentally different natures which leads to them creating different types of music come from social norms that are not specific to the screen or music industries." (p. 58)

Gendered subjectivity is hence constructed through the representational system of music. This is exemplified in gendered-theme concepts of early sonata form which orders assertive "masculine themes" first, and gentler "feminine themes" second (Hepokoski, 1994). Research regarding musical instruments and their gendered associations offer further statistical evidence to suggest that language informs our sonic understanding. Males are most commonly linked with lower pitch, and categorised as members of the orchestra's string and woodwind families, while females are linked with high pitch and keyboard players (Stronsick et. al, 2017). The gendered associations between "masculine" and "feminine" extends further than instrumentation. Research shows that we make gendered distinctions between genres and methods of production (Marsh & West, 2003; Strong & Cannizzo, 2017). This "sex-stereotyping of musical instruments" according to Griswold & Chroback (1981) is most prevalent in music education and the "state of social reality in the profession" more broadly.

Cram (2009) states musicologists are shifting toward a more pragmatic and empirical investigation of musical performance; "The 'separation' of linguistic and musicological theory, and the consequent need to bridge the gap between them, is arguably a curious and untypical feature of the Western tradition" (p. 53). Our phallogocentric language systems fail to account for the female experience within music practice, and to accurately depict or account for the effects of musical experience. This has influenced my poststructuralist approach to composition of Mother tongue, and informed the Deleuzian and Phenomenological methods of Part 2.

PART 2: METHODS



**My bedroom Studio
March 2019**

My primary bedroom studio set-up consists of an Apple imac (27-inch, 2017) which runs the DAW Logic Pro X, Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 (1st GENERATION) USB Recording Audio Interface, Ashton USB MIDI Controller Keyboard, Korg Minilogue analog polyphonic synthesiser, and a Sennheiser E945 super-cardioid vocal microphone.

As the sole composer, performer, engineer, and producer of this work, my creative process was rather erratic. Sometimes I would just focus on improving my “production” skills in Logic Pro X, and reshape/edit these ideas later, but generally I would rely on my critical research to inspire lyrical concepts or to inform the sourcing of samples.

MacArthur (2015) asserts that “conceptual thinking...can be harnessed as a tool for change.” By engaging in philosophical and cultural theory’s influence on feminist aesthetics, I was able to traverse the systems and patriarchal ideologies which inhibited the articulation of my own musical narrative.

Mother Tongue employs a post-structuralist conceptual framework to critique musical culture which fails to account for the intersubjective experience as woman. These methodologies of fragmentation, deconstruction, and re-assemblage reject the direct correlation between signified and signifier, disrupting the structuralism of traditional western institutions and its binary oppositional foundations. By employing phenomenological methods of embodiment I use my performing and experiencing body as a site of action and creativity⁴ to write, perform, record, and produce an album to reclaim that which is routinely dominated and objectified through masculine dominated environments.

⁴ Mesch (2001) references Carolee Schneemann’s “Interior Scroll” performance artwork as a site of ‘action and creativity’. Schneemann’s feminist work reunites the stereotypical opposites of the mind-body divide in artistic practice.

CUT UP TECHNIQUE

As an architect of sounds⁵, I store and accumulate field and urban recordings, online content, samples, vocal ideas, and chord sequences. I layer hi-fi with lo-fi, past with present, while harmonising these sonorous objects with the sounds of Inner and Outer space.

This sonic cut-up and collage technique, also known as bricolage, is analogous to the literary applications of cut up methodology utilised by French Critic Roland Barthes and American Novelist William S. Burroughs. In the foundational forms of his technique a text is selected, cut up, and re-arranged to “disrupt the conventions of narrative and logical sequence” (Lydenberg, 1978) I specially apply this by cutting up, re-sampling, and manipulating an original sound source as a way to displace hierarchical binary oppositions in contemporary electronic music composition.

Mother Tongue’s emphasis on the deconstruction and re-assemblage of language is informed by western dual systems of signified and signifier which creates a mind/body dichotomy, Burroughs refers to this phenomenon as a Schizophrenic division (Lydenberg, 1978). This duality also sets in opposition men and women, meaning and form, which in turn perpetuates structures of hierarchy and oppression.

Dadaist and Surrealist art practice also rejected these structures of oppression by adopting methods of collage, bricolage, and decoupage critique the correlation between words and meaning.

Feminist artists have also chosen cut up and collage as a mode of aesthetic express in postmodern art (Raaberg, 1998). Lippard (1984) describes feminist art as a deliberate denial of formal contradictions (male/female, outside/inside, hard/soft, solid, vulnerable, armoured/wounded, repulsive/attractive). The production of cut up and collage within the domestic space (coined “Femmage” by Shapiro) reflects on production as a female creative and the domestic space as a site for reclamation (Gourma-Peterson, 1997).

PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology highlights the intertwining and inseparability of the lived body and its’ environment. Cartesian models of logic, tradition, and semiotics, which emphasise the dualism of mind and body, and subsequently privilege the mind, fall short in describing the embodied experience of musical expression. By utilising phenomenological philosophies I subvert the socio-political power relations of the male gaze, to emphasise the intersubjective “experiences” of musical expression.

Existential phenomenologist; Merleau Ponty’s theory of the ‘body as lived experience’ (Gallagher, 1986) inspired my critique of my culturally performing body (that which repeats daily conventions of signifiers practice), and the epistemic ontological regimes which produce it. In response to this, I challenge the western development of my “body schema” and seek out my own experiential truth as a female composer and producer. Engaging with instinctive and intuitive approaches to composition (which contrasts methods of my previous education where rigid formulae inform compositional frameworks) has enabled a conscious reflection of the impact of western structuring of the female body, thus granting my experienced body its own voice.

The independent process of self-recording, composition, and production, allows my work to be created in a deeply mediated, visceral, embodied capacity. My voice, and other vocal samples as I have presented them, collapse the binary oppositions between artist and artwork. This process enables me to reclaim the passive female body and challenge the phallogocentric institutions which speak for the feminine experience.

⁵ Canadian composer and theorist R. Murray Schafer reflects on the worlds’ soundscape as a musical composition (Cox & Warner, 2006). The earth “forms the body of an instrument” and musicians as “Architects of Sound” (p. 30-31)

My approach here is indebted to women who preceded me. Many post-structuralist feminists⁶ have adopted phenomenological teachings in their critiques of Patriarchal society. Cixousean thought empowers woman to take ownership of her body, language and creative pursuits, and young's (1980) work "Throwing Like A Girl" argues that the female body cannot exist just as an object, as this interpretation creates a fixed and subjective account of the female experience.

In response to this, I adopt Amelia Jones' (1998) theory of performing the subject, and adopt unconventional compositional techniques (dissonance, modulating time signatures, juxtaposing temporalities) to subvert modernist assumptions that fixed meanings are "determinable through the formal structure of the work..."(p. 21).

BECOMING

Deleuzian-Feminist theories inform my work, by presenting the female body as a verb; a changeable, in flux, and fluid. Much like the format of this exegesis, *Mother Tongue* connects combinations of thoughts which cross conventional boundaries. Instead of restricting my research and explorations to "music", I draw influence from linguistics, philosophy, social politics, history and post-humanism, to consider how they, like bricolage itself, work together to create a whole. Through the virtual movement between past and present I create heterogeneous assemblages which transform into compositional sites of Becoming, this contrasts to the homogeneous, fixed structures of traditional music composition.

This 'fluid like' nature of becoming, cannot exist within the linear structures of hierarchy. Therefore, Becomings' ability to open new pathways "beyond the avenues, relations, values and meanings that seem to be laid out for us by our biological make-up, our evolutionary heritages, our historical/political/familial identities, and the social and cultural structures of civilised living (Sotirin, 2011, p. 117), provide new creative potentials for women in musical practice. Sotirin notes:

"Becoming-woman disrupts the rigid hierarchies of sexual binaries such as male/female, heterosexuality/homosexuality, masculinity/femininity that organise our bodies, our experiences, our institutions and our histories"

(p. 21)

Becoming-woman provides a feminist framework through which to explore my musical practice. By separating myself from the social and cultural expectations of male subjectivity, I am liberated to create and compose without constant comparison to the 'male standard' as it has been articulated in scholarship and practice. Macarthur (2015) argues that a Deleuzian-feminist approach provides a framework of positive difference, one that creates a space for women rather than existing as a comparative site.

ASSEMBLAGE

In Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, assemblages are formed through the processes of coding, stratification, and territorialization.

This process is akin to my process of sample collecting which creates new territories through their stratifications in my compositions (Rebirth, 10,000 Hours, Your-Pretty). The new articulations these new territories create are then re-territorialised by the listeners interpretation of the work.

Assemblage has become vital to the significance of the cut-up methodology I deploy in composition, which attempts to create a space for my own personal voice within electronic music, whilst also acknowledging the

⁶ To name a few post-structuralist feminists who have influenced my work; Iris Marion Young, Hélène Cixous, Judith Butler, Simone De Beauvoir.

cultural biases implicit in the ways in which musicians and theorists have engaged with gendered bodies in electronica.

RHIZOMES

Using the Rhizome as a metaphor (Van der Klei, 2002), I am able to bypass the gendered associations between sound and source and collapse the hierarchical distinctions between different musical elements. The immersion of different heterogenous sounds into one conceptual framework, allows me to create works of non linear, musically embodied expression.

PART 3: *THE WORK*

Mother Tongue represents a body of work designed to subvert the male form of subjectivity associated with album making, and deconstructs the passive female body within contemporary electronic music. This eight track album is submitted as the final work of my Masters degree, and is designed as a conceptual album to be listened to in full in a musically treated environment.

Thus far, the exegesis has explored the ties between compositional design and social/cultural phenomenon. I argue that “woman” in music is constructed through traditional and coded organisations of patriarchal culture. This exposes the need for new musical spaces, which resonates with Butler’s performance theory of the body (Jagger, 2008); dismissing the ideologies of the “essentialist woman” and supporting the fluid expressions of performing bodies.

My methods - phenomenological uses of Deleuzian-feminist practice - have informed my conceptual approaches to challenging traditional musical conventions in contemporary music; lyrically, harmonically, structurally, rhythmically and timbrally. I challenge traditional representations of the woman in music, by creating new temporal spaces for my work to “become”.

Mother Tongue reflects my embodied and personal approach to music making, I assemble cultural constituents of female identity, whilst responding autobiographically to social experiences of feeling subordinate. These are realised both lyrically and sonically, through the reclamation of my personal experience as a female musician.

Underpinning the processes of assemblage and bricolage that my work uses is a deep conceptual layering of multimedia and intertextuality. My instrumentation is a mix of live instrument recordings (voice, electric guitar, electric bass, and minilogue synthesiser), and field recordings and samples sourced from online platforms (predominantly youtube). Such techniques were deployed precisely to enable the rhizomatic horizon of multiple meaning; as Hawkins (2017) notes, “processes of intertextuality circumvent the domination of one interpretation over another, or, to put it differently, the totalisation of any specific singularity.” (p. 27)

Mother Tongue challenges the musical and social codes which perpetuate the power relationships between ‘man’ and ‘woman’. The juxtaposition between these two temporal spaces are a key feature of my work, merging the virtually constructed “public” woman with the “private” artist, which further explores the politics of the fragmented female identity. As consumers of music in the 21st century, we have access to multiple platforms (online streaming, digital downloads, vinyl, cassette, CDs) through which we are able to listen to music. These listening experiences are mediated by a variety of everyday speaker systems; headphones, car speakers, and so on. However, not all of these interfaces reproduce sound in the same way. This plurality informed my decision to have the album professionally mixed by Ben Lemi and mastered by Alexander Green.

I was able to supervise the mixing process to ensure my vision was not compromised, and was able to learn more about engineering through this process. The treatment of the tracks in post-production does not affect the creative or stylistic choices I have made in the work, it simply ensures that the final presentation and dissemination of the work will stand alongside other works in the field.

The tracks explore three main themes; **the myth, gender production in the studio, and the ‘musical machine’**. These are autobiographical and reflexive responses to the ways I have personally encountered the masculine narrative informing or depicting feminine experience. Below I present each theme as they inform my body of work. This is followed by a critical discussion of each of the eight tracks, detailing composition and production process, and the conceptual framework through which these works emerged.

THE MYTH

Examination of the roots of philosophy is indicative of the marginalisation of women to 380 BCE (Yeandle, 2017). Plato's mythologies of "universal truths" provide the catalyst for our gendered dualisms (such as mind-body, genius/talent, public/private) which inform the gender essentialism within prominent western mythology.

Feminist writer, Angela Carter, defines myths as 'extraordinary lies' which control the behaviour of society, and adopts the method of 'demythologising' in response to platonic influence over the structuring of society (Yeandle, 2017). As I outlined earlier, our language systems of signified and signifier perpetuate gender stereotypes within western society, and Bruce (1989) states that myth works as a "second order semiotic system, consisting of metaphorical language to natural mythical significations."

In response to the binary dualisms created by mythology, Mother Tongue 'demythologises' the central narrative of Ovid's Orpheus and Eurydice (as depicted in *Metamorphoses*) to critique the binary model of male artist, and female muse.

Eurydice, a beautiful nymph marries the legendary musician and poet, Orpheus. Shortly after their wedding day, she is bitten by a snake and dies. Heart broken, Orpheus is convinced that his song could move the gods of the underworld and bring his wife back from the dead. The bloodless spirits weep and his wish is granted, but on one condition; that as they ascend from the underworld, he doesn't look back at her. Giving into temptation, he looks back, and Eurydice slips back into darkness. Orpheus returns empty handed, and continues to charm the land of the living through his songs of heartbreak.

"And now, dying a second time, she made no complaint against her husband; for of what could she complain save that she was beloved? She spoke one last "farewell" which scarcely reached her husband's ears, and fell back again to the place whence she had come."

Book X, OVID, *Metamorphoses*

Popular music has referenced or retold the myth of Eurydice and Orpheus⁷, but absent from these representations has been a critical response to the masculine depiction of Orpheus as a symbol of musical brilliance, and Eurydice's subordinate role in their relationship. However, the literary world is rich in feminist exploration of the myth, most of which critique the depiction of Eurydice as the mute female object.⁸

Eurydice's mortal life relies upon Orpheus's interest in the 'erotic other' to be saved. Ultimately it is both literally and figuratively Orpheus' gaze which has the power to both give life to a woman or to end it. By appropriating this myth as a counter-hegemonic response I subvert the narrative of woman existing as muse through the imagination of the male artist, and give Eurydice a voice.

⁷ Nick Caves (2004) *Abattoir Blues/The Lyre of Orpheus* is an album written by Nick Cave and recorded by his all-male band "The Bad Seeds". This album adopts the Orphic model as a conceptual theme.

Zoey Deschanel's track (2010) "Don't look back" takes inspiration from the myth, but lyrically reiterates Eurydice's subordination to Orpheus.

⁸ Atwood's 1987 poems 'Orpheus' and 'Eurydice' equates Orpheus' love to narcissism, and identifies his supernatural musical abilities as manifestations of selfishness and arrogance. (Shugart, 2009). Doolittle's (1925) anti-ovidian poem "Eurydice" comments on the "model of artistic inspiration dominated by the all-powerful possessive artistic gaze with its presumed masculine bias..." (Bruzelius 1998). Stallings (1995) offers Eurydice's response to Orpheus' gaze, depicting intentions that weren't driven by honest love "I still imagine your explanation, were it to come...disappointment in the end was more aesthetic than any merely felicitous resolution".

GENDER PRODUCTION IN THE STUDIO

As a female bedroom producer, I challenge the hobbyist/professional, public/private dichotomies which have historically restricted women's autonomy in this area.

The male producer and female model is a recurring trope within contemporary electronica and pop musical history. The irony of the female experience as articulated by men, is explored by Reddington (2018) who invented the term "gender ventriloquism" to categorise male producers who use female vocalists as "mouthpieces".

The works "Rebirth" and "(your) pretty" draw the listeners attention to the representation of women in contemporary electronica and the gender ventriloquism that happens behind the scenes. Such an approach was informed by the work of Marsh and West (2003), who argue that "In the male dominated field of technology, the image of woman as machine not only implies male control of technology but also male control of woman, nature, and sound" (P. 184).

Through the process of cut and paste and re-sampling, I explore what it means to deconstruct the gender binaries perpetuated by our standardised phallogentric music culture, and encourage the listener to rethink the passive female body in music.

THE MUSICAL MACHINE

Having completed a Bachelor in Vocal Jazz, I understand the adversities and vulnerabilities of the embodied experience of being one's instrument. In my experience, I found that the other women in my cohort were also vocal majors, and with that territory came a hierarchical system through which we were constantly having to "prove" ourselves. This was not limited to my institution, the hierarchical roles of certain instruments are observed in the Brisbane Jazz Scene, whereby singing is not valued as highly as playing an instrument (Istvandy, 2016).

My application of cut-up technique in this context refers to the ties between machine technology and jazz improvisation which influenced much modernist artwork. For Zabel (2004), this is about initiating renegotiated modes of interfacing the artist with the machine: "The interplay between materials thus models the interaction between the artist and his machine environment: in this way the work becomes an unorthodox self-portrait" (p. xiv).

After a break from the jazz institution, I was able to fuse my formal training in jazz harmony with electronic becomings to create sonic works which resonate with the machine-assemblage portraiture of the early 20th century avant-garde. The tracks "10,000 hours" & "Outro" destabilise the gendered categories of the parochialist western jazz institution and the epistemic ontological culture that produces it. The symbiosis of mechanical reproduction and jazz composition allows me to apply the conceptual elements of jazz to electronic mediums which communicate little 'mimetic resemblance' to the static/passive bodily constructions attributed with my work.

By applying post-structuralist and phenomenological methodologies to my work, I am able to de-territorialise, and re-territorialise representations of female jazz musicians to create an assemblage of sonic becomings. For listeners who don't have this text whilst listening to "Mother Tongue", I hope these compositions communicate the ludic (and sometimes parodic) attitude I adopt when reflecting on my time in the institution.

MOTHER TONGUE

TRACK LISTING

Rebirth

Orphic Pleasure

(Your) Pretty

Familiar

10,000 Hours

Eurydice

Joy

Outro

ORPHIC PLEASURE

Don't talk to me about sadness

Don't talk to me about sadness

Does not excuse our choices

Does not excuse our choices

Blessed mediator of the light

Hells hounds bow down by your side

One glance revealed creation serpentine

A casualty to ovidian delight

Orphic Pleasure (x4)

Don't talk to me about madness

Don't talk to me about madness

Does not excuse our choices

Does not excuse our choices

Silenced by the season and the plight

Each palpation is it's own song

Veiled by the eclipse of your sun

and our faction met its end when we begun

Orphic Pleasure (x4)

Deanne Krieg (2019)

Orphic Pleasure is a 3.35 track which was composed and recorded with a combination of minilogue, Logic Pro X VST's, field recordings, samples⁹, piano, cello, and vocals.

The intro features a field recording of ocean waves lapping against the rocks in Island Bay, Pōneke/Wellington. It surges and dynamically ruptures before transporting the listener to a new temporal space centred on dry vocals accompanied by bird song. The following section features my flatmate Erika Grant, who I recorded playing cello in our kitchen. I recorded the "live" piano in our lounge, and the synth parts in my bedroom. This mix of inside and outside recording environments attempts to deconstruct the patriarchally constructed essence of woman as "nature" vs "technology" and "uncontrollable" vs "controllable" (Ortner, 1972).

The samples of the word "Choice" in the second verse, were sourced from youtube interviews with American women about the recent Alabama abortion laws, both pro and anti choice. Such samples were used to underscore my belief in the importance of women continuing to have discussions around body autonomy, and who has the authorial power to enforce these political decisions.

Dyson (1996) states that "Recorded sound cannot claim the so-called authenticity of direct, live transmission, since the recording is tied to neither here nor the now of the sonic event." Through my sporadic application of reverb on counter vocal lines, my voice exists in multiple temporalities and spaces at once, continuously in flux and multiple. This challenges the traditional studio methods of reverb which "must be calculated for its crucial role as a cue for the localisation of sound..."(p. 81).

Orphic Pleasure also explores the temporality of musical space within contemporary music production. This is realised through the process of recording in varied acoustic environments (inside and outside) and the digital manipulation of channel effects in post-production. The sonic merging of tactile space and virtual space challenges the public/private, mind/body dichotomies which create spatial and temporal barriers for women in music production. Juxtaposing phenomena between tangibly fixed environments and the multiplicities of the virtual evokes an uneasiness to the passive listener.

⁹ These samples were sourced and downloaded from youtube channels; ABC news (2019), The Atlantic (2019) and Live Action (2019).

EURYDICE

Evading fiery waters

Fuelling sensations reserved for the brave

The Jackal in the divide

Waves of dissonance in mind

The things that got lost in the...

(Bodies bending backwards)

What we comment

lost to the divide

What we comment

Emerging fiery waters

Fuelling sensations reserved for the brave

The Jackal in the divide

Waves of dissonance in mind

The things that got lost in the...

(Bodies bending backwards)

What we comment

lost to the divide

What we comment

Flicker (x4)

Fade (x4)

where there's a blaze

Deanne Krieg (2019)

Eurydice is a 3.52 track which was composed and recorded with a combination of minilogue, Logic Pro X VST's, field recordings, korg drum samples, electric bass guitar, electric guitar and vocals.

"Just as the mysterious telegraph and the telephone we also once thought to be able to contact the other world, cyber space is also an underworld in which to meet one's Eurydice."

(Margaret Morse p. 206)

Morse (n.d) uses Eurydice's Underworld as a metaphor for cyber space, a platform which allows women to make and remake themselves. This metaphor aligns my methods of "giving a voice" to the passive female muse with the infinite possibilities to become in virtual space. The lyrics respond to the image of woman as an object to be desired, therefore losing authority and autonomy over her own subjective experience, this is displayed through the repetition of "what we lost to the divide"

The "erratic" feeling of the beat in "Eurydice" is created through the placement of Korg drum samples' (kicks and claps) on offbeats, this opposes the standard "four on the floor" present in most contemporary electronica. The listener is pulled between the movement of these rhythms and the hook-like aspects of the vocal melody. This destabilising metric effect is heightened in the second verse when the bass line hints at a signature change from 4/4 to 6/4.

The "glitchy" treatment of the beat references the cyber feminist utopia as addressed by Plant (1996) who illuminates the possibilities for the re-construction and re-definition of women in cyber space.

The higher vocal register I occupy in this track, mixed with the close-mike technique of recording was often critiqued during my masters studies. I accept that phallogocentric culture has signified the high female voice as "pretty" and "sweet" which has thus eroticised it, but this was not my original intention for the piece. This decision to use my upper register, was a reaction to my formal jazz training which encouraged the use of my lower register (to sound more "bluesy"), as a natural soprano I have always felt most comfortable in this register. In a culture which likes to determine how my voice should sound, to refute my upper register would be equally as damaging to my work, as the institutions which advocate for it. I have maintained an intuitive, embodied approach to the recording of Mother Tongue, through which all tunes remain in the same key that they were originally written in.

FAMILIAR

Stepped inside a futile ring
Then my mind fell silent
Swept up in a hopeful scheme
Tongue tied and compliant

I only need my two arms
The only constant
Spend all my time making new art
A new direction

We're too familiar now it's only making it harder
We're too familiar now it's only making it stronger x2

Played out like a fever dream
Iridescent burning
and when the thirst came over me
I couldn't fight the yearning

We're too familiar now it's only making it harder
We're too familiar now it's only making it stronger x2

Wait a while
Grip into the surface
Bigger dreams
take their time

Deanne Krieg (2019)

Familiar is a 4.25 track which was recorded and composed with a combination of minilogue, Logic Pro X VST's, field recordings, korg drum samples and vocals.

The instrumentation alludes to many of the archetypal arrangements of a contemporary track; four on the floor kicks, driving double-time hats, and vocal harmonies, but a sense of unfamiliarity is created through bright textural production of sonorous forms as opposed to stereotypical studio production which satiates the preconditioned reflexes of popular music¹⁰.

The vocals were miked extra close to bring a feeling of closeness to the listener, this is echoed in my "dry" treatment of the lead vocal.

"Familiar" is the most conventionally contemporary electronic track on this album. It responds to the "commodity" character of successful formulaic pop, whilst challenging typical ideologies of feminine signification. It mimics strophic form (Introduction, Verse 1, Bridge, chorus (a), Verse 2, chorus (b), coda) with dynamic, textural and channel strip modifications that create an acousmatic¹¹ listening experience for the listener.

The lyrics echo formulaic love themes found in most contemporary music, but clearly communicates the control and autonomy the female protagonist has over her situation. For me, it is important that my work communicates that women can express their own embodiment (vulnerabilities) without feeling subordinate, or feeling as if she is compromising her authority an "empowered female musician".

¹⁰ These preconditioned reflexes are explored by Adorno, T. W. (1941)

¹¹ "Acousmatics" was popularised by Musique Concrete founder Pierre Schaeffer (Cox & Warner 2016)

REBIRTH

Rebirth is a sample based track, focused on critiquing the processes of “Gender Ventriloquism” in the studio. As outlined by Reddington (2018) the male producer, female vocalist model supports the facilitation of the feminine experience through the male gaze. By adopting a post-structuralist creative framework, this piece avoids relying on lyricism (and its traditional semiotic structuring) to critique the representation of women in popular culture. Instead, I de-territorialise and re-territorialise the samples from their masculine contexts to disrupt the socio-political hierarchy that normalises this process. This creates an assemblage of cyber samples of “different qualities, speeds and lines” (Wise, 2011, p. 92) which together create rhizomatic combinations of new becomings.

Karyn White - I'm not your Superwoman¹²

Adopting a sultry tilt, White delivers lyrics which equate the domestic duties of a girlfriend with unconditional love. Sentences are bookmarked by exasperated breathy gasps and started again with glottal moans.

*“Early in the morning I put breakfast at your table
And make sure that your coffee has its sugar and cream
Your eggs are over easy, your toast done lightly
All that's missing is your morning kiss
That used to greet me...”*

Written and produced by three men; L.A. Reid, Babyface, and Daryl Simmons, White's voice is separated from her physical body and transformed into an object that is meticulously edited to standards of the masculine ideal. This process of gender ventriloquism supports the facilitation of the feminine experience through masculine discourse.

By cutting up, re-assembling, and re-sampling fragments of this track, I challenge the doxa which normalises masculinised accounts of feminine experience and subvert the masculinised role of the sampler which “reproduces patriarchal values” according to Reddington (p. 63)

Super Girl film snippet (1984)¹³

The Super Girl “new powers” scene is an iconic, stereotypical depiction of the ideal woman as a thin, blonde, blue eyed bimbo. The orchestral score matches western sonic depictions of “femininity”. The discovery of Super Girls’ new-found super powers are depicted as soft, mysterious, accidental, decorative, pretty, and twinkly, and she is giggling absent-mindedly in amazement throughout the scene.

“Meet the real woman behind the voice of Siri” (2013)

In a CNN interview (2013), Susan Bennet, the original voice actor of Siri, talks about the process of Apple capturing her speech “...They put this thing around my neck”.

Bennet’s laidback conversation style and disconcertingly “human” expressions, contradict our more familiar interactions with her virtual other. She blurs the edges between reality and the virtual by speaking as “Susan” and then as “Siri”.

In an interview with Ravitz (2013), Bennet reveals that she thought she was partaking in a database to construct speech, not as the voice of a virtual assistant that would some day be speaking to more than 100 million people. By speeding up and slowing down snippets of the CNN interview, I emphasise the bizarre star-stuck excitement of the interviewers, all the while knowing that Bennet was used as symbolic goods as exploited by Apple.

¹² Karyn White’s 1989 single “superwoman” was a U.S top 10 hit “love ballad” written by L.A. Reid, Babyface & Daryl Simmons.

¹³ The audio from this scene was sourced and downloaded from youtube (Movieclips, 2017)

(YOUR) PRETTY

(Your) Pretty is a 3.25 track which was recorded and composed out of Acapella vocal takes of popular female pop artists. The songs were sourced at random from youtube, and using Logic Pro X's sampler I cut-up, isolated, and re-sampled fragments of these works.

This work critiques the lyrical representation and vocal production of women in commercial pop music. Through the cut-up process, I discovered identical lyrics and themes across most of the tracks, so I isolated recurring words: "you, pretty, you're, he" to highlight the construction of the male subject and female object within popular music culture.

The title for this track is a play on words, (your) references the gaze of patriarchal culture, which sexualises and depicts woman as subordinate to man. The practice of gender ventriloquism in the commercial studio feeds into the creation of the cartesian subject, accentuating the split between the female subject and masculine object.

By isolating the vocalised sounds between the words; (suffocating gasps, orgasmic oohs, hyper sexualised rasps, reverb tails) I expose the "in-between truths" (Lydenberg, 1978) of popular music, and which percussively juxtapose these sounds against the lyric as pseudo beats.

"The post-human diva is a sassy mimic, parodying the natural with a musical masquerade that mocks the fixity of femininity...but can the post-human siren sing a new sexual subjectivity into being, or will s/he be trapped by terminal desires?"

(Loza 2001)

Although Your Pretty resonates with Loza's dystopian critiques of the the post-human fembot, I believe that my methods of cut up "dissect and explode the linguistic parasite" (Lydenberg, 1978) which reveals "the mechanics of social communication systems and the possible abuses of language as a weapon of control"(p. 415) within contemporary pop culture.

10,000 HOURS

10,000 Hours is a 3.47 track which was recorded and composed using minilogue, Logic Pro X VST's, field recordings, korg drum samples, TC Helicon VoiceTone D1 Pedal, alto saxophone and vocals.

The repeated phrase "10,000 hours to sound like you" references Gladwell's (2008) "mantra to achieve success". This track reflects on the 10,000 hour goal preached by tutors to encourage students to spend hours in a windowless concrete practice room internalising the bebop language.

The walls of the school were covered in pictures of the "great" male instrumentalists, and course readings focused on the lives of these great men.

Due to the lack of female jazz role models in our curriculum, I remember working hard to "prove" both to myself and my tutors that I deserved to be there.

The time stretching of my vocals paired with the driving yet "broken" rhythmic pulse, summarises my practice routine - which consisted of slowing down of Charlie Parker solo's to ingrain his licks. I remember the sense of relief this "slowing down" allowed my ears, the swirling melodies and erratic splashes of metallic symbols created a meditative ambience, rich in new shades of colour.

Adopting this slower pacing, I emphasised the presence of breath in my vocal takes. I want the listener to be reminded of the close connection between breath and the flesh.

The end of the piece features female saxophonist Eilish Wilson, who I studied with at the NZSM. I captured the sound of her free improvisations through a microphone placed at the bell. I proceeded to affect her sound with a TC Helicon Vocal pedal as she played. This process aims to connect phenomenological themes of embodiment with the breath, as mediated through an interface; instrument or machine, whilst adding a bit of "tongue-in-cheek" to the seriousness we both associate with the perfectionist approaches of our training.

JOY

A gift, A gift
to know your devotion
A gift, A gift
To know your devotion

I lie awake
Within the body you've grown
Meditating your final words
Their strength now my own

A gift, a gift...

Love is ingrained
There from the start
Patient and brave
Words you impart
Heaven is made
Your life is art
Your'e by my side
And the ones before us

Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy
You are Joy

Deanne Krieg (2019)

Joy is a 4.41 track which was recorded and composed using minilogue, Logic Pro X VST's, field recordings, korg drum samples, samples from my composition FreeFall, (which features on the 2018 Tui Award winning Jazz album)¹⁴ and vocals.

The inspiration for this piece comes from my grandmother's letter, which was left for me when she passed away in 2007. From a young age, she nurtured my creativity and imagination, covered the costs of music lessons, and taught me the importance of determination and persistence.

"My darling precious grandchild Deanne, for me you have been a blessing from heaven. I'm so very lucky to have been part of your growing up and watched as you develop into a beautiful young woman. I'm so grateful for your caring and kindness and love and I will never cease to love you, as you are in my heart forever. I know our souls are connected and that will never change. Believe in yourself as I believe in you. You have so many talents use them well, they have been given to you for a reason. I am going on a new journey to the spiritual world but I will always be here by your side in spirit. Love Grandma."

OUTRO

Beautiful love

You're all a mystery

Beautiful love

What have you done to me

I was contented till you came along

Thrilling my soul with your song

Beautiful love I've roamed your paradise

Searching for love a dream to realise

Reaching for heaven, depending on you

Beautiful love will my dreams come true?

Wayne King, Victor Young, Egbert Van Alstyne¹⁵

¹⁴ Zakaria, U.(2018). Fearless Music. New Zealand: Rattle Records.

¹⁵Beautiful Love (Jazz standard 1931)

CONCLUSION

Platonic and Romantic ideologies still pervade most areas of western music culture today, these perpetuate the gender essentialism which suppresses women's autonomy in the male dominated areas of music making. Through the creation of my self produced album, *Mother Tongue*, I expose the flawed logic of essentialism that suggests biological difference contributes to the low representation of women in music composition and production.

I have adopted post-modernist feminist philosophies to challenge and critique the phallogocentric institutionalised frameworks in western society which exclude women from most areas of musical practice. This, in conjunction with phenomenological methodologies, has enabled the reclamation of my own body as both subject and object.

The masculine possession and mediation of the feminine experience within most areas of music practice is a pertinent trend within contemporary electronic music, but the ever-increasing accessibility of technology within the domestic space provides alternative sites of becoming for women. Research into areas of Cyber-feminist philosophy has revealed the possibilities of intersubjective embodiment for the post-human musician, who uses technology and machines to compose, produce, release, and share music.

Through my critical research and creative process, I have learned that the identification, critique, and deconstruction of the socio-political barriers which condition women to believe they don't belong in areas of music practice, is key to a prosperous future of gender equality in music. *Mother Tongue* is part of this transformative movement, and is an example of the autonomous possibilities for the female musician who contests the patriarchal foundations of musical practice.

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