

CREATIVE WORK:

LACEPEDE

VOL. 1

EXEGESIS:

DESIRING NATURE: FEMININITY, TRAUMA AND
DESIRE ON THE COORONG

VOL. 2

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ABSTRACT

The exegesis and the creative work are complementary forms of a poetic inquiry into gendered engagements with the Coorong's landscape, ecosystem and human history. Through a framework informed by post-colonial theory, psychoanalysis and French feminist philosophy, the exegesis explores why the traditional conflation of nature and femininity has so often been occasioned by silence and as an unrepresentable space of absence in western writing and discourse. In both components of the thesis, the exploration of female subjectivity and alternative ways of connecting to place are rooted within the local details of the Coorong estuary as the grounds to particularising the aesthetic, ethical and political engagements at stake for this fragile ecosystem. This has required an examination of the ways in which dualist logic has shaped western culture, language, subjectivity and knowledge and, more specifically, how this dualistic conceptual ordering of the world has operated to negate a subjectivity and language specific to the feminine. The exegesis then turns to two male-authored texts which have deeply influenced mainstream representations of the Coorong and discourses of human engagement with its landscapes to identify the operations of masculine desire. Analysis and psychoanalytic interpretations of these texts are then contrasted with a discussion of the creative work's exploration of female desire, subjectivity, trauma and the aesthetics of a feminine engagement with nature. These ideas culminate with an exploration of the possibilities of a female sublime. Overall, the idea of a feminine aesthetic is an experimental one that engages with poetic language, narrative forms and psychoanalytic theory to re-imagine the conceptual framework that shapes subjectivity.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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