ABSTRACT

ANNA JOSEPHINE DENDY BETTS. Woman in Pieces. (Under the direction of Professor Barbara Bennett.)

As an adult woman I found myself looking back on the foundational events in my childhood with an interest in mapping out critical experiences with paternal figures. This was dually inspired by my own interest in self-analysis and by my desire to understand if/ how narratives from my childhood were reenacted in my adulthood. My capstone is a project in two pieces. The first is memoir and the second is an academic literature review. The creative portion examines traumatic paternal relationships from my childhood, focusing on my father and first stepfather. These pieces are juxtaposed against experiences which occurred in my adult relationships with men. Furthermore, my relationship with my mother is explored in both childhood and adulthood. From here, the project moves into an academic literature review of contemporary feminist theory. In this portion I survey feminist theories of self, the affective feminist self, and feminist counter-stories of non-domination. I focus on the phenomenon of women discounting their own judgments in favor of the dominant masculine opinion, the importance of community for creating counter-narratives, and self-examination as a tool which can be used for the betterment of humanity. On a macro level, this project is an experiment in how the creative and the theoretical can be sewn together. I conclude that the memoir itself is an exercise in creatively mapping out my personal narrative of domination. As a result of my exposure to contemporary feminist theory I gain a fuller understanding of my being as a feminist self, as an embodied feminist in practice.