

PERSONA, CELEBRITY, PUBLICS

READING AND TALKING OUT LOUD SEMINAR SERIES

Friday 6 December 2013 10am–12pm

Deakin University, Melbourne Burwood Campus, B2.20 The Blue Room

Denise Varney University of Melbourne and co-director of the Australian Centre

Title: Julia Gillard and the Performative Power of Affect

Tickets for Julia Gillard in conversation with Anne Summers at the Melbourne Town Hall on 1 October, 2013 sold out in three hours. When she appears on stage, there is a spontaneous, heartfelt and lengthy standing ovation. Gillard acknowledges the ovation with the quiet dignity of her post-political self. Standing still on stage or sitting composed in an armchair, she exudes the quiet air of a woman who has been through a public flaying and is happy to have survived the pain that she so viscerally describes as one ‘that hits you like a fist, pain so strong you feel it in your guts, your nerve endings’. This frank description of pain provides evidence of the affects of power and its removal, and of the communication skills that were said to be lacking in her Prime Ministership. This power was briefly evident in the Misogyny Speech of October 2012, which is the subject of my paper. I analyse the speech as a cultural performance that cues a return to both earlier work on sexism and gender stereotypes and more recent work on the performative power of affect. Here I draw on Judith Butler’s 1990s and her more recent work to identify the constituent features of the speech and describe its enactment of an efficacious resistant politics.

Denise Varney is Associate Professor in Theatre Studies in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne and co-director of the Australian Centre. She publishes on Brechtian and contemporary German theatre, feminist criticism and women’s theatre and Australian Theatre. She is the author of *The Dolls’ Revolution* (2005) with Rachel Fensham, *Radical Visions: 1968-2008* (2011) and *Theatre in the Asia Pacific: Regional Modernities in the Global Era* Palgrave Macmillan (2013), co-authored with Eckersall, Hudson and Hatley.

Event Name. Persona, Celebrity, Publics
Reading and Talking Out Loud Seminar Series
Event Date. Friday 6 December 2013
Event Time. 10 am–12 pm
Event Location. Melbourne Burwood Campus , The Blue Room B2.20
RSVP Toija.Cinque@deakin.edu.au by 3 December 2013

Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B



