

**Academic Women in Neoliberal Times:
Gender, Time, Space and Emotion in the Contemporary
Australian University**

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis presented for examination contains no material previously published or accepted, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

The length of this thesis is 89,274 words

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Abstract

The neoliberal transformation of higher education has a significant impact upon the careers of academic women. The challenges facing women in academia in Australia, as well as internationally, are well documented, and the need to be seen to be creating change and promoting gender equity fits within the neoliberal doxa of the individualised and performative university. Women are by no means absent from the contemporary academy—if anything, what becomes most apparent is how the corporatisation of higher education has seemingly created ‘new’ opportunities for women. Opportunities for women are for those willing to embrace neoliberal ideology and act within the regulatory frameworks—yet there remains an absence of women in influential decision-making and leadership roles, and gender-based discrimination and harassment persists. It is a contradictory notion then, that despite women’s inclusion across the organisational hierarchy, neoliberal new managerialism in Australian universities exacerbates gender inequity and inequitable practices in the way it redistributes power, reproduces and reinforces traditional gendered patterns of inequality. A focus on increased gender representation obscures the fact that women’s participation continues to be measured and evaluated in relation to male norms of participation and achievements, and women remain largely invisible as academic leaders and respected knowledge producers.

This thesis is a feminist examination of key discourses, which constitute academic performativity and identity in the contemporary Australian university and how they relate to gender. In particular, how the discourses of neoliberalism and feminism are entangled in the structures, systems, operations, and cultures of the university, and how they constitute academic identity and performance. Although feminism has helped shape many

policy innovations and new governing rationalities, women's claims for equal rights and opportunities in academia have become 'mainstreamed', which has in many ways served to bureaucratise and depoliticise much of the radical intentions of equity and diversity policies. Drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews with academic women in Australia and critical autoethnography, this thesis uses a mix of experimental methods to emphasise the performative and discursive decisions women make in regard to their academic careers. This thesis takes inspiration from Hélène Cixous' (1976) *l'écriture féminine* and Sara Ahmed's (2014) concept of 'willfulness' as a methodological approach that playfully displaces gender and sex in scholarly research and writing and allows for a re-imagining of the academic self.

Academics embody contradictory, complicated, complacent, and complicit forms of knowledge and power within their subjectivities. As such, they are— in varying degrees— implicated in the cultural institutions, practices and performativities that also then produce academic subjectivities. Concentrating on academic women's experiences reveals how women themselves also generate these neoliberal and feminist shifts, how they manage the contradictions they produce, and how they carve spaces of influence and authority in the contemporary Australian university. In reconceptualising gender representation, and notions of women and leadership to move beyond the well-mapped inequalities and obstacles of the academic institution, this thesis moves towards a re-evaluation of existing discourses; of measures and values, job precarity and flexibility, collegiality and collectivity, and the misrecognition of emotion, offering new insight into gender inequality in the Australian university in neoliberal times.

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Prologue
The 'Willful' Secretary

Winter, March 2013

Hunched over her desk, squinting at her computer monitor, Briony checks and re-checks the clock in the top right corner of her computer screen. This is one of the most important aspects of her role as an executive assistant. Time is a finite resource and it was her job to squeeze and manipulate it into the tiny half-hourly windows of the office calendar. Her task was to control that time and manage the timeliness of the three university senior executives for whom she worked. Briony shuffles and then re-shuffles the already neat piles of paperwork upon her desk. She glances eagerly again at the top right corner of her computer screen. She is waiting in anticipation for her own meeting and the preservation of her own time. She is scheduled to meet with her honours supervisor. Tired of always being the one to call out the imbalance— and even the blatant omission— of women academics from awards short lists and committee panels, frustrated at listening to senior academics continually speak over the top of one another in meetings, and annoyed at being held hostage over the telephone by angry men, Briony needed change. She was flattered when her colleagues told her that her opinion mattered to them, but disappointed that she had no real voice. She found herself wishing she could do and be more. And so, on top of her full-time workload she had chosen to continue with her studies. This was something just for her. With the support of her superiors, Briony was allowed the space to manage her own agenda on the condition that it did not disrupt the flow of institutional life.

The wooden heels of her brogues made a heavy clip clop, clip clop across the sandstone pavers underneath the cloisters. Her heels were worn down, always at the back of the sole due to her heavy and quick stride. Heavy too were her thoughts. Two days prior she had received her grade for a course in which she was enrolled. Briony had received a distinction, which in most circumstances would be considered an excellent score.

Although the pressures of honours and the stresses of her responsibilities worried her, she knew that the anxiety of not receiving first-class honours was a first class, first world problem. How privileged was she, to be able to worry so much about the difference between a distinction and a high distinction? In attempting to subdue her own fears, she focused on the pace of her walk. Under archways and up the narrow spiral staircase, Briony travelled to the office of her supervisor, leaping up two steps at a time, holding her breath as she climbed the spire.

She reached the glass security door that separated staff from students. There wasn't a buzzer so she waited (im)patiently until by chance someone passing on the other side spotted her and let her in. Briony was invited into her supervisor's office, where her stiff body sank into a soft sofa. She was enveloped by its cushiony support. In this moment, it could have possibly been the most comfortable couch she had ever sat on. Her supervisor, Gillian had been reading something, a draft manuscript, or maybe a journal article. Thick pages were bound together and stapled in the top left-hand corner. Another pile of documents towered beside her. A cup of tea rested near her feet, which were propped up on a coffee table. She was engrossed in her reading. There was a furrow between her eyebrows as she concentrated, but there was a deep sense of pleasure for the work she was doing. Something about this intimate scene was alluring to Briony, that of the woman in a room of her own, comfortable and confident. A formidable woman, Gillian looked up

over her reading glasses to greet Briony with a warm smile. She put her work aside and removed her feet from the table top.

Without wanting to, Briony shared with her the cause of her recent anxiety and in doing so, could not help but begin to cry. Large tears flowed. Briony gulped the air. She told her about the distinction, and her worries about her final grade, which would mostly comprise the score she received for her thesis. Gillian asked her why this bothered her so, and secretly, Briony suspected her supervisor didn't consider her to be academic enough to pursue a PhD after honours. Nevertheless, Briony blurted out between tearful hiccups, *'because... I won't... be able... to become... a Vice-Chancellor'* and she let out a resigned wail that emanated only when you had truly spoken your fears aloud. This answer surprised both of them, and Briony's cry turned into laughter. Gillian laughed and passed her a box of tissues. Now feeling highly embarrassed, Briony pressed the palms of her hands into her cheekbones in an effort to stem the blotchy redness in her face and hide her shame. The corners of her mouth grew into a smile as she spluttered out the last salty liquid fears. *'I don't really want to be VC'*, Briony exclaimed, *'I just want the opportunity to become one.'*

Introduction

It is nine thirty on a Wednesday night and I am in bed working into the glow of my computer. My thumb swipes and claws at the screen of my smart phone. With one hand, I am scanning journal articles, and with the other, transcribing ideas, and typing paragraphs into my Macbook. I am saving notes to my reminders list and emailing web links to myself to read their content at a later date. These much-celebrated technologies used to produce this thesis have not so much brought about liberation in so much as they have promoted a speed-up and disaffection in the way they have enabled us to do more with less (Gregg 2011) and impact significantly on the careers of female academics. This frenetic work method is one that I have used for some time. Indeed, much of this thesis has been typed with one hand. Even as I write this very sentence I have had to pause, moving the laptop to the side, to gently pull a stirring baby to my chest for a night feed. My evening activities are interspersed with writing emails, reading articles, note taking, drafting chapters, academic job searching, quiet freak outs, and countless breastfeeds. Days and nights are an emotional overflow of writing and breastfeeding. I feel a creative charge:

A longing for text! Confusion! What's come over her? A child! Paper!

Intoxications! I'm brimming over! My breasts are overflowing! Milk. Ink.

Nursing time. And me? I'm hungry, too. The milky taste of ink! (Cixous 1991, p.

31)

Such bursts of inspiration and the seductive efficiencies that facilitate this writing can be experienced as empowering and intellectually productive, as much as they can be harmful

to our embodied and emotional selves. This is ‘where work “intrudes” on life’ (Bartlett 2006, p. 21). Melissa Gregg describes this state of being as a ‘presence bleed’ that ‘familiar experience whereby the location and time of work become secondary considerations [when] faced with a “to do list” that seems forever out of control’ (2011, p. 2). The impacts of neoliberalism are keenly felt, with women academics particularly vulnerable to institutions’ emphasis on performance measures, research outputs, impact factors, and funding targets (Thwaites & Pressland 2017; Taylor & Lahad 2018).

This work has become a very personal project as well as being an important professional one. It is a PhD thesis ‘enacted in the gaps of everyday life’ (Barnacle & Mewburn 2010, p. 437). I wrestled for some time, as to whether I should also disclose the private and ‘ordinary’ moments of my life at the time of ‘writing up’ (Berlant 2011; Stewart 2007). I decided upon including my personal experiences, because in many ways, my own scholarly journey runs parallel with the topic of this thesis: academic women’s experiences, performativities and identities in the contemporary Australian university in neoliberal times.

In recent years, the intensification of academic work, the fracturing and restructuring of teaching, research, and academic service, and the increase in various measurements of productivity, efficiency, quality and accountability have placed new demands on academics to perform productively and reinvent the self. These material and affective changes in Australian higher education— as is evident globally— are the effects of contemporary neoliberalisation (Ball 2015; Lorenz 2012). Neoliberalism is a mode of governance as well as a political and economic rationality. It promotes above all else, economic liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation and upholds as its central mandate the

primacy of a free market (Brown 2003; Clarke 2008; Skeggs 2014). The corporatisation of higher education has been labelled as ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter & Leslie 1997) with new managerialism being the bureaucratic administration of neoliberalism in the university.

The research presented in this thesis captures a particularly vulnerable moment in academia as higher education faces new pressures (Taylor & Lahad 2018). Values of the university have very much become linked to private interest, capitalising academic work, and turning knowledge into a commodity in the economic market. In a bid to become more competitive in the international knowledge economy, universities are moving away from government obligation to support tertiary education toward a privatised model of education delivery (Marginson 2011; White 2003). Rajani Naidoo notes that:

The perception of higher education as an industry for enhancing national competitiveness and as a lucrative service that can be sold in the global marketplace has begun to eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a ‘public good’. (2003, p. 250)

Changes include an unprecedented increase in student enrolments and course fees, a sizeable decrease in government funding, and a heavy emphasis on the marketisation of research and institutions, products and services. These transformations are based on the neoliberalist rationality that institutional competition and consumer preferences are more efficient mechanisms for allocating resources than government interventions and regulatory frameworks (Morley 2003b, 2014; Leathwood & Read 2009; Deem, Mok &

Lucas 2008; Harvey & Newton 2004; Lafferty & Fleming 2000). Deregulation of the higher education environment in favour of corporatisation, metrification, and performance-based funding models is highly visible and has increased competition amongst universities for funding and prestige. As a result, it has increased the hierarchical stratification of institutions and encouraged new forms of social and racial exclusion (Taylor & Lahad 2018; Tomlinson 2003).

Neoliberalism has found fertile ground, as Rosalind Gill states, in academics ‘whose predispositions to “work hard” and “do well” meshed perfectly with its demands for autonomous self-motivating, responsabilised subjects’ (2010, p. 241). It pushes our feelings inwards, individualising our academic practices and silencing our experiences in the process. The construction of academic identities is intrinsically connected to neoliberal measures and values of production, consumption, and competition. Although the majority of academics express opposition to current developments in Australian higher education, most nevertheless remain compliant with institutional imperatives. In the neoliberal university, we are constantly managing our performance as the demands on academics’ ‘output’ intensifies. Through knowing and enacting or resisting these neoliberal discourses, individuals produce themselves. According to Gregg (2011), this is a form of affective labour in which we find ways to hold on to the feeling that we are still in control in an environment that obfuscates the current structural insecurities of contemporary academic work.

In these new academic spaces, there are indeed more women than ever before, although they remain grievously underrepresented at senior levels (Fitzgerald 2014b; Pyke 2013; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Eveline 2004; White 2003,

Blackmore 1999). Although I began my research journey concerned with the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership, exploring the relationship between economic, political and social shifts became increasingly important factors to consider in understanding how the transformation of academic work impacts upon academic women's careers and personal lives. The introduction and renewal of gender equity and diversity policies and guidelines, and numerous institutional initiatives, aim to not only improve the gender profile but transform universities into more inclusive and gender equal workplaces. Yet, change remains slow.

Gender equity and diversity have become well-established paradoxical practices of the neoliberal university. Sara Ahmed (2012) argues that fundamentally, diversity belongs to an affective politics that does nothing more than make us feel good. While concepts of diversity, gender equity and equal opportunities imply an underlying concept of social justice; their very constitution invokes an acknowledgement of difference without any necessary commitment to action or social transformation. The difficulty of equality as a politics is that in legislating for equality 'it can be assumed that equality is achieved in the act' of legislating (Ahmed 2012, p. 11). Having a policy can become a substitute for action. It is in the discourse of equity and diversity that academic women's continued marginalisation and underrepresentation are rendered invisible. As such, women remain a minority in the professoriate as well as in positions of leadership, with these inequalities extending well beyond the university to journal editorial board memberships, research funding bodies, and academic selection committees (Fotaki 2013).

This thesis is a feminist examination of key discourses which constitute academic performativity and identity in the contemporary Australian university and how they relate

to gender. My feminist methodology takes into consideration a vibrant and evolving definition of the social movement of feminism to give a nuanced feminist analysis and offer alternative forms of knowledge. I also adopt an intersectional approach which views issues of gender, race, sexuality, class and ability as interconnected. However, the transformatory politics of collectivity, caring, and ‘equality for all’ that underpins feminist ideology occupies somewhat of a problematical place within the increasingly commercialised and marketised academy. While feminist values and practices make a significant contribution towards understanding these challenges, they further complicate these issues as they become intertwined with various other ideologies. Thus, in this thesis, my fundamental concern is with this imbrication: how the discourses of neoliberalism and feminism are entangled in the structures, systems, operations, and cultures of the university organisation, how they constitute academic identity and performance, and how they relate to continued gender inequality.

In this thesis, gender discourse is used to describe ‘the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities’ (Lazar 2007, p. 143). Broadly, the term discourse is used to describe language and the way it is communicated; written and spoken. Although discourse is often difficult to define—which is due, in part, to its complex history and the multiple ways it is taken up within academic disciplines—discourse is not a transparent representation or expression of language and communication (Bacchi 2005). Feminist theorists have long questioned the naturalisation of discourse and the ways in which they subjugate women (Livholts & Tambouku 2015; Lazar 2007; Bacchi 2005; Mills 1997). Discourses influence the way individuals think,

feel and express themselves, and alternative ways of knowing are often excluded from dominant institutional discourses.

This thesis focuses on the tensions between neoliberal and feminist discourses to better understand academic performativity and identity. It highlights both the discourses that we operate within, as well as our active co-construction of discourses (Bacchi 2005). Helen Peterson (2009) suggests that we are now at a point in higher education policy studies where we know that neoliberal discursive rationalities and practices are prevalent in the contemporary university, but as this thesis sets out, we are only just beginning to get a sense of the complexity and influence on discourses with academic work and subjectivities. Although neoliberalism and feminism have helped shape many policy innovations and new governing rationalities, in recent decades, women's claims for equal rights and opportunities have become 'mainstreamed', which has in many ways served to bureaucratise and depoliticise much of the radical intentions of second and third wave feminisms (Ahmed 2012; Newman 2012; Eveline 2004). Several other distinctive discourses that frame this thesis include, but are not limited to, the articulation of new managerialism, new modes of governmentality, and changing notions of gender; new masculinities and femininities, measurement, merit, university leadership, equity, and diversity.

This thesis draws on in-depth interviews with twelve academic women as well as critical autoethnography to reveal how women themselves also generate these neoliberal shifts and how academic women manage the contradictions they produce. Both academic women and men experience pressures under universities' neoliberal managerialism. Yet the impact of these insecurities is experienced unevenly, with women being far more

likely to experience gender-based discrimination and harassment, sexual assault, financial and employment instability, occupy shorter work contracts, and work for lower pay (Taylor & Lahad 2018; Thwaites & Pressland 2017; McKenzie 2017; Bagihole & White 2013; Morley 2013; Gill 2010). Since leadership is now central to the management of the corporatised university, this thesis is also concerned with how academic women experience leadership, and how they carve spaces of influence and authority in the contemporary Australian university. Focusing on academic women's experiences in the contemporary university is a way of bringing academic knowledge 'back home' (Ahmed 2012, p. 11). A shift in perspective: from using the academic gaze on 'others' to turning the gaze towards itself (Gill 2010, p. 229; Stanley 1997, p. 15; Davies et al. 2004), so that we might make the link between the university organisation, its institutional practices, and the experiences of women, and how this might open up an exploration of the ways in which these may be gendered.

The changing higher education environment is re/forming academics' identities in the way it impacts upon professional subjectivities (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 36). The notion of performativity in this thesis aligns with that of Jill Blackmore and Judyth Sachs' (2007) framework in that performativity captures the institutional neoliberal new managerialist practices as well as the ways in which these produce managerial or managerialised neoliberal identities. Judith Butler's (1990, 1997, 2004) performative analysis of gender draws critical attention to the body as a medium through which gendered subjectivity is brought into being or made to 'matter'. Gender is performatively produced, and identity is the effect of that performance (Bell 1999; Butler 1990). Performativity captures the temporal nature of how identities are produced and embodied. Butler (1997) sees performativity as an individual internalisation of behaviours, actions,

and practices, which are then repeatedly performed and then ‘naturalised’ through the body. For instance, femininity can be understood as a set of practices performed by women, which then become part of the embodied self.

This thesis is concerned with the ways in which gender, as well as feminism, and neoliberalism are enacted through the body and within and through the organisational time, space, and emotion of the contemporary Australian university. Academics embody contradictory, complicated, complacent, and complicit forms of knowledge and power within their subjectivities as academics, and they are— in varying degrees— implicated in the cultural institutions, practices and performativities that also then produce academic identities. Moreover, academics’ identities are emergent and shifting in a ‘flow of performativities’ (Ball 2000, p. 7) as they come to interact with others. Particularly when under the surveillance (or threat thereof) and judgment from students, colleagues, peer-reviewers and senior management.

There are three interrelated dimensions to performativity in the educational context (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 107); firstly, performativity is a disciplinary technology. In the highly sped-up corporatised university, the well-worn mantra of ‘publish or perish’ fits within this notion of performativity as efficiency and productivity. Secondly, performativity is also a representation of being seen to be good. Being seen to perform creates the imagery of productivity and prestige that then become objects of consumption. Lastly, performativity as a production of the regulated self. Quality assurance measures in the contemporary university, such as performance reviews and rankings compel academics to quantify and compare their work against the work of others creating unrestrained (self)surveillance and an auditory culture (Gill 2010; Armit 2000).

Performativity is not necessarily a conscious choice but rather a ‘forced reiteration of norms’ (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 109).

Similarly, academic cultures, or the ‘that’s how we do things around here’ attitude that is often referred to in this thesis are produced through our repeated use of particular institutional narratives, discourses and practices that create normative values. We create these cultures through our everyday performativities and interactions as academics. From who it is that eats their lunch alone working at their computer while others join their colleagues at the staff club or university pub, to the rituals and attendance patterns of committee meetings, and the time we allocate for teaching preparations, and student consultations. We re/produce discourses, which in turn, influence our workplace cultures and values. There is no singular academic culture. While there may be similarities across institutions, I follow Joan Eveline’s (2004, p. 32) emphasis that culture is something we do rather than merely something we have.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One contextualises this thesis by examining several theoretical debates about recent changes to higher education and it reviews literature on gender inequality and women in leadership. It provides an overview of several key contexts in higher education, organisation and leadership studies, and critical diversity research. Specifically, it explores the way job, organisations and leadership are gendered, offering a critique of discourses of feminisation and re-masculinisation, leadership, mentorship, equity and diversity in the contemporary academy and how these drive our understanding of women and leadership in academia.

This thesis endeavours to disturb the perceived gender neutrality embedded in social science research methodologies. Chapter Two outlines the feminist methodological and epistemological approaches used in this thesis. It explores the potentiality of combining a poststructuralist feminist philosophy of *écriture féminine* (Cixous 1976) with a mixture of postmodern and intersectional approaches to research on gender. This chapter spends time addressing the challenges and contradictions of such positionings in the contemporary university, and it problematises my own self-identification as a ‘willful’ feminist researcher (Ahmed, 2014), and ‘intimate insider’ (Taylor, 2011) as an early career scholar who is researching academics and institutional life. Such explorations led to the use of a narrative approach and the practice of a mixture of conventional, creative and experimental qualitative research methods, including; anecdote, sound, critical auto/ethnography, and photography in order to meet these methodological challenges as well as to capture the affective states of working in the contemporary Australian university.

The subsequent chapters are based on empirical qualitative research. It is important to note here that there is a deliberate overlap in the ideas and arguments that these chapters present. The broad chapter themes of measure and value, precarity and job (in)flexibility, collegiality and collectivity, and the misrecognition of emotion in tertiary education are very much interconnected. The sequencing of these chapters creates a cascading effect to demonstrate the multiple and complex challenges that underpin academic work, our performativities, and identities.

Chapter Three examines the reworking of gender in the measured university and the gendered paradox of academic promotion, which is closely tied up with measures and

values. Measurement policies and practices such as quality assurance and key performance indicators are intrinsic to the operations of the corporatised academy and are critical to the performance of Australian universities both domestically and internationally. This chapter sets out the paradox that women are rendered both visible and invisible in terms of their ambition and competencies and their female bodies. It employs Lauren Berlant's (2011) notion of 'cruel optimism' to highlight how our optimistic attachment to gender equity and diversity policies as tools for improving the representation of women may be detrimental to academic women's career progression and the realisation of gender equality in academia. Women's inclusion and institutional push for an increased female presence in academia brings to light their previous exclusion. Their very presence instigates a moment of change and a disturbance of the status quo (Puwar 2004). As a result, the hyper-visibility of academic women, alongside the increased individualisation of academic labour inherent in neoliberal new managerialism presents them as dangerous and responsible for their own success or failure.

Chapter Four traces the ways in which neoliberal new managerialism has significantly altered notions of academic labour and time in the Australian university. The rise in a casualised academic workforce, the prevalence of short-term contracts, and the prominence of online technologies place increased pressure on academics to produce more or perish. This chapter explores the way precarious academic work is gendered, focusing on discourses of flexibility and work-life balance inherent in the academic workplace. Many of the women interviewed talked about increasing pressures around hours worked, and specifically the additional load of unpaid labour that comes with contract work. The chapter concludes with a short autoethnographic case study of our

‘optimistic attachment’ (Berlant 2011) to academic professional networking sites like *Academia.edu* and *ResearchGate*. These new technologies of time are lucratively attractive to the ‘entrepreneurial’ academic. These productive digital tools may be experienced as desirable, even pleasurable, but this excitement also harbours deep self-loathing and anxiety.

Chapter Five explores academic collegiality as a gendered practice, and the paradoxical nature of collegial discourse, examining who we are collegial with, and in what spaces and contexts. It is an exploration of how academic collegiality is constructed in and shaped by the spaces of the neoliberal university. This chapter is concerned with how the performance of collegiality, collectivity, competition, conformity, and resistance inform aspects of identity practices within various academic spaces. In doing so, it is possible to see how collegiality is gendered, raced, and classed, and the ways in which these are rendered invisible in the lecture theatre, the tearoom, the resource area, in meetings, corridors, and offices. Taking inspiration from bell hooks’ (1990) theorisation of marginality as a site of resistance, this chapter also disrupts dominant and polarising narratives of academic women as either complete ‘outsiders’ in academe or entirely depoliticised and complicit neoliberal subjects. This chapter also reveals how female academics have created spaces in the changing higher education environment. Academic women continue to undertake such border work and have created alternative abstract and lived spaces for feminist resistance. This chapter concludes with an in-depth critical autoethnographic exploration of the academic conference as an inter-corporeal space for the transferral of academic collegiality and cultural norms.

Chapter Six explores the affective turn in respect to higher education, and the mis/recognition of emotion in the contemporary Australian university. Universities have traditionally been constructed as institutions of rationality and objectivity and free of emotion, and this gendered dualism can be used to explain women's continued marginalisation and devaluation in academia. However, research on the emotion work of educational leaders and the prominence of 'emotional intelligence' and the 'affective turn' in leadership and higher education studies has further complicated the concept of emotion in the university. This chapter focuses on academic women's strategies for resistance and subversion, exploring theorisations of resistance, willfulness, desire, and the transformative capacities of laughter. Laughter is the social conduit for affect and the transferal of emotion onto bodies. In such moments it makes affect visible. In this chapter I propose that laughter in its expression of emotion, and specifically feminist 'unruly' (Rowe 1995) 'willful' (Ahmed 2014) laughter has the capacity to subvert and transcend the rational-masculine hegemony of the knowledge economy authorising female academics in the present.

Chapter One

Gender in Higher Education: Key Themes and Debates

Higher education has been transformed by globalisation and market-orientated values (Ball 2015; Burke 2015; Morley 2003a; Naidoo 2003). Australian higher education has experienced rapid change over the past three decades that has not only reshaped universities, but academic work and the academic profession itself. Changes to university structures, modes of governance, and institutional identities as well as the transformations in the types of labour academics engage in can be linked to the corporatisation of the university (Marginson & Considine 2000). The phenomenon of neoliberal new managerialism and the discourses of economic liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, and diversification that underpin the corporate push has had a major impact on the restructuring of the Australian higher education sector (Brown 2003; Clarke 2008; Skeggs 2014). Academic and administrative staff are expected to maintain, or enhance, quality in teaching, research and administration in context of diminishing resources, higher student numbers, a more diverse student body and growing administrative bureaucracy (Taylor & Lahad 2018).

Women are by no means absent from the contemporary academy. Although women now make up approximately forty-five per cent of academic staff in Australia, they only represent thirty-two per cent of staff above senior lecturer level (Australian Government 2017), and only twenty-eight per cent of university vice-chancellors are female. Women significantly over represent at the lower levels of academia and are also more likely to occupy fixed-term contracts. What might look like progress actually falls short of many

institutions' gender equity goals. Indeed, a failure to achieve such targets has seen Universities Australia avoid setting any numerical objectives in their *Strategy for Women: 2011-2014*. Despite over a decade of sustained recruitment of female scholars, a reversal in the percentage of women in Group of Eight (Go8) universities is also now evident (Feteris 2012). The question of inserting women is overly simplistic.

We cannot continue to describe universities exclusively as antiquated ivory towers of patriarchal hegemony. Academic women are entering leadership positions, they are being creative and innovative in research and teaching (Black & Garvis 2018; Gannon et al. 2015; Fitzgerald 2014b; Bagihole & White 2013; Petersen 2009; Blackmore & Sachs 2007). Instead there are new formations of patriarchy within the academy. Patriarchal ideology continues to be produced in the gendered organisation, constructing differences between men and women that are made to appear 'natural' (Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013 p. 52). Old patriarchs and benevolent paternal figures have been made redundant or lost their power base through restructuring (Newman 1995). The masculinity of today's higher education sector does not share the old guard's mentality that 'a woman's-place-is-in-the-home'. Rather, women are now very much expected to be visible in the public sphere. Universities are complex institutions influenced by changing socio-economic and political rationality in which there is an array of competing discourses at play. Neoliberal economic rationality claims to be 'neutral' on gender, race and sexuality, when in fact what belies such neutrality is a masculinist, white, heteronormative logic that privileges autonomy and competition that individualises responsibility for success or failure (Blackmore 2014b; Ahmed 2012; Davies & Bansel 2010). The contemporary academic subject is encouraged to take up this rationality in practices of concomitant self-promotion and self-surveillance (Hey & Bradford 2004). Power lies at the heart of

institutions' business. The turn to corporate managerialist practices and an emphasis on individualised academic achievement in the university sector has produced informal hierarchies around competitive entrepreneurialism and unevenly impacted on differentially positioned bodies (Blackmore 2014a; David, 2014; Ahmed, 2012; Slaughter & Leslie 1997).

This chapter reviews feminist literature in organisation studies, higher education studies, leadership and critical diversity research, providing insights into and explanations of the persistence of gender inequality in universities. It also refers to key international research given that gender inequality and women's low representation in leadership roles in Australia is a characteristic shared internationally. Research from Australia and the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Denmark and Sweden are of particular relevance although of course there is a much broader international contribution.

This chapter provides an overview of several key contexts in which my thesis is situated. Firstly, this chapter considers university organisations as gendered institutions, highlighting the way gender roles continue to be consigned to bodies and jobs in restrictive ways. Recognising universities as gendered opens up an exploration of the ways in which women end up segregated and removed from direct channels to promotion, power and authority. In relation to criticisms about the increased representation or clustering of women in certain areas of academia, this chapter then also briefly explores feminisation debates and the role of emotion work in perpetuating gender inequality. Next, this chapter defines the relationship between leadership and management. These are terms that are frequently used when referring to women and inequality in the workplace often without clarification and is a fundamental entanglement of two prominent

discourses in the contemporary university. This chapter then goes on to problematise contemporary leadership theories and the way these are also gendered. It explores mentorship as a potential solution or pitfall to some of the obstacles to leadership for women. Lastly, this chapter reviews the potential and limitations of equity and diversity. These are important themes for understanding how women perform their academic identities and the way they then re-produce gender in these settings.

Gendered Jobs and Organisations

Gender is not a quality inherent to individuals but rather, it consists of a set of socially produced, hierarchically organised relations between men and women (Connell 1987; West & Zimmerman, 1987; Benschop & Brouns 2003). Gender is embedded in power relations (West & Zimmerman 1991; Eveline 2004). It operates through our perceptions and relationships with one another, and it is created and sustained through our everyday interactions (Morley 1999; Eveline 2004; Blackmore 2013; Taylor & Lahad 2018; Thwaites & Pressland 2017; Black & Garvis 2018). Gender inequality is not merely about the percentage of men and women (Morley 2013, p. 117), and I concur with Jill Blackmore (2013, p. 139) that a refocusing of feminist inquiry, away from numerical representation to a more nuanced understanding of women, leadership, and gender inequality, is needed. This chapter firstly turns to the relationship between gender and organisations as a way of explaining continued gender inequality in Australian higher education.

To demonstrate how an organisation is gendered, feminist organisational theorist Joan Acker (1990) has turned to a politics of the body to explain how it is that a certain type of masculine embodiment is taken as standard for measuring suitability and potential in the

workplace. Acker's foundational theory of gendered organisations in 'Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: Theorisations of gendered organisations' (1990) is used by many scholars (Lynch 2010; Fotaki & Harding 2012; Sayce 2012; Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013; Morley 2014) to reveal the persistence of gender inequality in the workplace and continues to be relevant to examinations of universities today. Acker argues that gender roles and inequality is, in fact, the structural base for organisations. In organisational logic, jobs and hierarchies are abstract genderless categories. However, a theoretical descriptor of a job only becomes tangible if there is a body to occupy the position. The concept of 'a job', thus 'assumes a particular gendered organisation of domestic life and social production' (Acker 1990, p. 149). The universal 'individual' is, in social reality, a male (Acker 1990, p. 150). In the words of Acker, this is because:

Rational-technical, ostensibly gender neutral, control systems are built upon and conceal a gendered substructure... in which men's bodies fill abstract jobs. Use of such abstract systems continually reproduces the underlying gender assumptions and the subordinated or excluded the place of women. (1990, p. 154)

Thus, jobs and organisations are inherently gendered even when constructed as gender-neutral. Organisational roles carry gendered characteristic images of the types of people that should occupy them, and as such become embedded in structures, rather than merely the behaviours of individuals (Acker 1990, p. 143; Höpfl, 2008, p. 349; Alvesson 2002, p. 119). Gender is an axis of power from which knowledge systems, policies, and practices are created and reproduced in the university organisation (Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2012, p. 53).

Acker convincingly argues that organisations are gendered but less attention has been given to the way research on organisations is also gendered (Pullen & Rhodes 2015). However, it is easy to forget how the foundation of academic language and writing is founded on gendered understandings of neutrality, rationality, and rigour and this influences also our research on gender and organisations (Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013). This thesis adopts and promotes a feminist poststructuralist concept of feminine writing, specifically drawing on the writings of Hélène Cixous (see also Chapter Two). There are a number of works that demonstrate the plurality of gender by writing differently (Sinclair 2007), writing subversively (Hofpl 2008), and writing in a bisexual mode (Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013) that exemplify possibilities in organisational and leadership studies. Such an approach contests the dominance of a rational masculine text. Gender is not simply something that we study but is also something we experience. Women's experiences directly challenge the notion that the working productive subject has no (male) body (Acker 1990). Women unavoidably challenge organisational and leadership discourses that disembodiment and operate only according to clock time (see also Chapter Four), where levels of productivity are measured by individualistic and gendered criteria (see also Chapter Three).

Texts are written by bodies; often about bodies; they inscribe experiences themselves on our skin and through our flesh' (Pullen & Rhodes 2015, p. 92). It is important to consider how our own gendered practice and subjectivity infuses into our research and writing. Acker's gendered organisation is a useful theoretical base. Importantly, drawing on Cixous and feminine writing practice in the fields of organisation and leadership studies push beyond Acker's thesis in the way that it:

always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico-theoretical domination. It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatism, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate. (Cixous, 1976, p. 883)

The Gendered University and Horizontal Segregation

Academics bring to work their gender identities, gendered perceptions, practices and attitudes (O'Connor 2011, p. 172). In 'Gendered organisations and intersectionality: Problems and possibilities' (2012) Acker returns to her groundbreaking theory of the gendered organisation to review its continued relevance and what might still be unresolved. Importantly, she updates the theory to include gendered substructures and subtexts that operate as classifications or markers of how inequalities are sustained and perpetuated. The image of the abstract gender 'neutral' worker is some-body who has no obligations outside of the workforce (Acker 2012, p. 218). The gendered subtext or organisational logic is that women are nurturing, caring and gentle; while men are active, competitive and good with tools and technology. The gendered university organisation is intent on both erasing the sexual body while also maintaining representations of the body that subordinate women (Fotaki 2011, p. 43). Organisations also play a role in constituting intersecting identities. What was previously missing from Acker's (1990) work was an analysis of the intersection of gender with race and class and the way these, as well as ethnicity, sexuality and disability, impact on working lives and are entwined in the reproduction of inequalities (Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013, p. 56; Acker 2012; p. 219).

Assumptions that underpin the gendered sub-structure of the university organisation inform an image of the ideal academic. As Lotte Bailyn (2003, p. 143) observes:

the academy is anchored in assumptions about competence and success that have led to practices and norms constructed around the life experiences of men, and around a vision of masculinity as the normal, universal requirement of university life.

Women's presence disturbs the 'natural' gender order in higher education, and 'a strange nostalgia... erupts' (Miller 1992, p. 2 cited in Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 19). In universities, leadership operates from a narrow base (Bagihole & White 2011). Gender is not simply imported into the workplace but constructed in and through work. Gender is an accomplishment and leadership cultures shape gender identities (Burkinshaw 2015).

While it can be said that recent restructuring of the Australian university has offered academic women new leadership opportunities; women who do occupy positions of leadership, power, and authority are often in roles that are an horizontal side-step away from central governance and the strategic operations of the university (Burkinshaw 2015; Fitzgerald 2014b; Simpson & Fitzgerald 2014). With the advent of equal opportunities and meritocratic restructuring in the 1990s, many women found themselves 'in the right place at the right time' in terms of undertaking formal leadership positions as managers, directors, and executives (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 128). The 'manager-academic' (Deem 2003) is often a woman. Reform has created new middle managerial positions in quality assurance, innovation, marketing and industry engagement (Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010). Academic women frequently cite experiences of discrimination and

marginalisation and being captured and marketed as the institutional promise of ‘diversity’ (Thwaites & Pressland 2017; Taylor & Lahad 2018; Black & Garvis 2018). The newly neoliberalised university is both enterprising and risk averse (Peseta, Barrie & McLean 2017), and with further corporate responsibility located at the school or department level, women are often left to take on the responsibility of ensuring that performance indicators are met, that compliance is secured, financial liability and profitability are enhanced, and the student experience is improved (Fitzgerald 2014b).

The metaphor of the ‘ivory basement’ (Eveline 2004) is used to capture the irony of the perception from within universities that the ivory tower and our institutions’ relevance is crumbling, as well as to highlight the invisible labour and leadership of those who occupy the basement of the academy. The higher the status position, the more likely that it is to be performed by white males. It means that the least desirable roles for men are those that are at the bottom of the hierarchy and thus considered desirable work for women. Even when women enter value-laden positions, there is little overall structural change. Women in middle management can be understood as undertaking ‘organisational housework’ (Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Burkinshaw 2015). These women are positioned within what Celia Whitchurch (2008) terms, the ‘third space’ of academia. That is the space where women academics are employed in academic development roles responsible for teaching and learning within universities. They are required to be flexible, innovative, and responsive to ‘client’ or ‘consumer’ needs. In this contested and problematic space (Land 2008; Handal 2008) academic identities blur with professional staff identities.

Helen Peterson (2015) and others (Bagihole & White 2008; Ryan & Haslam 2007) use the term ‘glass cliff’ to denote situations when women are appointed management

positions under circumstances different to men. For instance, in times of financial or reputational crisis. Taking on leadership roles in these situations is associated with an increased risk of negative consequences. As Louise Morley notes, leadership can be punishment as well as reward (2013, p. 117). Women may be more likely to be appointed to precarious senior management positions as a demonstration of equality such as fulfilling an institution's equity policy or quota. In Peterson's Swedish study, senior academic women also cited that it was assumed that as women they brought something 'different' to academic management (Peterson 2015, p. 9-10). Women are particularly affected when their perceived 'soft skills' become promoted as 'women's ways of leading' (Fitzgerald 2014b; Blackmore 1999; Due Billing & Alvesson 2000). While images of toughness, entrepreneurialism, decisiveness and self-interest are tied to being male and masculine (Acker 1990). A lack of opportunity is another explanation for why women accept precarious 'glass cliff' positions. Women feel pressured to take on management roles offered to them even if it conflicts with their career aspirations, considering themselves accountable to other women (Peterson 2015, p. 11). Tanya Fitzgerald observes that there is little discussion around the ways in which women work to maintain this gendered order, either by dissuading or distracting women from leadership roles or colluding in discourses that entrench masculine advantage (2014a, p. 104).

Universities function as a gendering mechanism by interpolating subjects into normatively gendered positions, calling on them to enact normative gendered practices. The gendered hierarchy of the Australian university is shaped, Eveline argues, by the assumption that the relational and emotional labour of women requires no reward or recognition. This being the distinct separation of work and family responsibilities, the

ways we view, enact, and reward different forms of leadership, and the cultural norms around what is valuable and practical when it comes to employment and promotion (Eveline 2004, p. 27). ‘To be misrecognised, or to be denied recognition, ‘is to suffer distortion of one’s relation to one’s self and injury to one’s identity’ (Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013, p. 57). Drawing on Jessica Benjamin (1988, 1995), Nancy Harding, Jackie Ford and Marianna Fotaki (2012) explore the politics of recognition in organisations. For without recognition, identity cannot fully form. Individuals and/or groups are sidelined or stigmatised. An absence of recognition leads to abjection. This is particularly important when analysing the relationships between leaders and their subordinates. In the gendered organisation— an organisation governed by masculine organisational norms— women are mis-recognised as inferior. A politics of recognition offers a way of understanding experiences of being abjected at work.

Feminisation and Emotion Work

Universities have long histories of tradition and privilege (Fitzgerald 2012), and for decades feminists in Australia and overseas have decried academia and university management as a ‘boys’ club’. However, stories of women’s educational achievements, their presence in prominent leadership positions in the workplace and public life are often seen as signs that gender is no longer an issue. Instead, gender equality today is more often framed in terms of a concern that boys and men are ‘losing out’ (Leathwood & Read 2009; Morley 2011; Burke 2015). This is the feminisation thesis. Feminisation in higher education is the conception that universities have been or are in the process of being ‘feminised’, and it is a common contemporary refrain (Leathwood & Read 2009; Hey 2011; Morley 2011; David 2014). As well as relating to a perceived numerical dominance, it is often implicitly or explicitly stated in this discourse that the very

‘culture’ of the academy itself has become feminised. In feminisation debates, women are simultaneously constructed as winners and losers (Morley 2011). They are winners because women have gained access to higher education as undergraduate students, in significant numbers, but losers because there is a continued absence of women in leadership roles and in prestigious disciplines. The affective fear of feminisation that follows discussions of women’s participation in higher education ‘is in many ways a myth—a product of a masculinist social imaginary— rather than a plausible account of the changing face of higher education in the contemporary arena’ (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 6).

The notion of critical mass or the conditional effects of an increased presence of women is another common discourse used to describe the representation of women in higher education (Burkinshaw 2015). It is possible for the idea of a critical mass of women in higher education to challenge entrenched leadership cultures and offer alternative models; although there is a risk in equating more women in leadership with a change to masculine culture (Burkinshaw 2015; Eagly & Carli 2007). When we witness increasing numbers of women in the workplace, ‘feminisation’ often signifies a process of change. Feminisation is in this way, connected to the notion of a critical mass of women. Feminisation discourse is also used in higher education to signify cultural change or transformation. This is where ‘feminine’ values, concerns and practices are understood as changing the culture of the organisation, or its disciplines. More women entering certain areas of the university is thought to impact on the institutional culture (Morley 2013; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010). A greater emphasis on cooperation, care, negotiation, and other ‘feminine’ aesthetics in university policy or leadership discourse, and an institution’s

cultural values are seen as evidence of women's greater numerical representation (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 10).

Fear of feminisation cannot be disconnected from the 'fear of making men effeminate' (Blackmore 1999, p. 40). Such a fear is implicitly homophobic and continues to underpin elements of 'feminisation' of higher education debate (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 19). This is because the feminisation argument also 'rests on a naturalisation of heterosexuality, with a gender binary constructed of heterosexual "girly" women and their complementary opposite, and equally heterosexual, "manly" men' (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 13). The feminisation of academia has brought with it a moral panic with women's successful participation in high status areas being the subject of such 'panic' (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 19). Far from being irrelevant, gender is very much an important element in the organisation and division of labour in Australian higher education.

Academic men are positioned as victims of feminisation discourse, but more than this, Carole Leathwood and Barbara Read (2009) find that women, and in some cases feminists, are positioned as being responsible for this. This can be attributed to discourses of 'girl power' and to analyses that suggest that women have now achieved equality. There is a backlash that insists that feminism has gone 'too far'. It also relates to conceptualisations of the ideal neoliberal subject as based on middle-class femininity (Walkerdine 2003). Those are 'subjects who are self-reflexive, successful, mobile and able to "remake" themselves to meet the demands of the new economy' (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 12). This discursive framing of women as successful and men as victims homogenises women and men and fails to recognise the inter-relationship of other social

identities and inequalities. For example, it relates to social class or 'race', including the costs for middle-class women who try to meet these unattainable expectations, and it continues to reinforce a gender binary.

In response, the new neoliberal corporatised higher education environment is contributing to the 're-masculinisation of the academy' despite its perceived equitable neutrality in this current climate (Thornton 2013, p. 128). Lisa Adkins (2009), drawing on the work of Linda McDowell (1997) argues that femininity is naturalised for women. Men can take on characteristics associated with femininity and be applauded and rewarded in the workplace for doing so; but women's performance of the same characteristics is not recognised for reward. Adkins argues that there is little evidence that gender has become irrelevant or that traditional gendered power relations have been usurped. Only by performing masculinity, do women succeed in a masculinist work environment. This again suggests that there has been little change to the gender order. The success of a few only serves to legitimise the idea of a meritocracy as neutral whilst effectively preserving the status quo, and gender inequalities are therefore maintained. (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 22)

University Leadership and Management

Leadership is now central to the corporate, self-managed university, it is the lexicon of reform (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 127), and yet it 'is discursively overworked and theoretically underdone in policy' (Blackmore 2013, p. 140; Sinclair 2007, p. 26).

Leadership is continually being re-defined and measured. In policy, leadership is positioned as a solution to problems and as a reform measure (Blackmore 2013, p. 139).

Yet leadership also 'has the potential to disguise the corporatisation and values shift in

academia by diverting attention to personal qualities, skills and dispositions required for organisational transformation' (Morley 2013, p. 117). There is in fact an ongoing lack of conceptual clarification around what leadership means (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 128; Sinclair 2007, p. 32). There are numerous theoretical and epistemological perspectives and approaches to leadership studies. Here I briefly trace the origins of a few key leadership theories including management, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and feminist leadership theories that are often raised in leadership discourse.

Contemporary understandings of leadership are interconnected with business and are most often associated with expanding organisational growth and the material success and normative influence of an institution (Sinclair 2007, p. 28). Leadership discourse foregrounds prevailing economic and managerial values. Success in leadership is measured by material achievements, and the notion that 'winning' is a good and appropriate aspiration (Sinclair 2007, p. 26). In the neoliberal university, measures of success or failure are tracked and analysed. For academics, it is not simply about the number of publications but about the quality of publications (see Chapter Three).

Academic success is also measured in the number of invited presentations and keynotes, and the prestige and geographic locations of those hosting institutions. Supervision of students is marked on successful degree completion and whether these students transition into academic positions (Shipley 2018, p. 17). Staff appraisals, performance-management, and '360-degree feedback' 'reproduce and reify a particular production of leadership' (Sinclair 2007, p. 27). In the recruitment of new staff, academics are interviewed about their potential leadership fit. It is through these mechanisms, that Amanda Sinclair argues 'the aspiring leader becomes compliant, earnestly performing within a regime of leadership while structural power remains masked' (2007, p. 27).

Educational leadership and management are two different, yet intimately intertwined, aspects of the overall functioning of higher education institutions (Taylor & de Lourdes Machado 2006; Connolly, James & Fertig 2017). In higher education, neoliberalism is primarily concerned with economics and has a definite political program, whereas managerial techniques underpin managerialism, which holds that all problems have managerial solutions. Managerialism can be conceived of as the pursuit of a set of management ideas (Shepard 2018, p. 1671). It is a practice that entails delegation and involves being assigned to, accepting and carrying the responsibility for the functioning of an institutional system in which others participate. Management suggests an organisational hierarchy, and encompasses a number of components, including (but not necessarily limited to) institutional culture, strategic planning, leadership, resource allocation and financial management, personnel and human resources management; research and scholarly activity; student and campus support services, academic support services, as well as internationalisation, and external relations. Managers are particularly involved with the interrelationships and balance between these components, rather than the implementation of major change initiatives (Taylor & de Lourdes Machado 2006, p. 139).

In contrast, educational leadership is the act or process of influencing and guiding others in educational settings to achieve goals (Taylor & de Lourdes Machado 2006; Connolly, James & Fertig 2017). Influencing others requires authority which may be derived from hierarchical relationships but may also come from other sources. Leaders are those who carry the responsibility for the functioning of an educational system, influencing others to

act (Connolly, James & Fertig 2017, p. 2). All academics can be considered leaders in their occupation. Lumby and Coleman (2007, p. 2) state that:

all educators are potentially leaders in that all may create followers by influencing those around them, whether as teacher leaders, heads of department, faculty or service support team, bursars, members of a senior leadership team, principal, [or] vice-chancellor.

Leadership is not a position or a person, but a process of influence, often aimed at mobilising people towards change—for example, in values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours and ideologies (Sinclair 2007, p. 19). Leaders in the neoliberalised context of higher education today are expected to act as autonomous, self-regulating individuals, yet they are also defined in relation to those they lead, and their peers around them (Blackmore & Sachs 2007). This thesis intends to complicate notions of leadership, rather than ascribe to any particular leadership theory as the definitive way to lead in higher education, referring to academic women in formal and informal management or leadership positions as leaders. Rather, what a focus on discourses of leadership highlights are the silences, contradictions and ambiguities around women's lived leadership experiences. Leadership is relational, as opposed to being an individual characteristic (Fitzgerald 2014) and should not be solely equated with seniority or formal positions.

Management is the mechanism that drives institutions (Taylor & de Lourdes Machado 2006, p. 139). Understandings of university leadership can be often caught up in and co-opted by the managerialist objectives of the contemporary university (Blackmore 2013,

2014a). Academic leaders often feel the strain of maintaining both their identities as formal managers and researcher-scholars, and experience being sandwiched between wider institutional requirements and the expectations of executive leaders, and the wants and needs of their own staff. Those in heads of department and executive roles are also expected to maintain their research and publication profiles (Bryman & Lilley 2009, p. 341).

Gendered Leadership

Transformational leadership has become a central concept in leadership theory, heralding what is known as ‘the new leadership era’ (Sinclair 2007, p. 21). Where previously leadership was understood as a transactional relationship between leaders and followers based on sanctions and material rewards, transformational leaders work by inspiring the motivations of followers (Sinclair 2007, p. 23). Transformational leaders earned moral authority while transactional leaders were ‘managers of the everyday’ (Blackmore 2013, p. 141). Leadership has thus been reinvested in the individual and their process of inspirational influence and not the relational. It becomes about the individual in relation to others (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 128). Leaders can of course, be and do both transformative and transactional leadership. There is an ever-growing body of leadership theory that traces the characteristics, practices and styles of contemporary leadership (Ford & Harding 2011; Jones 2014; Harding 2014; Blackmore 2014b; Spector 2014; Sinclair 2004, 2013).

Most change in higher education is incremental, not transformational (Taylor & de Lourdes Machado 2006, p. 138). More importantly, recent feminist research on leadership shows that much of the studies done on transformational leadership continue to present a

heroic or post-heroic leader as if they were gender neutral. Despite the search for a different kind of ‘post-heroic’ leader who displays characteristics different to the traditional model, this archetype continues to uphold the same idealised reverence for individualism associated with traditional models. In effort to displace the ‘heroic’, individual, masculine leader, these very traits insidiously insert themselves into post-heroic remedies (Collinson 2018; Sinclair 2007; Fletcher 2004). Heroic individualism remains a popular and pervasive narrative. The call for more collaboration in leadership reinforces the status quo, ‘leaving the power and privilege of leadership untouched’ (Sinclair 2007, p. 32).

The dominant account of leadership ignores the power structures within wider society that enable some individuals to rise more ‘naturally’ and easily to leadership positions (Sinclair 2007, p. 29). Just like organisations, leadership also suffers from gendered dualism. Leadership discourse is often disembodied, de-gendered and de-sexualised, when in reality leadership is emotion-laden and ‘thoroughly embodied’ (Sinclair 2004, p. 7). An increased emphasis on the development of personal skills and emotional literacy in higher education, reflects a neoliberal concern that improved productivity and management of people requires individuals with ‘people skills’ for the service economy (Leathwood & Read 2009: p. 18). Soft management skills are promoted as women’s ways of leading (Blackmore 1999; Due Billing & Avesson 2000), but as I explore in chapter six this gendering of leadership traits is taking a double-flip in that the feminisation and subsequent re-masculinisation discourse has rebranded feelings and interpersonal skills; with emotional intelligence branded as masculine and linked to male leaders. Women are often criticised for being too soft or too tough (Sinclair 2004, p. 9). Student evaluations also highlight the gendering of leadership with women being more likely to receive

harsher and more gender biased feedback than their male counterparts, and that using these evaluations in promotion decisions may be engaging in gender discrimination (Sinclair 2004; Bartlett 2005; Mitchell & Martin 2018). Alison Bartlett (2005) notes that teaching is a way of troubling and gradually undoing those limitations.

Women leaders continue to face contradictory demands of being feminine and not feminine enough (Fitzgerald 2014, p. 10). Women leaders are positioned within popular discourses about 'women's styles of leadership' wherein women leaders are noted for being caring and sharing, 'powerful discursive products of second wave feminism and feminist research' (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 13). Female leaders do not get the same credit as their male colleagues because the behaviours are perceived to be "feminine" and therefore automatically expected from them. Similarly, more stereotypically feminine behaviour when displayed by men is more likely to stand out and appear to be exceptional (Sinclair 2007; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; White 2003). Harding urges that we 'need to move away from dichotomous thinking in leadership studies' (Harding 2014, p. 392). These limited 'gender scripts' subtly continue to draw upon the symbolic power of the most dominant female role, that of motherhood. This is paradoxically at a time when many women in leadership are either unencumbered by dependent children, or childless. However, the dominance of the 'sharing and caring' discourse continues to influence management practices in different ways.

Emotional intelligence is used in the organisation as a way to reduce conflict and manage emotional displays in order to achieve effective cooperation. Emotional literacy in this instance is used to suppress emotional responses and endorse conformity. The gendered

power dynamic of emotional intelligence and emotional labour is ignored and instead it neutralises emotionality as something someone can acquire.

Emotional intelligence standardises emotional functions and presumes ongoing stability: a façade of neutrality and positive performativity. In this scenario, emotional work and intelligence loses its critical imperative in the ways that emotionality is gendered and racialised (Blackmore 2013, p. 145). Feminist understandings of emotional work are also co-opted by educational policy and neoliberal theorisations of leadership. Blackmore equates this misrepresentation of emancipatory discourses and terms such as transformational and emotional intelligence as tantamount to symbolic violence. Supplanting powerful concepts of social justice with more neutral terms such as ‘diversity’ is another example of this (2013, p. 145). In this, Blackmore notes another paradox: that it is mostly white male leaders who have benefited from or been advantaged by unequal social relations of gender in organisations. Emotions are being rationalised, with emotional intelligence being ‘redefined as a higher not lower order capability’ (2013, p. 145). It is reinscribed as a generic skill devoid of gender, race and cultural significance, and what’s more, the emotional turn has also largely benefited men and is now a central feature of contemporary leadership.

Feminist understandings of emotional work are also co-opted by educational policy and neoliberal theorisations of leadership and presented as a gendered paradox (see Chapter Six). The popularity of concepts such as emotional intelligence, social psychology, human relations and the study of self-help have been mobilised for organisational change and incorporated into leadership and management literature. Yet institutions’ engagement with emotions is somewhat of a ‘misrecognition’ (Burke 2015) in that emotions are used

to mitigate and control academics. This focus on emotions has redefined leadership as an acquired skill of how to better manage others. Ironically, feminist theorists have argued extensively that emotionality and rationality are inextricably linked. Yet what theorisations of emotional intelligence in leadership studies have done is to link and legitimate emotions with brain science and appropriate gender essentialism. Emotional intelligence neutralises and de-politicises the gendered argument that ‘women possess more empathy’ and are more ‘adept interpersonally’. Emotional intelligence is used in the organisation as a way to reduce conflict and manage emotional displays in order to achieve effective cooperation. Emotional literacy in this instance is used to suppress emotional responses and endorse conformity. The gendered power dynamic of emotional intelligence and emotional labour is ignored and is instead neutralises emotionality as something someone can acquire. Emotional intelligence is treated as an individualised capacity that can be acquired via training. It denies affective responses to conflicts, such as anger over discrimination and thus reinforces existing structures of inequality (Blackmore 2013, p. 144).

Academic women are acutely aware of how their performance as leadership is perceived, presented and viewed differently to that of men (Fitzgerald 2014). Such perceptions are based on gendered stereotypes and expectations of what is considered appropriate behaviour for men and women: ‘a woman leader is not viewed as androgynous or undifferentiated from her male counterparts. She is viewed as a woman who is a leader’ (Adler 1999, p. 259). Morley questions that considering the gendered historical evolution of leadership, why, if at all, women aspire to enter higher education leadership (2013, p. 118). Morley highlights the affective dimensions of crafting and managing leadership identities, and about who self-identifies, and is identified with existing power elites as

‘having leadership legitimacy’. In an audit culture of quality assurance and measurement, women’s representation in different roles and varying academic levels is not always perceived as a sufficiently important indicator to monitor or map comparably. Morley emphasises that leadership is socially articulated and constituted by a social and policy sphere that many women do not choose or even control. Blackmore proposes that the nature, purpose and capacities of leadership, of educational systems, organisations, and educational reform need to be problematised in order to ‘rethink their practices in more socially just ways’ (2013, p. 139).

Feminist perspectives of university leadership ‘offer alternative ways of thinking about leadership as a situated social and political practice, a habitus produced over time and not merely equated to position’ (Blackmore 2006, p. 195). In ‘A Feminist Critical Perspective on Educational Leadership’ Blackmore traces how feminist theories have been appropriated into educational policies and embedded into mainstream literature on educational leadership. These discursive moves, she argues, have domesticated feminist research by depoliticising and decontextualizing leadership (2013, p. 139). Blackmore offers an alternative perspective on leadership informed by principles of social justice: redistribution, recognition, and representation. For Blackmore, ‘social justice also requires a redistribution of material goods and fairer services to create the social, economic and political conditions that widen the opportunities of all students and women leaders’ (2013, p. 149). Feminist leadership is often defined as consultative, egalitarian, and collaborative. Feminist leaders are often dismissed as lenient or overly generous (Fitzgerald 2014, p. 88). Feminist leadership is a theory and a practice, informed by the feminist subjectivities of academic women. Being a feminist academic leader is not just a matter of having a body and taking it into the research field, or the university classroom,

or committee. Instead, it is about creating and experiencing our bodies, our careers, our lives, through embodied participation with others (Bell & Sinclair 2014, p. 270).

Bell and Sinclair (2014) propose that when the erotic is put back into analyses of institutions and relationships, re-eroticisation can easily mask itself as emancipatory while being used to advance a phallogentric, sexually manipulative agenda. Eroticism is not sexuality according to this view – far from it. Instead, it emphasises ‘potential, playfulness, unpredictability and danger’, and involves a rejection of conventions. The desire, perhaps especially among women, to have their erotic lives recognised, gets translated into another means of reducing women to their sexual value (2014, p. 269). As ‘erotic’ becomes intertwined with ‘capital’ in discourse, a process of commodification and instrumentalisation inevitably unfolds. Discourses of sexuality and gendered sexualisation thus become ubiquitous. Alternative meanings and experiences of eros in relationships are subsumed by the cannibalising canon of sexualisation. this manoeuvre of using perceived sexiness as a marker for the erotic has profound consequences for women. Women are far more likely than men to have their value linked to their perceived sexual attractiveness and availability, judged by those around them (Lewis & Simpson 2010).

Women leaders, and particularly feminist women leaders, ‘are at risk both personally and professionally as they challenge the status quo and unsettle what is perceived as the “natural order” of organisational life’ (Fitzgerald 2014, p. 8). What Fitzgerald, like Blackmore and Sachs do, is to explore the professional and institutional contexts that provide women in educational leadership positions with agency and the ones that are disempowering to women. Indeed, as Janet Newman proposes, it is possible to trace

multiple projects of neoliberalisation in the workplace and as such, a neoliberal restructured higher education environment does not preclude the potentiality of feminist identities and practices from ‘working in and against’ (2013, p. 208), outside and within structures and organisations. How do women navigate the paradoxical relations of leadership in an increasingly corporatised university system? A feminist perspective on educational leadership ‘creates the conditions conducive to the possibility of improving teaching and learning’ (Blackmore 2013, p. 139). However, I concur with Mary Phillips, Alison Pullen and Carl Rhodes that ‘the test is a struggle with our own complicity’ in the production of leadership discourses and the way these ‘reproduce masculinity in our work at the expense of its feminine other’ (2013, p. 315). Feminist post-colonial perspectives of leadership as approaches that move beyond current definitions of educational leadership are an important contribution to the field (Fitzgerald 2014b, 2010; Blackmore 2010; White 2010; Moreton-Robinson 2000). These are situated and contest the nature of white-western leadership in both its knowledge and ontological bases. Feminist theory challenges disciplinary fields, practices, methodologies, modes of analysis and data collection, and encourages a relational approach that recognises difference and values it (Blackmore 2013, p. 150).

A Critique of Mentoring

Networking can be a valuable tool for countering dominant homophilous networks at the same time supporting career progression (Burkinshaw & White 2017). Networking is considered important for a successful career since interpersonal networks can provide job opportunities, support, influence, status and an increased salary (van den Brink & Benschop 2014). Networking is thus operational, personal, and strategic. There has been a shift from focusing on the barriers that prevent women from accessing leadership

towards mentoring and networking, which is seen as a more helpful approach to the issue (Coleman 2012, p. 602). Men often have more access to higher status sponsors, strategic network partners, and powerful coalitions, while women experience barriers to networking because of time constraints and family responsibilities and their reluctance to engage in network related activities (van den Brink & Benschop 2014, p. 461). It is frequently suggested that 'women are not ambitious enough; women are not confident enough; women are not resilient enough; and so on' (Burkinshaw 2015, p. 22) and that mentoring, and leadership training specifically aimed at women will be beneficial to aspirant leaders (Coleman 2012). Mentoring and professional development programs as well as informal networks can play an important role in the recruitment and retention of women in higher education (Fitzgerald 2014; Morley 1999). Women-only networks offer women a 'space to breathe, build confidence and give voice to their concerns' (McCarthy 2004, p. 92). Networking can be an inclusive practice that mobilises women. However, in networking discourse, women are positioned as responsible for their own personal success or failure as well as the realisation of gender equality and the status of women more broadly.

Understanding how networking practices are intertwined with gender is useful when analysing the everyday interactions between academics and the way these encounters impact upon their performativities. Gatekeeping is a crucial networking practice in academia and concerns multiple phases in the recruitment and appointment process. One of the key ways involves scouting for eligible applicants through formal or informal networks and keeping a constant watch on the academic field. This means that candidates are often selected long before a position is formally announced (van den Brink & Benschop 2014, p. 464; Coleman 2012, p. 601). Gatekeeping highlights the power of

elites to grant privileges and allow access to some and deny it to others. Marike van den Brink and Yvonne Benschop (2014) propose that gender is implicated in gatekeeping. When gatekeepers are predominantly men, women arguably experience more difficulties gaining access to desirable academic networks. Mentoring networks teach women to 'play the game' (de Vries 2005, p. 11; Morley 2013). Sponsorship and workshops on self-confidence and esteem building may help some with the self-promotion necessary to gain senior leadership positions (Sinclair 2004). However, the underlying emphasis is on institutional needs, and such programs 'are often shaped according to perceived institutional and individual deficit and disadvantage' while structural inequalities remain intact and unexamined (Fitzgerald 2014, p. 104). There is more to networking than simply homophily, chance and choice (van den Brink & Benschop 2014).

There are also toxic cultures of women gatekeeping, which is linked to networking performativities (Fitzgerald 2014; Burkinshaw 2015; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; van den Brink & Benschop 2014). Not all women are supportive of other women in leadership. Hyper-competition in promotion and reward systems such as publication output and funding rounds, in tandem with masculine cultures in academia, create rivalries between colleagues (Morley 2013). Women in senior leadership have been termed 'queen bees'. The 'queen bee' is commonly constructed as 'a bitch who stings other women if her power is threatened and, as a concept, the queen bee blames individual women for not supporting other women (Mavin 2008, p. 75). A strategy for survival or a means of successfully getting on in institutional life, academic women may internalise masculinist practices, which also positions women leaders in opposition to their peers. Women also face vertical and horizontal oppressions from fellow female colleagues as well as engage in micropolitical aggression themselves (Morley 1999). The 'queen bee' discourse

highlights the need to pay further attention to structural issues within universities, gendered ways of knowing, rather than focusing on individual women (Morley 2013).

Focusing on women as the policy ‘problem’ will not divorce the entwined concepts of masculinity and leadership (Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Fitzgerald 2014; Sinclair 2004). Amanda Sinclair (1998) designed a framework for understanding the ongoing imbalance of women in leadership and management. The cascading framework starts with a denial of the numerical absence of women, followed by organisations identifying the problem as being with women who do not have the necessary skills, abilities or dispositions required to be leaders (and that they must adopt masculine ways of working), then, an incremental adjustment which rests on targeted appointments, which crescendos with a realisation that the exclusion of women is systemic and a commitment to a new culture. This framework illustrates that the organisation is the problem. It makes visible the impact of gender and helps realise how assumptions are institutionalised.

Equity and Diversity

This thesis is also concerned with how gender equity and diversity discourses impact on academic women’s performativities and identities. Gender inequality in higher education has managed to endure the introduction of university equity and diversity. Over the last few decades, Australia has experienced a shift away from affirmative action and equal employment opportunity towards the language of workplace diversity in what has been called ‘equity fatigue’. *The Federal Affirmative Action Act 1986* was enacted to improve equity in the Australian workplace. It was about achieving equal employment opportunities for women and aimed to remove the barriers that impede women’s

participation in paid employment and promotion opportunities (Strachan 2010, p. 122). Despite affirmative action being renowned as a progressive form of legislation, it was unfortunately, prematurely misjudged and replaced by a series of less radical gender regulations such as the *Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*. These changes to federal gender policy were occurring during a time of a significant change in government management and its perceived responsibilities, and the reprioritisation of gender equity in the workplace can be understood as part of a larger shift in the public service, which would reduce government regulation in both the public and private sectors. This was very much part of this broader neoliberal shift toward the corporatisation and privatisation of the public sector and its services, including that of universities (Coleman 2012, p. 598).

At the time of its inception, diversity management was considered a mechanism for positive cultural transformation in academia (White 2003, p. 46). The concept of workplace diversity was designed to remove ‘unnecessary prescription and red tape’ around gender equity. The move to equal opportunity reduced legislative requirements, which allowed ‘employers to take reasonably practicable actions’ with an emphasis on government facilitation rather than punitive action in response to non-compliance (Bacchi 2000, p. 65). Terms such as ‘reasonable’ and ‘practicable’ to describe organisations’ obligations to gender equity, while seemingly inoffensive, capture the tone of a less regulated approach to equity issues (Bacchi 2000, p. 68). This motion towards what Carol Bacchi defines as voluntarism on the part of businesses and organisations meant that there was no longer a real impetus for companies to integrate gender equity policies and procedures into organisational management structures.

While affirmative action was designed to exclude groups with a perceived advantage in order to improve women's assimilation into the workplace; workplace diversity offers a more pluralistic approach to difference (Bacchi 2000, p. 69). Diversity stresses that 'each individual is unique and that the goal of organisations should be to encourage each unique individual to maximise their potential'. It de-emphasises the collective and the need for programs that target specific equity groups. As Sara Ahmed argues, "equality" fails because institutions have failed to take equality seriously' (2006, p. 747). Indeed, equal opportunity in the workplace has been operationalised for over twenty years in Australian higher education, yet a critical mass of women in senior and leadership positions in universities is yet to be achieved.

Since diversity can be defined by organisations, diversity can be defined 'in ways that reproduce rather than challenge social privilege' (Ahmed 2006, p. 749). Diversity enters higher education through marketisation. Neoliberalism has reframed equity in the university in terms of 'managing diversity'. Neoliberalism morphs the language of social justice such as democracy and feminism until we cannot see past the rhetoric of the 'market' (Skeggs 2014, p. 2). Diversity, like neoliberalism, is chameleon-like in its ability to take on different meanings and adapt to changing environments. This complicates understandings of the way in which we (re)produce discourses.

The management of diversity works to individuate difference and 'conceal the continuation of systematic inequalities within organisations' (Ahmed 2006, p. 746). The overarching mandate of public universities is no longer solely about providing education for public good, universities are now required to contribute to economic growth and supply the post-industrial knowledge economy with skilled labour. While 'concepts of

equity and equal opportunities imply an underlying concept of social justice...diversity invokes the existence of difference and variety without any necessary commitment to action or redistributive justice' (Deem & Ozga 1997 cited in Ahmed 2006, p. 745). Deregulation structural innovations have centralised hierarchical executive power, moving away from collegial and democratic forms of governance (Marginson & Considine 2000, p. 9). Bev Skeggs notes that 'we become the living embodiment of capital' when our subjectivities change to fit in with this logic of capital (2014, p. 2). Neoliberalism and diversity appear resistant to criticism precisely because they have individualised academic enterprise and made complicit academics' engagement with neoliberal practices. This is further complicated by an emphasis on the importance of merit (see Chapter Three).

Despite universities' insistence on the centrality of diversity to institutions' character and appeal, there remains a lack of diversity amongst university leaders. Indigenous women rarely occupy leadership positions outside of Indigenous education portfolios (Blackmore 2014b, p. 93). Women, and particularly women of colour, fall short against the ideal academic. Women leaders are positioned in contradictory ways, and Fitzgerald states that 'women's presence in the world of men is conditional to them being willing to modify their behaviour' (2014b, p. 6). Many university equity and diversity programs aim to assist women in how to better navigate the prevailing higher education landscape, and to assimilate into the overarching patriarchal structure. Susan Feteris notes: 'the only path to success is for women to learn to become honorary men' (2012, n.p.).

Ahmed proposes that diversity involves a re-imagining of an institution. While an organisation may not have an inherent character, there is a great deal of institutional

investment in this process. Diversity work thus becomes about generating the right image. Diversity is seen to be effective because it 'secures rather than threatens the ethos of the university' (Ahmed 2006, p. 747). For example, to interrogate institutional whiteness, Ahmed deduces that 'diversity becomes about changing perceptions of whiteness rather than changing the whiteness of an organisation' (2012, p. 34). Diversity work and equal opportunity policies have not required institutions to interrogate the gendered aspects of their organisational structures but instead provide an opportunity for the institution to re-brand academic leadership positions and perform a certain type of acceptable leadership that promotes diversity but doesn't challenge existing structures. Diversity can even be an explicit part of an institution's marketing appeal (Ahmed 2006, p.753).

The notion of 'diversity' has been embraced, often as a marketing tool, without problematising the ways that diversity is intertwined with difference and 'misrecognition' (Burke 2015, p. 391). Misrecognition is the concept used to highlight the way women's value and contributions are misconstrued through practices of symbolic violence (Burke 2015; Grummell, Devine & Lynch 2009). Academic women are looked on less favourably as leaders and are evaluated more harshly in leadership positions. The difficulty of equality as a politics is that in legislating for equality 'it can be assumed that equality is achieved in the act' (Ahmed 2012, p. 11). Sara Ahmed highlights that having a policy can become a substitute for action. Misrecognition succeeds policy. Yet action is an integral part of policy. Ahmed's exploration of diversity and how it operates within the Australian higher education sector is useful to my research on academic women and university leadership because it allows us to better understand the persistence of gender inequality in a diversity and equal opportunities policy laden environment. Ahmed demonstrates how diversity can be exclusionary. Understanding the politics of diversity

reveals how new forms of inequality are being (re)produced in changing gendered organisational structures, and how this creates new power and hierarchical dynamics that affect women's careers.

Mayuzumi et al. (2007) point out that diversity in higher education is not simply a blending of bodies with different skin colours, or, of bodies speaking in various accents. Neither is it a one-way process of assimilation to established norms. Instead, diversity allows shifting modes of subjectivities. Equity and diversity policies treat gender as something people have rather than something people do (Eveline 2004, p. 28). Policies elide what is most pertinent to a gender analysis of the workplace, which is that gender is constructed, shaped, and performed in our interactions with one another, and in the rules, and practices we apply to our lives (West & Zimmerman 1991). Gender and sex are socially constructed. This is not to deny embodied differences, but rather, to recognise the social significance and meanings that are attached to differently gendered, classed, and racialised bodies, and how these are discursively produced (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 4). Hence, the relationship between discourses of feminisation and masculinisation are intricately linked to the construction of gender and gender inequalities in the contemporary university.

Despite neoliberalism's foundation of unequal opportunity in the exchange and accumulation of capital, women are nevertheless integral to the 'neoliberal strategies of governing the social, sustaining the domestic economy that reproduces the conditions of capital accumulation' (Newman 2013, p. 207). The expanded role of female labour, the increased adoption of the rhetoric of flexibility, and a decrease in the influence of unionism is all oriented toward a consumer service-focused economy (Newman 2013, p.

207). Women are being pushed towards entry into paid-employment as full-worker citizens and contribute to the economy as well as managing care work. Women have been included in the economy and in policy without any real change to existing gendered social structures. For example, a gendered rationale for women's participation in paid labour is that, as managers, or regulators of new managerialism, women are seen to be softening and humanising organisations. Feminism can be understood as functional to neoliberalism in distinctive yet contradictory ways (Newman 2013, p. 207). Selective incorporation of gender equity can be understood as the domination of neoliberal forms of appropriation of feminist politics (Newman 2013, p. 207). As Stephen Ball notes gender equality is not a priority for the neoliberal academy because effectively 'equity is off the agenda; inequality is the cornerstone of the market' (1994, p. 125). Women's participation in paid employment is good for capitalism. Women's equality under neoliberalism is partial and conditional.

Devika Chawla and Amardo Rodriguez (2007) and Penny Jane Burke (2015) write powerfully about new imaginations of difference 'rooted in the complexity of relationships rather than in the socially constructed categories of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation' (Chawla & Rodriguez 2007, p. 700). This is about moving towards solidarities and re-imagining 'identity in ways that enlarge possibility' (Chawla & Rodriguez 2007, p. 702). Chawla and Rodriguez highlight how a fixation on specific identity categories deeply limits:

understandings of our cultural selves, encourage separation and decrease our obligations to the world by making believe that we only belong to one corner of

the world. Instead of defining ourselves in relational connection with the people around us, we place ourselves in sealed boxes. (2007, p. 704)

Many women and feminist academics are ambivalent about university leadership (Blackmore 2014b; Morley 2013; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010). The dominance of white masculinity should alert us to the flaws in meritocracy and diversity policies (see Chapter Three). There is an important difference between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome, Furthermore, reward and merit-based systems do not take into 'account performance relative to opportunity' (White, Carvalho & Riordan 2011, p. 184). If leaders value, and more significantly, practice, diversity and this is communicated and enacted, it can positively influence organisational culture. Leadership should value difference rather than eliminating it (Coleman 2012, p. 605).

Women's underrepresentation in educational leadership is not about women's lack of ambition or capabilities but 'a consequence of the limited opportunities created in an environment of systematically gendered cultural, social and structural arrangements that inform women educators' choices and possibilities relative to their male colleagues' (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, p. 13). Often policies generated to support the advancement of women are unsuccessful, not necessarily because opponents of social change quash them, but because, as Carol Bacchi notes, 'issues get represented in ways that subvert progressive intent' (2000, p. 47). Blackmore asks feminist theorists to consider how leadership might enrich institutional life. This richness is not captured in the current discourse of diversity or recent theorisations of leadership, noticeably because such concepts and terms fail to acknowledge the legacies of past and occurring inequalities of gender, class, and race (2013, p. 149). Difference is socially constituted through

organisational structures, processes, cultures and is not just about what individuals bring to them. It is important to identify and recognise the historical processes and practices of the racialisation and gendering of leadership (Blackmore 2013, p. 149).

Despite a plethora of research in conjunction with institutions' equity and diversity policies and programs such as mentorship schemes and academic promotion workshops, gender (as well as race and class) inequalities prevail. This thesis was produced at the same time as the introduction of the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE), a national program promoting gender equity and gender diversity in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM). The Sage program is based on the Athena SWAN Charter, an evaluation and accreditation framework from the United Kingdom that aims to improve the gender profile of universities. Sage has the potential to obscure other equally important problems that contribute to slowing the achievement of gender equality in the academy. The program's focus on academic work-life balance also tacitly assumes a lack of institutional sexism within higher education. While issues such as childcare and caring responsibilities is significant to academic women's participation (Lynch 2010; Dever & Morrison 2009; Grummell, Devine & Lynch 2009; see also Chapter Four), they are not the only barriers to women's flourishing in the academy.

Conclusion

As I have outlined, women have made many gains in terms of participation and inclusion in Australian higher education in recent decades, although such advances have been uneven. Social, political, cultural and economic changes in recent decades have complicated our understanding of gender inequality in Australian higher education. Universities are complex institutions influenced by changing socio-economic and political rationality in which there is an array of competing discourses at play. Women are

by no means absent from the contemporary academy—if anything, what becomes most apparent is how this corporatisation of higher education has seemingly created ‘new’ opportunities for women (Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010, p. 25). Opportunities for women are for those willing to embrace neoliberal ideology and act within the regulatory frameworks— yet there remains an absence of women in those influential decision-making and leadership roles, and gender-based discrimination and harassment persists. It is a contradictory notion, then, that despite women’s inclusion across the organisational hierarchy, neoliberal new managerialism exacerbates inequity and inequitable practices in the way it redistributes power and reproduces and reinforces traditional gendered patterns of inequality (Blackmore 2014a; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010). There must be a ‘move away from viewing women’s disadvantage as an individualised problem’ that is only ever addressed by attempting to change women (Blackmore 2013, p. 149). There should be more of a focus on gender and how it is performed and reproduced in discourses, cultures, ideologies, and in groups. Hence there is a need to learn and practice alternate ways of leading and of leadership.

Chapter Two

Inventive Methods of the Intimate Insider:

Possibilities for Feminist Research

There is no doubt that the research and teaching practices of academics are affected by the shifting measures and values of the neoliberal university. Increased workloads and ‘key performance indicators’, such as rates of publication, the number of grants awarded, student enrolment numbers, and doctoral completions, not only re-modulate the way academics relate to one another ‘as neoliberal subjects, individual, responsible, striving, competitive, [and] enterprising’ (Ball, 2015, p. 258), but also influence our practices as researchers. This chapter considers the methodological implications behind a changing higher education environment. The often-routine structures in academic writing; of introduction, body, conclusion; overview, background, data collection, data analysis, results and implications; pervade and invade our sense of what ‘real’ and ‘rigorous’ academic research should look like. How then, do neoliberal institutional pressures affect academic research practices? In particular, what are the responsibilities of a feminist researcher in this context?

This thesis endeavours to disturb the perceived gender neutrality embedded in social science research methodologies, and it focuses on addressing the challenges and contradictions of such positionings in the contemporary university. In academic writing, I often find myself unwittingly participating in the very research and writing conventions and social structures that much feminist works seeks to disrupt. In this chapter, I explore the potentiality of combining a poststructuralist feminist philosophy of *écriture féminine*

with more contemporary, postmodern, materialist and intersectional approaches to research on gender. In doing so, I problematise my own self-identification and subject position as a ‘willful’ feminist researcher (Ahmed, 2014), and ‘intimate insider’ (Taylor, 2011); a doctoral student, early career scholar, and aspiring academic researching my own practices as an academic and experience of institutional life. The aforementioned methodological and epistemological questions are followed by a more detailed exploration of the narrative approach taken in this thesis and of the variety of conventional, creative, and experimental qualitative research methods it employs. Used together, interviews, anecdote, sound, critical auto/ethnographies, and photography are inventive methods that meet these challenges in tandem with capturing the affective states of working in the contemporary Australian university.

Towards a Feminist Methodology

Feminisms, feminist knowledge, feminist theories, and feminist perspectives are still yet to become truly mainstreamed in higher education (Ropers-Huilman & Wintera, 2011; Hart, 2006), but have developed and become embedded in academia in unexpected ways (David 2014). Feminism in the academy is closely tied to the history of the women’s movement and the formation of women’s studies (Rogers & Garrett 2002). In Australia, second-wave feminism and feminist movements have always had a strong presence in academia and in government bureaucracy (Kaplan 1996; Grimshaw 1980). In the Australian university, the discipline of women’s and gender studies came into being as the result of women’s practical efforts of advocacy and activism in the 1970s, to represent marginalised, excluded, and silenced voices through a distinctly feminist politic (Rogers & Garrett 2002). To this end, women’s and gender studies programs and academic feminisms have developed globally to not only ‘fill the gaps’ on those women ‘missing’

in traditional post-secondary curricula (Sprague 2005; Weiler 2001), but to ‘sustain feminism by doing work that has shifted the paradigms by which we gain, understand, and apply knowledge’ (Orr & Lichenstein 2004, p. 1). Despite these institutional gains, feminists and feminist research occupies somewhat of an insider/outsider status. For many feminists, identifications with academia will always hold tensions and ambivalence (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 119).

The status of women as a marginalised majority in academia, has profound implications for how knowledge is re/produced and what counts as knowledge (Fotaki 2013, p. 1253). In the neoliberal university, knowledge production is increasingly connected to academic promotion and leadership opportunities via research output. Dominant research methods are ones where ‘rigour’ is pursued ‘with a certain scientific rationality—one that valorises precision, systematicity, objectivity and the advancement of knowledge’ (Clark, Floyd & Wright 2006, in Phillips 2014, p. 316). Rigour is that which is hard, strict, and severe, and is understood as essential to research practice. Rigorous work is that which measures (Phillips 2014). The legacy of science, as a privileged mode of inquiry, with its ties to masculinity continues to pervade higher education institutions. Is there still space, then, to ask big and creative questions about complex problems in the neoliberal university? What is increasingly encouraged is research that is quantifiable, that has a measurable benefit to the university, and what is forgotten is the potential for research to have a much broader impact, and to benefit disadvantaged or marginalised lives (McLachlan, 2017, p. 59).

There is no common approach to the production of knowledge or the extent of the differences in women’s lived experiences, just as ‘there has never been a shared theory of gender oppression or male dominance’ or a universal definition of justice or liberation

(Ramazanğlu & Holland 2002, p. 7). It is the diversity of perspectives and experiences that enables feminist criticism and theory to have such continued relevance today. Moreover, the explosion and transformation of the category of ‘woman’ informs my methodological approach. When we focus on gender representation and the number of women, what is often overlooked is women’s voices. In institutional discourses, women’s voices can be heard, but only in specific ways; ways in which the selective voices of women support the institution and silence the lived experiences of female academics. The process of writing women’s voices and experiences into history and into academic knowledge should not simply be to fit women into a pre-existent male-dominated tradition (Eagleton 1996; Phillips 2014). It is not enough to simply add women and stir according to a patriarchal recipe. Instead, I am concerned with how we might write differently in feminist research on gender inequality in academia.

Knowing that language is an important part of methodology, but that gendered language continues to be prejudicial towards women in academia, I want to disturb the perceived gender neutrality embedded in social science research methodologies by following Hélène Cixous, who suggests that ‘You write a text in order to respeak it’ (Cixous qtd. Derrida et al. 2006, p. 2). In this thesis, I want to speak in a different way and through a different medium of academic language, in an approach that reveals the tensions, the paradoxes, the pains and the pleasures of being an academic woman in the contemporary neoliberal university.

Writing Through the Body

This thesis draws most notably on *l’écriture féminine* as a methodological approach. The concept *écriture féminine*, translated from French as ‘feminine writing’ is a theory which

emerged predominantly from the writings of Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva to deconstruct the relationship between the cultural and psychological inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text. We should not think of *écriture féminine* in the masculinist theoretical sense, bound as it is by fixed forms of representation and rigid structures, but rather as a methodology that places emphasis on feminine embodied experience, affective movement, material creativity, and fluid cycles of speaking-writing. In her renowned essay, 'The Laugh of the Medusa' (1976), Cixous clearly sets out the central purpose of *écriture féminine*: 'I shall speak about women's writing: about what it will do. Woman must write her self, must write about women and bring women to writing' (p. 875). For Cixous, the entire history of writing has been one of 'phallogocentric tradition', that is a history focused on the masculine point of view. Writing is governed by what Cixous defines as the 'masculine libidinal economy'. She states:

I maintain unequivocally that there is such a thing as marked writing; that, until now, far more extensively and repressively than is even suspected, writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural—hence political, typically masculine—economy. (1976, p. 879)

In the masculine libidinal economy, both masculine and feminine are predicated on a relation to the phallus, which is governed by a Freudian inspired fear of castration, which Cixous equates to a 'fear of being a woman' (1976, p. 884). Cixous calls out the phallus as the 'primary organiser of the structure of subjectivity', it is 'the condition for all symbolic functioning' (1991, p. 46). To break the silence around phallic knowledge we must critique the production (Höpfl 2000) and break what Kristeva (1974) calls the

‘mastery’ of knowledge. Women’s writing interrupts the silence of phallic knowledge and organisational spaces through the subversion of language, or what Phillips, Pullen and Rhodes (2013, p. 314) refer to as the ‘playful displacement’ of the Cartesian dualism:

Where is she?

Activity/ passivity

Sun/Moon

Culture/Nature

Day/Night. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 37)

Indeed, as Sissel Lie asserts, Cixous (1991, p. 43) wants us to ‘oppose norms, break loose from rigid concepts, at our own risk and peril, to arrive at a new freedom for our thoughts’. In a resistant way, women’s writing ignores the punishing glare of the great ‘One-Eyed Father’ (Haraway 1997, p. 45). Cixous insists that this is what writing will do, writing must no longer be determined by the past and instead must seek to break up, to destroy, and to foresee the unseeable (1976, p. 875). Cixous encourages me to approach new ways of writing.

Cixous’ writing radically and creatively disrupts everyday gender norms and distinctions and instils a desire to escape masculine mastery and hierarchy by ‘writing through the body’ (Cixous 1976). She poses that:

If woman has always functioned “within” the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to

dislocate the “within,” to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of. (1980, p. 257)

Cixous’ notion of feminine writing does not replace the masculine with the feminine or suggest an erasure of difference. Cixous’ approach to writing is a playful displacement of gender and sex and allows for an imagining of the self as multiple, beyond the gender dualism. She searches continually for those places in-between; she wants to be heard as ‘all the twos, all the couples. The duals, the duos, the differences, all the dyads in the world: each time there’s two in the world’ (Derrida qtd. Cixous 1994, p. vii) and takes great delight in the uncertainty, fluidity, and possibilities of in-between-ness for it is here that we might come close to translating the word to life, to text, and back again. There is, as Susan Hekman describes it, ‘an anarchic quality’ (2014, p. 42) in her exploration of the absence of women, and a world without phallogentrism.

Cixous claims that it is conceivable for women to write outside of this gendered binarism, only if women write in the in-between-ness of masculine and feminine writing. Indeed, although Cixous refers to ‘feminine writing’, this method can be understood as a bisexual mode of writing in which the feminine destabilises gender binaries and masculine hegemony but does not replace the masculine with the feminine (Phillips, 2014). It ‘is a form of exchange from one subject to another where both contribute to a whole, rather than facing one another in opposition, always harbouring a potential transformation that can make us anew’ (Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013, p. 324). Writing with/in the feminine is less a denunciation of traditional forms of scholarly writing and more of a process of be/coming in/to a feminist/feminine mode of writing. Cixous’ notion of

femininity is not in binary opposition to masculinity. This is the dualism that Cixous seeks to escape when she writes of *l'écriture féminine* (Fotaki 2013; Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013; Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013; Phillips 2014; Sellers 2010).

For Cixous, the feminine defies all boundaries; it cannot be pinned down or controlled. It is related to otherness, but it is not in opposition. Cixous writes sensually, but she also complicates the biological determinism that may be taken from a surface reading of her work (Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013). She avoids fetishising the female body, instead celebrating the plurality and diversity of women's bodies and experiences (Sellers 2010, p. 24). The subject of this 'bisexuality' is one 'who is not afraid to recognise in him or herself the presence of both sexes, not afraid to open him or herself up to the presence of the other, to the circulation of multiple drives and desires' (Suleiman 1985, p. 52).

The (Im)possibilities of Writing with *L'écriture Feminine*

I take inspiration from Cixous because out of the 'Holy Trinity' of French feminist theorists (Hekman 2014, p. 27), her work focuses the most on the practicalities of writing. Drawing on *l'écriture féminine* as a methodological approach allows for a reconsideration of what constitutes knowledge, research practice, and ultimately power, opening up a space for the reception of academic women's voices. Cixous writings tests my own complicity as an academic and the ways in which I might unwittingly be reproducing a masculine norm in my feminist work, a norm that continues to render the feminine outside of institutionalised sites of intellectual practice. In the writerly push to produce a first draft of my thesis I felt, at times, adrift in my interview material, or lost in the despair of the subject matter. I was often caught up in the pre-eminence and 'objectivity'

of 'The PhD thesis'. Cixous became a writing companion. Cixous' work has guided my scholarly journey and it has revived me in its humour, contradiction, and intensity.

This thesis does adhere, in many ways, to the traditional structural conventions of a social science PhD thesis. It begins with a literature review and detailed methodology, followed by empirical data analysis and findings. How, then, does this thesis disrupt the masculine norms of scholarly writing? My PhD journey has been an incredible opportunity to pursue my growing interest in critical, creative and reflexive academic writing methodologies, allowing me to experiment with a range of interdisciplinary cross-genre academic writing practices. There is no singular practical approach to writing in *l'écriture féminine*.

Elizabeth Grosz (1992, p. 368) highlights that in feminist research there is:

No one method, form of writing, speaking position, mode of argument can act as representative, model or ideal for feminist theory. Instead of attempting to establish a new theoretical norm, feminist theory seeks a new discursive space, a space where women can write, read and think as women. This space will encourage a proliferation of voices, instead of an hierarchical structuring of them, a plurality of perspectives and interests instead of the monopoly of the one—new kinds of questions and different kinds of answers.

In this thesis, my engagement with *l'écriture féminine* is less a denunciation of traditional forms of scholarly writing and is more of a process of be/coming in/to a feminist/feminine mode of writing. The bisexual Cixousian-inspired writing in this thesis takes the possibilities of in-between-ness inherent in *l'écriture féminine* both figuratively and literally as bursts or disruptions within the traditional thesis format. Most often these

fissures feature under the more conventional signposting of subheadings within chapters. They offer the reader moments of provocation and reflection, drawing together multiple, changeable and conflicting academic subjectivities and performativities. In each of these ruptures I have experimented with different methods and writing styles which are performative and creative (which I detail further in this chapter). This not only allows me to write my story alongside that of other academic women but has the potential to transform academic writing altering the relationship between scholar and reader in new ways (Livholts 2009, p. 121).

Poststructuralism, Postmodernism and New Materialism

Cixous' *l'écriture féminine* is not bound by fixed forms of representation and rigid structures, but rather it emphasises feminine embodied experience, affective movement, material creativity, and fluid cycles of speaking-writing. Hekman explains, 'fixed identities are the purview of the masculine, not the emerging feminine subject' (2014, p. 45). What I continue to find so appealing about Cixous' feminine writing is that it is an invitation to ask more complex and creative questions. One such question is the compatibility of Cixous' philosophy with more contemporary theoretical approaches to research on gender. This thesis builds on the long feminist philosophical tradition of French feminist poststructuralist, postmodern, intersectionalist and new materialist thought. Together they transform our way of thinking about gender, knowledge, power, social relations and cultural change (Flax 1990). Although these ideas form a historical cannon of feminist thought they should not be assembled in a linear, binaristic or hierarchical sense. Establishing any singular approach as orthodoxy prevents a deep exploration into the multiple viewpoints. My epistemological position is not about finding

the 'right' methodology. Instead, what is compelling about a multiple approach is that it offers new perspectives and has the potential to be transformative.

The shared experience of women has transformed how we understand gender inequality, and a uniting definition of 'woman' has been central to the feminist movement. However, the category of 'woman' has been described as a 'Trojan Horse' of feminist theory (Spelman 1988). Such an idiom calls to mind the hidden complexities riding on such a universal term. In *Inessential Woman* (1988), Elizabeth Spelman proclaims that we abandon the fixed definition of 'woman' as it inevitably leads to a hierarchy of woman that ignores the way privilege operates to exclude on the basis of race, class, and sexual differences. Instead, she proposes that we embrace women in their diversity. The discontent with 'woman' profoundly changed feminism, and it is the multiplicity of women's identities that is now central to the feminist movement. Judith Butler's iconic *Gender Trouble* (1999) opened up the field of possibility that feminists should not be restricted by definition of gender. Butler's inquiry into the political constitution and regulation of identity investigates the causes of those categories of gender and how they are performatively produced. Feminism has been and must be about resistance and change, but 'how does the subject that is wholly constituted by discourse resist that constitution?' (Hekman 2014, p. 116). When conducting qualitative, self-reflective research, which places lived experience at the centre, how do feminist researchers not re-inscribe the subject?

Alongside Butler's definition of 'performativity' are other strong and inspiring women's voices from the academy who have willingly placed themselves within the field of disruptive feminist academic writing practice. This thesis is also drawn to the

productiveness of the works of a wide range of feminist scholars, such as Lauren Berlant and her theory of ‘cruel optimism’ (2011), and Sara Ahmed’s ‘willful’ and ‘killjoy’ subjectivities (2014). This thesis is also drawn to the poetics, politics, and playful performativities in the works of Audre Lorde (1984), bell hooks (1990; 2000), and Janet Newman (2012). Together their writings may address the possibility of a feminist politics of resistance, and a ‘jamming [of] the theoretical machinery’ (Irigaray 1985). Cixous in particular, and her brand of poststructuralism as a mode of knowledge production, which uses theories of language, subjectivity and power, continues to be a commanding way of understanding existing power relations and identifying strategies for change that is often overlooked in contemporary research on gender in higher education.

Questions of Intersectionality

It is also important to acknowledge that feminism in and outside the academy has a particularly ‘white’ façade, colonial foundation, and exclusionary reputation (Lipton & Mackinlay 2017). The term ‘intersectionality’ has been widely adopted by scholars and activists in response to these arguments. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity of human experiences and hierarchies, and how these are shaped by social divisions of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016, p. 2). It is important to acknowledge that in Australian universities:

race privilege accords white feminist academics choices about altering their subject positions to accommodate the “Other’s” cultural difference. There is no imperative for them to acknowledge, own and change their complicity in racial domination, because the mind/body split allows them to position “race” as extrinsic. (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 148-9)

Sandy Grande (2003) calls this type of ‘racially’ exclusive, conveniently ignorant, neo-colonial feminism, ‘whitestream’ feminism, alluding to the ways in which such feminists conveniently side-step, mis-align and refuse a dialogue with such uncomfortable entanglements. Echoing similar criticisms by Jackie Huggins (1998) and Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2000), Grande also uses the term ‘ludic feminists’, to refer to feminist scholars who have redefined politics as a ‘purely academic exercise’ (2003, p. 331) and questions the purpose of whitestream ludic feminists’ theorising of ‘other’ women. When we ignore intersections of race, class, and sexual privilege ‘what is left uninterrogated in radical feminist analyses is the way in which patriarchy privileges whiteness as a social category’ (Moreton-Robinson, 2000, p. 40). Moreton-Robinson finds that ‘any inter-subjectivity in the cultural borderland of the university between white feminist academics and the “Other” is always circumscribed by the way in which white normality and otherness is invisibly retained’ (2000, p. 148). This thesis does not adopt an intersectional analysis framework (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016, p. 25), instead it focuses on reflexivity. Race privilege must be owned and challenged. The dominance of a white, middle-class feminist subject position diminishes the inclusiveness of a politics of difference in Australian feminism (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 149).

I am cautious that a playful exploration of *l’écriture féminine* may be seen as whitewashing an intersectional approach. Cixous’ multiplicity of ‘woman’ sits as a category which assumes sameness yet insists on difference across the boundaries of race. There is no ‘universal woman’ subject, and nevertheless woman must write woman (Cixous 1976, p. 876-7). Cixous asserts that, ‘there is at this time, no general woman, no one typical woman’. Her universal ‘woman’ is an attempt to destabilise an essentialised

woman. In *l'écriture féminine* there is not one feminine discourse but a multitude of different feminine words:

Woman must write through their bodies, they must reinvent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, rhetorics, regularities and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse, including the one that, aiming for the impossible, stops short before the word 'impossible' and writes it as 'the end'. (Cixous 1980, p. 256)

Contradiction and a rejection of dichotomies feature in Cixous' writings. Attempts to theorise women's experiences in feminist discourse are heavily criticised by women who sit outside white-middle-class Western hegemony as nothing more than tokenistic discussions of race, or analyses which exclude race altogether and make whiteness invisible. Women speak from very different subject positions, and as Moreton-Robinson asserts, 'there are limits to knowing the "Other"' (2000, p. 126).

Indeed, there is much criticism towards Cixous' ahistorical gesture (Glass 2010), which in its liberating utopian vision, masks race and class divisions, rendering the experiences and struggles of women of colour, the impoverished, and the elderly invisible. Cixous romanticises blackness and appropriates the experiences of 'otherness' when she claims women as 'darkness' reinforcing racialised representations through her appropriation of Africa, 'because you are Africa', Cixous claims, 'you are black. Your continent is dark. Dark is dangerous' (1976, p. 877–878). Kathy Glass finds that Cixous 'lapses into essentialism via racially charged figurative language' (2010, p. 226). For Lorde, ignoring difference enables the status quo and white privilege to flourish unfettered. She urges

white women to face the realities of our various raced, classed, sexed orientations and subjectivities within the category of ‘woman’ and recognise how these distinctions produce ‘difference in oppressions’ (1984, p. 112).

What is perhaps less known about Cixous is that she spent much of her adult life writing in France. For Cixous ‘being French’ has always been incredibly problematic (Mackinlay 2016, p. 191). Cixous was born in 1937 in Oran, Algeria to a French/Spanish/Jewish father and German/Jewish mother (Penrod 2003, p. 136). It is her experiences of both being and not being French, her shifting subjectivity as French-Algerian, and fluidity in her being and belonging that prompts Cixous to explore questions of ethical, politico-cultural and aesthetic value in writing. Cixous’ *l’écriture féminine* is a way of:

pushing back forgetfulness, of never letting oneself be surprised by the abyss. Of never becoming resigned, consoled: never turning over in bed to face the wall and drift asleep again as if nothing had happened; as if nothing could happen.

(Cixous, 1991, p. 3)

As a reflexive methodology, *l’écriture féminine* remains critical to decolonising academic writing (Connell 2007). I concur with Elizabeth Mackinlay (2016) that it is Cixous’ ‘questioning of her own alterity and shifting colonial subjectivity in, through and as writing which makes Cixous a most necessary companion in this search for an affective and critical writing practice’, which in Cixous’ words must ‘no longer be determined by the past and instead must seek to break up, to destroy, and to foresee the unseeable’ (1976, p.875). Writing in the feminine allows me to research and write in the in-between, forcing me to confront such criticisms of essentialism and otherness, acknowledging the ‘danger’

in writing (Cixous 1994, p. 90; Gannon 2006; Mackinlay 2016), and the (im)possibilities of navigating and negotiating contradictory spaces (McDowall & Ramos 2018; Ellsworth 1989; St. Pierre 2000).

Cixous observes that ‘men have committed the greatest crime against women.

Insidiously, violently, they have led them to hate women, to be their own enemies, to mobilise their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of their virile needs’ (1976, p. 878). We have in many ways been taught to internalise sexist and racist assumptions. In Cixous’ words, we must ‘kill the false woman’ or in hooks’ words, we need to ‘acknowledge and confront the enemy within’ (Cixous & Calle-Gruber 1997, p. 398). For hooks (1984), we must break our attachment to sexism; we must work to transform female consciousness.

To allow ourselves to be self-reflective, to be vulnerable, and to be ‘willing’ to create change, Lorde challenges us to consider our place in such systems of oppression. This, Glass (2010) summarises, allows us to challenge racist patriarchal norms and seek out ‘new ways of being in the world’ (Lorde 1984, p. 111). Furthermore, both Lorde and hooks argue that engaging in women’s diversity is essential to the feminist movement. Women’s commonality is in their diversity. Voices are heard, and meaningful dialogue emerges when we are willing to challenge our centrality and are willing to have our identities ‘fractured and rebuilt’ (Paris 1995 cited in Glass 2010, p. 228). Approaching *l’écriture féminine* as a methodology recognises and allows a layering of multiple voices and narratives that are shifting, fluid, mobile, and ambiguous (Irigaray 1985, p. 233).

I am cognisant too that not all feminist research is empowering. It is not always about feeling good. Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) poses this question of ‘why doesn’t this feel empowering?’ in relation to her work in the field of education and critical pedagogy. She suggests that assuming ‘giving voice’ leads to the ‘giving of power’ might instead reproduce a ‘repressive myth that perpetuate(s) relations of dominance’ (1989, p. 298). Ellsworth further questions the kinds of differences which might in fact be silenced by such an assumption. Realising the complexity of the relationship between academic knowledge production, and feminism sparks a possibility for change in research and writing practices, and approaches to knowledge, voice and resistance in the academy.

As scholars we must continue to question the production of knowledge (Carvalho 2014); how does it circulate, who authorises knowledge, and for whom does it empower? Ideas are embodied into texts, which then circulate as published works. Publishing is controlled by power relations. Journals enforce legitimacy and are critical mediators in the trafficking of knowledge and texts. Clarifying and acknowledging context is one posture to move toward greater equality in knowledge production. We must pay attention, not to talk for the other but that we can go further in an exchange, where we may learn from and offer better conditions. In decolonising gender, we reinvent ourselves (Connell 2007).

As academics, we are often already performing a distinctive form of whiteness, in our involvement in the way we measure and value various scholarly activities. My feminist voice is embodied and indelibly connected to the cultural institutions, practices and performativities, which imbue my subjectivities as a white, able-bodied, tertiary-educated woman with contradictory, complicated, complacent and complicit forms of power and influence. Questions of how a feminist voice might speak and write in ways that disrupt

and transform such power and privilege are ever present in this thesis, and I bring an interdisciplinary background of intellectual work in women's studies and recognition that gender justice in academia also includes the transformation of inequalities in race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity. Using intersectionality as an analytical lens highlights the entangled and mutually constructing power relations, and how various combinations of gender, race, class, and sexuality can differentially position individuals (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016). Intersectionality in the university, like diversity discourse, has a tendency to be used as a tool for identifying difference (Ahmed 2012).

Despite my own methodological intentions, it was apparent that in my interviews with academic women that their narratives did not frequently adopt an intersectional perspective. There are different ways of constructing subjectivity, and indeed, the women in this thesis hold multiple subjectivities. As a white, cisgendered scholar, what does it mean to be a feminist critical ally? It involves feelings of discomfort, dis-ease, and anxiety. Tensions of difference. Unlearning and relearning. Inspired by Elizabeth Grosz's (2010, p. 101) assertion that feminist theory is about 'revealing, elaborating, or unleashing the virtual forces that underlie (patriarchal, racist, militaristic, homophobic) actuality...to become otherwise', this thesis holds both exciting possibilities and epistemological quandaries (Wise 1997, p. 124). The possibilities and the problematics present themselves as the kind of 'yearning' that hooks (1990, p. 92) describes, when I place myself in the in-between spaces of mourning and something more.

Becoming an Intimate Insider

The researcher-researched relationship, the recognition and reflection of emotion as a research experience, the intellectual autobiography of researchers, and our understanding

of the differing realities of researchers and research subjects are some of the key epistemological principles underpinning feminist research practice (Stanley & Wise 1990, p. 23). Feminist research can be understood as a form of praxis, ‘a way of knowing that transforms what is known’ (Ahmed 2010, p. xx). I adopt Stanley’s theorisation of praxis as a shared feminist commitment to a political position in which ‘knowledge’ is not simply defined as ‘knowledge *what*’ but also as ‘knowledge *for*’ (1990, p. 15). Feminist research praxis is focused on not only researching the world around us but changing it in the process. Research is inevitably grounded in the material experiences of researchers and, as such, feminist research in the social sciences is about understanding these inter-subjectivities and how they influence how we share experiences and theorise being in the world (Stanley & Wise 1990, p. 23). Sharing a researcher’s position and experience to participants, and to the research audience is an important part of the reflexive research process (Alsup 2004, p. 232).

I find reassurance in Jodie Taylor’s (2011) term ‘intimate insider’, which is primarily used to describe the relationship between researchers and their pre-existing friendships with informants. This term ‘intimate insiders’ could indeed be expanded to include feminist researchers working within and against the neoliberal university. Stanley and Wise argue that ‘researchers’ understandings are temporally, intellectually, politically, and emotionally grounded and are thus as contextually specific as those of “the researched” (1990, p. 23). Taylor (2011, p. 9) describes this ‘intimate insider research’ as research conducted in:

a contemporary cultural space with which the researcher has regular and ongoing contact; where the researcher’s personal relationships are deeply embedded in the

field; where one's quotidian interactions and performances of identity are made visible; where the researcher has been and remains a key social actor within the field and thus becomes engaged in a process of self-interpretation to some degree; and where the researcher is privy to undocumented historical knowledge of the people and cultural phenomenon being studied.

This is thus an exploration of feminist epistemology. This is not just an important issue for myself as a researcher, but also perhaps for the feminist academic women interviewed. Many participants asked me why I chose this subject matter for my thesis, and enquired about my post-PhD career aspirations, wanting to know more about me and my personal life. This type of intimacy was particularly relevant when I remained in contact with several participants. To paraphrase, several interview participants also expressed that they were '*delighted to see a younger woman using the F word.*' Our sense of security in our intellectual ventures as academics, but particularly feminist academics, can feel, at times, fragile and precarious in the neoliberal university. Miriam David (2014) observes that in our shared sense of belonging as feminists in academia we must recognise that our ideas and views are never fully our own. We must 'let go of the fantasies of "writing" as autonomous intellectual work' (Potts & Price 1995, p. 99). As feminist academics, our work is collaborative and a product of our belonging to a community of scholars and activists (David 2014). As a feminist scholar, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the collaborative aspects of the research process and of belonging to a community of scholars and activists (David 2014). Rather than this being a limitation, this acknowledgement serves to strengthen feminist research.

The process of researching and writing about academic women and gender inequality in Australian higher education is also a process of my own becoming as a researcher and the development of my own academic identity. As a PhD student, I hold onto this precious space that I have been given to do this research. Having the opportunity to undertake an explicitly feminist project gives me a glowing sense of pride and legitimacy, but the precarity of the academic enterprise continues to loom nearby. This thesis offers a glimpse of what may lay ahead in my journey towards an academic career; a pathway of uncertainty and inequality in the neoliberal, bean-counting academy. I especially worry that for those whose knowledge-work is a form of political practice, we will only be further re-directed away from academic appointments and marginalised, our work de-politicised and our feminist voices ventriloquised.

The ‘Willful’ Secretary

The creative potentiality of Cixous in academic writing provides an important avenue for accessing those hard-to-get dimensions of social life, opening up a multiplicity of meanings and ways of knowing (Leavy 2012, p. 516). Similarly, through Sara Ahmed’s interdisciplinary queer archive of ‘willfulness’ in *Willful Subjects* (2014), I wanted to explore the ways in which academic women’s talk might be considered ‘willful’ talk inside the academy. ‘Willfulness’ and *l’écriture féminine* present themselves as ways of embodied thinking that move beyond theory and practice.

Drawing on the work of Ahmed (2012; 2014), I call myself the ‘willful’ secretary. For me, as a feminist researcher, and as a former university executive assistant this title has multiple connotations and configurations. Ahmed (2010) writes of feminist researchers as secretaries while recognising the gendered implications of this term. She uses it to invoke

the obscured meaning of the word secretary: a person who is entrusted with secrets.

While I have used Ahmed's descriptor elsewhere (Lipton & Mackinlay 2017), I continue to find it fitting in writing this thesis. I find myself repeatedly drawn back into this role as secretary or secret keeper. Belonging to feminist communities, means that questions of anonymity and confidentiality are never straightforward (David 2014). Ahmed suggests that 'sometimes we need not keep secrets with which we are entrusted even if this means we become untrustworthy. What we do with what we are entrusted – whether we speak up or keep silent – remains an important question' (2010, p. xx).

In *Willful Subjects* (2014), Ahmed reclaims 'willfulness' and uncovers its queer and feminist potential. She argues that, 'willfulness can become a style of politics through use of the word "willful" ... To claim to be willful or to describe oneself or one's stance as willful is to claim the very word that has historically been used as a technique for dismissal' (2014, p. 133). By using the term 'willful' secretary I do not want to diminish the work of my female colleagues working in administration, who are an integral and yet undervalued class of university staff. Rather, I wish to highlight the 'willful' nature of doing such research, as well as highlighting the blurred boundaries between professional and academic roles and the persistent hierarchies of privilege and prestige that come with stepping over and into the academic side of institutional life. Researching one's practice can provide opportunities for uncovering new ways of understanding the complex relations between learning and teaching, and how knowledge can be enacted, and how too, it can also allow for an exploration of leadership (Lemon & Garvis 2014, p. 3).

My time as a university executive assistant was a formative period in my professional life as a recent graduate. For three years it was my role to manage the complex schedules of

three senior executives. I was required to ‘assist’ and record the words of ‘*homo academicvs*’ or ‘academic man’ (Bordeaux [1984] 1988) into the agendas, minutes, presentations and reports of the university. In my position, as the ‘nose and bum wiper of the academy’ (Stanley 1997, p. 3) I had the opportunity to observe the micropolitics of the gendered university (Morley 1999). I saw up close in meetings not only the stark underrepresentation of women in senior executive positions and the professoriate, but also the different ways in which women inhabited university spaces and performed their academic identities. While this thesis focuses specifically on academic women, I wish to acknowledge the contributions of female administrative staff.

All academic positions have gone through a professionalisation transformation, and it is important to recognise the gendered substructure of the university organisation. The university is a gendered organisation, supported by the labour and contributions of women (Strachan et al. 2013). In Australia in 2013, women made up the majority of non-academic staff, sixty-four per cent of full-time professional staff being female compared with full-time continuing female academics, and with professional staff comprising fifty-four per cent of all full-time university employees (Strachan et al. 2013, p. 215). In times of organisational transformation, we must also acknowledge the gendered impact and consequences of such changes.

In my former role as an assistant, as is also the case in my current one as a researcher, I harboured many secrets. All the secrets shared within the pages of this thesis had ethical clearance and consent from their narrators, but I found it difficult at times to decide how to decipher and explain them. I worried that the stories in this thesis would not be believed, given the loud and lengthy proclamations of equity and diversity from

Australian universities. Who would believe that such overt discrimination and sexual harassment were so rampant?— Not to mention those instances that were less obvious and more insidious. How too would people respond when confronted by reading my interview participants' own espousals of the very discourses that serve to disadvantage academic women?

The challenges facing women in academia are well documented. Taken alone, as Davis points out, such experiences of marginalisation and misogyny might not seem particularly dramatic. The 'drama', however, 'is rather in their routine and systematic character. They are personal, but by no means idiosyncratic. Every female academic will have her own collection of atrocity tales' (1997, p. 185). Belonging to feminist communities, as David (2014) observes, means that questions of anonymity and confidentiality are never straightforward when it comes to women's voices being heard. While the women I interviewed welcomed the opportunity to share their experiences this is not to ignore the vulnerability we feel when we share such secrets. Their stories illuminate critical reflection and reorientation that make them full of relevance (Michaels 2012, p. 33). I am indebted to the women interviewed for the ways in which their insights have supported and enabled me to develop feminist critiques of gender in the contemporary university.

A criticism of adopting Cixous' *l'écriture féminine* and Ahmed's 'willful' subjectivity is how easily the individualistic nature of a 'willful' politics fits within a neoliberal doxa. That is, that we as individuals have an autonomy or freedom to act in a way we choose. For some, 'willfulness' and the capacity to say 'no' and to resist on a day-to-day level is based on ignorance of the broader systemic issues and hierarchies of oppression; the fact that your unwillingness to do something may in fact result in someone else carrying out

that task. If we think about administrative work (both academic and professional) in academia these duties are invariably undertaken by women. We need to be cognisant of the impact a ‘willful’ no can have on the gendered organisational hierarchy.

I do not want to reinforce the gendered, raced, and classed hierarchy that exists in Australian higher education. Rather, it is important to consider who ‘willful’ talk impacts, and how to speak in a way that empowers. ‘Willfulness’ is an individual act, but it is an act carried out because of one’s connection to ‘a culture whose existence is deemed a threat’ (Ahmed 2014, p. 151). There is an exciting potentiality in Ahmed’s theorisation of a ‘willful’ subject in the increasingly measured and corporatised university. ‘Willfulness’ has the capacity to adapt discursively to such a complex and contradictory environment and connect individuals as well as create a sense of collective will. To recover the collective social body of ‘willfulness’ is to garner a collective power which may distract and weaken the ever-consuming ‘baroque monster’ (Connell 2014) that is neoliberalism. We need to recognise how women in the academy are acting ‘willfully’ in different ways. In this chapter then, I trace the masculine legacy of academic research as well as our own coming to Cixous as feminist researchers to explore *l’écriture féminine* as a ‘willful’ (Ahmed 2014) methodology.

A Narrative Approach

As a ‘willful-intimate insider’ researcher I was drawn to a narrative approach to research because it is relationships that form the nexus of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Leavy 2015). Hartman (1991, p. 12) asserts that ‘we construct ourselves as agents by piecing together our stories’. A playful narrative approach allows for critical reflection of the multiple subjectivities in research and in academia, and the ways in which these are

ever shifting in context with each other. While this thesis takes discourses as its objects of analysis, it adopts a narrative approach. Discourse and narrative analyses have emerged as two wide, heterogeneous and overlapping fields. Both share an interest in the role of language to shape social relations and the social world. I chose narrative inquiry because it is the study of experience. Narrative is contextually and temporally relational, and part of that experience is the researcher-participant relationship. Simply put, narrative inquiry is ‘an experience of the experience’ (Clandinin & Connelly 2000 p. 189). Feminist practice values narrative as knowledge (Bagihole & White 2013, p. 15). Thus, narrative testimonies can be understood as a reflective process, where ‘woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement’ (Cixous 1976, p. 875).

Academic women contributing to and sharing their experiences and practices offer a nuanced understanding of the social and cultural realities of higher education. These stories are ‘telling’—not simply women telling their stories. Narratives have explanatory power (Hartman 1991, p. 12). They highlight the complexities of gender relationships and their experiences in academia (Bagihole & White 2013, p. 128). Women’s stories offer powerful insight into how women perform being academics. This research project follows the feminist tradition of prioritising women’s voices, and the complex methodological imbrications of discourse and narrative. These women’s narratives also highlight the pleasures, challenges, contradictions, and negotiations that these individuals experience in academia. They are, at times, emotional narratives of experience. Joan Scott (1991) accuses feminist projects that focus on the visibility of the experiences of women of being exceedingly naïve. I acknowledge that ‘it is not individuals who have experience, but

subjects who are constituted through experience' (Scott 1991, p. 25-26), but this does not negate the fact that these experiences are nevertheless felt and embodied.

To capture the ontological complexities as well as the affective and the emotional, and the contradictory (for experiences are discursive effects) interview material is at times left unmediated, while in other places it may be critically analysed or reflected upon using anecdote and other creative methods. Narrative allows for uncertainty, emotions, voice and creativity (Leavy 2015). It is not always mutual, possible, or necessary even, to have an emotional affinity or identification to what is being communicated. Rather, a narrative approach is a relational practice that speaks with one another, not for others. The self-presentation of interviewees and their re-telling of their experiences may be selective but what they choose to tell me may be significant to who they are and their present identities (Richardson 1997). A narrative approach trusts that the storyteller knows why they are telling me their story, and thus justification for inclusion in this thesis is the telling of that story. It is also important to acknowledge that as researchers we apprehend ourselves as agents when we select among participants' stories, which are chosen to be told and included; revising, amending, and even scrapping the materials we have on hand to shape our arguments (Hartman 1991, p. 12). We make these narratives our own. We must be conscious 'of ourselves as makers of our lives as well as makers of narratives about our lives' (Hartman 1991, p. 12).

Narrative, with its emphasis on storytelling is often positioned in opposition to science and so too, to rationality. Narrative could be identified as a feminine method of research and writing. Such an assumption reinforces the gender binary, and yet positioning narrative approach in this way is also a gendered act that seeks to destabilise such a

polarising construct. Experimental and inventive methods such as the use of narrative, critical autoethnography, in conversation with arts-based research practices, such as visual and aural or polyphonic methods, captures aspects of the traditional qualitative interviews and the research process that is often neglected from analysis (Holman Jones & Harris 2015; Leavy 2015). A narrative approach can offer unique insight and capture the affective elements of academic women's encounters in the contemporary university. This also reveals the imbricated relationship between myself, the researcher, and those who are the subject of this research. Such methods offer a way of capturing the effect of my encounters with the women academics I interviewed as well as a means of conveying their stories, whether it is through body language and gestures, laughter or tears, tone of voice or choice of words. Creative methods allow these hard to capture aspects of qualitative research to be included in the research data in a meaningful way.

During the interviews, women would share, not only their own recollections, but also the experiences of friends and colleagues. This is not to homogenise one woman's experiences as women's but to recognise the ways in which women confide and share their stories with one another, and how these tales then become collectively incorporated into their own performativities as academic women. In 'the telling and retelling of important events' we allow for the 'processing', 'figuring out' and 'inquiring', that promotes change in academics' attitudes and behaviours (Lemon & Garvis 2014, p. 2). The collectivising of stories also illustrates the way these narratives are embodied, and how we undertake multiple roles and subjectivities in our lives as academics. A narrative approach enables us to recognise not just the similarities in experience, but also the differences, and the way they form a diverse and collective narrative. This approach is particularly useful in this thesis where the exploration of women in academia is less about

what we understand to be the formal or known barriers for women academics and their equal participation in universities, and more so how these issues come to inform their identities and influence their actions and emotions. A focus on narrative presents an opportunity to put into action an intersectional feminist methodology.

While this thesis is most concerned with the experiences of those interviewed, there are many more voices that echo across these pages and I am reminded of my internal conversations with Virginia Woolf (Lipton & Mackinlay 2016) who claims the absurdity of measuring how many women's voices, for 'we think back through our mothers if we are women' (Woolf 2001 p. 88). The focus on the numerical representation of women in higher education places a distinct political and gendered value on their participation. Preoccupation with the number of interviews conducted and included in this thesis also places a constructed value on this research when every experience has meaning and worth. Helen Verran (2010, 2012) observes that numbers can be used to maintain or develop a market. Perhaps I should refuse to count the exact number of participants in this thesis as a political gesture, in order to reveal the more complex and more insidious issues that numbers can veil.

In the measured university, in-depth narrative style qualitative interviews highlight the complex entanglements of neoliberal and gender equity discourses. One woman's experience most often resonates with the experience of many women. Hence there is slippage between individual and collective stories. However, this approach should not be interpreted as a rigid homogenising of the category or identity of 'woman' academic at the expense of difference. Rather, even one woman's story has the potential to reveal the structural and institutional powers that create and perpetuate a myriad of gendered and

raced inequalities and social injustices. The process of interviewing, speaking and listening, transcribing and thereby writing women's voices and experiences into history and into academic knowledge should not simply be to fit women into a pre-existent male-dominated tradition (Eagleton 1996; Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013). It is not sufficient to simply add women, whether it be around board tables or in research studies.

Interview

For this project, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve female academics. Interviews are often considered the mainstay of qualitative research (Leavy 2015), but their importance in this thesis is the way they allow me to explore the diversity of women's experiences, drawing upon Cixous' discussion about 'woman' and 'her inevitable struggle' (1976, p. 875). Participants for this project were gained through a variety of different networks. They were from different age groups, disciplines, levels of seniority and had diverse life experiences. The selection of participants was purposive and iterative with foci emerging from participants' experiences and actions, which provided a basis for eliciting further interviews, and adding depth to particular areas of analysis. I am also grateful to many of my participants who introduced me to their colleagues across Australia. The women interviewed work in a variety of humanities, social science, and science and technologies disciplines, in a spectrum of permanent and precarious contract positions, ranging from early career scholar to professor — including academics in the senior executive, and were from a variety of Australian institutions. The women are from a variety of Australian institutions, such as those from the research-intensive Group of Eight universities as well as those at newer technological and regional, teaching-focused universities. All have worked for multiple institutions before taking up their current positions.

Australia has forty public universities with at least one university main campus based in each state or territory. Broadly speaking, higher education is comprised of several different types of institutions. This is in part due to their foundations as well as the impact of performative regimes (Ball 2000), which creates an institutional hierarchy, whereby some universities are recognised for their research capacity and others for their teaching. These ‘products’ offer universities opportunity to gain positional advantage (Fitzgerald 2012, p. 4). For instance, ‘sandstone’ universities are those institutions founded prior to World War One and are typically described as research-intensive universities. ‘Redbrick’ universities are those established in the 1940s and 1950s. The Group of Eight (Go8), a coalition of research-intensive Australian universities, is predominantly made up of sandstone and redbrick institutions. Regional universities, also termed ‘Gumtree’ institutions, were founded in the 1960s and mid-1970s, and ‘Utechs’ or universities of technology are former institutes of technology or colleges of advanced education, reconfigured into new universities in the 1980s and 1990s (Marginson & Considine 2000).

To protect the anonymity of my interview participants, I loosely use a mixture of various terms such as research-intensive to refer to those older, top-tier, research-focused institutions, and regional, university of technology, or teaching-focused to describe younger, more vocational institutions, as well as ‘mixed’ research and teaching to describe those universities with priorities in both areas. I use these descriptors loosely because like academic positions, even these identifiers are in flux as universities re-constitute and re-brand their offerings and identities, in order to stay relevant and competitive in the international higher education market. These brief position details do

not do justice to the richness and complexity of the participants' research expertise or individual careers and working lives. Instead, they serve as an orientation to their voices and experiences included in this thesis:

Alice is a senior lecturer in cultural studies at a university of technology

Andrea is a senior lecturer in law at a university of technology

Grace is a research fellow in science at a research-intensive institution

Hazel is a sessional academic teaching in human services at a university of technology

Joan is a professor in the sciences and a senior executive research-intensive university

Karen is a senior research fellow in education at a teaching-focused institution

Leah is a professor of history and a senior executive research-intensive university

Lucy is a sessional academic and research assistant at a research-intensive university

Miriam is a sessional academic at a regional university

Patricia is an associate professor in education at a research-intensive sandstone university

Sidonie is a sessional academic in literature at a teaching-focused institution

Yvonne is a professor in sociology and senior executive at a research-intensive university

Like many qualitative interviewing projects, the women whose voices were recorded, transcribed and now written in this work, represent a combination of planned meetings and chance encounters. Interviews were held in offices (some with thick sound-proof walls and others paper thin), alfresco coffee shops, and telephone conversations. Many interviews while starting out as formal procedural-like appointments with set questions and key themes, over the course of the meeting became more conversational. I had set questions but often the women I spoke with would answer them in conversation without me having to ask. Greed (1990, p. 148) observes that sometimes breaking the flow with a

formal question can ‘break the spell’ of an interview. Women’s personal lives were inevitably caught up in their stories from their professional lives. For even the most reserved participant, these worlds could never be explicated from one another and, more often than not, their personal and private experiences were deeply caught up with the inequalities they faced in their workplaces; whether it be disability, race or ethnicity, sexuality or class.

The changing higher education landscape both nationally and internationally has informed these women’s working lives, often working within and struggling against new political projects within the academy and shifting governmental policies. The interview respondents sought to reflect on the complex entanglements of different political and feminist identifications and commitments. They all experienced different patterns of work. Most had, to varying degrees, fractured working lives moving between a succession of different roles and universities.

There was a lot of implied knowledge as an assumed ‘insider’. Many things were taken for granted that I understood their intention or were left unsaid. These have to do with the day-to-day work life of being an academic, the various protocols and processes, of being managed and of managing others. I am incredibly privileged to have had these women make themselves vulnerable to me in sharing their experiences, particularly those which recount punishable offences, such as sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, and workplace bullying. During our interviews, we became just two academics sharing war stories and battle scars. I became a confidant and the collector of their secrets, their fears, and their desires. I did not consider the need for ‘objectivity’, and of keeping a distance from my interview participants. Instead, interviews were a process of sharing myself and

interacting with other women. I needed to be willing to offer something of myself to our relationship.

Only one woman I invited politely declined to participate. Personally, I still wonder whether her decision to do so was based on her fear that sharing her experiences as she neared the end of her contract would somehow be seen as rocking the boat. In the development of this project many scholars asked about the absence of men's accounts of gender and feminism in the neoliberal university, criticising my deliberate omission of male interview participants as in some way compromising the integrity of the project. Indeed, neoliberal new managerialist policies affect all academics. However, in many ways, male academics' views are already represented, just by their sheer presence as decision-makers in the higher education sector. They direct the overarching policies and have control over what actions are undertaken underneath those vast changes. Having said that, the experiences of men and the different types of masculinity performed in contemporary academia remain under-researched. I am interested in women because they have a particular experience in universities that I want to focus on, particularly because of the paradox of an institution that is neoliberal and yet also superficially attached to shallow and disembodied ideals of gender equity.

Critical engagement with the narratives offered by participants provide an opportunity to reflect on the process of narration and its effects on its audience (Bagihole & White 2013, p.14). While these women's reflections are constructed and can only ever be considered as partial accounts, there is still something very powerful about returning to women's experiences and a narrative approach highlights this. Furthermore, I argue that narrative brings to the forefront and validates the lived experiences of women. Their testimonies

can be understood as a reflective process, contributing to and sharing their experiences and practices as academic women and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the social and cultural realities of working in Australian higher education. They highlight the complexities of gender relationships and experiences in academia (Bagihole & White 2013, p. 128; Black & Garvis 2018).

Feminist scholarship has long confronted the problem of language and women's historic silence. Women have been systematically excluded from public life. Treated as objects in a masculine discourse and language reflects women's exclusion. When women's speech is recorded it is often characterised as non-verbal, inaudible hysteria, and madness. To be included in discourse, women have been forced to accept appropriation (Crowder 1983; Gal 1991). Susan Gal (1991, p. 176) observes that gender, a system of socially constructed power relations, is perpetuated through talk and sociolinguistic interaction and a site of struggle about gender definitions and power. This, she highlights, particularly concerns who may speak, where, and what they can speak about. In my interviews with academic women, what was often so poignant was not merely what that participant said, but the way in which they said it. These were intimate encounters. They were not just a moment that when captured by a recorder becomes a resource—a transcript that we can study. Instead, the performative aspect of voicing, listening, recording, and writing these moments reveal a process of becoming in the research process: the immense range of emotions and the minute detail of a fleeting moment.

Critical Autoethnography

In my desire to problematise the division between researcher and subject, this thesis also rethinks interviews as autoethnographic. Critical autoethnography shares a reciprocal, and

inter-animating relationship with other qualitative narrative techniques. Broadly, autoethnography refers to writing or research about an individual or set of experiences and its relationship to the broader social or cultural context (Ellis, 2000, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2006). Autoethnography stems from what Stacy Holman Jones (2016) describes as a crisis of representation, which has motivated researchers to acknowledge how their own identities, lives, beliefs, feelings, and how these relationships influenced their approach to research and their reporting of ‘findings’. This interest in representation encourages qualitative researchers to find more transparent, reflexive, and creative ways to do and share their research. ‘Rather than deny or separate the researcher from the research and the personal from the relational, cultural, and political, qualitative’, autoethnographic researchers embrace methods that recognise and embrace these personal-cultural entanglements (Adams, Holman Jones & Ellis 2015, p. 22). Here I invoke Holman Jones’ (2016) emphasis on the *critical* in critical autoethnography and the effort that goes into what seems like the effortless creativity of autoethnographic writing. Critical autoethnography goes beyond description, it goes beyond just being a story about the self (Denshire 2014, p. 833; Gannon 2006, p. 477). Critical autoethnography involves the researcher equally describing, contesting and resisting what they see, hear and know (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington 2008, p. 22). Critical autoethnography is *doing* theory; thinking story. As such, it avoids the constraints of traditional prescriptive theory and method. Critical autoethnography in conversation with my interviews with academic women has the potential to produce new, diverse, and dynamic knowledges.

What also resonates is the way critical autoethnography as a method also raises questions about what counts and is valued as knowledge, and what cultures, and bodies count as human. It places value on those marginalised or subjugated experiences, and the

emotional vulnerability, complexity and fragility of diverse cultural communities. Critical autoethnography draws in many ways on Donna Haraway's (1997) foundational theorisations of the body; that knowledge is not just from above but is embodied. Bodies are the 'nexus of meaning making' (Spry 2016; see also Gannon 2006, p. 491). It embraces rather than erases bodies and their experiences. It is an affective and emotional methodological force that seeks social change. It can be messy, unpredictable, and at times doesn't always have a place in the quantified and measured academic publishing system. Critical autoethnography is feeling and action, concentration and concerted movement. It has the capacity to be intersectional, and draws attention to the way culture is enabled and constrained. Critical reflection of our own subjectivities allows for a critical reflection of our relationship with structures of power (Holman Jones 2016; Adams & Holman Jones 2011). Critical autoethnography is not only a contemplation of the self but an examination of systems, cultures, discourses and institutions that privilege some and marginalise others.

What makes parts of this thesis distinctly autoethnographic are the deliberate choices I that have made to situate and analyse my experiences and identity in relation to my interview material, as well as to the broader social changes. Cixous tells us, 'Woman must write herself' (Cixous 1976, p. 875), and Laurel Richardson urges scholars to 'write ourselves into our texts with intellectual and spiritual integrity' (1997, p. 2). This is one way in which I write into and with the subjects of this thesis. Richardson invites an experimentalism with forms of writing, in different styles and format in order to create new understandings of what constitutes sociological 'knowledge' (1997, p. 80).

Autoethnography may be written in the first person, and in this thesis, I often shift between first and third person to illustrate the way in which as a researcher I am

irrevocably entangled in the issues affecting my subject matter. I am not claiming this thesis as a full-scale autoethnography. Rather, I have chosen to adopt critical autoethnographic techniques including anecdotal narrative and visual methods in conjunction with interviews to achieve the aims of this thesis.

Sound

This thesis also critically engages with the sound method in relation to the interview material. This is due largely to the way Cixous' writing invites the reader to engage with the body and the senses. An engagement with sound invites more experimentation with an affective critical writing practice. Drawing on Bakhtin (1986), Butler (1997), Deleuze and Guattari, (1987), and Lazzarato (2009), Anja Kanngieser (2012, p. 337) explores how sound influences space and politics, and how they affect our capacities to listen and respond to one another. She proposes that 'the utterances of speakers opens up space for different ways of being through dialogue, through their anticipation of a response'. It is creative and constitutive:

Sound operates by forming links, groupings, and conjunctions that accentuate individual identity as a relational project. The flows of surrounding sonority can be heard to weave an individual into a larger social fabric, filling relations with local sound, sonic culture, auditory memories, and the noises that move between, contributing to the making of shared spaces. This associative and connective process of sound comes to reconfigure the spatial distinctions of inside and outside, to foster confrontations between one and another, and to infuse language with degrees of intimacy. (LaBelle qtd. Kanngieser 2012, p. 336)

The narrative and autoethnographic writings throughout this thesis stem from my interviews with academic women and offer new ways of presenting sound through text. In Chapter Six, I expand on these practices and experiment with a polyphonic method that accompanies and complements the textual qualitative methods to understand the importance of laughter in my interviews with academic women. Kanngieser (2012) suggests that we pay attention not only to the linguistic content of speech but also to the acoustic qualities, to the pace and intonation, the timbres, accents, rhythms, frequencies and reverberations, the amplitude, and silence. Tone of voice, sighing, and laughter are ways of understanding relations between sound, listening and subjectivity and correspond with the methodological aims and challenges of narrative and critical autoethnography (Findlay-Walsh 2017).

Active listening contributes to the spaces that utterances compel and suggests that this emphasises the performative nature of both speaking and listening. For ‘how we speak and listen to one another; the voice, and how we hear it, is produced by, and reproduces, codings of power, class, gender and race’ (Kanngieser 2012, p. 336). While a polyphonic methodology is not central to the production of this thesis, it is nevertheless important to consider the impact of *how* we speak— the sounds and mechanics of our speech. Sound plays an important part in the formation of identity, belonging, and place and raises important questions about power and privilege (Boland 2010; Mac Giolla Christ & Thomas 2008; Matless 2005; Watson 2006).

Sound as method attempts to capture the affective aspects of academic work and subjectivities. It also muddies the binaristic debates about women and voice, and agency. Voice and the act of speaking are often understood to be an integral condition in the

demonstration of women's empowerment (Gal 1991; Mahoney 1996). Women's ability to make choices and speak out is often considered in feminist literature as proof of women's agency and power (Olsen [1978] 2003). Women's voice has become synonymous with empowerment in a way that needs to be further interrogated. Speech as active and empowering is positioned in opposition to silence, passivity, and powerlessness (Gal 1991, p. 175). It is thought, 'women who cannot speak out are seen as disempowered, unable to act and to effect change' (Parapat 2010, p. 15). Indeed, Davies reminds that, 'the linguistic structure through which the male/female dualism is re-constituted in almost every act of speaking, has a powerful effect on determining on what is possible/thinkable' (1992, p. 50), and further, what 'counts' and is therefore heard as a powerful voice. Elizabeth Parsons and Vincenza Prioloa (2013, p. 586) argue that it is not surprising then that everyday talk in both formal and informal settings is assumed to be one of the primary and most effectual methods for effecting change in the university organisation.

However, voices who speak from the margins can become overburdened with an expectation to speak (White & Drew 2011). There are many competing voices which set up this expectation, including those coming from within feminist circles. It is very easy to become swept along by the insistence that as a woman, and further a feminist, I have a responsibility to do so. If, for example, I were to listen only to the voice of Bronwyn Davies (1991, p. 52), I would be filled—and perhaps washed away by—the obligatory sense that: to be a feminist, or a feminist theorist is itself to engage in the very act of choosing to speak, of discovering the possibility of authority, of using that speaking, that authority to bring about fundamental changes in the possible ways of being that are available to oneself and others. Much like in *l'écriture féminine*, listening is a means of producing what, where and who we are—auditory self as processual becoming.

Anecdote

Broadly situated within the fields of auto/ethnographies, anecdotes are characterised as short self-reflexive narratives, which describe a personal or intimate incident. Anecdotes can capture the mundane of everyday life as well as document something out of the ordinary and unusual. They can offer unique insight into the affective elements of women's encounters in the measured university. Such a focus on ordinariness redirects attention away from the trauma of everyday work life, such as the absence of women in leadership (Blackmore 2013, 2014a; Morley 2014; Pyke 2013; Sinclair 2013), the gender pay gap (Currie & Hill 2013), sexual harassment (Bitter Fruit 2016; Joyner 2016; Phipps & Young 2015), and racial discrimination (Ahmed 2012; Naidoo 2003; Puwar 2004), and towards the mundane as a means of explaining how such a crisis of gender is embedded in the everyday. Such an approach is designed to empower the voices within this thesis rather than to constitute academic women solely as victims and exploit their negative experiences for the purposes of research.

Anecdote captures the experiences of the participants, my reflections on our interviews, as well as my self-reflexive accounts of personal incidents. Direct quotes from participants are distinguished from other quoted material and auto/ethnographic critical reflection by the use of *italic type*. Anecdotes that feature in this thesis can also be conceptualised as vignettes, or short stories about academics in various circumstances and are used to illustrate complex research findings (Langer 2016). Michaels (2012) suggests that the anecdote serves as a means for tracing the co-emergence of research, researcher and researched. The anecdote is methodologically tacit in that it both adheres to and escapes the particular confines and productivities of its discipline. These intimate

encounters not only capture a moment that becomes a resource we can study but the performative aspect of writing these anecdotes also reveals a process of *becoming* in the research process. The auto/ethnographic is performative both for the researcher and the researched and that ‘performativity lies in the way prior events come to enact the storyteller’ (Michaels 2012, p. 26). It is a means of writing the self ‘into the narrative in order to problematise the authorial voice’ (Michaels 2012, p. 28). Interviews and auto-ethnographic self-reflections are always constructed and only ever partial. In focusing on these intimate encounters that come out of interviews and my own experiences, I hope to complicate this as well as capture how these incidents are affectively charged and highly recognisable.

The decision to include anecdotes emerged from both the affective experiences I had when interviewing, as well as the post-interview listening, transcribing, and re-listening process. There is often an unrealised relationship between critical approaches to autoethnography and storytelling (Holman Jones 2016). Often participants had very similar experiences and would recite common or generalised facts about the overarching status of women in higher education. These experiences might also be understood as ordinary affects. Kathleen Stewart writes:

Ordinary affects are public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, but they’re also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of. They give circuits and flows the form of a life. They can be experienced as pleasure and a shock, as an empty pause or dragging undertow, as a sensibility that snaps into place or a profound disorientation. They can be funny, perturbing, or traumatic. Rooted not in fixed conditions of possibility but in the actual lines of potential that a

something coming together calls to mind and sets in motion, they can be seen as both the pressure points of events or banalities suffered and the trajectories that forces might take if they were to go unchecked. (2007, p. 2)

Ordinary affects are ‘uncertain objects’ that map connection and disjuncture, ‘they are not the kind of analytic object that can be laid out on a single, static plane of analysis’ (Stewart 2007, p. 3). Anecdotes, like affects are problems or questions that emerge in experiences and encounters that have the capacity to affect and to be affected. *Ordinary Affects* (2007) and Lauren Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism* (2011), in their focus on affects of the present moment and our ‘cruel’ attachments, invite me to continually revisit my interview material and retrace my autoethnographic scenes. Just because what these women recount is often already known, does not make it any less valuable or important. Using experimental methods such as anecdote also challenges the dominant traditions of scholarly research practices in order to generate something new, something that empowers both the researcher and the researched.

Research Poetry

Poetic writing also features in this thesis and has a clear connection to *l’écriture féminine*. Poetry is another experimental writing method that produces new forms of expression (Leavy 2015) that not only presents an alternative to the masculine but works through the dialectic *between* the masculine and feminine (Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013, p. 327; Beihl-Missal 2015, p. 185). Poetic academic accounts are included to recreate emotional aspects of institutional life. Research poetry is related to narrative approaches and other forms of arts-based and feminist autoethnographic writing (Ellis 2004; Rippin 2009; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Holman-Jones & Harris 2015; Leavy 2015). I acknowledge

that I am not a natural or trained poet. Instead, I have chosen to experiment with poetry because it ‘invites people in’ and poetic stanzas ‘open spaces for thinking’ that might otherwise ‘elude us’ (Richardson 2000, p. 930). Research poetry offers new paradoxical or dialectic perspectives of understanding and experiencing the world (Furman 2006). This invitation to reflection can be transformative. Thus, the representations of qualitative data through creative and analytic practices are compelling because they re-create experiences, evoke emotion, and require analysis (Furman 2006).

My engagement with research poetry also answers the call by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) for a diversification of methodology and research paradigms. Poetry in research stands up against the fears of ‘what happens to my identity, my prestige, my status—my place in the pecking order—ME?...Me, me...’ (Richardson 1996, p. 13). I have joined many other researchers who use creative methods to report narrative research (Mackinlay 2016; Johns 2017; Richardson 1996; 1997; Holman Jones & Harris 2015). Cixous’ writing itself is a thrilling mixture of academic critique and poetic prose. It is not a flat text on a flat page, inert argument. In her writing, Cixous does what she advocates, evoking pleasures and new possibilities of loving, living and being (see also Cixous & Clement 1986). Research poetry allows me to experiment with forms of discourse and writing that stand outside or precede masculine forms and conventions, which are particularly at play in the academy. In particular, the dialogue present in the ‘here and now’ in which two interlocutors may meet in ‘amorous exchange’ (Irigaray 1993, p. 7), in which the flesh and word are combined, and women are not rendered object to man’s subject

Photography

In critically reflecting on my own personal experiences I also wanted to explore the potential of photography as a visual arts method. Visual imagery-which includes photography- is not an objective window onto the world, but rather a created perspective (Leavy 2015, p. 224). Towards the end of writing this thesis, I discovered that I had often documented the process of researching and writing this project through the visual form of photography and illustrated sketches. In particular, photographs snapped somewhat spontaneously (and at times, blurrily) on my smartphone captured the day-to-day aspects of writing my thesis with a baby in tow, and of working in different academic spaces both on and off campus, and so it felt relevant to include them as objects of autoethnographic analysis and reflection. Using photography as a visual method within my critical autoethnographic approach raises questions of representation. That is, our connection to images and issues of power, value, and social influence. Photographs can communicate feelings and emotions ‘imparted by activities, environments, and interactions’ (Prosser & Schwarts 2004, p. 335; Leavy 2015, p. 225). Although photographs are not neutral, they can demonstrate subtle relationships and represent a specific moment in time (Prosser & Schwarts 2004, p. 339) even if this is constructed and mediated.

Prosser and Schwarts argue that in using photography as a method, you must be clear about the way you define and conceptualise photographs before they can be analysed (2004, p. 347). They distinguish between two types of photographic method; the visual record and the visual diary, and they argue that the distinction between the two must be made explicit. Images can serve as a visual record:

When viewed as visual records, researchers depend on photography's capacity to provide extra-somatic "memory". That is the camera's ability to record intense detail. They can be indefatigable, allowing us to catalogue and analyse large amounts of information later rather than in the moment. (Prosser & Schwartz 2004, p. 342)

In contrast, a visual diary—using images as a chronological self-reflection of the researcher's process— illustrates the way photographs are always constructed based on the person at that time. With degrees of perspicacity the photographer affects what is included or omitted from an image:

The images generated within this paradigm are acknowledged to be the unique result of the interaction of a certain researcher within a specific population using a particular medium at a precise moment in space and time. (Prosser & Schwartz 2004, p. 343)

The images included in this thesis are a visual record as much as they are a curated and critical self-reflection. The camera's reproductive and mimetic qualities are used to complement my critical auto and ethnographic reflections. The photographs are both of and about the culture of fitting in (or not fitting in) with university life. My use of photography in the research process, like Cixous' *l'écriture féminine*, is a formative act. Not a conclusive statement but part of a process. I have chosen to present the photographs as a series of visual diary entries to highlight how they form part of my autoethnographic and self-reflection on the research process.

Documenting the research and writing process with photographs ties observation with (re)enactment. The photographs I include might be considered quite ordinary. They are usually in the style of self-portraiture, or ‘selfies’. Prior to my contemplation of using images in this thesis, these photographs were for private and personal use only. In their formation, I was simultaneously the model, curator, and audience. Now, in their presence in this thesis, they represent an ongoing process. Their commentary is unavoidably and unabashedly gendered in how they come to document some aspects of everyday academic life. These mundane intimacies of everyday life reveal conflicts, embarrassments, and disquieted vulnerability. They capture expectations and obligations. They are also a form of self/surveillance. The inclusion of photography also ties into the creativity of critical autoethnography as well as with Taylor’s (2011) ‘intimate insider’ theory. With photography bridging the division between researcher and subject (Prosser & Schwartz 2004), this method also illustrates the ongoing process of critical autoethnographic research, and the *effort* in the effortlessness (Holman Jones 2016).

Conclusion

This thesis intentionally combines the self with qualitative interviews with academic women to write about the material, emotional, and affective dimensions of social experiences in the contemporary Australian university, and in doing so, contests the binaries of creativity and analysis. Experimenting with critical autoethnography, sound, anecdote, research poetry and photography methods helped tackle the narrative data in my interview material, which can at times easily feel overwhelming, susceptible to endless interpretation, and simultaneously inconsequential (Livholts & Tamboukou 2017). I reject the notion that academic writing must be distant and dispassionate, and instead, ‘yearn to theorise in a more passionate way’ (Livholts 2012, p. 6). By putting the

‘flesh of life on the bones of experience’ (Holman Jones 1998), such writing acknowledges that there is no dividing line between our academic lives and our academic writing—the personal truly becomes the political as phrases, paragraphs, and pages come into being, so much so that the use of our embodied and emotioned voices is a way we might ‘[break] the disembodied flow’ of academic writing (Potts & Price 1995, p. 100). Narratives of experience create an affective force that moves us in relation to one another (Stewart 2007) and attends to how we are ‘willfully’ connected (Ahmed 2014), how we shape relationships, and name identities (Holman Jones 2016).

In summary, this thesis employs a range of inventive, creative, emergent, feminist methods in order to disturb the perceived gender neutrality embedded in social science research methodologies. The narrative approach to this thesis directly confronts the hyper-competitive, individualisation, and immobilisation of neoliberal discourses on academic research practice. Creativity in research is not a commodity in neoliberal terms, but ‘a new aesthetic imaginary’ (Harris 2014). Creative and emergent methods are a set of skills and capacities for divergent thinking, and persistence, pushing back against some of the challenges and contradictions of the contemporary neoliberal university. This thesis pushes the boundaries of research praxis. It is in the *doing* of feminist research that we break the silence, give voice, and hopefully, create social change. It changes us as researchers, and our worlds (Holman Jones 2016). This methodological approach is relational and ‘willful’. It draws on skills, gestures, feelings, perceptions and pleasures. It allows for collective interpretations of recognition (and even the inevitability of mis-recognition). It communicates identity and performativity. It makes us vulnerable, through telling stories, but with a purpose!

Chapter Three

Measures of Success:

Cruel Optimism and the Paradox of Academic Promotion

The challenges facing women in academia in Australia, as well as overseas, are well documented, and the need to be seen to be creating change and promoting equity fits within the neoliberal doxa of the individualised and performative university. The transformation of higher education into a (quasi)market, packaged with increased measurement and shifting values has a significant impact upon the careers of academic women. Increased gender representation obscures the fact that women's participation continues to be measured and evaluated in relation to male norms, participation, and achievements, while women remain largely invisible as academic leaders and respected knowledge producers. Increased measurement in the neoliberal university reveals a paradox in the participation of academic women in Australian higher education. To maintain the fiction that gender plays no role in academic career progression, or ability to succeed in the higher education market, ignores the material and affective inequalities experienced by academic women in the neoliberal university.

This chapter examines the reworking of gender in the measured university and the impact this has on gender equality in academia. Neoliberal market rationalities and measurement embedded in the policies and practices in academic publishing, funding, and professional development affect the careers of academics in ways that are gendered. Focusing on the performative and discursive decisions women make in regard to their academic careers, this chapter draws on interviews with academic women and argues that the mainstreaming and visibility of gender equity and diversity policies in Australian

universities paradoxically seeks to render gender inequality invisible. It employs in more depth, Lauren Berlant's (2011) notion of 'cruel optimism' to highlight how our optimistic attachment to gender equity and diversity policies as tools for improving the representation of women may be detrimental to academic women's career progression and the realisation of gender equality in academia.

When the underrepresentation of women is recognised as a result of discrimination, institutions implement policies and procedures to improve women's access and participation. However, what also happens is that once there is a critical mass of women, the value and quality of academic scholarship in those fields is raised as a concern, where previously it had not been an issue (Leathwood & Read 2009; Morley 2011). The increasing number of women 'obscures the gender imperative associated with managerialism' (Thornton 2014, p.13). Thus, the 'hard' sciences are considered more 'productive' disciplines and 'prestigious' since it is from these masculinised fields where university leaders tend to be selected. In contrast, the humanities and the social sciences disciplines are often most at risk of downsizing, which is also where women predominate (Blackmore 2014a, p. 185-187; Leathwood & Read 2009).

Nirmal Puwar (2004) uses the evocative expression 'space invaders' to highlight the way women and minorities experience space as if it were not intended for them, invading spaces instead reserved for others. Women's inclusion in academia brings to light their previous exclusion, and their very presence instigates a moment of change and a disturbance of the status quo. As a result, the hyper-visibility of academic women, alongside the increased individualisation of academic labour inherent in neoliberal new

managerialism presents them as dangerous and responsible for their own success or failure.

The Measured University

The Australian university has been transformed by measurement in recent years.

Deregulation of the higher education environment in Australia in favour of corporatisation and performance-based funding models is highly visible and has increased competition amongst universities for funding and prestige. Measurement policies and practices such as quality assurance and key performance indicators are intrinsic to the operationalisation of the corporatised academy and are critical to the performance of Australian universities both domestically and internationally. In one sense, the *measured* university implies a state of caution, a sense of too much restraint and regulation, of blandness, and even automation (Peseta, Barrie & McLean 2017). In another, it establishes a new rationality, a certainty that academic life and decision-making proceeds on the basis of evidence. However, it is important to acknowledge that in amassing metrics, such data is ‘neither inert nor contained or containable...it moves, flows, leaks, overflows and circulates beyond the systems and events in which it originates’ (Adkins & Lury 2012, p. 6). Emergent practices of financial valuation and processes of measurement order ‘enterprises in a manner that made them amenable to valuation, and created value, notably by enabling the capitalisation of businesses, through that very process (Adkins & Lury 2012, p. 7).

Valuation as a practice is connected to measure and values in a problematic way. Not least ‘because the value obtained in the valuation of finance is capitalisation’ (Adkins & Lury 2012, p. 8). The logic of capital put quite simply is, ‘to make capital, wherever,

whenever, from whomever' (Skeggs 2014, p. 2). 'This dynamic logic', as Bev Skeggs uncovers, 'opens out, monetises and commodifies every aspect of our lives, making everything, person and interaction subject to the value that can be reduced to exchange' (2014, p. 2). This traps us in the various manifestations of neoliberalism, and the Australian higher education system is no exception: the updated ideas of liberal economics, of free trade, privatisation and deregulation, are all underpinned by the logic of capital. While higher education institutions still rely on government funding, the sector brings in approximately thirty billion dollars in revenue (Norton 2016, p. 3). Financial valuation, or systems of value, premised upon the logic of capital enable the activity itself to become a source of economic value (Adkins & Lury 2012, p. 8).

Measures of quality and productivity in research and in teaching are deployed by a government that simultaneously seeks to reduce its financial commitment to, and also increase its control over the corporatised higher education industry (Newton & Harvey 2004; Deem, Mok & Lucas 2008; Morley 2003b, 2014; Lafferty & Fleming 2000). Defined as 'new public management', or 'new managerialism', this new form of corporate university management 'is characterised by public sector institutions adopting organisational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector' (White, Carvalho & Riordan 2011, p.180). To summarise briefly the literature explored in the Introduction and Chapter One, it is based on the neoliberalist rationality that institutional competition and consumer preferences are more efficient mechanisms for allocating resources than government interventions and regulatory frameworks. Measurements of research output are a highly valued commodity on the international higher education market, and are used both nationally and internationally as a tool to gauge productivity and performance (Deem, Mok & Lucas

2008). They also play a major role in academic recruitment and promotion. The global preoccupation with bibliometrics alters the ways in which ‘quality’ research and teaching is measured and valued by those inside and outside of the academy. Moreover, quality of research becomes not just a matter of whether academics publish their research and how good it is, but about what they publish, where they publish it, and how often it is cited.

Academic Promotion

Academic careers are social processes which involve many people over time (Angermuller 2017). The system of academic position titles and ranks in Australia is classified into five levels of A-E¹, although the titles of these levels may differ between institutions. Academic positions correspond to salary levels set by the Australian government's Higher education Academic Salaries Award (2002). Full and part-time academics on continuing or fixed term positions are eligible for internal promotion, which is based on academics passing their institution's minimum academic standards. In Australia, academic promotion is merit-based, meaning that each applicant is judged on their own value and excellence in relation to the selection criteria. However, as this chapter argues, merit is a gendered system of measurement. Each university has specific guidelines and selection criteria for each position regarding general requirements (scholarship and leadership), research (publications and funding), teaching (courseware development and supervision), administration, outside links (cooperation with industry, business, authorities, professional organisations), equity and diversity (implementation)

¹ Level A appointments include Associate or Assistant Lecturer, Senior Tutor, Tutor, Research Officer, Lecturer - Level B appointments, equivalent to Assistant Professor in North American universities (Universities now require applicants for Lecturer positions to have a PhD degree). Level C appointments, Senior Lecturer, Level D appointments, Associate Professor and/or equivalent to Reader in the United Kingdom, and Level E appointments, Professor.

and knowledge of Occupational Health and Safety issues. The applicant must demonstrate to a committee of peers (most of whom do not know the applicant's work) an increase in the quality and impact of their academic activities (Smith et al. 2014).

By focusing on academic promotion this chapter highlights the way in which 'masculine profit is almost always mixed up with a success that is socially defined' (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 44). The gender imbalance in academic promotion has been recognised as a national problem with the recent launch of the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) pilot. Belinda Probert (2005) found that women academics apply for promotion less than men (Probert 2005), but when they do, success rates for women are similar to men's (Whinchester et al. 2006). Cho Jo Vu and James Doughney (2008) found that at their institution, the main mode of entry into level E was via external appointment, while, associate professors were more likely to be promoted internally (2008, p. 62). Furthermore, in an academic environment where universities have diverted their workforce to research activities that are perceived to invite further funding, Vu and Doughney found that external appointments at level D and E were more often male. Gender differences in social capital, the impact of personal relationships, and the division of household labour and older children's needs impacts upon women's ability to apply for promotion.

A promotion provides both a positive impact on salary, but perhaps more importantly, it 'acts as a positive feedback on performance...where internal promotion is based on establishing outstanding or meritorious performance, rather than applying for vacancies' (Bentley et al. 2013, p. 46). The Australian higher education sector has been forced to

redefine itself in a more commercial context. The traditional academic goal of the pursuit of a knowledge society has been replaced with increased pressures and performance expectations that directly affect the workloads of academic staff (Houston, Meyer & Paewai. 2006; Bentley et al. 2013). Recent reforms in Australian higher education, in particular the introduction of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), a research assessment model similar to that of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the United Kingdom, has redefined the system of research funding distribution. In their five-year longitudinal study of key drivers of internal academic promotion in Australia, Angela Dobele and Sharyn Rundle-Theile (2015) found that despite an emphasis on teaching, and in particular the importance of student evaluations, the value placed on teaching quality is at odds with the quality of research agenda. Kylie M. Smith, Fabienne Else and Patrick A. Crookes (2014) discovered that while there are plenty of definitions and theories of engagement, processes of conducting engaged research, teaching and service, and systems for evaluating engagement within projects and across institutions; there is very specific information about how institutions track, measure, reward or recognise an individual's level of engagement.

Universities are more inclined to invest in emerging research areas that are of monetary value on the international market and meet the perceived needs of individual institutions and the recruitment of 'academic superstars' to boost an institution's prestige continue to be male (Smyth 2017; Jones 2013). Vu and Doughney find that even though equal merit among men and women in the promotional applicant pool is expected and most often enacted as selection panels observe procedural 'fairness', problems arise when women's unequal histories and career trajectories, and the subtleties of power relations are not taken into account. They state that selection panels 'become insensitive to gender

inequality and discrimination in the social distribution of the responsibility for care precisely when sensitivity is needed most' (2008, p. 64). External professorial appointments continue to work against women academics, particularly women with care responsibilities. Unequal responsibility for care reduces female academics' social capital allowing men to accumulate more experience and occupancy of positions.

The gendered paradox of academic promotion is closely tied up with measures and values. The paradox is that the more emphasis that is placed on the presence and achievements of women, the less critical attention is paid to women's experiences of discrimination and marginalisation that endure in light of their prominence. Academic women's participation and performativity in the contemporary university is situated within a social, political and economic climate of metrics and valuation. A misunderstanding or misrecognition of women's contributions is a value problem. It is that women's value to the academic enterprise is not properly seen and understood by those in senior leadership and decision-making roles. Measurement is used selectively in relation to gender. It is ignored, as Morley (2011) observes, when women suffer discrimination and under-representation and yet it is intensified when women over-represent and pose a threat to a dominant group or workplace culture. Morley (2011) describes this as 'misogyny posing as measurement'. This is what I argue is the 'cruel optimism' of our investment in gender equity in the measured university.

The 'Cruel Optimism' of the Measured University

Berlant (2011, p. 1) describes 'cruel optimism' as a relation that exists 'when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing'. Not all optimistic relations are inherently cruel but 'they become cruel only when the object that draws your attachment

actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially' (2011, p. 1). Berlant's research explores the fantasy of 'the good life' and its perseverance in neoliberal times, and she uses this object of 'the good life'; that of upward mobility, economic security, political and social equality to illustrate why people remain attached to such fragile fantasies. This notion of 'the good life' shares some striking similarities with the contemporary academic enterprise. Our desires to be deemed proficient in the work that we do, to have our work published, to be promoted, to receive praise and recognition in teaching and in our service to our communities, are a form of 'cruel optimism' in that not all types of bodies, academic activities and knowledges are considered meritorious in the measured university. This collective aspiration for the '*academic good life*' influences our subjectivities as academics. It determines how we position ourselves as scholars, which journals we read, where we submit our research for publication, which books we review and which we buy, which conferences we choose to attend, and where we form collaborations. In our pursuit of the academic good life, Julie White observes that as academics 'we author ourselves in different ways' (2010, p. 1) and even the not-so-objective measures of achievement, that of our academic biographies, and of course, our *curriculum vitae*, influence the types of organisational cultures we create and they embed us, even unwittingly, in this fantasy of the academic good life. A belief in the future realisation and attainment of equity and diversity allows academics to experience their work as bearable. For Berlant, optimism is a formal structural feeling (2011, p. 13). It allows day-to-day life to be liveable.

It is important to note that optimism may not always *feel* optimistic. In any moment optimism might present itself in the form of anxiety or excitement. Berlant (2011, p. 2) proposes that:

whatever the experience of optimism is in particular, then, the affective structure of an optimistic attachment involves a sustaining inclination to return to the scene of the fantasy that enables you to expect that at *this* time, nearness to *this* thing will help you or a world to become different in just the right way (emphasis in original).

This individualising discourse inherent in neoliberal new managerialist practices is further complicated by its appropriation of this mythology of ‘the academic good life’. The pleasures and satisfaction of scholarly work and an academic’s passionate investment in research represents a critical example of how academics have internalised neoliberal values. Neoliberalism has indeed found fertile ground as Rosalind Gill states, in academics ‘whose predispositions to “work hard” and “do well” meshed perfectly with its demands for autonomous self-motivating, responsabilised subjects’ (2010, p. 241). It pushes our feelings inwards, individualising practices and silencing our experiences in the process, forcing us into a relentless pursuit of the ‘academic good life’. Gill (2010) notes that, in many ways, academics are the ideal neoliberal subject. Academics are imbricated in the process of neoliberalising academic labour, and the work ethic of the ‘ideal academic’ reinforces Berlant’s premise of cruel optimism; that is, that researchers’ relentless dedication to and investment in research and teaching does not allow them to challenge or alter established structures but merely to accept and endure the inundation of academic work and increasing administrative responsibilities (Bagihole & White 2011).

In *Cruel Optimism* (2011), Berlant is concerned with the state of the present moment and, so too, this thesis primarily focuses on academic women's current reflections on the

academy as well as their past experiences in order to highlight the ‘cruel optimism’ inherent in the participation and promotion of academic women. Berlant’s focus on the present is a mediated affect that allows us to understand the ‘crisis of ordinariness’, or the state by which we live, which thus enables a deconstruction of our cruel attachments. How do certain gender equity measures in the neoliberal university turn everyday academic practices into an ongoing ‘crisis of ordinariness’ and how do these conditions exert pressure on academics in different ways? While this thesis does not adopt Berlant’s methodological approach of reading patterns of adjustment to aesthetic and social contexts or apply her theorisation of a collective historicity of the present, this chapter does take on her overarching argument of ‘cruel optimism’ as its conceptual moorings.

Cruel Measures

Criticism of neoliberal management policies and practices that now underpin the Australian higher education sector are fragmented and weakened by the underlying politics of quality assurance. The notion that quality assurance is a political tool is not new. However, the majority of literature on quality assurance in higher education, both in Australia and internationally, concentrates on the technical aspects of the process rather than unpacking embedded prejudices inherent in such measures. The purpose of quality assurance is typically recognised as accountability and improvement. The definition of accountability being used in quality assurance and new managerialist discourse is derived from financial usage and is in direct opposition to common understandings of accountability as democratic and egalitarian (Lorenz, 2012). White, Carvalho and Riordan (2011) cite quality assurance measures as ‘a classic example’ of new managerialism in operation.

Neoliberalism perverts concepts of ‘efficiency’, ‘accountability’, ‘transparency’, and ‘quality’ for the purposes of profit and these redefined ideas are then implemented and actualised by new managerialism. The neoliberal accountability prerogative appropriates a social rationale as justification for the implementation of quality assurance measures so as to obscure its financial intentions. Values that, as Tanya Fitzgerald and Jane Wilkinson (2010) propose, run counter to values of equity, collegiality, and cooperation. Bruce Charlton notes that ‘accountability is assumed to be an intrinsically desirable goal, and nobody ever claims that one can have “too much” accountability – the pressure is always for more’ (Charlton 2002 cited in Lorenz 2012, p. 617). Thus, arguments against the need for more ‘transparent’ ‘accountability’ to stakeholders go largely unchallenged and the political motivations are obscured. It also implies an unproblematic moral obligation and hence neutralises the political characteristics of quality assurance. It is therefore not difficult to understand how and why government-imposed quality assurance may have a particular agenda. The interactions of power, knowledge and meaning shape quality assurance processes and support their continued operation despite ongoing criticism (Houston & Paewai 2013). Michael Skolnik argues that, higher education leaders can ‘define quality in a way that best served their interests’ (2010, p. 9), particularly if individuals and institutions are unable to challenge the implementation of such quality assurance processes. Chris Lorenz highlights how this contradiction in quality assurance impacts on the gendered paradox of women’s participation and promotion when he contends: who ‘can legitimately stand opposed to “transparency”, or “quality” or “accountability”?’ (2012, p. 625). Similarly, in *On Being Included*, Ahmed (2012) questions how can we criticise equity and diversity when its establishment aims to remove the barriers that impedes equal and open participation.

Quality Assurance

Public stakeholder confidence in the ‘quality’ of Australian academic research is considered paramount to the measured university in order to meet the needs of the (prospective and existing) customer. In this deregulated and corporatised higher education model, students and parents are repositioned as private individual consumers investing in their education, expecting a return on their capital: ‘*now we’re all clients and now students are all clients*’ (Alice). Therefore, ‘considerable resources are allocated to the effective packaging, selling, and distribution of the ‘product’ and images, slogans and marketing campaigns are utilised to endorse the product and attract increasing numbers of consumers’ (Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010, p. 26). Research excellence is understood as being an important commodity in this practice.

Institutional measures of quality such as the formal quality assurance frameworks of the ERA in research output, the Fellows of Higher Education Australia (FHEA) in teaching performance, and awards in ‘excellence’ are also based on an individual’s heuristic judgements and definitions of what constitutes quality. Assessments of excellence are ‘far from being an exercise in disinvested and disinterested judgments’ they are ‘one of situated decision-making, reproducing the cultures from which it emanates’ (White, Carvalho & Riordan 2011, p. 181). Don Houston and Shelley Paewai (2013) assert that the accountability argument for quality assurance is biased towards those that design and implement such measures, namely government and quality assurance agencies.

Theorisations of critical systems heuristics can be used to better understand the aims and potential scope of such projects. Quality assurance can be understood as a series of systems. These systems require the quality assurer to make decisions about the direction and implementation of quality assurance processes. As a consequence, definitions of the

types of quality will be specific to the assurer's methodological approach, their values, and desired outcomes. Socially-driven quality assurance ensures the presence of heuristic elements, which limits rather than improves issues surrounding quality assurance processes and measures.

Thus, quality assurance is not merely the systematic measurement of quality. The unchallenged and perceived neutrality of quality assurance disguises its very power. Politics and the heuristic motivations behind those ideologies are used to determine 'the public allocation of things that are valued' (Skolnik 2010, p. 3). What constitutes 'excellence' or the 'best applicant' is not neutral nor objective. It is imbued with value. A critical systems heuristic approach highlights how the very design process of quality assurance narrows potential outcomes based on the political perspectives of the decision-maker, which disadvantages the activities being audited and hinders 'quality' improvement. In recognising that quality control measures are a political and heuristic process, it must be also acknowledged that these personal and political motivations are also inflicted with gender biases. New managerialism exacerbates inequity and unequitable practices in its reproduction of top-down hierarchical power relations. It reinforces patterns of inequality and is a 'terrain deeply marked by gender and gendered boundaries' (Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010, p. 25).

Meritocracy

Merit is an 'essential tenant of modern liberal democratic governance' (Thornton 2013, p. 129), and in academia we witness a 'rigorous application of meritocratic standards' (Jenkins 2014, p. 81). Universities have attempted to redress the overwhelming male dominance in the professoriate and in university leadership, framing the change as

economically imperative and guided by performance and merit. Yet women's contributions continue to go mis- or un-recognised, judged against male norms and practices (Blackmore 2014a; Morley 2011; Thornton 2013), making it difficult for women to gain promotion to senior academic and leadership positions. In this way gender equality in higher education and the improved representation of women in leadership becomes a desired object that is harmful and an 'obstacle to your flourishing' (Berlant 2011, p.1) as a female academic. Merit as another system of measure, implies that the best person for the job should be appointed in relation to his or her abilities and achievements, irrespective of status, gender or other facets of identity (Eveline 2004; Thornton 2013; Jenkins 2014). It is an ideological system for establishing and legitimating hierarchy and inequality based on individual achievement. It is designed to replace inherited privilege as a means of allocating rewards, power, and resources and to establish legitimate hierarchies and ensure excellence, but it is also a system of power.

This is because merit prevents an interrogation of its systems through its naturalisation as an apolitical process. In organisational logic, jobs and hierarchies are abstract genderless categories (Acker 1990; 2012; see Chapter One). Cixous (1976) observes that 'organisation by hierarchy makes all conceptual organisations subject to man. Male privilege, shown in opposition between activity and passivity, which he uses to sustain himself' (Sellers 1994, p. 38). The universal 'individual' is, in social reality, a male. Margaret Thornton (2013, p. 128) argues that:

the ideal academic continues to be constituted in the image of Benchmark Man. This normative masculinist standard favours those who are Anglo-Australian, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class, not elderly, espouse a right-of-centre

politics and a nominal mainstream religion, if any.

Meritocracy is supposed to replace inherited privilege as a means of allocating rewards, power, and resources and to establish legitimate hierarchies and ensure excellence, but it is also a system of power. Fiona Jenkins (2014) observes that in academia, meritocracy establishes everyone as 'equal' and thus there is no inequality that cannot be justified as part of the meritocratic system. Equal and unequal status is then distributed accordingly. 'According to this defense,' Jenkins critiques, 'there may be inequality, but it is not inequitable' (2014, p. 95). Merit drives the university organisation. It prevents an interrogation of its systems through its naturalisation as an apolitical process. Definitions of 'excellence' thus 'foreclose criticism by over determining the kinds of questions that can be presumed to have 'merit'. How can we challenge merit when the opposite of merit is gender inequality? (2014, p. 89). What counts as 'success' or 'excellence' in the meritocratic process creates performative competition.

Under the logic of capital, male bodies are understood to have the most capacity to accumulate capital. Merit is inflected with bias and integral to neoliberal corporatised higher education. Women, and particularly women of colour, fall short against the ideal academic. Despite merit and equal opportunity, there remains a lack of diversity amongst university leaders. Ahmed notes that 'the likability of a candidate might be determined as a relation to likeness' (2012, p. 39). Merit is imbricated with benchmark masculinity and the ideal academic. Thornton also argues that 'gender bias is reflective of the standpoint of decision makers, who are invariably Benchmark Men themselves or "safe" women who endorse benchmark masculinity' (2013, p. 129). This approach to recruitment demonstrates how organisational habits and cultures are practiced in selection procedures

and promotional committees. Tanya Fitzgerald states that ‘women’s presence in the world of men is conditional to them being willing to modify their behaviour’ (2014b, p. 6).

Many university equity and diversity programs aim to assist women to better navigate the prevailing higher education landscape, and to assimilate into the overarching patriarchal structure. Susan Feteris (2012), Fitzgerald (2014b) and others (Jenkins 2014; Ahmed 2012; Morley 2011; Puwar 2004) observe that the only path to success is often for women to learn to become honorary men.

The Paradox of Academic Women’s Participation

The paradox is that women are rendered both visible and invisible in terms of their bodies, competencies, and ambitions. Diversity and equity policies and programs have placed an unprecedented focus on the contributions of women academics and gender representation. However, increased participation rates and the visibility of women on campus does not necessarily indicate broader structural change to the gendered power relations that underpin universities. Women’s experiences working in such structures are thus rendered invisible. This institutional focus on academic women is further compounded by the increased monitoring and individualisation of academic labour which consequently makes women responsible for their own success or failure. This presents a paradox in women’s inclusion and subsequent progression and promotional opportunities in academia and reveals the ‘cruel optimism’ of our continued investment in gender equity policies.

Institutions are host to a suite of academic and workplace practices; whether they be ethics reviews, codes of conduct, or sexual harassment policies. These measures have sought to improve quality and equality in the workplace, and in the case of gender equity

policies such as equal opportunity, maternity and paternity leave, and work and family responsibilities have been brought about by much lobbying on the part of the women's movement. These policies can be thought of as a major step forward in that they are intended to prevent discrimination. They may also be used as statistical tools to track and quantify gender equality. These measures are also operational tools for neoliberalising higher education in that they 'assure' quality and accountability increasing competition and production (Ball 2015; Lorenz 2012; Naidoo 2003). Enhancing transparency and accountability is a fundamental aspect of achieving gender equality in academic recruitment and promotion (van den Brink et al. 2010). However, the measurement of full and equitable participation in academia is neither neutral in construction nor outcomes. Such measures play an integral role in the creation of value and the social construction of our reality (Adkins & Lury 2012; Blackmore 2014a) and they have enduring consequences.

Lucy observes that even though her '*department isn't sparse of women*', in fact, the majority of the department are women, yet '*there are one or two senior male academics who look disorientated when they see me and my female colleagues in the office corridor.*' This disorientation speaks to what Louise Morley describes as an 'equity paradox', which has over time, morphed into a 'crisis discourse of feminisation' (2011, p. 227), a 'misogynistic impulse', or nostalgia for patriarchal patterns of participation and exclusion (Morley 2011, p. 223). These individual 'misogynistic impulses' become embedded in the operationalisation of gender equity policies, which are a complex assemblage of personal and professional patronage; of close fraternities, as well as peer-review and performance indicators. These impulses seek to curtail women's participation

and stifle their achievements. Moreover, such gender measures continue to compare women's achievements to the persistent masculine representation of the ideal academic.

The 'academic good life' can be understood as a fantasy discourse where the world becomes 'what is wanted, regular, ordered, controllable' (Walkerdine 1988, p. 188). The optimism that we have in the 'academic good life' is distinctively cruel because it does not disband the gender binary, but rather maintains it, whereby masculinity signifies absolute 'mastery', while femininity remains relegated to the status of 'other' (Hey 2011; Hey & Morley 2011; Walkerdine 1988).

Securing contractual and permanent employment, and subsequent promotions in academia involves peer assessment of research, teaching and service, with greater credibility and prestige often being awarded to those with significant volumes of peer-reviewed publications (Baker 2010b, p. 318; Shore & Wright 2015, p. 428). Neoliberal reforms in higher education have produced new forms of governmentality premised upon competition and comparison. 'A pecking order is created not only between differentially ranked universities and departments, but increasingly between individuals' (Shore & Wright 2000, p. 76). In the measured university we must, as Ball observes, 'calculate ourselves' (2015, p. 259) and rank ourselves against one another in order to maintain as well as elevate our academic position/s. The new conditions of academic employment, that of increased rates of publications, the ability to secure funding and produce marketable research 'remain[s] powerful in positioning women and men differently and unequally within structures' (Pyke 2013, p. 445).

‘They’re Really Committed’

Alice observes that at her current institution *‘they’re really committed [to gender, diversity and inclusion policies]. Actually, I was really surprised by that.’* Although she is cognisant that such policies, *‘they take on their own meaning don’t they, within the institution.’* Indeed, at the same university, Hazel highlights that despite the institution’s apparent good intentions, and she emphasises that no one is saying they are not a good idea, *‘we should have them’*, but she has found that when female academics raise issues with how they are enacted *‘universities could do much better’*. Puwar reveals that the inclusion of once historically and conceptually excluded groups into organisations, such as women and racialised minorities highlights a paradox; that their inclusion brings to light their previous exclusion and in their very presence comes, a moment of change, and a disturbance of the status quo. Puwar states that *‘the moment when the historically excluded is included is incredibly revealing’* (2004, p. 5). Andrea reflects, *‘I’m worried about that... gender awareness stuff has been around for a long time, but it still has a long way to go to actually change practices.’* Alice and Hazel both describe how negative gendered incidents around academic promotion forced them to alter their career aspirations somewhat in order to better fit in with the reality of their respective work environments. Hazel adds that, *‘since I’ve had children definitely - well, no that’s bullshit, my whole life has been an alteration of aspiration.’* Hazel is recast. She projects ‘new traits’ of a different value. I can hear in Hazel’s words both disappointment and the joyous transformation that Cixous writes of: *‘Now at last I resemble her! How beautiful I am! Aspiration is what I am’* (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 50).

Measurement is ignored when women cite experiences of discrimination and yet is amplified when women ‘over-represent’ or pose a threat to the status quo (Morley 2011,

p. 232). This notion that certain types of bodies are out of place is further exacerbated by the feminisation crisis (Leathwood & Read 2009). As Morley discerns, the discourse ‘implies that a woman’s place is in the self-minimising minority. If they dare to fight their way out of that role, they are conceptualised as a threat to social cohesion’ (2011, p. 229). Alice recalls at her previous university:

I remember, I always thought it was very male dominated... But, I remember a conversation there; somebody was saying- something about gender diversity or gender equity. It was in a meeting... “oh isn’t this run by women, this place.” I thought, well we’ve got a male vice-chancellor, but we had a powerful female pro-vice-chancellor.

Despite her institution’s gender equity policies and being *overrun* with women as Alison’s male interjector implies, Hazel tells me about having had ‘*a big fight*’ with her institution ‘*because there was nowhere to change a baby on campus until a couple of years ago.*’ Her female colleague, a vocal feminist who led the campaign, ‘*had to fight to get a baby change facility, a parenting room.*’ Hazel notices that ‘*even now*’ [*the parents’ room*] *it’s not very well advertised.*’ Women represent a ‘source of uncertainty’ informed by men’s own ‘unease’ and are suspected of lacking in relevant leadership competencies. They do not expect these relevant competencies to be embodied by women (Puwar 2004, p. 103). The ‘other’, the vocal feminist, the breastfeeding, nappy-changing academic, in this instance, disturbs normative academic bodies and spaces. Morley notes that ‘women’s academic identities are often forged in otherness, as strangers in opposition to (privileged) men’s belonging and entitlement’ (Morley 2011, p. 231), and Puwar (2004, p. 105) contends that ‘much more is required if we are to reverse the institutionally

embedded masculine advantage' it requires a complete overhaul of our political and social imaginings that destroys the universality of the male body both within and beyond the walls of the university organisation.

Academic women are committed to their institutions. In the neoliberal university, they may perform acts of compliance as well as resistance:

Miriam had recently started in a great early career, two year, full-time, level B lectureship. Her time is divided into forty per cent research, forty per cent teaching, and twenty per cent outreach, and no marking. Much to her delighted bemusement this was one of the incentivised perks of her contract. This morning Miriam receives a curt email from her School's admin officer explaining that Miriam hadn't properly confirmed the results of her course. '*It was no drama. An accident. Easy to fix*'. She was embarrassed to say, but she thought the email '*was harsh*'. Phrases like, "*you are holding everyone up*" and "*resolve this immediately*". It made Miriam cry. It made her cry because she tries so hard in her job. She has moved to a new institution and knows how tough the job market is. She had '*made every effort to get her course grades in on time and had somehow missed one tiny step in the process*'. Miriam had received no guidance as a new staff member but was always getting unsolicited feedback on her work telling her that she was '*failing*'. During her quantitative-focused performance review meeting with her Head of School, they measured the impact of her recent work. Miriam was told that she was not publishing enough, despite having two monographs in the pipeline and several recent journal publications, and only having been in the job six months. She was told that she was not teaching big

enough classes. Strangely, the new honours course she wrote *'doesn't count for anything'*. Miriam looks around at her colleagues, and she looks at the ones who are supposedly passing these metrics tests and *'succeeding'*. These are the academics who exploit others, taking advantage of impoverished PhD students to mark last minute essays and convene courses at a lower rate of pay so that they can publish more and nominally teach much larger courses. Sobbing behind her closed office door over a terse administrative email reminds Miriam that *'things are not going so great.'*

What further complicates a critique of the paradox of academic women's participation and promotion in contemporary Australian higher education is the way in which neoliberal measures have appropriated values of collectivity, solidarity, and social justice. Academics become implicated. Neoliberal measures and new managerialist practices have individualised the norms of the newly corporatised and metricised university and made the individual culpable for their own success or failure (Ball 2015; Blackmore 2014a; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Gill 2010; Davies & Petersen 2005). This is because, as Stephen Ball claims, 'collective interests are replaced by competitive relations, and become increasingly difficult to mobilise workers around issues of general significance, collective professional values are displaced by commercial values' (2015, p. 259).

Yvonne highlights the compromise:

I have always had a sense that if you're smart, and if you're good, you can make your way. You can make your way in a gendered framework. You can make your way without having to sell off your children or sell off your principles. But I don't

know, we say that and then you think of the times where you perhaps have sold some of the farm and it is tricky.

‘What lacks market value also lacks the right to exist’ (Jenkins 2014, p. 49) and thus in order to survive, academics must uphold the fiction of the ‘academic good life’ by cooperating in various forms of academic measurement and valuation. The contemporary university ‘is being remade into a panopticon in which university professors censor, police, audit and market themselves while institutional administrations strive ever harder to limit their own liability’ (Amit 2000, p. 217). Bronwyn Davies and Eva Petersen (2005) observe this in the ways that these measures are taken up internally by individuals who learn to perform to these external audits and enact a form of self-governance. In academia, the value of subjects is their ability to produce particular kinds of products and findings within the specified timescales and parameters:

Within the neoliberal discursive repertoire, “performance” produces the subject as a set of outcomes, bottom lines and deliverables, and all subjects thus produced are rendered exchangeable and dispensable in the management of bottom-lines... The performance of oneself in a neoliberal regime of thought entails a constant slippage between the process and the product. It is a signifying device through which the subject demonstrates alignment and compliance, and it is at the same time a technology of the self, a performance of oneself as embodied intellect subject who must find the way to act within and between the contradictions. (Davies & Petersen 2005, p. 5)

The measured university requires an implicit cooperation between academics as individuals and the collective of academics that form the university faculty and constitute the institution. Amit claims that this is in part due to a ‘convergent clamour for intellectual accountability and moral obligation from sources both within and outside academia’ (2000, p. 217), and states that there is a presumption that academics have prior to the introduction of such measures, been seriously wanting; that these measures redeem the contemporary academic in the eyes of their peers and the public.

‘Twenty Shitty Papers’

Fantasies of the academic ‘good life’ are increasingly bound up in publishing practices, which is also tied up with academics’ faith in the traditional linear academic career trajectory of assistant lecturer through to professor and then to senior executive (Bagihole & White 2013; Grummell, Devine & Lynch 2009; Morley 2014). That is, academics’ ability to secure job contracts, gain permanent positions and achieve promotion is heavily based on the number and quality of research publications. Measurements of research output, a valued commodity on the international higher education economic market, are used to gauge productivity and performance. An increased focus on the outcomes of quality assurance reporting is altering the ways in which research ‘quality’ is measured and subsequently valued by those inside and outside of the academy. Moreover, quality of research becomes not just a matter of whether academics publish their research, but about what they publish, where they publish it, and how often it is cited. I have suggested elsewhere (Lipton 2015) that since the first full round of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) reporting occurred in 2010, there has been limited critical discussion on the ways in which ERA perpetuates gender inequality in Australian universities. This is

because to do so requires a radical disentanglement of the presumed purposes and values of academic work from the interests of neoliberalism.

The measured university with its rankings and performance appraisals places unprecedented pressure on academics, particularly those early in their careers. Grace finds this to be at odds with the management of her more senior male colleagues. As Grace shares:

Yeah, given they don't do anything, oh my god, they seriously don't. Not all of them, obviously some of them work extremely hard, but some of them published a paper in 1982 and haven't done anything since, except consume oxygen. Which is also kind of upsetting, like I expect to work really hard and I don't expect to have an excellent job handed to me. But we're being evaluated by these measures that just would have broken successful researchers, who have established themselves now. But if they were being judged by what I'm being judged, they wouldn't have made it. Anyway...

Grace both adopts and resists the logic of measurement in that she contrasts her own productivity and diligence with that of the professor who hasn't published anything since 1982, therefore invoking the notion of merit. In the moment of telling this story there is what Jennifer Charteris, Susanne Gannon, Eve Mayes, Adele Nye and Lauren Stephenson (2016, p. 35) describe as a loosening of the academic subject's sense of self, both alert to and complicit in the ways in which the measured university accords value to certain bodies and forms of knowledge.

Gendered values around notions of the ideal academic and what constitutes excellence in conjunction with other ongoing gender inequalities result in women academics producing less quantifiable research than men (Kahn 2012; Bentley 2011). This is in part due to the fact that academic women continue to take on greater responsibilities for teaching, administration and pastoral care which are accorded less weight than research, entrepreneurialism and leadership (Thornton 2013, p. 128). The gender representation may be quite similar when the rate of publications is relatively low but previous research demonstrates that at the apex, men continue to publish three times more than women and are more likely to represent the majority of top-tiered publications (Bentley 2011), which itself is a gendered category as it assigns value to some forms of knowledge and not others. Nevertheless, if publications are based on articles only, the gender difference would be partially due to the greater proportion of men in the sciences, for instance, where articles are more common than books (Bentley 2011; Marsh et al. 2012). Publication output differences could reflect the gender representation or culture of a particular discipline. For example, in the sciences there is also an issue of being the first or last author on papers, in which women are rarely the lead investigator or author (Wilson 2012). Similarly, differences in research publication output may vary amongst institutions. These gendered disciplinary and institutional differences are imbricated with pre-existing gendered social factors, which impacts on the research output of academics.

Academic status is a symbolic representation of academic influence and legitimacy. As a consequence, 'a minority of highly productive researchers' may indeed account for 'a disproportionate share of total publications' (Bentley 2011, p. 95). The quantification of research output is highly gendered and there is a need to interrogate existing, taken-for-granted notions of measure and value as contributing to the continued persistence of

gender inequalities and the paucity of academic women in senior positions. Research auditory exercises not only claim to evaluate ‘quality’ but they also help academics to determine ‘worth’ and ‘relevance’ of research in terms of its domestic and international currency. What constitutes ‘excellence’ is currently generated and inhabited by a predominantly male academic cohort (Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010). As Jenkins notes, this gendered dominance acts as a ‘powerful mechanism of affirmation of subsisting institutional arrangements’ (2013 p. 83). Metrification of research output becomes an obstacle to quality, innovative research.

On my way to meet my interview participant, Grace, I saw reflected in her body language a lack of self-worth, a resentment towards her institution’s values, as she sat waiting for me at the campus alfresco café:

She sat outside in the sunshine tilting her coffee cup on its saucer and looking down into the depths of her half-finished flat white. A black dog sat behind her. It followed her wherever she went. It started turning up after she’d been pinched on the bottom on a fieldwork trip, when she walked the corridors of her building to a cacophony of men whistling from their offices, their backs facing open office doors. It was there when colleagues made sexist, homophobic, and racist comments right in front of her, and it was there when she had to deal with the aftermath of a student-teacher relationship that had resulted in her mediating a sexual harassment allegation. She was angry and disappointed. So much had happened to her in the few short years she had been at her university that her sense of her academic identity had irrevocably changed, and she had begun to doubt her ability as a research academic. These experiences were making her

bitter. She found that quite upsetting, to realise that academia wasn't what she had first thought it would be when she started in her new position. Her department didn't support her in her research, except when of course she won an award. *'It's all just so incredibly low risk'*, she thought to herself. *'Why would you take a chance on something being interesting or useful, when you could just do something that you know will work okay. You'll get a shitty paper out and then you can have more shitty papers, and then everyone will think you're good because you have twenty shitty papers.'*

Grace was embodying as well as processing a moment, a realisation, a feeling that no matter how hard she worked, she would not receive the respect and recognition she deserved. She was not seeking praise for vanity's sake. Her body was marked. When there is a preoccupation with output and these gendered and raced experiences of being in the academy become the norm, everyday academic life turns into an ongoing 'crisis of ordinariness'. When I asked Grace about where the pressure to publish is coming from, particularly in light of recent reportage that academics feel compelled to produce positive results at the expense of research quality (Sarewitz 2016), I was struck by the way she individualised many external, structural pressures into her reasoning:

I think we've put it on ourselves, I think we're just really lazy about evaluating people. We'd rather just reduce people to a number. I think we've done that, I understand there's these different expectations and benchmarking and all of that, compared to when my supervisors were ECRs [Early Career Researchers]. But I really do think that we've decided this is a good way to evaluate ourselves and

we're going to go with that. Instead of actually thinking about [it in] a more complicated way.

This is how neoliberalism internalises the logic of capital, whereby we internalise and individualise our collective or institutional failings to push us to achieve and accumulate more capital (Clarke 2008; Lorenz 2012; Skeggs 2014). By way of thinking in '*a more complicated way*' Grace is referring to the need to reflect on the purpose of academic research, on the impact of quality assurance measures on individuals and groups of academics.

Publication lists and academic curricula vitae are 'a shrine to the notion of linear career development' (Klocker & Drozdowski 2016). 'Publication after publication, paper presentation after presentation' (Crang 2007, p. 511) these records and measures become key instruments of neoliberal governance within the university sector (Ball 2015).

Individuals' feelings of anxiety around academic publishing and the sector's intent on the measurement and ranking of research output, creates the ideal conditions for universities to justify exerting increased pressure on academics in different ways. Measuring research output actually changes the nature of those outputs themselves. Writing becomes an instrumental skill rather than an epistemological experience. This counting experience pervades all aspects of academic work, including teaching (Mountz et al. 2015).

Andrea tells me how research output and her publication record were intrinsically linked to her job security. When her faculty announced '*they were going to cut from every discipline and that everyone had to pretty much apply for their positions*' in order to '*not*

lose them'. The restructure 'pitted people against each other.' Andrea states that until this point:

We had a really good, quite collegiate atmosphere...and so that made everyone really stressed and tense. This dragged on with all sorts of inappropriate meetings where all sorts of inappropriate things were being said at the team meetings. Then eventually I, being part-time, wasn't in the best head space, I hadn't published much for a while. I'd been on maternity leave; I'd [just] come back. Also I was only working part-time. So in [re]applying for my job, compared to the other staff in my small area, I just couldn't compete. So I got told that I was being made redundant which was one of the most horrible things I've experienced. Especially coming back part-time. They ticked the box saying they take into account that I was on maternity leave but they don't say how or why or whatever.

Natascha Klocker and Danielle Drozdzewski (2016) address the central concerns of Andrea's predicament when they ask 'how many papers is a baby worth?' While Klocker and Drozdzewski's provocation is somewhat of a hypothetical one, in the United Kingdom, under the Research Excellence Framework (REF) each period of maternity leave equates to a reduced output expectation equivalent to one paper (out of a minimum of four) across each four-year period (Donald 2011). Although Klocker and Drozdzewski (2016) and their participants contend that you cannot adequately quantify research quality and output in this way:

For those who offered up a number, the average impact of parenting a young child (for the primary carer) was estimated at around three papers per year (over the two to three -

three-year period specified in the question). Our colleagues qualified their numbers with various considerations including: the duration of parental leave taken, whether the candidate returned to full-time or part-time work following leave, whether the candidate had previously been in a teaching-research or research only position, as well as the candidate's previous publication track-record and field of research. (Klocker & Drozdowski 2016, n.p.)

In her formative essay 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House' (1984) Audre Lorde proclaims that it is not possible for feminists to truly transform patriarchal hegemony from within institutions that sustain and perpetuate inequality. Using Lorde's metaphor, Klocker and Drozdowski's maternal measurement proposition can be understood as reclaiming the master's tools to better support women academics who juggle pressure to publish with caring responsibilities. Klocker and Drozdowski's measurement proposition is an example of measurement being used against a culture of measurement. Lorde asks us to consider what this means, 'when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy?' (1984, p. 112). Lorde claims that operating within a patriarchal structure offers limited parameters for change. Indeed, publication output, journal impact factors, and other quality assurance measures do not offer any significant structural gains for women in academia. 'The master's tools' is a complex descriptor that offers positive and negative connotations. It is a metaphor for exploring privilege, power and judgement. While Lorde's statement might appear to be a cliché or an overly simplistic binary, her words are polysemic, and invite the need for a critical reflection on neoliberalism and gender equality in the present. Lorde is challenging reformist feminists toward a more radical subjectivity that considers the

systemic impact of these measures and to not just think in terms of small-scale individual benefits.

After the stress and uncertainty of her faculty's restructure, and her acceptance of a redundancy, Andrea since found out that many of the academics she was up against in the re-application of her position had fewer publications than she had and that she *'would have compared more favourably against them'* if she had re-applied. For Andrea, this *'was a really interesting and horrible experience.'* The way she still tries to see the positive outcomes of such an incident in a way that highlights just how embedded the fantasy of the academic good life is in the psyches of many academics; that *'maybe something good will come out of it'*. She reflects that, *'I managed to get some [sessional] teaching at [another] university which was good just to see another university and meet other people and get that experience.'* Our optimistic faith in publications, in their 'quality', knowledge, and assessment as objects that will see women obtain and progress in their academic careers is simplistic. It ignores the privilege and power of those who value and measure publications, and ultimately for whom the system benefits. Those leading quality assurance projects have the most to gain from such developments. Our investment in publishing limits the autonomy and agency of universities to change or challenge quality assurance measures.

Co-author Statement

Dear Jude,

No problem at all—I know very well how busy and complicated things can get. In other news, I am applying for a postdoc position. Applications are due next week. I have to submit three publications. I want to include our paper, but I have to attach a co-author

statement that outlines the percentage share of multi-authored publications (see attached). I did have a bit of a laugh really, when I read through the document requirements. It's ironic that having to complete this form negates the very argument we set out in our co-authored paper on the gendered measures of the contemporary academy. These documents are regulatory tools (Clarke 2004, p. 131) and measuring our contributions in this way can have intentional and unforeseen consequences. Authorship matters, and these types of documents have the capacity to veil more complex and more insidious issues (Verran 2010). This co-author statement is a great example of Shona Hunter's notion of a 'living' document. It is a material semiotic actor integral to the process of governance. There is this ongoing tendency to underplay the process of doing and 'their becoming' in these types of policy and procedural documents (Hunter 2008, p. 508). Indeed, to dismiss this co-author statement as merely quality assurance or an accountability measure underestimates what these documents actually do, and what they might do—but I know you already know all of this.

I feel uncomfortable asking you to agree on a split in the percentage of the complete work. I know that as feminist academics we contest the bean counting and the hoop jumping that the neoliberal university demands of us (Lipton & Mackinlay 2017), but the reality is also, that this is for a job application. I really want to be shortlisted for this postdoc position. It would be perfect. I'm really well-suited to the role and the research is right in my area of interest. It's a 3-year contract as well—would you believe! These material objects take on the characteristics of academics; 'they judge; form networks, communicate and work performatively generating symbolic attachment and identity investments as they travel across time and space' (Hunter 2008, p. 508), which makes my reliance on this co-author statement form all the more fraught.

I know we established that I would be the first author and our paper has long since been published, but it's interesting to reflect on the continued confusion around who should be credited as an author and in what order names should be listed. Should they be listed alphabetically, in order of seniority, or reflect the levels of intellectual and substantial contribution to a paper? There is a disconnect between what academics believe should happen and what actually takes place. Documents like this operate to strengthen and restrict gender equalities in academic publishing. It compels authors to account for their scholarly contribution, which would appear to legitimise academic women's involvement in collaborative projects and publications, and yet as we all know, attribution of authorship is to some extent discipline and country specific and there remains a number of ethical concerns within these cultural contexts.

Is it more feminist to split the responsibility 50/50 to break the tyranny of hierarchy and power, weighing our different and diverse contributions equally? Or do we follow with the ethical and moral approach that those who contribute the most be rewarded for it? Ideally, seniority would be unimportant to authorship, but as we all know, senior researchers tend to get too much credit in multi-author publications (MacFarlane 2017). Scholarly importance has weight. But what does a senior academic have to lose, if their academic rank already has value, why not use it to support and promote an early career scholar by listing them as first-author? In many collegial relations this may well be the case. It is rather, more significantly, that these documents generate values in how they constitute what matters and what is of concern. There is a simultaneous dependency and disregard for these kinds of documents. Both positions are imbricated in continued gender

inequality. Particularly when we discredit the value imbued in such paperwork, we discredit the contribution of academic women.

I'm sorry to have to ask if you are happy with the percentage split I have given, and if you can sign this document for me so that I may submit it with my job application, that would be most appreciated.

Best wishes,

Briony

'Relative to Opportunity'

The imbalance in research output affects which researchers have influence in both academia and in the public domain. Consequently, women are also less likely than men to apply for promotion; they form fewer research collaborations and apply for fewer grants. Female academics, as they tend to work in fields that are less likely to attract industry funding (Strachan et al. 2016), are less likely to be considered as working in national research priority areas. These all influence women's academic membership and career progression (Ahmed 2006; Bentley 2011; Feteris 2012; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010; Luke 1997; Probert 2005; White, Carvalho & Riordan 2011). Fewer publications equates with less opportunity for promotion. Competitive grants, awards and fellowship applications often include a section on 'research opportunity and performance evidence'. This allows applicants to outline any extenuating circumstances relevant to their application. This might include career interruptions, their date of PhD completion, the nature of their current and previous employment and periods spent in non-academic

employment, and other factors that have impacted on career progression (Klocker & Drozdowski 2016, n.p.).

Such extenuating circumstances also termed as ‘relative to opportunity’ in the Australian Research Council (ARC) competitive grant criteria, seek to provide ‘positive acknowledgement of what can be or has been achieved given the opportunities available’, but are not about providing “‘special consideration” or expecting lesser standards of performance’ (Rafferty et al. 2010, p. 5 ctd. Klocker & Drozdowski 2016). Such measures are also considered to improve the gender representation of women by recognising the career interruptions and circumstances that disproportionately affect female applicants. Ideally, a focus on achievement relative to opportunity provides scope to challenge the ‘existence of a singular norm’ against which all academic careers are measured (Dalton 2011, p. 5). It implies that all candidates are thus on a level playing field. Rather than benefiting women, Joan found women applicants being open about personal circumstances in relation to their research opportunities often enabled certain recruiters to ‘*put a stranglehold on candidates into accepting unreasonable or unfair working conditions*’. Speaking about her experiences on selection panels, Grace tells me how when sitting on a selection panel with two senior men, although ‘*we did hire a woman*’ and ‘*we all agreed that she was the best person for the job*’ the process was prejudiced. There was only one other appropriately qualified person for the position, however, it was most likely that if the top candidate didn’t accept the job, they would have to readvertise. However, when it came time to offer her the job:

the panel chair, the senior male academic, told her that he was thinking about hiring her, but there was another guy in the UK who’d be really really good. He

didn't want to get messed around, so he needed to know straight away if she was going to take the job and if she was going to work full-time. Because she had a three-month old son, and he [the panel chair] was wary that she would want to be on a part-time position. So he basically tricked her in to taking the job full-time, because she thought that if she didn't she wouldn't get the job, even though there was no one else.

I concur with Klocker and Drozdowski (2016), who find consensus amongst colleagues that 'the application of "relative to opportunity" fails to live up to its potential'. Lucy does too. When I meet with Lucy she is coming back from an afternoon committee meeting. She smiles at me in welcome but with pursed lips. When she unlocks the door to her office she slumps into the armchair next to her desk and lets out a sigh. With the door firmly closed, Lucy then takes me through what happened:

She enters the meeting room and sits down at the large oak table. The room smells of furniture polish and the oil paintings of male chancellors that cover the walls and stare down at her from all sides of the tiered conference room. The school had expressed a direct desire to focus on selecting a potential female candidate for their early career award and Lucy had been invited to sit on the panel. As the only female in attendance, her male colleagues disclose to Lucy that she had been invited to join the selection committee because they thought, '*we should make sure we have a woman on the panel*'. Then, in the next breath the chair of the committee adds, '*oh, and [Lucy], do you mind taking the minutes [for the meeting]*.' This comes in the form of a statement rather than a question. When Lucy tells me this she rolls her eyes and hangs her head in utter exasperation.

'They all looked very smug,' she said, *'feeling very good about themselves'* when they added this 'special clause' to the award. Sure enough, Lucy tells me, plenty of female academics applied, dispelling the overarching gendered trend that fewer women apply for awards and grants and hence are less competitive than their male counterparts, and yet when the committee reconvened to nominate a candidate all of the women were discredited because of the gaps in their careers. This was in spite of the posed aim of the award, which was to acquire and support female early career academics. The panel, without Lucy's consensus, settled on three men. *'They all felt really satisfied that they had done gender equity,'* Lucy tells me. Their rationale was that *'in a couple of years' time these women would be ready for an early career award* and that *'it was too early in their careers; they hadn't done their time'* Lucy said in frustration. These men had *'talked themselves out of choosing a woman'* and hence *'felt good without doing anything'* all the while looking at Lucy as if for approval: Approval that they had in fact already granted themselves. *'Their focus on doing the right thing didn't go beyond talk'* and inevitably the award and its funds went to a male applicant. As we talked, Lucy and I discussed the irony that in a few years' time these women will most likely be considered ineligible for an early career award, as they will be too far advanced into their academic careers. Their focus on doing the right thing doesn't go beyond the talk at the table.

Those making the decisions congratulate themselves on 'getting it right', which disguises their underlying biases. The heuristic elements of such measures make the idea that equity and diversity are irrelevant to questions of merit (Eveline 2004, p. 103). This is where the act of having a policy, a document, or a guideline for actions required becomes

what Ahmed (2012) describes as brick wall. She uses this metaphor to expose how the language of diversity prohibits change. The broadness is scope or the ‘hollowness’ of such language, while it ‘get[s] people to the table’ (2012, p. 67); such policies lack clearly defined commitments to equity, equality, and social justice. Such ideals become co-opted. While ‘concepts of equity and equal opportunities imply an underlying concept of social justice...diversity invokes the existence of difference and variety without any necessary commitment to action or redistributive justice’ (Deem & Ozga date cited in Ahmed 2006, p. 745). The difficulty of equality as a politics is that in legislating for equality ‘it can be assumed that equality is achieved in the act’ (Ahmed 2012, p. 11). Such policies become part of the paradox in that they become a substitute for action and change, and yet action and change is integral to such policies.

The mainstreaming of equality and diversity is synonymous with the advent of new managerialism and the rhetoric of ‘good governance’ (Hunter 2008, p. 510). Despite the presence of these policies and procedures, the discussion, as Lucy observes, is limited to only what is directly referenced in such policy clauses. There is, as Shona Hunter reveals, over-dependence on the words of policy documents, and a constant return to the document can be a way of blocking conversations. She notes that there is a crucial difference between ‘documenting diversity and the transformation of diversity into a document’ (2008, p. 516). When universities do confront racism and sexism or indeed when their equality failings are exposed, their response is invariably a reiteration of conservative institutional values. Such language allows for a ‘feel good factor’ without any lasting change to the status quo.

Grace is also fed up with being the token woman on selection panels and committees ‘that no one wants to serve on.’ She sarcastically imitates:

We’ll have a woman on the selection panel and then there won’t be any bias.

We’ll have a woman here and everything will be equitable. It’s like no, I don’t want to do that shitty job that’s going to take up my time and we’re going to hire a man anyway. Why don’t you just think about what you’re doing, and behave like a human and then it’s not my job to make you accountable. Can’t you just do that yourself?

She highlights that it is not the job of women to domesticate the workplace or administer equity and diversity policies. Instead, academic women are needed because:

They’re equally qualified and they have something to bring, we’re missing out on a lot by not having them. I think my School especially doesn’t understand that that’s actually part of the problem.

Puwar notes, ‘the language of diversity is today embraced as a holy mantra across different sites. We are told that diversity is good for us. It makes for an enriched multicultural society’ (2004, p. 1). Such gender policies separate out masculinities and femininities into normative and non-normative, making women the gender that is out of place. Grace and Lucy realise the ‘cruel optimism’ in academic institutions’ investment in such equity policies and clauses. While they aim to level the playing field in terms of merit, they make gendered disadvantage more visible, locating women’s difference as the issue. This is where the bisexuality of Cixous *l’écriture féminine* is useful. Writing and

speaking in the feminine offers a “passageway” to a new relation between self and other in which both coexist (Sellers 1994, p. 40), and indeed, women already adopt this subjectivity. Women have much to gain from opening up within this bisexuality, a position ‘which does not annihilate differences but cheers them on, pursues them, adds more’ (Cixous 1976 qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 41).

‘The Good Girls, They go Further, I can Tell You That’

At Hazel’s institution, ‘*they do try to have women’s networks, women’s mentoring kind of programs. But they’re big L, liberal,*’ alluding to the feminist ideals and gendered leadership traits espoused by female cabinet ministers of the Australian Liberal National Party such as Julie Bishop and Michaela Cash. Men do not exclusively govern the maintenance of the academic good life. Karen tells me as if letting me in on a conspiratorial secret, ‘*the good girls, they go further, I can tell you that.*’ Accepted qualities of leadership are embodied as masculine (Puwar 2004, p. 98). Karen attributes the success of ‘good girls’ to be those who maintain the masculine scholarly and leadership of the ideal academic. Whether it be a strategy for survival or a means of claiming power, women can adopt and internalise masculinist practices (Fitzgerald 2014b, p. 5). Karen continues, ‘*I think it’s because the really ordinary “yes” people who are in positions of power and authority and who have the ability to create change instead are compelled to always try and save money.*’ There is a continued pressure to emulate and live up to the academic masculine norm. The deployment of a ‘good girl’ gendered subject position implies the ‘good girls’ seek the approval of academic men and male leaders for the sake of approval. They are understood as subservient. However, the ‘good girl’ identity is more complex. Karen tells me about her faculty dean who:

used to regularly give back great big pools of money, \$70,000, \$100,000 every year back to the university hierarchy to suck up to them. That money was earmarked to support research like going to conferences. I had to always fund going to conferences on my own. She had the money but she chose to give it back and be seen as a good girl and get a pat on the head.

Karen constructs her dean as an ambitious woman who desires power but attains it through her subservience of being ‘a good girl’. The dean’s returning of funds demonstrates one way in which she manages to secure power, through the approval of senior male leaders. Leadership and management in its construction as masculine makes it increasingly difficult for women to ‘strike a balance between being seen as a competent manager/leader and as sufficiently feminine’ and not being seen to break with gender expectations (Alvesson & Due Billing 1997, p. 91). Women who do step over from being ‘not-men’ to ‘like-men’ transgress gendered spatial boundaries. To an extent these women destabilise the existing social order by virtue of their sheer presence, although women’s position in such spaces continues to be ambiguous and confused as they are seen as still being women as well as honorary men (Puwar 2004, p. 100).

Emulating the tenet that masculine comes at a price, women need to erase their difference, but policy constantly plays on their difference. Those who ‘fall outside this norm in contradictory and conflictual situations, with little opportunity to create language, or a discourse, in which to voice these contradictions, since the failure to match, or live up to, the norm is understood as a failure of the individual concerned’ (Gatens 1996, p. 98). Grace notes that ‘*it’s really hard when you’re not in a position of power to talk about those things*’, and she flushes with a mix of anger and embarrassment as she tells me

about an incident at a seminar where a visiting female academic after just having presented a talk was treated with such disparagement by several of her male colleagues. At the end of the seminar, another female academic was making a comment to the speaker when Grace hears one of the male academics in the audience audibly remark: “*I’ve got no idea what that stupid woman’s banging on about*”, or something to that effect, she tells me. Women in positions of authority, whether it be when presenting research or in holding a formal leadership position, are imagined as incongruent.

Women are granted access to the public sphere so long as they have the ‘ability to emulate those powers and capacities’ that come with male and masculine privilege (Gatens 1996, p. 71). Similarly, Hazel is also angered by male academics’ actions in the workplace:

I get really sick of women having to be the moral keepers of men. Women having to say, don't harass women in the street, or talk nicely to women. Like, fuck off, why can't you say that to each other? Figure your own stuff out guys.

‘Rare are the men able to venture onto the brink’, to exceed the phallic and become feminine. ‘When one gives, what does one give oneself? (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 43). For men, Cixous believes for the most part, men want to ‘gain more masculinity: plus-value of virility, authority, power, money, or pleasure, all of which reinforce his phallogocentric narcissism at the same time...that is what society is made for—how it is made; and men can hardly get out of it’ (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 44). ‘*It’s just evident*’ Grace tells me, ‘*that it’s really hard to talk*’ whether it be about your work or on this issue:

if you're not tenured or if you don't have strong allies. People just - they don't like you anyway and they're going to like you less the more you talk about not liking the way they behave. They'll make it difficult for you, so I don't know, you just rapidly feel quite impotent.

The social organisation of recruitment and promotion is, Puwar argues, 'absolutely vital to how careers are made' (2004, p. 120). While academic hiring and promotion is based on principles of merit, it continues to be commonplace for colleagues to be 'shoulder-tapped' as applicants and candidates for positions (Baker 2010b, p. 320). The endorsement and support of powerful professional allies is pivotal to success. There are specific activities that give an academic exposure to 'the key players in the field' (Puwar 2004, p. 121). When you are in a career, Puwar observes, 'you have already been part and parcel of the practice of endorsement, even though you may not be conscious of it' (2004, p. 121). As you climb the ladder of promotion you become increasingly part of the process and mechanisms of affirmation. Support and endorsement aren't necessarily top down but may be chequered across an organisation or field. Additionally, Puwar finds that visibility is integral to successful career in academia. 'Visibility comes from jumping through the right hoops that offer opportunities for exposure and respect from influential quarters' (2004, p. 121). The paradox is that women are rendered both visible and invisible in terms of their ambition and competencies and their female bodies.

Women's voices and experiences are written out of selection criteria and promotion-based texts and replaced with another more appropriate (masculine) voice that is in line with more competitive and individualising discourses. For instance, selection criteria

rarely ask applicants to describe how they contribute to workplace culture and improving gender equality in the workplace. Collaboration, which is measured in job applications is often only listed in terms of individual competencies rather than collective outcomes (see also Chapter Five for more on the individualising discourse of collegiality as a job criterion). Moreover, the number of ‘essential’ requirements for a job position is often exceedingly high in relation to the position level, which ignores the gendered elements of the intensification of academic labour (see also Chapter Four on gendered discourses of work flexibility and work-life balance). Rachael Pitt and Inger Mewburn (2016) also found that there is often a major gap in expectations between position levels. They cite in an exploratory sample of sixty-four Australian university advertised job position descriptions that ‘87 per cent of Level B (lecturer) roles required an ability to apply for (but not necessarily obtain) grants. By Level C (senior lecturer), it was expected that 100 per cent of applicants would be successful in obtaining external funding’ (Pitt & Mewburn 2016, p. 96). Given that the overall success rate for ARC Discovery Projects for funding commencing in 2018 is 18.9 per cent (Australian Research Council 2018) this recent addition to criteria is particularly difficult to accomplish. Previous research suggests that it is women’s lack of confidence influenced by lack of collegial recognition and esteem that is the reason behind the ‘leaky pipeline’ or paucity of women in senior academic and leadership positions (Baker 2010a; Probert 2005). While this may be the case in some circumstances, such a response does not account for structural causes. Moreover, a purported lack of confidence is a direct result of structural pressures, rather than an inherent gendered characteristic.

To address this gap, universities offer professional development training. Women’s numerical presence and the neoliberal individual imperative obfuscates broader structural

issues at play in professional development that impact upon women's academic careers. In *Organising Feminisms*, Morley noticed how her participants 'clouded over' at the sound of 'career development', revealing that this was an area of profound hurt for a lot of women (1999, p. 170). I also found that the women I interviewed were doubtful of the benefits of 'professional development' as it is now rebranded. It is a deficit model. Many were extremely frustrated with the way professional development and career advice aimed at women made women the problem, blaming them and their deficiencies for their inability to get promoted, with lunchtime seminars on academic promotion for women branding the paucity of women in the professoriate as being a confidence issue, whereby women lack confidence and therefore do not apply for promotion.

This positions the paucity of women in senior roles as an individual and gendered characteristic, again representing confidence, or lack thereof, as a woman problem. Morley found that 'careers have patterns that progress according to our socialised understandings of age-appropriate behaviour. They are also inextricably linked with notions of self-worth, self-esteem, as well as social status' (Morley 1999, p. 170). Despite the not so linear career trajectory of many academics today, age still plays a part in career expectation. Louise Archer found that younger academics recognised that they were expected to produce applications and publications and that winning grants was necessary for their own academic careers as well as for the visibility and success of their institutions (2008, p. 289). Dana, an early career, sessional academic, realises that '*no one likes the process. Being rejected is painful*', but she continues to invest in the 'cruel optimism' of an academic career. Despite her scepticism towards the professional development lunchtime sessions offered at her university, she nevertheless attends them in an attempt to secure some form of competitive edge when applying for grants and jobs.

Such professional development exercises are designed to empower individuals in the ‘discovery’ of their skills and competencies. Through their own persistence and hard-work they will be able to successfully achieve promotion. These workshops and seminars promote the gendered ideal of the ‘good girl’. Faults, whether they be personal, social or structural lie with the individual. Mary Wrenn highlights that ‘this veneration of the individual and her agency is neatly framed within the neoliberal narrative as the power to change one’s situation and station’ (2015, p. 1234). However, in reality there is little possibility for change. The hidden contradiction is that there is little individual capacity to change one’s social position in the existing social hierarchy, particularly when many roles and positions, despite equity and diversity, continue to restrict women. This is not ignoring that women regularly write cases for promotion - both their own and as references for other academics (including women), but the voice that is adopted is an appropriation, with certain voices excluded from such documents.

Professional development also ignores academic women’s existing skills, with academics repackaging and commodifying professionalisation. As Sidonie explains:

I now have to do a three-year [part-time] Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. Which is all good. I started it in 2015 with the idea of me doing it part-time, which is fine, only to find out that because I have to do it within three years in order to be employed at that university to teach that the unit that I had done was no longer valid because they had restructured and re-written the program. Which is fine in the sense that the university is paying for me to do the program, which is great, but personal time when you are already juggling all that you

juggle, it's a huge miff to find out that all the work that you have done is now no longer recognised, no longer deemed relevant or worthy of you having done it. So then you think, why did I spend a semester doing it? In between teaching and marking. So I am really annoyed that they have told me I have to do this unit again because they've restructured the course. Really annoyed about that. It's like the time that you spent doing it is not as precious as the money that cost to do it.

Sidonie has had a long career in teaching in the tertiary education sector and has been teaching in academia for a number of years. She firmly believes in the professionalisation of teaching staff. Although she acknowledges that there is often little benefit to individuals. Professional development programs largely benefit the university and ignore the ever-changing policy requirements and processes that academics must go through in order to be measured as competent. Sidonie adds:

I can spend three years doing this course which everyone now has to do. Not only do you have to have a PhD but you have to have a Graduate Certificate to teach. Well that's all good, but you have no guarantee of employment even though they are telling you you've got to do this, you've still got to squeeze it in between your teaching schedules because they aren't giving you the paid time to do it. You never know as a sessional if there is going to be work for you from semester to semester.

Hazel is sceptical about professional development workshops and seminars and whether or not they will actually assist women in obtaining promotions:

What? Is that going to make you a happier person? A more, well-rounded person? I feel like wherever I go to work now it's just going to be - and if I want to progress anywhere it's just an abundance of work. I'm actually questioning whether I am better off just not even trying to achieve, to not even try to progress into a full-time job or a leadership position.

What women are taught in these professional development workshops, Hazel finds, is that:

It's inherently masculine and it prioritises the wrong things in a workplace and in a society. So I don't know, until that changes, how much the other stuff will kind of change as well.

Yvonne tells me that many academics attempt to circumnavigate these issues by 'gaming' the system:

There's a lot of navigation in contemporary universities and there's a lot of deals and initiatives and responses, and there's gaming. You know, the ARC [Australian Research Council] gets really mad when people game the system, but it's a system that sets itself up to be gamed. So it's knowing that to survive, you have to be able to understand those frameworks but also not completely sucked in by them.

By this Yvonne is suggesting that some academics may wait until their final year of eligibility for an early career grant, when their current academic position and title would suggest that they are a mid-senior career researcher.

Hazel then focuses in on additional child-caring responsibilities being a significant structural issue that impinges upon her individual ability to compete in the higher education jobs market. Unequal responsibility for care, whether it be for children, families, colleagues, or students is an existing theme in research on academic women and is often cited as a major reason for women's slow progression (Pyke 2013). *'Why can't men take on some of those additional caring responsibilities?'* Hazel sighs, and continues, *'I think the whole problem is this idea of everyone working fifty hours a week to achieve something... Just that whole work your arse off idea is inherently masculine.'*

Alice also feels ambivalence about academic promotion and leadership focused workshops and seminars:

I'm really ambivalent about that; it's kind of hard when you're on contract as well, to think about promotion. I mean, I have been promoted while I'm on contract, so I probably could do it again. But yeah, I mean I wouldn't mind going up the ladder. But then I'd...although, I'm towards the end of my career as well at the moment, and I am getting a bit jaded by the whole university sector. I still think there's a male culture. I'm in a faculty that got rid of its humanities department, and there probably were more women then. I mean, there's quite a lot of women in leadership roles in my faculty, but there's a few strong research [nodes] and they're all blokes.

Institutional policies have attributed increased value towards the 'hard' sciences as being more 'productive' and 'prestigious' while downsizing those disciplines, namely in the humanities and social sciences deemed to be overly 'feminised' (Blackmore 2014a, p.

185-187; Leathwood & Read 2009). University leadership determines whether these clauses and the language of equity and diversity are ‘taken up’ and ‘taken seriously’ within an institution. Such discourses may also determine who that leader is, and this in turn affects the status of women in academia. Alice maintains that:

There’s got to be, the change has got to come from within, it’s got to come from the manager. It’s got to come from leaders who say, no this is a really awful way to manage a workforce. You’re not valuing people for their contribution, you’re just treating – it’s that classic neoliberal thing, they’re just [automatisms], they’re functionaries. They do a job, they’re dispensable, you can get somebody else, there’s no humanity.

Why have academics been so compliant with and for the most part, uncritical of these measures in public discourse? Academic women are made responsible for their own success or failure (Blackmore 2014a; Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Gill 2010; Davies & Petersen 2005). In order to survive, academics must uphold the fiction of the ‘academic good life’ by cooperating in various forms of academic measurement and valuation. Vered Amit (2000, p. 217) argues that the university ‘is being remade into a panopticon in which university professors censor, police, audit and market themselves while institutional administrations strive ever harder to limit their own liability’. In academia, the value of subjects is their ability to produce particular kinds of products and research findings within the specified timescales and parameters. They learn to perform to external audits and enact a form of self-governance lest they be rendered exchangeable and dispensable (Davies & Petersen 2005, p. 5).

It is not that women are necessarily unhappy with how they have negotiated or reconciled different or competing aspects of their lives. These subjects have, in Berlant's words, 'chosen primarily not to fight, but to get caught up in a circuit of adjustment and gestural transformation in order to stay in proximity to some aspirations that had gotten attached to the normative good life' (2009, p. 249).

Conclusion

Merit is intrinsic to the narrative of contemporary academic careers. It is understood as an 'objective' requirement measured based on ability, skill and achievement. However, what is made apparent through the works of feminist scholars such as Jenkins (2014), Margaret Thornton (2013), and others (Burton 1987; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson 2010) is that recruitment and promotion are not based purely on objective measures, and moreover, we must be critical of this notion of objectivity itself. There is an underlying assumption that the 'objectivity' of meritocratic measures will replace bias and sexism, and advance the position of women. When in reality meritocratic and equity policies act as 'empty referents' (Berg 2002, p. 253), devoid of what Nirmal Puwar describes as the 'messiness of culture and power' (2004, p. 120). These policy approaches are ultimately undermined by masculine norms of academic behaviour embedded in our construction of merit and productivity.

Despite equal opportunity policies, institutional policy discourse privileges the ideal academic as white, male, able-bodied, middle class, and heterosexual as normative (Thornton 2013; Hey & Morley 2011). Thus, women in academia are positioned not only failing to enter certain 'prestigious' disciplines and senior leadership roles but also posing a threat to the values of the neoliberal patriarchal academy (Blackmore 2014a; Hey 2011;

Hey & Morley 2011). It important to also acknowledge the multiple positionings of academics, and that indeed some women (white, middle-class, abled-bodied) embody the ideal academic more closely than some men (non-white, working-class, disabled).

Increased measurement and focus on women's representation in the neoliberal university reveals a paradox in the participation of academic women in Australian higher education. In many ways the 'optimistic objects' that are mainstream equity and diversity policies can both improve and impede gender equality objectives. Gendered practices are imbued in gender equality measures. Women have not been entirely missing, but as Puwar states, 'their presence has been more constrained by the marking of domains as masculine' (2004, p. 24). The development of gender equity policies and procedures, their interpretations, and implementation continue to be measured and evaluated in relation to male norms of the ideal academic and understandings of participation, and achievement. Gender equality in higher education becomes a form of 'cruel optimism'. Failing a complete and collective indictment of the measured university system more broadly, there must be a move away from masculine, individualised notions of merit and academic achievement, which places the impetus back onto institutions to implement policies, practices, and cultures that create sustainable gender change.



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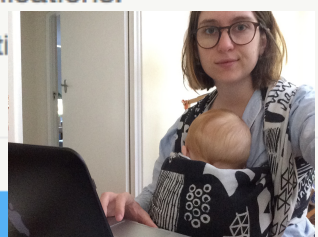
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Chapter Four

Precarious Times:

Academic Work and Self-surveillance

'I just squeeze it in,' Hazel raises her arms in an expression of exasperation and futility. *'I just don't think that's a good way of working. I think we need to be asking harder questions.'* I nod in agreement as I subtly turn the face of my watch towards the inside of my wrist and attempt to take an inconspicuous glance at the time, wondering how many more interview questions I can ask her before our time is up. Even as a doctoral student, I am not immune to the time pressures of the contemporary university, and the constant juggling of personal, professional as well as emotional demands. Women are significantly more likely to feel overworked and stressed (Leathwood & Read 2013 p. 16), as well as being employed at lower levels and for less pay (McKenzie 2017; Bailey et al. 2016). I always felt concerned about the time, or lack thereof. I was anxious about imposing on another woman's busy schedule. All the women I spoke with exclaimed a time consciousness when we arranged our interviews and so I feel even more grateful for their input, however brief our conversations. Time is socially constituted operating in the background of everything we do. It is ever-present, but when addressing gender inequalities, it is often taken for granted. The surmounting pressure on individuals' capacity to juggle competing personal and professional commitments and responsibilities can be heard in the elongated sighs that were sounded in my conversations with female scholars when discussing work intensification, job precarity, flexibility and work-life balance.

The intensification of academic work is an endemic feature of academic life (Gill 2010). Frequent restructuring, increased workloads, the rise in a casualised academic workforce and short-term contracts, and the prominence of online technologies, places increased pressure on academics to produce more and to excel. Filip Vostal (2016, p. ix) aptly summarises that academics must be able to:

cultivate a metric mindset, adopt performance and productivity discipline, publish in the right journals with the right publishers, get cited and learn to exist and thrive in regimes of audit, surveillance, ‘excellence’, ‘accountability’ and business-driven administration structures, often justified by neoliberal assumptions.

In *Accelerating Academia: The Changing Structure of Academic Time*, Vostal (2016) explores the increasing pace of human and social life, the speed of institutional change and different forms of cultural speed in the contemporary world and the ways in which they relate to academia. The intensification of academic work sees academics working harder and longer. Recent surveys of academic working hours demonstrate that few are working ‘ordinary’ hours (thirty-eight hours per week), with a majority who are routinely working in excess of forty-five hours per week (National Tertiary Education Union, 2016, p. 12). Writing lectures at home on personal laptops, holding meetings in cafés, communicating with students online, and grading assignments remotely, all contribute to the perception that being employed as an academic is a leisured and flexible work-life, when in fact this mobility and plasticity is somewhat of a ‘poisonous myth’ (Gill 2014, p. 20). The long hours and ‘flexibility’ of academic labour goes largely unquestioned. In accepting the flexibility rhetoric of academic work, we create a twenty-four hour, seven

days a week work culture that blurs the boundaries between paid and unpaid labour and impinges on individuals' personal lives (Eveline 2004). Job precarity is also a defining experience of contemporary academic life. Academics are feeling pressed for time as well as a pressured to build their career profiles in the hope of obtaining more secure employment within academia.

Technologies of time are also increasingly present in the lives of academics. Email, Wi-Fi, smart phones, academic calendars, and active learning platforms such as Blackbaud and Turnitin, the presence of social media, and academic professional networking sites like *LinkedIn*, *Academia.edu*, *Mendeley*, and *ResearchGate*, are lucratively attractive to the 'entrepreneurial' academic, and our 'optimistic attachment' (Berlant 2011) to them as productive digital tools can be experienced as desirable, even pleasurable. Specifically, sites such as *Academia.edu* and *ResearchGate* encourage users to connect with other academics online, upload research publications and create what is essentially an online version of the traditional hard-copy academic curriculum vitae (CV), chronicling the academic self in terms of scholarly activities such as: publications, research grants and projects, conference participation, and teaching awards.

Digital technologies of time continue to reinforce dominant ideas and practices for the recruitment and evaluation of academics and academic work. Our connection to these is creating a culture in which we are expected to always be online and available for work. Moreover, 'the surveillance capabilities of many online applications create new dilemmas as social networking sites, calendar scheduling devices, chat programs, and above all, email, bring a raft of opportunities and requirements for work-related contact' (Gregg 2011, p. 14). These technologies of time may seem unremarkable, particularly as our

engagement with them becomes entangled with our everyday work activities, but they are very much producing new kinds of academic labour in ways which are gendered.

This chapter explores academic women's time perspectives in the neoliberal university. Not only does the intensification, 'flexibility', and individualisation of academic labour reinforce existing gender inequalities in the contemporary university, but it exacerbates them. Firstly, to better understand what affect time has on female academics' identities and performativities, this chapter briefly traces the shift in conceptualisations of academic time and the influence of neoliberal new managerialist practices. Secondly, this chapter explores several discourses of time that emerged from my interviews with academic women. These relate to the intensification of academic labour, and of career precarity, with a particular focus on the rhetoric of flexibility and work-life balance. Lastly, this chapter concludes with an autoethnographic reflection of academic professional networking site *ResearchGate*. Such websites essentially use academics' career histories and publication data in order to measure, value and monetise academics' labour. They do not merely advocate academic social networking and research collaboration but incite hyper-competition and (self) surveillance. Technologies of time and selfhood in the neoliberal university are not simply symptomatic of an increasingly globalised and intensified academy, but are, in fact, driving the intensification of academic work, job precarity, and (self) surveillance, which has a significant impact on academic women's personal and professional lives.

Rethinking Academics' Time

The concept of time is frequently employed in discussions of neoliberal academic subjectivity to highlight the changes to the nature of work in the contemporary university.

Traditional conceptions of academic activities can be categorised broadly as continuous linear or ‘clock time’ (Lingard & Thompson 2017). In academia, these can be broken down into undergraduate, postgraduate, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorates, degree majors, minors, and prerequisites. The academic year is also a measure of time and is typically structured around two twelve-week semesters (although trimesters are increasingly common) with substantial non-teaching research periods— although academics may undertake some teaching-related activities such as marking assessments during these non-teaching periods (Biggs 2016). Amongst academics and institutions there is also conflicting ideas about time, such as how long a semester, module or undergraduate degree should take (and when tied to government funding this issue becomes more pertinent than ever). Yvonne concurs: *‘It’s true that the demands are increasing, like really, really hugely. I do think that. I think that there is a requirement that a lot of time be committed’*. The consequence of time pressures is that quality is often sacrificed for quantity:

What’s important is that when supervisors take students on, they really understand their responsibility as from beginning to end. The end does not mean when the person runs out of time or stops responding to emails or when you get really busy doing something else. The end means when [the student has] completed [their] thesis.

There are also then, the time conventions of when it is and is not an appropriate time for a particular milestone event, such as graduation, or how often meetings should occur. Targets, timetables and deadlines are also examples of academic clock time (Southerton & Tomlinson 2005).

The temporal qualities of different aspects of academic work contribute to multivalent experiences of time (Spurling 2015, p. 372). Clock time acts as an imposed reference point by which academics are measured. Another example of such allotted time is in the division of teaching and related duties, research and scholarship, service and leadership. This is commonly understood as the 40:40:20 research-teaching formula (forty per cent research, forty per cent teaching, and twenty per cent service) and is one of the key ways that academics' work is quantified and (self)surveilled (Henderson 2018, p. 41). The key point here is that research and teaching, semesters, degrees, courses, and deadlines are all units of time and space, 'interchangeable and equal in theory and practices' (Finke 2005, p. 129). They come to feel 'natural', when they may in fact provide a better fit for some individuals and entirely exclude others.

Academic time is not experienced as linear. Rather it is 'complex, divergent, and not infrequently conflictual' (Clegg 2010, p. 358). It is important to consider the various tensions of time, that are produced in the contemporary university and how they work to both enable and constrain academics. Neoliberal managerialist practices constitute the academic self. While it is commonly understood that the accelerated manifestation of time impacts on academic subjectivities, what is less understood is the relationship between time and subjectivity (Henderson 2018). The neoliberal university requires high productivity in compressed time frames, but the focus on time here, is less on individuals' struggle against time and more about the ongoing process of subject formation in relation to time (Henderson 2018, p. 47). Temporality and subjectivity are inextricably produced in and through each other (Henderson 2018, p. 43).

Precarious Work

Lucy mock chants in the quiet of her office: *'What do casual academics want? We want permanent jobs.'* The second half of her cry, 'when do we want it? Now!' is left unsaid but the demand rings out in the silence. *'Everything sucks but we can change it if we stand up for each other.'* Casualisation of the academic workforce is widespread in contemporary higher education. It is feature of neoliberalisation, and one which disproportionately affects female academics. Research remains the most prestigious of the three main areas of an academic role, while teaching and administration duties are often syphoned off to academics who are earlier in their careers and are often short-term or on hourly-based contracts (Thwaites & Pressland 2017). The traditional linear career trajectory of an academic from lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, professor and emeritus is being displaced by a far more fractured academic life course. Indeed, careers are another measure of academics' experience and service. The stretch of time known as 'early career' can be up to ten years post-PhD (Taylor & Lahad 2018, p. 3; McKenzie 2017, p.36). Until recently the category of 'early career researcher' (ECR) was relatively unheard of. Of course, the postdoctoral position is still a coveted role at the beginning of an academic career, however, what has changed is the continued precarity of academics' employment after the anticipated period of financial vulnerability and transience that comes post-PhD (Goodwyn & Hogg 2017, p. 100).

For instance, academic job profiles described as short-term research, teaching-focused lectureships or teaching fellowships, define work that was once rewarded with a permanent position, but is now repackaged at a lower rate of pay, stripped of benefits and any sense of institutional obligation or responsibility to the employee. This frequently

leaves academics without income during holiday periods between semesters and in-between contracts. As Sidonie points out:

the problem is it's flexible, but you are not paid in the non-teaching periods, and so for instance you are paid for face-to-face and you are paid for a certain amount of preparation but I for instance had to drive into the uni which took forty minutes just to pick up the exam papers that I was marking and then I had to drive forty minutes to return the exam papers and I wasn't paid for that at all. That was not acknowledged at all. I mean I was thanked for doing it, but I had no other choice than to do it. Last semester I got around doing this because I was at a one-day seminar run by the university in the city and my colleague was there as well and I actually gave the papers to him then so I didn't have to actually go all the way out to the uni to return them, and I was actually adjudicating the exam that time so that I could take them home after the exam finished whereas this time I had to go in and out at my own expense.

Academics are part of what Guy Standing (2011) terms 'the precariat'. A class category evolving out of neoliberal ideology. The precariat are people living in unstable and untenable conditions. The precariat is not a homogenous societal group, but what unites them is 'a sense that their labour is instrumental (to live), opportunistic (taking what comes) and precarious (insecure)' (Standing 2011, p. 14). Statistical data about the employment of academics reveals a transformation of higher education over the last two decades, with the systematic casualisation of the workforce. In Australia, approximately half of all academic staff are employed on an hourly rate basis, with seventy-five per cent of new university jobs since 2005 being insecure, casual and contractual appointments

(Lane 2017). Moreover, though there are considerable complexities to the picture, recent data on academic employment suggests that academic women across all disciplines (even the fields dominated by women) are more likely to occupy fixed-term positions than continuing roles and are more likely to end up in insecure career pathways (Bailey et al. 2016; Strachan et al. 2016; May, Peetz & Strachan 2013; Broadbent, Troup & Strachan 2013; Hartley & Dobele 2009; Dever & Morrison 2009).

Precarity in academia is gendered. It is not only women's presence in the academy, but the positions they occupy that expose continued gender inequality in Australian higher education. Sidione summarises for me that, '*universities are essentially now run as businesses in this new environment and staffing seems to be more and more sessional contract staff which I think is increasingly female.*' Feminist scholars have noted that, 'women have always done immaterial and affective labour, often with little recognition in both fields' (Fontane 2007, p. 12), and so it isn't surprising that recent discussions around precariousness is raised when it begins to negatively affect those who easily fit the model of the ideal academic. Hazel observes that:

what happens at my university is all the sessional staff are women, there's hardly any men and a lot of them are care givers, a lot of them are mums. So, they're there because it's flexible and they're really, really smart but they kind of get abused in a way, like our skills are abused because of the labour market and gender constructions within that.

This horizontal segregation might be considered somewhat of a consolation to those whose private lives demand more (Gregg 2011, p. 5). However, Hazel is all too aware:

you know there's just always going to be someone to replace you because of that labour market situation. There'll just be another woman to come and do all the sessional work or the research assistant work.

Driven by a need for work, academics often internalise what are ostensibly structural issues associated with life as a sessional academic, as Sidonie concedes, *'I suppose I've got to be grateful I've got a job, really'*. Gregg argues that the lack of critique of the long hours' culture, and the gendered assumptions underpinning it, are a consequence of women feeling grateful for 'flexible' work arrangements. (2011, p. 4). The temporariness of contract work also leads to a sense of being outside of the profession (Thwaites & Pressland 2017, p. 3). When asked to reflect on her future as an academic Hazel confides that:

It's just kind of depressing because I could be here forever, as a casual. There's just not much of an option for secure employment, and then you think; you give all this time and energy, and for what? I don't know. I suppose in my mind I have to frame it as a transitory period of my life to cope with it. I try to use them as much as they use me. So, trying to get experience or get training or whatever out of it. Because you just don't know.

The interdependency of academics and institutions in terms of casualised labour is part of an ongoing process of subject formation in relation to temporality. The intensification of work and precarity has resulted in more 'yay-saying'. That is, when offered another semester of teaching, or a short-term research contract, those without the stability of a permanent position are disinclined to turn down the invitation. Moreover, even those with

job security also feel pressured to say yes to additional leadership responsibilities and opportunities because of the continuous scrutiny of academic performance.

Precarious academic positions remain highly sought after for gaining experience and building CVs with the hope of securing more secure academic employment in the future, even when these contract positions are a result of university management cost-cutting measures (Taylor & Lahad 2018; Gill 2014 Probert 2013; Papadopoulos 2017). Sidonie is a sessional academic and is currently the course convenor for one subject, which means she is only working two days a week. She tells me:

I know for a fact that I am only employed because my university has put a quota on how many hours the full-time staff are meant to work, and that my male, associate professor who is in charge of the course has too many hours. But I know that he has had to fight to get me to be the lecture-in-charge of the course while he went on long service leave. I don't know who they thought was going to lecture the course while he was away? I think they thought he wasn't going to take his leave during semester time, but he was adamant, which was a bit controversial.

Sidonie needs her supervisor's approval, support, and ultimately, sign-off to secure future teaching work. The lack of cohesive and collective criticism of neoliberal managerialist practices is complicated by the individualisation of academic work and maintenance of an academic hierarchy despite the significant fracturing of academic labour. Here Tanya Fitzgerald (2014a, p. 211-212) explains the institutional hierarchy:

Recruitment, contracts, workload and the allocation of resources have been formalised through induction and performance management processes in which academic labour is appointed and assessed differentially according to hierarchical position (associate lecturer to professor). These processes legitimate the university as an incentivising institution that can prescribe how work should be done and develop the rules (policies and procedures) that are designed to induce compliant behaviours if individuals are to access rewards such as promotion.

Precariousness is not merely an unintended consequence of a neoliberal agenda; it is a discursive and operant practice, an intentional product of neoliberalism, and one which is markedly gendered.

Despite research being the coveted academic activity, teaching and teaching-related activities 'represent the bottom line in a sector that derives more than half of its income from student fees via commonwealth grants' (Papadopoulos 2017, p. 515; Department of Education and Training, 2014). Teaching has its own distinct temporal rhythms and activities which includes the preparation of lectures, timetabling tutorials and marking assignments. Sidonie professes:

Often you don't get a tea break or a lunch break. I started teaching at 8 and finished at 2 but because the classrooms were all across campus I was ping-ponging all across the campus and only ten minutes to get from one class to the other, and there's always students at the end of class who want to talk to you, which makes things a bit pressing. I had an hour break, but really that was cut down to half an hour when you think of the set up and pack up time of each of the

classrooms, and that was also my office consult hour time where students could come and talk to me and particularly around the exam and assignment time I had a student see me so I didn't actually get a break that day. Thank goodness for water bottles. Sometimes I think the timetabling leaves something to be desired.

Sidonie, Lucy, and Hazel are all passionate lecturers. They care for their students' education and welfare. It is:

with open hands [she] gives herself– pleasure, happiness, increased value, enhanced self-image. But she doesn't try to “recover her expenses.” She is not able to return herself, never settling down, pouring out, going everywhere to the other. She does not flee extremes; she is not the being-of-the-end (the goal), but she is how-far-being-reaches. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 44)

These women fair the tumultuous weather of the precariat landscape, despite being constrained and restricted by neoliberal constructs of time. In these precarious positions, doctoral students, postdocs, and sessionals are charged with delivering mass undergraduate programmes often with little official training or support. Moreover, the pay in these positions frequently only rewards ‘contact hours’, meaning that preparation, marking and pastoral care of students are not remunerated. Sidonie points out:

When its two o'clock and you've finished for the day but a student is talking to you as you are walking down to your car, and you aren't getting paid are you really professionally meant to say to the student, “sorry I can't talk to you, I'm not getting paid”. No, it doesn't work like that.

Even if consultation time is factored in to marking, tutoring and class preparation rates, this does not necessarily translate to the amount of communication students expect outside of class time, either in person or through email (Gregg 2011 p. 59). In their dedication to students, all the women I interviewed operated according to a set of values that highlight their commitment to students' education and wellbeing. In contrast to the university's monetary values. Sidonie adds:

You are supposed to respond to students emails within forty-eight hours but when you are only paid for your face-to-face, prep time, delivery of lectures and tutorials, you are not paid for all the hours you spend on email to students. There is no idea that you may not be working on those days, if a student writes to you, you are expected to respond, especially when you are lecturer-in-charge.

These are the conditions of the gendered academic precariat. Women entrapped in insecure, low paid, and highly demanding roles, many casualised academics are 'on the front line' in classrooms attempting to meet the competing demands of students and institutions (Natanel 2017). Much of academics' time, as Sidonie reiterates:

is spent doing teacher preparation and dealing with admin, and meetings, that even the people who are allotted research time, do not have the time to do the research. That's the irony, they want you to do the research, but they don't give you the time to do it.

Academics are being asked to do more with less; to use their own personal time and money for attending conferences and publishing research to remain competitive in the neoliberal environment.

Got Milk

Leave her, let her go. Don't be the overbearing mother. You're more than that. Just walk away and don't look back. She wails at your immanent departure. Don't let her see your tears. Her screams make your body surge with milky tears. You love her so much that every step you take as you leave the creche is excruciating. This is the moment you put your career first. This is one day you'll never forget. Go make something of it. Easier said than done when your day is frequently broken up with pumping breast milk in a supply cupboard. How considerate of your department to offer such a comfortable space for you to do this important and loving work in. You plug in your portable breast pump.

Chug, chug, chug, pause. Chug, chug, chug, pause.

The back of your chair is pushed up against a shelf. You put your feet up on a box of out of date promotional flyers. A group of young women graduates, all white, long haired, pretty, all smiling widely up at you from the flyer. The image represents the 'typical' student and the university itself (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 80). This was you five years ago. On the inverse of the leaflet is an image of a white man talking to a white woman over a table. 'He is talking (shown by his gesticulating hand gesture), she is listening. He is a bit older, in shirt and tie. She is young, with a brown bob, wearing glasses, and is smiling at him' (Leathwood & Read 2009, p. 79). This is you now. Not right now. Right now you are in storeroom, remember.

Chug, chug, chug, pause. Chug, chug, chug, pause.

The room is small and dark. The fluorescent lights make it harder to produce milk. You swipe through photos of your darling little one on your iPhone to increase the flow.

Chug, chug, chug, pause. Chug, chug, chug, pause.

The pressure to be productive in the windows of time when you aren't stuck in this closet is a battle. Your heart pangs with guilty feelings. You certainly feel the 'time-debt' (Hochschild 2001). The more attached you become to your work, with its deadlines and cycles, the more you are forced to accommodate these pressures of work and weave them into your complex personal schedule (Hochschild 2001 p. 45).

Chug, chug, chug, pause. Chug, chug, chug, pause.

'I don't understand? You *knew* we'd run out of milk. I don't understand why you couldn't have just gone out and got some more? Why is this somehow my responsibility?' A brusque telephone conversation is taking place right outside your door.

Chug, chug, chug, pause. Chug, chug, chug, pause.

Little does this woman arguing with her spouse know that you are hidden away waging your own milk war at work.

Work-life Time-debt

'Women's time' and women's work in the private sphere has historically been directed towards the care of others and as a means of supporting and sustaining the public sphere and consumerist production through unpaid labour (Folbre 2006; Federici 2012; Jaggar 2013). The body politic of the gendered organisation requires representational aspects of maternity, of the maternal body, whether or not women are mothers (Fotaki 2013, p. 1257), 'but paradoxically denies that dependence both through the homologation of the feminine into the masculine' via a denial of the female and her reproductive capacities (Phillips 2014, p. 448). Women's bodies and their visible reproductive abilities – such as

pregnancy and breast-feeding are considered suspect; as inauthentic against the construct of the 'ideal' subject. This relational notion of 'women's time' or social reproduction is distinguished from the masculine domain of creativity, innovation, and invention, valorised production and productivity.

The managerialism of the neoliberal university remakes and reinforces academic subjectivities to serve institutional productivity in a way that entrenches the hierarchical valuation of 'women's time'. For Shahjahan (2014, p. 3), these neoliberal logics are 'hyper extensions of colonial time' that have been used to 'sort individuals into polarized signifiers such as intelligent/slow, lazy/industrious, saved/unsaved, believer/heathen, developed/undeveloped, and civilized/primitive.' Indeed, women and academics of colour especially are overburdened by service to ensure 'diversity' (Pyke 2013), even as this work is devalued (Mountz et al. 2015, p. 1242). The increasing experience of feeling time pressured and harried is not unique to academics. In her work, *Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (1997), Hochschild argues that to understand changing experiences of time, we need to understand the relationship between home and work, and the cultural reversal of work and home. She asks why work always wins out over family life, even in companies and organisations with strong work-life balance policies.

Work-life balance is really only something that arrives in our vocabulary when women enter full-time employment (Baxter & Chesters 2011), or when work is something that needs to be mitigated by private life, and so it is crucial that we reframe the way life and career intersections are conceptualised (Bagihole & White 2013, p. 13). Return to work or career re-entry policies are designed to facilitate a smooth transition for those returning to

work after a period of parental leave. At a glance, university policies generally outline that staff members are entitled to return to their substantive position, or an agreed part-time position, or even an agreed alternative position. While a request for part-time hours cannot be ‘unreasonably’ refused and that your previous ‘substantive’ position must still be there for you upon your return to work, the fact is that the re-entry is still conditional, and based on a mutual understanding, places individual responsibility on the staff member to ‘choose’ and ‘decide’ to work full-time or part-time. Spurling (2015) argues that it is not only the quantities of overall work, but the qualities of time made through everyday work, which are important in academics’ experiences of time.

Those who are well-paid and enjoy their work are less likely to want to ‘balance’ their work-life loads, making it more difficult for other employees. These higher ranked staff set a precedence. Although, working women’s desire to be productive certainly marks them as contenders for the ideal employee under neoliberal capitalism (Gregg 2011; see also McRobbie 2009). Organisational work-life balance policies and flexible work arrangements position mothers as grateful to be offered work (Gregg 2011, p. 51). Hazel is sceptical of the Trojan horse that is work-life balance:

When you get to those full-time positions— I don’t know if I want to get into a full-time role in a university because the volume of work— I’m not interested in living a life full of a stress. I’m interested in having some sort of balance and I’m not sure that universities provide that. Or perhaps if I had a wife they would provide that for me. But that lack of balance seems very acute for me.

While women's work and participation in public life has changed, domestic lives have not so much. Here Hazel is referring to Annabel Crabb's (2014) popular book *The Wife Drought: Why Women Need Wives, and Men Need Lives*, which explores the contemporary work-and-family debate in Australia and the reality that having a spouse who undertakes the majority of domestic labour is an economic asset in the workplace. Sidonie's own thoughts on working hours reflect that of Hazel's when she says that:

part-time work never seems to mean part-time work to the person you work for and are being paid by. You are expected to go to meetings and do your service and then you've still got your domestic unpaid responsibilities at home. But the expectation always is you are going to continue to be working full-time hours but for part-time pay. Because anything less would be considered unprofessional.

'They say "do the best that you can". Well she always does the best she can.' Sidonie comes to the defence of another woman in her department. *'There's always this expectation that she is going to do all that she did full-time but now she is on less hours and less money.'*

For women, online technologies are a seductive convenience. While Sidonie admits, *'IT support is very good. But they don't do the work for you. You don't hand it over and say, "this is what I want putting on the internet"'*. Gregg (2011) observes that the mainstream depiction of women effortlessly attaining work-life balance through mobile devices is misleading. As Sidonie points out:

I have a female colleague, full-time staff member. It took her ten hours to research and write and produce— because you have to do all your PowerPoints and podcasting yourself with no technical support or help, all yourself- It took her ten hours to produce a one-hour lecture.'

At her university they are very good at providing staff with training and there is an assumption that academics know how to use new digital teaching technologies and that the support on offer and the time it takes to produce an online course or record an online lecture is incongruent with the time it takes to spend using the end product. Gregg found that despite imagining that the confluence of technological advancements and feminism might result in new gendered domestic divisions of labour, 'by far the most common experience was the multi-tasking, mid-rank, anxious working mother whose commitment to work and home pushed every day to the limit' (Gregg 2011, p. 53-54). Sidonie reiterates:

It took her ten hours to research it, write it, podcast it, put a PowerPoint online, embed it in her online course site, as well as all her regular teaching prep and face-to-face teaching. Where does she get time to do research?

The ability to check and send emails on your mobile phone or iPad, grade assignments on your laptop while sitting on the couch, catch up on writing while your child sleeps in the car; working from home 'creates a heightened sensitivity to the number of productive hours available in any given day' and home space is thus assessed in terms of efficiency and potential productivity (Gregg 2011, p. 54). Home-based work is framed in policy as something that may assist staff who have conflicting personal and professional

schedules but for those with caring responsibilities, it is not a substitute for dependent care.

Andrea also remarks on the problematic aspects of the ‘presence bleed’ where work time and location begin to flow over into personal life (Gregg 2011). It is very difficult to sustain a high level of productivity at all times at work as well as at home. Andrea tells me:

You know, you can't just go home and write and stuff. So then finding a way to actually do research and teaching at the same time within work hours is something I need to work towards in my career.

Andrea's perseverance and drive to create more time for her research aligns with Acker and Armenti's (2004) discussion of ‘sleeplessness in academia’; that for young female academics with children, time is essentially broken down into shifts, ‘squeezing’ additional hours of academic research and writing after the children are asleep and into the ‘night shift’ as a means of staying competitive and a-pace with colleagues.

Flexibility and the Cost of ‘Freedom’

Lucy is part of the academic precariat; moving from contract to contract for both teaching and research work. She angrily tells me that *‘flexibility is only flexible for universities. Not for us. We have to be there every day for our students. We're committed workers and universities treat us like we are disposable.’* However, Hazel admits that initially the flexibility of higher education was an appealing aspect of an academic career:

It is more flexible than most work, I mean it is much more flexible than a lot of jobs because you don't have to be in an office nine to five. But it is inflexible in the sense that, you know if I'm teaching a class I'm teaching that class whether I'm sick or not. If I've got a migraine or I've got a cold, I'm teaching that class.

This is where some form of job security— even a six-month research contract— and notions of work-life balance may appear attractive to women, particularly those with caring responsibilities. It may also appear to benefit women who feel that they are unable to challenge their spouses over divisions of household labour without risking their relationship but can ‘rely on legislation to ensure equity in the office’ (Gregg 2011, p. 5). However, this legislation is taken up and enacted in highly gendered ways.

The gendered hierarchy of work and responsibilities is very obvious in Hazel’s faculty. Academic women take on the majority of teaching, and student placement administration. This is because while her faculty is seen to be supportive of academics with caring commitments:

to do the research you need to be doing that outside of your forty hours a week and a lot of those women don't because they have families.

In an effort to reduce academics’ workloads, do we expect professional staff to take on more of the administrative tasks found in academics’ workloads? Yvonne acknowledges that in her department, and under her leadership, professional staff are incredibly valuable:

we work fairly in a kind of connected way with our professional staff. They work incredibly hard. I think it is true that everything would fall over if they weren't around. Yeah, but they're an active part of those conversations too.

When we try then, and adjust notions of academic time, who takes on the bulk of the shifted labour? Sidonie was conscious that her sessional contract was a result of a continuing academic's push to take long service leave during the semester. While this is an example of academic precarity that has a detrimental long-term effect on Sidonie and many other academics who are dependent on short-term contracts; it is also an example of permanent academics pushing back against exploited workloads and the restrictions of neoliberal time. Yvonne tells me:

We do actively do that at the beginning of every year. Usually that's the thing we're having to do, we're having to take work off people to try and make it reasonable.

Andrea is a recipient of a similar reallocation of tasks and responsibilities. When I met with her she was not doing any teaching. Although she reminds me that:

Of course, there's still heaps of admin and I'm actually still doing some other stuff, which means it won't just be this free for all of research time. But it makes a huge difference. It's exactly what I need right now because I've been - the last few years - well, five years, six years have been just parenting and teaching and designing new courses and doing massive teaching loads.

Recent research shows that a supportive work environment makes people less susceptible to the most dangerous, negative effects of overwork (Bergland 2018; Mountz et al. 2015). However, Andrea acknowledges that despite the adjustment to her workload, which enables her to focus on her research, there remains institutional pressure to increase productivity, outputs, and secure funding. Moreover, such initiatives to better balance workloads are often implemented by those in mid-level management and leadership positions, on case-by-case basis. Andrea believes that flexible workloads can be easily taken away from academics. Andrea suspects that *'the school will crack down'* on individual flexible work arrangements. However, her sense is also that *'if we do start publishing more because of it, that they might actually go "okay"'*. For such initiatives to be become normalised there must be a measurable increase productivity, usually in the form of publications.

Andrea raises another issue, that of probation periods, which impact work-life and workload balance and job security (see also Black 2016). In her current position as an ongoing level B lecturer, Andrea is thrilled to have passed her one-year probation.

Whereas at her previous university she was on a three-year probation:

I never got off that. They still had to make me redundant because I wasn't being let go for underperformance. I was stuck. It was just this endless probation, it was crazy. But here, it was one year. I've gotten through that, so that's good.

Andrea tells me that one of the best things to come out of her new position was that *'I've already been given a leadership position to manage a program.'* While the additional leadership responsibilities put more pressure on already busy workloads, Andrea confides

that she is enjoying the opportunity. She was somewhat surprised about the appointment. Until she realised that senior academics in research-focused positions '*didn't want those kinds of roles because they take up so much time. So that's why they often get handed to the newbies.*' Instead of seeing this as contributing to the maintenance of an academic precariat or gendered organisational hierarchy, Andrea sees this as an advantage.

the great thing is I actually get paid at level C to do that. So, it felt like a real promotion. I get to go to higher level meetings and make decisions and manage that stuff. It is time consuming though, especially with all the student emails and meetings about the program management.

Even if it is 'time consuming' it offers Andrea a level of freedom that comes with a leadership position.

having that control over something and that sense of leadership and respect so that other people around the university get to know who I am and see me as a kind of - not just a bottom rung kind of person. So, I like that level of responsibility.

There can be freedom in flexibility, but embodying such elasticity is also highly constraining (Davies & Petersen 2005, p. 351). There is a constant demand for productivity and availability and yet academic women continue to push themselves at the same time as they call for change.

Working Remotely

'And what about the freedom to be flexible and work at home?' Sidonie postulates rhetorically. Her university is moving towards a more remote academic workforce with teaching preparations, marking, and research being conducted from home. Sidonie weighs up the benefits of such a move:

This obviously has good and bad sides to it. Great for flexibility, especially if you need to mind children at home. Outside of your face-to-face contact with students it doesn't matter where you mark papers. You do not have an office. It can be good in some respects because you can be flexible outside of delivering a lecture or tutorial, because outside those hours you could pick up your children, do your shopping, there's flexibility that goes with that.

Sidonie finds that the flexibility of working remotely certainly has its advantages, but while *'this flexibility might suit school drop-offs and pick-ups and being at home during school holidays, it is not so good for collegiate environment, and mentoring.'* She adds:

I would say there is a de-professionalisation that goes with it because there is no chatting in the tea room, or in the corridor, no informal talking with colleagues because you are not there.

The 'work from home' policy is not a uniquely female issue. Male sessional academics are also impacted by this, but this new policy has a gendered impact. Women sessionals often do not have the financial support to go to conferences, to put their children into alternative care arrangements. Moreover, in Australia all workers suffer very much from

the prevailing social attitude that you must be *seen* to be working. Even though academic work can be understood as an isolated and individual labour, being present on campus can be beneficial in terms of work and leadership opportunities (see also Chapter Five).

Unless you are known to have a grant, be on fieldwork, or overseas giving keynotes and conferencing, there is still largely an expectation that you must be physically present on campus and available to students and staff. Unless you are an academic superstar, you need to be present to do the bulk of the institutional grunt work (Smyth 2017). Women's careers are stunted by official and unofficial home policies. When working from home, what do opportunities for collaboration, for professional development, for mentorship look like? While Marike van den Brink and Yvonne Benschop (2014) debunk the gendered myth around mentorship and careers, academic women's absence from campus life contributes to the neoliberal fallacy of the ideal academic as male.

It also costs money to fund your own home office and not have as much technical support from the university. I talk about this with Sidonie and Lucy. Tax returns only cover expenses such as books, stationary, and IT, printer, scanner, ink cartridge, if you earn over a certain amount per annum. This is where sessional and contract staff may further suffer. At her institution, Sidonie tells me that her institution no longer asks students to purchase course materials, which is in line with the neoliberal commodification of education where students are repositioned as customers paying for a service: '*these days you don't ask your students to go out and buy all these different books*'. Instead, course convenors and tutors are expected to purchase course text books, readers, and anthologies. '*I am not given a copy of that anthology. I am expected to buy that myself.*' This is further compounded when teaching four or five courses a semester, and when

these anthologies are continually being updated with new works. This is not a new issue, but Sidonie admits that she ‘*was a bit surprised*’ when she found out that it wasn’t a requirement that students obtain copies and that the only way she was going to get a copy of these core texts to teach these students with was to buy them herself.

Isolation

Sidonie talks about how it was much more stressful juggling family life and work at the research-intensive university where she previously worked than at a teaching-focused institution where she works now. She felt that she couldn’t talk about any of the issues affecting her (and presumably others couldn’t either):

The one thing I have noticed between the two different institutions, one where I did research work and my current institution where I am teaching, is in the first institution if you were heterosexual, married woman and had children you were outed. You could not talk about your partner or your children. You were snubbed. And I am talking about being snubbed by the other women in the department. But if you were gay and had a child that child was accepted in the department, that child was fussed over. There were a lot of single females, not all of them gay, but there, single, un-married females were predominant amongst the staff, then married heterosexual men with children, and queer men and women - single and in relationships. In a sense, if you were a woman, heterosexual and with children you couldn’t talk about it. You couldn’t talk about your children or personal life.

Isolation can be an effect of poor support policies. Sidonie’s frustration is directed at other members of the faculty rather than at the structures that underpin the faculty itself.

What might be considered an anti-queer sentiment is perhaps rather an example of the consequences of a neoliberalised work culture that continues to privilege the ideal academic as someone unencumbered by family responsibilities. What Sidonie highlights is the way some forms of diversity are celebrated while others are not. Indeed, under the guise of ‘fuss’ and ‘acceptance’ queer parents may also feel isolated in the way that they stand in as a tokenistic representation of ‘queerness’ and ‘diversity’. Moreover, because of the discourse of diversity, queer parents may also struggle to voice their experiences and lack of support (Taylor 2018). Sidonie contrasts this experience with working at her current university department where:

there are lots of people with children who talk about it, and that helps to lift the pressure. To be able to talk about having to juggle family life and work, and life with a partner and children. It actually helps to de-stress. Especially when the school holidays this year didn't align with the university breaks. So, I found that I had a lot of lectures and tutorials where the students were bringing their children into the lectures and tutorials. You know, they couldn't afford childcare, and of course staff members had their own difficulties having children at home, but you see, that was something we could talk about. Whereas you couldn't talk about that at the other institution. Because you weren't actually allowed to talk about your family life or your children at all.

The ideal academic remains the ideal. Unless you represent diversity, in which case the senior leaders in -Sidonie's department paraded them on display as symbols of inclusion. When according to Sidonie, the environment was highly competitive with a toxic culture of bullying:

I once made the mistake of saying to a female academic there - who moved on to a university overseas in fact, because she couldn't get promoted to associate professor since they were promoting men before women. One woman was three years off retirement and despite all her outputs in terms of books and journal articles and having taught at the university for over twenty-five years, they only made her an associate professor two years before she formally retired, because they were so slow on promoting women. But this other woman who was ambitious and single ended up going to London. I once made the mistake of telling her I'd got children. And she said, "oh no, no, no, I couldn't think of anything worse!" So you couldn't destress and share your stresses of juggling work and family life because at that university department you just weren't allowed to talk about it.

Fitting into the academic culture '*It's difficult; it is difficult*', Sidonie tells me. Although she considers her current university where they talk openly about the struggles in work and family life and finding 'balance' to be a more supportive work environment.

For me, it is far better. In fact, there was a job vacancy going that I was well qualified for at the other university, but I would just not want to work there. I had all the qualifications, the research, the published papers, the book chapters, you name it, experience, my subject area, but with all the politics I would not want to teach there. It's too toxic. I'm happier where I am, even though I am a sessional, they are accepting of me, as well as me the teacher. Whereas at the other university you almost have to pretend to be someone else. They don't want to know about you the person.

For Andrea, now back at work after the birth of her second child she individualises what is fundamentally a structural issue with ‘work-life balance’:

what I really need now is to get back into the research and then once I’ve done that for six months, I think I’ll be able to merge the two better. Because that’s really the trickiest part, especially when you’ve got a family and kids which take a lot of your home time.

Academics most often internalise the justification of their work intensity; that their work is exceptional in some way. Or it’s excused as, ‘it’s just how academics work’. Rather than merely look at the organisation of home-life or the boundaries between work and personal life balance, we must interrogate the organisation of work itself (Spurling 2015; Hochschild 1997). Spurling (2015, p. 371) importantly, points out that there is an assumption that experiences of time are homogenous, and that emphasis is placed on quantitative, measurable dimensions of time, rather than its qualitative characteristics. Never-ending work days, and for those on hourly contract positions, it means not being compensated financially for the extra time it takes to complete certain tasks. Innovative resourcefulness is a response to a lack of flexibility (Gregg 2011, p.54).

‘Absolute closest thing I’ve met to a workplace sociopath. It was absolutely the pits. Be afraid, there’s reason to it’ Karen warns me. This workplace sociopath was Karen’s manager and she believed that she was being deliberately overworked. Having a number of disabilities should have precluded Karen from having to undertake certain work tasks, but Karen felt that her manager deliberately targeted her, isolating her from her peers:

Just to give you an example of how I was thwarted, I was coordinating two Dip Ed courses that had 200 and 150 students. I was coordinating the Masters by Research and Masters by Coursework programs, which had about 400 students. I was coordinating - I was running the - they call it capstone - the core subject in three new undergraduate degrees. I was coordinating that with three new staff members who had never taught in a university before. And I had twelve PhD students, and I was supposed to do - and I was trying to do research and write. It was we'll keep adding and see if we can kill her. It was a deliberate strategy. Plus, because I've got some disabilities, they were targeted by this particular woman. I wouldn't crack.

Sometimes we need to 'pass as willing in order to be willful' (Ahmed 2014, p. 152).

'Willful' obedience can also be a form of disobedience in disguise, an unwilling obedience. Ahmed argues that 'Subjects might obey a command but do so grudgingly or reluctantly and enact with or through the compartment of their body a withdrawal from the right of the command even as they complete it' (2014, p. 140). Even carrying out a task begrudgingly with a smile and a laugh can be 'willful'. Ahmed proposes that:

'Perhaps when obedience is performed willfully, disobedience becomes the end' (2014, p. 141).

Would not crack. It was just unbelievably horrific and nobody else had it [the workload and bullying]. But people have that kind of power. That's why I say futile. When you leave middle management that are not good at anything except

power, they ruin people's lives. Or they have the potential to. She did. It's founded on nothing and then the university gets in behind and backs them.

Slowing Down

Amidst the chaos of intensified work, compressed timeframes, and precarious working conditions, many academics are seeking to 'slow—things—down' (Mountz et al. 2015). This is what has been called the slow scholarship movement. Slow scholarship is that which is thoughtful, reflective, and a response to hastily produced research driven by metrics and rankings. Slowing down the pace of production represents both a commitment to good scholarship and a feminist politics of resistance to the accelerated timelines of the neoliberal university. Karen observes a marked absence of both:

Awful women masquerading as feminists is my main obstacle, and I've met an awful lot of them. It's truly disgusting. And anti-intellectualism in the university is the second one, and poor systems and processes. Lack of transparency and accountability, and the neoliberal pervading every aspect of university life has been - just takes all the - it's like I see - I've got an image in my head of neoliberalism being like a dementor out of Harry Potter. Sucking the life out of everything that is good.

Academics involved in the nascent movement on slow scholarship take a more active, agentic role to the relationship between time and subjectivity (Henderson 2018, p. 42). Slow scholarship is not just about time, but about power and inequality. It is not only about improving individuals' quality of work life but about re-making the university (O'Neill 2014; Martell 2014; McCabe 2012). Alison Mountz, Anne Bonds, Becky

Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu, Risa Whitson, Roberta Hawkins, Trina Hamilton, and Winifred Curran in their ‘collectively written’ article ‘For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University’ (2015) inject a feminist ethics of care (Lorde 1988; Ahmed 2014) into the notion of slow scholarship in a collaborative effort to resist the isolating effects and pressures within the neoliberal academy, ‘finding ways to exist in a world that is diminishing’ (Ahmed 2014, n.p.). Their politics foregrounds ‘collective action and the contention that good scholarship requires time to think, write, read, research, analyze, edit, organize, and resist the growing administrative and professional demands that disrupt these crucial processes of intellectual growth and personal freedom’ (Mountz et al. 2015, p. 1236).

Such an imagining of slow scholarship could just be another mirage of the ‘academic goodlife’. Vostal (2016) considers how slow scholarship is often confused as a nostalgic yearning for a lost moment in the transformation of social, economic and political life. Although Vostal also argues for a reclamation of academic time, his assertion is for increased scholarly autonomy, while Mountz et al. (2015) assert a caring model that puts further emphasis on claiming time for ourselves in order to build shared time into everyday life. My concern is that the ethos of slow scholarship; that ‘good’ scholarship requires time to think and write bears a striking resemblance to Berlant’s ‘cruel optimism’. ‘Cruel optimism’ is about living within crisis. It is about destabilising our collective construct of ‘the good life’. In the neoliberal university, academics are living within a crisis of intense neoliberalisation of their scholarly labour. We witness the impact and implications of such pressures on academics and the ways in which academics have become exhausted, harried, and worn out (Acker & Armenti 2004; Taylor & Lahad

2018; Thwaites & Pressland 2017). Academics are awakening to the realisation that this way of working can no longer sustain their fantasies of the good life. Only by recognising and understanding the various impasses academics face can we strive to create alternative conditions for living (Berlant 2011, p. 10).

Of course, what the slow scholarship collective (Mountz et al. 2015) is calling for is a feminist intervention into academic or institutional life. As feminists with a commitment to social justice, they do not have a nostalgia for a university that excludes based on gender, race, sexuality and class. Instead, they emphasise that slow scholarship is a direct affront to neoliberal metrics and efficiencies. Their aim is more than simply making time for themselves and their own scholarship, but about collective action that addresses the conditions that underpin knowledge production. Writing with/in *l'écriture féminine* offers slow scholars another means of resistance. As if following Cixous advice:

Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me—the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live— that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who?—a feminine one, a masculine one, some?— several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars... for men this permeability, this non-exclusion is a threat, something intolerable. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 42)

L'écriture féminine allows us to reflect and write in and to the present 'crisis' (Berlant 2011), subverting gendered notions of academic scholarship and time. Slow scholarship has at its core a feminist ethics of self-care. It is about 'cultivating space to care for

ourselves, our colleagues, and our students is, in fact, a political activity when we are situated in institutions that devalue and militate against such relations and practices' (Mountz et al. 2015, p. 1239). It is about acting with-in, against and beyond the university.

Making Time

Alice tells me that she knows plenty of '*women in leadership positions who would describe themselves as feminist- which is fair enough - but it's hard to say what exactly about their behaviour is feminist.*' Women's performativities as academics are both influenced by time and constituting time itself. How then, do women carve out time (and space) for resistance and change? Yvonne often spoke in the plural 'we' when talking about her feminist leadership practices. When we spoke, she always acknowledged the contribution and influence of other feminist colleagues (both academic and professional) with whom she worked. This is one way of making time for women; making heard their contributions, talents, experiences, and voices. Joan tells me that she finds leadership to be '*deeply satisfying*' when you bring people together and equip others with the capabilities to lead, implement new projects, and create change in their institutions. And she accredits allowing people to '*pave their way*' and bringing people together to work collaboratively as her '*impact*', her career legacy as a university leader. She knows that people wouldn't be satisfied with that because some people would want to reap the rewards of that achievement for themselves. Another way that Yvonne's leadership practice disrupts notions of time is the way her actions intervene in neoliberal constructions of time creating and shaping something different:

'It's really about trying to make sure, and this is the thing that I think is important—that we have a reasonable set of standards and practices, and that we apply them as equitably as we can. So it's really—if we're talking about teaching activity, research activity, if we're talking about all of those sorts of things...' the landline telephone on her desk begins to ring. This is her time that she has given me, and I ask her if she'd like to take the call. I turn off my tape recorder. I want to give her privacy but there is nowhere really for me to go. As I sit there in the corner of her office, I try my best to blend into the white pine table and chairs. Her daughter called. I can't remember what their brief conversation was about, although Yvonne did tell me. Maybe it was an update on how her exams had gone that morning, but I do remember that it was important that she did pick up this call. That, it is important, where possible to prioritise personal life. We talk momentarily about this; what I understood as this 'willful' feminist action. About her always making herself available to her children. Yvonne picks up our discussion where she left off. *'Everyday feminist practice is about really making sure that we understand what is going on. So, we really try and keep an eye on workloads, on distribution of labour, on how teaching is managed. We try and communicate really clearly about what the expectations are and congratulate and acknowledge when those are being met or being exceeded, which they often are.'*

This pause in our interview was so brief and seemingly insignificant that I had almost forgotten about it, and yet now reflecting back this intermission is poised with significance. 'Willfulness' can be ordinary stuff. It can be world creating (Ahmed 2014, p. 169). *'What is the point?'* For Hazel there is no other way to be in the academy than as a 'willful' subject.

Similarly, Hazel also '*made a conscious decision as a parent, as a mother*' that she would not attend meetings on days she did not work, not least because she wasn't being paid, but because she would have to arrange childcare in order to attend. '*I'm like, you can – but you'll just have to wait. You'll have to wait for me to see if I can organise that before I say yes.*' Hazel firmly believes in:

deliberately letting people know that I have children and if it's like, oh I'll have to arrange childcare for that, I let them know. I make sure that that presence is known. I think it's important because of these inequalities that people know, hey there's a life outside of work and it might impact on this space. But that's a really conscious decision.

Hazel recognises that in this action she is taking a personal and professional risk. The risk of backlash, that she be reduced to her maternal role. But she believes that '*the more you say it, the more it becomes the norm*' and changes workplace cultures. Too many organisations look to women to speak up and to change the status quo while men continue to hold positions of power. Indeed, it is an oversimplification to merge these notions of motherhood with leadership. Of course, motherhood may be one of the many subjectivities academic women hold, but as Alice observes, doing leadership differently is about much more:

the woman who is one of my distant managers. She's just, I don't know, she's just one of those people. She's not motherly, but there's something about her, she's visionary. But she's also got an acute sense of people's - you know people who are

working with her and for her. Their - not their needs so much, but you know, a humanity. She's got a sense of humanity and not just a person.

Grace also tells me about an academic whom she looks towards as a leader and mentor.

An academic who gives so much of her time to others:

I always had an idea that people who were successful in academia were inevitably hardened by it. You've kind of got to be tough, you've got to be ambitious and determined. But she doesn't seem to be. Evidently, she's really tough, she's had a really hard time and she's persevered, but she's still really nice and it seems like she's made a choice, to be a generous academic. Generous in terms of time and experience and expertise, I think I really respect that. She has all the time in the world for her students, or anyone who has questions for her. Even though she has no time because she has three kids under five. Yeah, I think in that environment, where everyone's basically a bully, it's really easy to think that the only way you can be successful there is to be a bully. She's still doing research in a vastly different way from everyone else there, which is collaboratively and yeah, she has really strong work relationships with people, and stuff like that. I like that she's just carving out her own way to do things, I think would be particularly hard.

The Course of My Life

The high level of intensity and insecurity in Australian higher education has created a segmented workforce (that is casual and fixed-term academics versus permanent or those academics in continuing positions), and the impact on the career aspirations and expectations of these two workforces are significantly different. In their desire for better

job security, casual academics perform a distinct type of aspirational labour. Brooke Duffy (2016) uses the term ‘aspirational labour’ to describe those who pursue productive activities that hold the promise of social and economic capital. Duffy finds such endeavours to be highly gendered in that the reward system for these aspirants is highly uneven. While a select few may realise their professional goals, this worker ideology obscures problematic constructions of gender and class subjectivities. Duffy’s focus is on creative industries and consumer culture. However, this forward-looking and entrepreneurial enactment of creativity online in the hope of securing a paid job doing what you love, shares resounding similarities with the entrepreneurial academic and their participation in professional development programs and activities.

6:30am, wake up. The sun already glaring through the crack in the curtains. She lets the dogs out for a wee, and then heads to the kitchen to turn on kettle. She takes bird seed out for the lorikeets. She can already hear them squawking in the tree outside. With the kettle boiled, she heads back to the kitchen to pour herself a cup of tea. While she waits for her weak Earl Grey to cool she stirs herself a Metamucil and takes out her thyroid medication from the fridge. She shots the slimy orange-flavoured drink back, trying not to gag, and then takes her cup with her into the home office. The dogs, done with chasing birds pad into the study and curl up under her feet. Sidonie flips open her laptop. As its tiny engine whirls awake she takes stock of the things she has to get done this morning: prepare lecture slides, course readings, respond to student emails (that will no doubt be waiting for her). The melodic chimes of Windows return her attention and she clicks open Microsoft Outlook:

From: On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor

To: Overworked and underpaid sessional

The Resilience Building Series is available to interested staff. The series involves 3 workshops (3 X 3hrs 9:15-12:30): 5 Ways to Wellbeing, Creating Strong Relationships, Cultivating Resilience and Grit. The series aims to help participants understand the neuroscience to managing stress, boosting resilience and developing your strengths. Learn how to work with your brain rather than against it, to consistently feel good and function effectively. Explore how to genuinely connect, create a team culture of giving and help people find the right balance of purpose in their work. Discover how to cultivate a growth mindset, nurture grit and ignite hope so you can accomplish the things that matter most.

Regards,

VC

‘Ohh that sounds good!’ Sidonie thought, *‘I wouldn’t mind going into the city and doing some one-day seminars.’* It would make a nice change from marking assignments in her pyjamas, sweating away in her un-air-conditioned home office in the tropical summer heat that always seems to last ten months of the year. She had visions of meeting other academics. Maybe they would even grab some sushi together during the lunchbreak. Sidonie was inspired by the proactive approach of her Vice-Chancellor emailing her this opportunity. Of course, she knew that it was a generic email, but it was personalised, and she couldn’t help but feel like it was directed at her specifically. A sessional now at her institution for three years, the

personal nature of the email made Sidonie feel like maybe she was finally being recognised, and valued, by her university. She clicked on the link to register her attendance. To her horror, she *found out that they were \$500 each!* Sidonie was mortified. She *wasn't even being paid in the semester break either.* The faint flutter of eagerness, anticipation and sense of worth quickly dissipated. The cheek of it! 'I'll give you resilience building.' She thought. No, she did not want to pay \$1,500 to learn how to manage stress, nurture grit and ignite hope. She wanted a secure contract; one that lasted longer than twelve weeks and paid her during the term breaks.

Institutions are proactive in terms of pushing professionalisation of the work force and linking it to the CV as an object of measuring individuals' academic success. While it may look good on your CV to have completed these workshops and seminars, Sidonie contends:

Yes it would look really good to have completed these seminars and have them on my CV, but the fact is, at \$500 each out of my own pocket and not being paid in the mid-semester break as it is, it disadvantages female sessional staff. Well, all sessional staff really, unless they are already stinking rich, but more so women.

In the contemporary university, 'You are your CV,' Karen tells me. 'It doesn't matter how you get those things on your CV, the fact that they're on there. It's a very individualistic, highly competitive environment'. Giroux (1999) suggests, obsessive careerism is a strong feature of the neoliberalised university. Academics may feel pressured to consider the 'worthwhileness' of an academic activity in terms of what it can do for their individual

careers, and for their CVs (Petersen 2009, p. 419). The *Curriculum Vitae* (CV) is a Latin expression broadly translated as ‘the course of my life’. The common concept behind the CV or resume is to chronologically list a summary of one’s personal experience and skills. The academic CV typically includes information about a person’s education, their academic and managerial professional positions, publications, presentations, grants and awards (Gaughan & Bozeman 2002). This A4 document typed in 12pt font is typically the first medium between applicant and employer.

Today, academics are overwhelmed by the array of seemingly contradictory ideals of academic researcher, teacher, leader, which they must then demonstrate and document. Academics are required to construct and record a life course. Not simply as a means for job and grant applications, or for promotion, but as a means of measuring and evaluating academics’ and institutions’ performance. Organisations attempt to help staff deal with the intensification with a barrage of ‘training courses’ including time management, speed reading, and prioritising goals. These courses require each individual to work on the self in order to better manage proliferating workloads, and in doing so become trapped in various technologies of the self (Gill 2010, p. 236). It is in technology ‘that our “worth” is most harshly surveilled and assessed and we are subject to ever greater scrutiny’ (Gill 2010, p. 238).

Academics Online: Some Self-reflections on Surveillance of the Self

A researcher is following your updates on *ResearchGate*

A researcher followed you back

Briony, people are reading your work

A researcher from your network commented on a project

A researcher requested the full-text of your article:

Briony, an author you cited, published a new Article

An author you cited, published a new Article

An author you cited, published a new Article

A researcher started following your work.

A researcher started following your project:

A researcher requested the full-text of your chapter:

Briony, we've found the full-text for 1 of your publications

14 researchers have already tried to access this publication. Add the full-text to make it readable using our one-click uploader

Add the full-text to make it readable

Add the full-text to make it readable

make it readable

make it readable

Briony, does the journal you published in support self-archiving?

Reminder - You haven't added the full-texts to some of your publications

Briony, you have 1 more citation

An author you cited, uploaded a full-text

An author you cited, published a new Article

An author you cited, published a new Article

An author you cited, published a new Article

Briony, is *this* you?

These are the email subject lines I received in the first week after signing up to the academic social media site *ResearchGate*. Together they read somewhat like a poem about the increasingly monitored academic. At first, I wasn't too bothered by the notifications I received from *ResearchGate*. I would just delete them as they arrived in my inbox. But, after a while, I began to notice that I might get two or three notifications a day. Their appearance was disrupting the organisation of my inbox. The ping of my smart phone alerted me to their presence. Email can cause a heavy burden of stress, and as Gill observes, 'it is a rare academic who does not feel enslaved and oppressed by email' (2014, p. 21), and especially for those who adopt the rigorous 'inbox zero' approach to email management. Instead of deleting them arbitrarily, I decided to save these messages and keep a running tally. In less than two weeks. I had thirteen notifications. It is not surprising then, to find that in default settings, *ResearchGate* may send anywhere between four and ten emails a week, depending on the activity in your network. These daily notifications are somewhat of a mantra to the contemporary academic, serving as (unwanted) electronic provocations towards an overly anxious internal monologue.

Rather than aiding work practices, digital and communication technologies exacerbate the intensification of academic labour. Moreover, our engagement with social media sites such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram* and professional networking platforms, *LinkedIn*, *Academia.edu*, *Mendeley*, and *ResearchGate* further perpetuates dominant ideals around the measurement of academics' performativity and employment. These

sites function as an online curriculum vitae, where users record and upload employment and publication details and achievements. These web platforms can be understood as technologies of time (Gregg 2011) as well as technologies of ‘everyday neoliberalism’ (Mirowski 2013). What is distinctly neoliberal about these sites, such as *ResearchGate*, is how through the architecture and design of the website, the individual experiences their field of knowledge production as a ‘marketplace of ideas’ (Rushforth 2015). Networking sites are quietly forming an integral part of background infrastructures to our everyday research practices and operate discursively to both assist and impair academic labour. Duffy (2016, p. 442) notes that the market is rife with advice on how to secure and create jobs, particularly those that don’t seem like work. This aligns neatly with the neoliberal ideologies that shift risk and responsibility onto the individual and fits well within the mantra of the overworked academic who loves what they do.

Founded in 2008, and ‘built by scientists, for scientists’ the social media site *ResearchGate* has more than twelve million members. Its aim is to connect the world of science and make research ‘open to all’. The site claims that it is ‘accelerating science’ through improving academic networking and promoting online collaboration, however, at what cost? As outlined in Chapter Three, academics are increasingly required to measure every aspect of their working career, putting into numbers their research, teaching, supervisory, and leadership activities. Tracking and measuring your performance using digital tools is an evident trend in contemporary life (Hammarfelt et al. 2016).

ResearchGate and other similar services represent a ‘gamification’ of research (Hammarfelt et al. 2016). *ResearchGate* sends constant reminders to its users regarding their latest achievements. Users are continually encouraged to login, update their profiles,

and compare themselves and their research in relation to other academics. Drawing on features usually associated with online games, such as rewards, rankings and levels, the notion of the gamification of research promotes an understanding of the professional self as a product in competition with others. The quantification and gamification of professional selves can be linked to a neoliberal discourse in which the researcher is a commodity in the 'marketplace of ideas'. This not only drives the publish or perish mantra, but re-commodifies academic publications:

Briony, does the journal you published in support self-archiving? If so, make your research accessible to your peers by uploading the full-text version of this publication to your *ResearchGate* profile.

ResearchGate converts users' data to develop a ratings system. The RG score is based on an algorithm that combines the number of publications, impact factor and user activity. *ResearchGate* users upload their research papers, participate in a question and answering system, and access the *ResearchGate* job board. Researchers are able to create a profile that showcases their publication record and their academic expertise. Other users are then able to follow these profiles and are notified of any updates (Kraker et al. 2015). Members contribute data which, once converted into a score is used by members to measure impact. This is self-quantification and the 'quantified self' (Wolf & Kelly 2007) in action.

The seductive 'efficiencies' of 'one-click' document uploads and chronicling work achievements can also be harmful to our embodied and emotional selves. Technologies of time allow users to connect and network anytime and anywhere, and in our engagement

online we subject ourselves to constant judgement and surveillance. The extensive use of the RG Score in marketing e-mails suggests that it was meant to be a marketing tool that drives more traffic to the site (Kraker et al. 2015). Aside from *ResearchGate* being the very panopticon (Amit 2000) we fear, it works almost invisibly ‘through multiple eyes at every level’ (Davies et al. 2005, p. 344) evaluating our uploaded content, manipulating the impact and value of our outputs. It drives us to internalise its surveillance. The growth of such academic profiling services seems to be unstoppable. Alex Rushforth finds that ‘one of their fascinating features is to promulgate a mode of power that is not directed to us “from above”– no manager or formal audit exercise is coercing researchers into signing-up’ (2015, n.p.). The meaning and purpose of our engagement with these sites is contradictory and nuanced. Tales of achievement on these sites should not obscure the practical realities of aspirational work. A stable permanent job is not an end result of social networking (Gregg 2011, p. 13). Platforms such as *ResearchGate* and *Academia.edu* intensify and reinforce dominant ideas and practices for evaluating research and researchers.

I signed up to *ResearchGate* in a moment of scholarly procrastination and self-doubt. I already have a *LinkedIn* profile and an *Academia.edu* profile where I recorded and uploaded papers. Did I really need another academic social media platform? I very much fit the mould of a female millennial PhD student, brought up on the ‘girls can do anything’ mantra of third-wave feminism; forward-looking, with a carefully coordinated, and entrepreneurial form of online social presence and creative cultural production. By joining *ResearchGate*, I perform Duffy’s (2016) concept of ‘aspirational labour’. In my commitment to *ResearchGate*, I pin my hopes and desires for an academic future on my engagement with this site, producing new forms of academic labour in order to create

new networks, and find jobs and funding, generating rankings metrics in the process. I perform and record social roles through my aspirational consumption. Buying academic books and paying to attend conferences can be understood as the purchasing of luxuries in order to attain elite status (Duffy 2016, p. 446). The entrepreneurial academic and ‘aspirational labourer’ is required to have a baseline level of economic capital (Duffy 2016, p. 448). Aspirants must also have access to the requisite technologies for producing and distributing their content. Namely, regular access to the Internet, personal electronic devices such as smartphones, iPads and personal laptops. These require a steady stream of funding that is often rationalised as an investment. ‘Aspirational labourers’ do purchase literature, update their technology devices and attend conferences in order to mark themselves as creative producers who, Duffy states, will one day be compensated for their talents (2016, p. 446).

Professionalisation also encompasses formal and informal networking opportunities (Duffy 2016, p. 450). You list your conference attendance on *ResearchGate* with only the conferences that you gave a paper at as being the ones that add value to your profile. Participation can be understood as productive socialisation (Wissinger 2007) or ‘compulsory sociality’ (Gill & Pratt 2008; Gregg 2011). This is the type of networking ‘where work and non-work time bleed into one another’ (Duffy 2016, p. 449). Networking online allows you to connect with academics across international boundaries, where physical travel and face-to-face consultation may be economically impractical. However, these sites are also a record and reflection of your ability to undertake other forms of networking, which does require sufficient reserves of time and money in order to afford conference registration fees, airfares, and childcare costs.

Aspirational and critical—even disillusioned—perspectives are not mutually exclusive. All the women I interviewed had a professional social media presence. Although their engagement varied across various platforms and some used sites such as *Twitter* to voice their cynicism, they can all still be considered ‘aspirational labourers’. This is because ‘aspirational labourers’ understand self-branding practices as imperative to their creative (academic) projects as they endeavour to market themselves to (current and potential) audiences and advertisers, while forging a consistent brand identity across social media platforms. Duffy (2016, p. 451) highlights that the gendered dimension to such self-branding is that men typically consume their favourite products while women promote their favourite brands to other women. Who we are connected to and ‘endorsed’ by can have an impact on future job prospects. These sites are also touted as recruitment sites, but the networking and collaborative functions of these sites further supports a ‘shoulder tapping’ culture of *who you know, not what you know*; where academics are offered work through informal networks rather than formal recruitment processes. Such sites can be a valuable resource for people to stay in contact with their professional networks. Findings from a small-scale project on gender bias and *LinkedIn* found that women will have fewer connections than men, although, of their connections women will have more female connections than male, and will have more complete profiles than their counterparts (Peachey 2013).

As outlined in Chapter Three, women in academia are found to publish less, receive less funding, and form fewer collaborations than their male counterparts. By cloaking the commodification of academic labour in the discourse of visibility, *ResearchGate* and *Academia.edu* capitalise on the energies of their female content creators who sustain the commodity circuit. ‘Aspirational labour’ reifies gendered social hierarchies. It reproduces

the structural conditions that result in women's work going unrecognised and unrewarded. Even though 'aspirational labourers' are the producers of content, their work remains inscribed in feminised sites of commodity capitalism (Duffy 2016, p. 454). These concepts reveal how the marketplace rationalises regimes of neoliberal governance that shift risks from central organisations onto individuals.

Individualising discourse of technologies of time produce shame: I'm a fraud, I'm useless, I'm nothing, are of course 'deeply gendered racialized and classed' (Gill 2010, p. 240). Maddie Breeze (2018) argues that 'imposter syndrome' is a public feeling. Boundaries between personal and professional lives have been corroded and it is evident that we are deeply invested and passionately attached to our academic work (Gill 2010, p. 240). Academics' engagement with these social media sites become a medium through which they perform scholarly identities (Kirkup 2010, p. 83). I recall Yvonne calling people like me—those academics who all too frequently check and update their academic social media pages—'twogglers':

I think universities are a bit taken by that. Your bloggers and your tweeters, and who I call 'twogglers', self Googlers. I think there's a sense in which universities have been captured by that. They have been captured by the sorts of productivity that's linked to that kind of stuff, so that's tough. I think it is really tough.

Tweeting, blogging- that is the act of publishing text and multimedia materials online without the intervention of an editor or a webmaster- and sharing content on platforms such as *ResearchGate* becomes a medium through which academics perform scholarly identities (Kirkup 2010, p. 83). It can be understood as affective 'realness' or

‘ordinariness’ that then produces a form of academic capital that can then be measured as ‘outreach’ (Mewburn & Thomson 2013). Duffy proposes that the key features of ‘aspirational labourers’ are their authenticity and ‘realness’, the instrumentality of their affective relationships, and their entrepreneurial brand devotion (2016, p. 447). This authenticity myth is also evident on *ResearchGate* where users interact on the Q&A noticeboard or invite those in their network to comment on a draft chapter or article. For the entrepreneurial academic, the line between bragging and begging is murky (Huws 2006 in Gill 2014). I cannot deny that I feel a strangely aggressive thrill in uploading a new publication to *ResearchGate* and *Academia.edu*. A humble brag to my community of fellow researchers. *ResearchGate* fuels the ego that dwells in every researcher (Martin-Martin et al. 2016). These new technologies of time are lucratively attractive to the ‘entrepreneurial’ academic. In our ‘optimistic attachment’ (Berlant 2011) to them as productive digital tools they may be experienced as desirable, even pleasurable. But this excitement also harbours deep self-loathing and anxiety. Namely, imposter syndrome. These websites capitalise on the intensification of academic labour and the hyper competition amongst academics, which means that these sites then have the tendency to make academics feel insecure and to monetise already under-rewarded academic work. Feelings of isolation that casuals experience in large organisations, such as universities, underscores their experiences with working with technology (Gregg 2011, p. 59).

‘Aspirational labourers’ must build affective relationships with members of their community. Social networking sites build deliberate confusion around work and friendship. Online cultures have the potential to quantify and construct these relationships (Gregg 2011, p. 6). Duffy observes that expressions of community, sociality and affect, are often stereotyped as ‘feminine’ traits, that require the management of feelings or

‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild 2003) and describes ‘aspirational labourers’ as the emotional labourers for the social media age, in that aspirants recognise the instrumental value of their affective relations. These websites teach their users to become ‘entrepreneurs of themselves’, by fragmenting the self and reducing it to the trends of the moment, drawn out of various click-enabled associations such as indicators like the numbers of ‘likes’, ‘friends’, comments, and connections (Mirowski 2013, 92). They also seek to increase their followers and likes and improve rankings; and reflect on approaches to their content, based upon feedback from their online community (Duffy 2016, p. 449).

Universities also increasingly regulate and track academics’ use of *Twitter* and *Facebook*, and *ResearchGate*. In particular, academic institutions also take an interest in academics’ blogging, as this can now be measured in terms of research output as well as service outreach and engagement with the public. As Inger Mewburn and Pat Thomson (2013, p. 1117) observe, academics are persistently urged by universities to blog and expand their research audiences, to create new networks (and new avenues for funding), and to write in a more accessible style. Yet many academics are unaware of the legal ramifications relevant to academic blogging and use of social media at work, particularly in regard to online articulations of dissatisfaction with institutions. Academics must be cognisant that these strategies are monitored and at times reappropriated by institutions. I am referring here to the way women’s blogging can be measured as research productivity by institutions, and how bloggers can be reprimanded by institutions for blogging about their experiences at work.

Conclusion

‘Are you looking for lost Time? But who has had it? who (sic) has lost it?’

(Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 65)

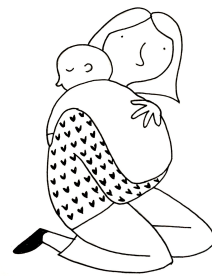
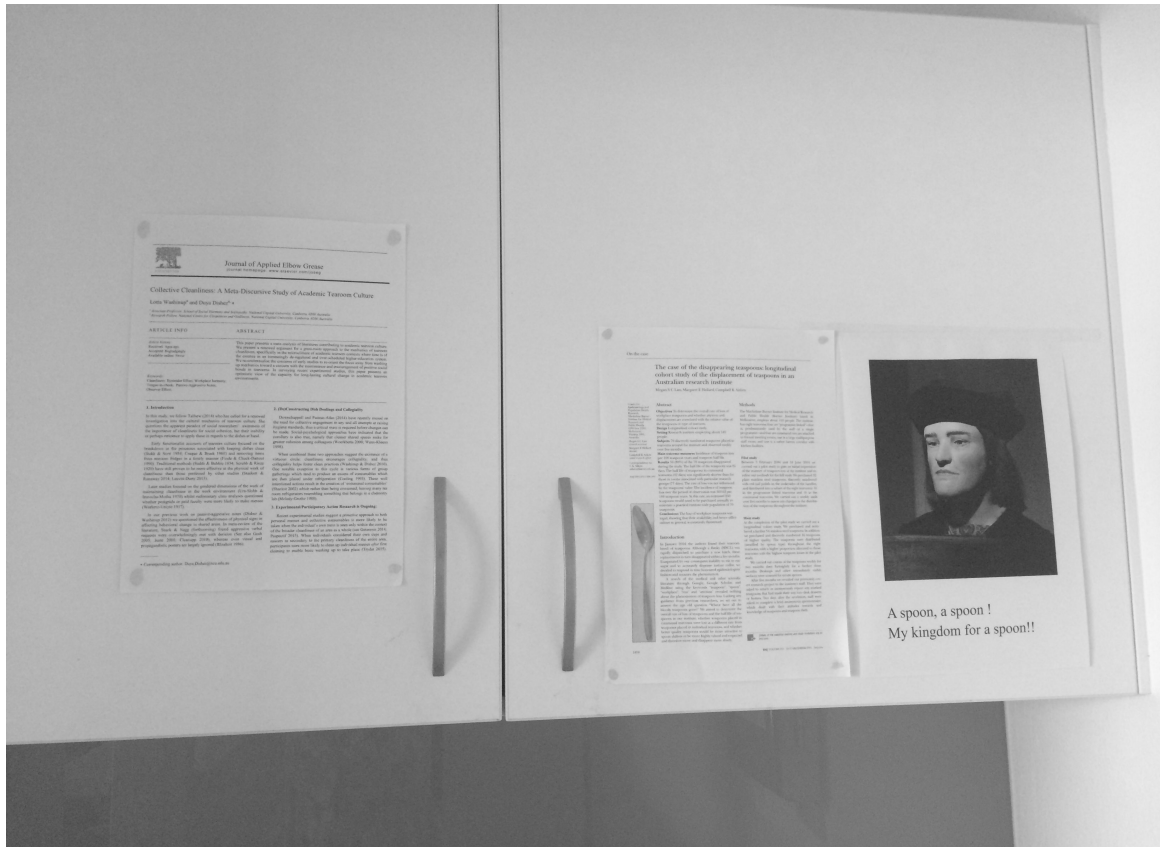
The pleasures of academic work in combination with our ‘cruel optimism’ drives us to work harder, binding us ever more tightly to the neoliberal university regime. Our investment in the academic good life (see Chapter Three) allows us to survive but as Gill (2010) argues, does not enable us to change structures for the betterment of academics’ lives. This chapter has explored the kinds of academic work being encouraged under such neoliberal temporalities, and the increasing role that digital technologies play in the monitoring and control of academics. In the neoliberal university, time has become a commodified product (Sabelis 2002). A lack of resistance is as much a result of precarity and individualising practices of flexibility and work-life balance, as it is that academics are exhausted. Notwithstanding the ‘need to also decide *what* to resist and *how* to approach creating change’ (Gill 2010, p. 241). Gender inequality in the contemporary university operates in and through academic technologies of time. Dominant temporalities of higher education as fast-paced, driven by consumer interests shape participants’ reflections on work-life-career decisions.

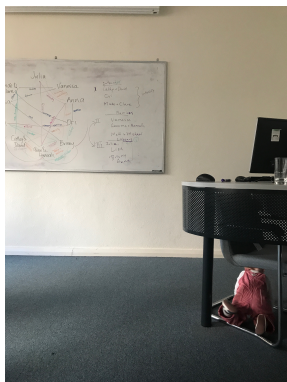
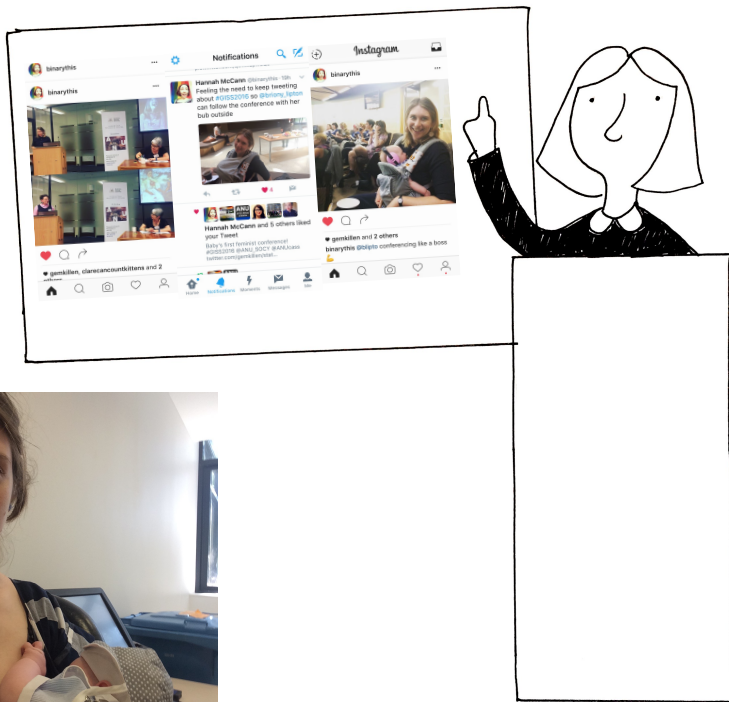
The women I interviewed all expressed that the intensification of academic labour and the rhetoric of flexibility and work-life balance discourses impact upon and shape their academic performativities. What was particularly striking was the way that academic precarity reverberates across casual, contract, and ongoing positions in ways which are gendered, affecting professional relationships. It is not simply that the implementation of new managerialism and audit culture is negatively impacting on academic practice. We

should also be equally concerned with how qualities of time are made in practice, and the effects of contemporary contexts on these processes (Spurling 2015). Interestingly, time pressures are highly individualised and there tends to be little to no emphasis given to making demands on our institutions for a different kind of understanding of time itself (Mountz et al. 2015, p. 1248).

We are told that the Internet and digital technologies provide a host of possibilities for sharing our research, and while institutions and individuals may need to better integrate the use of digital technologies with academic work, we must remain cognisant that technologies of the self, give us an illusionary sense that we are connecting.

ResearchGate and *Academia.edu* replace the simple act of looking at someone's research profile with (self)surveillance. We must be cautious in our attachment to the idea that our self-generated content on *ResearchGate* equates to control over our online academic identities. We are seduced by the promise of these websites and technologies of time; that our aspirational engagement will help us to secure future work and funding. However, for the most part, they limit our agency and commodify our 'aspirational labour' on our behalf.





Chapter Five

Collegiality in the University Organisation: Academic Conferences and Other Inter-corporeal Spaces

I knock on her door. The neon white corridor in the modern refurbished building is empty but I see an expanse of open-plan cubicles ahead. Sue opens the door. ‘*You must be Briony*’, she smiles, and invites me into the narrow shoebox room. I shuffle into her office. Her workspace is pushed up against a wall near the only window in the tight space. I sit down at a chair positioned to the side of her desk. ‘*Would you like a cup of tea?*’ she asks. My nervousness has made me thirsty. For a split second, I weigh up how long our conversation will go for and how long it will take for my tea to cool. What if the meeting finishes and my tea hasn’t cooled enough for me to drink it? Is it impolite to leave an untouched cup of tea? These anxieties run through my mind. This is a cup of reciprocity. ‘*Thank you. That would be lovely*’ I reply. The woman promptly leans down and flicks on her electric kettle, hidden in the corner behind her desk. ‘*Do you take milk?*’ she asks, ‘*because if you do I will need to get some from the tearoom.*’ I shook my head. Neither of us took milk with our tea and so we were saved from having to venture into the communal space.

The kettle in Sue’s office was a revelation to me. During our meeting, Sue was warm and inviting. She was generous with her time and her thoughts. After we exchanged goodbyes, I couldn’t stop thinking about academic spaces— both material and affective — and the dissonance between the personal kettle under the desk and the communal milk

carton in the kitchenette down the corridor. Our workspaces can tell us a lot about the ways in which we perform our gender identities (Tyler & Cohen 2010). With a computer, a personal printer, a kettle, and a home-packed lunch, there is almost no reason for Sue to need to leave her office except for the routine toilet trip, scheduled meetings – and of course, teaching. Sue’s privacy is also somewhat of a privilege considering that academics are increasingly put into open plan ‘offices’. Was it merely more efficient to have the kettle in her office rather than walk the ten paces down the hall to the staff room, or does the decision to bring her own kettle into work speak more to the critical issue of ongoing gender inequality in Australian higher education?

I begin with this encounter because it reveals the subtle and corrosive ways in which spaces are gendered in the contemporary university. It is also an example of academic collegiality as a gendered practice, and the paradoxical nature of collegial discourse, who are we collegial with, and in what spaces and contexts? This chapter is an exploration of how academic collegiality is constructed in and shaped by the spaces of the neoliberal university, and how this subsequently impacts on the future of gender equality projects in higher education. Several academic women that I interviewed, voiced explicit incidences of sexual assault and harassment on university campuses and at conferences, and all shared anecdotes about departments where colleagues had refused to speak to one another, where cold-shouldering each other in hallways was common practice, and where academics worked with the lights switched off and doors locked. This chapter is concerned with how the performance of collegiality, collectivity, competition, conformity, and resistance inform aspects of identity practices within various academic spaces. In doing so, it is possible to see how collegiality is gendered, raced, and classed,

and the ways in which these are rendered invisible in the lecture theatre, the tearoom, the resource area, in meetings, corridors, and offices.

In theorising spaces, both literal and figurative, and the ways in which such sites enable and constrain academics, this chapter disrupts dominant and polarising narratives of academic women as either radical ‘outsiders’ in the academy or entirely depoliticised ‘insiders’ and complicit neoliberal subjects of the contemporary Australian university. Feminist metaphors of borderlands, marginalisation, and exile articulate different ways of being in a space (hooks 1990). While such static representations of space have been politically effective, they fail to articulate how academic women move across and between centre and margin and embody more mobile subjectivities. This chapter thus also reveals how academic women, have created alternative abstract and lived spaces for feminist resistance in the changing Australian higher education environment. This chapter begins by conceptualising academic collegiality and collectivity. It then interweaves the voices of interviewees with analysis of the ways in which these women articulate the complex and contradictory discourse of academic collegiality, particularly their experiences of isolation, competition, and resistance in the private and communal spaces of the contemporary Australian university. Lastly, this chapter concludes with an in-depth critical autoethnographic exploration of the academic conference as an inter-corporeal space for the transferral of academic cultural norms.

Collegiality

Making cups of tea from underneath one’s desk is not such a far cry from the gendered differences in academic collegiality that Virginia Woolf describes in *A Room of One’s Own* (2001). ‘He was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path

(Woolf 2001, p. 8). Here Woolf satirises the masculine authority of the Oxbridge security officer deterring her narrator from the manicured campus lawns, ‘only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me’ (2001, p. 8). Authority is visible and personified in Woolf’s fiction whereas the kettle in Sue’s office is in some sense the subject’s agentic response to power relations. Collegiality is understood as a desirable trait and invokes the ethos of polite society. It is at once both an individual characteristic and a cooperative relationship between those who belong in a space. Collegiality is often described in universalising terms as being able to ‘get along’, ‘fit in’ and ‘work well with colleagues’ and is one of the prevailing ideologies that structures academia. To belong to the college is to possess collegiality. What is implied in these terms is the sense of the proper: ‘something of someone *belongs* in one place and not in another’ (Cresswell 1996, p. 3).

To be a beneficiary of such fellowship Woolf perceives; ‘how good life seemed, how sweet its rewards’ (2001, p. 11). What revisiting *A Room of One’s Own* highlights is the successful preservation of patriarchal or homosocial collegiality in the contemporary academy. Indeed, we continue to see in the neoliberal university, although perhaps in more subtle ways, that the Woolfian adage that what is his; must not be hers still very much applies. Of course, Sue did not need to be ‘accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction’ (Woolf 2001, p. 9) to be able to walk across her university campus or to enter the tearoom, but there was something in the way she asked, ‘*do you take milk?*’ that made me feel that for us, the communal kitchenette was a place that should largely be avoided. This was not a neutral shared space but one imbued with complex gendered collegial relations.

Academic collegiality is a set of values and ideals constituted in space as well as a set of practices and performances. Collegiality is not just about getting along with colleagues but rather it means understanding how to successfully ‘get on’ in the social life of the university and about understanding how routinised daily practices reproduce values and cultures of an institution and how these practices then feed into a neoliberal system of valuation. Little has changed in terms of mainstream understandings of collegiality in academia. Characteristics of collegiality and autonomy continue to underpin notions of contemporary academic work. It is simultaneously, global and local (Finke 2005), individual and institutional, hierarchical and context specific (Oort 2005; Watt 2005), everywhere and nowhere (Caesar 2005; Watt 2005). Collegiality is used to understand the social dimensions to relationships that are almost wholly mediated through professional protocols. For Terry Caesar, what springs from the term collegiality is ‘just enough normative force to activate a professional relationship or just enough civil character to process a professional occasion to a successful conclusion. But no more’ (2005, p. 10). While the concept of academic collegiality can be understood to lack political impetus and worth, it does retain an element of power in how it stands for an ideal (Caesar 2005, p. 13; Finke 2005). That is, its broadness in definition; its complexity and somewhat ‘slipperiness’ as a concept, is what allows it to maintain its value.

As academics, we often turn to collegiality as a means of survival against the unrelenting neoliberal measures of performativity and accountability in the contemporary university. Collegiality is often associated with consensus and occupies a ‘neutral’ connotation in that social space devoid of social hierarchies. While universities have gradually adopted more neoliberal, corporatised management practices, the remnants of ‘collegial governance’ is reflected in the continued centrality of university academic boards,

senates, and consensual decision-making committees, as well as through federal funding models, and in the daily administration of university organisations (Marginson & Considine 2000). Collegiality can be identified as a form of management of public life which materialises as ‘institutional life’ and is inextricably connected to power and legitimacy in the academy (Berlant 1998). With academic collegiality a criterion on academic job, promotion, and grant applications, collegiality also becomes a set of social practices or performances that demonstrate our inclusion or proficiency as academics. Being an expert networker or a social colleague can help advance an individual’s academic career, it supports the development of group research projects, and improves office morale. While the immediate rewards of collegiality might be individual, overall it advances an institutional agenda.

Body pedagogics are the means through which a culture seeks to transmit its main corporeal techniques, skills and dispositions (Shilling 2007), and in academia, is often linked to collegiality (Kligyte & Barrie 2014, p. 162). Body pedagogies are about embodied learning, whereby new academics embrace the values, expected behaviours, and social knowledge that is required to become a recognised member of the university organisation (Shilling 2007, p. 13). Collegiality is seen as the main conduit of values and practices (Kligyte & Barrie 2014, p. 162). Indeed, collegiality infers a need to identify and be accepted into a group (Oort 2005, p. 161). This idea that the body is the surface onto which culture is inscribed is a relatively under-explored aspect of organisational learning (Bell & King 2010, p. 429). The body becomes a vehicle for the reproduction of knowledge and collegiality with various places and spaces in academia acting as the means through which these bodies transmit knowledge and enact certain cultures and subjectivities. The body is a receptive surface (Grosz 1994) onto which an ideological

construction of the proficient academic is written. Collegiality homogenises academic communities through various collegial protocols and practices and excludes on the basis of difference. It not only reinforces the gendered and heteronormative aspects of organisational socialisation, but it also becomes a purely individualistic, and competitive pursuit (Caesar 2005, p. 14).

Neoliberal feminist appropriation and depoliticisation is often cited as a failing of feminism (Newman 2013), but we hardly pause to mention how other ideals - like collegiality, support a neoliberal agenda. It is easy to deduce that collegiality is marred by neoliberalism when in fact, the discourse of collegiality in many respects supports the neoliberal agenda. Paradoxically, collegiality imposes obedience through the fear of competition. That is, given the increased competitiveness for academic jobs, funding, promotion, and performance evaluation, academics as a result, become more compliant to institutional norms and demands. Collegiality becomes another 'cruel object' (Berlant 2011) in the neoliberal university (see also Chapter Three). The fantasy of the academic 'good life' includes nostalgia for a collegiality that is hierarchical and exclusive. Collegial discourse often invokes the notion of shared solidarity and yet our everyday relationships and interactions undermine this ideal as academics are ranked against one another. Indeed, most models of collegiality are ones that advance the strategic agenda of the neoliberal university, because academics fear a loss of academic opportunity if they are not seen to be collegial (Gardiner 2005, p. 119). Thus, collegiality is closely linked to cultural norms and the management of academics. It also increases academic anxieties around disciplinary differences, quantification of research output, downsizing of teaching and administrative staff (and in some cases increasing in the latter), casualisation, peer review, and professional evaluation.

Collectivity

Collegiality and collectivity in the contemporary academy appear interchangeable as an academic virtue, with such practices being nurtured in the constraints and opportunities provided by the neoliberal transformations of academic institutions. Judith Gardiner (2005) describes collectivity as a heightened kind of collegiality. Collectivity is a complementary type of professional interaction. Gardiner depicts traditional forms of collegiality as ‘cool’, and masculine in style, with collegiality, often, as I also argue, inspiring both excellence and anxiety through the intentional deployment of competition:

I picture collegiality as the more masculine of the two, dressed in tweed, chatting in leather chairs, even drinking sherry. In contrast, collectivity connotes for me women in jeans, sitting on the floor vigorously discussing ideas, with a pot of chili bubbling on a stove nearby. (2005, p. 108)

The accepted or normative qualities of collegiality are frequently embodied as masculine, while collectivity is rendered feminine. Gardiner defines collectivity as non-coercive and feminist rather than feminine, which is akin to Cixous’ interpretation of the feminine. Collectivity should not be positioned in gendered opposition to collegiality. Collectivity does not emanate naturally from women working together but rather it is deliberately built from a specific political approach to collegial relationships (Gardiner 2005, p. 115). Membership on a journal editorial board is an example of collective organisation, or collegial governance (Kligyte & Barrie 2014, p. 160). Journals have a goal external to the university organisation, with collective aims and scopes. Academics come together in a way that elevates the expert status of an individual academic above the role of employee

in order to produce multiple issues each year. The group of editors decide the journal's contents by examining submitted manuscripts and by soliciting book reviews and commentaries. There is a considerable amount of volunteer labour that goes into supporting many aspects of academia's infrastructure. Gardiner highlights that the goals and the group are enhanced by practices that 'encourage people to develop personal knowledge, respect, trust, and affection for one another, but without undue expectations for continued closeness or personal friendship outside the group's times and purposes' (2005, p. 117)

Collectivity and resistance to hegemonic or coercive forms of collegiality are not without their limitations (Gardiner 2005), but it is important to explore the contradictions and potentiality of collegiality and collectivity and their competing and complementary projects since they require different agents and occur in different temporalities and spatialities. Masculine and heteronormative gestures, voices, postures, and accents are all involved in the performance of collegiality, and are thus transferable skills we come to learn through the body that are not only taught as appropriate but also as aspirational qualities. Academics' performance of collegiality can influence collective organisation. In meetings and email correspondence, embodied subjects may assume or masquerade as the universal academic. Collectivity and collegiality teach us how and with whom we should interact. Knowing when to speak and when to remain silent in a meeting, or in a seminar are learnt via these bodily interactions. Men may be aware of women's exclusion and the adverse conditions women face. They may even claim to be pro-equality but continue to participate in homosocial forms of collegiality and recruit men for management and leadership positions. Women are often judged as mimicking men rather than simply being women whose performativity encompasses a mix of masculinities and femininities.

Collegiality and collectivity are thus a complex set of practices and performances rather than inherent qualities or virtues.

Isolated Colleagues

The material geographies of offices, classrooms and buildings necessitate a capacity for mobility, for traveling to and from somewhere. While not spatially fixed, online arenas also require the capacity for access to technologies and skills that enable participation. These sites are steeped in power; the ways that people engage with or participate within spaces hinge upon the associations they ascribe to them, the affects and psychic-emotional experiences they have, or project they may have, within them. Such experiences are informed by relations of gender, race, sexuality, class, and education and may play out in desires for engagement or disengagement. How these spaces are perceived varies with the different experiences of the individual and the collective, but it is clear that even the campus and its buildings in their design are conducive to producing specific collegial states. Grace points out:

well that's the other problem, I think. I think so much of happiness about work is the physical space you're in. I work in a rabbit warren. It's really disjointed, it is eight buildings semi-connected.

Grace believes that the physical layout of the campus and its buildings plays a large role in the creation and absence of opportunities for collaboration. Because of her isolation, Grace makes more of a conscious effort to meet with colleagues:

I do, I do, but I guess the more you feel shitty about your work, the less inclined you are to... I feel horribly lonely, but not so personally, [more] professionally. I feel really lonely, I really miss working with people, but the lonelier I feel the more inclined I am to sit in my office by myself. Even though that's counterproductive.

Patricia eats her lunch alone while working at her desk. It is not an uncommon habit in her department. She tells me:

I'm not the only one who sits with my light off in my office. Lots of people come in, shut their door and don't talk to anybody. There's a time for that but there's just this sense that everybody is just so kind of down in that dark pit of despair that even wanting to talk to people is just too much, haven't got time for that, I've got to be working 24/7, I've got to be productive, I'm under so much pressure. So everyone just kind of holes themselves away. I think that's really sad.

Sidonie tells me that even though she is a sessional, and so only on campus during teaching periods, she still sees her Head of School every week or two. Often a few colleagues including her Head of School will go out together for a quick coffee and a chat. *'I think that's what is not valued'*, Patricia considers, is that idea that a Head of School or a Dean or Professor could:

operate at that level of friendship and of love where we're actually looking out for one another, we're being responsible to one another in the sense that we're not trying to change your identity or change your disciplinary, the way you act within

your discipline. I'm here to allow you to be whatever it needs - or not allow but I'm here to facilitate or open the doors.

Grace weighs the failures of her workplace in cultivating a connected, collaborative and supportive environment against the benefits of being physically isolated:

When [Maryanne] comes up for lunch... she'll be like, who's that guy? I'm like, oh don't worry about him, he sleeps with his students. Or don't worry about him he does such and such, it's just like every person, I just don't want to see that [them].

Collegiality is found in various theorisations of leadership practice (Kligyte & Barrie 2014, p. 162) and yet Patricia and Grace find collegiality in leadership wanting.

Competitive Collegiality

The body pedagogics of collegiality also exposes the extent to which collegial performance involves interactions not only amongst individuals but between individuals and institutions as well (Finke 2005, p. 124). Universities pride themselves on valuing, celebrating and rewarding collegiality, and of building a culture of collegiality and engagement. In university policy, collegiality is often described as being able to operate effectively in a team or contribute positively to departmental operations. Collegiality has become an important criterion and evaluative tool in academic recruitment, promotion, and funding. While the collegial expression, 'working together' denotes collaboration, or even, equality, its emphasis remains on autonomous individualism, and the value and uniqueness of separate and competing persons. This notion of competitive collegiality is

often articulated when institutional leaders push for greater efficiency and greater productivity, especially in interdisciplinary initiatives intended to garner large research grants.

The competitiveness of the contemporary university environment is a common refrain amongst academics. ‘*Research today is highly, highly competitive,*’ Sidonie repeats. Outside of her teaching commitments, Sidonie is a solitary academic. She closely guards her research from other academics because she has first-hand experience having her research poached and then published by another colleague in the field:

I was a bit naïve when I started [out as an academic]. I would happily tell people what I was doing. Only to find that they would then go off and do the same thing. Which isn't to say you can't all be researching the same subject, billions of people, for instance, research Shakespeare - all over the world. But it's when you share your ideas with someone else and then they go and do exactly that, which is a bit dodgy.

Sidonie pauses after this. She is still very much hurt and disappointed even several years on from the incident. Collegiality also incites fear of the evaluation of our performances of collegiality, academic freedom, and ‘stifles dissent in favour of civility and cordiality’ (Finke 2005, p. 123). Sidonie continues:

Also, in the arts where I am based the idea of collegiality is very different to in the sciences, say where you might have nine people co-writing a paper... You're totally responsible and very rarely do you ever co-produce with somebody unless

you are writing a chapter in a book. So, we are not used to working together and we guard our research quite jealously. And I certainly do now. I don't broadcast what I am doing any more.

The isolation and autonomous work of some academics (namely those in the arts and humanities disciplines) is in conflict with outward perceptions of collegial performativity and the 'ideal' (and highly commodified) scholar-entrepreneur used in marketing campaigns and invited to conferences and conventions to represent the university's brand and intellectual property (Danielewics & McGowan 2005, p. 168; Watt 2005, p. 21).

Academic collaboration communicates your collegial relationships. Academic collegiality is important for a successful career with interpersonal networks often providing job opportunities (Van den Brink & Benschop 2014) and reveals professional allegiances. It is also hierarchical (Van Oort 2005; Gardiner 2005), and academics are often strategic in whom they are collegial with. For instance, who we decide to approach socially in the moments before the commencement of a meeting, whose plenary sessions we attend at a conference is not always based solely on research interest, who we ask out for coffee, those we smile at in the corridor, and those whom we ignore entirely. In university leadership, collegiality represents the interface between 'leaders' and 'followers' (Kligyte & Barrie 2014, p. 158). Joan explores this relationship in more detail:

She was always told that she came out of the womb a born leader. From captain of the softball team at school, to lab leader, and senior executive. As a scientist Joan knows that even while she attributes much of her leadership to an '*innateness*', she also knows that these skills were *honed and crafted* from early on. Joan *learnt*

about leadership from watching others. She was always sure to get into situations where she felt that she was learning from a good leader. *She learnt from the leadership around her* and *had good leaders and good mentors* too. She realised early on that *she'd rather be a leader than a report to one*. *She did not want to play a supporting role like most women*.

When Joan joined the senior executive as Dean and then Deputy Vice-Chancellor she did so at the encouragement of her Vice-Chancellor. This is collegiality at its most influential. However, she also reasons:

At the point when I became the Dean and my research career was going pretty well, I felt then that I would have more of an impact helping others and I've done that ever since. I think that's been a guiding thing.

Our collegial interactions are not only based on gender, race, and age, but also academic rank; positions, institution type (top-tier research intensive, or teaching and vocationally focused), performance as academics (research output and grant attracting abilities) and the mutual benefits of social and cultural capital we might accrue from our potential connection and collaboration.

Academics are urged to collaborate, particularly when it comes to research activities, but career and promotion prospects still very much depend on the evaluation of individual achievement; developing an independent body of work and obtaining research funding. This is central to what Bruce MacFarlane (2017) describes as the paradox of collaboration. Similar to collegiality, collaboration, involves the free sharing of ideas 'for

the common good of scientific advance’, or what MacFarlane describes as ‘collaboration-as-intellectual generosity’. It is also purported to nurture the development of less-experienced colleagues through embodied interactions and the sharing in knowledge claims via a range of scholarly platforms. However, MacFarlane finds that other forms of collaboration are essentially self-regarding, when considering the pressures of academic performativity, and there is some debate around whether this fits into a working definition of collegiality (Van Oort 2005; Watt 2005). Paradoxically, collaboration can reinforce existing networks of power, create and perpetuate hierarchies of exploitation. This is not to succumb to a discourse of collegiality that promotes the antisocial and solitary forms of academic labour. MacFarlane suggests that we be cognisant that:

Whilst collaboration has always been at the heart of academic labour its paradoxes illustrate how individual and collective goals can come into conflict through the measurement of academic performance and the way in which such audits have perverted the meaning of collaboration. (2017, p. 472)

There is an assumption that if you are passionate about your research that you will continue to research for love and not for money, that you will not question your position as second or third author on a paper regardless of how much extra work you put in, and you will accept additional responsibilities from senior academics. Thus, Sidonie adds that *‘research tends to then be something that you do privately, in your private life as well. Because there is no paid time to do it in.’*

The Morning Tea

“Good morning, David. Hello Mark—”

“I’ve just seen your email. I just need to check my calendar—”

“Hi Trish, how’s the marking going?—”

“Are you coming to the end of teaching morning tea?—”

It was a simple event to celebrate the end of teaching (and bemoan the beginning of essay marking) and an excuse to all get together for a few minutes.

Sidonie made a cake. She places it on the table and peels back the cling film.

Alison baked cupcakes.

Sandra brought in a packet of Tim Tams that she found in the cupboard before shoving school lunch boxes into bags and hurrying out the door.

Lucy nipped into the student refectory and grabbed a large packet of crisps. She pours them into a bowl.

Oh look. Here comes that young guy. Striding in here. No one knows his name. He only ever turns up when there is food about. Never brings anything. Looks like he’s bailed up Nadia by the sink. Typical this is.

As the gathering winds down, some academics understandably dash off to teach, others disappear back to their offices. All of a sudden Sidonie realises it is just herself and a few other women left to pack up the party. To throw away the empty biscuit packets, wash the dirty tea cups and spoons, and wipe up the crumbs. As she dried the plates and cutlery, the steam rising from the hot water in the sink formed a clammy film on her forehead.

‘Typical, this!’ She thought to herself. *‘Even though we are all sessional staff, and it’s pretty much equal numbers men and women sessionals. It was only the women who remembered to bring a plate. And only the women who stayed to clear it all away.’*

Communal Spaces

The kitchenette, the resource room, the photocopying area— these are all spaces in contemporary organisations that are principally designed as a place where academic and professional staff members come together in a seemingly neutral space, regardless of rank or position. These are the communal areas where we make tea and coffee, or eat lunch, print materials, pick up mail and chat with our colleagues. Space and place are used to structure a normative landscape (Cresswell 1996, p. 8). However, these spaces are not neutral sites of egalitarian collegiality. The tearoom in particular, is a gendered place where the private and the public spheres converge, as Sidonie observes in her department:

I think the thing you notice on an informal level is that the women go to the tea room and talk together more than the males. There's one male I have never ever seen go to the tea room, ever!

Who cleans out the communal fridge? Who uses someone else's milk without asking? Who leaves dirty dishes and mugs in the sink? These questions and actions go unnoticed or are ignored. Inspired by Carol Taylor's conference paper 'Mundane Disturbances: Theorising the Inconsequential Materiality of Educational Spaces' (2015) I began to pay more attention to the emotions and power signalled in communal spaces. The messages left for staff and cleaners on whiteboards: "Do not wipe this off!" and the labels on food items in the fridge. I remembered back to when I was an executive assistant and someone ate my home-packed lunch. Someone ate my sandwich! "A spoon, a spoon, my kingdom for a spoon!!" and other playfully passive aggressive notices sticky taped to cupboard doors express unhappiness and frustration at the gendered effects of collegiality. Their presence, like the fake journal article poster 'Collective Cleanliness: A Meta-Discursive

Study of Academic Tearoom Culture’, while poignant and funny does little to change gendered collegial practices. Sometimes it is hard to pinpoint how collegiality explicitly excludes when we appear to share these spaces. Grace explains:

I don't know just little things, like every time we have a group meeting, one of the honours girls has to bring a cake. Doesn't have to obviously, but they're the ones that volunteer, it's never a man's job to bring a cake to work.

Academic spaces are ideological in that they serve a social hierarchy (Cresswell 1996; Puwar 2004). Our place in the academy is constituted in the spaces of the university. It combines the spatial and the social, with space always intersecting with place through sociocultural expectations.

Academic identities and collegial relationships are constructed through embodied experiences and processes of embodied learning in different types of academic spaces. In a recent faculty restructure, Sidonie’s school of arts was merged with the school of education. This amalgamation resulted in the integration of two groups of academics; two sets of management, leaders, and students. This came with a lot of antagonism between the two departments, even down to the personal level, as Sidonie tells me, it goes right down to *‘the people in education are not in the tearoom at the same time as the people in arts, and vice versa’*. The merger has placed a strain on the newly formed department. Even though arts academics are increasingly teaching education students, which Sidonie believes is why she and her arts colleagues still have jobs (*‘everyone is conscious of losing their jobs’*) but the amalgamation has changed the staff culture. She gives an example:

there's a sessional room for sessional staff [to meet with students], and recently I had a student with a very loud voice and I refused to have the door shut with a mature-age male student in the room with me, or any student in the room with me for that matter, so I don't shut the door with any student for my own protection as well as theirs, but somebody from education basically paraded up and down the corridor and kept looking in my room because the door was ajar and looking at me because I was facing the door because they [education staff] like silence.

Sidonie considers such collegial expectations *'an added strain. You're meant to be doing your job but, in a whisper, just to satisfy the education staff, which I refuse to do.'* It is a gendered strain too. If Sidonie had been a man talking with a loud student, she didn't think she would have been treated in the same way by her colleague. *'I don't think men are challenged in the same way women are. Especially tall men.'* In this space the feminine is neutered, becoming homologous with the masculine (Phillips 2014). As the meeting commences, *'they begin to comment, one after the other the male members swell in their seats, stretching, arching and asserting themselves, competing for physical command of the space, making their presence/prowess known in the small stuffy meeting room'* (Lipton 2017, p. 73).

Grace cites a similar experience (see also Chapter Four). She is one of only two women in her department. When she walks the corridors of her building it is to a cacophony of men whistling from their offices, their backs facing open office doors. The whistling is a competition for space. The sound pushes Grace to avoid using the shared areas, opting for alternate workspaces outside of her building:

you have those everyday interactions that just put you back in to that funk, why would I want to reach out when someone's just been rude to me to my face in the tearoom.

Grace complains that with her short curly hair and slim figure she is, ironically, often mistaken for a man and at times, is even treated as one of 'the boys'. She laughs wishfully at the thought of a future where she is not called mister or sir. Grace finds that when she is mistaken for a man and is invited into the homosociality of hegemonic or competitive academic collegiality that she becomes privileged to a litany of sexist, misogynistic and racist conversations. Some of which, upon being 'outed' from the 'boys' club', are directed at her:

Inequalities, harassment, everything, my school's awful. We have this lab manager, he used to make really vile anti-Semitic jokes, even though he knew my family were Jewish, and racist jokes too. When my supervisor was really mean and bullied me, he went around and told everyone in the school that I had a problem with men. That I was aggressive and abusive and too emotional. Which I think is highly gendered type of bullying, and I don't know, I don't know what else, it'll come to me.

Social and professional judgements and standards are measured in relation to normative gender performativities. Women who do step over from being 'not-men' to 'like-men' transgress gendered spatial boundaries, to such an extent that they destabilise the existing social order by sheer virtue of their presence. Although women's position in such spaces

continue to be ambiguous and confused as they are seen as still being women as well as honorary men (Puwar 2004, p. 100). Women are granted access to the public sphere so long as they have the ‘ability to emulate those powers and capacities’ that come with male and masculine privilege (Gatens 1996, p. 71).

A culture of collegiality is often used to delineate permanent academic staff from casual and sessional academics. It separates the haves from the have-nots. Collegiality manifests in the various ways we interact with our colleagues; from who we choose to chat with in the office corridor to which staff are invited to staff meetings. Collegiality is used to explain or justify the ways in which academics act in their everyday relationships (Caesar 2005, p. 15). Sidonie remarks:

Collegiately, don't ask me why, but sessional staff don't get invited to the Christmas party, which I think is a little bit rude. I find that a bit rude. I think, well you want us to be in there doing all the work then when it comes to the party time - no invite. Less people to pay for I suppose?

To be sessional is to be considered to be on the wrong side of the academic institution, with the transient figure of the casual academic often not considered to be part of the contract of collegiality.

Behind closed doors

In my interviews, there were many accounts of closed doors both literal and metaphorical. Women working with their doors closed and the lights switched off. Sidonie tells me, ‘Everyone now works in silence, with their doors locked, and their headphones on’. For

some academics, if they kept the lights switched off and moved their desks behind the door, no one would know if they were even in their office. While this could simply be interpreted as academics just trying to get some writing done without distraction, office doors function as a signal for the readiness of collegial interactions. Patricia tells me, *'what I see happening is a lot of door closing.'* She uses this spatial metaphor to describe the dissonance not just between academics and institutions but also between individuals. Patricia elaborates, closing the door, is *'that idea that the only way that we can get on as a manager or a leader and you as a non-manager or follower is distance between us.'* Shutting the door, closing lines of communication, these actions speak to a lack of transparency and a disregard for experiences experienced behind closed doors; in offices, meetings, and empty classrooms. Closed doors do not impel academics' collegiality to go beyond professional protocol. The layers of privacy; the headphones, the locked door, the darkened room. It highlights a lack of connectedness and solidarity in a highly competitive and critical work environment.

Dark and isolated spaces are often unsafe places that we may try and avoid. Many offices and resource rooms only have one entry and exit point. Patricia knows this all too well after being sexually assaulted in the photocopier room by an older male colleague, giving her even more reason to hide away in her office when she is not giving a lecture or tutorial:

One morning, Patricia arrived early to work to prepare for her morning class when she was accosted and sexually assaulted in the photocopier room by an older male colleague. He had jammed the photocopier. The man *'just stood there staring at white sheets of paper that were all across the room'*. Patricia bent down quickly to

help collate his papers. Once on the floor she felt him looking down at her, watching her. When she stood back up, he suddenly grabbed her drawing her in for a kiss. Patricia felt frozen in that moment. Her flight or fight response triggered her to run but physically she was unable to move. When she did manage to push him away she stumbled out of the photocopier room to her office. Her hands were shaking so violently she could barely manage to insert the key in the door.

This is a history where consent is ‘read off women’s own bodies or conduct’ (Ahmed 2014, p. 55); what women wear, how they move, the way their bodies are thought to enact a yes even when they say no. Women are not homogenous bodily specifications but are differentiated through power relations constituted, in this instance, in an organisational space (Puwar 2004, p. 25). There are a whole set of identifications and disidentifications between women and space. Who we engage with in these communal areas of the academy demarcates which bodies are considered inside of academic culture, and the conversations and interactions that occur in these environments demonstrate how collegiality is transmitted through bodies. An account of gender in the neoliberal university may do well to include an analysis of ‘how women willingly agree to situations in spaces where their safety and wellbeing are compromised’ (Ahmed 2014, p. 55). Ahmed reminds us that there is a history ‘whereby men give themselves permission to hear no as a yes, to assume women are willing, whatever women say’ (2014, p. 55). When Patricia told a fellow academic, what had happened, ‘*she said “well he does that to all the women in the school” and I said “what?” I said, “why aren't we looking after one another?”*’

To be collegial is to 'know your place' or to use a gendered expression 'to be put in your place'. Patricia reported the assault and both individuals were made to attend a face-to-face mediation with the Head of School. In such an arbitration all members are accountable to the ideal of collegiality:

I felt that it was more about her [the Head of School] trying to say 'I've got to file the policy, how can we keep everybody happy?' But at the end of the day sometimes I do feel a bit angry because I think well who really - not that it was about winning or losing, but who really won from that? I think it was him, because apart from being slapped on the wrist and told you can't do that, he's still being allowed to - none of his privilege as an older white male have been taken away. This staff member continues to work in the workplace and I didn't necessarily want to ruin his life, but I didn't necessarily think that him continuing to have such a prominent role as a – he's only a sessional staff member. But I didn't necessarily think that that was appropriate, particularly with a cohort of students that are predominantly female and where there have been instances of sexual harassment reports from students.

For Patricia, mediation led by her Head of School was not justice. In the mediation process she was forced to comply and agree to the terms of collegiality:

It probably doesn't really mean anything but it did strike me as kind of strange. She didn't even have a box of tissues ready, and she didn't even - not once did she say are you okay, how are you coping with it? Are you feeling alright about being at work or do you need to take some time off? Nothing like that. It was just

straight to 'right, let's look at the policy, this is what I'm going to say, this is what you [say]' - she did say things like 'it's important for you to say what you experienced' but she didn't once step back from that, this the procedure to say, I just want to check in that you're alright.

In the mediation room, their collegial relationships were driven by process. Patricia felt that her body had been labelled as the problem, and she did not feel supported by her Head of School beyond what was written in the policy:

Then not once since then has she said how's it going? Because this guy and I are on the same floor. She hasn't once said I just want to check that everything is alright, and nothing further has happened. To me that shows that what she was concerned about when I brought it to her attention, is nothing about the embodied aspect of that kind of thing and what the implications might be physically, emotionally, mentally. But more about the managerial implications.

Collegiality in the Margins

Women's marginalisation in academia is often a consequence of their continued exclusion from certain practices of networked collegiality. Being an academic 'outsider', 'working on the fringes', being 'marginal' and working 'within and against' are reoccurring spatial metaphors in literature on women, work and organisations and my interview material is no exception to these findings. Feminist metaphors of borderlands, marginalisation, and exile articulate different ways of being in a space. Metaphors of marginality insist upon difference and a distance from hegemonic culture (Pratt 1998, p. 14). bell hooks writes of marginality as a space from where we can imagine alternative

ways of existing outside of hegemonic culture and presents an opportunity to create counter-hegemonic cultures. She describes the margins as ‘to be part of the whole but outside the main body’ (1990, p. 341). hooks is speaking here of the silencing and appropriation of black women’s voices and she grounds her argument in her lived experience. For hooks, marginality is a site of resistance, a position from which to resist colonisation by the dominant white culture: ‘that space of refusal, where one can say no to the coloniser, no to the downpressor, is located in the margins’ (1990, p. 341).

There’s power in the margins. Since the assault, Patricia has learnt ‘*about other things that have happened to women and what other women in the school think about the male leaders in our school*’. The isolation, secrecy and silence that other women in her school experienced:

I didn’t even know, I knew nothing about how women had been treated. But this kind of secret network of women who are - if the opportunity arises we will talk to one another about it. The only thing I can see that’s slightly problematic with that is that because it’s in secret and the power of it actually is that it’s secret and that none of the guys know that we’re - or the women who aren’t part of that little network, they don’t know that we talk about these things.

In the margins these women formed a strong feminist collective identity. Patricia finds power in being on the outskirts and that these conversations happen in secret, ‘*but the downside is that we all kind of feel, or we’ll talk – but we’ve got this little secret network going and we don’t know what else to do, so we won’t do anything.*’ Woolf (2001), much

earlier observed that the ‘daughters of educated men’ have always been part of an ‘Outsiders Society’ within the academic confines of the university.

This is not to say that the margins are a safe space or feminist utopia. Patricia’s attitude towards collegiality in the margins does not do away with the space between. Following Cixous, Patricia ‘experience[s] what she is not, what she is, what she can be’ (1986 qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 43). hooks acknowledges that the margins can be just as much a site for repression as for resistance. However, her insistence on choosing the margins is an intervention against being positioned as marginal by oppressive structures and it highlights how it is possible to move beyond static spatial representations to explore the tenuous position academic women occupy as both insiders and outsiders of the neoliberal university. Patricia concedes that despite their feminist collegiality in the margins:

nothing ever happens publicly, it still happens in that secret space because we’re all – we’re all kind of worried about breaking that secrecy and maybe being brave enough to break the secrecy, to do something about some of the things that go on.

This is what Yvonne describes as navigating the different layers of academic spaces:

That the fact that what you’re navigating is fifty per cent surface and fifty per cent subterranean, I think because women have had to struggle to make their way in the academy for so long, I think they’re much better at working out that framework and navigating it.

Yvonne's reflections resonate with what Kathy Ferguson (1993) describes as 'mobile subjectivities', this oscillation between centre and margin. By understanding how individuals move between and across boundaries, we can destabilise those under examined dualisms and see the connection between inside/outside, centre/margin (Pratt 1998, p. 15). In some respects, women are made to remain in the margins, but that there is also a self-proclaiming and creative power that comes from such a space; 'an inclusive space where we recover ourselves' (hooks 1990, p. 343).

When claiming the potentiality of the margins of the university as a site of resistance for women academics it is important to consider how neoliberalism appropriates feminist and social justice principles. As Patricia remarks:

It's scary how if something public - the way neoliberalism works, it can put a spin on something like that to cover it up. What might happen and it may not be really covert – but the repercussions will happen in a very covert, insidious way, perhaps without you even realising. Then by the time you do it's too late.

Any criticism of this appropriation, or any dissenting voice that challenges the fabric of academic collegiality impacts upon your professional life. As Patricia explains, if you are a feminist and you speak out, the institution appears to be very much supportive, in that they profess:

'oh great we've got this great voice of feminists' and then undercut them [feminists] privately in everyday interactions. So they no longer have a voice but

what everyone sees is this really, 'oh they're being so supportive.' But actually they're not.

hooks (1990, p. 143) observes that the language of resistance can be misappropriated by the dominant in a way that silences the lived experiences of the marginalised. Due to the way in which neoliberalism individualises the social and collective, feminism is made culpable for its depoliticisation, its widening interpretations and broadening political objectives. While this identification may present particular opportunities, the door remains closed in terms of feminist and academic voices. Patricia gives some more examples:

one of the ways that that happens is that they might ask you to be on a panel to talk on International Women's Day or in the public moments where feminism matters they want to be seen to be doing things, feminist academics will be asked. But then in the things that then matter may possibly - for women getting promoted - is that - to get promoted from Level D to Level E you've got to show significant school leadership or faculty leadership. What can happen is that women won't get supported to take up those roles, or the doors won't be open for women to take on that [unclear] leadership. Or it'll just be given to somebody else. So I think that's one of the things – that's one of the ways you can get the backhanded slap. It's not ever said publicly, it's not ever said in a performance appraisal but just those opportunities, the doors just get shut.

Here we see another spatial metaphor used to describe the power and influence of hegemonic collegiality. Patricia highlights that feminism and a feminist academic identity

are not always about large scale activism but can also be about the small everyday actions and interactions.

Understanding marginality as a position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited and colonised peoples. Marginality nourishes our capacity to resist (hooks 1990, p. 342). Yvonne maintains that '*a huge part*' of her practice as an academic is '*that I think about all of those things.*' What's really important to her is '*to always maintain a strong commitment to feminist spaces*' where women's voices are heard and articulate the importance of such spaces in all aspects of her work. If you cannot make the margins, these feminist spaces what people expect these spaces to be, you must make them in different ways. One way of doing this is to change your actions prior to creating a new space. Yvonne does this by supporting women, and taking an interest in their work:

I like the work that I do. Mostly the places that I need to talk to people about things, I feel that I can do that. Yeah, so like I don't feel marginalised - I think that would be really hard. But I do think that is a little bit about working with a group of colleagues that are basically really good. I like working with them and I want to support them in the work that they do. Yeah. So I do think a part of that is really about luck.

Feminist collectivity and ideals of friendly intellectual comradeship and mutual respect form an alternative to the bland and often implicitly coercive, and implicitly masculine demands of individualist collegiality within hierarchical university structures. Feminist spaces of resistance are not perfect places. It is not enough to simply establish a space for women separate from the central operations of the university but rather, feminist spaces

are created through embodied feminist actions where women ask big questions about gendered and discriminatory structures and then weigh these up in relation to their everyday lived experiences. What hooks' writings so powerfully demonstrate is the way in which individual actions can support a collective social resistance. Continuing to read her work in relation to the neoliberal university counters many of the appropriation claims associated with neoliberalism, and creates power and hope in academic women's desires to create space for women and forge meaningful connections.

Collegiality at Conferences

Academic conferences are key sites for the development and transmission of collegiality through the bodily praxis of body pedagogics. As academics we 'attend conferences with a specific identity anticipated' (Ford & Harding 2010, p. 509), as knowing subjects performing as conference participant, watching and (self-)policing ourselves and others. Conferences are an important part of the working lives of academics, managers, and professional staff alike. For academics, conferences are a necessity for professional development, building networks across institutions, and for sharing in ideas and knowledge production (Stanley 1995; Ford & Harding 2008; 2010; Bell & King 2010; Henderson 2015). They are, what Ford and Harding describe as 'part of the mundane of the everyday' (2008, p. 234) in that the academic conference parallels with the everyday activities of the institution. Even with new technological advances that allow remote communication, resource sharing, and networking, face-to-face interactions remain a crucial component to career advancement.

Conferences are most often held on university campuses, occupying buildings 'in a peculiar way' (Henderson 2015, p. 916). Conference-goers are often removed from their

local context and forced into unfamiliar territory with participants being ‘spatially and symbolically separated from the outside world’. As Emma Bell and Daniel King summarise, ‘for a few days all human activities, including working, eating and sleeping, are carried out in the same limited space’ (2010, p. 433). The conference itself has its own patterns and routines, in the various dress codes it obliges, the uniform nametags or lanyards, the free tea and coffee and presence of the registration table. This temporarily relocated academy is a microcosm, it ‘is a site where illusions of social mobility are tested out intensively and repeatedly’ (Stanley 1995, p. 172). This professionalisation in the form of academic conferences is what ‘binds all members of a discipline, however dispersed in time and space’ (Finke 2005, p. 122).

At the conference there is invariably a hierarchy of attendees; esteemed key-note speakers, presenters, attendees, academics, students, and conference organisers. Even in paper sessions or works-in-progress round tables there is still a hierarchy based on position, institution, and social capital. Even your position in the conference timetable, whether it be on the first day or the last, before or after lunch, denotes value. Where a conference is hosted inevitably influences who can attend, and as such has implications for knowledge sharing and development. While conferences are often labelled ‘international’ and ‘global’ they often have a homogenising effect given that the intellectual environment within which they are held largely celebrates Anglo-American, English-speaking academic culture.

The academic conference is a key site for academic socialisation and the passing on of norms and values from experts to newcomers. It is career making. For Humphreys (2005) conference attendance is the foundation of an academic career. Conference participation

is integral to the way that ‘the embodied agent learns appropriate ways of using her body as a means of demonstrating proficiency’ (Bell & King 2010, p. 434). Presentations constitute a moment of transformation and demonstrate that an authoritative performer can respond well under pressure (Bell & King 2010, p. 432). Early-stage researchers not only benefit significantly from these events, but also face notable barriers to attendance (Calisi 2018). Conferences are often costly events: conference registration, flights, and accommodation. Since the majority of academic conferences are scheduled during school holidays, conferences produce a double burden for the parent academic, and attendance might require additional childcare costs. While travel grants and awards may support some conference-goers, as Genine Hook (2016) observes, these are often paid retrospectively and are intensely problematic for sole parents, postgraduate and early career academics with children who can find the upfront costs associated with conferencing to be exclusionary. As Ahmed surmises, ‘the more precarious you are, the more support you need, the more precarious you are, the less support you have’ (2017, p. 238). There is also an institutional expectation to attend conferences, and an assumption that scholars are in a position to pay/attend.

Hazel recounts an experience after giving a seminar presentation with one of the senior male academics in her department making what she and many of her female colleagues in the audience thought to be an entirely unrelated and unnecessarily aggressive comment:

You know he just really goaded me and I thought you probably wouldn’t speak to me like - if you spoke to me like that, as a man there would be a threat of violence in the room. [Laughs] ... I just don’t think I would have been spoken to in that way had I been a man.

Stanley and others (Ford & Harding 2008, 2010; Bell & King 2010) note that such ‘an event is one in which speakers can feel on trial, their whole *career* and *identity* at stake’ (emphasis in original, Stanley 1995, p. 172). Such incidents highlight the ways in which women are silenced and marginalised through the body pedagogic practices of presenting at an academic conference. These bodily dispositions are also symptomatic of a ‘between-men’ culture that excludes difference (Irigaray 1993). Between-men cultures are prefaced on a structured hierarchy of male over female and a binarised conception of mind and body. Women and their connection to the emotion-laden body are thereby excluded from such bodily practices, including entering into collegial relationships and the production of knowledge unless they ‘subject themselves to the imperatives of a culture that alienates their female identity’ (Bell & King 2010, p. 437).

Such aforementioned situations illicit what I describe as, an academic bystander effect, a result of collegiality, where an individual or group of academics do not intervene when another academic spouts unfairly critical or derogatory comments under the safety of an academic discourse of critique and collegiality. Conferences force academics into conformity through embodied practices despite the creative precursors around the exchange of knowledge and ideas, as well as the collective sentiments of resistance or discontent towards the new managerialist orthodoxy. Grace feels that ‘*it’s really hard when you’re not in a position of power to talk about those things.*’ Such incidences render women’s voices silent and prevent them from passing the body pedagogic litmus test for demonstrable proficiency. Grace tells me:

I went to a seminar and a woman was making a comment afterwards to the speaker that was really pertinent, about her experience of doing field work and observing an unusual phenomena. One of the male academics was like I've got no idea what that stupid woman's banging on about, or something like that. It's just evident that it's really hard to talk, if you're not tenured or if you don't have strong allies. People just - they don't like you anyway and they're going to like you less the more you talk about not liking the way they behave. They'll make it difficult for you, so I don't know, you just rapidly feel quite impotent.

Graces use of the gendered term '*impotent*' is fitting. When compared to the somatic norm, women are considered to be lacking, they are abnormal. Loudly goading his female colleagues, this is the type of power yielded from the somatic norm. The power to include and exclude an individual in certain spaces. Incidents of silencing at academic conferences relies on a collective and deliberate effort from members of such a social system to jointly refrain from acknowledging those deemed non-members (Bell & King 2010, p. 437).

Hazel narrates another encounter in a reading group when a male professor asked her:

'Do you want to say anything more to defend your paper' and I thought, what is this, a duel? Are we jousting? I don't need to defend anything. Just tell me. You can critique it, cool. Where am I? What is this language?

Hazel uses the phallic sport of jousting to illustrate the way patriarchal power is being possessed and exercised (Morley 1999). Hazel describes feeling like an academic outsider, failing to interpret the body pedagogics of the reading group:

I find that academia is quite formal and because I didn't go to a private school, I went to a state school and I'm from a working-class family. I find the formalities very difficult at times. I don't understand why they exist or how I'm meant to act in them. Like at the reading group I was at the other week.

Classed experiences are deeply embodied, affectively lived and performed (Walkerdine 2011, p. 258). Power relations inform body pedagogics, and while it is possible for us to learn to overcome the challenges in learning to acquire the right academic cultural attributes, it is not without potential bodily injury (Shilling 2007; Gill 2010), which might manifest as eye strain or back pain from working long hours at a computer, or even anxiety, stress, or depression.

I think there's something about kind of owning the space as a leader, feeling that you're legitimate, like a confidence in your legitimacy. So it's not just that procedural legitimacy. You know what is it with power there's like a - you can have legitimate kind of power because that's your role but I think a leader has to extend beyond just being in the role. They have to be more than that, an embodiment.

In her weekly reading group, Hazel is involved in a mode of pedagogic transmission and thus becomes equipped with a 'vastly heightened performance capacity' in comparison to

those who may not be involved in such disciplinary practices (Shilling 2007, p. 14). Resulting in a bodily transformation of sorts, there is a power in confronting confrontation, of standing up to antagonism, and this enables Hazel to realise that the jousting professor and this situation no longer has power over her. From this realisation Hazel is empowered and feels both pleasure and pain at the change.

When women and others are measured against Benchmark Men they are invariably 'found wanting' (Thornton 2013, p. 128). Mimicry is the only path for those assigned to the feminine (Irigaray 1985). Women may mimic the masculine in the aim that they will achieve subjecthood and so reaffirm the phallocentrism of the symbolic order. However, under such a regime there is no possibility of an autonomous difference or place for women other than as the negative mirror of man (Rozmarin 2011). O'Connor (2000) suggests that women can challenge hierarchical relations with a range of 'resistance' strategies that include: keeping your head down, challenging the opposition of work and family, confronting the 'enemy' from within the institution, and naming organisational culture that is exclusionary for women. However, such approaches can become somewhat contradictory. Kate White (2003, p. 47) argues that 'none of these strategies effectively seek to redefine an elitist and intransigent management culture'. Those who are marked by difference continue to be constructed as lesser than those who represent sameness. As Thornton (2013) observes, Benchmark Men promote those most like themselves. There is a misguided faith around the pipeline theory that as more women undertake positions of leadership, those women will then recruit women in their image. Instead, to ensure conformity these 'token' women are rendered ineffectual. Louise Morley is optimistic however, suggesting that there still are 'possibilities for creativity and critical challenge' (1999, p. 191).

Luce Irigaray (1985) plays with the idea of mimesis as a way ‘for a woman to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it’ (1985, p. 76). Rather than creating a new theory of the feminine as a subject, Irigaray is more interested in mimesis as a way of ‘jamming the theoretical machinery itself’ (1985, p. 78). Mimesis is a subversive and strategic form of repetition. It is a strategic use of language that upsets the canonical dominance of male-centric epistemology and ontology (Rozmarin 2011, p. 13). Practically, Shilling (2007, p. 15) argues that successful mimesis requires not only mimicking but also having corporeal comprehension of the attempted execution of skilled tasks, not simply an imitating of techniques.

Irigaray’s mimesis is a bodily conscious act, and shares similarities with Ahmed’s ‘willfulness’ in the ways in which ‘willfulness’ can adapt and flex in the contemporary academy to the dominant will; that of a neoliberal phallocentrism. This is where Ahmed’s ‘willfulness’ can be most productive. Sometimes we must go with the will of the way in order to sustain a feminist, ‘willful’ subjectivity. Ahmed notes that:

Willfulness is ordinary stuff. It can be a daily grind. This is also how an experience of willfulness is world creating: willful subjects can recognise each other, can find each other, can create spaces of relief, spaces that might be breathing spaces, spaces in which we can be inventive. (2014, p. 169)

‘Willful’ academic women find each other in unlikely spaces within the confines and gendered hostility of the conference. As I discovered when at a large sociology conference:

I stand eating a Danish during the morning tea break. Awkwardly trying to hold onto my conference bag, a serviette filled with buttery pastries, and a plastic cup of orange juice (why do conference organisers never provide enough tables and chairs?), a woman comes up to me and tells me that she enjoyed my paper. What a relief! I smile and thank her earnestly, quickly wiping away any possible flakes of pastry from my mouth, wishing my hands were not so full of things, and wondering if I should attempt to find my business cards. She tells me she heard some other women commenting on my paper in the queue for the toilets. The women’s toilets seem like a strange place for such critical engagement in scholarly research. I hungrily soak up the positive feedback that I hear in the tone of the woman’s voice.

In this encounter the experiences often associated with visiting public ablutions; that of embarrassment, shame, fear of criticism, and anxieties around performance mirror my own emotions in the conference paper session. Sheila Cavanagh observes that ‘affect is a complex affair and what is queerest about the toilet is that it is a repository for the messy, contradictory, unknowable, excessive, dissonant, and thus troubling dimensions of the social subject’ (2013, p. 288). Communal toilets are spaces privileged for their anonymity. They are gendered spaces, private and segregated. Places where you can easily feel trapped, but in this instance, it was a space in which these women felt most comfortable or at the very least, compelled to talk about the conference papers they had

just heard. The way individuals inhabit organised spaces is also significant in constituting embodied subjectivity (Bell & King 2010, p. 433). This refers to how delegates move about the conference, ‘what they do with their bodies, where they go and how they walk, who they stand near or move away from, who they seek out and who they ignore’ (Halford & Leonard 2006, p. 98). If the conference room is the centre, the toilets are the margins. I do not wish to incite an argument in support of strictly women-only spaces. Such gendered spaces can also render identities invisible (Cavanagh 2013, p. 296), but it does speak volumes about the affective dimensions of the academic conference and the conversation that took place in the line for the toilets contrasts and even challenges the masculine hegemony of the academic conference.

On Flying and Saying Thank You

Thank you

[thangk-yoo]

He said thank you when she spoke up in the meeting

A thank you is always appreciated. Maybe we have become so used to hearing those two little words that they’ve all but lost their meaning, or maybe we don’t hear them at all. I am still struck when I attend conferences and seminars by how men hardly ever say thank you at these events—or more specifically, how academic men rarely thank and acknowledge academic women presenters. When I am the speaker, and I stand in front of these men I feel my stomach drop. I am poised, ready to take off. That is because in my conference presentation ‘the body takes new flight’ (Cixous 1991, p. 43). Speaking is an embodied performativity. The writing-thinking body can be used as a performative instrument to speak. For if we:

Listen to a woman speak at a public gathering. She doesn't "speak," she throws her trembling body forward; she lets go of herself, she flies; all of her passes into her voice, and it's with her body that she vitally supports the "logic" of her speech. Her flesh speaks true. She lays herself bare. In fact, she physically materialises what she's thinking; she signifies it with her body. (Cixous 1976, p. 881)

Obligatory applause ensues, and I return to my seat. But I do not hear the word thank you. I do not hear, 'thank you for that insightful and detailed presentation', or 'thank you for taking the time to speak with us.' It's always just straight into a soliloquy on a tangential issue with these men. Alice makes a similar observation: *'You notice that all the people who ask questions are men. I thought, oh fuck it's still true yeah, I mean not always, but in certain—when there's a certain group of people together...'* It is not uncommon for a male academic to make a comment, 'other men turning to him, congratulating him for being constructive' (Ahmed 2014, p. 155). This is where 'the question of silence is in this moment not a question of not speaking but of not being heard' (Ahmed 2014, p. 155).

I sit amongst these men, I feel my skin burn with anger and rage. I feel unable to move. Sometimes unable to speak. Through the metaphor of 'flying' women can 'speak/write' their story and enact their own freedom. Cixous' woman in flight is a woman who is 'dispersible, prodigious, stunning, desirable and capable of others, of the other woman she will be, of the other woman she isn't' (1976, p. 890). I want to be this woman. This woman who comes in without fear of her becoming. It is as if the absence or perhaps even the presence of the word 'thank you' that pins me down; pushes me into this space,

punishes me to this chair, and penalises me for challenging the patriarchal ordering of this academic conference with my feminist talk. Preventing me from flying, this dizzying flight Cixous describes, takes place between knowledge and invention (1976, p. 893). I should be flying. I shouldn't give a *flying* fuck about men saying thank you. The woman's flight gives voice (Cixous 1997, p. 166); she 'wills' herself into becoming by her own movement and this act is marked by woman's seizing the moment 'to become at will the taker and the initiator, for her own right, in every symbolic system, in every political process' (1976, p. 880). Cixous' phrase 'to become at will'; an assertion of women's political right is echoed in Ahmed's notion of 'willfulness'. My body feels frozen in this silence, this gap where a 'thank you' might go, but my eyes are always searching the room. Looking to catch the eye of another woman. Hoping that our gaze meets. Willing recognition. Sharing cynicism at these men. Rolling our eyes. Smiling at one another. Even if we have never met, there is a shared knowing. Our bodies, they speak in a feminist language. It is a point of connection that also speaks 'Thank you. I am here, and I support you'.

Baby's First Conference

Today you are nine weeks old!

I, as your mummy am about to do something quite bold

We've packed our bags and hopped in the car

Four hours drive it's not very far

'It's Baby's first conference' the delegates they cried

Oh the pleasure of just being here, I cannot hide

These temporary events offer an enticingly open invitation

But when you are a parent it can be a real situation

Submitting the abstract and writing the paper

Am I going to regret this decision later?

Travelling, attending, and presenting all create possibilities
with time and space producing 'mobile subjectivities'

I am oscillating between centre and margin

Especially when I am only two months' post-partum

For some, moving between and across boundaries is easy to navigate

But for others, there is this invisible line that is hard to demarcate

Some people say, 'geez, you're brave'

And others will exclaim 'gosh, your baby is so well behaved!'

But many will tell me, 'you can't have your cake and eat it too'

'You are either at home or at work, you can't have the two'

You wouldn't take your baby to work if you were conducting open heart surgery

You wouldn't take your baby to work if you were orating before a judge and jury

You wouldn't take your baby to work if you were a pilot flying a plane

or a conductor driving a train

You wouldn't take a baby to work if you were a cleaner

or even a teacher

Because that is not standard operating procedure

You wouldn't take your baby onto a construction site

or to work at a restaurant late at night

You wouldn't take a baby into parliament...

In these early days and months, I need to feel you close to me— my darling baby

But what happens when you turn three?

Is it right to ask a child to sit quietly four days straight?

My needs, wants and desires will just have to wait

But why should I have to divide my attention?

I hasten to mention

Just because I am not a radiologist

doesn't make me an apologist

For the work that I do has just as much value—damn you!

Having a child adds a layer of complexity

So, what if academia was more family-friendly?

For, what if you are single, or have no extended family?

How do you juggle work commitments when both parents are trying to smash the neoliberal patriarchy?

Twelve weeks of school holidays, and only eight weeks of combined annual leave

You're still four weeks short— add on some sick days and it's still a squeeze

But what about if you are a casual, a sessional, or on contract?

You are most likely going to have to miss out— and that, is a fact.

These are problems of the internalised sort

Being liable for our own success or failure is particularly fraught

We must challenge the structures that inform these 'choices'

We must really listen to women's voices

I must admit that I wouldn't usually share that I am a mother

To keep quiet reduces my chance of being made to feel 'other'

Finding critical autoethnography allows me to ask these hard questions

The ones that are sticky, and tricky, and awkward that nobody ever mentions

Day One of the conference, and I am sleep deprived, and with a cloudy mind

I sit up the back of the theatre so you can have a breastfeed

Just to be amongst the discourse is something I need

I try taking notes, but it is a bit of a struggle

Holding a baby, a note pad and a pen, and a cup of coffee is quite a juggle

Not to mention my brain feels like a laptop that has 5,471 tabs open

But I am here, and my mind isn't completely broken

Feed, sleep, play, repeat

My life without you now would feel incomplete

The conference too, has its own patterns and routines in the various dress codes it obliges

The nametags, the complimentary tea and coffee and the performative disguises

You see, academic conferences are inter-corporeal spaces

Where academic identities are constructed through embodied experiences in places

Space is not a fixed entity, it moves and it changes

Some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong while others are marked as dangerous

Through the body, conference delegates acquire various skills and dispositions

That allow newcomers to demonstrate their proficiency as technicians

The success of our performance as academics is our membership into a specific culture

But it is one that is based on a gendered sub-structure

When it is my turn to present I give you a big kiss

Watch carefully little one, body pedagogics in action is not something to miss

I shake with nerves, I feel on trial, my whole career and identity at stake

A stellar presentation does an academic make

At the conclusion, the floor is open to shorter speeches disguised as questions

I am struck with a deliberately convoluted comment but I politely welcome the suggestions

With your gorgeous smile, you responded to us academics' question time patter

It was then that I realised, in this moment, all else ceased to matter

I have given my paper but there is no time to relax
Mama is always on duty, this is the gendered parental tax
Conferences are important places for networking
But with a baby all I feel are heads turning

Day two of the conference, and we arrive on time, which is an incredible feat
Hang on, I smell something whiffy, and it's hardy discrete
'The session is about to start', the conference organisers call
'Shit', I say, we are going to miss the keynote after all

You see, 'baby isn't happy with a yucky mucky nappy'
'So we put another nappy on the baby-oh!'
and sit in the sunshine, which isn't so crappy...

You see, I am between two worlds,
I am in 'The Waiting Place'
Being both a spectacle and invisible is something I just have to embrace

Changing nappies on lecture room floors
Listening to keynotes from behind half opened doors
I cuddled you when you were sad
And missing the conference dinner wasn't so bad

We passed a milestone along the way
Exactly when, I cannot say
Even with equal opportunity and diversity

Gendered challenges still persist in the neoliberal university.

I wrote this poem after I attended my first conference with my then, nine-week-old baby. I wrote it in the style of a children's storybook because it is the world of reading that I am now immersed in. I never had to reveal or conceal my pregnancy in the academic workplace because I ended up moving interstate—becoming an external status PhD student and working remotely— so I was nervous when I returned on campus for a one-day symposium at two months post-partum. There is still such a noticeable disadvantage to being a mother in academia, even though so many academics are disadvantaged. In the corridor it was all congratulations, compliments and dotting eyes. “It goes so fast! How small babies are! It’s amazing that you’re here.” I breastfeed on the grey fabric armchair by the elevator. When it is time to go in, I pass my son back to my partner. I am torn by competing desires. To remain in the privacy of our newborn bubble and the (self)conscious and creative drive to keep one foot in the academic door. They take the lift back downstairs and head off for a walk around the university gardens. I step through the seminar room doorway and into another realm. There is an awkward silence as we sit around an oblong table waiting for the session to start. I feel guilty about my outing in the corridor just moments before. I don’t want to be judged differently but I am somehow different to the last time I saw this group of people. Irrevocably changed.

A few months later I decide to take another interstate trip to present at a conference. Herb was a calm and curious baby. Wrapped up against my chest—and with the flaps of my nursing bra almost permanently undone under my button

up shirt for ease of access—I could take him anywhere. No one need know that I only got on average four hours' sleep a night. Herb was an angel. It didn't matter. Sleep is for the weak, right? In my cloud of oxytocin, I felt confident. We need to normalise the presence of children on campus. We need to see more babies being breastfed in the workplace. I must 'speak back' to 'ensure that conferences speak differently to us' (Ford & Harding 2010, p. 517). I was challenging myself to be the change I wished to see. This time Herb and I travelled on our own. Although, to say I did it alone would be to overlook the immense support around me. I remain incredibly grateful for the love and care that I received on this trip from my friends and colleagues, for nourishing me both materially and intellectually. As Laura Rademaker (2017) points out, well wishes and positive attitudes are not enough to support academic parents' participation and institutions need to address this. Many (Calisi 2018; Gill 2009, 2014; Hook 2017; Morley 2014; Probert 2005) have already raised practical steps universities can take in order to reduce the number of women who leave academia before they reach the peak of their careers, which includes improving childcare on campus, providing childcare or covering the costs of childcare at conferences, scheduling meetings or keynotes after school drop off and before pick up times.

During the morning keynote on the first day of the conference, Herb and I sit at the side of the tiered lecture theatre and toward the back of the room. For the most part, Herb dozes on my chest until he is woken by the applause. Once awake, his cooing sounds seemed much louder to me in the acoustics of the auditorium. I start to panic. I let him grab my pen, and then after he loses interest, play with my keys. I bounce him a little on my lap to keep him from protesting about being

stuck in the confines of the chair, but I succumb to my own internalised peer-pressure and we quickly escape up the stairs and out into the foyer. I rationalise that I will instead use this time before the session concludes to work on my own conference paper, which at this point I still hadn't finished working on. It wouldn't be an academic conference if we weren't all writing and tweaking papers right before our sessions commence (Henderson 2018). And then there's a nappy that needs changing. Herb's pacifier falls on the floor, and I dunk it in a tea cup of water from the boiler.

During the break I meet more students and academics who are yet to discover that I've had a baby. While I was pregnant my mind was in a thick fog of trepidation. Reading and writing required extra concentration. Once the little squish arrived the muddle had lifted but I was left giddy. My head was still in a cloud. My mind freezes, and I can't think of anything to say. I look down at Herb strapped in the Ergo pouch on my front. I fuss over him unnecessarily as an excuse; to avoid confronting my own feelings of inadequacy in these conversations and in the conference space. In the next session, I opt for pacing and patting Herb in the small dark space between the lecture theatre and the foyer. The double door arrangement means that I can listen in and see the speaker, but no one can see me. It seemed fitting. Here I was, one foot in and one foot out of the academic realm. "You know you and your baby are perfectly fine sitting in the theatre, I know you must think he's making more noise than he actually is. Anyway, we could do with a bit more 'noise' in here," one woman politely encourages, but I'm quickly losing confidence. I feel safe in the airlock. I am between two worlds, trying to have the best of both, hoping I don't lose myself in the change.

On another campus, at another conference, I discovered the power of the authoritarian-patriarchal style tiered lecture theatre when I had to leave the conference keynote mid-way with a crying baby, with the only exit being at the front of the room next to the lectern. I felt so terribly embarrassed. The complete opposite of the relaxed and enthused conference delegate. I felt a spectacle. Don't draw attention to yourself. Act cool, I told myself. I was amongst strangers anyway. I felt their gaze on me. Here comes the mum-student. So much academic potential ahead of this young woman and she's thrown it all away! Was it completely unprofessional of me to have brought him along in the first place? I cursed my stroller as I clumsily tried to navigate it up and down stairs.

Almost a year later I presented the above poem at another interstate conference. I invited delegates to join me on the floor for story time and I had the words and some illustrations I had drawn and then scanned into PowerPoint on the projector above us. Sitting on the floor, some kneeling, others cross-legged, we destabilised the power dynamic of presenter and audience, active and passive. Certain stanzas *'for, what if you are single, or have no extended family? How do you juggle work commitments when both parents are trying to smash the neoliberal patriarchy?'* and *'at the conclusion, the floor is open to shorter speeches disguised as questions'* received laughter, cheers and clapping, others *'for the work that I do has just as much value, damn you'* and *'I am between two worlds, in "The Waiting Place" Being both a spectacle and invisible is something I just have to embrace'* were responded to with supportive hollering and rhythmic finger clicking. This was the most fun I had ever had presenting at a conference. My

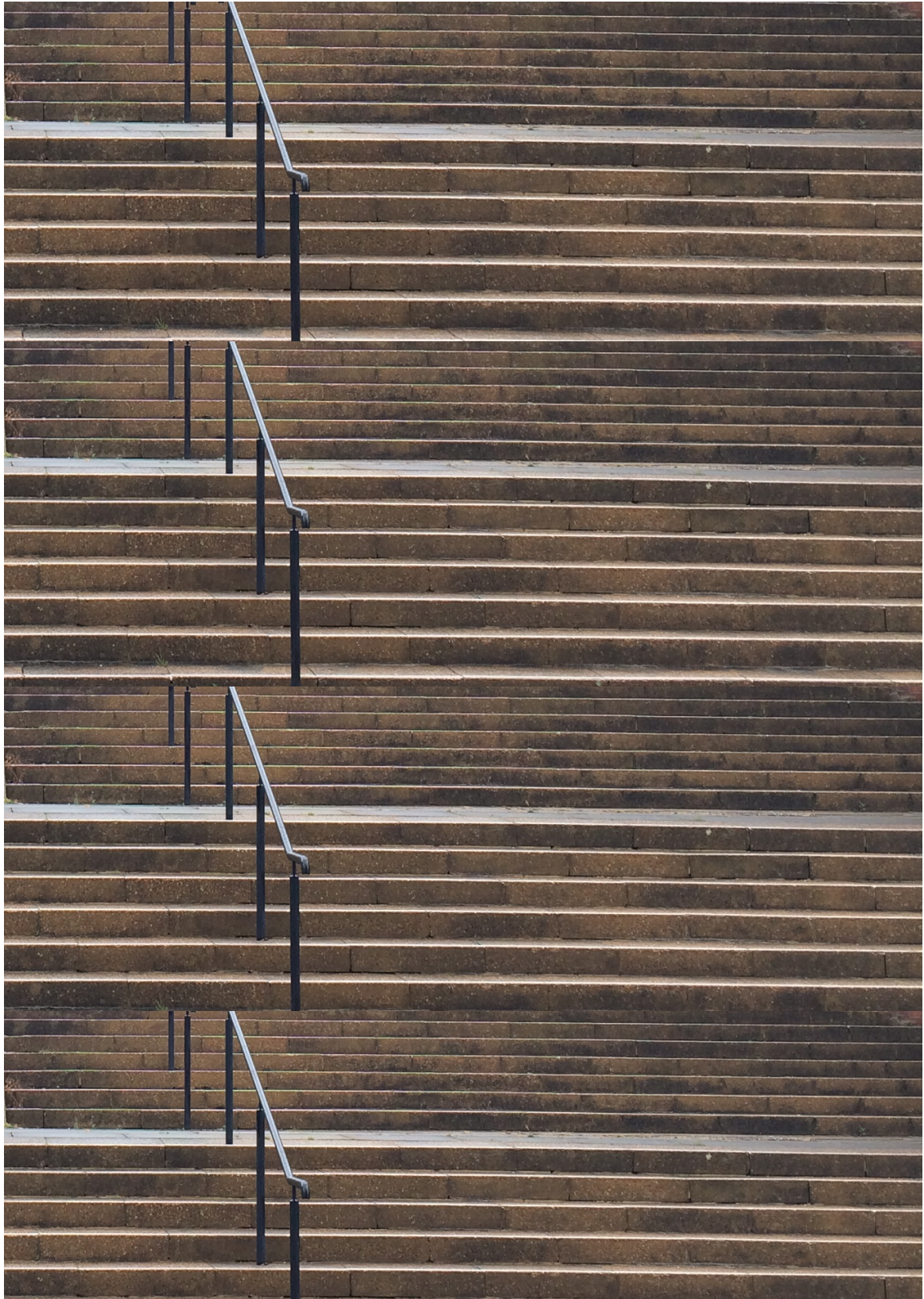
nervous energy and excitement were met with eye contact and smiles from women and the small number of men in attendance.

Conclusion

It is the last day of the Universities Australia Higher Education Conference. It is the annual signature event for the sector attracting over 900 delegates including Vice-Chancellors, Chancellors, senior university representatives, Government and industry, international specialists, and media. Senior executives and Members of Parliament dash off to catch early flights home, the corporate sponsors pack away their merchandise and collapse their marquees, the roller door on the coffee rattles shut, and a stream of bodies exit the lecture theatre and make towards the convention centre foyer. Firm handshakes and business cards are exchanged. A group of academics (not-so) casually crowd around the previous session's plenary chair, political journalist and commentator Annabel Crabb, hoping for an introduction. I walk over to an oblong ottoman near the entrance of the exhibition hall. My legs are tired from standing in high heels all day. I sit down and continue to observe the departure rituals of this industry conference. A middle-aged woman in a grey skirt-suit and grey-blond power bob sits down next to me. She looks important. Stretching my legs out in front of me, I dig my heels into the backs of my shoes and slide off my stilettos. The woman next to me hunches over and with one leg crossed over the other she grasps at the heel of her black pumps and pulls them off one at a time. In my backpack are my New Balance sneakers. The woman has with her a reusable shopping bag along with her black leather laptop satchel. In it are a pair of well-worn gym shoes. She takes them out of the green

bag, undoes the purple laces, and wriggles her feet into the spongy Asics. We smile at each other in this act of corporate undressing.

In studying space and place and the ways in which bodies transmit values and reproduce knowledge it is possible to see how individuals negotiate such established norms. When problematising academic collegiality in the neoliberal university, it is important not to forget that as academics we are connected. A student and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor seemingly worlds apart in terms of career, financial and job security, appearance, power, and privilege are nevertheless connected in and by space, in ways in which are gendered. We are connected because we work in the same place, we work together, and it can feel good for us to be connected, regardless of whether or not our collegial relationships are complicit in or resistant to a neoliberal agenda. Most importantly, there must be space for women's voices, and for their experiences to be listened to and valued. Academic women's accounts of collegiality tell us is that there is a lack of connectedness, and their experiences are often rendered invisible in the spaces of the neoliberal university.





Chapter Six

A Laughing Matter:

Affect, Resistance, and the Mis/recognition of Emotion

Universities, both in Australia and internationally, have traditionally been constructed as institutions of rationality and objectivity that are free of emotion. This gendered dualism contributes towards women's continued marginalisation and devaluation in academia. However, research on the emotion work of educational leaders (Blackmore 1999) and the prominence of the 'emotional' or 'affective turn' in leadership and higher education studies (Leathwood & Read 2009; Hey & Leathwood 2009; Hey & Morley 2011) has complicated the role of emotion in the university. This chapter expands upon previous research and feminist interpretations of emotion, with a specific empirical focus to explore academic women's laughter as an 'unruly' 'willfulness' (Rowe 1995; Ahmed 2014). It argues that such laughter disturbs the taken-for-granted gender neutrality of the university and articulates women's experiences in it. I propose that laughter in its expression of emotion, and specifically feminist laughter has the capacity to subvert and transcend the rational-masculine hegemony of the knowledge economy, authorising female academics in the present.

Laughter – that audible bubbling up of air through the lungs and into the throat is a reflexive response to emotions, sometimes unexplainable and un-representable in origin. Laughter featured in all of my interviews with academic women. It was often sounded in the form of a humble chuckle, a titter, or a surprised shriek. In my interviews, laughter was at times used to stifle overt cynicism, and convey through scoffing mirth a critical mocking. Laughter expresses a wide array of emotions. It is a socio-embodied

phenomena, which can often be found in research accounts, but rather than simply relegate these moments to the square brackets of an interview transcript this chapter seeks to explore the emotive and affective dimensions of laughter and how it is used to express feelings such as anger, resentment, resistance and desire that might not be otherwise captured in my research. In doing so, this chapter engages with contemporary debates around the absence and presence of emotions in higher education.

An analysis of laughter can reveal shared understandings (or disagreement). It can communicate disapproval and narrow communicative distances and has the potential to be a subversive force (Cohen 2001; Davidson 2001; Haynes & Sharpe 2010; Rowe 1995). Once I began to notice the recurrence of laughter in my interviews with academic women, and its affective capacities, I started to realise how important laughter could be in understanding how women experience leadership and carve spaces of influence and authority for themselves within the contemporary university. As outlined earlier in this thesis, neoliberal practices within the university have created a culture of surveillance. Laughter can express what may be un-representable, and in some instances, laughter signifies the personal risk these women took to share their experiences with me.

Emotions in the University

Emotions pervade every aspect of social life; from our speech, to our conversations, and discourse (Bloch 2008). Emotions are important in understanding how discourses constitute academic women's performativities and identities. Emotional labour is a concept articulated by Hochschild (1983) who recognises the significant but often unacknowledged labour that employees often undertake in order to control and regulate the expression of emotions at work. Emotional labour involves enacting, limiting and

even hiding spontaneous feelings and reactions, such as anger, disgust, fear, sadness, or delight, excitement and approval. It means that ‘employees are expected to modify the extent of their feelings or express them in ways that are culturally acceptable to their organisation, colleagues, clients and other stakeholders’ (Cherry 2017, p. 161). We might pretend to be friendly, upbeat, concerned, calm, angry, or disinterested when we may not feel these things at all. This is significant work, which is often ignored by employers. Successful and sustained emotional labour is often mistaken for ‘soft skills’ or ‘emotional intelligence’ that is assumed to come easily or naturally to the person. It is a gendered concept. Seeing and hearing emotions is a way of knowing about the world. When we concede to our employer’s attempts to engineer feelings that is to manage and control our emotions, Hochschild warns that we lose touch with reality and with ourselves (1983, p. 28-29).

Neoliberalism uses a discourse of feelings and personal skills to micro-manage academics. Emotions become a punitive technology of neoliberalism producing particular kinds of subjects (Leathwood & Hey 2009, p. 436). Organisational culture prohibits the acknowledgment of emotional labour, so that it becomes undiscussable or even invisible. Universities have been constructed as dispassionate and objective emotion-free zones, reflecting the dominance of Cartesian dualism with its rational/emotional, mind/body, public/private, masculine/feminine split. Gender bias is neutralised by the masculine norm; a norm that continues to render the feminine, as well as the sexual and racial ‘other’, outside of institutionalised sites of intellectual practice (Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013, p. 315). Indeed, much academic research continues to adhere to ideals of scientific rationality and objectivity shaped by a stereotype of manliness and masculine rigour (Harding 2011, p. 85; Oseen 1997). In this rational-masculine tradition, non-scientific

knowledge has been dismissed, trivialised and relegated to the feminine realm (Phillips, Pullen & Rhodes 2013, p. 316).

The Affective Turn and Emotional Intelligence

An exploration of the emotive dimensions of laughter can be understood as part of the broader 'affective turn' in scholarly research on the political, economic, and cultural transformations changing the realm of the social (Clough & Halley 2007). Without entering into detailed epistemological and ontological debates regarding emotions and affect (Gregg & Seigworth 2010), this chapter focuses on the potentiality of affect *and* emotion in the laughter of academic women. In a broad sense, the affective relates to the intensities or visceral forces other than conscious knowing and while it is often used interchangeably and in combination with emotion, affect and emotion do different things. Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth state that 'affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon' (2010, p. 1). Ahmed suggests that we view emotions as relational because it is 'through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made; the "I" and "we" are shaped by, and even take the shape of contact with others' (2014, p. 10). I use the term affect to describe the non-representational bodily encounters that arise from laughter as well as the more representational term emotion to articulate the feeling of such experiences. Laughter puts emotions, both positive and negative into motion, shaping what bodies do and 'sticking' affect to objects (Ahmed 2014). Laughter is the social conduit for affect and the transferal of emotion onto bodies. In such moments it makes affect visible.

In many ways the affective turn can be understood as a move away from emotions. The affective encompasses a large body of literature spanning a number of disciplines (Gregg

& Seigworth 2010; Clough & Halley 2007). In higher education, the affective turn is associated with debates around the creation of academic knowledge (Hey & Leathwood 2009). Yet this turn towards the affective in its various manifestations excludes much pre-existent feminist work (Koivunen 2010). Cixous remarks that:

as soon as the question of ontology raises its head, as soon as one asks oneself “what is it?,” as soon as there is intended meaning. Intention: desire, authority — examine them and you are let right back... to the father. It is even possible not to notice that there is no place whatsoever for woman in the calculations. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 38-9)

Affect theorists build on the important work within feminist theory. In the experience and demonstration and even the preference for affects, affects are understood as a form of social capital and are used as a means of accruing value in the self (Skeggs 2005). Affect has been taken up by consumer culture to promote affects as a key form of self-knowledge and a moral act (Koivunen 2010; Skeggs 2005). Anu Koivunen (2010) in her historiography of the affective turn highlights how it has renegotiated the critical currency of feminist thought and as a consequence has the potential to reproduce the very mind/body dualism its theorisations seek to transform. Beverley Skeggs and Vik Loveday (2012) emphasise how different affective articulations can reveal different understandings of value, which is connected with what matters. These values then come into effect and circulate alongside the dominant symbolic. Even if the discourse of affect acknowledges feminist theorisations of emotion and the body as precursors, Ahmed (2014, p. 206) proposes that the shift itself is away from such scholarly contributions and in many ways the affective turn can be understood as a move away from emotions.

Part of the success of neoliberal capitalism is its adoption of affects in order to accumulate capital. Valerie Hey asserts ‘the market is largely ‘affect-saturated’ as bodies are increasingly addressed/dis/affected through feelings, stimuli and impulses’ (2011, p. 209). Policy discourses authorise emotions such as fear and depression and in doing so shape us and place social and economic responsibilities once governed by the state back onto the collective individual. The ‘affective turn’ in higher education discourse supports the commercialisation of the academy in that ‘supportive’ and ‘emotionally literate’ individuals in teaching and learning are considered most apt at producing ‘emotionally intelligent’ and ‘employable’ graduates (Hey & Leathwood 2009). The popularity of such concepts as emotional intelligence, social psychology, human relations and the study of self-help have been mobilised for organisational change and incorporated into leadership literature. The affective turn has redefined university leadership and management as an acquired skill of how to better manage others.

Higher education appropriates a discourse of feelings to micro-manage the educational trajectories of its subjects (Leathwood & Hey 2009, p. 436). New formations of patriarchy within neoliberalism ensure that ‘being emotional’ or ‘caring’, are regulated and controlled (Burke 2015, p. 391). In neoliberal terms, emotional intelligence is linked to the profitability of the emotionally attuned and is understood to contribute to a more productive workforce (Blackmore 2011).

The literature on emotional intelligence often suggests a perceived dissolution of the pre-existing gendered dualism. However, this is not the result of a mainstream acceptance of feminist social theory or the sociology of emotions (Blackmore 2011; 2013). Echoing

Cixous, ‘if we consult literary history, it is the same story. It all comes back to the man—to his torment, *his* desire to be (at) the origin’ (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 39). Feminist theorists have long argued that emotionality and rationality are inextricably linked, and yet theorisations of emotional intelligence in management and leadership studies link and legitimate emotions with brain science and appropriate gender essentialism—that ‘women possess more empathy’ and are more ‘adept interpersonally’— and naturalise it. In contrast, men with emotional intelligence are championed for overcoming such gendered stereotypes. Emotional intelligence is used in the organisation as a way to reduce conflict and manage emotional displays in order to achieve effective cooperation (Ahmed 2004; Blackmore 2013). Emotional literacy—that is, the ability to read emotions—is, in this instance, used to suppress emotional responses and endorse conformity to a masculine ideal.

Emotional intelligence standardises emotional functions and presumes ongoing stability: a façade of neutrality and positive performativity. That is, in Cixousian terms, ‘subordination of the feminine to the masculine order, which gives the appearance of being the condition for the machinery’s functioning’ (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 39). Emotional work/intelligence in this scenario loses its critical imperative in the ways that emotionality is gendered and racialised (Blackmore 2013, p. 145). In this, Blackmore notes another paradox: that it is, mostly white male leaders have benefited from or been advantaged by unequal social relations of gender in organisations. Emotions are being rationalised, with emotional intelligence being ‘redefined as a higher not lower order capability’ (2013, p. 145). It is re-inscribed as a generic skill devoid of gender, race and cultural significance and what’s more is that the emotional turn has also largely benefited men and is now a central feature of contemporary leadership. As Blackmore highlights:

In arguing that emotions are no longer private and feminised work but generic attributes, the leadership discourse ignores how emotion is displayed, perceived, and understood differently according to the gender, racial or cultural positioning of the leader or their location in the organisation or society. (2011, p. 220)

Women's presence, their laughter threatens the stability of the masculine structure. A structure 'that passed itself off as eternal-natural, by conjuring up from femininity the reflections and hypotheses that are essentially ruinous for the stronghold still in possession of authority' (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 39-40). It isn't that men have embraced the feminine in emotional intelligence, it is that emotional intelligence has become coded as masculine. Emotional intelligence is often described as the distinction between leaders and followers. Emotions are exploited by the corporate organisation. Blackmore equates this misrepresentation of emancipatory discourses and terms such as transformational and emotional intelligence as tantamount to symbolic violence. Supplanting powerful concepts of social justice with more neutral terms such as 'diversity' is another example of this.

What is particularly interesting about this 'affective turn' in higher education is how laughter can reveal these tensions, contradictions, and paradoxes of a gendered social structure. Women's presence, their laughter, threatens the stability of the masculine structure. A structure 'that passed itself off as eternal-natural, by conjuring up from femininity the reflections and hypotheses that are essentially ruinous for the stronghold still in possession of authority' (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 39-40). It isn't that men have embraced the feminine in emotional intelligence, it is that emotional intelligence has

become coded as masculine. What are these women communicating through laughter that is perhaps not being said explicitly in their responses to my interview questions?

Neoliberal practices within the university have created a culture of self-surveillance and this prevents critical voices from speaking out and being heard.

Interrupting the Libidinal Affective Economy

Feminist theories of emotion have opened up a critical space to rethink the relation between mind and body (Ahmed 2014, p. 206). Recent scholarship in higher education (Hey & Morley 2011), organisational (Phillips 2014; Fotaki et al. 2014; Harding, Ford & Fotaki 2013) and leadership studies (Blackmore 2011; Oseen 1997) has focused on the continued masculine hegemony in academic research and have explored the ways in which the work of feminist post-structuralists might provoke new feminist research into these intersecting disciplinary fields. Such an approach disturbs the perceived gender neutrality of organisational and leadership studies in higher education. In this way, universities are understood as being governed by phallic knowledge or what Cixous (1976, p. 879) terms the 'masculine libidinal economy'. That is, the dominance of science, rationality and scholarly conquest over the unknown. Such a system is based upon the fear of castration (Phillips 2014, p. 315). In adopting a feminist poststructural framework to gender inequality in academia, it is possible to disrupt such Cartesian dualism of rationality and emotionality, masculinity and femininity, object and subject (Leathwood & Hey 2009). Academic women's continued marginalisation and devaluation in academia means that women often both collude with and resist their own marginalisation. Women's absence from the symbolic disables their equal participation (Fotaki 2013).

It is through women's laughter – a gestural code of women's bodies that women move beyond this dualism. Irigaray probes: 'isn't laughter the first form of liberation from a secular oppression? Isn't the phallic tantamount to the seriousness of meaning? Perhaps woman, and the sexual relation transcend it 'first' in laughter?' (1985, p. 163). Women transcend the phallic when laughing. This transcendence is not without contradiction. Indeed, it is as Kathleen Rowe (1995, p. 4) states:

because as women we cannot simply reject these conventions and invent new 'untainted' ones in their place, we must learn the language in which we inherit, with their inescapable contradictions, before transforming and re-directing them toward our own ends

Cixous (1976) in 'The Laugh of the Medusa' reinterprets the mythology of Medusa as an evocative symbol. Once a beautiful woman, Medusa is monstrously transformed into a repulsive creature with a head of live and venomous snakes that turned men to stone. The mythology of the Medusa comprises an extreme ambivalence towards women – their bodies, beauty, and self, an internalisation of male fears of castration and female lack (Leeming 2013, p. 71; Rowe 1995, p. 9). The Medusa expresses anger. Her rage is embodied in her hair of seething snakes, and from a feminist perspective could be understood as an appropriate emotional response to marginalisation and oppression. In 'The Laugh of the Medusa', the Medusa is updated. She is powerful. Anger as an emotion that can be reclaimed and legitimised. Anger can reinvigorate. It can bring back energy and hope (Ahmed 2014). Women have been conditioned to be polite. Anger is an emotion that breaks the gendered binarism. Cixous urges women to resist the pressure to look at oneself through the prism of the male gaze, because 'you only have to look at the Medusa

straight on to see her. And she is not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing' (1976, p. 885). For Cixous, the body is a locus for empowerment, women's own enjoyment and recovery, and this is central to women's writing. Writing in the feminine offers a new way of understanding language. There is a creative destruction in Medusa's laughter since she creates a spectacle of herself with her unruly laughter (Rowe 1995, p. 10). In her laughter, she represents a kind of excess. Cixous exclaims: 'What's the meaning of all these waves, these floods, these outbursts?' (1976, p. 876). She recites woman's coming into creative agency through embodied writing. Cixous wishes for women to proclaim their:

unique empire so that other women, other unacknowledged sovereigns, might exclaim: I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard-of songs. Time and again I, too, have felt so full of luminous torrents that I could burst- burst with forms much more beautiful than those which are put up in frames and sold for a stinking fortune. (1976, p. 876)

Empirical Laughter

My first interview was extremely welcoming and warm with lots of laughter, and although not all the interviews were merry, they did all contain laughter of some kind. We are told that laughter is good for us. Laughter opens up the blood vessels to increase blood flow. It decreases inflammation, and releases endorphins into the bloodstream. It opens us up to the present moment (Greenfield 2002, p. 156). Laughter can also act as a form of release and relief (Macpherson 2008, p. 1086). If we understand our vocal enunciations as produced by, and productive of, relations, geographies of time, space, emotion and subjectivities, laughter has significant resonances for research on gender

equality in higher education. In this chapter, I attempt to capture the contextual and embodied experiences of laughter. Laughter is considered to be a cultural universal (Critchley 2002) and yet there has been limited critical engagement with laughter and humour in the social sciences (Macpherson 2008). Hannah Macpherson's work on the role of humour and laughter in research on visually impaired walking groups in the United Kingdom lays the groundwork for understanding the potentiality of laughter in empirical sociological research. She highlights the importance of sound, when so often research is 'ocular centric' (Jay 1994) and 'ablist' (Macpherson 2008, p. 1080). Stephanie Schnurr and Angela Chan (2009) also cite the need to acknowledge how non-verbal gestures can unintentionally be overlooked when we foreground sound.

"That's the beauty of being in an interview" Karen explains after a long joyous outburst of laughter, which caused her to lean back in her chair using her arms to anchor herself to the edge of the table in case her uncontrollable laughter sent her falling. *"It's just such an indulgence"* to speak with complete confidentiality and to have your voice heard. To really be listened to. Listening is a kind of embodied thinking-feeling, a drawing together of the streams of information – sonic, spatial, social (Findlay-Walsh 2017, p. 122). Careful listening comes before laughter (Stengel 2014, p. 200). In speaking and listening, we create public dialogic spaces (Bakhtin 1986); we create worlds. Qualities of sound such as pace, accent and dialect, intonation, frequency, amplitude and silence, invoke and reveal ways of being in these worlds, of class, gender, race, education and privilege (Kanngieser 2012, p. 348). Karen's use of the term 'indulgence', a pleasure, an extravagance, and an excess of sorts, is in many ways a response bound to the incongruous and gendered notion of emotion within the academy. It is also what prompts these narratives of experience as they speak in the language of laughter.

Laughter may also have no discernible reason, being simply a muscular reflex with no clear conscious cause. Our laughter may surprise us, for laughter has an infectious quality to it, which defies the limits of discourse and dislocates our sense of a rational reflective subject. Laughter is incongruous and paradoxical in that sometimes we might not even know why we are laughing (Swabey 1961). Patricia warns, *'I promise I won't laugh'* and then proceeds to laugh for a time, mostly to herself. She pauses before she continues, *'I guess there is that bit of - it's kind of a sense of despair. Because I don't know that there is a lot of leadership for me on the things that matter.'* Laughter can 'betray, express, and translate a complex range of feelings, (mis)understandings, relationships, and specialities' (Macpherson 2008, p. 1082). It can be difficult at times, however, to articulate or find the right vocabulary to reinvolve the situation which prompted such laughter.

The act of laughter is transgressive and ambiguous and yet it is that uncertainty, unrepresentable unpredictability of laughter, which makes it an epistemological and methodological feminist subversion of the affective libidinal economy. The sound of laughter itself is important because it affects what kinds of voices are heard, how, and in what spaces (Kanngieser 2012, p. 344). Women may be silent or silenced as a result of repeated experiences of having speech acts fail. Justine McGill is wary that various acts of silencing can render women 'effectively and eventually literally, silent' (2013, p. 203), and further, that silencing is not just the result of an isolated incident but of a culture that is, to varying degrees, hostile or dismissive to women (2013, p. 197). Laughter requires space and time to form. It is imperative that we recognise 'the reciprocitous dynamics of voices and the spaces in which they become, and make, present' (Kanngieser 2011, p. 344-45), because, in the words of Jean Luc Nancy (2007, p. 13), 'the sonorous present is

the result of space-time: it spreads through space, or rather it opens a space that is its own, the very spreading out of its resonance, its expansion and its reverberation'. Laughter alerts us to the contested values, and the precarious balances that constitute academic women's identities and performativities in the contemporary neoliberal university.

Humour and Laughter

Humour and laughter represent important dimensions of social life as well as new perspectives on the understandings we take for granted (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 209). The subversions, the inversions, the rule breaking of humour is universal but ultimately and 'often elusively localised in their nuance and context' (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 213). Sidonie sees '*a lot of complaining. A lot of complaining about meetings, and control. A lot of black humour actually. Subversive humour.*' I probe Sidonie for an example, but she tells me it is a bit more elusive. '*Black humour about management and black humour about students. Just off the cuff jokes, really.*' Everyone feels the 'ordinary affects' (Stewart 2007) in the neoliberal university and Sidonie considers formal complaining to management to be somewhat of a dead-end. Humour and laughter are often characterised as being inextricably linked. However, there is contestation about how laughter should be interpreted when it is viewed as inseparable to humour (Schnurr & Chan 2009). Humour and laughter are not merely funny, silly or trivial. They are 'serious engagement' (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 214).

Laughter can do serious work. Jokes encode or provoke social tensions and laughter can reproduce these divisions (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 214). Jokes and humour, even the denigrating type, can reveal certain assumptions about the perceived norms and values of certain people, and places, and can 'sometimes be indicative of who is considered 'in

place' and who is "out of place" (Macpherson 2008, p. 1082). Humour assumes that the audience of a joke has the requisite background to understand what is being communicated (Cohen 2001, p. 3). Humour and laughter can create a hierarchy of those who are included in the joke and those who are not (Bloch 2012, p. 73) and at times my participants would laugh more to themselves than as a signal of a shared affect. Laughter can represent powerlessness and a recognition of the incongruity of changing policies and practices in the university.

In its relationship to humour, laughter is considered to be part of a system of 'emotion-work' (Sanders 2004; Davidson 2001) whereby humour and jokes can be used to distance oneself from emotions, turning feelings of distress into laughter. Sometimes I pre-empted a humorous comment with an awkward laugh. I did not always like to do this, although it came from my attempts to develop a comfortable rapport with my participants and on occasion led me to overcompensate on the laughter front during an interview. 'Laughter is a boundary thrown around those laughing, those sharing the joke' (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 214). While my own laughter may coincide with another's, 'it may not' as Macpherson reminds, 'always correspond with the purpose, object, or effect of another person's laughter' (2008, p. 1084). This is the sort of laughter which does not *feel* like humour. Indeed, not all the laughter I encountered in my interviews was a response to a form of jest. Simon Critchley explains that 'we often laugh because we are troubled by what we laugh at, because it somehow frightens us' (2002, p. 56-57). In some instances, I had to learn to become comfortable with my own discomfort and silence.

Laughter in its function as a vessel or passage for the expression of complex affects, creates a space for response rather than simply reaction. In her discussion of laughter in

academia, Bloch (2012) explores the role of humour as an emotionally distancing device that embraces the co-existence of contrasts and contradictions in our social lives.

Humour, she asserts, relies on a mental openness. For instance, when we are too emotive we may not be able to see the humorous or funny side to a situation. It allows the one laughing to ‘think and feel through immediate discomfort or delight towards a considered action that represents one’s best self’ (Stengel 2014, p. 201). Hynes and Sharpe (2010) note in their research on humour and non-violent resistance that laughing together can strengthen collective struggles. Laughter can communicate a form of ridicule of the status quo and of power relations. Collectively, the act of laughing can enhance solidarity through consciousness-raising (Hynes & Sharpe 2010, p. 44). For Georges Bataille, laughter, especially the hilarious kind, in the extreme and excessive state can shatter the rationality of an individual. In a fit of laughter, the reasonability of the subject is destroyed, and such reverberations of laughter may then transfer from one person to another (Lawtoo 2011; Macpherson 2008).

Unruly Academic Women and ‘Willful’ Laughter

The act of laughing can be a disruptive and productive force (Hynes & Sharpe 2010, p. 45). In *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*, Rowe examines the conventions that govern gender and comedy and the spectacle-making unruly woman.

While Rowe uses film theory to analyse filmic texts, exploring gender in relation to the genres of melodrama, the carnivalesque and the masquerade, her argument has resonance with my own about the gendered performativity of academic labour and leadership, and the (in)visibility of academic women. She (1995) argues that while all narrative forms have the potential to represent transformation, it is the genres of laughter that most fully

employ the motifs of liminality. There is a potentiality in the character of the unruly laughing woman to disrupt the affective and libidinal economy.

The unruly academic woman laughing might be understood as a subject of resistance. However, understanding these women's experiences and their laughter as acts of resistance has the potential to reinforce dominant discourses rather than diminish them. Resistance is a force of opposition. It is 'tied to that which already has legitimacy' (Richardson 1997, p. 78). Women's laughter is not merely a response to neoliberal discourses of merit, measure, leadership, and emotional intelligence. Women's laughter has transformative power. Women's laughter gives voice to their experiences. Their laughter has value that exceeds mere resistance to dominant discourses.

The unruly woman is not a 'nice girl' and 'she is willing to offend and to be offensive' (Rowe 1995, p. 10), and as Cixous argues, she is willing 'to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the "truth" with laughter' (1976, p. 888). To deny women as active participants in spectatorship, is do deny women's emotions as legitimate responses to the injustices they experience (Rowe 1995, p. 7). A woman laughing violates the gendered sanctions imposed on women that keep them in their place and prevent them from exposing their bodies (Rowe 1995). Cixous chants: 'we're stormy, and that to which is ours breaks loose from us without fearing any debilitation' (1976, p. 878). Here Cixous might very well be talking about laughter. She (1976, p. 878) continues:

Our glances, our smiles, are spent: laughs exude from all our mouths; our blood flows and we extend ourselves without ever reaching an end; we never hold back our thoughts, our signs, our writing; and we are not afraid of lacking.

Laughter is bound as much to social exclusion as it is to inclusion. Laughing ‘with’ also entails laughing ‘at’ others (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 214). We may joke with our colleagues about the scarcity of funding, but laughter can be far more subversive (Gabriel 1991, p. 431). We may laugh along at the male professor’s misogynistic joke, but in reality, the grants are still more likely to be awarded to him, and he will thus maintain his power in the institution. A laughing response could be understood as ‘willful’ resistance (Ahmed 2014). ‘Willfulness’ is not a definitive identity, although to be named as ‘willful’ is to be branded by deviance. Instead, ‘willfulness’ occurs in a particular moment, enacted and mobilised by a subject. It is also affective in that it can be taken up in different ways by different bodies.

Laughter emerged in my interviews with academic women in a variety of situations and can be understood to be doing much discursive work in that women’s laughter produces multiple interpretations and meanings. Women who dare to laugh, to make a spectacle, make themselves vulnerable to ridicule and trivialisation, can also be understood as threatening (Rowe 1995, p. 3). The unruly laughing woman, in that moment, escapes the fate of women governed under patriarchy – in the realm of inversion. Rowe argues that by analysing the unruly woman it is possible to discover ‘new ways of thinking about visibility and power’ (1995, p. 11). Public power is largely predicated on visibility and such public displays of emotion and laughter may enable women to disrupt hegemonic power and lay claim to their own. When my participants laughed they interrupted their

performance as ‘acceptable’ academics and instead began to play a unique role in the ‘revaluing of values’ (Hynes & Sharpe 2010, p. 46). I consider such women to be ‘willful’ in their act of sharing their secrets with me. Those who refuse to stay silent, expose, wilfully, the injustice of the laws of institutional norms. I now draw upon Sara Ahmed’s (2014) theorisation of the ‘willful subject’ to explore how unruly laughter is also expressive of a ‘willful’, *desiring*, affect.

Laughing into the Silence

What then happens when one has to continually hear one’s own dismissal? It can be exhausting, being misheard. There is an emotional toll of always being in opposition. Ahmed (2014) explores the difficulties with being dismissed. ‘Willful’ subjects can become in some ways stuck in a ‘willful’ subjectivity. Staying silent can actually be an act of sustaining a feminist will. Silence can be a liberating act (Lorde 1984). Ahmed states that ‘if you have become used to having others oppose your existence, if you are used even to being thought of as oppositional, then those experiences are wearing and directive’ (2014, p. 169). She notes that in this way there is a risk of repetition that can in some ways close down possibilities. Constantly correcting and insisting is a daily struggle and exhausting emotional labour, but we must continue, otherwise change may just recede from the ‘horizon of possibility’ (Ahmed 2014, p. 151).

In critically interrogating understanding silencing and silence in relation to women’s voices, agency, and empowerment, it is possible to reconceptualise silence as a potential strategy for negotiating gender relations (Parapart 2010, p. 16). For Cixous, the power of silence lies in its capacity for us to hear the ruptures and spaces it holds (cited in Schrift 1997, p. 66) so that we might refuse the allure of complacency, and instead, confront the

fears we fight (1997, p. 26). In this way, silence can also be considered subversive. To remain silent does not have to be interpreted as an act of passivity. Not speaking, and instead laughing might be considered a 'willful' act, a form of protest. Gal (1991, p. 176) observes that silence can be a subversive form of self-defence. A woman speaking is a transgressive woman. Silencing and women's decision not to speak are not isolated incidents but may be part of a culture that to varying degrees is hostile or dismissive to women. Alice laughs as she tells me:

This bloke I work for, he's an old sexist fart, he's very smart, so he's not going to make those outrageous statements that [other men have] made. But he would think them probably. I mean, he's in his mid-60s and on his way to retirement. But yeah, I know he's sexist, you can just - he calls me, dear, for a start - oh hello dear, how are you dear [laughs]. I think there's still those gender-based attitudes that are pretty ripe. But I think he's, as I said, in his mid-60s, but hopefully not so prevalent in the younger men I work with. One of the things about working in a public sector, workplace, everyone's very conscious of what they can say and what they can't say. Especially in a university and people are pretty smart, so they know how to say the right things and not be seen to say the wrong things generally.

Alice sympathetically laughs at the 'old sexist fart' as well as cynically at the idea that self-policing political correctness may disguise the more contemporary sexists in our workplaces. When she laughs:

she does not protect herself against these unknown femininities; she surprises herself at seeing, being, pleasuring in her gift of changeability. I am spacious singing Flesh: onto which is grafted no one knows which I—which masculine or feminine, more or less human but above all living, because changing I. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 45)

Laughing into the physical and metaphorical silence is an act of becoming. Cixous' *Newly Born Woman* is in part a story about the loss of a mother, but just as importantly it is about the (re)birth of a self and the feminine.

If We Didn't Laugh, We Might Well Cry

I ask Karen how she feels about her status within the academy. This question elucidates laughter, a mocking laughter erupting from deep within. Her diaphragm enlarges as she takes in the air that would expunge her cynicism. This laugh, in which I am invited to join in, albeit sympathetically, simultaneously touches on sadness, disappointment, exhaustion, and anger:

I came in a bit late. I was a bit old and I was forty when I did my PhD I think. So I think I was always seen and positioned as someone good to do a whole lot of the teaching, but not really expected to do the research. Women are definitely positioned and categorised and expected to nurture and care and look after everybody else and be selfless and all that claptrap that women have always been expected to do.

If it were not for our laughter we might well have been crying in desperation, and despair sounded in her voice. There is ‘little room for crying’ in universities (Hacker 2018, p. 282). Crying is similar to laughter in that they are both gendered emotional expressions. For women weeping openly symbolises their acceptance of the model that connects femininity to emotionality and vulnerability. Men who expose tears, while they may risk the social ridicule of being labelled as weak (Hacker 2018, p. 281), there is also the possibility that their noble male tears will be celebrated. In her research on ‘Crying on Campus’, Daphna Hacker (2018) found that crying in higher education reinforces patriarchal perceptions of hierarchical essentialist differences between the sexes. Men and women must perform according to masculine standards in order to fulfil their role as scholars. Laughter, like crying, also forms a standard that is based on a hierarchical mind-body dichotomy that privileges rationality and the ideal of self-control over the emotional.

Karen does not cry. That is not to say that it was not permitted or that she did not feel comfortable or compelled to do so, but that there was comfort in our shared laughter. There was rebellion in her laughter. Laughter disturbs the masculine model of an individualistic, competitive, unemotional academic environment. Karen’s laughter is a daring voice in our conversation. ‘The voice says: “I am there.” And everything is there’ (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 50). For Cixous, to have such a voice, ‘I would not write, I would laugh. And no need of quills so more body. I would not fear being out of breath. I would not come to my aid enlarging myself with a text. Fort!’ (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 50). Laughter releases the tension between control and loss in language.

The creative emotional energy that stems from laughter can counter the consumerism and hyper-competition of neoliberalism in the contemporary university. In this regard, 'laughter is dangerous' (Carty & Musharbash 2008, p. 214). In understanding laughter, Barbara Stengel (2014, p. 205) cites the possibility of growth and describes how in breaking down experiences and the multivalent emotions they carry, a positive attitude towards oneself can be developed. Karen tells me that coming into academia after a solid career, in her case as a teacher, '*you're pretty confident in knowing who you are*'. Her laughter tells me that she does not let such perceptions define her, although they have wounded her. In Karen's laughter, her voice is a jet that propels her to embody the in-betweenness that Cixous calls for:

"You!" the voice says: "you." And I am born! "Look," she says, and I see everything!—"Touch!" And I am touched. There! The voice opens my eyes, her light opens my mouth, makes me cry out. And I am born from this. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 50)

Laughter is both revealing and concealing in that it diverts attention away from discomfort that threatens the individual or status quo but it can also mark a disruption (Stengel 2014, p. 201; Macpherson 2008). Karen remains grateful for her academic career:

So how do I see myself in the hierarchy? Lucky. Bloody lucky to be in a research-only position. I've got a feeling it won't last but shit I'm enjoying the ride. Trying to deliver, because of the trust that has been put in me. Basically, I didn't ever have anyone ever champion my work along the way and I think everybody needs

to be - it's an awful cliché but people need to be mentored in and they need someone to champion their work, and to include them in projects and things like that. I'm hoping that will happen to you. That's how it should work.

However, laughter which accompanies such a story can be positioned to exclude: where such jocularity might come about at the expense of another. This, Stengel observes, may conceal ‘feelings of weakness behind a behavioural veil of laughter’ (2014, p. 206). Nevertheless, in the liminal space, which laughter opens up, there is a potential for growth in those individuals— myself included.

Laughing at Leadership

When I ask Alice what university leadership means to her, she lets out a loud cackle and swings her head back, and when she returns to look at me her posture has become more relaxed, as if the interview can now truly begin. Humour - as with laughter - can change the course of a conversation and can shift relationships and expectations (Forester 2004). It is an inclusive laugh; as if I have made a witty or humorous remark. Our laughter is its own type of conversation. Alice leads our chortle with a long-drawn-out sound and I respond with tittering drawn in quick breaths. With little tears clinging to our eyelashes we come together as our chorus of laughter reaches an appropriate conclusion. This laughter makes us feel elated even when our topic of conversation is grim. Laughter is ‘singing in the abyss’ (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 59), it is an acceptance, of the inevitability of death, which leads to growth and the life of the feminine in the face of this death. At the beginning of her career, Alice was turned down for her own job when it was reclassified:

you know what he said to me. [He] knew I had kids; Catholic man, big family man, five kids, wife who didn't work, right? He said to me, oh we didn't think you'd be able to finish your PhD when you've got kids, and you're working. I thought, oh my god, I wish I'd had a recorder. I told HR about it and they were outraged. They said that's outrageous, that's discriminatory, ring up the union. So I rang up the union, got the union out, they said, you can take it to court, we'll back you. But - and I haven't been a member of the union, since this time because I was for years - they just pulled out at the last moment, I think they just got scared. It was really my word against his. But I did instigate a review. The union had to interview all the [laughs] selection panel and find out why they didn't even consider interviewing me. Because I had really good feedback from students, I had a really good reputation, everything.

Alice continues to laugh. She laughs to herself. She laughs *for* herself. She laughs at the chair of the selection committee, she laughs at the committee panel members, she laughs at human resources, she laughs at the union. 'You fucking arseholes' she cries, before continuing:

Anyway, and the whole thing was a complete whitewash. I should've realised, I was naïve thinking that I would get some sort of justice, by going through those processes. But it just - whistle blower thing doesn't work, doesn't work.

The conversation then shifts to the gendering of academic disciplines. A somewhat light-hearted reprieve from the horror of her previous story, even though the gendering of knowledge is just as disheartening:

I still think there's a male culture. I'm in a faculty that got rid of its humanities department, and there probably were, more women then. I mean, there's quite a lot of women in leadership roles in my faculty, but there's a few strong research [nodes] and they're all blokes. They're the blokes doing digital stuff. [Laughter]

'Because technology is so masculine!' I exaggerate my words. We laugh in 'forgotten tongues' (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 50). Alice is reanimated by this shared experience:

I know they're doing all this - what is it, algorithms and blogging. Not blogging but social media, data analysis - quite quantitative analysis not qualitative analysis. I think cultural studies is, had, I think it's been fairly male dominated at the top. That's quite distressing. It hasn't really changed over the years.

We laugh at the way academic 'man has been given the grotesque and unenviable fate of being reduced to a single idol with clay balls' (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 41). At the core of the quantitative turn in cultural studies that Alice speaks of there is a fear of the feminine, trapped in a limited masculine position.

Saying No and Saying Yes

Grace didn't laugh much at all during our interview, but when she did it was a short, loud and abrasive snort. The 'I told you so!' type, the: 'well that's typical!' knowing laugh that exudes a form of confidence that was almost out of step with the language she used in our interview. I happened upon her at a time when she was feeling particularly disillusioned by her university and by academia, so much so that her sense of her academic identity had

changed, and she doubted her ability as a research academic. As we were talking, she did highlight how this was partly because of the restrictions imposed on her role, which she felt significantly limited her capacity to produce the types of research that had elevated her to a leadership position. This was also in combination with a toxic and violent work environment – for female scientists – where overt misogyny and racism were frequent occurrences along with sexual harassment. These issues in her workplace had affected her to the point that she was considering leaving the university once her four-year post-doctorate fellowship was over. She had come to a point where:

I just resist by doing what I want all the time. Because no one knows I want to leave, so everyone's oh you have to do this [shitty] service role and you have to make a good impression, you have to do this that and the other. I'm like I'm not going to do that, and I really don't care, but I'm not going to tell you why that I'm leaving. I can just do my own thing. It's quite liberating actually to feel I'm no longer bound by other people's agendas for my future.

I am struck, excited by the power in Grace's words. It is as if through this account, she has become a 'newly born woman':

She knows not no, name, negativity. She excels at marrying oppositions and taking pleasure in this as a single pleasure with several hearths. Her real happinesses are no less intense than her imaginary happinesses so much more complete, so much more luxurious than Truthverility claims all the more to command of modesty and reduction, and dancingly independent with regards to the censor's consent. (Cixous qtd. Sellers 1994, p. 60)

She told me that this is something she has had to teach herself. To say no. And she got quite excited after she articulated - and realised - that to say no; to taking-on service responsibilities outside of her role, or accepting a tokenistic position on a selection panel, or publishing a 'bullshit number' of papers in journals which she sees to be compromising the integrity of her research, was a very unusual and heavily gendered thing to do:

that's what I learnt this year, I love saying no now. Even just not even giving a reason, just say no, I don't want to do that... It's great, because I feel like now I've got nothing to lose.

In Grace's quote there is a resonance with Cixous writing: 'from now on, who, if we say so, can say no to us? We've come back from always' (1976, p. 878). This act of saying no is what Cixous describes as the liberation of the 'New Woman' from the 'Old' one. In the act of saying no, as in the laughter that exuded when she told me, Grace becomes: 'I-woman, escapee' (Cixous 1976, p. 878). An unwillingness to assist can be performed by what bodies do not do. Grace's 'willfulness' is also entangled with academic collegiality:

It is really liberating not caring. Before I just felt so guilty I felt I was in this job I was ill-suited to, there was no cohesion between me and my group. I felt like I just had different ideas about everything, different ways to talk about different approaches, everything was different. I felt really guilty about it, I wasn't doing a good job, and I was a terrible hire, which I am. I'm such a bad hire for that position, no I am. Then I'm like fuck it, that's not my problem, why should I feel

guilty about doing a job adequately. Someone else made the decision to hire me, not me. So yeah now I just say no to things. Yeah that was what that - the woman, the one role model in my school, that's what she taught me. I went to see her in tears about this seminar role and she's like I can't say no, but you have to say no. I'm going to go say no and then I said no, best skill ever saying no.

It is important here to recognise the need to move beyond the individual strategy of 'just say no' to institutional changes (Pyke 2013; Mountz et al. 2015). Who takes on that labour when women say no to leadership or responsibilities. Where is the power between us versus them? Cixous' 'newly born woman' must negotiate a place for herself within a symbolic order designed to protect the masculine (Sellers 1994, p. 71). Discourses represent order. Academics, even the Cixousian ones, are still neoliberal subjects, entangled in a web of their own making.

New managerialist practices and the corporatisation of the university makes aspiring to formal leadership positions unattractive to many scholars, but Grace reflects:

I guess it's easy to criticise people in leadership and say you don't stand for anything, you're too willing to say yes. But I think the more that you see somebody continually bow down to that pressure and not actually show any kind of intellectual leadership on any issue then the more you can just see well you're just a frontline manager really.

What Grace is expressing is the effort that is often required in the process of saying no, 'which might even require saying yes along the way' (Ahmed 2014, p. 141).

'Willfulness' is a process:

To will this change is at the same time not to be willing to bear or reproduce the present; the project of willing thus begins with, but not exceeds, negation: to oppose the old directives is to will what follows. (Ahmed 2014, p. 141)

Ahmed (2014) notes that too much emphasis on the optimism of 'willfulness' might be misleading and instead become a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant 2011). Too much attachment to the object of being 'willful' might diminish us, 'if we assume the will is how we get out'. The will might also be as Ahmed provokes, become about how we stay in (2014, p. 174). However, it is the way that 'willfulness' can adapt and flex in the contemporary academy to the dominant will that of a neoliberal phallogentrism. This is where Ahmed's 'willfulness' is most productive. Sometimes we must go with the will of the way in order to sustain a feminist, 'willful' subjectivity.

Complicity

Laughter in its potential to rupture gendered dichotomies, forces us to remain in the present. It is in this space of the present that the complicity of feminism in relation to neoliberal reforms can be more fully explored. Laughter opens up space for ambivalence and contradiction. Rather than imply that feminist demands have conceded to the rationalities and ideologies of neoliberalism, or that feminism has been entirely appropriated by neoliberalism for its own purposes of expanding consumerism (McRobbie 2009), Newman (2012) punctures the coherence of such narratives,

reintroducing the strains and possibility of such an entanglement. I argue that laughter has the potential to challenge the legitimacy of prevailing attitudes that can be found in academic institutions (Hynes & Sharpe 2010, p. 52). Blaming feminism slides too easily into a demonisation of feminism (Newman 2012, p. 154). It silences the voices and legitimacy of women. Particularly those who cross the divide from professor to executive leader. How then do we move forward? How do we break down the divides between us and them; between academic and executive, academic and professional staff, masculine and feminine? What are the conditions of agency and resistance?

Yvonne is a feminist and really enjoys her position as a director. Although she recognises that her explicitly feminist leadership approach and strategies are not always valued by the wider-university management. Nevertheless, in her performativities as a feminist *and* director, Yvonne uses feminist discourses as well as appropriating the spaces and language of new managerialism to push particular gender and social justice issues forward in the academic workplace. She chuckles as she tells me that many in the senior executive ‘*get distracted by the razzle dazzle*’ of leadership, and she waves her hands in an overtly performative song-and-dance gesture. Yvonne continues: ‘*I [still] feel that I can have a reasonable conversation with most of the key leaders*’ but most poignantly she confidently states that: ‘*part of this is about me defining what I want to talk to them about*’. As she says this, there is a communicative sparkle in her eyes. We laugh together in a shared knowing laugh. ‘*It’s about being clear about what’s important to me, which I think is important*’. Being assertive has gendered connotations but Yvonne’s ‘willfulness’ destabilises this dichotomy.

‘Willfulness’ also complicates notions of complicity. ‘Willful’ obedience can also be a form of disobedience in disguise, an unwilling obedience. Ahmed argues that ‘subjects might obey a command but do so grudgingly or reluctantly and enact with or through the compartment of their body a withdrawal from the right of the command even as they complete it’ (2014, p. 140). Even carrying out a task begrudgingly with a smile and a laugh can be ‘willful’. Ahmed proposes that: ‘Perhaps when obedience is performed wilfully, disobedience becomes the end’ (2014, p. 141). Women in the academy are caught up and are to varying degrees complicit in the corporatisation of the university. This is not to say that in her ‘willfulness’, Yvonne is a ‘perfectly knowing feminist’ (Ahmed 2014, p. 175). ‘Willfulness’ is not necessarily a conscious choice. For if willfulness was a choice it assumes that she knows how and what to feel, what she wants and who she is, which are all very volatile, fluid and changing states of being. ‘Willfulness’ can be affective, bound up in a subject, but also in-between subjects. It is a political volition pulsing with unknown desires.

Neoliberalism complicates and restricts ‘willful’ defiance and attempts to placate ‘willful’ subjects through appropriation, and individualisation of the ‘ideal academic’. It can, however, connect individuals and create collective will. It is not who possess such affects or emotions; it is, as Ahmed contends, what emotions *do*. She states that: ‘it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces, or boundaries are made: the ‘I’ and the ‘we’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others (2004, p. 10). ‘Willfulness’ is an individual act, but it is an act carried out because of one’s connection to ‘a culture whose existence is deemed a threat’ (Ahmed 2014, p. 151). To recover the collective social body of ‘willfulness’ is to garner a collective power, and so it

is important to recognise how women in the academy are acting ‘willfully’ in different ways.

Killing the False Woman

In the warm stuffy office my conversation with Lucy came full circle. She had been offered a new contract that ‘*officially recognises the work*’ that she had been doing ‘*unofficially*’ on her previous contract. It means that this coming semester she even receives some teaching relief. ‘*I have to hire a casual tutor next semester. I’ve become the slave master!*’ Lucy laughs. She looks small, her body hunched into itself as she sits there, swivelling slightly on her office chair. Self-conscious. Anxious? But her laughter is bold and unashamed in its embarrassment of her new (albeit still precarious) employment situation. Lucy adds, ‘*classic university system. Now I just need to figure out how not to be so exploitative.*’ She continues to laugh at the incongruity of her predicament.

The false woman is a manifestation, a type of gendered performativity. Cixous wants us to ‘kill the false woman’ (1976, p. 880) because she sees it as preventing women from coming to writing:

A woman without a body, dumb, blind, can’t possibly be a good fighter. She is reduced to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow. We must kill the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing. Inscribe the breath of the whole woman. (Cixous 1976, p. 880)

In her predicament, Lucy is at risk of being reduced ‘to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow’. She may be the one who over works casualised staff, she may bully other women (as Karen has experienced – see Chapter Four), she may be unsupportive of other women, she may be compliant or appear passive to universities’ neoliberal instructions. Cixous’ false woman implies a form of false consciousness in women. Yet, in the university, academic women live with and perform a number of different and contradictory subjectivities that make Cixous call to ‘kill the false woman’ somewhat more difficult.

The spectre of Cixous’ ‘false woman’ has been following me around this project. Or perhaps, I have been following her? Elsewhere I have written about her as a shadow on the wall of the academic labyrinth. The false woman is an outline of gendered expectations, telling academic women how to conform (Lipton 2017). Alice Eagly and Linda Carli (2007, p. 166) propose that ‘to become leaders, women must navigate through the labyrinth’. As outlined in Chapter One, few metaphors address the complex processes and mechanisms that produce and challenge gender inequality. The metaphor of a labyrinth articulates the myriad of overt and concealed obstacles that prevent women from successfully navigating career pathways and access to leadership positions. We might catch a glimpse of the false woman as a silhouette on the wall as we walk across the university campus. The shadow follows us as we move through corridors, in and out of classrooms, and meeting rooms. The false woman is not a simple dichotomy where one is false and the other authentic. Instead, the false woman highlights the contradictions and complexities in our performances as women academics.

Individualising neoliberal discourses ‘devours us like flesh – eating bacterium, producing its own toxic waste – shame: ‘I’m a fraud, I’m useless, I’m nothing’. It is of course deeply gendered, racialised and classed’ (Gill 2010, p. 240). This is the shadow of ‘the false woman’. Through this repression, women are reduced to servitude, stripping her of all ability to fight back. Cixous (1976, p. 880) places the responsibility of feminine achievement on women when she says, ‘we must kill the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing’. Once the live woman is exposed, she has the responsibility to compose her own stories, making it possible for her writings to be heard in her own voice.

It as if, in this moment of laughter, that Lucy stepped out from the shadow of the false woman and proceeded to give zero fucks. Not even one. I can hear Cixous’ Medusa laughing with Lucy. These laughing women reinvent what it means to live happily ever after. Lucy’s laughter sounds out over the motion of her swivelling back and forth on her office chair; back and forth, side to side, left to right, right to left. Her rocking is rhythmic, a predictable pattern, while her laughter is audacious and volatile. Her chair rocking is also disruptive, and I am reminded of Hazel and her comment about academics being reticent to rock the boat. There’s just so much compliance. Hazel almost groans in despair. ‘*People, who are going to be - seem to be - to do the right thing. People, who aren’t going to rock the boat, people who aren’t going to challenge.*’ I cry out in response, ‘*arghhhh! what do we do [laughs]?*’ ‘*I know!*’ Hazel replies in laughter. She continues with a discordant frankness:

the bottom line is equality of opportunity. The rights, all those rights that happen underneath that big broad brush stroke slogan, statement. The right to safety, the

same rights in the workplace, the same rights in a relationship. Same legal rights. But also just in terms of behaviour. The right to be heard, and I think that's actually a bit of a problem, with, in some areas, that women's voices just aren't taken as seriously as men's.

Conclusion

Emotions *constitute* the university organisation. Yet feminisation debates have led to a strengthening of the divisions between the rational and the emotional. A misrecognition of emotions in higher education generates misogynistic orientations (Leathwood & Hey 2009; Burke 2015). *L'Écriture féminine* is as much about speech and voice as it is about pause and silence. Academic women laughing 'wreck[s] partitions' (Cixous 1976, p. 886). Laughter is a complex expression of affects and emotions. It is multifaceted socio-embodied phenomenon. The 'excessive' qualities of laughter push it beyond a conscious reflective strategy and its gendered origins disrupt the affective economies that govern the production of knowledge. Laughter blurs the self/other, subject/object, confusing notions of what constitutes valuable research material (Macpherson 2008, p. 1092).

It is important to also recognise the limitations of laughter as a potential affective and emotive force. While a cheerful disposition, as Macpherson (2008, p. 1093) notes, may seem like strong self-work or appear as subversion, it can also indicate a degree of powerlessness on the part of the participant. What do academic women find laughable in the neoliberal academy, and what does their laughter say about their performativities as academics? This exploration is riddled with changing and contradictory understandings of affects, embodiment, emotionality and rationality. Stengel (2014, p. 208) proposes that

the affective dimensions of laughter opens up space for growth, but ‘what happens after the laughter?’

Alice: *‘I wish I had answers [laughter]’*

Briony: *‘Yeah, I know, me too [laughter]’.*

In this moment of laughter, does it matter what comes next? ‘Willful’ and unruly laughter challenge gendered stereotypes around women in leadership. It grounds us in the present, albeit momentarily. It disrupts the continual drive towards the future and the cruel optimism (Berlant 2011) of the academic good life. It makes the ordinary noticeable and thus extraordinary (Hynes & Sharpe 2010, p. 51). The laughter I encountered in my interviews with academic women was a feminist disruption. In the liminal space of the present moment (Stengel 2014, p. 208), where laughter is not yet closedness or openness. It is neither response nor reaction, masculine nor feminine. Unruly ‘willful’ laughter marks a moment of confrontation that invites change.

Conclusion

I flop on the sofa. It's been another long day—spent marking essays, mostly, as well as responding to emails, and worrying about my thesis. I am exhausted, and it's only just gone eight on a Saturday night. My neck aches and I have a headache. I still have ten more assignments to mark before results are due in on Monday, I tell myself, one more, one more until they are all graded, lined up neatly in Turnitin. I am excited too. I've been invited to write a book chapter for an edited collection and I am pumped up on the thrill of the invitation. I can't wait to get writing. Academic life in the neoliberal, measured, and (self) surveilled university is filled with politics, paradoxes and pleasures. Academic women's identities in the contemporary university are simultaneously constituted in and by neoliberal and feminist discourses. This thesis has sought to examine key discourses, which constitute academic performativity and identity in the contemporary Australian university and how they relate to gender.

I must admit this PhD journey has left me feeling rather tired. This thesis topic is tired, and I am tired of it. Not because after three-and-a-half years I am bored and ready to move on to newer, greener research pastures, but because at the end of writing this thesis I am still faced with the paradox of academic women's (in)visibility, and of the 'cruel optimism' in our continued acceptance of merit, equity and diversity, flexibility, work-life-balance, and collegiality, and approaches to knowledge production. Despite major shifts in Australian higher education in terms of equity and diversity policies, and improvements to gender representation in higher education, women in academia remain a precarious and marginalised majority. For the most part, equality is considered to have been reached in the act of calling out and in the acknowledgment of inequities. Naming

the problem becomes a substitute for action. I am tired because increased participation rates do not necessarily signify broader structural change to gendered relations. In this sense, gender inequality in higher education is a tiring issue.

Tiredness registers at the bodily level. It is somatic. This tired feeling catches me by surprise. Many women academics, and particularly feminist academics might well be familiar with this feeling of being worn down. All the academic women I interviewed expressed an ambivalence (even those in senior leadership positions) about their relationship to academia. Academic women are constantly managing their presence in academic spaces. Neoliberalism has radically altered the structures and systems of the Australian university. Deregulation of the higher education sector, and the commodification of knowledge, the intensification of workloads, the increased casualisation of the academic workforce and the dependence on measures of performativity and productivity have been further solidified by or in the hierarchical stratification of institutions and they have produced new forms of social and racial exclusion.

At times these feelings of uncertainty are registered as tiredness, or exhaustion. As Sara Ahmed observes, 'willful' feminist killjoys are all too familiar with this feeling of being worn out: 'that sense of coming up against the same thing, whatever you say or do. We have, I think, in face of this feeling to think about how to protect ourselves (and those around us) from being diminished' (Ahmed 2013, blog post). Caring for oneself can be 'an act of political warfare' as a form of self-preservation not self-indulgence (Lorde 1988, p. 131), although the pervasiveness of neoliberal intertwined with more liberal feminist ideologies we might want to be cautious of the radical capabilities of an

individualised understanding of self-care. The connections and relationships we develop inside and outside academia to restore ourselves are as Ahmed puts it, world making; ‘with each other we find ways of becoming re-energised in the face of the ongoing reality of what causes our sense of depletion’ (Ahmed 2013, n.p.).

This thesis has been concerned with the performance of gender, revealing the complicated and often contradictory ways in which neoliberal and feminist discourses are enacted through the body, within and through the organisational time, space, and emotion of the contemporary Australian university. In preparing to interview academic women, what I did not anticipate was just how self-contradictory that entanglement is. Academic women are no longer complete ‘outsiders’ in academe or entirely depoliticised and complicit neoliberal subjects. Academic women are of course also generating neoliberal and feminist shifts in discourse. As academics, we create university cultures through our everyday performativities and interactions and this influences our workplace cultures and values. The entanglement of feminism with new managerialism, merit, measurement, equity, diversity, and leadership shapes our understandings of gender inequality in the neoliberalised academy. What continues to inspire me is that amidst transformation and intensification of academic work, the twelve academic women that I interviewed are creating spaces of influence, authority, and endurance in the contemporary Australian university, confronting the contradictions that their imbrication in discourses might produce. Focusing on academic women’s experiences, however paradoxical, was always important to this project.

I have absolutely loved researching and writing this thesis. In particular, what gives me an abundant source of energy are feminist methodologies. A narrative approach and

critical autoethnography has allowed me to explore my ‘willful-intimate insider’ status and the multiple subjectivities and performativities of academic women I interviewed. Academic performativities and identities are embodied, and so it was important that the methodology of this thesis also be embodied and reflexive. This thesis can be understood as a spiral; ‘circling, pulling, and beginning again’ (Adams & Holman-Jones 2011) in order to make sense of the relationship between feminist and neoliberal discourses. Similarly, Cixous employs a circular form and sensual, metaphorically illustrated narrative to create cohesion between her ideas about the need for women to not reproduce androcentric knowledge, to not ‘make a paper penis’, urging women to ‘write herself’ (Cixous 1976). This thesis fuses the qualitative and creative research methods of interview, critical autoethnography, sound, anecdote, research poetry and photography in a way that complements and complicates our understanding of the self and the contemporary academy.

The concept of *l’écriture féminine* continues to offer exciting avenues as a methodology for how we might research and write differently and resist the reproduction of androcentrism in the contemporary Australian university. The methodological contributions of this thesis continue to challenge me and counter any tired feelings that I have. Cixous’ *l’écriture féminine* is a liberating bodily practice that aims to release women’s repressed creative agency and transform phallogocentric structures. Cixous urges women writers to sweep away syntax and abandon the linearity and orderly characteristics associated with a masculine writing. What continues to draw me to Cixous is the way her writing radically and creatively disrupts everyday gender norms and distinctions and instils a desire to escape the masculine mastery and hierarchy by ‘writing through the body’ (Cixous 1976). In this thesis, Cixous’ concept of *l’écriture féminine* is

developed both conceptually and aesthetically alongside feminist poststructuralist, postmodern, intersectionalist and new materialist thought, disturbing the perceived gender neutrality embedded in social science research.

Recurring throughout each chapter has been the concern with whether academic women are labouring under the fantasy of the academic 'good life' (Berlant 2011). I increasingly notice the cruel optimism in many institutional gender equity policies, which pledge to level the playing field yet still measure women's capabilities in relation to masculine norms, participation, and achievements. In our optimistic attachment to the roles and responsibilities that are at the core of our understanding around what it means to be an academic; in our cooperation in publication models, in our pastoral commitments to students, and in our collegial relationships with colleagues and senior leaders, we unavoidably contribute to continued gender inequality.

Academic labour has been transformed by recent audit and quality assurance measures and this impacts on academic women in a unique and debilitating way. Measures and quality assurance mechanisms infiltrate aspects of academic work and this was an important place from which to begin my examination of the way neoliberal and feminist discourses coalesce, and how this, impacts upon female academics' sense of identity and performativity. It is easy for these quality assurance measures to prioritise and push for research that is ERA-able; work that can be quantified in a simplistic way. These sorts of ventures put universities at risk of losing great critical, creative, and inventive scholars and to the detriment of equity and diversity. The paradox of academic women's participation and promotion highlights this complex entanglement.

A major result of increased measurement in the contemporary university is the way in which it has altered perceptions of time. Time, or lack thereof, not only compromises the quality of work produced but it alters academic identities. Perceptions of time in the contemporary Australian university are intrinsically connected to neoliberal measures and values of production, consumption, and competition. Managerial practices impose significant time burdens on already full workloads. Despite claims of efficiency and accountability, measures of productivity, performativity, and quality in the academic endeavours of research, teaching and academic service require us as academics, to wade through the content of ourselves –the dense paper(less) trail of performance reviews, teaching evaluations, promotion applications, award nominations, and grant applications. We write, revise and resubmit, record and archive our scholarly work and our achievements on websites like *ResearchGate* in order to comply with managerial practices, but we are only just beginning to realise the positive and negative -and lasting- consequences of our relationship with digital technologies.

Performance management and increased pressure to pump out publications and improve institutions' research output invariably impacts all academics but it further exacerbates the time scarcity of female academics, particularly those who are parents and carers. Academic women are adapting to and resisting time in unexpected ways. The twenty-four-hour work culture, our access to technologies of productivity makes it difficult to slow down the daily time pressures. There is much still to be explored in relation to constructs of time in the contemporary Australian university. Travel is also affected, and gender and academics' mobility are something that warrants further exploration beyond this thesis.

Academic women have created alternative abstract and lived spaces for feminist collectivity in the changing higher education environment. Academic collegiality is a gendered practice constructed in and shaped by the spaces of the neoliberal university. As much as collegiality is a set of practices and performances, it is also a set of values and ideals constituted in space. Collegiality is not just about getting along with colleagues but rather it means understanding how to successfully 'get on' in the social life of the university. With it, comes competitive routinised daily practices that reproduce the values and cultures of an institution. Collegiality discourse is thus an intricate and discursive set of values, practices and performances that reproduce academic identities through repetition of the everyday. Laughter can rupture these repetitions of measure and value, time, and space of the everyday. The socio-embodied phenomena of laughter shatters the fantasy of the academic good life. Academic women's laughter is a form of feminist disruption that explodes the gendered dualism of emotional intelligence, complicating our understandings of feminist and neoliberal discourses and how they shape and are shaped by academic women's performativities.

To conclude, this thesis continues to be inspired by the writing of Cixous and the way she plays with words and gender, offering new interpretations, and ways of destabilising our understanding of discourses. Harnessing her libidinous energy, writing in the feminine offers new embodied possibilities for research on academic women, identity and performativity in neoliberal times. In the words of Cixous:

Let nothing stop you: not man; not the imbecilic capitalist machinery, in which publishing houses are the crafty, obsequious relayers of imperatives handed down by an economy that works against us and off our backs; and not yourself (sic).

Smug-faced readers, managing editors, and big bosses don't like the true texts of women—female-sexed texts. That kind scares them. I write woman: woman must write woman. (Cixous 1976, p. 877)

Epilogue

An Ode to the Pauline Griffin Building, Australian National University

So we talked standing at the window and looking, as so many thousands look every night, down on the domes and towers of the famous city beneath us. It was very beautiful, very mysterious in the autumn moonlight. The old stone looked very white and venerable. One thought of all the books that were assembled down there; of the pictures of old prelates and worthies hanging in the panelled rooms; of the painted windows that would be throwing strange globes and crescents on the pavement; of the tablets and memorials and inscriptions; of the fountains and the grass; of the quiet rooms looking across the quiet quadrangles. And (pardon me the thought) I thought, too, of the admirable smoke and drink and the deep armchairs and the pleasant carpets: of the urbanity, the geniality, the dignity which are the offspring of luxury and privacy and space. (Woolf 1993, p. 29-30)

Acton campus, 2016

Pauline looks out across the sprawling campus. Late autumn leaves swirl around her. She had heard the whisperings in the corridors, the tense committee meetings, the institutional fighting over her future at the university. During her twenty-year tenure and in the many decades since she always involved herself in the life of the campus, in this ‘institutional life’ (Ahmed 2012). Her doors were always open. Perhaps this was why debate about her position within the university never seemed to reach a consensus. There was never a direct confrontation. She was perceptive. She could feel the micro-aggressions from staff when they passed her by. Each semester, her value to the university would always

seem to make its way as an agenda item on various sub-committees. Perhaps they were trying to be gentle on her, to not burden her with the prospect of her own demolition.

Although forty-something thousand students and scholars who visited the campus did not always know her by name, Pauline was a modernist. A foundation. And now, in contrast to the bustle and chaos of early days, she stood waiting for the university to decide what to do with her. Pauline really was an outstanding example of the post-war international style. Love her or hate her, her functionalist approach, curved staircase and cubiform shape was an architectural classic. All steel and glass. She was strength and elegance. The differing fenestration, plain, smooth wall surfaces, with overhangs for shade and contrasting textures, she had style and direction. But her insides were overgrown. She was in fair condition so said the safety report, though required some basic maintenance and upkeep. Except that she had not been maintained. She was riddled with asbestos and didn't comply with modern building and workplace standards. There had been numerous instances of water leaking through her roof, exacerbated in heavy hailstorms. The water leaks had resulted in numerous stains to her vermiculite ceilings. She still displayed a high level of aesthetic value, but to fully meet the criterion and aesthetic values of a historic building she needed the affection and appreciation of the university community.

Pauline was part of a complex of buildings, a generation which were built on campus during a period of significant expansion for the university. There was Pauline, then there was Hannah, Beryl, and Ursula— Not to forget Molly and Coral, too. Although Molly's standing was that of a room, only, and Coral was actually more of an abstract space than a building *per se*. These six structures were all named after notable university women.

Pauline was not remiss to read the gendered dimension to the debate about her fixity as a

building in the broader university community. There were more buildings named after John than there were buildings named after women. Pauline had heard the groans from staff when meetings were scheduled in the Beryl building. They had made her house administration. Of course, academics would hasten to avoid her, knowing full well that the weight of the surveilled and measured university would be upon them as they stepped through those doors glass doors of hers. It was a shame really, that people despised or dismissed these buildings named after women. And so, with nothing more to do since her doors had been long boarded up, and the Australian Federal Police had taken to running tactical training ops in her dilapidated corridors, Pauline spent most of her days ignoring the rubber pellet gunfire and the scathing building code appraisals, instead choosing to trace the fragmented and elliptical herstories of female and feminist academics and activists on this campus. The campus she loved so much.

‘Are you ready?’ Briony pops her heads around Sam’s office door. In different rooms in different buildings across the university, several other women switch off their desktop monitors and grab their office keys. The women pull the collars of their coats up around their necks to embrace the cold wind as they walk across the campus. They meet in the yawning yoni of the university campus. Students are spread out across its lawns catching the warmth of the early morning sunshine, chatting, reading, drinking coffee, and munching on refectory sausage rolls and cheap doughy croissants. The space is also a place of gathering and protest. The women pause for a moment on the wide footpath as they group together, and then begin to move down in unison across the lawn toward the coffee shop. Come rain, hail or sunshine, the five women would make their daily coffee pilgrimage together. Travelling this way was a mode of historical engagement (Aoki & Yoshimizu 2015) that allowed the women to reflect on their place in this unfolding and

shifting space of the university. Each paying particular attention to their bodily relationships with one another and their environment as they moved across the campus (Bondi 1992). Sometimes they would walk all together in a horizontal line, and at other times, in pairs. Often stopping to give way to strident busy men in grey suits or deviating from their usual route to help a woman lift her baby's pram up a flight of stairs. For women, being on campus is both a poetic and political practice in the way their presence and participation in institutional life is a recuperating history 'from below' (de Certeau 1984, p. 97 cited in Aoki & Yoshimizu 2015, p. 276), emerging from the 'ivory basement' (Eveline 2004). 'Only ivy can climb the walls' (Richardson 1996, p. 11). Stepping out of the office and into the archways, the footpaths, the alcoves between buildings, and the wide-open spaces of the university is an alternative way to understand and critically engage in this unique urban space, spatialising the women's experiences.

Sam updates the women on the latest debacle with her paternity leave arrangements. Sarah complains of a young male student who is unhappy with his low scoring essay. Carrie-a sessional- informs them of union activities and her simultaneous feelings of desire for activism and wearied ambivalence. Tracey and Briony nod in agreement. Their personal lives unexpectedly give shape to the walking experience. These conversations and the stories that they share on these daily trips bring to the surface many recent memories and past herstories of activism that for many years the women felt had been actively erased from public consciousness by the current university governance structure. Sometimes, after paying and waiting for their usual orders- three flat whites, a long black, and a mocha, the women would stay awhile in the alfresco café, or move from the well-worn coffee shop path to stop down by the lake and sit down on a bench, watching the brown ducks and plovers go about their business.

These daily trips across campus illicit sensually experienced deviations from the abstract and mundane of their working lives. The practice of walking and sitting amongst the campus buildings, courtyards, enclaves and statues facilitated a ‘bearing witness to erasures through historical narratives but is also constrained by lifeworld entanglements in the production and reproduction of transhistorical inclusions and cohesions’ (Aoki & Yoshimizu 2015, p. 274). The women; they remembered the past, they were directed by the present, and they imagined the future (Pink 2008).

She knew it was an academic cliché but Briony enjoyed the ritual of these coffee catch ups. She liked to be able to touch the sandstone, smell the wattle, hear the bubble of students’ conversations, and taste the critical theory as they spoke about their teaching and research. Their conversations were an opportunity to sample ideas and knowledge. She would take them, coating her mouth with them, filling her cheeks, and breathing in the scents of knowledge. Layers of personal and professional knowledge and embodied experiences. Performance and imagination are part of the production of material and sensory realities that inform Briony’s sense of place. It was a way of place-making, exploring her practices of everyday life. Women had been out of place for so long, but now that they were in it and no longer outsiders. Although Briony remained somewhat ambivalent about their positioning. It was funny the way her life had become entangled with and given shape to her research.

The women sat on the grassy knoll staring out at Pauline, who was standing empty. Though her offices and classrooms were unoccupied, she was not barren. The material geographies of buildings and rooms necessitate a capacity for mobility, for traveling to

and from somewhere. While not spatially fixed, the online arenas of Blackbaud and Moodle also require the capacity for access to technologies and skills that enable participation. These sites both are steeped in histories and currents of power; the ways that people engage with, or participate within, spaces hinge on the associations they ascribe to them, the affects and psychic-emotional experiences they have, or project they may have, within them. Such experiences are informed by relations of class, of education, of sociocultural affiliation, for instance, and may play out in desires for engagement or disengagement. How these spaces are perceived varies with the different experiences of the individual and the collective, but it is clear that architectures may have particular design elements conducive to producing specific states.

It was not just Pauline's bricks and mortar presence that was so important to her being here in this space. It was the people who gathered under her awnings. Women. There were more women students and staff on campus than ever before. Even with the steady attrition of female academics; the sexual harassment, the bullying, the discrimination, the precarious employment; their continued presence was a constant reminder of all that had been achieved and all that still needed to change. Pauline watched these women. She understood how these trips the women made together across the campus was a way of uncovering the absences and celebrating the presence of female figures, and she was grateful for their company.

Following nearly a year of delays, it is with sadness that on Monday 11 September 2017 the university announced that contractors commenced with the site establishment of the Pauline Griffin Building. The early works included the installation of temporary fencing,

the erection of site sheds, and traffic management around the area. Hazardous material was removed, followed by the demolition of the Building itself.

The arrangements were of course handled by the university's senior executive, led by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Major Projects, a fancy architect firm, and around 500 building contractors. It was reported to staff and students that there would not be any significant changes to road conditions or adjacent building access during this early works phase. During this trying time, it was advised that food vendors at the Pop-Up Village be asked to limit deliveries to off-peak times, as well as slowing down the move-in process for new vendors such as Lazy Su and Chicken Tikka. She was gone in just eight weeks. In late 2018, all that remains is a giant hole.

Vale the Pauline Griffin Building.

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