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Examining Representations of Women's Leadership in the Media and Australian Universities

by

Jane Wilkinson, BA (Hons); B Litt (Hons); MA, Dip Ed

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University

January, 2005
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis entitled: ‘Examining Representations of Women’s Leadership in the Media and Australian Universities’

submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any other university or institution is identified in the text.

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Acknowledgments

I would particularly like to thank Professor Jill Blackmore, my principal supervisor, for her inspiration, help and encouragement.

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I dedicate this thesis to Peter and Sarah, with all my love.
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Summary of Thesis: Examining Representations of Women's Leadership in the Media and Australian Universities

Australian women, we are told by the media, live in an era of postfeminism. Equity strategies for women and leadership are increasingly debunked because 'women don't need them anymore'. Furthermore, contemporary print media representations of women's leadership appear to operate from an assumed Anglo-Australian, middle-class subject location which ignores the ethnic and class differences between groups of women leaders and is highly essentialist. Yet interviews with women leaders in Australian academia who are from a range of ethnic and class backgrounds, challenge these representations. They point to an array of formal and informal barriers that still exist for women leaders in academia. They note the ways in which their gender, class and ethnicity intersect to construct very different leadership experiences from these essentialising media discourses. Hence, there appears to be a wide gap between media discourses of postfeminism and representations of women's leadership on the one hand, and the actual experiences of female academic leaders, on the other hand.

This thesis examines representations of women leaders from differing ethnic and class backgrounds in two major Australian broadsheets. It then explores whether and how dominant media discourses of women's leadership are interpellated across the specific field of academia. In so doing, the study adopts a case study method through interviews with six women educational leaders of diverse class and ethnic origins, located in a variety of universities. The tertiary education sector has been selected for examination, as it has been the site of radical transformation in the past fifteen years, changes which in turn have had major material and symbolic consequences for its women workers. A study of academic women leaders provides a lens through which to view the potential ways in which mediatised discourses of women's leadership are being interpellated in a sector undergoing key changes in its organisational identity.
The study posits that Australian feminist analyses of women and leadership have tended to assume a commonality of women’s interests, ignoring the diversity, which exists between different groups of women and the material impact of these differences upon leadership work for women. It contends that Australian feminist research on leadership silences such differences at its peril.
Chapter One

Storylines

We often think of power in terms of direct physical coercion or constraint. However, we have also spoken ... of power in representation; power to mark, assign and classify; of symbolic power: of ritualised expulsion. Power, it seems, has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain 'regime of representation'. It includes the exercise of symbolic power through representational practices. Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence (Hall 1997, p. 259).

Jane's Story: Where Do I Belong?

I was born in assimilationist Australia in the late 1950s. My mother was a Palcstinian-raised Jew whose grandparents had immigrated to Palestine from Transylvania in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. My father was born in Australia to an Anglican working-class family of English and Anglo-Irish origins. His grandparents also had emigrated in the late nineteenth century, but from the Midlands of England to a different promised land – Australia. My parents divorced when I was six, leaving my mother to raise my two sisters and myself, whilst she held down a full-time job as a process worker in a factory. To be a divorced, female sole parent working full time was an unusual phenomenon in the early to mid-1960s in Australia. Despite the divorce, my mother retained apparently cordial relations with her ex mother-in-law, my Anglo-Australian grandmother. As children we frequently visited the original home my paternal great-grandparents had built when they first immigrated to Australia and in which my grandmother and her identical twin sister had lived all their lives. At times on these visits, I was dimly aware of a peculiar tension in the air. One day I heard my great aunt walk into the room where I was playing and mutter, 'That Jewess', in an utterly disparaging tone. With a shock of recognition, I realised that she was referring to my mother and I was puzzled,
humiliated and angry. How could she say this about my mother? Yet my father was her nephew — did I belong in the despised ‘Jewess’ category or on my father’s side? Where did I belong?

I was a female, working-class Jew from a sole parent family raised in a multicultural, working-class suburb on the outskirts of Melbourne in the 1960s. I experienced as a daily reality, the snobbery, prejudice and sometimes well-meaning but insulting paternalism that my family’s circumstances elicited. I was determined to prove those doomsayers wrong who whispered in my hearing, ‘Well, what would you expect, poor things?’ Like many other white, working-class girls, teaching was my way out. I won a teaching studentship and became the first person in my immediate family to attend university. I completed Honours and Masters Degrees in English Literature — the classic over-achiever. Thus, my academic background has been shaped by an immersion in literature, which in turn has led to a personal disposition and professional habitus favouring a literary, narrative style of writing. This predilection both shapes and constructs the narrative form I have adopted for my thesis and converges with the narrative methodology which characterises these opening paragraphs.

My teaching career in the 1980s commenced at a time of great excitement and energy in Victoria with the election of a Labor government, after many years of a conservative Liberal/Country Party government. In 1992, I became the youngest assistant principal of a public secondary school in the Central Highlands/Wimmera region and one of only a handful of senior women administrators in the area. As such, I had a firsthand opportunity to experience personally the tensions and conflicts involved in being a woman leader in a very conservative rural region. As part of the Victorian Education Department’s Equal Employment Opportunity Program for women teachers, I was responsible for organising and running female leadership programs in the Wimmera. I became the first woman unionist in our sub-region to ever represent the region’s secondary teachers on the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association’s State Council. Thus, I gained valuable leadership experience in a range of areas.
Yet, the preceding experiences also deepened the tension I felt as a woman and a leader. On the face of it, my career appeared to be meteoric in its rise. The 1980s and early 1990s were awash with the rhetoric and policy of equal employment opportunity for women educators in Victoria, leading to a ‘door that opened in the later 80s and the 90s’ for Australian women in the leadership stakes (Aubin 1999, p. 52). However, there was a great distance between the reality and the rhetoric in terms of my individual experiences as a woman leader and the experiences of those women whom I dealt with every day in both in-school and out-of-school locations. Much of my career felt like a series of unending battles against conservative and ultimately chauvinistic attitudes within the education community, which made the policy of equal opportunity at times seem to be chimerical. For example, the first piece of advice I gained on receiving the Assistant Principalship was from my former boss who told me to ‘act like a man’ when I disciplined students (after some thought, I decided to reject the advice). My new male principal gladly handed the other (male) Assistant Principal and myself the task of doing the emotional housework for the staff, leaving himself free to go home at 3.30pm every day. I was placed in charge of the youngest High School students – the Year 7 and 8s – a role that was often given to women as it was seen as appropriate to their female, nurturing instincts. The middle and senior year levels were coordinated by the two other male Assistant Principals. I was receiving a good wage, had respect from students and staff and yet I felt uneasy. Is this what I had worked for so long to achieve? How could I, as a woman, lead in a way which did not place me in the position of surrogate mother to the staff and junior students, but alternatively, which did not position me as a ‘ball-breaking harpy’ or a man-hating feminist?

In addition, I witnessed many very able female colleagues either failing to gain leadership positions or not even trying because they felt defeated by the rural culture in which we lived. In April 1994, a year after the election of a conservative government which commenced major cuts to Victorian school education, I made the decision to take a redundancy package from the Education Department. I moved interstate, had a baby and gained work in the tertiary education sector.

The reason I tell my story, despite its partiality, gaps and contradictions, is because it was the springboard from which this current research began. My own career as an
educational leader from a working-class, urban, mixed ethnic background, made me acutely conscious of the at times brutal collision between the largely majority ethnic, middle-class, masculine construct of educational leadership with which I worked and the realities of my gender, ethnic and class origins. As a woman, I felt a partial identification with the female leaders I occasionally encountered in my region. Yet I also felt alienated by their automatic assumption of ‘an invisibilised racialised subject position’ – their comfortable and unquestioned assumption that the middle-class, majority ethnic mainstream was the inevitable centre from which to lead (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xxii).

In addition, I felt troubled by the contradictions that appeared to exist between my own conflicting experiences of educational leadership (which suggested its still highly gendered nature) and the increasing emergence of discourses in the mainstream media suggesting that the battle for equity had been won and that we were in fact now living in a postfeminist era where the struggles for women’s rights were over¹ (See also feminist writers such as Blackmore (1997a); Cameron (1995); Dunant (1994); Faludi (1991)). Such contradictions suggested a major dissonance between the rhetoric of much of the mainstream media and public figures such as the Prime Minister, and the reality for the majority of Australian women.

A Picture of Australian Women: The Realities Versus the Rhetoric

What is this reality? The picture is a complex one for Australian women. On the one hand, some Australian statistics paint a steadily improving picture of the status of women in contemporary Australia. For example, figures show that from 1982 to 2002, ‘the female proportion of the paid workforce grew from 35.4 percent to 44.0

¹ For example, in 2002, in response to a federal policy proposal in regard to the introduction of paid maternity leave at Commonwealth Government level, Prime Minister John Howard, leader of the conservative Liberal/National Party, noted that:

We are in the post-feminist stage of the debate … for the under-30s woman … the feminist battle has been won … Of course, women are as good as men. Of course, they are entitled to the same promotion and they can do it as well … That is someone else’s debate, an older debate. I think some of the people who write on this subject seem to have missed that. They are essentially fighting a 1970s, early 1980s debate. I don’t think it is like that any more. We have moved on … (Howett 2002, pp. 45, 50).
percent, while the proportion of civilian women aged 15 and older in the paid workforce ... rose from 44.6 percent to 56.3 percent' (Doughney et al. 2003, p. 3). In 2002, the lead article of Australia’s foremost business magazine, Business Review Weekly (BRW) noted that ‘in the ... (Australian) ... government sector women account for 30 percent of all directorships’ (Gome and Ross 2002, p. 52). Women comprise 24.6 percent of the Federal House of Representatives (Sawer 2004, p. 9) and 27.4 percent of state and territory parliaments (Stephens, 2002). Over 50 percent of medical and law graduates in Australia are women (Foley 2001, p. 9); (Shi, 2003 p. 8).

Yet other statistics suggest a more contradictory and complex picture. A background paper commissioned by the Prime Minister’s Commonwealth Office for the Status of Women, declared that:

The most significant change in the Australian labour force over the past four decades has been a profound increase in the proportion of women in paid work. Yet the economic position of women in Australia has not improved to anything approximating the same degree. In fact women will be waiting more than another 100 years for equal pay if the past 20 years’ trends continue (Doughney et al. 2003, p. 1).

A comparison with OECD countries reveals that Australia has ‘a highly gender segmented labour market, which ... reflects its highly segregated social division of labour’ (Doughney et al. 2003, p. 54).

In the 1990s, the gender gap has again widened with the election of a Federal Liberal/National Party Coalition government in 1996 and its adoption of neoconservative social and radical liberal market policies, including deregulation of the labour market and a shift to individual contracts. The winding back of the welfare state has included cutbacks to publicly funded childcare and legal aid and the watering down of affirmative action policies. It has led to Australia being ‘listed as at risk in areas on gender equality in 1999 in relation to the same United Nations convention it had endorsed a decade early’ (Blackmore and Sachs 2003, pp. 146-147).
In terms of leadership and management, Australian women comprise 23.5 percent of managerial jobs, compared to 76.5 percent of males (Doughney et al. 2003, p. 33). An International Labour Office Report noted that in Australia there had been 'no change in recent years of the 1.3 percent figure of executive directors who were women' (Wirth 2001, p. 38). BRW commented that, 'an estimated 5 percent of the directors of Australia’s 5000 biggest listed companies are women, a proportion that has not changed substantially over the past decade' (Gome and Ross 2002, p. 52). Women of minority ethnic background fare even worse in terms of leadership opportunities, with research suggesting that 'fifty-one percent of non-whites found their accent affected their access to opportunities to move into management roles compared with 21 percent of white women' (Unknown 2001b, p. 4).

This dissonance paralleled the contradictions I had experienced between the institutional discourses of women's leadership in education and my own personal experiences of leadership in the sector – a dissonance amplified by the emergence of backlash and postfeminist discourses in the public arena.

I was a strong feminist when I took on the Assistant Principalship. Yet, despite my feminist consciousness, I was not prepared for how powerfully framed I felt by the limitations and contradictions of the discourses of women’s leadership I experienced. Such power potentially suggests the extent to which representations may be 'more than mere symbols'. They may be 'a means by which we come to know, embody and perform reality' (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xxii). My sense of being trapped by a series of deeply-held societal beliefs and values around women leaders, led me to pose the following questions in regard to the origins of such leadership representations:

- How did such apparently 'common sense' understandings about gender and leadership come to assume such strength in my leadership work?
- How closely did the realities of the workforce tally with the increasing emergence of postfeminist and backlash discourses within Australian society?

---

In this thesis, I utilise the term 'common sense' as meaning, 'the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become "common" in any given epoch (Hoare and Nowell 1982, pp. 321-322).
and the media which suggested that the battle for women’s equality had been
won and may have gone too far?

- Were the contradictions and dissonances I experienced as a woman leader an
isolated phenomenon or were they more widespread, given that we are all
subject to societal discourses?

These were the questions that I initially sought to investigate when I first began my
doctoral research.

Lisa and Rhoda: Gaps in the Sisterhood Stories

In order to answer these questions, I began my research with an initial, small-scale
study which involved interviewing two women who held Deputy Principalship and
Principalship positions respectively, in the New South Wales government primary
sector. Both women worked in my immediate geographical region. In the interviews
I sought to identify possible discourses of women’s leadership in education and how
such discourses were taken up, circulated and/or interrogated by women leaders on
the ground. I selected these women for two reasons. Initially I was interested in the
experiences of women principals due to my own former career as a teacher and
Assistant Principal in the Victorian secondary system – an interest which later shifted
to universities due to the switch in my career path. Secondly, the decision to
interview the women was made on the pragmatic grounds that this was a pilot study
and it was unclear at this early point in the research as to whether such interviews
would yield much useful data.

Fortuitously, I selected two women from different ethnic and class backgrounds.
Rhoda was a middle-aged, Australian-born principal of English origin, originally
from an urban working-class background. Her marriage into an old, well-established
farming family had placed her solidly within the rural middle-class. In contrast, the
younger Lisa was a Deputy Principal from an ethnically and socially mixed
background (her mother was a middle-class Australian of English background, her
father working-class, Australian born with Chinese grandparents). She was married
to a local tradesman.
As I analysed the interviews, what became clear was that in terms of her possibilities for promotion, Rhoda's class and ethnicity appeared to confer a significant 'advantage' in comparison to Lisa (Eveline 1996, p. 70). Rhoda's interview revealed the privileges of being a majority ethnic, middle-class farming woman in rural New South Wales. As a new principal, the recognition of her status as the spouse of an old farming family amongst the rural community she was entering gave her an acceptance that she at least temporarily, would have been denied. There was a clear hierarchy of difference which placed Rhoda higher in social status than Lisa, for Lisa was from partial minority ethnic origins and not of a farming background. The colour of Lisa's skin as well as her sex appeared to mark her both physically and symbolically as the threatening other. The visibility of Lisa's appearance in such an ethnically homogenous region appeared to allow the 'hidden text' of whiteness to go unchallenged (Eveline 1996, p. 70). Lisa wryly summed up her dilemma when, after failing to gain any interviews for principalship despite her rank at Deputy Principal level and her excellent reputation, she noted that in order to get a job as principal in her region, 'you've gotta be a grizzler and a male' — and I would add — from a majority ethnic background. Otherwise, she notes, 'locally the message for me is if you want to go any further you have to leave'.

Gaps and Silences: Leadership as a Gendered, Classed and Raced Activity?

The interviews with Lisa and Rhoda were significant for my research for a number of reasons. Firstly, they suggested the possibility that the concept of leadership may be a raced, classed and gendered construct, rather than being purely a gendered issue (See also Rizvi 1993, pp. 214-215). Secondly, Lisa's and Rhoda's leadership experiences suggested that a significant silence around the intersection of gender, class and ethnicity might exist in the media in terms of postfeminist discourses. Thirdly, the diversity between Rhoda and Lisa in terms of their ethnicity and class and the apparent impact of such differences in terms of achieving leadership, also potentially implied the homogenising and essentialising nature of postfeminist discourses, in that they might be rendering invisible the realities of such diversity. Fourthly, despite the fact that Lisa's and Rhoda's achievements could be constructed by the media and prominent public figures such as our current Prime Minister as
evidence of the realities of postfeminism, their struggles in achieving and retaining leadership implied that the ascension to the principalship was not the uncomplicated career trajectory connoted by these discourses. There appeared to be a major dissonance between the complex realities of Lisa’s and Rhoda’s leadership experiences and the institutional discourses of equal opportunity circulating in the education sector which employed them – a dissonance which appeared to be amplified by postfeminist and backlash discourses circulating in the media.

These contradictions led to my desire to:

- Problematisate the relationship between broader societal discourses of women’s leadership and institutional discourses;
- Examine how broader societal discourses may be articulated at the institutional level; and
- Analyse what these discourses signify for women leaders as individuals and as a collectivity in terms of women leaders’ positioning and practices within organisations, including the professional choices they make as leaders.

In order to meet these aims, I needed to:

- Establish, map and explore broader societal discourses of women’s leadership;
- Examine the types of institutional discourses of women’s leadership occurring in a specific organisational context; and
- Analyse both the content and process by which women leaders as individuals come to understand these representations at both the symbolic and material levels.

**Rationale of Thesis**

The rationale for my study was that the interviews with Rhoda and Lisa implied firstly that a silence of potential significance might exist in media discourses of Australian women’s leadership, that is, in terms of the intersection of class, ethnicity
and gender. Secondly, the silence suggested the possibility of a discursive struggle over the construct of leadership – a struggle that might render particular discourses as sayable or unsayable. Thirdly, the experiences of Lisa, Rhoda and myself suggested that what was happening in our sector of school education, might be part of a wider set of discursive ways of framing women and their leadership possibilities in other sectors and society more generally, in which the media may be a major player. Fourthly, a comparison of Lisa’s, Rhoda’s and my educational leadership experiences with postfeminist discourses of women’s leadership, raised the possibility that women leaders in Australia may be being discursively framed in ways that did not take into account the diversity within and amongst women and that were highly essentialist.

**What is the Key Research Question This Thesis Poses?**

In order to explore these gaps, dissonances and relationships, I commenced the thesis as a case study examining how gender, class and ethnicity, leadership and power are played out in a particular educational site. The key question the thesis poses is:

*How does the media produce and reproduce representations of culturally and socioeconomically diverse women leaders in ways which are then interpollated across a specific educational field, namely, higher education?*

**No Organisation is an Island: Rationale for Data Collection**

Based on the notion that representations have the capacity for symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1990a, pp. 84-85) and that the women leaders interviewed noted, on the one hand, contradictions between media and common sense or societal representations of leadership, and on the other hand, their individual experiences as leaders, this thesis takes on two interconnected dimensions. Firstly, it maps representations of socioeconomically and ethnically diverse women leaders in the media – representations that in turn inform the general subjectivity of women leaders as an overall group. Secondly, it explores six individual women leaders in the field of higher education; how they are discursively positioned organisationally; and how they see themselves misrepresented through dominant discourses of women’s
leadership which are derived largely from the media and inform common sense or societal leadership discourses. The premise for this approach is drawn from Karen Lee Ashcraft’s and Dennis Mumby’s contention that part of the scholarly disarticulation of organisations includes examining, ‘multiple sites and practices of organising that extend well beyond the conventional sites of work’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 187). Importantly for my thesis, the authors note that two crucial part of this process include:

- Examining and critiquing how popular media discourses and ‘representations of work and professional identity’ act to organise ‘professional identities’;
  and

- Asking in ‘what ways are these organising processes articulated through particular raced, classed, and gendered discourses?’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 187).

In other words, in order to understand the micro-context or gender regime of a specific organisation, that is, the particular ways in which individual women’s professional identities as leaders are discursively shaped and constructed within a specific organisation – one needs to examine how this gender regime simultaneously is informed by/informs the macro context or wider gender order (Connell, 1987). One needs to ask, what are the popular mediatised discourses of women’s leadership and how do they interpelate as field-specific, but still gendered, raced and classed discourses at organisational level – discourses which may then feed into women leaders’ identity formation?

In order to examine these two interconnected dimensions, I undertook two major pieces of data collection in my thesis. Firstly, over a twelve-month period I collected articles on Australian women leaders of majority ethnic, minority ethnic, Aboriginal and diverse class backgrounds from two key Australian broadsheets – *The Australian* and *The Age*. I then mapped the articles for the dominant discourses and gaps and silences in their representations of women’s leadership. These discourses were then classified under the categories of Aboriginal, minority ethnic, and majority ethnic women’s discourses of leadership.
Most of the articles I examined on majority ethnic women leaders, focused upon women in the field of mainstream Australian politics, that is, at federal, state and local levels. This was because broadsheet representations of majority ethnic women leaders tended to concentrate largely upon women political leaders and subsume or marginalise women leaders in other fields, such as health, welfare, business or education. In contrast to the preceding group of women, representations of Aboriginal and minority ethnic women leaders were drawn from a much broader range of contexts, including the juridical, bureaucratic and arts fields. However, I will argue that firstly, Australian media representations of women leaders from the mainstream political field inform wider discussions about women and leadership in general; and secondly, the dominant discourses within these representations then are played out/taken up and circulated in a wide range of specific institutional sites. As such, they become part of a wider discursive framework, which shapes the possibilities of leadership for women in a range of workplace contexts. Therefore, higher education as an institutional site in which gendered representations intersect as part of the overall symbolic order will be explored, rather than the juridical, bureaucratic or arts fields. The rationale for selecting the tertiary sector will be discussed in the next section.

Secondly, I conducted lengthy interviews with six women leaders in the Australian higher education field focusing on exploring their leadership experiences in terms of:

- The intersection of gender, ethnicity and class; and
- The individual women’s perceptions of the dominant discourses of leadership they encountered in their work.

The women came from a range of ethnic and class backgrounds including one English/working-class; two Aboriginal/working-class; one Italian origin/peasant/working-class; one Greek origin/peasant/working-class and one Chinese-Indonesian origin/middle-class. All the women were at least at senior lecturer level or above and all – save the senior lecturer – had major roles as managers at either middle or upper management level. Let us now turn to an
examination of Australian universities as a site of practice in order to explore why this particular field was selected.

**Why Choose the Australian Tertiary Education Sector as a Specific Site of Practice?**

I chose to conduct a case study of women leaders in the tertiary education sector, rather than other fields, for a number of reasons. Firstly, from a pragmatic perspective, I am an educator who has worked in this sector for the past decade, so I am familiar with its issues. Secondly, it was the one educational sector in which I was able to identify a number (but not a critical mass) of women leaders who came from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Thirdly, and most importantly, under a succession of Labor and then conservative federal governments, the Australian higher education sector has undergone in the past fifteen years, one of the most significant forms of restructuring of any industry, reflecting the major role that it is seen to play in the nation’s attempts to move from a Fordist to post-Fordist or knowledge economy (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 8); (Ozga and Deem 2000, p. 141). In fact, it has been argued that in Australia, ‘common global trends’ in tertiary education, such as the impact of restructuring, market reforms and a ‘fall in public fiscal support for the universities ... have been carried further and more consistently ... than in many places’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 6-7).

Instability and disruption currently characterise the Australian university field. One characteristic of this instability is that previously taken-for-granted ideologies embedded in discourses about the field become exposed through mediatised debates about policy (Janks 1997, p. 340). It is in the interplay of competing discourses across the fields of politics, media and academia about what academia signifies, that the print media’s symbolic power ‘to set the terms in which the debate proceeds’, becomes crucial (Hall 1988, p. 71).

A second characteristic of this instability is that the field’s internal gender regime is volatile and currently undergoing considerable challenge. Restructuring has led to the repositioning of various groups and in turn, has opened up new possibilities for some women academics while simultaneously leading to the reassertion of old gender
hierarchies and mobilisation of ‘new regimes of power’ under new managerialist
discourses of efficiency and quality provision (Blackmore 2004, p. 383). For
example, in Australian universities, there has been an intensification,
commodification and casualisation of academic work which has led to women
academics being increasingly concentrated in the lowest paying, most casualised and
contractualised areas of academia (Allen and Castleman 2001, p. 162). Yet, during
the last eight years there has been an increase in the number of new women vice-
chancellors from five percent in 1996 to 27 percent in 2003 (Anon., 2004). Hence,
my final reason for selecting the sector is that a case study of women leaders
provides a useful lens through which to explore the ways in which mediatised
discourses of women’s leadership produced in the broader societal field are being
interpellated in a sector undergoing a massive transformation in its institutional
identity – a radical change which has had complex and varied effects on different
groups of women academics.

Is This a Pretty Story? Exploring the Implications of Restructuring for
Australian Women Academics

The increasing interdependence between the fields of business/economics, politics,
and the tertiary education sector has led to ‘broad changes in the values
underpinning’ the academic field as a whole (Lingard and Rawolle 2004, p. 369). For
example, a major part of the massive restructuring of the Australian tertiary
education field includes a significant shift in values from academia and education as
a public good, to values premised on neoliberal concepts of marketisation,
privatisation, enterprncurialism and the user pays principle, leading to the production
of the enterprise university (Marginson and Considine, 2000). In terms of the
Anglophone tertiary field as a whole, Jenny Ozga and Rosemary Deem contend that
the three ‘key policy areas designed to ensure’ the transformation of the higher
education sector include:

the clear articulation of educational outcomes to national economic priorities ... the
redefinition of professionalism in the education workforce, and ... organisational
restructuring modelled on a corporate managerial approach ... (Ozga and Deem 2000, pp.
141-142).
The transition in Australian higher education also has occurred due to the impact of a global economy in which governments seek to minimise debt, attract investment and ‘create wealth and competitive advantage’ through a range of strategies including the packaging and commodification of knowledge (Mackinnon and Brooks 2001, p. 2). Simultaneously, there has been a significant reduction in the role of the state in Australia. Cuts to education have been a major part of this trend (Mackinnon and Brooks 2001, p. 2) with Commonwealth Government funding for universities declining from 90 percent in 1981 to 41 percent in 2003 (Chan, J. 2004, pers. comm. 17 November); (Anon., 2004). Such a situation has created enormous tensions as universities scramble to justify their existence in a corporatised environment, which demands major sacrifices from its workers. Ironically, these pressures potentially compromise the very characteristics, which give the sector its competitive advantage, namely the quality of its research and teaching (Currie et al., 2000).

In terms of my thesis, the restructuring of the tertiary education sector along with cutbacks to government funding of the system, has had specific consequences for female academics at all levels. Jenny Ozga and Rosemary Deem note that as part of the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist ‘regimes of flexible accumulation’, educational organisations are charged with a crucial responsibility of producing a ‘differentially skilled workforce divided into ... “highly-skilled professional and other core workers; specifically-skilled peripheral full-time workers; gencratically-skilled peripheral part-time or casual workers”’ (Ozga and Deem 2000, p. 141); (Soucek, 1994). The workforces of educational organisations themselves ‘mirror... these three categories’ as ‘(p)art of the process of transition’ and such a process has clear gender implications (Ozga and Deem 2000, p. 141). This has been the case in Australian universities despite equity being declared ‘as a central principle of the new national system’ (Bacchi 2001, p. 121). It is also reflected in my personal experience of nine years of casualised and contract labour in academia.

The most recent figures obtained from the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (refer Table 1) reveal that at level A, Australian women academics remained clustered as the majority of the lowest paid academics (1996 – 52 percent; 2003 – 53 percent). Despite male academics being a minority at 47 percent, in 2003 men still
comprised the overwhelming majority of all professorships – 85 percent – only a slight decrease from 90 percent in 1996. In 2003 at senior lecturer level (Level C) – the key lecturing level from which positions of leadership commence and at which the springboard into the professoriate occurs – women’s representation declines from 46 percent at Level B to 34 percent, or just over a third of all academics. Nonetheless, these figures represent a moderate increase from 24 percent in 1996.

The largest growth for women appears at vice-chancellor level with a shift from five percent in 1996 to 27 percent in 2003. A parallel movement has occurred in broader societal level with women in 2002 holding 8.4 percent of executive management positions and 47.4 percent of Australian companies having ‘at least one woman in executive management position’ (Anon. 2002, p. 5). However, the numbers of female vice-chancellors need to be treated with caution as they represent a small number of very high profile women. If only one woman leaves, then the figures alter dramatically.

The sheer visibility of women vice-chancellors and of women managers at the broader societal level can be used as proof that equity policies have worked and are no longer needed, thus bolstering postfeminist discourses. However, the increasing casualisation of the sector noted below suggests that although some women as individuals are doing well, academic women as a group may be overall in a more perilous and disadvantaged position. As the 2001 Australian Senate Committee’s Universitites in Crisis: Report on Higher Education noted, in direct repudiation of the ‘pipeline’ theory of equity (Allen and Castleman, 2001):

It is highly likely that within an emerging cohort of relatively inexperienced academics waiting to fill tenured positions over the next ten years, women will be even less experienced than their male colleagues (Anon. 2001, pp. 314-315).
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| Total staff | 78,766 | 77,316 | 76,272 | 76,037 | 76,877 | 78,228 | 81,145 | 84,435 |


DEST's staff data sets 1996-2003
Casual staffs now 'comprise more than 15 percent of the total higher education workforce' but it has been argued that the actual number of casuals may be much higher (Anon., 2001). The increasing casualisation of higher education and the shift towards enterprise bargaining and individual contracts, impacts most harshly upon the lower-paid, less industrially strong sections of the workplace where women are most concentrated (Allen and Castleman 2001, pp. 162, 165).

**The Enterprise University: Discourses of Managerialism**

Australian universities now draw on private enterprise for their models of governance and have been coined 'enterprise universities' (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 4). Features of these institutions include 'strong executive control'; 'university missions and governing bodies ... tak(ing) ... on a distinctly corporate character'; a 'new openness to outside funding and competition'; a 'commercial and entrepreneurial spirit' which drives a 'redefined internal economy in which under funding drives a "pseudo market" in fee incomes' etcetera; and a transformation of academic work 'driven by an "academic ratcheting process" that encourages more but not necessarily better research productivity' (Blackmore and Sachs 2001, p. 45); (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 4). Restructured universities 'have shifted towards lean and mean modes of administration, teaching and learning at the very moment that there is increased emphasis on quality, outcomes and performances – a contradiction in itself' (Blackmore 1997b, p. 3).

A major feature of these new structures is the emergence of a hard management discourse – modelled on a form of corporate management that privileges hierarchy and line-management structures and concentrates management decisions within fewer and fewer hands. It thus runs the risk of further marginalising already marginalised equity groups such as women at all levels except the most junior. Management accountability is devolved to individuals such as deans or departmental heads rather than 'academic or operational collectivities', along with 'increased line-management responsibility' (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 11). The new forms of devolution increase 'centralised control', for they provide 'budgetary autonomy
within the framework of institutional plans, performance measures and targets” which restrains the ‘devolved manager’s ... capacity to innovate or resist’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 10). In addition, ‘(o)lder forms of devolution’ such as ‘collegial forms of decision-making’ were no longer favoured as they were seen ‘as an obstacle to managerial rationalities’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 11). Importantly for women, a more ‘recently created democratic tradition in universities’ which had ‘provided greater space for young academics, students, general staff and women in all categories’ was being ‘pushed aside, and most of its gains ... reversed’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 11).

A second consequence for women as leaders is that management may come to view ‘women as the new source of leadership for the greedy organisation, to position women as change agents’ (Blackmore 1997b, p. 4), whilst simultaneously tapping into discourses of women’s leadership as more ‘collaborative’ (Mackinnon and Brooks 2001, p. 4). Such discourses open up certain limited leadership possibilities for women while also dovetailing with soft management discourses which privilege traditionally female qualities such as team-building, consultation and communication (Karpin 1995, p. xxxix). However, the danger is that such discourses reproduce existing gender stereotypes by placing expectations upon women leaders that they will do the emotional ‘housework ... (and) ... the nurturing’ of staff required in these tougher times (Currie and Thiele 2001, p. 98).

Finally, the reinvention of Australian universities’ very identities, due to rapid corporatisation, managerialism and casualisation of staff (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 2-3) means that new discourses of efficiency and effectiveness outweigh those of equity. In fact, ‘gender-equity for women (as opposed to clients) is seen to be a luxury in these new hard times’ and those who argue for equity may be positioned as ‘inflexible ... resistant to change, and ... “out-of-date”’ (Blackmore 1997a, pp. 90-91); (Blackmore and Sachs 2003, p. 141).
Why Examine the Media as a Major Player in the Construction of Discourses of Women's Leadership?

The preceding discussion raises the issue of the role of the media in constructing broader societal discourses of women's leadership. I commenced this thesis with a quotation from Stuart Hall which alerts us to the significance of power as not simply 'direct physical coercion or restraint', but as 'symbolic power ... the power to represent someone or something in a certain way...' (Hall 1997, p. 259). Hall's point signals the crucial foundation of this research. Firstly, the thesis is an exploration of how women leaders from ethnically and socioeconomically diverse origins are represented within two specific broadsheets. Secondly, it examines via interview, how a small group of women leaders in the tertiary education field desire to represent themselves.

Hall's quotation alerts us to the media's key role in exercising symbolic power via its ability to 'mark, assign and classify' – a power which the women leaders lack. However, what the interviews do attempt to explore is an individual's power to represent, that is, the difference 'between how one represents oneself through interpretation as opposed to how one is represented by another' (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xxii). It is a difference I will examine further in Chapters Three and Four.

Pierre Bourdieu has argued that the 'combined effects' of contemporary media 'result in' a form of 'political "agenda setting" ... and the "circular circulation" of issues', that is, the 'media pick up on issues covered by others' (Bourdieu 1998a, pp. 23-28). The privilege to decide which issues will be picked up on and which will not is a major power of the media. As Stuart Hall notes, the media is one of the key institutions by which 'the headquarters' or consolidation of 'a circuit of relations' of power occurs in society. As Hall observes, '(w)hen you set the terms in which the debate proceeds, that is an exercise of symbolic power' (Hall 1988, p. 71). It is a 'signifying power' to which Norman Fairclough also points (Fairclough 1995b, p. 2).

In terms of the constitution and transformation of gender relations, Bob Connell argues that the media in contemporary society is an obvious "vector" for the globalisation of gender (Connell 1998, pp. 10-11). He contends that, '(a)t the level of collective practice, masculinities are reconstituted by the remaking of gender
meanings and the reshaping of the institutional contexts of practice' (Connell 1998, p. 11). Connell asserts that within an increasingly globalising economy, a hegemonic world gender order has been created with 'transnational business masculinity' dominating with ethnic variants (Connell 1998, p. 16). The circulation of such dominant discourses of masculinity via the Western-dominated media is a crucial component in their creation and reconfiguration.

In regard to gender relations, Liesbet Van Zoonen observes that the media ‘has always been at the centre of feminist critique’ for Western first world women (Zoonen 1994, p. 11). She notes that debates around ‘culture and representation have once again become important battle grounds for feminism’, raising issues such as what it means ‘to be a woman or a man, how feminine and masculine subjectivities and identities ... (are) ... constructed’ both at individual and collective level and ‘which interests are being served by particular constructions?’ (Zoonen 1994, p. 5).

The media is a major player in Australia in determining how the common sense within societal institutions, such as the family and the political realm, renders certain discourses of leadership as sayable or unsayable. Moreover, it plays a key role in the production of hegemonic understandings of the world and of leadership3. Thus, I began my research with an examination of the dominant media discourses contained within representations of ethnically and socioeconomically diverse women’s leadership. I did so in order to explore firstly, what kinds of knowledge about the leadership of these groups of women were produced by these discourses whilst potentially silencing or marginalising other forms of knowledge; and secondly, how this common sense or knowledge may then become part of a broader discursive field which potentially frames the leadership possibilities of the women interviewees within Australian academia.

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3 Hegemony is the process by which a class ‘articulates the interests of social groups such that those groups actively “consent” to their subordinated status’, utilising the ‘cement’ of ideology which is ‘conceived of as an articulation of ... common sense ... and philosophy’ (Slack 1996, p. 119).
Defining 'Leadership’

For the purposes of this thesis, I have used the term leadership to refer to firstly, the roles and positions imbued with formal status and authority in hierarchical organisations, such as those held by the interview participants. Secondly, I draw on a more holistic meaning of leadership, as that which is frequently ‘initiated and worked on from the bottom-up’ (Blackmore 1999, p. 2), by individuals or groups of people in both the paid and voluntary sectors, the public and the private spheres, in families and extended communities. In academia, Joan Evison has defined this type of leadership as ‘post-ivory’ and ‘post-heroic’ (Evison, 2004). Both the traditional and ‘bottom-up’ approaches to leadership were utilised when collecting articles on women leaders in the two broadsheets. It challenges the benchmark of leadership as ‘white, middle-class, heterosexual and male’ – and the technocratic view of leadership as a set of ‘generic competencies’ – a perspective that ‘leach(es) out … the … ‘social, ethical and political dimensions of leadership’ (Blackmore 1999, pp. 5-6).

Would the six women who were interviewed be considered leaders in academia? In terms of the more traditional definition of leadership as formal positions of authority, five out of the six women would be considered so. Three held full professorships – of which one was in middle management, a second in senior management and the third the head of a research unit. The fourth was a member of the senior executive of her university. The fifth participant was the Deputy Head of a unit – a role that carried formal leadership responsibilities but not to the degree of the preceding women. However, outside the academic field this academic held a significant position of leadership within a government/Indigenous committee, was a leading feminist and activist in the Aboriginal political field and was regularly quoted in the media as a source of authority. These latter roles imbued her with considerable political capital, which translated across into the academic field. The sixth was a senior lecturer who held no formal leadership role within the faculty but whose scholastic reputation as a leader in her research field provided her with some status and symbolic capital in the academic field. She was also chosen as a source of authority in her field by the media.
Ethnicity as an Ideological Construct

The term ‘ethnicity’ has been defined as ‘language, customs, beliefs, religion or generally those characteristics which create and reproduce a cultural identity’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 13). Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias have argued that ethnicity is also ‘an ideological construct, used to divide people into collectivities, a process which, although primarily ideological ... involves real material practices’ (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989).

In Australia, ethnicity as a construct has ‘been used to exclude Australian ethnic minorities from “legitimate Australianness”’ – the latter being conceived of as ‘those with British ancestry’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 14). The way in which non-British ethnicity is linked with gender and class in order to reconstruct asymmetrical relations of power through media representations of women’s leadership, will be one of the key issues I will examine in this research.

Throughout this thesis I will use the term ‘majority ethnic’ to refer to Australian people from English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish Catholic and/or Irish Protestant origins. I will use the phrase ‘minority ethnic’ to refer to people born or from origins other than the previous ones identified, with the exception of the first peoples of Australia, whom I will refer to as Aboriginal Australians. I speak of Aboriginal Australians rather than Indigenous Australians, because both the media representations and the interviews I conducted were with Aboriginal women, as I was not able to locate academic women leaders of Torres Strait Islander origin.

I have adopted the preceding terms while noting the difficulty in finding alternative phrases, which encompassed in a more inclusive way, the various diversity and power differences signified by such words. Moreover, I have made an attempt whenever possible in the thesis, to use more specific language to describe the ethnic and class origins of individual women, both in regard to the interview participants and the media articles I collected.
Defining ‘Class’

A key tenet of this thesis is that the two broadsheets’ representations of women’s leadership take as their assumed centre, a majority ethnic, and middle-class women’s subject position. ‘Middle-class’ can be used in the ‘Weberian sense to refer to one’s social status and prestige based on capital, occupation, skill and education’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xvii). In this sense, all the women interviewed for this study were middle-class by virtue of their position as leading academics. However, the five interviewees who were of working-class background, still strongly identified with their original class origins. Hence, one of the arguments I will posit in the thesis is that class is as much about identity, as it is about current ‘social status and prestige’.

The phrase ‘subject location’ is used ‘to denote a socially constructed position whereby one’s behaviour is significantly shaped by what is expected of that position rather than by conscious intention’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xvii). The habitus or social identity that underpins the middle-class subject location of Australian academia is also a key concept, which will be explored throughout this thesis.

Conclusion

I have noted that my thesis is a case study of how gender, class and ethnicity, leadership and power are played out in higher education as a specific institutional site. I have contended that a series of dissonances between media discourses of postfeminism, institutional discourses of equity and Lisa, Rhoda and my own leadership experiences, led me to explore how such discourses may form part of a wider set of discursive ways of framing women and their leadership possibilities in which the media plays a major role. I have argued that such discourses may homogenise women’s diversity and potentially produce an essentialised, raced, classed and gendered body of knowledge about what it means to be a woman leader.

I have also noted that the higher education sector has been discursively positioned by government policy as a central player in Australia’s shift to a knowledge economy and consequently attracts widespread media attention. In terms of dominant power
relations, therefore, it is a key site in which to conduct a series of case studies into
the ways in which a wider representational framework of women may discursively
shape the possibilities of ethnically and socioeconomically diverse women leaders in
a sector riven by contradictory local, national and globalising demands. Specifically I
will explore what possibilities for leadership are opened up/shut down or
marginalised by broader media discourses of ethnically and socioeconomically
diverse women's leadership. I will examine how these discourses are
circulated/played out and/or resisted by the women in my case studies who carry out
their leadership work in a restructured sector in which contradictory discourses of
efficiency and effectiveness, quality and outcomes are being propounded. Finally, I
will examine whether enterprise universities allow discursive space for these
particular women leaders and if so, to what degree? In order to explore these
questions, however, it is necessary first to turn to an examination of the ways in
which feminists have theorised leadership.
Chapter Two

Do White Girls Rule? Exploring the Feminist Leadership Literature

In the opening chapter, I noted the possibility that a significant silence might exist in media discourses of Australian women's leadership in terms of the intersection of class, ethnicity and gender. I also observed some major contradictions between Lisa's, Rhoda's and my individual educational leadership experiences on the one hand; and media, government and academic discourses of postfeminism, on the other hand. I commented that such dissonances raised the possibility that our experiences as three individuals might be part of a broader discursive framing of women leaders' possibilities that did not take into account the diversity within and amongst women and that were highly essentialist. In order to explore these possible gaps, silences and dissonances further, I turned to a reading of the feminist educational leadership research literature conducted in a number of Anglophone nations, concentrating in particular on the higher education sector where my six key informants were located.

In the past fifteen years, there has been an increase in research focusing upon the leadership experiences of women in academia in Anglophone nations. The literature includes international comparative studies (Brooks, 1997); (Brooks and Mackinnon, 2001); (Howie and Tauchert, 2002); (Marshall, 1997); (Stiver Lie and O'Leary, 1990); (Stiver Lie et al., 1994); American research (Glazer-Raymo, 1999); (Nidiffer and Bashaw, 2001); (Pearson et al., 1989); Canadian literature (Bannerji et al., 1991); British and Irish studies (Acker, 1994); (Barker and Monks, 1998); (David and Woodward, 1998); (Davis et al., 1994); (Egging, 1997); (Morley and Walsh, 1996); (Morley, 1999); (Ozga and Deem, 2000); New Zealand research (Munford et al., 1998); (Munford and Rumball, 2001); (Tuhiwai Smith, 1998); South African literature (Walker, 1997); (Walker, 1998) and Australian research (Allen and Castlemans, 2001); (Bacchi, 2001); (Blackmore, 1992); (Blackmore and Sachs, 2001); (Blackmore and Sachs, 2003); (Burton, 1997); (Chesterman, 2002); (Chesterman et al., 2003); (Chesterman et al., 2004); (Martin, 1996b); (Meyenn and Parker, 1996); (Ramsay, 2001); (Sheridan, 1992).
Key strands of feminist research into leadership in a range of sectors, including academia, critique the sexism of conventional management literature with its almost exclusive focus upon the male as leader (Sinclair 1998, pp. 15, 27); the interrogation of the ways in which traditionally masculine traits of leadership have been privileged in such literature (Blackmore, 1997a); (Cox, 1996); (Sinclair, 1994), (Sinclair, 1998); and an examination of strategies for women to affect change in this area (Burton and Ryall, 1995); (Cox, 1996).

A major insight of the body of feminist leadership literature overall is that leadership as a construct is highly gendered. In the feminist leadership literature in the compulsory education sector for example, this insight has led to a critique of the ‘gender blindness’ of many conventional educational management theories, which are often uncritically transplanted from general management theories to the study of educational leadership. Such theorisations typically exclude or marginalise women and lead to stereotypical masculinist constructions of educational leadership, which valorise ‘idealised masculine virtues of decisiveness, incisiveness and strength’ (Nidiffer 2001, p. 103); (Ozga and Walker 1995, p. 36). In so doing, they reconstruct and perpetuate a binary division between constructions of teaching as the devalued feminine other versus administration as the privileged domain of hegemonic modes of masculine authority (Blackmore, 1993).

**Feminist Organisational Literature: Thinking about Leadership Differently**

In my introductory chapter, I argued that in order to understand the ways in which the six women interviewees were positioned as leaders within the various organisational sites of higher education, it was necessary also to map media representations of women’s leadership. I contended that such representations in turn contributed to a broader discursive framework of possibilities of leadership for women in a range of workplace contexts, including universities. In the past two to three years, since I commenced my thesis, a small body of feminist organisational literature is emerging which supports this contention through a demonstration of how feminist work is advancing radical notions of organisation (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004); (Czarniawska and Hopfl, 2002).
A key notion, which underpins this body of work, is that organisations are porous to wider sets of societal values and discourses. Thus in order to understand the context of organisational life and, for example, the ways in which Australian women leaders in the specific organisational site of the university operate, one must explore broader societal texts in which dominant discourses and ideologies underpinning beliefs and values about women’s leadership are circulated. In addition, it is necessary to examine how these discourses are in turn, taken up/rejected and/or played out within the individual organisation under examination and contribute to individual identity formation for women leaders.

Karen Ashcraft and Dennis Mumby, researchers in organisational studies, have recently advanced the claim for a ‘feminist communicology of organisation’ which ‘is positioned at the intersection of the discourses of postmodernism and modernism’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 111). They argue that such a communicative framework, combines on the one hand, the strengths of modernism with its recognition of ‘the material character of oppression and enduring, gendered structures of power and dominance’; and on the other hand, postmodernist insights into ‘relationships among discourse, identity, power and organising’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 112). In sum, they contend that a feminist communicology of organisation allows them to explore the ‘dialectical relationship between … Foucault’s concept of discourse as “conditions of possibility”’ and ‘how such “conditions of possibility” actually get played out in material, everyday discourses’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, pp. 115, 118). In particular, Ashcraft and Mumby make a case for a feminist communicology of organisations on the basis of two claims. Firstly, they critique critical studies of organisation for their gender blindness, noting that ‘gender is not simply a feature of organising that may be addressed or ignored; rather, it is a basic, constitutive feature of organisation’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 96). Secondly, they argue the case for a blending of the pragmatics of feminism and the theorising of postmodernism. They assert that feminist critiques of organisation have, unlike critical theories, done much of the radical groundwork in terms of on-the-ground ‘politics and social transformation’. However, they note that its shortcomings – such as feminism’s ‘attendant suspicion of … grand theorising’ – can be countered by postmodernist critiques of theory, thus allowing a more balanced
'relationship between theory and politics' to emerge (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, pp. 84-85).

Ashcraft and Mumby note the 'difficulty of adequately theorising subjectivities without recourse to the larger network of discourses out of which they emerge' (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 127). To illustrate this thesis, they draw upon an empirical study they have conducted which traces the ways in which the modern (white, male, middle-class) pilot historically emerged from a set of competing discourses about masculine and feminine identities. They note the way in which certain discourses of raced, classed and sexualised masculinity were privileged due to the economic imperatives of the airline industry. In so doing, the woman pilot of the 1930s and 40s was rendered invisible and transformed into a more acceptable construction of femininity in the person of the female stewardess. Importantly for my study, it was the utilisation of study data such as 'museum exhibits, archival texts and film, and in-depth interviews with contemporary pilots', which allowed the researchers to

shift... the usual meaning of organisation ... to the formation of professional identity across public and private arenas of practice, such as popular culture, commercial aviation organisations, and individual pilot experience (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 132).

In so doing, Ashcraft and Mumby convincingly argue for

a broader scope for the study of gender and organisation – one that would elucidate the complex intersections among public discourse and the cultures of industries, occupations, and particular organisations (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 174).

Another illustration of this macro approach is that of feminist organisational theorist, Helene Jonson Ahl. She examines the ways in which Swedish policies to support female entrepreneurship, in turn created a new public discourse of female entrepreneurship which both produced a 'picture of women entrepreneurs as secondary' to males, 'whilst leaving the primary position of the (male) entrepreneur unchallenged'. Her examination of the academic and public discourses leads to the conclusion that such discourses had the material effect of 'recreat(ing)... the established gender regime' by simultaneously rendering women 'entrepreneurs visible but kept in place' (Johnson Ahl 2002, p. 63).
Ashcraft and Mumby have contended that:

Dislocating organisation calls attention to multiple sites and practices of organising that extend well beyond the conventional sites of work ... (ii) ... involves exploring and critiquing the representations of work and professional identity that characterise popular media. How do popular discourses organise professional identities? In what ways are these organising processes articulated through particular raced, classed, and gendered discourses? How might organisational scholars intervene in these popular discourses to suggest other forms of organisational identity, connected, for example, to non profit organisations and different social movements? (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, pp. 187-188).

These are crucial questions, which strike at the heart of the research I am carrying out in this thesis. In a similar fashion, my thesis argues that the identity formation of individual women leaders in the organisational site of universities cannot be disinterred in isolation from an examination of how broader representational sites such as the print media produce and constitute societal discourses of women’s leadership which are then selectively taken up in specific organisational sites such as individual universities. In other words, I am attempting to explore the dialectical relationship between the ‘‘conditions of possibility’’ which dominant discourses of women’s leadership, drawn from the print media, open up or shut down, and how these possibilities are selectively played out in material discourses of women’s academic leadership in specific institutional sites.

Ashcraft and Mumby argue that the key directions of feminist organisational literature since the turn to discourse can be broadly classified into four frames. The first frame encompasses a ‘vast literature on gender differences’, which ‘converges around a basic image of gendered discourse’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 4). It emphasises women’s ways of leading, is very essentialist, focuses upon the individual and ignores the institutional or broader societal contexts (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 7). Frame two, takes ‘organization as a crucial site in which gendered selves are assembled’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 27). It notes the ‘constitutive or productive’ nature of discourse, with ‘gender identity’ as a ‘product always in progress’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 9). There is an emphasis on ‘sexed bodies’ and that the ‘performance of professional identity entails the symbolic and material manipulation of sexed bodies’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 10). A common feature of the first two frames is that they both focus on the micro, that is,
‘individual identity’ becomes the primary site for analysis and research, rather than the organisation in which the individual is embedded (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 13). The vast majority of the feminist literature on women academics that I examine in this chapter tends to come under these two frames.

In contrast, Ashcraft and Mumby argue, frames three and four switch to a macro focus of organisations. However, there are key differences between these two frames. Firstly, frame three views the organisation as its primary site of analysis, thus limiting ‘its scope to the workplace’; and secondly, it ignores ‘the ways in which gendered organisational forms are also raced, classed and so forth’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 18). Frame four – the one pertinent to my analysis – and which Ashcraft and Mumby utilise in their study of airline pilots shifts attention from communication in organisation to communication about organisation, or how a larger society portrays and debates its institutions and the very nature of work ... proponents of frame 4 emphasise the organising properties of public discourse as it shapes available institutions, as well as how we participate in them and come to understand ‘work’ endeavours (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 19).

In so doing, frame four scholars have examined ‘two broad discursive ... representational sites, beyond the workplace: organisation theory and popular culture’ (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 19). Although organisational studies have begun to utilise this perspective, (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 19) note that its ‘application to the study of gender and organisation is comparatively recent’. This is why I have been unable to utilise their insights until the latter stage of my thesis. Nonetheless, I have found the notion of a feminist communicology of organisation and in particular, the insights afforded by this newly emergent body of feminist organisational literature, exciting in showing a way to address the tensions implicit in postmodernism versus modernism, the macro versus the micro and theory versus the strategic/pragmatic bent of feminism. I have struggled conceptually with these issues, in terms of how I as a researcher addressed the tensions implicit between the six individual women tertiary leaders’ conception of their own identity as leaders, within their individual organisational sites (the micro) – versus the broader societal discourses of women’s leadership drawn from popular culture such as print media representations of women’s leadership (the macro) – and the interplay between the two.
Feminist Insights into the Tertiary Education Sector: Why So Few Women Leaders?

As a specific field of practice with its own discourses and rules of the game, feminist researchers have noted that the tertiary education sector exhibits both commonalities and differences with other sectors of employment in terms of the gendering of its workplace. Similarities include the phenomenon of women's continuing under-representation in senior management levels in particular. For example, a UNESCO report on academia noted that globally, 'men outnumber(ed)... women at about five to one at middle management level and at about twenty or more to one at senior management level' (Dines 1993, p. 11). Research in Britain (Brooks, 1997); (David 1998); Australia (Burton, 1997); (Probe et al., 1998); Europe (David, 1998) and the USA (David, 1998); (El-Khawas 1997, p. xii), suggests that a decade later the accuracy of 'this observation' remains (Luke 2001, p. 4). This phenomenon has persisted despite increases in female students to at least 50 percent of the undergraduate population in Britain (David 1998, p. 281); USA (Pearson et al., 1989); and Australia (Bradley 1998, p. 15). In Australian, under-representation of women at management level has occurred despite over twenty years of equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation and the current embedding of equity principles within Quality Assurance processes (Luke 2001, pp. 56-57). Moreover, the Australian university sector has remained a 'significant sphere of the public sector where the male culture was so entrenched that almost no headway was made at all' (O'Shane 1998, p. 243).

It has been contended that Australian universities remain 'fertile ground for horizontal sex segregation because they credential a wide range of professions' (Luke 2001, p. 10). Secondly, the presence of a 'more visible feminocracy' – a peculiarly Australian phenomenon of relatively senior gender equity workers in the public service – may have led to greater representation of women at middle and senior management level in this sector, in contrast to Australian universities where the 'ongoing gender imbalance ... remained significant' (Luke 2001, p. 56). Whatever the reason, feminist research into the Australian tertiary education sector has documented a number of personal, institutional, structural and cultural barriers that impede women's acceptance within the field both culturally and in terms of their
equitable representation across all levels of the organisation. For example, despite the growth in numbers of women students, women remain inequitably spread across the disciplines and are less likely to move into higher degree study, in particular doctoral studies which remain a crucial passport to academic tenure (Probert et al., 1998; Tracey 1998, p. 365). When they do, they tend to favour coursework higher degrees rather than Masters or Doctoral research due to family commitments (Bradley 1998, p. 17). They also have a heavier reliance on a declining number of government-funded, subsidised placements (Anderson et al., 1997).

Horizontal and vertical segregation of women continues in tertiary employment for both academic and general staff – with Australian women in the tertiary sector clustered in the lower ranks, on lesser salaries, with less formal power and as academics, over-represented in traditional feminised fields of study such as education and the arts (Bradley 1998, p. 16). When women enter academia they are more likely to be found in casualised or short-term contract work where the bulk of the teaching is concentrated. Increases in the casualisation and contracting of teaching in the past decade in Australia have exacerbated this phenomenon (Bradley 1998, pp. 17, 19). University promotion committees traditionally give priority to masculinised areas such as research over feminised (and devalued) teaching (Barker and Monks 1998, p. 270). Women are often excluded from the mentoring and networking vital to progress in one’s career (Barker and Monks 1998, p. 264), in particular in relation to forging links with more senior researchers, learning the rules of the game in terms of the writing-up of grant applications and access to grant money which will lead to significant research and publications (Luke, 2001) In addition, the predominately masculinist culture of universities has been characterised as ‘mini-patriarchies’ (Hearn 2001, p. 83); as positioning many women on the margins in a terrain that is experienced as ‘alien’ and as exercising a culture of violence towards women (Morley 1999, pp. 1, 3-4).

**Who Speaks for Whom? Postcolonial and Postmodernist Insights into Feminist Leadership Literature**

The burgeoning of feminist research in the tertiary education sector over the past fifteen years needs to be placed in the broader context of a corresponding growth in postmodernist and postcolonial understandings of the politics of difference. One
impact of this latter research is the realisation of how Western feminism as a largely white and middle-class movement has operated as a form of hegemony, producing essentialist understandings of the category of women which privilege sexism alone as a form of oppression and which consequently ignore, subsume or marginalise differences between different cohorts of women. White, western feminism has benefited from African-American and Indigenous feminists’ insights that the homogenisation of differences produces a form of ‘epistemic violence’ (Spivak, 1988a) upon many women of Indigenous, minority ethnic and working-class backgrounds, amongst other groups (See, for example, hooks (1989); Huggins (1998); Moreton-Robinson (2000); Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

In my survey of the Australian feminist leadership literature, there was a major dissonance between the burgeoning realisation amongst many strands of Western feminism of the hegemonic and essentialising nature of the movement and the lack of application of this knowledge to Australian feminist educational leadership research. Aileen Moreton-Robinson notes ‘(i)n Australia, a small number of feminists have written within the framework of a feminist politics of difference’ and that consequently

an emerging literature on whiteness is slowly impacting on the study of race. However, despite — or perhaps because of feminism’s commitment to a politics of difference ... Whiteness remains the invisible omnipresent norm. As long as whiteness remains invisible in analyses ‘race’ is the prison reserved for the ‘Other’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, pp. xviii-xix).

The silence and/or marginalisation of discussions in regard to ethnicity in the Australian feminist educational and overall leadership literature seemed to be a striking omission given the public prominence of debates about ethnicity in Australia throughout the past decade (refer to Chapter Five) and the adoption of a policy of multiculturalism which until recently had had bilateral political agreement at Federal Government level for over two decades.

**Why are Women Leaders Assumed to be White?**

I have found postcolonial and postmodernist understandings of the politics of difference invaluable in providing me with a broader conceptual framework in which to begin to place Lisa’s, Rhoda’s and my educational leadership experiences. They
opened up possible understandings of the ways in which Western educational leadership as a potentially gendered, racialised and classed construct could be privileging white, Western, middle-class masculinist ways of leading. However, when I turned to the Australian feminist leadership literature in academe, it became increasingly clear that the insights afforded by postcolonial and postmodernist theories in terms of the potential intersection of leadership with gender and ethnicity in particular, appeared often to have been ignored or marginalised. In addition, this appeared to be a trend duplicated in Australian feminist research on other sectors in regard to leadership.

For example, a tendency in the feminist literature examining Australian female academics was that the word ‘women’ appeared to function as a homogenising category which often silenced diversity between different groups of women and reproduced a white, middle-class female norm of academia. In general, the use of words such as ‘gender equity’ and ‘diversity’ in a number of texts appeared to function as a code word for women as a group, but the diversity within this group was rarely acknowledged or unpacked in any detail.

For example, in a comprehensive study of gender equity in the Australian tertiary education sector, Clare Burton identifies a number of ‘cultural and structural barriers to the achievement of equitable employment outcomes for academic and general staff women’ (Burton 1997, p. xi). One of the key cultural barriers identified is the prevalence of a ‘blokey culture... (which) ... revolves around Friday afternoon drinks, football, darts, hockey, golf, conversations and language that exclude women’ (Burton 1997, p. 29). Burton notes that such cultures also favour the development of ‘close ties to decision-makers among people with interests to pursue’ and this may lead to ‘consequences for how policy is formulated’, as well as ‘implications for practices which affect people’s employment opportunities’ (Burton 1997, p. 29). These are valid observations. However, what such commonalities paper over is that these ‘blokey cultures’ construct a dominant discourse of masculinity rooted in an Anglo-Australian, heterosexual culture of working and middle-class origins. In so doing it discursively excludes or marginalises all women, homosexual men and males of minority ethnic origin. This is not simply a male culture that is being described but an ethnically specific and highly (hetero) sexualised one. The
ethnocentricity of such a culture has specific consequences, by excluding those women and men who do not share the majority ethnic familiarity with sport and alcohol. The identification of a ‘blokey culture’ as an issue for all women also glosses over the reality that some Australian women who share the same dominant cultural origins may be partially admitted to it as ‘honorary males’ – an ‘honour’ that is highly unlikely for minority ethnic women and men.

Even when the apparently homogenous surface of the white academic leader’s body was disturbed, the potential implications of this disruption were not followed through. For example, in a recent study of management cultures in Australian universities, in which 41 women and men who held positions at the level of dean or above were interviewed, the authors do note that, ‘the overwhelming’ number of respondents were from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds’, which ‘did not reflect the present ethnic diversity of Australia’ (Chesterman et al. 2003, p. 424), but this point is not interrogated further. The privileging of leadership as the exclusive property of Anglo-Australian men (and a very small number of women) and the fact that this phenomenon may suggest the ways in which unequal power relations can act to reproduce racist and sexist bodies of knowledge and authority through key sites such as academia is left unexplored (Pettman 1992, p. 129). The original class origins of the interviewees are omitted altogether.

**Indigenous Australian Women Academics: Omissions in the Feminist Leadership Literature**

There does appear to be a small body of literature, which has begun to render problematic the construction of Australian academic women as white and middle-class, by discussing the experiences of Indigenous women in academia. For example, Huggins and Tarrago have argued that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) women in universities are subject to the contradictory pressures of being both exceptional and yet supposedly representative of their peoples (Huggins and Tarrago, 1990). Ityllus Munro has critiqued Western theories of management as they apply to the Indigenous Australian context and notes that in discussions on managing a culturally diverse workplace, the ‘assumption is that it is a male, Anglo-Celtic manager’ (Munro 1998, p. 337). Angela Leitch has critiqued Affirmative Action legislation because it treats women as a homogenous group and ‘ignore(s)... racism’.  

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in particular in relation to Aboriginal and non-Indigenous, minority ethnic groups (Leitch 1998, p. 124). Shirley Morgan outlined the implementation of an Aboriginal recruitment and career strategy at the University of Western Sydney and noted that some of the reasons for Aboriginal under-representation in the sector included 'reticence' on the part of ATSI people to declare their 'heritage' due to their historical 'status as non-citizens prior to (the) ... 1967' referendum on citizenship; less formal qualifications than non-Indigenous peoples; a 'lack of commitment to western education by parents and the common attitude of their families that they are "rising above their station in life"' (Morgan 1998, pp. 148-149). Wendy Brady discusses the importance of storytelling in Aboriginal cultures and how 'knowledge of the system' is passed on by women Aboriginal academics through storytelling (Brady 1998, pp. 203-205). Penny Tripcony discusses issues in relation to Indigenous women as students, staff and objects of study in higher education including the difficulty in gaining data on employment of Indigenous women in education in Australia (Tripcony 1998, p. 255). The latter point is similarly made in regard to minority ethnic academics. In both cases, such omissions lead to a lack of data in regard to evaluating how such groups are faring in terms of equity policies (Mathews 1998, p. 137).

Jan Pettman's research foregrounds the historical and contemporary intersection of racism, sexism and feminism in a number of different sectors in Australia (Pettman, 1992). However, with the exception of Pettman and Jackie Huggins' article, which appeared in the Australian feminist journal *Hecate* (Huggins and Tarrago, 1990), the remainder of the preceding research cited was marginalised through its placement in the latter section of a collection of international conference proceedings examining women and the culture of universities (Cohen et al., 1999). For example, Leitch and Morgan's articles were two out of fifteen articles grouped under the rubric of 'Forging Coalitions? Access, Equity and Participation in Employment'. None of the other articles explored the intersection of ethnicity and gender -- the construction of the white, middle-class female academic appeared to remain intact. Munro's discussion of Western theories of management from an Indigenous Australian context, was one of only two pieces of Australian feminist research in educational leadership that I have been able to locate which had as its key focus, issues of Indigeneity, women and leadership. However, it was the tenth and final article in an
overall section in the conference proceedings entitled ‘Management and Leadership’. Only two of the ten other articles briefly touched on white, middle-class constructions of leadership in their research – one explicitly (Hearn, 1998) and the other implicitly (Chesterman, 1998).

Minority Ethnic Australian Women Academics: Silences in the Feminist Leadership Literature

Deepa Mathews observes the scarcity of research on minority ethnic academics in her study of immigrant women and men’s experiences of Australian academia (Mathews 1998, p. 133). The small amount of literature I was able to locate included Muyesser Durur examining the issues for women of diversity who reach leadership level. Her women leaders note a ‘“clubbish” atmosphere’ amongst the Deans, the referral of issues to men and ongoing patronising and discrimination (Durur, 1998). The prejudice is both sexist and racist, with language, accents and cultural differences becoming signifiers of inferiority and the women leaders silenced (Durur 1998, pp. 103-104). Deepa Matthews discusses her interviews with immigrant female and male academics and identifies key barriers as language difficulties; being left out of ‘ordinary social activities’ by both female and male Australian academics; and a lack of overall support (Mathews 1998, pp. 133-135). Mathews contends that the immigrant men appeared to be more advantaged than the women because they have more chance of becoming part of the ‘boys’ club’ (Mathews 1998, p. 136).

Carmen Luke’s research on academic women and globalisation provided a refreshingly different discussion on issues of women and academia in that she examines the leadership experiences of South East Asian women academics in their own countries. Luke argues that such women are, like ‘women in higher education management … everywhere … a privileged class’ (Luke 2001, p. 20). She contends that the similarities between ‘cultural frames of reference, lifestyle, and attitude(s) … suggest that class and ideological differences are more marked and evident today within societies than between societies’ (Luke 2001, p. 21). She notes the inadequacy of theoretical tools and frameworks utilised by Western feminism when it comes to explorations of these women’s ‘experiences … opportunities … social roles and status within this increasingly internationalised sector’ (Luke 2001, p. xix). Although her work does not examine the experiences of women in Australian academia from
the perspective of gender, ethnicity and class, it is a reminder of the important contribution that such perspectives can bring.

The Marginalisation of Ethnicity in Australian Feminist Research in Other Sectors: An Emerging Pattern

I noted at the commencement of this chapter that there appeared to be an overall trend of silence, omission and/or marginalisation in terms of examining the unequal power relations produced through the intersection of gender, class and ethnicity in the Australian feminist leadership literature in general. For example, in her discussion of women's leadership, Eva Cox makes the claim that 'many women will not want power, or have restricted access to it because of class, race and other factors. These are issues of major concern but outside the direct scope of this book' (Cox 1996, p. 31). The reason why this is the case is never outlined. Joan Kirner and Moira Rayner, in their extremely practical and useful book on women's power, mention Aboriginal and immigrant women twice but the overall impression left by the book is that power is a property of a homogenous category – (white, middle-class) women (Kirner and Rayner, 1999).

In the Australian business sector, Amanda Sinclair has written a number of key texts, which explore gendered and raced constructions of leadership. For example, Doing Leadership Differently makes the crucial point in its introduction that Australian management is homogenous both in terms of ethnicity as well as gender (Sinclair 1998, p. 3), but the implications of this assertion are not followed through in the text. The interviews conducted in the latter half of the book focus exclusively on examining women leaders as a homogenous whole. A later book on leadership, New Faces of Leadership, does examine the experiences of men and women from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds (Sinclair and Wilson, 2002). However, there appears to be a binary opposition operating within the text, which discursively locates women in one group and those from immigrant backgrounds in another group.

In the compulsory education sector, Georgina Tsolidis has noted that the rejection of a unitary subject position for feminism as a movement, the recognition of the 'reality of multiple “feminisms” and the intertwining of ethnicity, race and gender' have
been crucial insights with which Western feminism has struggled to come to terms (Tsolidis 2001, p. ix). Tsolidis argues that, 'it is possible and valuable' to remain both 'feminist and different' but that, 'within the politics of education, it is often the case that the acknowledged feminist voice is unitary and that this means that different feminist voices are silenced' (Tsolidis 2001, p. 2).

Hester Eisenstein comments in her discussion of the rise of Australian femocrats within state and federal bureaucracies, that it was the femocrats’ shared cultural origins with male bureaucrats and politicians, which was 'one of the unspoken keys to their success'. She argues that 'femocrats and women in leadership could be assimilated over time because of their strong cultural links to the men placing them in positions of power' (Eisenstein 1996, p. xix). It is precisely this 'hidden text' of a specific ethnic category of whiteness (Eveleme 1996, p. 70), which remains unspoken, invisible and unchallenged and thus able to continue to assert its hegemonic power as the subject position from which Australian (majority ethnic, middle-class) feminist constructions of leadership are produced/reproduced.

**International Feminist Research on Women Academics: A Similar Story?**

A common trope in feminist research of the past fifteen years has been the realisation of the inadequacy of earlier white feminist theorisations which focused upon women as an unproblematic unitary category – thus constructing an essentialist norm of the category of 'woman' as white and middle-class. Such insights have been applied to international feminist research in the tertiary education sector, with a number of feminist researchers pointing out the hegemony of whiteness and middle-classness that underpins the category of academic woman, for example, Acker (1993, p. 158); Baporji et al. (1991); Bhopal (1994); Mirza (1995, pp. 149-150); Walker (1998).

As in my survey of Australian feminist literature on women leaders in tertiary education, I will examine two bodies of international literature. The first is feminist research examining experiences of academic women in general in Anglophone nations; and the second looks more specifically at research dealing with academic women’s leadership experiences. In so doing, I will ask a number of questions about the research. Firstly, do both bodies of literature include the perspectives of women academics from a range of ethnic origins, rather than assuming a white, middle-class
norm of woman academic? Secondly, are minority and Indigenous women’s experiences of academia located at the margins of such research, or foregrounded, both in theory and practice, as central? Thirdly, is the category of whiteness troubled in any way through such research, or does it remain as the hegemonic naturalised centre of academic women’s experiences? Fourthly, are white women’s experiences of academia and leadership rendered visible through an examination of the privileges that their whiteness may bring?

As in Australia, women are under-represented in positions of leadership in universities in countries such as Britain and the United States (Doyle Walton 1997, pp. 78-80). However, in contrast to the small amount of Australian feminist literature which examined general issues in regard to Indigenous and minority ethnic women academics in the tertiary education sector, there appeared to be a growing body of work in Anglophone nations specifically exploring a range of issues facing academic women from minority ethnic and (less commonly) Indigenous backgrounds. The American feminist literature appeared to have the greatest amount of research in this area. Given the sheer population size of the United States and the high ethnic diversity of its population, this is not an unsurprising finding. However, when it came to feminist research specifically examining issues of leadership in relation to Indigenous and minority ethnic women in academia, there was far less research, although again, American feminists had produced the greatest amount.

**American Feminist Research on Academic Women and Leadership: Glimpses of Leadership and Ethnicity**

In contrast to the Australian feminist research, there is a strong body of American research on minority ethnic women’s experiences of academia, for example, Benjamin (1997); hooks (1989); James and Farmer (1993); Kim (2001); Pearson et al. (1989); Trotman (1990); Udel (2001); Washington and Harris (2001); and of academic leadership (for example, Aparicio (1999); Benjamin (1997); Cox and Matthews (1996); Cox and Matthews (1998); Essed (2000); Fields (2002); Green and King (2001); Matthews (2002); Perna (2001); Stewart (2002); Waring (2003). The visibility of race as a construct is reflected in majority ethnic American women’s research on leadership in the tertiary sector, with works such as that by Judith Glazer-Raymo regularly referring to data in regard to women of colour’s position in
the academy. However, in such works, the majority ethnic woman as academic still appears to be the central subject position, with women of colour located as ‘other’ (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). In addition, there is a complete silence in regard to whiteness as a category of privilege from which these mainstream constructions of the female academic are drawn. The picture in the American feminist research is mixed however. In other works which focus specifically on issues around American academic women and leadership, for example, (Nidiffer and Bashaw, 2001), or an autobiographical study of American and British university/college presidents (Doyle-Walton, 1996), there is a virtual silence around ethnicity, with the latter work containing one autobiography of an African-American women college president.

Despite the greater American focus of research on minority ethnic women’s experiences of academia and leadership, gaps remain in the research. Philomena Essed observes the ‘scanty research’ on ‘every day oppositional and transformative potential among women of colour in white dominated colleges’ (Essed 2000, p. 889). Bell, Denton and Nkomo argue that ‘research on women in management has ignored women of colour’ and thus ‘we have learned little about the effects of race … and gender on the status of women in management positions’ (Bell et al., 1993).

**African-American Women Academies: What are the Issues?**

In terms of African-American women, faith in the power of education as a means of improving both community and individual status, is noted as an abiding belief for many African-Americans (Guy-Sheftall and Bell-Scott 1989, p. 47). However, black females’ under-representation at college level as students; in the less prestigious two year versus four year colleges (Guy-Sheftall and Bell-Scott 1989, p. 52); and the lower levels of academic tenure for African-American women (Aparicio 1999, p. 2); (Perna, 2001 p. 565); (Trotman 1990, p. 158) are also ongoing issues. Moreover, the experiences of African-American academic women should not be divorced from the historical context of enslavement, ongoing racial segregation, a history of civil rights activism and the material impact these factors continue to exert in contemporary America.

In relation to African-American women as leaders, Philomena Essed explores the issues faced by five African-American and one Dutch Caribbean women leaders in
the academy. She notes the emotional ‘housework’ such women leaders are expected to carry out with students of colour in terms of demands from students for additional support, whilst at the same time knowing that such labour will not be credited when it comes to promotions (Essed 2000, p. 888). The expectation of the mothering role or ‘mammy work’ (Hill Collins, 1991) which this role can conjure up, with its links to the historical exploitation and enslavement of African-American women, makes such work additionally hazardous.

The ‘double bind ... of marginalisation in terms of race and gender’ which African-American women face in academia includes, ‘isolation, racial and gender based antagonisms ... devaluation of research interests ... and ambivalence about academic authority’ (Aparicio 1999, p. 1). In addition, as African-American women ascend the ladder, the load continues for it is claimed that ‘at every career level ... you have to educate people about what it means to be a diverse group, to be inclusive, to represent all people’ (Cox and Matthews 1998, p. 4). In a special edition of the NWSA Journal focusing on current issues and scholarship of women of colour, it is claimed that ‘(s)ilence, censure and erasure continue to be painful and potentially spirit-killing issues for women of colour, including those who have ... been afforded a particularly privileged voice through academic credentialling’ (Washington and Harris 2001, p. 1). African-American women in academia who succeed may be perceived as ‘deviants’ (Trotman 1990, p. 147). In terms of gender differences in regard to African-American women achieving college presidency, a number of issues were identified, including the fact that if women’s tenure ended prematurely, they were ‘much more likely to be viewed as failures’ and have trouble gaining other positions of leadership, whereas ‘men seemed to get hired again and again after being fired from previous posts’ (Manzo 2001, pp. 2-3).

In addition, sexism from within their own communities, whereby African-American women have been traditionally constructed as ‘workers’ not ‘leaders’, allied to the operation of a ‘Black Men’s Club’ in terms of presidency of historically black educational institutions, has meant that women have been denied formal leadership positions (Stewart 2002, p. 26). Nonetheless, it has been argued that a major shift appears to have occurred recently, with more African-American women being selected as ‘presidents and upper echelon administrators’ of colleges (Stewart, 2002);
(Trotman 1990, p. 158). In fact, African-American women are being appointed to ‘traditionally white institutions’ in preference to African-American males – with such institutions being ‘more comfortable ... (in) ... promoting Black women’ (Stewart 2002, pp. 24-25).

The troubled relationship between African-American women and the white North American feminist movement was also cited by Malveaux (2002) and Trotman (1990). However, Philomena Essed makes the interesting observation that it is black and white feminists in Western Europe who have been at the forefront of ‘breaking through ethnic barriers in working together for common goals’. She contends that the American history of racial segregation has led to a ‘racial exclusiveness and US-centrism in representations of black feminism’, so that when authors such as bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins refer to issues of black students, they exclude students of colour (Essed 2000, p. 898).

**Native American and Hispanic Women Academics**

I was able to find less feminist research on Native American women. However, it was noted that the American feminist movement of the 1970s with its white, middle-class focus and demand for abortion and birth control – was opposed to Native American women’s concerns as colonised peoples who had suffered until very recently from high levels of infant mortality and eugenics – ‘clandestine sterilisation by the Indian Health Service’ (Ferron 1989, p. 88); (Udel, 2001). (These are concerns raised by Australian Aboriginal women also in relation to their lack of affinity with Australian feminism). Poverty, single parenthood and culturally different ways of communicating were all noted as issues facing Native American women students (Ferron, 1989). In addition, Lisa Udel argues that Native American women see ‘motherwork’ as being a critical part of the politically activist role they must play in order to ensure the survival and flourishing of their communities (Udel, 2001). This is in direct opposition to the 1970s white feminist movement’s theorisation and repudiation of the maternal role as playing a central part in the reproduction of patriarchal systems; and poses a very different construction of leadership to that envisaged by Western modes of thought. Again, there are parallels with Aboriginal Australian women here.
Hispanic people as a category are severely under-represented in higher education in America. This is where issues of class, race and gender intersect powerfully, for Hispanic women ‘remain... the poorest, least-educated major population in the country’ with less schooling and college attainment in comparison to both white and black students (Melendez and Petrovich 1989, p. 59). Melendez and Petrovich contend that equity programs to encourage more Hispanic students into higher education have been problematic for they ‘encourage... students to behave like white, middle-class Anglos’ (Melendez and Petrovich 1989, p. 57).

**British Feminist Research on Academic Women Leaders**

There has been a flourishing of British feminist research, which examines women and academia in general, for example, Acker (1994); Davis et al. (1994); Morley and Walsh (1996); Morley (1999); and academic women and leadership more specifically, for example, David and Woodward (1998); Eggins (1997); Ozga and Dcem (2000). However, in terms of the intersection of gender and ethnicity, Sandra Acker has noted that, ‘there is a near-silence about “race” and ethnicity in terms of their impact on British academic women’ (Acker 1993, p. 158).

Despite Acker’s observations in regard to major gaps in British feminist research in relation to ethnic and class diversity amongst women as a group, the work in this area appears to be more advanced than the Australian feminist research. There was at least an upfront recognition by feminist researchers of the racial and gender diversity amongst women in academia. This was most commonly signalled by the inclusion of a single or occasionally two chapters containing women from minority ethnic backgrounds discussing their experiences as academics, for example, Barrow (1997) in Eggins (1997); Henry (1994) and Bhopal (1994) in Davis et al. (1994); Rassool (1995) and Mirza (1995) in Morley and Walsh (1995); Montgomery (1997) and Kothari (1997) in Stanley (1997b). Only one reference examined the experiences of minority ethnic women in management positions in universities and other sites, Powney (1997) in Eggins (1997). Hence, this pattern of location still marginalises minority ethnic women as the ‘other’ through constructing ethnicity as the exclusive property of non-white women. As such, it also potentially acts as a strategy of containment.
An alternative and later development in some of the British feminist research on women and academia is for minority ethnic academic women’s voices to be positioned under the more general rubric of identity and difference, for example, Housee (2001), Jones (2001a) and Marshall (2001) in Anderson and Williams (2001). However, such a subject position can also be problematic as a location. Nonetheless, the visibility of the women within the British feminist literature suggests that they are being heard and seriously engaged with to a greater degree than within the Australian feminist literature. However, despite this more visible engagement and awareness, I was able locate very little research which extended this greater awareness to work on British women academics in senior positions, either through an examination of minority ethnic women’s experiences in leadership in the British university sector, or through the concept of whiteness acting as a privileging subject location for majority ethnic British women academic leaders. For example, David and Woodward (1998) examines the lives of a number of prominent British and European academic women. It is a fascinating autobiographical collection, which by virtue of including a range of ethnicities, suggests possibilities for the exploration of the ways in which gender and ethnicity may intersect. However, this potential is not fulfilled. Interestingly, the only research I was able to locate which looks specifically at the experiences of black women managers in education was within the compulsory education sector – suggesting the possibility that feminist research in this area may be slightly more advanced (Walker, 1993).

Heidi Mirza observes in the British context that there has been a ‘long history of ethnocentrism in white feminist discourse, and it lives on in the changing discourse on gender in Higher Education, where black women remain invisible’ (Mirza 1995, pp. 149-150). It is a point also made by Afshar and Maynard (1994a, p. 1) and Henry (1994, pp. 42, 45). Mirza’s study examines how black women in the United Kingdom, ‘carve out our space and find our place in Higher Education’ despite the barriers of racism and sexism that they face (Mirza 1995, p. 145). Mirza makes the interesting point that in relation to their numbers within the population, there is an ‘over-representation of “black” or “ethnic” students in Higher Education in the United Kingdom despite the discourse of under-representation of “black” in Higher Education in the quality press’. However, in a similar fashion to women as a collective whole, this over-representation does not translate into the figures on
staffing, revealing instead that there is an under-representation within academia (Mirza 1995, p. 149).

Jocelyn Barrow provides a history of black Afro-Caribbean Women in higher education in the United Kingdom, post World War Two (Barrow, 1997). Louise Morley, in a three nation (Britain, Greece and Sweden) study of "what academic feminism means in different locations" found that despite the women's variety of locations in terms of "nations ... age ... "race", sexualities and social classes ... voices chorused similar concerns about the prolonged subordination of women in the academy" (Morley 1999, pp. 2, 185-186). Naz Razool examines the experiences of four black women academics in English universities, noting the multi-accentuality of the term "black" within different socio-historical contexts and in so doing, begins to deconstruct the subject position of the black woman as "other" (Razool 1995, pp. 28-29). Razool argues that because black women academics' experiences draw
discursively from meanings constructed within wider social discourse ... (they) ... cannot be analysed only in terms of the unequal relations that prevail within the academy. Thus the analysis focused also on socialisation processes within the community and broader cultural practices (Razool 1995, p. 38).

In a similar fashion, I would argue that the experiences of women leaders within the Australian academy cannot be analysed separately from the wider societal discourses of leadership, which inform the context in which they work. However, I did find it interesting that the four women whom Razool selected were all of middle-class origin. The sample is too small to make generalisations, but it does potentially suggest the way in which one's class origins may bring with them positive social capital which then goes some way to compensating for the negative capital which one's gender and ethnicity accumulates within the academy (Razool 1995, p. 39).

Millsom Henry has examined the experiences of black women in higher education in Britain and argues that universities are still largely perceived by them as ivory towers that are antithetical to black women as academics and students. She contends that despite the prevalence of Equal Opportunity policies in higher education, it is not purely a matter of increasing numbers of black women but also "overhauling the processes of institutional discrimination that remain a crucial feature" (Henry 1994, p. 53). The hegemonic code of whiteness is also criticised in terms of a university
curriculum, which continues to reflect a 'western, white male perspective' (Henry 1994, pp. 49, 51) – the latter point having been echoed by Bhopal (1994, p. 130).

Kalwant Bhopal discusses the way in which black women have been positioned as the ‘‘outsider-within’’ in British academia (Bhopal 1994, p. 132). She notes that as an Asian woman, she has been ‘treated as ... weak and in need of being looked after’ (Bhopal 1994, p. 129). It is a stereotype which also is critiqued by Moghissi (1994, p. 228) and Yamauchi and Tin-Mala (1989). Bhopal argues that in academia, black women must ‘change their whole persona in order to be accepted and have their views heard’ (Bhopal 1994, p. 133).

Angela Montgomery’s analysis of her experiences as a British black academic in a number of law departments, makes a number of insightful points in regard to the predominantly ‘white, public school, male’ culture of these departments and the way in which she was initially welcomed by some of her male colleagues into the ‘boys’ club’ as a ‘token black bloke’, for it was her skin colour that was seen as primary rather than her gender (Montgomery 1997, p. 63). In a similar vein, the white women’s network did not assume any ‘sense of solidarity’ with her because ‘perceived colour difference ruled over assumed gender similarities in that setting’, until she made a complaint against a male colleague for harassment (Montgomery 1997, p. 68). She also comments on differences between British black women academics by noting that to be working-class and a black woman makes her an ‘anomaly ... within the system because if you are a black woman then the qualification most likely to get you into academia is to be upper class and I most certainly am not that’ (Montgomery 1997, p. 63). Interestingly, Montgomery notes that the ideal of the university as a place that provides space where one can disagree did in fact operate in favour of women academics by allowing them the discursive space to ‘disagree’ and thus ‘challenge the traditional male public school hierarchy’, even in departments which were neither ‘pro-women’ nor ‘pro-feminist’ (Montgomery 1997, p. 67).

Uma Kothari provides an excellent analysis of the complexities of occupying the academic ‘borderlands’ (Stanley 1997a, p. 2). In her role as a black British woman lecturing in Development Studies to mainly international male black students, she observes how they come with a set of expectations that in their field at least, ‘‘expert
knowledge” is that which is ‘advanced and imparted by white males ... their minds have become colonised’ (Kothari 1997, p. 161). As a black woman academic working in the field of Development Studies, she simultaneously occupies a ‘position of power and powerlessness’ (Simmonds, 1992), a ‘mobile and contingent power’ which can be ‘immensely significant if you are to use the university as a useful site for radical political work’ (hooks, 1989). On the one hand, her gender and colour provide her with the power of legitimacy when discussing issues to do with ‘Black people and women’ but on the other hand, these same qualities ‘marginalise’ her within the university as an institution (Kothari 1997, p. 160).

In examining the experiences of 40 ‘members of under-represented groups who have nevertheless achieved senior positions’, Powney and Weiner noted that in terms of university management, to be ‘a black women brings double indemnity’ (Powney 1997, p. 55). The structures within university management are described as, ‘highly middle-class, white and male dominated which fosters a culture that supports the old public school boy network’ (Powney and Weiner 1992, p. 20). Interestingly, Powney and Weiner found that ‘there are those who make their working-class and/or ethnic background an advantage, using it to give them support’, whereas others ‘do not or cannot’. In addition, they discovered that it was ‘(w)hite women with working-class backgrounds ... (who) ... were most likely to express the tensions between women traditionally putting home and children first and pursuing a career’ (Powney 1997, p. 54). In contrast to these latter tensions, Mirza has contended that for West Indian working-class people, definitions of femininity meant that ‘black females had a positive outlook on work and education’ and expected that they would continue to work after having a family (Mirza 1995, p. 147). The apparent contrast between these two different groups of women’s experiences demonstrates the importance of examining the specificities of ethnicity, class and gender when analysing women’s leadership experiences and the dangers of treating women as a homogenous category.

Powney’s work was the only text I was able to locate which looked specifically at the experiences of non-white women leaders in British academia, as opposed to women staff or students. However, the group they examined consisted of women and men from under-represented groups who were senior managers drawn from a range of
sectors, not just academia. Hence, although there may be slightly more focus upon ethnicity in the British feminist educational leadership literature, it still appears to be marginal in terms of its consideration of power relations within academia.

**Canadian, New Zealand and South African Feminist Research on Academic Women Leaders**

Bannerji et al.’s study of Canadian universities was extremely useful in framing how, in ‘a racist, classist and heterosexist society’, the university is ‘structured to perpetuate those relations’ (Bannerji et al. 1991, p. 8). Linda Carty and Himani Bannorji both provide a powerful discussion of their experiences as black university students in Canada and the racism and sexism they experienced from university lecturers both in terms of racist attitudes and a whitecentric male view of the world which was presented as the only authoritative form of knowledge. Both are also critical of the primacy 1970s feminism had placed upon gender as a main category of oppression, arguing that this was inherently racist and that viewing sexism as the primary form of oppression, perpetuated and legitimated white feminist forms of knowledge (Bannerji, 1991); (Carty 1991, pp. 37-41).

In regard to the New Zealand research, a small number of texts addressed the situation for Maori women in universities and did appear to have a greater cognisance of the ethnic diversity amongst women as a category compared to Australia. For example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes that the under-representation of women and that of Maori women in particular is an issue in New Zealand universities (Tuhiwai Smith, 1998). Munford et al. (1998) have noted that as part of the restructuring of New Zealand universities, a shift towards competition ‘for students and research funding’ as well as ‘staff compet(ing) for tenure … is the antithesis of an environment promoted by women based on collegiality and consensus modes of operation’ (Munford et al. 1998, p. 1). In attempting to deal with this contradiction, one strategy adopted by the School of Social Policy and Social Work at her university was to make the ‘appointment of Maori staffs … a non-negotiable aspect of the strategic plan’ (Munford et al. 1998, pp. 1-2). The authors argue that in so doing, ‘new styles of leadership and teamwork and collective ways of operating’ are encouraged (Munford et al. 1998, p. 5). Munford and Rumball (2001) also discuss the particular under-representation of Maori within universities.
although again, ethnic diversity appears to remain the property of the Maori, and not white women academics. In contrast, however, Brooks' comparative study of issues for British and New Zealand women academics, although noting in the introduction that the text pays 'attention to the construction of “difference around gender, race and ethnicity”' (Brooks 1997, p. 4), appears to largely ignore issues of race and ethnicity for the remainder of the book.

Tanya Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald 2003, p. 15) has observed that feminist writings on leadership in the compulsory education sector have tended to fall into two categories. There are those which organised knowledge about minority ethnic women's leadership in 'a marginal way' through their location in the latter parts of the text and those which placed such knowledge at the central core of their discussion. She contends:

'It is not a case of arguing whether gender and ethnicity are relevant to debates surrounding the nature of educational leadership, but why the case for their centrality to our understanding still has to be made (Fitzgerald 2003, p. 15).

Fitzgerald's observation equally applies to the ways in which knowledge about black and minority ethnic women academics is organised in much of the British and American feminist literature.

Finally, an article written by British academic Melanie Walker, based on interviews with thirteen mixed race academic women in South African universities, was extremely useful in tracing the differing and complex ways in which race, class and gender interacted to construct the academic identities of these women (Walker, 1998). Walker argues that the material impact of race as a deeply embedded marker of difference and unequal power relations in South Africa is revealed in a variety of ways, for example, through the quality and prestige of the schools and universities the individual women attended. She critiques Liz Stanley's argument (Stanley 1997b, p. 3) that '“sex” ... outweighs the “otherness” of race universally in academia', contending that such a comment suggests, 'silences in this gendered and classed construction of the shaping experiences and identities of academic women ...' (Walker 1998, p. 337). However, she also notes that gender and race at different times, may assume a different level of significance for the women (Walker 1998, p.
350), a point echoed by Dr Moses, the former African-American head of the City University of New York's City College of New York (Cox and Matthews, 1998).

Walker was also one of the very few feminist theorists I have read who examines in specific detail the way in which white academic women were privileged by their skin colour (Walker 1997, p. 350). It was a fascinating case study of how the mechanics of such privileging is played out in gendered and raced institutions such as academia. Her work signals the overall lack of specific, nuanced discussion within feminist research on diversity of women in the academy, in terms of the ways in which the subject position of white and middle or upper-class might confer particular advantages in the Anglophone academy. Feminist theorisations of diversity within academia still largely appear to be the property of the ‘other’, that is, minority ethnic, Indigenous and/or working-class origin women within the academy. As Afshar and Maynard note, there is a deeply embedded assumption

in most Western texts, that ‘race’ is some kind of minority experience ... to be labelled ‘white’ in a world context, is also to be allotted a racial category, albeit one which is privileged, unanalysed, taken for granted and itself ‘minority’ status (Afshar and Maynard 1994b, p. 1).

Hence, in western feminism, ‘whiteness is not ... seen as a racialised identity and one that ... may need to be deconstructed’, yet, it is all the more ‘important to look at the taken-for-granted everydayness of white privilege, as well as ... unravelling what the term “white” actually means, for it is by no means a homogenous category’ (Maynard 1994, p. 21). For overseas visitors to South Africa under the apartheid laws, the ‘everydayness of white privilege’ was flagrantly visible. Walker has been able to render its visibility as a signifier and marker of power and privilege in ways that are more challenging, because of its apparent naturalness in other Western societies.

Australia Universities: Classless Institutions?

The discourses of egalitarianism and the mythology of Australia as the nation of the ‘fair go’ have been dominant in twentieth century Australian society. Perhaps such discourses operate to silence and contain obvious class differences in Australia, for I found that if discussions of ethnicity as a construct were marginal in Australian
feminist explorations of academic women’s leadership, the silence around women leadership and class was deafening. In the Australian feminist literature which examined the experiences of academic women in general or academic women leaders more specifically, I was able to locate very little research, which focused in any significant way on the issue of class.

I was only able to find one research article from an Australian feminist perspective, which took as its central focus, the experiences of Australian working-class origin women academics and students from white, Indigenous and minority ethnic backgrounds in an Australian university (O’Loughlin and Inge, 1998). It notes the fact that this area has been under-researched (O’Loughlin and Inge 1998, p. 159) and discusses the women’s sense of ‘frustration with feminist organisations which failed to take into account class and ethnicity’ (O’Loughlin and Inge 1998, p. 162). It documents the difficulties students faced in terms of finances, the Anglo-Australian, sexist, masculinist culture of the academic classrooms and the sense of not fitting in to this culture (O’Loughlin and Inge 1998, pp. 163-164).

One rare find was Elizabeth Hatton’s invaluable and passionate account of her transition from a poor working-class family to Australian academia (Hatton, 1999). However, the article was part of an international collection edited by two British feminists. Hatton’s article explores the conflicting emotions that have ensued from her transition to academia – including her sense of alienation from her family – a common trope in academic accounts of those who have shifted from the working-class. Hatton argues that, contrary to Lynch and O’Neill’s claims (Lynch and O’Neill, 1994) that ‘one’s habitus changes as a result of the acquisition of academic credentials’ (Hatton 1999, p. 217), one’s working-class disposition remains strong. She contends that it is exhibited through the ‘disruptive, dislocating role’ it continues to play in one’s life, for example, the sense of marginality working-class origin academics may feel in certain contexts within academia (Hatton 1999, p. 222), particularly in Australia where university ‘is very much the preserve of those from privileged backgrounds’ (Hatton 1999, p. 223). It is an observation similarly made by Pauline Anderson (Anderson 2001, pp. 137-138). Hatton’s and Anderson’s point was very much borne out in the interviews I conducted with Iris, Simone and Lauren – three academics from working-class backgrounds who cited examples of clashes that
had occurred between their class of origin and the very middle-class and ethnically Angola-Australian culture of the universities in which they worked. The notion that such clashes were very much context specific was also supported by my interviewees.

Is Class a Structuralist Illusion?

There was a small but significant strand in the British feminist literature which explored the experiences of working-class origin academic women and/or female students within the academy, for example, Anderson and Williams (2001); Archer et al. (2003); Hey (2003); Lucey et al. (2003); Mahoney and Zmroczek (1997); Reynolds (1997); Stanley (1995); Zmroczek and Mahony (1999). However, I was unable to locate any British feminist research on women academic leaders which specifically foregrounded class in an ongoing way in its analyses. Most of the time it was a marginal note in autobiographies of women leaders. For example, the autobiographies of the senior women in David and Woodward’s (1998) study, do at times touch on their class background, generally when it departs from the middle-class norm of academia.

Similarly, the American feminist literature on academic leadership did not foreground class and was far more muted about class issues in academia in general than the British. Nonetheless, a few American feminist texts did take academia and class as their key category, in contrast to the apparent dearth in Australian feminist research. For example, Tokarczyk and Fay (1993) examine the experiences of working-class origin American university students, tenure-track and tenured faculty lecturers moving into middle-class academia. Their introduction notes the difficulty in finding articles by women of colour due to the ‘small number’ of women academics of colour from working-class backgrounds in particular. However, it does contain a moving autobiographical piece by bell hooks (hooks, 1993). They also observe the prevailing middle-class origin of most Asian American women scholars (Tokarczyk and Fay 1993, p. 19).

Zandy’s edited collection of writings and memoirs by American working-class origin female and male ‘cultural workers’ (Zandy 1995, p. 1) contains a number of pieces by ethnically diverse women academics. Zandy claims that class has been missing in
'recent scholarship' and examines the 'more complicated paradigm' that class, combined with ethnicity and gender, brings forth in the autobiographical writings she has collected (Zandy 1995, p. 10). Zandy notes the differences between the bodily hexis of working-class versus middle-class peoples, arguing that the former group's experiences of lived reality 'encode... a kind of knowledge -- especially of the body -- that is absent in bourgeois academic institutions' (Zandy 1995, p. 3). It is a knowledge that Iris and Simone, two of the working-class, minority ethnic women I interviewed, embody and for which Simone at least, pays dearly.

In terms of the British literature on women academics and class, a number of key insights pertinent to my research were generated. Firstly, academia is defined as a 'white middle-class pursuit' (Reynolds 1997, p. 13), a sentiment echoed by other feminist writers such as Hey (1997). Thus minority ethnic women of all classes and white women of working-class background, enter its field with less social and cultural capital to trade than white middle-class women and men (Skeggs, 1997b). However, a number of the authors argue that examining the way in which women are positioned by class continues to be an unfashionable pursuit, both in the academy (for example, Archer and Leathwood (2003); Reay (1997, p. 18); Skeggs (1997b, pp. 6-7); and within feminism itself (for example, Mahoney and Zmroczek (1997, p. 5); Skeggs (1997b, p. 6); Stanley (1995, p. 169); Walsh (1997, pp. 159, 169).

Beverley Skeggs contends that the 'retreat from class' in feminist theory is part of a 'class movement' from Marxist perspectives of feminist theory to literary perspectives. Feminist theory, she argues, now largely draws upon 'the cultural capital of those who have had access to "high culture" and higher education' (Skeggs 1997b, p. 6). In addition, she argues that much postmodernist theory dismisses class as a 'relic from modernism', although ironically race itself 'is not dismissed as a structural dinosaur' in the same way as class (Skeggs 1997b, p. 7). Skeggs' argument appears to be echoed in the feminist literature on women in academia, in which examinations of ethnicity and gender appear to be more predominant than that of class.

In an extension of the argument in regard to postmodernism's dismissal of class, Helen Lacey, June Melody and Valerie Walkerdine contend that although the postmodernist concept of hybridity can be a useful one when analysing working-
class girls' experiences of entering university, the deep pain and loss as well as pleasure involved in making the massive transition into educational success and the middle-classes exacts an emotional toll on these girls which the concept of hybridity cannot adequately encompass. As they note, such transitions alert us to the fact that 'there are no easy hybrids' (Lucey et al. 2003, p. 285). As Valerie Hey observes, 'no amount of fascination with poststructuralist accounts of “decentred” subjectivity can erase the “under the skin” sense of an intractable (working-class) class identity’ (Hey 1997, p. 143).

In a wide-ranging collection of British and mainly white working-class origin women's experiences of entering the academy as students and/or academics, Class Matters: "Working-Class" Women's Perspectives on Social Class (Mahoney and Zmroczek, 1997), the editors and numerous authors trace both the pain and pleasure involved when working-class origin women enter academia. Diane Reay argues that working-class background female academics are 'unlikely ever to feel at home in academia' (Reay 1997, p. 21). She lists the costs and trade-offs that may come with survival in the academy, including 'learning a totally new language'; 'developing a decorum and reserve that fits in with middle-class standards of acceptable female sexuality' -- a 'treacherous process' that brings with it a continuing sense of disloyalty and dislocation' (Reay 1997, pp. 20-21) and guilt (Mahoney and Zmroczek 1997, p. 5). The 'language of the body' that Anglo majority '(w)orking-class people practise' may often be traded off for 'the quiet hands' and 'neutral faces of the privileged classes' (Zandy 1995, p. 5). Reay's observations point to the 'hidden injuries of class' (Sennett and Cobb, 1977); the 'symbolic and structural violence' inflicted as part of the 'classifying practices enacted on a daily basis by many of those who do not think class is an issue' (Skeggs 1997a, p. 134).

On the other hand, the authors note the strengths and pleasures of hybridity for working-class origin academic women. These include 'good “crap detectors” in terms of understanding 'the role of education in creating class difference and division' (Mahoney and Zmroczek 1997, p. 5); the ability to “cross” classes; to "play" with accent, vocabulary and demeanour; of “performance”, "masquerade" and "passing"; and the ‘richness gained from seeing the world from different vantage points’ (Mahoney and Zmroczek 1997, p. 5). Most importantly perhaps, it is the
‘sense of unfairness’ that working-class origin women academics may bring to their research – an ‘insider knowledge of class inequalities’ (Reay 1997, p. 23) – which provides them with ‘a potentially radical role’ in terms of ‘subverting dominant discourses’ both within the academy and white, middle-class feminism (Reay 1997, p. 25).

The intersection of gender, class and ethnicity is picked up in a small number of more recent feminist texts on academia. For example, the dangers of essentialising black women’s experiences of the academy are noted by Tracey Reynolds, the sole black working-class woman writing in Class Matters. She notes that the majority of the black female peers in British academia she encounters are older, more experienced in their line of work and largely from middle-class backgrounds. Hence, she draws attention to the importance of future analysis of ‘social class differences and the way in which they inform black women’s social and structural positioning’ (Reynolds 1997, pp. 14-15). The African-American feminist Patricia Hill Collins contends that in attempting to fashion a black feminist epistemology, women are forced to use ‘white male middle-class “tools”’ that are even less culturally appropriate than for white middle-class feminists (Collins 1991, p. 13). However, Reynolds’ text signals the dangers in constructing a subject position for black women academics which subsumes differences between black feminists in the same way as white feminism appears to have done.

Some British black women academics have noted that despite possessing a middle-class accent, they are still ‘presumed’ to be working-class and a series of negative class and racial stereotypical assumptions then ensue from this (Mahoney and Zmroczek 1997, p. 3). Zmroczek and Mahony (1999, pp. 1-2) examine the experiences of women from a variety of class backgrounds, including that of the middle and upper-classes in order ‘to widen the debates about how class works’. They argue that class can act as a ‘unifying category across racial or cultural divisions’ and that there is a need for more research into this phenomenon (Zmroczek and Mahony 1999, p. 6).

The study by Archer et al. (2003) of ethnically diverse working-class men and women participants and non participants in British higher education, explores their under-representation in this sector. It draws together the categories of ethnicity, class
and gender to make it one of the few studies to foreground so comprehensively this intersection. They note that the institutional habitus of more exclusive British universities alienates many working-class students from applying for admission, thus ‘social hierarchies are transformed into academic hierarchies’ (Archer et al. 2003, p. 18). In a similar fashion, four of the five working-class origin women academics in my study were located in the less prestigious, non sandstone Australian universities – perhaps connoting their lack of fit in more traditional middle-class, Anglo-Australian sandstone universities. Louise Archer calls for a more nuanced debate noting that the experiences of groups such as British black working-class women are ‘entirely different’ from white women of the same class (Archer 2003, p. 18). She notes that ‘the boundaries of classed identities and inequalities are ... indiscrete, “fuzzy” and stratified by “race” and gender’ and thus researchers need to pay attention to the ‘multiple stratification’ of working-class groups in terms of their ‘complexity’ and ‘heterogeneity’ (Archer 2003, p. 20).

The Australian Feminist Movement: Whiteness as the Hegemonic Norm

A number of feminist commentators have argued that Australian feminism is particularly hegemonic in terms of its omissions in regard to ethnicity in particular, and class to a lesser degree, thus leading to major material consequences for groups of women who do not fall within its normalising centre. In relation to immigrant women, Anne Patel-Gray has contended that Australian feminists have a ‘profound cultural arrogance – if not a crippling ethnocentric bias’ (Patel-Gray 1995, p. 13). In her history of the Australian women’s movement, Gisela Kaplan notes that ‘(m)igrant women of different linguistic backgrounds were by and large not welcomed in the ... (Australian) ... women’s movement’. The fact that migrant women, along with Indigenous women, were not the responsibility of the Federal Government’s Office of the Status of Women, but the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for the former group and the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs for the latter group, ‘structurally cemented’ divisions between migrant and Indigenous women on the one hand and Anglo-Australian women on the other hand (Kaplan 1996, p. 124). It also meant that male leaders represented their communities to these departments and thus it was male issues, which set the agenda (Eisenstein 1996, p. 114). Georgina Tsolidis has noted that ‘issues surrounding minority women
in Australia have been taken up through movements concerned with ethnic rights more so than within the women’s movement’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 25). Hester Eisenstein, in her study of Australian femocracy, notes the enormous gap between Anglo-Australian women’s needs and that of new immigrant women (Eisenstein 1996, p. 113). Chris Ronalds comments that the monolingual nature of the Australian women’s movement, allied to the patriarchal nature of the immigrant women’s culture, had led to a series of differing issues for both groups which meant that immigrant women were sidelined by the women’s movement (Eisenstein 1996, pp. 112-113).

In terms of whiteness, Ailcun Moreton-Robinson has argued that in contrast to Australia

in recent years, in Britain and the United States, thinking and writing about whiteness has begun to generate new intellectual and practical approaches to living in a multi-racial society (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xviii).

Jackie Huggins refers to Aboriginal women and white feminists as ‘two quite distinct political groups’, between which major tensions still exist as ‘the white women’s movement does not appreciate how racism shapes sexism’ (Huggins 1998, pp. 26, 28). Hester Eisenstein has noted that in Australia, the women’s movement and the Aboriginal rights movement have been separate entities, with the battle for Aboriginal rights that centered around the 1967 referendum predating the second wave women’s movement of the 1970s (Eisenstein 1996, p. 112).

Marian Sawyer presents a different perspective, arguing that part of the reason for the development of autonomous Aboriginal and immigrant women’s networks in the 1980s occurred as a result of the series of consultations and conferences with these two groups which Anglo-Australian femocrats organised in the 1970s (Eisenstein 1996, p. 115); (Sawer 1990, pp. 107-139). Whatever the case may be, the tendency to place gender first as an issue and ignore or subsume ethnic and race issues under its universalising category, appears to have been strong in the second wave Australian feminist movement in the 1970s. Related recognition of this tendency appears to have only occurred in the past fifteen years or so and to still be tentative. In discussing Australian feminism, for example, Hester Eisenstein observes that in terms of class issues, her feminocrat interviewees felt they had achieved some success
but that they had failed women when it came to the ‘issue of race and racism’ (Eisenstein 1996, p. 208).

In relation to issues of class and gender, Gisela Kaplan has observed that another feature of the history of the Australian women’s movement has been its exclusion of working-class women – in a similar manner to the Australian trade union movement. She contends that European trade unions contained models of participatory democracy, which provided working-class women with a valuable ‘training ground for political thought and practice’. Hence, in excluding European women workers who flocked to Australia post World War Two, both the feminist and trade union movements missed out on these women’s considerable skills in this area (Kaplan 1996, p. 12). In an interview with Hester Eisenstein, Clare Burton has argued a slightly different case – that there appear to be two conflicting tendencies within the second wave Australian feminist movement – that of the grassroots and the elite (Eisenstein 1996, p. 108). Burton noted the individualistic tendency of women in management seminars of the 1980s, where the focus was upon networking (Eisenstein 1996, p. 107). In contrast, the grassroots tendency placed an emphasis on the needs of ‘nonelite’ women (Eisenstein 1996, p. 102). It derives its origins from the tradition of egalitarianism within Australian culture, strong traditions of collectivism and trade unionism, and many feminists’ links to left wing organisations (Eisenstein 1991, p. 42); (Eisenstein 1996, p. 106). In addition, many feminists were themselves from working-class backgrounds and had a strong commitment to issues for working-class women (Eisenstein 1996, pp. 101-108). However, Eisenstein notes that within the democratic culture of the state and federal bureaucracies, the two strands ‘coexisted uncomfortably’ but concludes that ideologically, the bulk of feminists were committed to improving ‘the life situations of the mass of women’ and this was reflected in the strong emphasis placed upon issues such as employment, ‘childcare, education, and welfare’ (Eisenstein 1996, p. 208).

**Contextualising Feminist Movements**

Why do such gaps and omissions within Australian feminist educational leadership literature exist, given:
• Australia’s longstanding bilateral commitment to multiculturalism as a federal policy;

• The broad ethnic diversity of its peoples as a result of post World War Two immigration policies pursued by federal governments of both conservative and Labor persuasion;

• A bilateral state and federal government commitment to policies of Indigenous land rights and reconciliation commencing slowly in the 1970s through to the demise of the federal Labor government in the mid 1990s;

• Australia’s reputation as an egalitarian nation and pioneer in matters of civil rights, for example, the vote for women; and

• A collectivist tradition within Australian feminism of working towards social justice for women in terms of class, if not racial/ethnic concerns?

A number of reasons can be advanced for these omissions. Possibly the primary reason why this is the case is that the political movements for human and civil rights took on different forms in Australia, the United States and Britain. For example, the civil rights movement, which reached a peak of activism in America in the 1950s and 60s, surfaced much later in Australia in the 1970s. A fledgling Aboriginal civil rights movement had existed in Australia since the 1930s (Lake, 2001), along with a land rights movement from the 1970s onwards. However, Indigenous racial issues only came strongly to the public forefront in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the High Court of Australia’s recognition of the pre-existing claim of Indigenous Australians to the nation prior to white British settlement (commonly known as the Mabo decision).

Secondly, Indigenous Australians constitute approximately 2.1 per cent of the Australian population; immigrants from non English speaking background 23 percent; and Australians of English speaking origin close to three-quarters of the population (Anon. 2001a). The first group constitutes a very small number of voters who can be easily overlooked. In addition, until 1967, Indigenous Australians were not recognised as citizens, did not have the right to vote and their freedom of
movement was strictly curtailed through a pass system by state appointed protectors, or the Aboriginal Welfare Board as it was known in the 1950s and 60s (Lake, 2001). A policy of removal of Indigenous children from their parents was in force until the 1970s and access to schools in the non-Indigenous education system was denied until changes to legislation in the 1970s. Although the Indigenous civil rights movement was able to claim a number of significant wins such as the success of the citizenship referendum in 1967 and the dismantling of the Aboriginal Welfare Board (Lake, 2001), Australian politicians across the political landscape often have been able to ignore civil rights claims from Indigenous Australians, due to the latter group’s small numbers.

The longstanding White Australia policy, which was only overturned in the 1960s, had effectively debarred non-white immigrants from entering Australia as citizens. Thus the face of Australia, despite its commitment to opening up immigration post World War Two, remained resolutely white (non black, non Asian) until the 1970s when Vietnamese refugees began to arrive. This was in contrast to America where ethnic minorities from both European and non-European origins, along with African-Americans, constitute a far more formidable voting constituency and have a much longer history of settlement. Moreover, unlike Indigenous Australians, African-Americans have had ongoing access to education (albeit historically segregated) in the compulsory and postsecondary sectors and a long history of civil rights activism stretching back to the nineteenth century founded on the slave movement (Hill Collins, 1998).

It was this history of civil rights activism, which provided American feminists much earlier than Australian feminists, with models of resistance and analysis from which they could draw. It also partially explains why second wave feminism arrived much earlier in America than in Australia. Examples of the power of this history are that in contrast to Australia where Women’s Studies struggled to find a place in Australian universities in the 1970s and 80s, American feminists were able to cite Black Studies – which had emerged in American universities in the 1950s and 60s – as a model and justification for Women’s Studies becoming a legitimate ‘curriculum offering’ (Eisenstein 1991, pp. 13-14). In contrast, due to women being shut out of academic careers in Australian universities and to an Australian tradition of using the state to
ameliorate the worst excesses of capitalism, Australian feminists worked within public bureaucracies to create Women’s Units and positions designed specifically to raise women’s issues. In so doing, they created the unique Australian tradition of the feminist bureaucrat/femocrat (Eisenstein 1991, pp. 12-13). Another difference between Australia and America was that American feminists were able to mobilise and organise powerful campaigns from the 1960s onwards which drew upon President Johnson’s 1964 historic civil rights legislation enacting equal rights for women and minorities, the latter including equal employment opportunity, anti-discrimination and the establishment of a commission to ensure the requirements of the act were enforced (Glazer-Raymo 1999, pp. 13-14).

In Britain, the post World War Two immigration of peoples from former Commonwealth countries, led to an increase in racism and the introduction of a succession of Immigration Acts commencing in 1962 (Donald and Rattansi 1992, p. 14). As in Australia, it was a time of economic prosperity and growth but these immigrants, and, in particular women, were often concentrated in the most poorly paid, unskilled and easily dispensable segments of the labour market (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, pp. 116-117). Despite official denials of racism, immigration legislation aimed to control the numbers of black immigrants arriving in Britain and to assimilate them into ‘an imagined British national culture and way of life’, that is, a white culture (Donald and Rattansi 1992, p. 15). The 1970s in Britain ushered in a sharp decline in economic prosperity and a sense of political crisis. British black communities became politically active and engaged in a wide series of campaigns to deal with the racism in the labour market and union movement, and in attacks upon black persons and communities. Black British feminism grew as a separate political movement in the late 1970s and into the 1980s from the anti-racist political campaigns that emerged from the British black communities in response to these conditions (Donald and Rattansi 1992, p. 134). As in Australia, the white British feminist movement was seen as separate from the British black feminists (Donald and Rattansi 1992, p. 134). However, perhaps because of the sheer numbers of British black communities, white British feminists appear to have taken on board earlier than white Australian feminists, the need to understand the ways in which black women have been oppressed in ‘feminist theory and practice’ (Donald and Rattansi 1992, p. 134).
Aboriginal academics and activists such as Jackie Huggins (Huggins and Tarrago, 1990); (Huggins and Huggins, 1994); (Huggins, 1998); Marcia Langton (Langton, 1993) and Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Moreton-Robinson, 1998); (Moreton-Robinson, 2000) have challenged the white gaze of Australian feminism in the past decade, but perhaps because of the smaller numbers of Indigenous peoples, the late take-up in Australian universities of Indigenous studies and issues, and the recent arrival in Australian universities of small and scattered cohorts of Indigenous students, this has been a fairly recent phenomenon.

Finally, the long-standing discourse and policy of multiculturalism in Australia, although on the one hand celebrating and authenticating diversity within cultures, may also act to contain differences (Hage 1998, p. 130). The policy is posited on an Anglo-Australian subject position, which tolerates difference amongst others – non Anglo immigrants and their children. These others are firmly located through the discourse of multiculturalism as being on the periphery of ‘our’ Anglo-Australian culture – it is ‘we’ who tolerate ‘them’ and who retain the power to withdraw tolerance if it is deemed necessary. Thus, difference remains the property of others, not of ‘us’ (Hage, 1998). Such a discourse may assist in explaining why the unitary nature of women as a category has remained relatively unchallenged in Australian feminism until the past decade.

Feminist Academic Leadership Literature: The Need to Question Old Assumptions

The marginalisation of minority ethnic, Indigenous and working-class origin academic women’s perspectives in the international feminist leadership literature, echoes the ways in which conventional educational management literature deals with feminist critiques of leadership. As the former body of literature continues to treat feminist analyses of educational leadership as marginal to the mainstream/malestream of leadership, so too does feminist research appear to render the experiences of minority ethnic, Indigenous and working-class origin women as generally invisible or largely peripheral to the (fe)malestream of feminist academic leadership literature. This phenomenon appears to be particularly the case in the Australian research.
Feminist research often has been mobilised into institutional policy and practice (for example, the adoption of gender equity policies of the Victorian Education Department) and also has gained significant airspace in the popular media. Hence, feminist leadership discourses may also feed into a wider discursive framing of leadership in the public domain via the media, and thus simultaneously constitute the subject positions open for a variety of women leaders. I have argued in this chapter that in rendering largely invisible the subject position of the middle-class majority ethnic woman from which they make their claims, Australian feminist academic leadership discourses potentially limit the possibilities for women leaders of minority ethnic and working-class backgrounds. Even more importantly, in a similar way to the discourses of productive diversity in Anglophone management literature of the 1990s, such discourses may play an important role in ‘ward(ing) off the possibility’ of non majority ethnic women leaders. The discourses may function as ‘practices of containment’ that become ‘practices of exclusion ... aim(ed) at regulating the modality of inclusion’ of such leaders ‘in ... (the academic leadership) ... space’ (Hage 1998, pp. 130, 132). In this sense, the very success of such feminist discourses may ironically allow them to function in a similar fashion to multiculturalism, that is, as discourses of containment whose power lies in the way they insidiously and simultaneously trumpet their inclusive nature to the world.

In noting this major gap in the Australian feminist academic leadership literature, I am not denigrating the significant and ongoing contribution that Australian feminist research has made to the overall field of leadership, nor overlooking the fact that at a state level, Australian feminism as a general movement has been very effective in gaining legislative recognition for many of its claims (Eisenstein, 1991); (Eisenstein, 1993). The question must arise however, on whose behalf have Australian feminist claims for leadership been made and who ultimately, have such demands benefited? Do the ‘discourses of women’s ways of leading’ necessarily benefit all women or simply ‘provide... social mobility for an elite of white middle-class women’ (Blackmore 1999, p. 198), while not ‘inform(ing) political reality and their relationship to other women’? (Eisenstein 1996, p. 198).

It is the partial success of the feminist movement in achieving a number of its demands that has led to a range of feminists raising the preceding questions.
Ironically, the claim that feminism has assumed the hegemonic subject position of a ‘master discourse ... (an) ... ‘act of symbolic violence’ (Ang 1995, p. 73), suggests that achievements have been made in breaking into the Australian mainstream for some majority ethnic, middle-class women. I am not implying that there have not been gains made overall for women as a group, nor ignoring the fact that Australian feminism has evolved to a point where non-white women can turn their ‘difference’ very effectively ‘into intellectual and political capital’ (Ang 1995, p. 57).

Kay Schaffer makes a similar comment to Jen Ang when she notes that feminism as a ‘“master discourse” has ... engaged in border patrols ... that have differentially affected different members and groups within the community and have perpetrated both symbolic and actual violence on to non-Western, non-white women’ (Schaffer 1998, p. 323). She argues however, that ‘(t)his recognition is a central issue within the feminist and cultural studies scholars today, but one seldom acknowledged in the realm of the popular’ (Schaffer 1998, p. 323).

The central point of this chapter and one of the key points of my thesis however, is that Australian feminist academic leadership research has not achieved this central recognition. Hence, it appears to have reached an impasse in which claims for leadership space on behalf of all women are still being made from a largely unrecognised majority ethnic Australian, middle-class subject position. There appears to be little recognition that it is the very ethnicity and class from which such claims are made that provide the power base from which to speak and which appear to advantage a limited group of women. With the continuation of a conservative federal government, which has wound back many of the gains made by the Australian feminist movement (Sinclair and Wilson 2002, pp. 103-104), there are compelling reasons to look with fresh eyes at the subject positions from which Australian feminism makes its claims in regard to women’s leadership.
Chapter Three

Theorising Women’s Leadership: An Exercise in Symbolic Power?

Exploring the Fields

There are three central and related issues, which underpin this chapter and my thesis as a whole. These include the variety of ways in which Australian women are discursively positioned in their leadership work; the key role that media representations of women’s leadership play in the production and circulation of these discursive positions; and finally, what such positioning meant for the six women leaders I interviewed who work in the specific field of higher education.

This thesis is not an attempt to do a case study in one specific location. It is about exploring the ways in which discourses of women’s leadership are interpellated across a number of distinct, but overlapping fields, that is, the media, politics, feminism and higher education. It examines the way in which discourses in the first three fields mediate to form a crucial part of a broader discursive framework of women’s leadership, which may have particular material effects for women leaders in the fourth field of higher education. The study draws upon Karen Ashcroft and Dennis Mumby’s conceptualisation of organisations as contested sites of meaning. It utilises their insights that specific institutional discourses, such as those of women’s leadership, may both inform and be informed by broader discourses of leadership drawn from a range of sources including the realm of popular culture and the media. The latter may in turn contribute to individual women leaders’ professional identity formation or habitus (Ashcroft and Mumby 2004, pp. 187-188).

I have noted in my introductory chapter that the majority of discourses of women’s leadership in the two Australian broadsheets I examined were based upon women politicians in the mainstream political field. Feminist discourses are often drawn upon or challenged in locating women leaders within this field. In contrast, the much smaller number of discourses of Aboriginal and minority ethnic women leaders were drawn from a considerably wider range of fields including the bureaucratic, juridical and arts. I contend that it is the mediatised discourses of women’s political leadership
(Fairclough, 2000), combined with a subset of discourses around Indigenous and minority ethnic women leaders, which form a crucial part of the representational regime\(^4\) from which broader societal understandings of women’s leadership are drawn (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004). The media plays a major role in privileging and hegemonising specific sets of discourses around women’s leadership (while simultaneously marginalising others) so that they become part of the common sense of the broader societal field. I have hypothesised that certain hegemonic discourses of women’s leadership may have been interpellated in the field of higher education and positioned the six women leaders in very specific ways – for mediatised constructions of the common sense of women’s leadership have particular ideological and hegemonic impacts upon individual women’s identities as leaders.

**How, Why and Under What Conditions Might Popularised Discourses of Women’s Leadership be Taken Up in the Higher Education Field?**

It is crucial to note that in putting forward the preceding hypothesis, I am not arguing that there is a simple, one-to-one relationship between media constructions of women’s leadership and the discursive positioning of the six women leaders in higher education. Nor am I contending that popularised media discourses of women’s leadership were unproblematically taken up by the six interviewees or by higher education as an overall field. However, the symbolic power of the media as a field to ‘mark, assign and classify’ (Hall 1997, p. 259) minority groups in other fields can be illustrated by the comments of a number of senior Australian female academic managers. They noted that their visibility as a small group meant that, ‘whenever you make even the slightest mistake it’s on the front page of *The Australian*’ (Meyenn and Parker 1996, p. 8).

In their study of the ways in which particular discourses of flying were mobilised by the aviation sector to construct a dominant discourse of pilots as white, male and heterosexual, Ashcraft and Mumby make the crucial point that it is necessary to understand the economic, political and social contexts of an era in order to understand how, why and under what conditions, certain discourses are mobilised.

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\(^4\) Representational regime is defined as ‘discursive formations’ or ‘the whole repertoire of imagery and visual effects through which “difference” is represented at any one historical moment’ (Hall 1997, p. 232).
and become hegemonic and/or marginalised (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004). The traditional habitus of higher education as a field in terms of the scholastic point of view would suggest a resistance to the taking-up of mediatised discourses, given that academia has taken pride in its distance from the ordinary world and thus ability to resist popular shibboleths. In addition, feminism is a recognisable discourse within the Australian tertiary education field and thus offers a potentially strong site of resistance to popularised discourses such as postfeminism and new managerialism.

However, as noted in Chapter One, in the past fifteen years since the introduction of a first major set of reforms to the tertiary education sector in the late 1980s, higher education has been discursively and materially positioned by successive Australian governments to play a crucial role in Australia’s shift from a Fordist economy to a post-Fordist knowledge economy. Newer discourses of managerialism, entrepreneurship, quality assurance and enterprise, chiefly borrowed from the business sector, along with major shifts in funding to a more private enterprise model, have transformed the sector’s habitus. It would appear that as a field, academia is shifting from being more autonomous to heteronomous (that is, one that is more open to other fields), through the influence of market forces (Webb et al. 2002, pp. 28-29). Part of the process of transformation of a field includes a modification of individuals’ identities within that field, but the process is neither straightforward nor ‘homogenous’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 30). For Australian academics, it includes a redefining of their role as professionals to that of ‘knowledge workers’, in which knowledge becomes a commodity that helps secure for our nation, an ‘economic and competitive advantage’ (Brooks, 2001); (Mackinnon and Brooks 2001, p. 2). It is a redefinition that many academics and not simply feminists, contest. Hence, I am hypothesising that the mainstream discourses of women’s leadership that potentially may be picked up in the academic sector could be those that are more amenable to the increasingly managerialist habitus/identity of the academic field.

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5 The scholastic point of view is a major characteristic of the academic field, according to Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2000). In simple terms, it may be defined as the ‘objectifying and universalising perspective offered by a position within the academy’ and is a major means by which academia maintains its power as a field (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002, pp. 134, 138).
A major point of the thesis is that the broader discourses of women's leadership circulated via the media come together to form a representational regime, which potentially informs the ways in which academic women leaders are both represented and represent themselves. However, individual women leaders' agency is also a crucial aspect of their discursive positioning. Furthermore, the women's ethnic and class origins and the variety of locations in which they performed their leadership work, also has a major impact on the ways in which they are both positioned and position themselves through such discourses. Most importantly, however, I contend that although these broader discourses may be an important part of the wider sets of common sense understandings of women's leadership within society as a whole which the media naturalises and hegemonises, if certain of these discourses are taken up in the tertiary field, they may take on a different set of readings for women leaders because they are located in a specific field of practice. In addition, as a semi-autonomous field which is both distinct but overlapping with the fields of politics and the media, higher education produces its own 'regulatory and coercive discourses' (Webb et al. 2002, p. 68), its own gendered, raced and classed habitus, which interacts in complex ways with the broader sets of mediatised understandings of women's leadership drawn largely from the field of politics. Discourses of women's leadership may be everywhere but the particular forms and shapes which these discourses take on, and the possibilities for leadership work which they may open up or close down, take on specific and peculiar dimensions in the different field of practice which is Australian higher education.

In summary, the key theoretical frames which I will explore in this chapter and which underpin this thesis include:

- The ways in which the media discursively positions women leaders chiefly through representations of women politicians and a subset of discourses around Indigenous and minority ethnic women's leadership drawn from a variety of fields;

- How different discourses of women's leadership are mainly drawn from this broader representational framework but may differ from it;
• The ways in which the broader discourses of women's leadership may be picked up as a different set of readings for women leaders in higher education because they are working in a different field of practice;

• How the specific women leaders' sense of identity (or academic habitus in Bourdieu's terms) is framed, shaped and informed by these discourses; and

• How the women interviewees respond to these discourses in terms of their own sense of agency.

The two key theorists whose work has assisted me in conceptualising these frames are Norman Fairclough and Pierre Bourdieu. In the remainder of this chapter, I will summarise the theoretical concepts that I have drawn from their work and explore their relevance and usefulness to this research.

Is Meaning a Reflection or a Construction?

In examining the two broadsheets' representations of Australian women leaders, I will adopt a social constructionist approach to explaining how language works in order to represent meaning in the media. Broadly speaking this approach posits that language is multi-referential and does not simply act as a mirror or reflection of our thoughts. Meaning is constructed and produced through language, the latter which is in turn, 'the key repository of cultural values and meanings' (Hall 1997, p. 1).

The social constructionist approach to meaning making argues that meaning is constructed and produced using language as a representational system of concepts and signs. Meaning does not occur in a social vacuum – quite the opposite. It is the 'public, social character of language', which is recognised in the constructionist approach (Hall 1997, p. 25). Constructionists contend that, '(T)hings don't mean: we construct meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs …' (Hall 1997, p. 25).

As a critical linguist who adopts a social constructionist approach to the study of language and media texts, Norman Fairclough observes that the language use of any text
is constitutive both in conventional ways which help to reproduce and maintain existing social identities, relations and systems of knowledge and belief, and in creative ways which help to transform them (Fairclough 1995b, p. 55).

Hence, the basic social constructionist concept of the media as a key signifying agent engaging in the intellectual labour of representation, that is, of ‘making things mean’ (Hall 1982, pp. 64-65) will be adopted in this thesis.

**Critical Discourse Analysis as an Analytical Tool**

Central to this thesis is whether and how particular representations of women have discursive effects on women’s perceptions, understandings and actions with respect to leadership. A key concept, which underpins this issue, is that of discourse. I found the field of Cultural Studies extremely useful in providing me with a broad general understanding of discourse, particularly in relation to the constitutive and productive role it plays within media representations. However, it was less useful in terms of applying these theories to the individual women leaders, that is, in analysing, “the processes by which “real” women negotiate and understand them “selves”” (Skeggs 1997b, p. 1). There appears to be an emphasis in Cultural Studies upon the idealistic nature of discourse, which in turn assumes that discourse is articulated in the same way across various locations. Yet as Ashcraft and Mumby (2004) contend in their study of the aviation industry and in my own study, it is more complex than this. In times of radical transformation of a field such as academia, popular discourses of women’s leadership may be selectively interpellated into the latter site. They may function as part of the discursive construction of new sets of meanings or knowledge, which reshape female academic leaders’ identities. However, which discourses are mobilised and the processes by which this occurs, depend upon the specific economic, social and political contexts of the era and the specific conditions of the field at the time.

In laying stress upon the circulation of discourses through the capillaries of power, a Foucauldian reading of discourse (upon which many Cultural Theorists base their research) gains a deterministic edge for which it has been criticised. Hence, I sought a definition of discourse, which emphasises its dialectical nature, that is, the interplay between structure and agency, that avoided a deterministic emphasis upon the discursive production of the subject and which had a practical/political edge.
Therefore, my definition of discourse will draw upon Michel’s Foucault’s work, but with important modifications based upon Norman Fairclough’s research in the area of the media and critical discourse analysis. The latter has been crucial in assisting my conceptualisation of the interplay between broader social discourses, the role of the media in producing these collective understandings and the material effects of these discursive positionings upon individual women leaders.

**Exploring Definitions of Discourse**

Michel Foucault has defined discourse as ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault 1972, p. 49). The effects of discourse are produced by a combination of ‘the factors of truth, power and knowledge’ (Mills 1997, p. 18). Truth does not represent a reality ‘out there’, nor ‘an ideal abstract quality’ (Mills 1997, p. 18). Rather, our ways of knowing about the world are based on relations of power that are produced within discourses, for

> it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together ... we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies ... (Foucault 1990, p. 100).

Importantly, power is not, ‘something that is acquired, seized, or shared ... power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations’ (Foucault 1990, p. 94). Resistance is a crucial part of this network of power relations for, ‘(W)here there is power, there is resistance ... there is no single locus of great Refusal ... Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case’ (Foucault 1990, pp. 95-96).

There are some important differences between Foucault’s work on discourse and that of other theorists and these are pertinent to my analysis. For example, in contrast to Foucault who emphasises a ‘fairly stable notion of access to discourse’, Michel Pechoux, a Marxist linguist, stresses people’s differential access to discourses (Mills 1997, p. 14). In addition, John Clarke and Janet Newman have pointed out that there is a crucial difference between ‘being subjected by a discourse and being subjected to it’. The former phrase suggests ‘the ideal effects of discourses – the production of new subjects who identify with it and enact it in their practices’, whereas the latter
implies resistance, 'the experience of being regulated by and disciplined through a
discourse, without it engaging beliefs, enthusiasms or identification' (Clarke and

In terms of women as a group, Sara Mills argues for a less deterministic definition of
discourse than that posited by Foucault. She notes that women 'can come to a
position of disidentification, whereby we not only locate and isolate the ways in
which we as subjects have been constructed and subjected' (a process which
Foucauldian analysis clearly articulates), 'but we also map out ... new terrains in
which we can construct different and potentially more liberating ways in which we
can exist' (a process upon which Foucauldian analysis is more silent but which
feminist groups have clearly articulated) (Mills 1997, p. 15). Other feminists such as
Lois McNay have also critiqued Foucauldian constructionism, arguing that the 'idea
of discursive constructionism becomes a form of determinism because of the
frequent assumption ... of the essential passivity of the subject' (McNay 2000, p. 3).

In contrast to the potential determinism of 'discursive constructionism', Norman
Fairclough utilises Foucauldian definitions of discourse as socially constitutive but
stresses instead their dialectical nature, arguing that discourse and in particular, the
analysis of the way in which it functions, can have potentially transformative as well
as reproductive functions. Crucially, as a critical discourse analyst, Fairclough
utilises an analytical approach to the dissection of media texts. The approach
provides a means to 'map out ... new terrains in which we can construct different
and potentially more liberating ways in which we can exist' (Mills 1997, p. 15).
Fairclough's key influences are Foucault and 'Marxist linguistics and political
theory', and this latter influence is apparent through his use of a far greater number
of concrete examples of 'how texts work to create inequalities of power' (Mills 1997,
p. 134). Norman Fairclough has argued that:

Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or
"constitute" them: different discourses constitute key entities ... in different ways, and
position people in different ways as social subjects ... it is these social effects of discourse
that are focused upon in discourse analysis ... (Fairclough 1992, pp. 3-4).

Fairclough contends that an overemphasis on discourse unnecessarily privileges
language and ignores the material social and economic conditions which structure
people’s lives. A major reason I find Fairclough’s analysis of discourse attractive, is that by stressing the dialectical and potentially transformative potential of discourse, critical linguists such as Fairclough, Terry Threadgold, Roger Fowler and Gunther Kress are drawing attention to the political nature of language. The foundation for their conclusion is based on the argument that

(L)anguage is a central vehicle in the process whereby people are constituted as individuals and as social subjects, and because language and ideology are closely imbricated, the close systematic analysis of the language of texts can expose some of the workings of texts and, by extension, the way that people are oppressed within current social structures (Mills 1997, pp. 133-134).

In relation to my research, I have found Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis extremely useful in assisting me to explore how women leaders as a collective or group are more broadly represented within society and the way in which these more general discursive conditions may assist in constituting and shaping individual women’s leadership possibilities. He is one of the few theorists working in the area of media analysis who makes connections between the micro level, that is, close analysis of actual media texts, and the macro level, that is, a consideration of the broader shifts and changes occurring in contemporary society as a whole. His research provides a working model of how links can be drawn between analysis of representations and discourses in media texts and the way in which these in turn, have constitutive power and material effects for individuals within society. Fairclough makes a case as to how such representations and discourses have material impacts, in particular, in terms of both reshaping people’s relationships with others and the broader social collective and the way in which they can work to constitute people’s identities and understandings of who they are.

In addition, I find Fairclough’s dialectical definition of discourse most productive in providing me with the conceptual tools to explore the ways in which discourses of women’s leadership within the higher education field open up possibilities for agency and identity, while simultaneously acting as a constraint upon other leadership possibilities. One of the features of the interview data was the way in which the women leaders mobilised a range of leadership discourses in order to attempt to represent themselves in ways that opened up new and different spaces for leadership. For example, Ruth, an Aboriginal academic in a middle management
position, drew upon (white) feminist and Aboriginal matriarchal discourses, which fused together for her to construct a powerful sense of Aboriginal women’s leadership and agency. Fairclough’s work on discourse is generative in its constant reminder that agency is produced through wider sets of cultural and structural arrangements which are articulated through discourses.

The Mediatisation of Politics

Another key element of Fairclough’s research, which is pertinent to my work, is the concept of the mediatisation of politics. Fairclough argues that ‘changes in language use are an important part of wider social and cultural changes’ (Fairclough 1992, p. 5). He contends that the accordance by social theorists such as Gramsci, Althusser, Pecheux, Foucault and Habermas of ‘a more central place ... (for language) ... in social life’ has led to

a significant shift in the social functioning of language, a shift reflected in the salience of language in the major social changes which have been taking place over the last few decades ... it is perhaps one indication of the growing importance of language in social and cultural change that attempts to engineer the direction of change increasingly include attempts to change language practices (Fairclough 1992, p. 6).

A major part of the analysis of the increasing ‘salience’ of discourse in contemporary Western societies is through the close analysis of media texts. Fairclough contends that the media are an important tool in providing researchers with ‘access to the detailed mechanisms through which social contradictions evolve and are lived out, and the sometimes subtle shifts they undergo’ (Fairclough 1995b, p. 15).

For example, in his examination of the manipulation and use of language by the New Labour party in Britain, Fairclough argues that language has become increasingly important ‘in the past few decades because of social changes which have transformed politics and government’. A crucial part of the changes that he points to is ‘a new relationship between politics, government and mass media – a new synthesis which means that many significant political events are now ... media events’ (Fairclough 2000, pp. 3-4). He refers to this significant shift as a ‘mediatisation’ of politics and government’ and argues that there have been a number of important consequences from this ‘mediatisation’, including the ‘transformation of political leaders into
media personalities’ which in turn entails that the ‘communicative style of leaders is now recognised as a crucial factor in political success or failure’ (Fairclough 2000, p. 4).

A central part of the mediatisation of politics is a recognition by politicians that ‘language is a very important part of the action in the social practice of government ... much of the action of government is language’ and that this move to “cultural governance” implies an increased importance for discourses in shaping the action ... managing culture means gaining acceptance for particular representations of the social world, that is, particular discourses ... (such as) ... neo-liberal ‘enterprise’ and ‘social justice’ (Fairclough 2000, pp. 157-158).

The mediatisation of politics as a field is a crucial concept in my research for it points to the fundamental role which the media play in selecting, circulating and constituting as commonsensical within the field of higher education in particular, discourses of women’s leadership, especially those drawn from the political field. In a sense what Fairclough is pointing to is the increasingly important role the media play in manufacturing consent around discourses of women’s leadership, that is, the hegemonic role of the media in ‘symbolic control, including shaping the discursive terrain’ of individual women’s leadership possibilities through its privileging and circulation of the discourses of women’s political leadership (Blackmore and Thorpe 2003, p. 580). The media’s hegemonising of discourses of women’s leadership drawn from the political field is particularly salient in higher education for as a field, the latter site has become a focus of media attention with government discourses of restructuring, efficiency and effectiveness being privileged and partially talked into being via the discursive terrain of the media.

The Media as a Persuasive Tool

Fairclough links the mediatisation of the political field to the dual concepts of hegemony and discourse, noting that hegemony is

a mode of domination, which is based upon alliances, the incorporation of subordinate groups, and the generation of consent. Hegemonies within particular organisations and
institutions and at a societal level are produced, reproduced, contested and transformed in discourse (Fairclough 1992, pp. 9-10).

According to Fairclough, it is crucial to analyse discourses in the media, for the media are a primary site by which this is achieved. Study of the media can lead to

an understanding of how relations are constructed in the media between audiences and those who dominate the economy, politics and culture ... (and) ... is an important part of a general understanding of relations of power and domination in contemporary societies (Fairclough 1995b, p. 126).

However, the manufacture of consent or hegemony, is never fixed. As Fairclough notes in terms of the British New Labour Government, the ‘unifying political discourse’, which they had achieved, ‘is constantly put at risk by events and changing circumstances, and it demands continuous work to sustain it’ (Fairclough 2000, pp. 21-22). Hence, the hegemonic role of the media in producing popular understandings of women’s discourses of leadership is not based on a model of the media as a ‘number of well-defined, unitary and stable codes which dictate practice’ (Fairclough 1995b, p. 67). Instead, it draws on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony as

a theory of power and domination which emphasises power through achieving consent rather than through coercion, and the importance of cultural aspects of domination which depend upon a particular articulation of a plurality of practices (Fairclough 1995b, p. 67).

Hegemony is achieved through more subtle forms of practice in which ‘diverse discursive practices are articulated together within the order of discourse in ways which overall sustain relations of domination’ (Fairclough 1995b, pp. 67-68). Thus:

(T)he mere fact that a plethora of voices is included in the media treatments of social and political issues does not entail an absence of control, merely that the question of how voices are woven together, how they are ordered with respect to each other, becomes decisive (Fairclough 1995b, p. 84).

This is a particularly important point in terms of discourses of women’s leadership. For example, in my analysis of the media representations of majority ethnic and Aboriginal women leaders, there appeared to be a large number of women from both groups being represented in the two broadsheets. However, despite this ‘plethora of voices’, closer analysis revealed that a small number of women leaders was represented numerous times and often on the basis of a negative storyline about
conflict, division or controversy. This was particularly the case for Aboriginal women leaders. As Norman Fairclough remarks:

There has been a significant increase in the salience of women’s political voices in the media ... An interesting question is how those women who figure prominently in the media ... are constructed – sheer presence is not in itself a straightforward measure of greater equity (Fairclough 1995b, p. 187).

In a discussion of the shift from the use of standard English in the media, Fairclough points to another significant trend in language and media discourse, that is, the ‘democratisation’ of language within the media – the use of everyday and more informal language in media instead of a more public and formal voice. The question he raises is whether such a shift in language use represents ‘a real fracturing of hegemony in the linguistic sphere’ ... (in the sense that the language becomes accessible to a broader range of people) ... ‘or is hegemony merely taking new forms?’ (Fairclough 1992, p. 202). This raises a crucial issue in relation to the ‘increasing salience of women’s political voices in the media’, for does this discursive turn represent ‘a real fracturing of hegemony’ in terms of gender relations and power, or ‘is hegemony merely taking new forms?’ (Fairclough 1992, p. 202). In reply to this rhetorical question, Fairclough notes that:

(A)ss overt markers become less evident, covert markers of power asymmetry become more potent, with the result that power asymmetry becomes more subtle rather than disappearing ... One way of interpreting such cases is that the apparent elimination of overt markers and asymmetries is really only cosmetic ... There is some truth in that, but only a half truth: this mode of democratisation is sometimes cosmetic, but it can also be substantive, and there is struggle over its meaning (Fairclough 1992, pp. 203-204).

In my opening chapter, I noted the dissonance that appeared to exist between media discourses of postfeminism and Lisa’s, Rhoda’s and my own experiences of educational leadership. One of the reasons I found these dissonances so difficult to grapple with was because a discourse such as postfeminism does capture a partial truth in that equality at some levels has been achieved for women in Australia. However, it is the hegemonising tendency of such a discourse – the way it is taken up and circulated by the media in ways that constitutes a position for all women – and the material impact this can have, for example, in the areas of government policy, that are of such concern. Fairclough’s point about the ways in which power
asymmetry becomes more subtle is a crucial one for it captures the complex ways in which media discourses of women’s leadership can, on the one hand, appear to signal a major shift in gender relations and power while at the same time, subtly repositioning women in ways that are not always as transformative as they may at first suggest.

In summary, in connecting the micro-analysis of texts with ‘wider discourse structures’, Fairclough’s analysis provides a powerful tool by which to map ‘the larger social changes affecting the relationship between the public and the private domains’ (Mills 1997, p. 157). Hence, my analysis of the media firstly will adopt the central tenet of Fairclough and other critical linguists, that ‘language is a central vehicle in the process whereby people are constituted as individuals and as social subjects’ (Mills 1997, p. 133); and secondly, that media discourses can be analysed for political purposes as a means of identifying ‘the way that people are oppressed within current social structures’ (Mills 1997, p. 134). I will not adopt Fairclough’s more specific textual techniques, which he has outlined at length in a number of texts (Fairclough 1992; Fairclough, 1995b; Fairclough, 1995a) as word length limitations preclude me from doing so. However, my analysis of the broad sweep of discourses of women leaders in the print media is predicated on Fairclough’s important insights into the ways in which shifts and changes in language and especially the media, play a constitutive role in shaping and framing people’s identities and relationships and, in the case of my research, upon specific women leaders.

Realising Individual Women Leaders’ Identities

I noted at the commencement of this chapter that the thesis was an exploration of the interpellation of discourses of women’s leadership across four fields of practice, that is, the media, politics, feminism and higher education. Secondly, I observed that in relation to the discursive positioning of women leaders, two key points which my thesis explores are what such positioning means for individual women leaders in the specific context of higher education and the significant contribution media representations of women leaders make to such positionings. Norman Fairclough’s work on media discourses has assisted me in making links between representations of the broader collective of women leaders and how these discursive conditions may
shape individual women leaders’ possibilities. However, I found Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of field or social space an extremely useful tool in exploring the ways in which the media, politics and higher education operate as discrete but overlapping sites of practice which produce their own inner logic and rules and which, in turn, differentially mediate the ways in which broader discourses of women’s leadership may be taken up and circulated within specific sites of practice, such as the Australian tertiary education field.

In addition, Bourdieu’s concepts have assisted me in conceptualising the major gap I noted in my opening chapter between the dominant discourses of women’s leadership circulating in the media suggesting women have made it and no longer require special treatment and the real practices and experiences of individual women which suggested otherwise. Specifically, the notion of habitus has assisted me in making sense of how the women leaders in my study constructed a sense of themselves as *individuals* within the specific field of higher education. Theories of discourse do not appear to offer a way of conceptualising the dialectical relationship between the broader discourses of women’s leadership and individual women educational leaders. This is particularly the case in terms of how these discourses are circulated, taken up, rearticulated and shaped in individual educational institutions (that is, the raced, classed and gendered academic institutions in which they work), by the day-to-day practices and experiences of women leaders (that is, individual educational women leaders’ past and present historics). It is here that Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, which attempts to steer a ‘third path’ between the sociological Charybdis of structure and the Scylla of agency, provides an extremely useful conceptual tool for such an exploration. It is this attempt to strike a balance between structure and agency, in particular, through the interplay of field and habitus in terms of the ways in which the individual women interviewed formed identities as leaders within the specific field of practice of higher education and realised a sense of their own agency, that I find most productive for my research.

Moreover, Bourdieu is the only theorist I have come across whose concepts of habitus, bodily hexis and symbolic violence have assisted me in making sense of the constitutive nature of the categories of gender, class and ethnicity, that is, how they
work together to form a fundamental core of self identity that is enacted at both the physical as well as mental level in the individual women leaders interviewed.

**Defining Field and Capital**

Bourdieu's concept of the field is drawn from Max Weber and seeks to analyse the ways in which Western European societies historically have developed 'in terms of the differentiation of distinct spheres or fields of practice, each involving specific forms and combinations of capital and value' (Thompson 1991, p. 25). Bourdieu has defined the field as

>a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies (Bourdieu 1998a, pp. 40-41).

As a 'metaphor for a social site where people and institutions engage in particular activities', rather than a 'real or concrete space', Bourdieu's field

exists only relationally, only as a set of possibilities, or a series of moves; as the site of particular forms of capital and particular narratives; and, especially, as the site of regulatory and coercive discourses (Webb et al. 2002, p. 68).

Bourdieu uses the language of the market to define power within the field. He argues that there are four key kinds of power or capital which individuals bring to a field: economic capital ('which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights'); cultural capital ('which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications'); social capital ('made up of social obligations ... “connections”') (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243); and symbolic capital ('the prestige and honour that is associated with the acquisition of one or more of the other forms of capital once it has been perceived and recognised as legitimate by others') (Connolly 2000, pp. 124-125). There is an unequal distribution of capital within the dominant, middle and lower-classes and also within different 'factions' within a class (for example, intellectuals versus factory owners in the 'dominant class'). As
Bourdieu notes, 'different fields ... are the site of a struggle of interests, between agents or institutions unequally endowed in specific capital' (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 111). Bourdieu observes that it is 'the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time ... (which) ... represents the immanent structures of the social world' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 242).

**Linking Field and Habitus**

What of the individuals who compete and struggle within these specific social sites? The habitus is an attempt by Bourdieu to surmount the sociological dichotomy between subjectivism, in which social practices 'can be understood solely in terms of individual decision-making', and objectivism, in which the practice of individuals is solely 'determined by supra-individual “structures”', such as class (Jenkins 1992, p. 74).

In an interview with Loic Wacquant, Bourdieu defines the habitus as

> the product of a practical sense ... of a socially constituted ‘sense of the game’ ... (which) ... posits that objects of knowledge are constructed and not passively recorded ... the principle of this construction is habitus, the system of structured and structuring dispositions which is constituted by practice and constantly aimed at the practical – as opposed to cognitive – functions ... when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself as ‘fish in water’ and takes the world about itself for granted (Wacquant 1989, p. 43).

The role of the habitus is crucial in the concept of the field, as the 'habitus realises itself, becomes active only in relation to a field ... the same habitus can lead to very different practices and stances depending on the state of the field' (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 116). Bourdieu also notes that '(f)or a field to work ... there must be stakes, and people ready to play the game, equipped with the habitus which enables them to know and recognise the immanent laws of the game, the stakes and so on' (Bourdieu 1984b, p. 110). Each field produces its own specific habitus, its own ‘(a)ction guided by a feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 11). As Jenkins explains, '((e)ach field, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance which is both the product and producer of the habitus}
which is specific and appropriated to the field” (Jenkins 1992, p. 84). Bourdieu also points to the dialectical relationship between a field and the habitus, for

the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field … On the other side … habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world … endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one’s energy (Wacquant 1989, p. 44).

In other words, in playing for the stakes of a particular field, agents and/or institutions must be convinced that such stakes are worth attaining, otherwise there would be no point in continuing to ‘play the game’.

I find the twin concepts of habitus and field particularly helpful in my analysis of the interviews conducted with the six individual women educational leaders. Each of the women clearly possessed a sufficient practical sense – a socially constituted sense of the game as it is played in the higher education field – as witnessed by their success in gaining positions of leadership within this site of practice. They were able to amass a sufficient amount of cultural and symbolic capital to position themselves in what appeared to be for at least some of the women, a relatively dominant position within the field. Yet, what also came through clearly in the interviews is how intrinsic to their fundamental sense of identity – their individual habitus – their gender and original class and ethnic origins remained. As Bourdieu notes, habitus ‘is history turned into nature’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 78) and each woman carried their gendered, classed and raced histories into the academic field and inscribed upon their bodies or bodily hexis. For example, Suzanne, a professor, was from a highly Westernised, middle-class, Chinese origin background with tertiary-educated parents. Her father’s mantra when they were growing was the importance of assimilating or ‘fitting in’ to the Eastern and Western cultures respectively in which they had grown up. Hence, her individual habitus meshed to a certain degree with the middle-class, Anglo-Australian masculinist habitus of the academic world that she encountered in Australia as an adult. Although having to deal with racism and sexism in her working environment, she nonetheless felt that senior staff welcomed her ideas for change at a time of major restructuring and that she was being groomed for promotion. As the only middle-class origin academic who had tertiary-educated
parents, Suzanne’s experience in the academic field was to a certain extent that of being a ‘fish in water’ – of encountering a social world whose rules of the game and inner logic were to a degree embodied within the individual habitus she brought to the field.

The habitus is not only about the specific characteristics of the higher education field, but needs to be placed in the wider context of the broader sets of social relationships which inform the ways in which this field operates. There may be specific sets of gender, raced and classed rules within the field of higher education which confer legitimacy upon particular players, but the inner logic of this field’s practices is always informed by wider sets of social relationships of gender, class and ethnicity. This is where Fairclough’s work on the hegemonising role of the media in contemporary Western society is crucial in its recognition that these social relationships are, in turn, partly constituted and circulated by media discourses which work to form part of a gendered, raced and classed representational regime. It is this regime that informs the more specific habitus of individual fields.

**Symbolic Silences? Gender, Ethnicity and Class in Relation to Fields**

The preceding discussion raises the issue of where gender, ethnicity and class fit within the notions of field and habitus. Critics have argued that Bourdieu has under-theorised gender and ethnicity, placing class instead as the primary site of social inequality (Moi 2000, p. 329). Toril Moi, in an attempt to theorise gender using Bourdieu’s concepts, argues that gender, like class and possibly ethnicity, ‘is part of a field, but that this field is the general social field, rather than any specific field of gender’ (Moi 2000, p. 329). Moi contends that gender behaves like social class in Bourdieu’s theories, in its ‘chameleon capacity for change in value and importance according to its specific social context’. Just as social class ‘infiltrates and influences every other category’, being part of the “‘whole social field” (which) ... underpins or structures all other fields’, so too does gender and more than likely, ethnicity (Moi 2000, p. 329). Moi observes that this formulation of gender is ‘not unproblematic’. For example, what of the relationship between gender and class? Should ethnicity be theorised in a similar fashion? Moi argues that in order to avoid the dogmatism associated with asserting the primacy of one oppression over another, it is more
fruitful ‘to see both class and gender as belonging to the “whole social field” without specifying a fixed and unchangeable hierarchy between them’. This would allow us ‘to seize the complex variability of these social factors as well as the way in which they influence and modify each other in different social contexts’ (Moi 2000, p. 329). Importantly, Moi also notes that

gender is always a socially variable entity ... which carries different amounts of symbolic capital in different contexts. Insofar as gender never appears in a ‘pure’ field of its own, there is no such thing as pure ‘gender capital’. The capital at stake is always the symbolic capital relevant for the specific field under examination. We may nevertheless start from the assumption that under current social conditions and in most contexts maleness functions as positive and femaleness as negative symbolic capital (Moi 2000, p. 330).

In terms of extending Bourdieu’s concepts to the field of ethnicity, Paul Connolly has argued that there has been little work done in sociology on how ‘discourses on “race”, manifest at various levels of the social formation, come to articulate with each other in their reproduction and the contradictions that emerge from this’ (Connolly 2000, p. 122). Connolly notes that racist discourses, ‘do not simply exist outside of the individual but also come to shape their sense of self’ and that the concept of the habitus ‘provides the medium through which we can conceptualise the way in which various discourses, including “race”, come to impact upon the individual and develop a ... “capillary form of existence”’ (Connolly 2000, pp. 122-123). Connolly argues for the need to extend the concepts of capital, field and habitus and that in so doing, it can be seen that

certain subordinate groups come to develop and value their own forms of ... capital which are ... at variance with the broader forms of class-related capital. How and when these forms of capital become significant depends upon the specific context – that is, the particular field – in which individuals are located (Connolly 2000, p. 126).

As an example of his argument, Connolly cites his own research into ‘certain black cultural forms ... within the field of masculine peer group relations among working-class children’ (Connolly 2000, p. 126). He makes the very useful point that the different forms of capital are not only based on categories of class, but of ethnicity, gender, sexuality etcetera and that a conceptualisation of capital and fields which simply assumes masculinist values and male-dominated fields as the basis of all
norms and values, will fail to recognise the different values placed upon capitals depending upon one’s class, ethnicity and gender and the specific field in which they are situated at the time. He observes that ‘“race” is not simply “added on” as just another variable’ to class, gender, age or education, but ‘fundamentally constituted through and analysed in its articulation with them’ (Connolly 2000, p. 128).

Connolly’s work illustrates how Bourdieu’s concepts can be extended and applied to the processes of identity formation in contemporary Western individuals and groups. It illustrates the importance of taking the particular context or field into account when undertaking research and of how the notion of capital can be extended to encompass categories such as gender and ethnicity. For example, in my own study, it is the still dominant forms of heterosexual, majority ethnic and middle to upper-class masculinity, and the positive capital associated with them, that remain the legitimating forces within the tertiary education field. However, there appears to be a struggle for legitimacy going on in the academic field as a whole, in that the previously negative capital which the six women leaders bring to the field – their gender, their largely working-class backgrounds and their mainly minority ethnic or Aboriginal cultures – appears to assume in some of the institutional contexts or specific fields, a positive capital they had previously not possessed (Refer to Chapters Six to Eleven).

Toril Moi’s point that, ‘Bourdiciuan categories are always relational, always determined by their fluctuating relationship to other categories’ (Moi 2000, p. 331) is relevant here, for as she notes

one interesting consequence of this is that we cannot assume that femaleness will carry equal amounts of negative capital throughout a woman’s life or in all social fields ... although a woman rich in symbolic capital may lose some legitimacy because of her gender, she still has more than enough capital left to make her impact on the field (Moi 2000, pp. 331-332).

This point is particularly useful in my research for it helps to explain why it is that in certain contexts or fields, being a woman appears to bring with it less negative capital than in other contexts. For example, Lauren, an English-born academic of working-class background, notes that in her previous job with a scientific
organisation, the amount of social and intellectual capital she was able to amass within her work was sufficiently high so as to render her femaleness and working-class background apparently negligible, despite the sexist, middle-class habitus of her organisation. However, when Lauren took on her position at a provincial university, she did not carry with her the same amount of social and intellectual capital and the negative capital associated with her femaleness and working-class background, rose significantly.

**Embodying Women’s Identity: Habitus and Bodily Hexis**

Bourdieu argues that the concept of habitus as ‘social life incorporated, and thus individuated’ is an attempt to transcend the ‘canonical opposition...’ between individual and society’ (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 31). His emphasis upon incorporation raises a crucial aspect of his theory – that habitus chiefly is embodied through bodily hexis, the ‘deportment ... manner and style in which actors “carry themselves”: stance, gait, gesture, etc.’ (Jenkins 1992, p. 75) and that this hexis itself is

political mythology realised, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking. The opposition between male and female is realised in posture, in the gestures and movements of the body ... (Bourdieu 1990b, pp. 69-70)

This is where I find Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus and the way it is embodied in a form of bodily hexis particularly useful in terms of gender relations. His articulation of the politics of the gendered body and the ways in which the ‘socially produced body is thus necessarily also a political body, or rather an embodied politics’, is an extremely powerful concept. It picks up on the ways in which the most seemingly trivial activities (teaching children ‘how to move, dress, and eat’) are ‘thoroughly political, in that they impose on them an unspoken understanding of legitimate ways to (re)present their bodies to themselves and others’ (Moi 2000, p. 324). In relation to my research, it provides me with some important conceptual tools in analysing the ways in which the women leaders interviewed were subject to a form of symbolic violence through the constant problematisation of their bodies in terms of their appearance, the way in which they spoke, their bodily movements, the
way they occupied space, despite some of the women’s attempts to adjust their
habitus to the middle-class, masculinist intellectual field of which they were part.
The focus upon the women’s bodies acted as a powerful means of keeping women in
their place by visibilising women’s bodies at the expense of the masculine hexis. As
Moi notes, the ‘body – and its apparel such as clothing, gestures, make-up and so on
– becomes a kind of constant reminder ... of sociosexual power relations’ (Moi
2000, p. 325).

Why Do They Put Up with It? Exploring Symbolic Violence

In the preceding discussion of bodily hexis, I made reference to Bourdieu’s concept
of symbolic violence. The term is used by Bourdieu as a means of explaining the
way in which dominant power relations within a society are experienced as
legitimate by the members of that society (Jenkins 1992, p. 104). Bourdieu defines it as

a violence exercised ... in formal terms, and paying due respect to forms ... (it) ... allows
force to be fully exercised while disguising its true nature as force and gaining recognition,
approval and acceptance by dint of the fact that it can present itself under the appearances of
universalism – that of reason or morality (Bourdieu 1990a, pp. 84-85).

Bourdieu argues that it is through ‘pedagogic action’, such as the influences of the
family, peer groups and institutions such as schools, that the cultural arbitrary and
simultaneously, the social power relations which underlie ‘its own operation’, are
imposed (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, pp. xi, 10). Such action involves both the
silencing or exclusion of ideas as unthinkable or unsayable, as well as the positive
reinforcement of ideas which reflect ‘the interests of the dominant groups or classes’
(Jenkins 1992, p. 105). Importantly, Bourdieu contends, it is through the symbolic
violence of such ‘pedagogic action’ and the influence of pedagogic authorities, such
as parents and teachers, that the foundations of the habitus are lain. Pedagogic work
produces over many years, from infancy onwards, the durable and stable dispositions
of the habitus, which in turn ‘generate “correct” responses to the symbolic stimuli
emanating from agencies endowed with pedagogic authority’. This pedagogic work
is a ‘substitute for physical constraint and coercion’, hence, the term, ‘symbolic
violence’ (Jenkins 1992, p. 107).
Bourdieu argues that the gender order is the most fundamental opposition in relations of domination and it is enacted most powerfully and symbolically through the body. He observes that

the fundamental oppositions of the social order, whether between the dominant and the dominated ... are always sexually overdetermined, as if the body language of sexual domination and submission had provided the fundamental principles of both the body language and the verbal language of social domination and submission (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 72).

Bourdieu identifies women's habitus as the production of the 'symbolic violence that oppresses them' (Moi 2000; p. 327) and contends that this violence is embodied through their bodily hexis. Toril Moi notes that:

for Bourdieu ... sexual oppression is above all an effect of symbolic violence. As such, the traditional relationship between the sexes is structured by a habitus which makes male power appear legitimate even to women ... Insofar as symbolic violence works, it produces women who share the very same habitus which serves to oppress them ... (Moi 2000, pp. 325, 330).

I find the concept provides a particularly powerful explanation of the almost obsessive attention to women's bodies, voices and physical attire (and the corresponding deafening silence in regard to men's bodies) which saturates the interviews I conducted with women educational leaders. In addition, it was a generative concept in terms of capturing the subtle ways in which the two broadsheets I analysed, selectively emphasised particular discourses of women's leadership in ways that made them more hegemonic and commonsensical within the broader representational regime of societal understanding about women's leadership.

However, where I part company with Bourdieu, is the deterministic spin which he appears to place on underlying structures of power relations which symbolic violence perpetuates, at the expense of both individual and collective agency and resistance. Toril Moi herself notes that Bourdieu's 'gloomy' analysis of gender is contradicted by the collective action of the feminist movement which has challenged such 'presupposition(s)' (Moi 2000, p. 327).
Who Dominates Whom? The Media and Politics as Fields of Power

Why is the concept of field relevant to my research? As noted in Webb et al. (2002, p. 66), ‘if we want to make sense of human practices ... we first need to make sense of the field(s) in which they are played out’. The three fields of the media, politics and higher education have been characterised as ‘fields of power’, that is, ‘dominant fields’, whose power arises from their ‘relationship to other dominant fields, and from ... (their) ... position as part of the metafield – the field of power – which acts on other fields and influences their practices’ (Webb et al. 2002, pp. 85, 87).

Bourdieu contends that much of the importance of the media in contemporary society is due to their ‘de facto monopoly on the large-scale informational instruments of production and diffusion of information’ which leads, in turn, to controlling the ‘access of ordinary citizens ... (and) ... other cultural producers ... to “public space”’ (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 46). This access allows journalists to ‘impose on the whole of society their vision of the world, their conception of problems, and their point of view’ (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 47). Hence, because the ‘journalistic field is based on a set of shared assumptions and beliefs ... that influence what counts as news’, this acts as an invisible form of censorship (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 47). In addition, another form of censorship, characterised by the homogenisation of ‘journalistic products’ and the ‘circular circulation of information’, arises due to the competition which ‘occurs between journalists or newspapers subject to identical pressures and opinion polls, and with the same basic cast of commentators’ (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 23).

Bourdieu’s discussion of the field of journalism, however, points to the increasing overlap occurring between the fields of politics and the media in two respects. Firstly, like Fairclough, he notes the mediatisation of the political field, contending that

political success increasingly depends on adapting to the demands of the journalistic field, which becomes a ‘caucus’ increasingly responsible for ‘making’ both politicians and their reputations (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 5).
Secondly, he points to the 'ambiguous position' journalists 'occupy ... in the political world, in which they are very influential actors but not fully-fledged members' (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 4). Such a position allows them, however, 'to offer politicians vital symbolic support that they can't get for themselves' (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 4). In Bourdieu's terminology, the increasing reliance of the field of politics upon the field of the media, points to the way in which a field can be transformed from being semi-autonomous (that is, above the dictates of the market, or other fields) to an increasingly heteronomous state, that is, subject to the vagaries of other fields such as the media.

In relation to my research, this is demonstrated in the way in which discourses of women's leadership were largely dominated in the two broadsheets by the field of mainstream politics. The discourses from the field of politics were given additional capital by the fact that the majority of them were featured in the hard news section of the broadsheets. The fields of the arts, entertainment, higher education and Indigenous organisations in which the Aboriginal and minority ethnic women were represented were given far less coverage in comparison. As a field which is increasingly 'subject to the decrees of the market and the opinion poll' and thus 'is much more dependent on external forces ... on demand' (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 53), the journalistic field selects much of its news based on the principles of conflict, division and (often media-generated) controversy. Conflict sells newspapers and hence the attraction by the media to the field of politics, in that both fields share a similar inner logic with the Westminster system of politics based on an oppositional and adversarial mode of behaviour. The congruence between the two fields dictates what is selected as news in the sub field of newspaper journalism in particular.

In relation to representations of women's leadership, it was noticeable that many of the articles about majority ethnic and Aboriginal women leaders were centred around the discourses of conflict, division and controversy. These representations had particular material effects for the women concerned and were both gendered and raced. For example, stories based on two Aboriginal women leaders – Doctor Pat O'Sharc (a magistrate) and Lowitja O'Donoghue (former chairperson of the Federal Government's Council for Reconciliation) – made up the majority of articles collected on Aboriginal women leaders in 2001. Both women were featured
prominently because of two media-generated controversies. The first was in relation to comments O'Shane had made in an ABC television interview after the chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) had been alleged by *The Age* newspaper to have raped a number of women many years ago. In one part of the interview, O'Shane made the observation that some women made up stories about sexual assault. In the ensuing controversy both federal government politicians and feminists roundly criticised O'Shane for her comments. In the second story featuring Lowitja O'Donoghue, a tabloid journalist and prominent right-wing commentator, Andrew Bolt, alleged that O'Donoghue had 'confessed' in an interview with him that she had not been a member of the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal people as she had previously led people to believe.

Both stories were featured prominently in the two broadsheets for a number of weeks. The way in which the media chose to give prominent coverage and a particularly raced news angle to both stories illustrates the increasing mediatisation of the field of politics and the shared rules of the game in both fields in terms of conflict and an adversarial approach. Such stories also gave succour to a conservative discourse of raced politics which the Federal Government controversially had been proclaiming at the time. The Pat O'Shane story also exemplified the active shaping and construction of a preferred discourse of Aboriginal women's leadership which some individual Aboriginal women leaders then felt compelled to address. As such, this kind of media representation operates as a form of symbolic violence.

**The Media and Feminist Fields**

The ways in which feminism as a field overlaps with that of the media cannot be ignored. For example, the prevalence of the mediatised discourse of postfeminism, though it may be read as evidence of a socially conservative backlash (Faludi, 1991), ironically connotes the power of feminism as a subject location against which postfeminism needs to position itself. Media representations of women politicians frequently mobilise feminism as a discourse, with journalist and feminist researcher Julia Baird arguing that feminism is one of five key frames Australian print.

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6 Both broadsheets portrayed Pat O'Shane as a controversial figure whose comments were out of line. Other Aboriginal women leaders quoted as contrasting sources, were discursively constructed as conciliatory, mainstream figures whose opinions, by implication, should be preferred.
journalists have used in the past three decades in discursively locating women politicians (Baird 2004, p. 262). A number of the six female interviewees utilise feminist discourses in order to conceptualise the ways in which they had been embodied respectively by the media and academia as an institution. The emergence of the ‘celebrity feminist’, one who is both ‘feminist and media-savvy’ is a marker of the ambivalent relationship between the print media and feminism as a movement (Lilburn et al. 2000, p. 335).

One of the key characteristics of third wave feminism is its ‘embeddedness in popular culture’. It is this overlap in the cultural field that renders it vulnerable to commodification and appropriation within the postmodern media (Shugart et al. 2001, pp. 2, 9-10). However, it also signals the dialectical ways in which feminism as a field has both infiltrated and in turn been infiltrated by the media. As Catherine Lumby – a third wave feminist, academic and media commentator – notes in relation to the increasing emphasis within the media on soft news/domestic or private sphere issues, it is the intersection of the two fields of media and feminism that has forced this ‘re-examination of the foundations of our public sphere’ (Lumby 2000, p. 53).

**Whither the Ivory Tower? Exploring Academia as a Field**

How are mediatised discourses of women’s leadership read in the academic field in which the six women leaders work? The intellectual and academic fields, Bourdieu has contended, remain ‘one of the few relatively autonomous ... fields that also carr(y) (at least in France) considerable cultural capital and authority’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 19). As possessors of cultural capital – ‘a subordinate form of capital’ – university professors are on the ‘subordinate pole of the field of power’, but equally, as ‘holders of an institutionalised form of cultural capital, which guarantees them a bureaucratic career and a regular income, they are opposed to writers and academics’ (Bourdieu 1988, p. 36).

Bourdieu argues that one of the chief characteristics of the academic field and of academics, is the scholastic view, that is,

someone who can play seriously because his or her state ... assures her the means to do so, that is, free time, outside the urgency of a practical situation ... the disposition ... to invest
oneself in the futile stakes ... which are generated in the scholastic worlds ... (Bourdieu 1998b, p. 128).

The freedom to ‘play seriously’ in the academic field is also allied with the disparate ways in which academics work to maintain their position as dominant in the field through a series of strategies that ‘generat(e) and maintain... a distance between academic staff and students’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 129). Such strategies include the academic discourse academics use and the physical layout of the environment, such as the set up of a lecture hall in which the lecturer is the central figure (Bourdieu et al., 1994). These kinds of material conditions ‘“turn... you” ... into an intellectual ... produc(ing) a particular kind of body and set of dispositions and values, so that the agent comes to feel ... “like a fish in water”’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 18); (Wacquant 1989, p. 43).

However, how pertinent to women academics in the field is Bourdieu’s construction of academic habitus? Researchers have argued that the habitus of the Western academic field is ‘profoundly gendered’, operating as ‘sites of men’s specific organisational or departmental cultures’ and as ‘incredibly hierarchical institutions’ with a ‘homosociality of management’ that is endemic (Hearn 2001, pp. 72, 74). Brooks notes that institutions of higher education ‘are masculinist institutions ... (with) ... limited and rigid career patterns for academic women’ (Brooks 1997, p. 1). Ramazanoglu observes that the structure within higher education, ‘reproduce(s) a patriarchal order which constructs academic women as actual or potential threats to this order, and which acts to subordinate women academics’ (Ramazanoglu 1987, p. 61). Feminist researchers have also pointed to the raced and classed habitus of the academic field (refer to Chapter Two).

On the other hand, it is not that simple. The greatest stronghold of white and to a certain extent, Indigenous Australian feminism, is within the academic field. The core values of the scholastic disposition, that is, rational enquiry, democracy, egalitarianism and autonomy, form the key foundations upon which Western academia has been based (Yeatman 1995, p. 196). By their very nature, these values are Western and patriarchal. However, they also provide the conceptual tools upon which many feminist and postcolonial critiques have drawn (Yeatman 1995, p. 196) including the justification for equity strategies within universities as institutions.
Hence, feminists are paradoxically positioned within academia as ‘change agents’ who may both use the master’s tools to dismantle his house, while simultaneously benefiting from the very strategies and values they critique (Yeatman 1995, p. 196). This is not a one way relationship however, for feminism as a movement itself has produced its own tools, including discourses that are mobilised in academia. For example, four out of the six interviewees were strong feminist educators who also worked in the fields of politics and the media. A variety of feminist discourses provided the trajectories which both worked to shape their professional habitus and inform their practices within their different fields of activity. The fit between the fields was at times strained with, for example, feminist rules of the game not always fitting the institutional field of academia in which the women were variously located. It was this tension which often led to a number of these women feeling like ‘fish’ out of ‘water’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43) in their academic institutions. For example, Ruth, an Indigenous feminist academic, commented that she felt more comfortable in the field of politics than in academia, despite the latter institution’s strong policy commitment to equity.

In Chapter One, I noted that the transformation of the Australian academic field over the past fifteen years has led to major shifts in power relations within the field which have had differing implications for both women and men and for different groups of women. For example, Suzanne, whose middle-class origins allied with the intellectual capital she brings to her university as an overseas-born scholar of international repute, the restructure of her university offers opportunities for her to demonstrate her management skills. Senior management, she notes, looks favourably upon her. The shifting degree of positive or negative symbolic capital the interviewees bring to their universities is linked to the broader habitus of the field of academia – a habitus which Jeff Hearn describes in the wake of successive Australian governments’ restructuring of the field as

mini-patriarchies but in different and more complex ways; they are much less collegial, less patriarchal and less fraternal. Women’s voices are heard more, are less easy for men to ignore … managerialism … and the intensification of male management … may both affirm … existing patriarchal relationships in universities, and yet also create the spaces for some women to do more management … in different ways (Hearn 2001, pp. 83-84).
Hearn and Bourdieu’s observations of the academic field suggest the way in which the field of academia has a specific habitus which is masculinised and middle to upper-class, for it is only these groups who have traditionally had the money to purchase the freedom to play seriously, ‘outside the urgency of a practical situation’ (Bourdieu 1998b, p. 128).

O’Hearn’s comments also signal the way in which Bourdieu’s conception of the scholastic disposition is played out very differently for women leaders. Simone, an interviewee who is a professor and of Greek, working-class/peasant origins, muses at one point as to whether she would ‘get on better’ by disguising the threat of her gender, through ‘let(ting) … (my hair) … go white, cut it, wear flat shoes, be as … unwomanly as I can’. The six women leaders who noted the ways in which university leadership remained largely constructed by the habitus and practices of middle-class masculinity echo Simone’s dilemma. In addition, however, the five women leaders who were of minority ethnic or Aboriginal origin noted the ways in which the habitus of university leadership was founded on the cultural assumption of majority ethnicity. Hence, the women leaders’ habituses clashed with the cultural legitimacy that being male, majority ethnic and middle-class carried within the broader habitus of the field of academia. In addition, the representational regime of women’s leadership, derived as it is largely from representations of women politicians, led to a form of symbolic violence operating upon the individual women leaders who were interviewed. The ways in which they chose to represent themselves were very different from the broader representational regime against which they were constantly measured. Moreover, their individual habituses clashed with the broader habitus of an academic field which still largely confers legitimacy primarily upon an Anglo-Australian, middle-class masculinist mode of leadership.

**Conclusion**

The habitus of individual academic women leaders cannot be considered in isolation from the raced, classed and gendered logic of practice which forms the habitus of the academic field – and the ways in which a number of the women interviewees drew upon feminism as a discourse and site of practice to inform their professional identities and practices within both these fields. Nor can considerations of individual
academic women's leadership be divorced from an understanding of the ways in which representations of women's leadership drawn largely from the mediated field of mainstream middle-class politics may feed into and hegemonise broader power relations of gender, class and ethnicity and underpin academia as a specific field of practice located within the broader societal field. In other words, organisations such as universities need to be viewed as contested sites of meaning in whose symbolic realm, specific societal discourses of women's leadership may permeate and construct women's professional identities in complex ways (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004).

In Chapter Five I will explore more specifically the media's symbolic power to 'mark, assign and classify' women leaders (Hall 1997, p. 259). In Chapters Six to Eleven I will explore the materiality of this symbolic power in terms of the six academic women leaders whom I interviewed. However, before doing so, I will turn to a discussion in Chapter Four of the specific methods I used to collect my data.
Chapter Four

Methods of Analysis: Representing Versus Re-Presenting

This thesis examines three key sets of data:

- My subject location as a feminist researcher from a hybrid majority and minority ethnic, working-class background.

- How a small number of women leaders self-represent through interview; and

- How Australian women leaders are represented through the print media.

The rationale that underpins the collection of the data is based on the distinction that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak draws between representation as, on the one hand, "speaking for" groups, and on the other hand, 'involving interpretation'. The latter is identified by Spivak as 're-presentation ... thus all representations are based on interpretation' (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xxii); (Spivak 1988a, p. 275); (Spivak, 1988b). Spivak's distinction between the two different dimensions of representation is a crucial one for my thesis. It captures how media representations of women leaders speak for them in ways, which they may not choose. Consequently, such representations potentially inflict a form of 'epistemic violence' (Spivak 1988a, p. 280) upon women leaders via the 'exercise of symbolic power through representational practices' (Hall 1997, p. 259).

The interviews with women leaders from the tertiary education field, and to a certain degree, my own autobiographical location, attempt a form of 're-presentation' or "self-presentation", namely, distinguishing 'between how one represents oneself through interpretation as opposed to how one is represented by another' (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. xxii). The distinction is a particularly important one as it draws on the key definition of discourse which I adopt in this thesis, that is, one which distinguishes between 'being subjected by a discourse' (that is, the 'ideal effects of discourse') – and being subjected to it' (with the implication of resistance that accompanies it) (Clarke and Newman 1997, p. 54). In particular, the interviews with
women leaders attempt to relocate them as the site of the ‘mastering gaze’ of the media and instead, render them as ‘subjects of their own gaze’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 2). Such an act is, as Moreton-Robinson argues, an intensely politically one, for it utilises the lived experiences of women leaders – their subjectivity – as a site of resistance. It is an attempt to produce ‘subjugated knowledges’ about leadership which may challenge and disrupt the majority ethnic, masculinist and middle-class gaze of the two broadsheets and academia as a field (Moreton-Robinson 2000, pp. 2-3).

**Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method of Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis forms both the method by which I analyse the interview and media data and provides the key methodology upon which this method is based. As I have discussed at length in the preceding chapter the methodological foundations of my research, of which critical discourse analysis is a major tool, I will now turn to a brief summary only of critical discourse analysis as a method.

Critical discourse analysis as a method has been defined as

(a) contemporary approach to the study of language and discourses in social institutions. Drawing on poststructuralist discourse theory and critical linguistics, it focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts ... (Luke 1997, p. 50).

The method provides a tool by which the ‘signifying agen(cy) of the media, its symbolic power ’to mark, assign and classify ... to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain “regime of representation”’, can be examined (Hall 1997, p. 259). Hence, I have adopted this method as a key means of analysing both the media data and the interview transcripts. It assists me in exploring the major role the media plays in developing hegemonic notions around women and leadership, drawn largely from the majority ethnic sphere of mainstream Australian politics, which then feed into and construct the broader discursive societal framework through which women leaders in the tertiary education sphere are viewed.

As a method, critical discourse analysis draws upon ‘an ensemble of techniques for the study of textual practice and language use as social and cultural practices’ (Fairelough, 1992); (Luke 1997, p. 53). It utilises three ‘theoretical orientations',
including Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological concepts and neo-Marxist cultural theories. These are that:

- Discourse operates laterally across local institutional sites, and that texts have a constructive function in forming up and shaping human identities and actions;

- Actual textual practices and interactions with texts become “embodied” forms of “cultural capital” with exchange value in particular social fields; and

- These discourses are produced and used within political economies, and … thus produce and articulate broader ideological interests, social formations, and movements within those fields … (Luke 1997, p. 53).

Hence, my chief method of analysis is through an examination of both the dominant and submerged discourses, the silences and the gaps in both the interview and media texts I have gathered. It is based on the premise that both

discourse and language in everyday life may function ideologically … to make asymmetrical relations of power and particular textual portrayals of social and biological worlds appear given, commonsensical, and ‘natural’ (Luke 1997, p. 54).

The definition of discourse in the preceding quotation, is underpinned by the recognition that ‘language and discourse are not transparent or neutral means for describing or analysing the world’, but rather that they ‘enable and delimit fields of knowledge and inquiry, and … govern what can be said, thought, and done within those fields’ (Luke 1997, p. 51). In addition, ‘writing, texts, and discourses are constructive phenomena, shaping the identities and practices of human subjects’ (Luke 1997, p. 51). In this sense, critical discourse analysis is a crucial method in understanding the media’s role in producing hegemonic representations of women’s leadership drawn largely upon the mainstream political field, that ‘delimit’ and govern what is sayable, thinkable and doable about women’s leadership in the tertiary education field (Luke 1997, p. 51).

The study of both dominant discourses of women’s leadership and the gaps and silences in both the media and interview texts, allows for an understanding of firstly, the ways in which such discourses ‘constitute … ubiquitous ways of knowing,
valuing, and experiencing’ leadership as a potentially gendered, raced and classed construct (Luke 1997, p. 55). Secondly, it assists in understanding how these discourses ‘can be used for the assertion of power and knowledge’, in particular, in exploring how majority ethnic, middle-class forms of leadership may be perpetuated as the naturalised centre from which all other constructions of leadership are evaluated (Luke 1997, p. 55). Thirdly, and most crucially in my work, it can be used ‘for purposes of resistance and critique’, that is, as a way of rupturing ‘given, commonsensical and “natural” understandings of what constitutes leadership (Luke 1997, p. 55) and of producing ‘subjugated knowledges’ about different women’s ways of leading (Moreton-Robinson 2000, pp. 2-3).

First Set of Data: Writing Autobiographically: My Location as Researcher

I noted in the introduction to this chapter that the interview data was an attempt to produce ‘subjugated knowledges’ about leadership that contest the colonising gaze of the media. In addition to the interviews and media analysis of representations of women leaders, a third set of data was produced, that is, the autobiographical writing that commenced this thesis. As a feminist researcher ‘concerned with the politics of difference’, I have attempted to ‘pursue identity politics within frameworks which understand power and the nature of domination’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 105). In so doing, I have attempted through my autobiographical writing, media analysis and interviews to ‘contest colonised subjectivities ... “by contesting the subject/object relationship ... inscribed within the discursive order of foundationalist science”’ (Yeatman 1991, p. 10). In turn, my own subject location as a researcher, implicated within such ‘colonised subjectivities’, needs to be held up for scrutiny. Hence, I commenced this thesis with a partial retelling of my own story. I noted in my introduction that the first reason I told my story was because it was the springboard from which this current research began. The power of representations to produce within asymmetrical relations of power, either a knowing subject or an object which is known was not simply an intellectual theory for me but had been my day-to-day reality, first as a child and then as an educational leader. It was and remains my reality as a majority ethnic, middle-class woman. I have been both object and subject, the privileged knower and the known.

Georgina Tsolidis notes that
we may hold dear a social location constructed as particularly oppressed because it provides a sense of moral if not epistemological privilege. In the business of transformation, oppressive locations have a particular currency (Tsolidis 2001, p. 108).

I did not cite my personal history in the opening chapter of this thesis because I wished to claim my ‘personal experience as a privileged source of authority’ (Ang 1993, p. 3). Nor did I wish to posit a spurious empathy with Indigenous or minority ethnic women (‘I grew up as a working-class Jewish girl from a single-parent background – I know what it is to suffer, too’), an action which simply becomes another ‘form of appropriation’, reinforcing ‘the security of the white point of view’ as the central reference from which ‘the other is made same’ (Ang 1995, p. 61). Finally, I did not wish to take part in the politically dangerous gamesmanship of creating ‘hierarchies of oppression’ (Tsolidis, 2001). As an Australian of majority and minority ethnic origins from a working-class background, I stand betwixt and between ethnicities and classes, a hybrid, inhabiting a ‘complex, “third space…” which potentially may be the site ‘for the development of dynamic, hybrid cultural identities and practices’ (Luke and Luke 2000, p. 66).

Yet, despite my hybridity and childhood origins, my contemporary reality is that I benefit every day from my position as a majority ethnic, middle-class woman in Australia. It permeates my position as a feminist researcher and saturates my day-to-day life. Hence, the second reason I commenced the thesis with my autobiography was because I was attempting to problematise my stance as an majority ethnic, middle-class feminist researcher, to lay bare the reality that I was writing from a subject position that was inevitably subjective, partial and privileged. It was to acknowledge the ‘partialness’ of the ‘master discourse’ of majority ethnic, middle-class Australian feminism and the ways in which I have been and continue to be, privileged by such a discourse (Ang 1995, p. 73). It was not to make a claim for guilt or victimhood, but an attempt to disrupt the naturalised ways of knowing a subject that underpin minority ethnic, commonsense views of the world.

Jen Ang has argued that writing autobiographically potentially allows the writer to commit ‘a political act’, one which can be utilised ‘as a strategy to open up new speaking trajectories, the articulation of new lines of theorising’ and which
demonstrates the ‘indeterminacy’ of ethnicity ‘as a signifier for “identity”’ (Ang 1993, p. 4). The second reason she puts forward is that

in the midst of the postmodernist flux of nomadic subjectivities we need to recognise the continuing and continuous operation of ‘fixing’ performed by the categories of race and ethnicity, as well as class, gender, geography etc. on the formation of ‘identity’ (Ang 1993, p. 4).

Ang contends that ethnic categories such as ‘‘Chineseness’’ (or ‘Jewishness’) are not ‘fixed and pregiven, but constantly renegotiated and rearticulated’ (Ang 1993, p. 4). In opening with my autobiography, I attempted to demonstrate that the whiteness of Australian majority ethnicity, like all other ethnic categories, was ‘not a biological category but a political one’. (Ang 1995, p. 69). In so doing, I attempted, in some small way, to provide the ‘necessary condition(s)’ by which my position as a majority ethnic, Australian feminist was ‘deuniversalised’, both in terms of theory and practice (Ang 1995, p. 69).

Second Set of Data: (A) Interviews with Women Leaders from the Primary Education Sector

In June 2000, I interviewed Lisa and Rhoda – respectively the deputy principal and principal of two primary schools in a nearby education region. I used the snowball technique, that is, seeking potential interviewees out by word of mouth. I spoke to three key informants within the New South Wales Department of Education and compiled a list of potential candidates. Lisa’s and Rhoda’s names reoccurred in all three lists. I contacted the two women by phone and in order to gain trust and establish a rapport, I explained that three different colleagues with whom they were familiar had supplied their names to me as valuable potential interviewees in regard to the topic of women and educational leadership.

In conducting both these initial interviews and the subsequent interviews with women academics, I attempted to subvert the subject/object relationship of researcher/researched by the adoption of feminist-based interviewing, which ‘requires openness … (and) … emotional engagement’ (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p. 36). I did so by noting that I was a doctoral student and former deputy principal originally from Victoria, who was conducting a small-scale pilot study examining the
ways in which individual educational women leaders experienced leadership in the region in comparison with the media’s portrayal of women leaders. I provided each woman with a brief verbal explanation of my own personal and professional background and what had brought me to this research. I explained that with their permission the interviews would be tape-recorded and transcribed, that they would be sent copies of the transcripts and that they would then have permission to delete any material within the interview that they did not wish to have analysed. I also explained to them that I would use pseudonyms and would attempt to remove any identifying details about them from the interview transcripts in subsequent publications. I offered to meet the women at any location where they felt comfortable and relaxed. Rhoda asked to be interviewed in her home in the evening and Lisa requested that she be interviewed at her school. Both women were sent a formal letter, which had been approved by Deakin University’s ethics committee outlining the nature of the project, noting that all details would be kept confidential and requesting permission for the interviews to be taped and transcribed. They signed and returned these forms. The interviews were recorded and I simultaneously took notes. After transcription, the two women were sent copies of the transcripts. I contacted both women by phone subsequently and neither requested changes or deletions to the interview material. Interviews with the six university women leaders followed the same procedures.

Both the interviews with Lisa and Rhoda, and the subsequent six interviews followed a semi-structured format. Lisa and Rhoda were asked eight questions (refer to Appendix One). As a result of a preliminary analysis of these interviews, the six tertiary women leaders then were asked six slightly different questions (refer to Appendix Two). All interviews took approximately one to one and a half hours to complete. I consequently phoned and spoke with both Lisa and Rhoda three months after the completion of the interview and asked them to describe their class backgrounds. I explained that class appeared to be a submerged issue which had arisen from their interviews and that I needed to check on their class origins. I made notes of their answers and this data was added to the interview data for further analysis.
Initial Analysis of Rhoda's and Lisa's Interviews

I chose to transcribe the interviews with Rhoda and Lisa myself as a means of becoming familiar with the interview data. In addition, it allowed me to place in bold, any sections of the transcripts that appeared to be of interest or potential significance. I read through both transcripts in order to gain the overall gist of the data and then reread them a second time, underlining dominant discourses within the transcripts and making notes about them in the margins.

The key discourses that emerged for both women included:

1. *Obstacles to career advancement*, including societal obstacles such as sexism towards aspiring women leaders; structural obstacles, such as the requirement by the Education Department that women teachers resign when they had children; and any other obstacles which emerged which did not fit the first two categories.

2. *Positives/Opportunities* that assisted women in their career advancement. These included personal opportunities such as the significance of informal mentors; and organisational changes such as the shift from promotion by seniority to promotion by merit.

*Discourses around women leaders.* These included:

- The 'macho' type/pseudo male
- The pushy/aggressive woman
- Women can have it all (that is, home, career, family)
- The spinster
- The token woman leader
- Women as agents of change
- Superwoman
- Queen Bee
• The bitch

• Women having to work twice as hard to prove themselves as leaders

• Women as embodying a different kind of authority to men – more consultative, less authoritarian

3. **Discourses around male leaders.** These included:

• Males as ‘natural’ authority figures

• Males as compensatory father figures/authority figures to primary school boys who lack a male role model

4. **Other themes** – for example, the massive shifts in rural society that had occurred since both women had started teaching 20 to 30 years ago.

None of the preceding dominant discourses provided any new material in terms of feminist research on educational leadership. However, I decided to reread the transcripts for a third time, looking for marginalised discourses and silences.

Two key silences emerged from this reading. These were:

• **The issue of class differences between women** – Refer to discussion in Chapter One; and

• **The issue of ethnic differences between women** – Refer to discussion in Chapter One.

Although I had been reading feminist educational leadership literature, including Australian works in particular, as part of my data collection, I was unable to recall it discussing ethnicity and class when it came to issues of women’s leadership. A preliminary rereading of the literature suggested that the issue of gender was dominant, yet gender as a category appeared to be largely unproblematised and thus appeared to function in an essentialist way. At best, class and ethnicity seemed to be marginalised discourses within the literature and the underlying and unspoken assumption of much of the research was that leadership was the possession and construct of majority ethnic, middle-class women. Whiteness and middle-classness
appeared to be hegemonic categories, which underpinned much of the discussion in the literature.

Hence, it was as a result of these two key gaps that I located within the pilot study that I firstly determined to carry out a small number of interviews with educational women leaders from diverse class and ethnic origins, in order to explore further this possible silence around the combination of ethnicity, class and gender in women’s leadership. Secondly, I closely reread the feminist educational leadership literature in order to examine whether and how it had dealt with issues of gender, ethnicity and class and expanded my literature search in order to locate any texts that might touch on these issues. Thirdly, I decided that I would collect print media articles on women’s leadership from both the hard and soft sections of the broadsheets. Collecting articles from the hard news section only would potentially exclude women leaders from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds as well as those women leaders involved in a range of non-traditional leadership positions (such as the voluntary sector, arts, the professions etcetera). There is a significant under-representation of female (and male) leaders from minority ethnic and class backgrounds in mainstream Australian politics and business (Sinclair and Wilson 2002, pp. 106, 124-125). Given that the majority of the hard news section of broadsheets focuses on these two sectors, I would run the risk of excluding many ethnically and socioeconomically diverse women leaders from the data collection.

Second Set of Data: (B) Interviews with Women Leaders from the Tertiary Education Sector

My analysis of the interview data with Lisa and Rhoda and a reading of the literature suggested there might be a significant silence in Australian feminist leadership research in relation to the intersection of class, gender, ethnicity and leadership. In order to explore these gaps further, I decided to conduct a small series of interviews with women educational leaders from a range of class and ethnic backgrounds. Although both my principal supervisor and I had extensive contacts with women educational leaders within the Victorian primary and secondary public systems, we were only able to identify one or two women from minority ethnic origins holding leadership positions at deputy principal level or above (this in itself suggests the potentially hegemonic nature of educational leadership in the public system in
Victoria, in terms of ethnicity). It was only in the tertiary education sector that we both were able to identify a small number of women leaders from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds. Hence, I made a decision to shift my interview focus to the tertiary education sector. My familiarity with the sector as an employee, also provided me with a potential entrée and initial credibility when approaching possible interviewees.

My selection of leading women tertiary educators was made on the basis that firstly, it was crucial to interview a range of women educational leaders from a range of class and ethnic origins in order to explore what appeared to be significant gaps in the feminist educational leadership literature in terms of both ethnicity and class. Secondly, the interviews were an attempt to begin to disrupt the gaps in Australian feminist educational discourses of leadership, which appeared to constitute majority ethnic Australian women as the naturalised centre of such leadership literature. Finally, in conducting the interviews, I was attempting to construct ‘an alternative set of meanings’ about women’s educational leadership in Australia, ‘through such contestation’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 109).

In order to identify potential interviewees, a type of snowball sampling was used. This was on the basis that there were very few women in positions of leadership in the Australian tertiary education sector who were from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Because of their small numbers, I was required to talk from one woman to another in order to identify participants. Seven women of diverse ethnic and class origins, holding leadership positions in universities at senior lecturer level or above, were identified through this technique. A total of six women were interviewed between October and December 2000 (a seventh potential interviewee refused to participate). In compiling the list, a key consideration was that the women were seen within the broader literature, to be the focus of particular and ongoing media attention. Moreover, I attempted to gain a spread of women leaders who came from a range of the key ethnic categories that constituted contemporary multicultural Australia, that is, Aboriginal Australian, Southern European (the first major wave of immigrants from non majority ethnic origins who emigrated to Australia post World War Two, many of whom were from peasant origin); South East Asia (the second major wave of immigrants who emigrated to Australia in the 1980s onwards and who
were often drawn from the business or professional classes); and Britain (a continuing source of white Australia's immigration for the past two centuries). The interviewees included:

1. **Two Aboriginal Australian women leaders:**

   - Ruth was from a working-class background. She held a more junior leadership position in her university, while simultaneously carrying out crucial activities related to her activist work in the fields of politics and feminism. Ruth had worked in a range of fields including teaching before moving to academia.

   - Amelia was also of working-class origin. She held a senior executive position, as well as continuing her work in the legal field. Like Ruth, she came from a teaching background and was a political activist and committed feminist.

2. **Two Southern European origin women leaders:**

   - Iris was from an Italian peasant background and the youngest of the women leaders interviewed at 40 years of age. She had originally trained as a teacher and did not hold a formal leadership role in her university. She identified as a strong feminist.

   - Simone was from Greek peasant origins and was a senior academic who held a professorship. She also had originally trained as a teacher, identified as a strong feminist and carried out extensive work in the business field.

3. **One woman leader of Chinese origin:**

   - Suzanne had grown up in South East Asia and Europe. She was from a middle-class family. Suzanne immigrated to Australia as an adult to work in the tertiary education field and was a professor who held a formal leadership role. She identified as a feminist but held some ambivalence towards this label.

4. **One woman leader of British origin:**
- Lauren was raised in Britain and both parents were originally of working-class origin. Lauren moved to Australia as an adult and had worked in the scientific field prior to taking up a senior academic post at her university. In her interview, she did not primarily identify as a feminist.

Two of the six women were located in the more traditionally feminised faculties of Health and Education. Two were in Cultural Studies and Indigenous Studies, respectively. The final two, because of the nature of the senior posts they held, were located at senior executive level. Four of the six women had begun their careers as teachers in either the primary or secondary education field but only one of these women was located in an education faculty. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teaching has traditionally provided a way out of the working-class for academically bright girls, through the amassing of the cultural capital of undergraduate qualifications.

However, the fact that my supervisor and I found it difficult to identify many minority ethnic, working-class origin women in leadership positions in the compulsory education sector suggests that at leadership level at least, the negative capital ascribed to their ethnicity, class and gender may outweigh the cultural capital they have accumulated. It is interesting to note that none of the four women remained in the primary or secondary education field. The number of women interviewed is far too small to be representative, but there is potential for some further research in terms of comparisons between the sub fields of education in regard to the ethnicity and class of its personnel in teaching and management. The fact that four of the academic women interviewed faced triple jeopardy in that they were Aboriginal Australians or minority ethnic women from peasant or working-class backgrounds, raises the issue of the ways in which class and ethnicity may intersect to form a hegemonic position within the circuit of power relations that exists within mainstream discourses of Australian leadership in the compulsory and higher education sectors. Such a position may be all the more powerful because of how ‘(d)iscourse and language’ about educational leadership in ‘everyday life may function ideologically ... to make asymmetrical relations of power and particular textual portrayals of ... (leadership) .... appear given, commonsensical, and “natural”’, even within feminist analyses of leadership (Luke 1997, p. 54).
Because at the time of interview I was interested in exploring the experiences of minority ethnic women leaders in order to disrupt what appeared to be a taken-for-granted silence around majority ethnic women leaders, I only chose to interview one majority ethnic woman leader, that is, Lauren – the British origin academic. On reflection, this was an error, for in only selecting one woman leader from a majority ethnic background who was also an immigrant, I was unwittingly perpetuating a construction of minority ethnic women leaders as the 'other'. In other words, I risked leaving uninterrogated the potentially hegemonic construction of Australian educational women leaders as being from majority ethnic background. In order to partially overcome this oversight, my analysis of media representations of women's leadership examines dominant discourses of women's leadership collected from Aboriginal Australian, majority ethnic Australian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

**Interview Methods**

In a similar fashion to my analysis of Lisa's and Rhoda's interviews, I initially read hard copies of the six interviews in order to gain a general gist of the material. Items of potential interest were placed in bold and those that seemed of particular possible significance were placed in bold and capitalised. I then reread the interviews in order to get a sense of any reoccurring themes and/or words/phrases, which might indicate dominant discourses in regard to women's leadership and noted any possible gaps or silences. In these initial readings, a number of general themes and discourses emerged. These included:

- The *constraints* each woman leader encountered in her professional work as an educator;

- The *opportunities* each woman leader encountered in her professional work as an educator;

- The *discourses* which emerged around women leaders both in society and the media;

- Examples of *agency and resistance* which each women exhibited; and
• Any other discourses which did not fit within the umbrella term of ‘women and leadership’ but which reoccurred throughout the transcripts.

I underlined and made notes in the margins against sections of the transcript that appeared to fall into these categories. The categories were then placed in a separate computer file under the subheadings and relevant quotations and page numbers were recorded.

I then commenced writing up my analysis in the form of an in-depth case study of each woman’s interview. In this process, the following series of discourses also emerged as reoccurring themes in the women’s interviews:

• Class as a crucial category in terms of the way in which a number of the individual women leaders were located/chose to locate themselves as leaders;

• Ethnicity as a second fundamental category which positioned different women leaders in a variety of ways;

• Intersection of gender, ethnicity and class and the way in which individual women leaders were positioned by this nexus;

• The site-specific location of individual women leaders within particular universities and how this appeared to impact upon individual women’s experiences of leadership;

• Feminism – Where individual women leaders chose to position themselves in terms of feminism as a movement;

• Intergenerational divide between the attitudes of the younger Iris and the other five women leaders; and

• Embodiment – A repeated emphasis within the interviews upon women’s physical appearance

As a feminist utilising critical discourse analysis as both my key method of analysis and the major theoretical position from which I write, I made the decision to write up each interview as a case study of the individual woman leader. This was because it
was crucial for me to attempt to capture, ‘situated accounts of experience and identity formation, marginality and exclusion’ in terms of the women leaders’ experiences of educational leadership (Luke 1997, p. 53). As Luke notes:

The outstanding task for critical discourse analysis ... is to provide detailed analysis of cultural voices and texts in local educational sites, while attempting to connect theoretically and empirically these with an understanding of power and ideology in broader social formations and configurations (Luke 1997, p. 53).

Given the marginal status of minority ethnic and working-class origin women leaders in the feminist educational leadership literature, within broader societal discourses of leadership and key institutions such as the media, I felt it imperative that a ‘detailed analysis’ of each of the interview texts be provided, rather than subsuming each woman’s experience under the key discourses identified above. The case study approach does identify and explore these common discourses, but locates them within the particularities of each woman’s experiences of leadership.

Finally, a striking characteristic of the interviews was the sheer multiplicity of perspectives, viewpoints and positions, which these women leaders held. On the basis of such a small number of interviews it would be impossible to make any generalisations. Nonetheless, the hybridity of positions, which the women held appears to lend a certain truth to the assertion that ‘race ... (like) ... identity ... (is not) ... a stable category’ (Apple 1993, p. vii). Both are ‘socially and historically constructed, and subject to political tensions and contradictions’ (Apple 1993, p. vii); (Hall, 1992). Yet it is also important to recognise that although ‘societies contain a plurality of discourses and discursive sites, a plurality of positions and perspectives from which to speak ... not all of these have equal authority. Yet conflict and contestation are part of the story’ (Fraser 1992, p. 179).

Third Set of Data: Media Representations of Australian Women Leaders

I have noted previously the crucial role the media is accorded in critical discourse analysis methodology, in terms of the production of discursive frameworks which potentially further hegemonise broader societal understandings of gender, class and ethnicity. In terms of women’s leadership, it would appear that representations of mainstream majority ethnic women politicians may constitute the hegemonising lens
through which subject locations for women’s leadership in a variety of fields, including the tertiary education sector, may be constructed. In order to explore this concept further, from January 2001 to January 2002, I collected a series of newspaper articles from two Australian broadsheets, *The Australian* and *The Age*. The common theme to the articles was that they featured Australian women leaders from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. The articles either portrayed individual women leaders or discussed women and leadership in more general terms. The time frame of 2001 to 2002 was selected because I was at this stage in my data collection. The data was collected over one year as it gave sufficient time for ongoing trends and patterns in terms of dominant and marginalised discourses of women’s leadership to be identified.

*The Australian* is a national newspaper produced in Sydney and owned by Rupert Murdoch, of the media company News Limited. *The Age* is produced in Melbourne and is owned by Fairfax Corporation, a publicly listed company that was previously owned by a prominent Melbourne family. The selection of the papers was made on the grounds that it would be productive to compare and contrast the treatment of women leaders from a newspaper that has more of a state perspective with that of a newspaper which claims to have a broader, national perspective. In addition, as I am originally from Victoria, I have more familiarity with its cultural and political contexts, in contrast to New South Wales. I chose to select two broadsheets because although overall sales of newspapers and in particular broadsheets are declining, the readership of these two broadsheets is still drawn from the more educated middle and upper-classes of Australian society. Thus the newspapers have continuing prestige and still have more power to set the daily news agenda in terms of national issues than the tabloids and other media sources.

Articles on women leaders were selected from Wednesday’s, Thursday’s and Saturday’s *Australian* and Saturday’s *Age*. The following sections of the two newspapers were canvassed: the ‘hard news’, features, commentaries, editorial and letters to the editor, lifestyle magazines (which appear on Saturdays as an insert);

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7 In an Australian survey of 100 news producers, the authors noted that, ‘newspapers were perceived by many of the practitioners as the dominant agenda-setters in the daily news cycle …’ (Anon. 2001, p. 4). The *Australian* was one of the two most significant newspapers cited, in terms of the importance of news and current affairs services (Pearson 2001, p. 15).
review; media and the employment sections. The sports and business sections of the
two newspapers were excluded from collection in order to keep the amount of data
collected at a manageable level. The definition of leader was kept deliberately broad
in order to encompass women who were recognised as leaders both in the public and
private spheres, within a range of both traditional and non-traditional areas of paid
employment and in the voluntary and community sectors. The rationale for this
method of selection is that I did not wish to exclude women who may not have been
described as leaders according to more narrow, masculinist paradigms of leadership
within traditional leadership literature.

In addition, I categorised the selection of women leaders into three broad categories:
majority ethnic women leaders (that is, women from English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish
Catholic, Irish Protestant backgrounds, or a mix of these origins); Aboriginal
Australian women leaders, and women leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds
(the latter category was drawn from all other ethnic backgrounds apart from majority
ethnic and Aboriginal Australian). My reason for this was that it was important to
examine the breadth of leadership discourses amongst women from a range of ethnic
backgrounds, given I was exploring dominant and marginalised discourses of
women’s leadership in the media. I was aware of the pitfalls of categorising people in
this way, for it could be said that I was making arbitrary and potentially racist
judgements about ethnicity. For example, Lowitja O’Donoghue is a prominent
Aboriginal Australian leader but her father was actually of Irish origin. However, in
such cases, I categorised the women on the basis of which ethnic identity they
claimed as primary. In O’Donoghue’s case, it was her Aboriginal Australian
background. Another example was Natasha Stott Despoja, a prominent Australian
politician, who has a majority ethnic mother and a Croatian father. However, in
interviews it was her mother with whom she primarily appeared to identify and thus I
made the somewhat arbitrary decision to place her in the majority ethnic category,
whilst not ignoring her diverse ethnic identity.

Due to the sheer quantity of articles about women leaders from majority ethnic
backgrounds in the two newspapers that I collected, and the fact that this data was
not the major focus of my thesis, I made a decision to confine my actual analysis of
the discourses of leadership in this category to:
• 24 general and 25 specific articles on majority ethnic women politicians drawn from the federal, state and local government tiers;

• Seventeen articles on Cheryl Kernot, then prominent federal opposition shadow minister with the ALP who had made the dramatic decision in 1997 to resign from her position as leader of the Australian Democrats (a minority party) and join the ALP; and

• 38 articles on Natasha Stott Despoja, former deputy leader of the Australian Democrats, who in the early part of 2001 defeated the Democrats’ leader, Meg Lees and became the new leader of the party.

Women in Australian mainstream politics were selected because as an overall group, they have been the focus of particular and ongoing media attention over the past three decades (Baird, 2004). Natasha Stott Despoja and Cheryl Kernot were selected because their role as female leaders of a political party, made them the subject of intense media attention.

I numbered each article within each of the three categories and read all articles in each category through for their general gist/meaning. I then reread all the articles in each category, attempting to identify dominant and submerged discourses of leadership. I did so by underlining key words or phrases, which reoccurred, and noting in particular the reasons each woman leader and/or journalist gave for the individual woman’s ascension to power (for example, did they insist their appointment was purely on the basis of merit, that gender had nothing to do with it etcetera). I counted the number of times words/phrases/key themes reoccurred and then mapped these on a grid. A grid was constructed for each of the categories of leadership, that is, Aboriginal, majority ethnic and minority ethnic women leaders. Reoccurring phrases or themes were listed in the left hand column and along the top I noted whether the article was drawn from an article about an individual woman leader, or whether it was from a group of articles which discussed women and leadership issues more generally. The date and newspaper source of each article was also recorded. I counted up the number of times a theme/phrase reoccurred and noted this underneath each discourse.
I made a decision to do very limited analysis of visual data and concentrate primarily upon written text. The reason for this is that analysis of visual images would have drawn upon semiotics as a different although somewhat related form of analysis. Given that the primary focus of the research was a case study of women leaders in the tertiary education field, additional data drawn from analysis of images would not have been a manageable aim within the word limitations of this thesis.

**Conclusion**

A crucial component of critical discourse analysis is the political potential it provides ‘to address persistent questions about larger, systemic relations of class, gender and culture’ (Luke 1997, p. 53). As a method, it forces researchers to consider the interrelationship of class, gender and race through its awareness of the ‘complexity of structures of domination’ that lie within the everyday language and discourses that construct what is sayable, thinkable and doable in terms of our knowledge and identity about leadership. Let us now turn to a presentation and analysis of the key findings in regard to the ways in which two specific newspapers, *The Australian* and *The Age*, potentially acted as canons of authority, through the active production and circulation of texts that assisted in the regulation and disciplining of societal knowledge about what constitutes women’s leadership identities.
Chapter Five

Does Visibility Equate with Power? Exploring Broadsheet Representations of Women Leaders

Years ago, when much fuss was made about the reluctance of fashion magazines to include images of black women, it was assumed that the presence of such representations would in and of themselves challenge racist stereotypes that imply black women are not beautiful. Nowadays, black women are included in magazines in a manner that tends to reinscribe prevailing stereotypes (hooks 1997, p. 123).

Introduction

Conflicting discourses circulate within the Australian media in regard to women’s position within society. On the one hand, some discourses posit that gender equity has now been achieved (and by implication, that women are ‘no longer disadvantaged’); that gender equity reforms are a luxury the economy cannot afford; that feminism is to blame for societal ills such as unemployment; and that masculinity is in crisis as a result of the feminist movement (Blackmore 1997a, pp. 79-86). The ‘We-are-in-the-Era-of-Postfeminism’ discourse, for example, will often utilise phrases such as ‘postfeminist’ and construct a singular subject position for feminists which posits them as old fashioned and out of touch (refer to Chapter One). This transformation in the discourses can have the material impact of silencing women’s claims for equity (Blackmore 1997a, p. 79). Such discourses are at odds with gender equity discourses and Rhoda’s, Lisa’s and my own experiences of educational leadership. They also contradict the statistics noted in Chapter One, which reveal that the deregulation of the Australian economy has ‘tend(ed) to increase inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, race, and class’ (Blackmore 1997a, p. 80).

This chapter will explore these dissonances through an examination of representations of Australian women leaders from a range of ethnic and class
backgrounds collected in 2001 from two contemporary Australian broadsheets. I have noted in Chapter Three that representations are constitutive, that is, they have both material and symbolic effects in terms of subjectivity and thus are both productive and self-productive. Moreover, 'it is clear that all ... (representations) ... are not equally constitutive ... in any kind of enduring way' (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 174). The question arises as to 'why some discursive efforts seem to “stick” more than others' (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 174). In order to explore this question, it is necessary to examine the 'material dimensions' of representation (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 174), including an '(a)analysis of historical context' (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004, p. 117). Contextualising discourses is critical for an understanding of why particular broadsheet representations '“stick”', that is, come to constitute part of the broader discursive framework of women's leadership. Hence, prior to discussing the results of the data gathered, it is important to locate the representations within the broader economic, political and social context of the era.

**Contextualising 2001**

The key event in 2001 was the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11. Australia is a close ally of the United States both economically and strategically and the attacks resonated deeply. They led to an increased national scrutiny of Australia's own preparedness in the event of a similar terrorist attack occurring on our shores. The increase in concerns about national security appeared to feed historic xenophobic anxieties about defending Australia's borders (O'Regan 2001c, p. 1). These concerns had been fanned in the previous months through the federal government's highly publicised policy of refusing entry to ships carrying mainly Middle Eastern asylum seekers (dubbed 'illegal immigrants' by the coalition government – a phrase, which in turn, was taken up by the media). Debate centred on whether the Federal Government should be placing border security or humanitarian principles first. The controversy was particularly fraught given that in the past 30 years, Australian governments of all political persuasions had rejected a previous assimilation policy towards Indigenous Australians and immigrants and had embraced a policy of integration and multiculturalism at both federal and state levels – an outcome which had appeared to be largely accepted by the Australian people.
A federal election was scheduled for November, 2001. In that year, one of only two large Australian air carriers, Ansett Airlines, was declared bankrupt and 17,000 employees lost their jobs. The coalition federal government, led by Prime Minister John Howard, was trailing in the polls and was seen to be out of touch with the electorate. Until August, 2001, media pundits had declared a coalition win for a third term in government highly unlikely (Gordon 2001a, p. 2). In August, 2001, the Federal Government, using the rhetoric of national sovereignty and border security, refused to accept 438 mainly Afghan asylum seekers crowded on board a Norwegian container ship, the Tampa. The refugees had been rescued by the ship’s captain after their own boat capsized in international waters (Shanahan 2001, p. 1). The event received mass coverage in the international and national media and polls showed that a vast majority of Australians supported the government’s actions (Ellingsen and Saltau 2001, p. 1). Many people appeared to buy into the racist discourses used by the government and the tabloid press and radio which characterised asylum seekers as ‘illegal immigrants’ and ‘queue jumpers’ who had paid vast sums of money to illegal people smugglers whilst so-called genuine refugees languished in transit camps for years awaiting repatriation. After the Tampa crisis and the September 11 attack, there was an increase in violence against Muslim communities in Australia, including the burning of a mosque in Brisbane (O'Regan 2001c, p. 4).

In the previous year, Australia had staged the Olympics and gained much international kudos for its opening ceremony in which Australian-Indigenous culture was a prominent feature. Cathy Freeman, an Australian Aboriginal, had won the Olympic gold medal for the 400 metres running race and received much public acclamation. Nonetheless, her race was run in the midst of controversy. Prime Minister John Howard had refused to apologise on behalf of the Commonwealth Government to Indigenous Australians, after the release of the Bringing Them Home report in 1997 – a judicial inquiry which gathered a great deal of evidence about generations of Aboriginal Australians forcibly removed from their families and communities because of their mixed race background (dubbed the ‘Stolen Generations’). Howard’s refusal to apologise gained both acrimony and support. In May 2000, the largest marches ever held in Australia occurred when thousands of Australians participated in reconciliation marches across Australia to show their
support for reconciliation between black and white Australia and in particular, for an apology from the Federal Government. The tensions released by this debate continued to simmer in 2001, with the Prime Minister still refusing to apologise.

The events of 2001, including the increase in racial and social tensions, need to be seen in the wider context of a social and political backlash of the past decade that has included a shift to the right for both major Australian political parties – Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Liberal Party. The tensions were first clearly demonstrated when Paul Keating’s Labor government lost the federal election in 1996.

Prior to this loss, a number of significant events occurred which shifted the political landscape. In 1992, a landmark High Court decision recognised the existence of native title at the time of European settlement. In 1994, the Keating ALP Federal Government brought in the Native Title Act – an acknowledgement that ‘native title had existed on all Australian land’ and may continue to do so in certain circumstances that would be determined through claims in the Native Title Tribunal (Davison et al. 1999, p. 6). The decision became known as the Mabo decision. The conservative opposition, powerful farming lobbies and mining companies who feared considerable loss of land and revenue, condemned it.

The restructuring of the Australian economy by the Federal ALP under Paul Keating as Treasurer and then Prime Minister in the 1980s and 1990s, brought with it a range of economic and social woes including high unemployment figures, high inflation and a major recession. There was a public perception that the ALP government was indifferent to the hurts of its traditional constituencies, the ‘battlers’\(^8\), while pandering too much to new constituencies who were characterised by the newly formed racist One Nation Party and the conservative parties as ‘minority interest groups’. These groups included feminists, Aboriginal activists, republicans (whom the coalition alleged were drawn mainly from the urban elites) and the so-called ethnic lobby. The perception was fanned by the One Nation party amongst its mainly

\(^8\) The ‘battlers’ were characterised by politicians and the media as white, working-class males and in the wake of the formation of the One Nation Party, rural men. This ignored the lack of progress and at times, deterioration in material conditions for women as a group (refer to Chapter One).
rural constituency and was played on with enormous success by the newly elected conservative Prime Minister John Howard, particularly in regard to a now dominant discourse in the media and the social realm around (predominantly white, working-class) male disadvantage.

The perception that the Keating ALP government was insensitive to the economic and social damage inflicted by its policies on its traditional heartland was captured by the emergence of a new set of political discourses in the 1990s in the media and politics such as ‘urban elites’, the ‘chardonnay sipping set’, ‘Aboriginal advantage/Indigenous privilege’ — which set up a binary divide between those who supported issues such as Mabo, the republic and multiculturalism, and the ‘ordinary people’ (Mickler 1998, pp. 239-240). Such discourses had the effect of stifling and marginalising equity discourses. Hence the backlash against feminism which began in the late 1980s and early 1990s and was characterised by the emergence of a range of neoconservative discourses of gender in the media and politics (Blackmore, 1997a), appears to be symptomatic of a larger social backlash against ethnic minorities, Indigenous Australians, the welfare dependent, the majority of whom are women) and any group which attempted to utilise equity discourses. The emergence and electoral success in the 1990s of a minor political party One Nation with its racist policies and the new Prime Minister, John Howard’s refusal to criticise these policies, revealed the beginnings of a backlash in public political discourse against equity in which (non Anglo-Australian) ethnicity and gender were categories used as political lightning rods for Australia’s perceived economic, political and social woes.

In summary, one of the chief characteristics of the year was the ways in which social and racial tensions were manipulated and exacerbated by conservative political and media discourses of social backlash which played on historic white Australian insecurities around non white ethnicity. Let us now turn to an examination of media discourses of women’s leadership in order to explore these representations in the light of this discussion.
Results: Quantitative Data

The main component of my chapter focuses upon a discussion of the dominant and marginalised discourses that I identified in the collected articles. However, as a preliminary to this analysis, I have included some quantitative data in regard to the number of representations of women found in each broad ethnic category, as it sheds some interesting light on both my previous discussion of the context of 2001 and the analysis of media representations which follows.

1. Anglo-Australian Women Leaders

From January 2001 to January 2002, 166 articles were collected on Anglo-Australian women leaders. Of these articles, 125 or 75.3 percent featured either individual women politicians or were general articles on women in politics. Of the remaining 41 articles:

- 19 featured women leaders from a range of areas including the police and community groups;
- 10 featured women leaders in the media;
- 10 focussed on the tertiary education sector; and
- Four examined the business field.

Of the 125 articles which featured women politicians:

- 38 articles profiled the struggle between Natasha Stott Despoja and Meg Lees for leadership of the Australian Democrats, a minority Australian political party;
- 37 articles were on a variety of women leaders across all political spectrums;
- 24 articles were on Pauline Hanson, founder and former leader of a minority political party, One Nation, which promoted racist policies;
- 17 articles featured Cheryl Kernot and her unsuccessful struggle to retain her ALP marginal seat in the federal election of 2001; and
• Nine articles featured Carmen Lawrence, respectively former ALP premier of Western Australia and opposition shadow cabinet member.

In sum, 70.4 percent of the articles concentrated upon the same five women politicians, all of whom were former leaders of political parties or in Carmen Lawrence’s case, a former premier.

2. **Aboriginal Women Leaders**

82 articles were collected on Aboriginal women leaders. These included:

• 21 general articles featuring Aboriginal women leaders from the arts, politics and education fields;

• 22 articles on Lowitja O’Donoghue (former inaugural chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission – ATSIC) whom, it was claimed by a Melbourne tabloid, *The Herald-Sun*, was not a member of the Stolen Generations, but instead had been voluntarily given up for adoption by her Anglo-Australian father;

• 22 articles featured Pat O’Shane, a magistrate with the NSW courts. In 2001 *The Age* published allegations from a number of women that the head of ATSIC had raped them. Pat O’Shane made the comment in a subsequent interview that some women manufactured stories of sexual abuse and there was an ensuing media controversy; and

• Seventeen articles focused upon Evelyn Scott, former chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, who noted that O’Shane’s preceding comments were not helpful and disclosed that her own children had been the victims of sexual abuse.

3. **Minority Ethnic Women Leaders**

20 articles were collected on minority ethnic women leaders. Of these articles:
• Six featured businesswomen whose ethnic backgrounds included: White South-African, Australian-born with Austrian-Jewish refugee parents, Italian-born, Indian/Chinese parents and one woman whose ethnic origins were not stated;

• Four featured women in the arts and media fields whose ethnic background included: Iranian-born refugee, Australian-born with Chinese parents, Chinese-born;

• Two were in education including: Greek-born, unspecified ethnic background;

• Two were in politics including: Australian-born with Greek parents, Hong Kong-born and raised;

• Two managers: Chinese origins, Malaysian-born;

• One scientist: unclear ethnic background;

• One doctor: Chinese origins;

• One unionist: born in Italy to Russian refugees; and

• One philanthropist: daughter of a Russian-Jewish, self-made millionaire businessman.

Summary

In total, 269 articles featuring Australian women leaders were collected. 61.5 percent of the total number of articles featured Anglo-Australian women leaders; 30.7 percent of the articles portrayed Aboriginal women leaders and 7.7 percent featured women leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds. These figures need to be considered in the light of the following facts in regard to Australia’s cultural diversity:

• 23 percent of Australians are from a non English speaking immigrant background (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000); and

• 352,970 people identified as Indigenous in the 1996 Census or 2.1 percent of the total Australian population (Face, 2001).

In quantitative terms, the media articles collected suggest that the typical face of Australian women leadership is predominantly Anglo-Australian and mainly based in the political field. Yet, the preceding figures on Australia’s cultural diversity
contradict this dominant representation. While not advocating a mimetic theory of representation, there does appear to be a major dissonance between Australia's ethnic diversity and the largely Anglo-Australian face of women's leadership featured in the two Australian broadsheets. The dominance of Anglo-Australian representations of female political leadership, combined with the marginalisation of minority ethnic women leaders, feeds into an ethnocentrism that appears to confirm stereotypes of leadership as naturally the property of Anglo-Australian ethnicity. Further discussion of this dissonance will occur in the final section of the chapter when I draw together the threads of the quantitative and qualitative data.

Discourses of Anglo-Australian Women Politicians

There has been a considerable increase in the number of women politicians in Australia over the past two decades (refer to Chapter One for current figures). Yet such an increase has not necessarily translated into more influence. The fact that 75.3 percent of the articles on women leaders were based on women in politics, suggests the underlying sexism of news values, in which politics (still a largely Anglo-Australian, middle-class and masculine domain) is seen as 'hard news' and given a correspondingly higher prominence within the two broadsheets. In addition, 70.4 percent of the articles featured the same five women leaders, thus demonstrating the way in which the contemporary media engage in setting the 'agenda ... the issues up for discussion, the subjects of the editorials, important problems to be covered' (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 50). This leads to the 'circular circulation of information' (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 23), in which the 'media pick up on issues covered by others' (Lingard, 2000) and a level of homogeneity amongst the news for which it has been criticised (Pearson and Brand, 2001).

1. Women as the Harbinger of Change

Pippa Norris has identified this discourse as 'one of the dominant motifs' of international media coverage of women leaders such as Maggie Thatcher, Benazir Bhutto and Mary Robinson over 20 years (Norris 1997, p. 163). It emerged as the dominant discourse amongst the articles collected. For example, in her push to take over the leadership of the Australian Democrats and restore its popularity after a loss
of electoral support, Natasha Stott Despoja was described as potentially supplying her party with a ‘new image’; providing the Australian Democrats with ‘a radical transformation’ and ‘rejuvenat(ing) the party’ (Dodson 2001, p. 4).

Jenny Macklin’s bid for deputy leadership of the ALP Federal Opposition was framed frequently in terms of generational change. One feature noted that ‘party figures spoke out yesterday on the need for change’ and in the same feature, Macklin herself picks up on the discourse, stating that the party needed ‘a combination of Mr Crean’s experience and her vision to help bring about a “generational change”’ (Kerin and Keenan 2001, p. 3). She is described as ‘the concession to the cry for a new generation of leaders. She is a relatively fresh face and she is a woman’ (Steketee 2001, p. 11). However, such a discourse is a double-edged sword which can rebound, for the article also notes that Macklin is ‘aware of the pitfalls that have claimed senior women politicians in the past’ in terms of the high expectations it places on women (Steketee 2001, p. 11).

The fact that Macklin feels compelled to address this discourse, illustrates the signifying power of the media to ‘set the terms in which the debate proceeds’ (Hall 1988, p. 71). They are terms which are highly gendered, raced and classed. The constitutive and material impact of such a discourse is that it, ‘may create false expectations for what the new leader can achieve and ... in the long term may set women leaders on a pedestal from which they can only fall’ (Norris 1997, p. 165). Norris’s observations equally apply to minority/disadvantaged groups overall who do not possess the legitimacy within the media as a field of power to take ‘a first shot at the field’ (Hall 1988, p. 62).

2. Golden Girl Syndrome

This syndrome emerged as another major discourse with new, rising or previously successful women politicians located within its hegemonic frame. It was typically used by journalists to either hail particularly promising women politician (and thus, place unrealistic expectations of success upon their shoulders) or, when inevitably this potential was unfulfilled, to herald their downfall. It has been described as, ‘the female meteor syndrome – where women flame then fade to black’ (Baird 2004, p.
229), or alternatively as the golden girl syndrome, ‘the pedestal for the female politician is installed by the party and the statue gilded and photographed by the media’ (Else-Mitchell 2000, p. 10).

Some of the epithets, which clustered around the golden girl syndrome, included references to rising women politicians as stars. Julia Gillard was noted as one of ‘Labor’s rising stars’ (Gray and Douez 2001, p.6). Jenny Macklin, the ALP’s federal Deputy Opposition Leader, was portrayed three times in one article as ‘the fast rising star of the Left’, a ‘Rising star well aware of crash potential’ and as someone who ‘takes no joy … that her own star is on the rise’ (Rintoul 2001d, p. 13).

However, the problem with stars is that like meteors, many of them eventually burn out or fall to the ground. In the articles about Cheryl Kernot, which appeared prior to and after her struggle to maintain her marginal seat in the 2001 federal election, the language sets up a dichotomy between Kernot’s past appeal as a talented politician and her fall from grace. She is referred to as someone who had helped ‘to break the mould’ (Editor 2001c, p. 12); a ‘star recruit’ (Dubecki 2001, p. 2); (Editor, 2001a); someone with ‘promise’ (Editor, 2001a) and possessing ‘charisma’ (Dubecki 2001, p. 2). However, Kernot is simultaneously scolded as having a ‘maddening combination of promise and wrongheadedness’; as someone who must learn to ‘observe the basic rules of politics’ (Editor, 2001a); as a person who ‘has not lived up to … expectations’ (Editor 2001c, p. 549) and as facing ‘self-inflicted controversies’ (McGregor 2001b, p. 8). The dichotomous language of such articles suggests a media construction of someone who may be heading for a fall.

In a similar fashion to the women as harbinger of change discourse, the golden girl syndrome connotes the signifying power of the media to ‘influence knowledge, beliefs … (and) … social identities’ (Fairclough 1995b, p. 2) about women politicians, through the construction of unrealistic expectations of leadership to which they feel forced to respond. Julia Baird argues what is ‘most lethal’ about such a discourse is ‘the excitement and fervour about possible female leaders’ which it elicits (Baird 2004, p. 231). Moreover, the discourse was highly gendered for there
appears to be both a lower level of expectations placed upon male politicians as a group and a greater degree of forgiveness should things go awry.

The constitutive nature of the discourse and the symbolic violence it metes out is noted in a discussion of how female political ‘meteors’ of the 1990s such as Cheryl Kernot and Natasha Stott Despoja, have come to represent ‘cautionary tales’ (Baird 2004, p. 271) to a younger generation of Australian women politicians. The latter group ‘now talk about “the Natasha factor”’ (Baird 2004, p. 242) and their habitus has changed for they have learned to be ‘quieter, more determined to play by the rules, to trade and fight in factions, to sing the party anthem’ (Baird 2004, p. 236). Such an outcome hardly represents a victory for women as a group for in operating as a strategy of containment, the golden girl syndrome reinforces the status quo of political authority as naturally masculine.

3. Embodying Women Leaders

It is often claimed that descriptions of women leaders tend to focus on stereotypical judgements about their physical appearance and demeanour in ways, which do not occur for male leaders (Norris 1997, pp. 154, 159). My interviews with academic women leaders appear to support this contention. In examining the dominant discourses around Australian women politicians, the discourse of embodying women leaders appeared to be dominant for one female politician, Natasha Stott Despoja. It is a discourse, which is also commented upon as a constant phenomenon in Australian politics by former women leaders such as Joan Kirner, Cheryl Kernot and Pauline Hanson (Baird, 2004).

Media coverage of Stott Despoja’s physical appearance often converges around a cluster of epithets that focus upon the themes of her youth and gender (women as the harbinger of change) and celebrity (the golden girl). For example, The Age notes that, ‘Were it not for her blonde hair … and the iridescent indigo of her clothing, Senator Natasha Stott Despoja would go unnoticed, just another politician’ (Ellingsen 2001.

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9 For example, Alexander Downer, currently the Federal Coalition’s Foreign Affairs Minister, had a brief and disastrous stint as leader of the Liberal Party. His failure as leader was constructed by the media as an individual failure and not as a failure of his gender as a whole. Consequently, his career has been rehabilitated.
p. 3). As new leader of the Democrats, she is described by Frank Devine, a right wing commentator for *The Australian*, as dressed ‘in an open-neck, wide-collar dress shirt, looking stunning ... The straight blonde hair ... banishes thought of qualification about Stott Despoja’s good looks’ (Devine 2001, p. 13). (It is hard to imagine an Anglo-Australian male politician being described in such terms and taken seriously).

In addition, the embodiment discourse was at times linked to that of generational war, contrasting Stott Despoja with the older Meg Lecs (Blackmore 1997a, p. 81). For example, the Democrats’ Deputy Leader Sandra Kanck had commented that, ‘“pert breasts” should not be the deciding factor of any leadership contest’—a comment which was seized upon with glee by the media and reported as sparking ‘a wave of catfiness’ (Crabb 2001, p. 3).

What can we make of the discourses around Natasha Stott Despoja’s physical appearance and dress? Firstly, because women leaders in Australia remain the exception rather than the rule, they are deemed to be more newsworthy (Norris 1997, p. 153). If a female leader is young, blonde and attractive, they are even more exceptional and hence their newsworthiness is enhanced—knowledge which Stott Despoja utilised to maximum potential. Secondly, such stereotypical news angles are part of a media tradition of stereotyping women leaders. Thirdly, the chief business of newspapers is to make money. Photographs of a young, blonde attractive female in parliament provide a ‘splash of colour in the photo op’ of a newspaper (Norris, 1997) and are good for business. Fourthly, despite Pippa Norris’s research into media representations of women leaders worldwide, which found that such sexism was ‘highly exceptional’ and did ‘not reflect the vast bulk of the coverage’ of these women (Norris 1997, pp. 154, 159), other research suggests that ‘descriptions of women leaders focus on gender-based evaluations of dress and demeanor, rather than the substance of decisions and actions’ (Witt et al., 1994).

Stott Despoja appears to have initially utilised her bodily hexis to carve out a new space for herself and other young women within the political domain. However, as the quotations from the above articles suggest, the limited and extremely gendered subject positions from which she could speak, that is, the golden girl, the youthful
harbinger of change and the embodied woman, operated as a form of symbolic violence by setting the terms from which she was constituted as a subject. However, as Foucault reminds us, ‘(w)here there is power, there is resistance’ (Foucault 1990, p. 95) and feminist discourses allowed Stott Despoja an alternative discursive space in which to attempt (with great difficulty) to reposition her identity within the media. Nonetheless, the focus upon Stott Despoja’s body, clothing and physical appearance, ‘becomes a … constant reminder … of sociosexual power relations’ within the fields of power that constitute politics and the media (Moi 2000, p. 325). It is a reminder for women politicians that the category of woman remains discursively located outside hegemonic modes of masculine authority.

4. Public/Private Divide

Caldas-Coulthard (1995, pp. 226-227) has argued that in the media, women are commonly ‘identified with the private sphere’ in contrast to males, who, in general, ‘are represented speaking in their public … roles’. Another dominant discourse within media reports of Anglo-Australian women politicians was that of the public versus the private sphere. It was exemplified most typically through the reporting of a woman leader’s marital or family status or discussions of the dilemma of family versus career. For example, in an article which discusses the small number of women in Victorian local councils, the dilemma of juggling family and council responsibilities is raised twice as a barrier deterring women from running for election (Carson 2001b, p. 9). The voluntary demotion of former Federal Liberal Tourism minister Jackic Kelly due to family responsibilities gained considerable publicity. For example, Sex Discrimination Commissioner Prue Goward was quoted as arguing that the way women balanced work and family was ‘a matter of individual choice’. In contrast, Sole Parents’ Union President and Women’s Electoral Lobby Activist Kathleen Swinbourne utilised a feminist discourse of women as a collective to contend that it was a message to the Prime Minister to ‘implement some family-friendly workplaces’ (Nason 2001, p. 7).

On the one hand, such discussions are a positive sign in that they suggest that the second wave feminist movement has created a discursive space within the mainstream media, which allows the dilemmas of women’s double shift to be aired.
Nonetheless, there is considerable contrast between the media discourses that occurred when Jackie Kelly voluntarily demoted in order to spend time with her family, compared to the discussion of the ‘hushed silence’ that fell over federal parliament when Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, announced his retirement from politics to spend more time with his family. The public/private divide appears to be largely represented within the media as a conflict for women leaders or aspirant female leaders, rather than as an issue for males or society as a whole. Thus it suggests the still largely gendered and sexist nature of the discourse.

5. Feminist Appeal to Women as a Collective

In features which either discussed women in politics in general, or which profiled individual women politicians, both the women leaders and the journalists called on second wave feminist discourses of women as a collective. It is a common media frame (Baird, 2004). For example, in a profile of the ALP’s likely front bench post the 2001 election loss, Sue Mackay is described solely as ‘a strong advocate of women’s rights in the ALP’ (Hudson 2001, p. 5). It is an epithet which ordinarily would be the kiss of death but which, in the wake of Labor’s election loss, was seen as presenting a ‘new face’ to the disillusioned electorate. New Federal Liberal Assistant Treasurer, Helen Coonan, is profiled as a Liberal with a ‘moderate bent’, witnessed by her feminist credentials in ‘helping to open Sydney’s first women’s refuge, followed by women’s health and legal centres’ (Price 2002, p. 4).

Natasha Stott Despoja is described in her leadership bid for the Democrats, as ‘happy to describe herself as a “proud feminist” in an era when the F-word has become unfashionable’ (Gilchrist 2001, p. 12). Cheryl Kernot draws upon a feminist critique of politicians as ‘boring suits’ (O’Regan 2001b, p. 2) – a criticism which The Australian editorial amplifies (Editor 2001c, p. 12). The calling upon of more mainstream, second wave discourses of feminism within the broadsheets connotes how feminism has become ‘one of the contested sites of changing power relations within mainstream media’ (Schaffer 1998, p. 321). It provides a subject position upon which women politicians may draw and whose ‘discursive efforts seem to “stick” more than’ other, marginalised feminisms discourses which recognise the
intersection of gender and ethnicity, for example, black feminist or postcolonial discourses (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, p. 174).

6. Women as the Rule-Breaker (but not the Rule-Maker)

Ann Henderson, in her discussion of media representations of Australian and New Zealand women politicians, has argued that a recurring discourse is that of women as Whigs or non-conformists, with men as the Tories (Henderson 1999, p. 144). In this sense, masculinity operates as a form of ‘positive and femaleness as negative symbolic capital’ within the media and political fields in terms of formal authority (Moi 2000, p. 330). Women politicians, it connotes, can only be rule-breakers for they are discursively located outside the hegemonic norm of masculine authority, that is, as other to those who have the symbolic power to ‘set the terms in which the debate proceeds’ (Hall 1988, p. 71).

The discourse was utilised in articles discussing the demise of former golden girls such as Cheryl Kernot and Natasha Stott Despoja. For example, Stott Despoja comments that, ‘I don’t fit into the stereotypical view of who or what should be the leader of a political party’ (Price 2001, p. 24). Three months previously, this exceptionality was seen as positive capital with Stott Despoja being described by potential voters as ‘the exception’ to the rule of political leaders, ‘as honest, authentic and forthright’ (Stewart 2001, p. 25). However, female rule-breakers, unlike ‘mavericks’ or ‘bad boys’ may have a limited life span in politics. Cheryl Kernot’s likely defeat in the 2001 federal election was described as, ‘Cheryl’s problem’ … (in) … that she has never really adjusted to the Labor Party, and the Labor Party has never really adjusted to her’ (Roberts 2001, p. 6). The reality that there may be broader issues in regard to the way in which mainstream parties such as the ALP and Liberal Party organise themselves to advantage predominantly middle-class, Anglo-Australian males, is ignored. It is an individual woman’s problem and therefore can be dismissed. It would appear that there is a discursive space for larrikins, rule-breakers and bad boys in Australian politics, but that similar characteristics in women politicians are more severely punished.
7. First Female Leader

This discourse commonly occurred in articles hailing promising new women leaders. At times, it appeared to function as a potential nail in any promising Australian women politician’s coffin. For example, Jenny Macklin, the current Federal Opposition Deputy Leader of the ALP, was described shortly after the 2001 federal election as ‘poised to become the first woman to hold a federal ALP leadership post’; ‘touted as a future leader’; and as someone who ‘could ultimately be leader’ (Rintoul 2001d, p. 13). Former Democrats’ leader and subsequently, federal ALP shadow minister, Cheryl Kernot, was reported as having once been ‘tipped to be Australia’s first woman prime minister’ (Wroc 2001, p. 7). Lorraine Elliott, former minister in the Victorian Liberal government, is described as at ‘one time ... tipped as the first female premier of Victoria’ (Sullivan 2001, p. 5).

Pippa Norris has identified that over a period of 20 years, ‘certain gendered news frames with common themes’ such as the first woman leader discourse, endured as ‘pervasive and recurrent in early coverage’ of women who had achieved major leadership positions (Norris 1997, p. 161). In the Australian context, such a discourse connotes dangerous undertones of potential failure, thus compelling women politicians such as Jenny Macklin to call on alternative subject positions, such as feminism. By rendering individual women politicians as highly visible, the discourse also leaves unproblematised, the status quo of masculine authority.

Discourses of Aboriginal Women Leaders

Controversy sells news and media organisations ‘are a commercial organisation, they’ve got to sell their newspaper’ (O’Regan 2001b, p. 4). The increasing concentration of media ownership in Australia and the predominance in the last decade of a commercial imperative, over the democratic ideal of the print media as a fourth estate, has led to an even greater focus upon media-generated controversy as a profitable news angle. Issues that can be constructed as conflict sell newspapers. For example, the majority of news stories about the five Anglo-Australian women politicians who featured in the majority of articles analysed in the previous section of this chapter, utilised conflict between women or within their political parties as the
predominant news angle. Such articles demonstrated the high news values accorded to conflict and confrontation as a profitable commodity within newspapers.

1. ‘Warring Blacks’

If conflict between Anglo-Australian middle-class female politicians sells newspapers, then so too does dissension between this group and Indigenous women leaders; or alternatively, between Aboriginal women leaders. Such conflict is often read as typical of such groups’ divisiveness, whereas dissension between economically privileged Anglo-Australian males is viewed as an individual affair. In other words, individuals within the former groups are asked to bear the burden of representation for their ethnic groups in ways that are not applied to majority ethnic males.

The most prevalent discourse for Aboriginal women leaders was that of the ‘warring black’ or variations upon this theme. It mainly occurred in articles featuring prominent NSW feminist magistrate, Pat O’Shane (refer also to Chapter Three). For example, it was noted that she had created ‘an uproar when she told ABC TV that the motives of the four women’ (who had made allegations of rape against ATSIC chair, Geoff Clark) ‘were questionable’. Bonnie Robertson, ‘who chaired an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander taskforce on violence’ was reported as stating that ‘Ms O’Shane’s comments were concerning because they may promote a view that women have a tendency to fabricate their own stories’ (Fyle and Taylor 2001, p. 1). A major article on the front page of The Age quotes former chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Evelyn Scott, stating that “there is a very real possibility that because of her remarks, Aboriginal women who have only just started to speak out … will now feel constrained from doing so” (Davies 2001, p. 1). A page one article reported that Pat O’Shane had launched attacks on Lowitja O’Donoghue, Boni Robertson and Evelyn Scott and “‘bleeding-heart’, middle-class feminists’ for failing ‘to support her when she first raised the issue of violence against Aboriginal women more than 20 years ago’ (Gordon and Taylor 2001, p. 1).
2. The ‘Naughty Nigger’

Linked to the warring blacks discourse is the construction of the subject position of the ‘naughty nigger’, that is, the angry/defiant/outspoken black. Doctor Marcia Langton, Chair of Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne, has argued that the Australian media’s quest for sensationalist news stories which simplify complex issues, leads to a form of racial stereotyping that includes the construction of binary oppositions of individual Aborigines as ‘the naughty nigger who … just doesn’t know how to behave properly in public, and … the good niggers who keep their mouths shut’ (O'Regan 2001a, p. 6). The *Sunday Age* anchored a photograph of Doctor O’Shane with the caption, ‘Magistrate Pat O’Shane: Defiant’ (Unknown 2001a, p. 3). O’Shane’s remarks were editorialised in *The Age* as ‘(a)n inexcusable error of judgement’ which raises ‘questions about the appropriateness of her continuing to fulfil her role as a magistrate’ (Editor 2001b, p. 12). O’Shane was described as ‘(o)utspoken’ and provoking a ‘storm’ for her comments (Benns 2001, p. 1) and as ‘lash(ing) out at what she claimed was a “malicious campaign” by the media’ (Videnieks 2001, p. 3).

By speaking out, Pat O’Shane appears to have been firmly constructed by much of the media as the ‘naughty nigger’ (and as a naughty feminist for putting allegiance to her ethnicity before women as a group). At times, she appears to be opposed to Evelyn Scott and other Aboriginal women such as Bonnie Robertson who are implicitly constructed as the ‘good niggers’ for, although they do not keep their mouths shut, their message supports the mainstream media’s own perspective on violence in Aboriginal communities. In addition, the discourse plays into older discourses of women (and black women in particular) as a threat to the (white) patriarchal social order (Muir 1996, p. 75).

On the one hand, in terms of the story in regard to Geoff Clark and Pat O’Shane, it could be argued that it is positive in that the voices of feminist Aboriginal women leaders be heard. This suggests that the race/sex debate in Australia may have moved on in some ways and that domestic violence in Aboriginal communities is now a public issue about which Aboriginal women feel empowered to speak out. On the other hand, the construction of Aborigines as warring adversaries perpetually in
conflict normalises Anglo-Australian constructions of squabbling blacks and suggests that for the print media at least, such controversy sells papers. Hence, although not necessarily agreeing with O'Shane's comments, what is crucial here is how the broadsheets' representational choices obscure other possible news frames and submerge more marginal media representations, for example, those which feature 'amicable ... (or) ... amorous, white-black or black-black relationships ...' (Probyn 2001, p. 30).

3. High Achiever Who Succeeds Against the Odds

This was a dominant discourse in the broadsheets' representations of Aboriginal women leaders. For example, a feature on Dawn Casey, former director of the National Museum in Canberra, notes that her life began 'in the shacks of far north Queensland half a century ago ... and culminates on the pinnacle of her highly respected position as director of the new National Museum of Australia in Canberra' (Powell 2001, p. 3). It thus implicitly supports the discourse of Australia as providing a fair go for all. In describing Casey's poverty-stricken childhood, the article observes that her parents 'believed education was important and sent their children to school every day', thus placing the decision about school attendance as purely a parental responsibility which her parents chose to exercise, rather than as part of a broader social context around Aboriginal children's continuing alienation from mainstream white education (Powell 2001, p. 3).

An obituary to Pat Dixon, local government councillor and Aboriginal leader, describes her as '(s)chooled at the mission without trained teachers, she was removed from her family at sixteen by the Aboriginal Welfare Board and taken to Sydney to work as a domestic servant ...', and then lists a series of extraordinary achievements as a local government councillor, Indigenous leader and endorsed ALP candidate for the seat of New England (Hughes 2001, p. 11). Ida West calls on the battler discourse when she notes after being chosen by the children of her local school as their hero and the figure they wished to paint for the celebration of Centenary of Federation, that the portrait, 'reflects me, what I've been through, from the hard times as a civilian widow up until the present time'' (Walker 2001a, p. 7). The twin
themes of both individual and institutional racism and poverty are central threads in these discourses of survival and battling against the odds.

On a positive note, the succeeding against the odds discourse is one that provides Aboriginal women leaders with an alternative discourse to that of victimhood. It potentially allows such women to draw on a certain amount of strength and pride in terms of their political struggles. It also elicits sympathy within the mainly white readership. However, such discourses can too easily become self-limiting and stereotype women in ways, which make it difficult to move beyond. The danger becomes that they are perennially stereotyped as the Aboriginal battler. For example, the construction of Dawn Casey as an achiever who has succeeded against the odds of racism and poverty, leaves little room for other subject positions. Although her achievements in a range of major positions within the public service are noted later in the article, the choice to commence the article with the discourse of succeeding against the odds frames the way in which we read the rest of the article. Hence, this discourse is paramount and her achievements almost secondary, functioning only to support and sustain the dominant discourse. Thus, in seeking to have their experiences valued, Aboriginality (similar to the construction of femininity) is constructed as victimhood.

In addition, the discourse serves to background dominant power relations within Australian society, in terms of the way in which ethnicity (Aboriginal) and class (working-class/lower socioeconomic) have intersected to position these women as battlers in life. As such, it serves to ‘defuse contentious … issues through an individualising focus on the personality and biography of the people involved’ (Greenfield and Williams 1988, p. 85). It underlines conservative news values and reinforces the existing status quo in terms of governmental policies through reinscribing neoliberal individualist white societal values of achievement through adversity. Finally, it reinscribes racist and sexist constructions of Aboriginal women leaders and suggests that only Aboriginals who have had a hard life, are good leaders. In addition, in portraying the women as survivors of adversity, such a discourse is simultaneously silent about the women’s ‘location within wider structures of power and subordination’, that is, the very structures that have created
the 'appalling odds' which these 'power-gatherers in times of crisis' are then lauded as overcoming (Pettman 1992, p. 65).

4. First Woman

In a similar fashion to Anglo-Australian women leaders, this gendered (and raced) news frame (Norris 1997, p. 161) was used in a number of articles when locating Aboriginal woman leaders. For example, Pat O’Shane is described as 'Australia's first female Aboriginal magistrate' (Editor 2001b, p. 12); (Fyfe and Taylor 2001, p. 1) and Marion Scrymgour, as the 'first Aboriginal woman elected to a territory parliament and only the second in the nation' (Toohey 2001, p. 4). The golden girl syndrome is connoted in such a discourse, for it places the burden of representation of Aboriginal womanhood upon a singular and very visible woman leader who is often asked to bear the brunt of the nation's expectations. It is interesting to note that this discourse is used as an epithet to describe Pat O’Shane in the early news reports of her comments about women and rape. As media opinion appeared to harden against her, the discourse was replaced by other epithets such as 'controversial' and 'outspoken' (Benns 2001, p. 1), thus signalling that as a golden girl she had well and truly been kicked off her pedestal.

On the other hand, one of the few articles in which a woman leader is given a right of reply, posits a new subject position for women who are placed in this essentialist frame. Brenda Croft – new senior curator of Aboriginal art at the National Gallery of Australia – uses humour to deflect anticipated criticism that her appointment is not based on merit, noting, "Young, indigenous, female – yep, it's all there, just tick the box". Her comments are used as the headline of the article – 'Young, indigenous, female – and in charge' (Laurie 2001b, p. 19), signalling that she is attempting to take charge not just of the curator's position but also perhaps of her own media representation. Croft’s comments connote the positive capital, which at times does attach itself to women of diverse backgrounds and age. It is perhaps not coincidental that Croft is young, relatively unknown and untested and therefore, less threatening to the white mainstream. Thus she may be provided with greater discursive space by the newspaper to construct a subject position that humorously challenges the merit discourse. In a somewhat similar vein, an interview with Rachel Perkins, calls on the
marginalised discourse of a ‘new generation’ to argue that what is needed in Indigenous film making is a shift ‘beyond the one dimensional – us and them, goodies and baddies . . . “white people as the baddies and the Aborigines are the poor victims”’ (Sexton 2001, p. 3). As if to support this statement, a large photograph of Rachel Perkins shows her gazing straight at the camera. Such an image is in contrast to the majority of images in the articles I collected, which depict Aboriginal women leaders gazing away from the camera. Do Croft and Perkins’ comments suggest that a younger generation of Aboriginal women leaders may be opening up promising new subject positions for Aboriginal women as leaders that challenge familiar stereotypes and dualisms?

5. Closer to Nature

The discourse of women leaders’ identification with the land was framed in a way which intertextually echoed colonial and romantic discourses of Aboriginal peoples as closer to nature and hence, more primitive and uncivilised. The discourse set up a binary opposition between the authentic/good Aborigine who is a part of the land and the inauthentic/bad (often urban and mixed race) Aborigine whose roots to the land no longer exist (Muir, 1996). The discourse is similar to gender dualisms in which women/nature is placed in opposition to men/science, thus feminising constructions of Aboriginality.

This discourse was most strikingly played out in a number of highly sympathetic articles about Lowitja O’Donoghue in The Australian after The Sun-Herald’s supposed revelations about her not being stolen from her family but voluntarily given up by her white father (refer also to Chapter Three). For example, in an extensive piece in its weekend magazine, the front page of the magazine contains a stunning colour photograph of Lowitja O’Donoghue bathed in the light of a setting sun, looking thoughtfully out to the side of the photograph. The opening paragraph of the sympathetic story tells us that she is ‘glad to be on her people’s land, the Yankunytjatjara homelands of central Australia’ (Rintoul 2001a, p. 12). Two more colour photographs within the article show respectively, an empty landscape with the setting sun and Lowitja O’Donoghue standing in the virtual darkness, with the
The placement of O’Donoghue in a series of bushland images reinforces the discourse of O’Donoghue as an authentic/good Aborigine who has, with the assistance of The Australian, gone ‘home’ to her ‘ancestral lands ... sixty five years after being placed in a home for “half-castes”’ (Rintoul 2001a, p. 12). However, such representations also reinforce the discourse of Aboriginal women as victims – in O’Donoghue’s case – of her white father and the white patriarchal institutions that raised her. For example, frequent references were made to O’Donoghue’s tears (Rintoul 2001e, p. 4); (Rintoul 2001c, p. 1). None of the photographs shows Lowitja O’Donoghue looking directly at the camera. The fact that I found the article and photographs deeply moving attests to the power of such discourses. On the one hand, Lowitja O’Donoghue herself has strategically used The Australian as a vehicle through which she can attempt to redress the misconceptions and distortions that she felt had flowed from the publication of The Sun-Herald story and give her side of the story. On the other hand, the final article in particular, by positioning O’Donoghue so firmly within the dualisms of authentic/good versus inauthentic/bad Aborigine; nature/culture; women/men; victim/perpetrator of violence, in many ways constructs and reconfigures the very racism she and The Australian are intending to combat.

6. Whites Versus Blacks: Gender Versus Race

In terms of gendered and raced news values, conflict between women appears to be high on the two broadsheets’ agenda. If it is between prominent black and white feminists, for example, in relation to the Pat O’Shane story, the news values appear to increase. For example, the Liberal politician, Senator Amanda Vanstone, the Minister assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women, was reported as describing Pat O’Shane’s comments as ‘disappointing, inappropriate and disparaging to women’ (Connolly and Burke 2001, p. 6). Prue Goward, former head of the Office of the Status of Women, argued that the debate illustrated that ‘reconciliation constitutes just another element of wedge politics’ and that this view was supported by Aboriginal women themselves who saw reconciliation as ‘just a word’ (Goward 2001, p. 19).
White feminists were also given prominent coverage in terms of their thoughts. Dr Nina Puren, former editor of the *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, wrote that Pat O'Shanec's comments reinforced 'a patriarchal stereotype of sexual assault victims as unreliable witnesses' (Puren 2001, p. 13). Pamela Bone, associate editor of *The Age*, condemned O'Shanec's remarks (Bone 2001, p. 7). In contrast, Dr Jocelynne Scutt, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner for Tasmania, in a comment piece, disagreed with O'Shanec's comments but noted that the 'next time a white male judge' made similar comments, she would be 'waiting for the prominent men now critiquing Dr O'Shanec to come forward with an equally powerful critique of their fellows. But I won't be holding my breath' (Scutt 2001, p. 17).

Black feminist leaders were also given space for comment. For example, Jackie Huggins argued that the 'commitment to tackling the problem of violence and sexual abuse in indigenous communities so far ... (was) ... 'very inadequate' and contended that a 'consideration of the impact of colonisation and the erosion of traditional men's roles and women's independent structures ... (was) ... something missing from the debate so far' (Saunders 2001, p. 5). The voices of ordinary Aboriginal women were not heard.

That feminists, both black and white, were given space to discuss the issues that arose from the Pat O'Shanec story was one positive feature of the media coverage. It suggests that liberal discourses of feminism have been accepted as part of the 'common sense' views of Australian society. However, the choice of white feminists -- generally liberal -- and the foregrounding of feminist views that raised the intersection of race and gender, meant that the white feminist/black women dichotomy was largely perpetuated. In particular, one of the most concerning issues about the way in which the debate was constructed as a series of dualisms by the media, is the question of who benefits from these dominant representational choices? As Fred Chaney, Chair of Reconciliation Australia observed, 'Are we going to be in a position in five ... years' time when we simply revisit this debate in the latest flurry of scandal?' (Saunders 2001, p. 5). The jury is still out on this key question.
7. Matriarch

This was a marginalised discourse, which was called upon to locate leaders such as Evelyn Scott and Lowitja O’Donoghue. The women were represented as imbued with the authority of their age and status within the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. An article about Evelyn Scott encouraging Aboriginal women to speak out about abuse in their own communities is accompanied by the headline, ‘Abused children “keep it in their little hearts for a long time”’ (Gordon 2001b, p. 2). A photograph of a thoughtful looking, white haired Scott gazing sideways out of the photo, reinforces Scott’s image as a matriarchal figure. In addition, the foregrounding in the article of her call to Aboriginal women and Australian women in general to speak out about abuse, along with the use of her title as ‘the former head of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation’, reinforces her authority (Davies 2001, p. 1).

A feature on artist Julie Dowling and her writer sister Carol, quotes Julie as stating, ‘I feel that Carol and I are counsellors to a lot of people, like agony aunts. We’re the next generation of matriarchs, and we feel a lot of concern for people we know’ (Laurie 2001a, 31). A review of an SBS television program featuring the Fregon community of South Australia, calls on the nature/culture divide when noting that in this community, ‘things do change, especially through the natural authority that emanates from the women of the NPY …’ (Walker 2001b, p. 20).

The final quotation above encapsulates the problematic nature of the female elder/matriarchal discourse. On the one hand, it invests the women with a level of power and authority that, in part, recognises the authority invested in Aboriginal women as ‘keepers of the family … bearers of subjugated knowledges …’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 20). On the other hand, the media use of epithets such as ‘the former head of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation’ to describe Evelyn Scott (Davies 2001, p. 1) and ‘one of Australia’s most prominent black leaders’ to describe Lowitja O’Donoghue (Rintoul 2001b, p. 1), also suggests that much of the women’s authority is primarily located and conferred by white Australia upon the women. If white Australia (in the guise of the media) has the power to confer such authority, it also has the power to remove it, as was attempted in Lowitja O’Donoghue’s case. In
addition, the use of the matriarchal discourse, while on the one hand, constructing a subject position that suggests the authority of the women, also runs the risk of reducing the women’s authority to a stereotypical maternal discourse in which the authority is seen as ‘natural’ rather than the product of a culture which the women themselves have had a hand in shaping. Greenfield and Williams observe that

(i)fa ... newspaper article operates as if power is a possession (of whites) rather than a relation (between whites and Aborigines) ... (women can be) ... de-politicised and located as a ... motherly individual, as if this purportedly matriarchal relation does not entail a politics (Greenfield and Williams 1988, p. 79).

Discourses of Minority Ethnic Women Leaders

There were a number of contrasts between representations of minority ethnic women leaders and the other two categories of women. Firstly, unlike the representations of Anglo-Australian or Aboriginal women leaders, there was no concentrated media focus upon an individual woman. Only two women were featured twice: Gail Kelly, South-African born and raised chief executive of St George’s Bank (featured in the hard news section) (Saville, 2001 p. 4); (White, 2001 p. 2); and Mojgan Khadem, a film maker who came to Australia as a religious refugee from Iran as a child (featured in the soft news section of the paper) (Williams, 2001); (Wynhausen, 2001).

Secondly, the majority of the remainder of the articles on the women was located in the soft news section, that is, employment, arts or features. The marginalisation of minority ethnic women leaders in these sections of the newspapers can be explained by the sexism that underlies dominant news values, which legitimise politics and economics. Given the fact that there are very few women from minority ethnic backgrounds in mainstream Australian politics at any level\(^\text{10}\), minority ethnic women

\(^{10}\) Immigrants from non English speaking backgrounds make up 23 percent of Australia’s population. However, only ‘8 per cent of Federal members of Parliament elected in 1998’ were from this background, despite the fact that this group is ‘at least as well educated as the Australian-born population’, and has ‘a history of fifty years of substantial immigration’ (Cope, 2000); (Sinclair and Wilson 2002, pp. 105-106).
leaders were largely excluded from the hard news pages of the two broadsheets, except for the occasional businesswoman (Carla Zampatti) and Chief Executive Officer of a bank (Gail Kelly). The rarity of such women when they do appear in the hard news section, in turn reinforces a construction of such minority ethnic women leaders as the 'miraculous exceptions' to the hegemonic rule of Anglo-Australian, masculinist authority and assists in fostering the belief that our society is 'egalitarian and meritocratic after all' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977); (Moi 2000, p. 321). Moreover, the placement of such articles in the hard news section reflects the masculinist nature of news values in which the business sector is accorded greater recognition than areas that are traditionally considered more feminised such as the arts or entertainment.

Finally, in contrast to the two other categories of women leaders, the most common representations of minority ethnic women leaders were drawn from the field of business, with just under one-third of the women located within this site. It is a phenomenon that is discussed further in the following section.

1. High Achiever Who: (a) Succeeds Against the Odds; or (b) Whose Hard Work Brings Rewards

This was the most dominant discourse for minority ethnic women leaders and was largely located in the soft news sections of the broadsheets. It appeared in two variations — those women who were located as succeeding against the odds (generally of racism) and those for whom hard work had brought just rewards. The latter variation in particular drew upon neoliberal discourses of meritocracy and individual enterprise.

For example, Gail Kelly called upon a neoliberal discourse of individual aspiration, hard work and achievement to note that 'she had wanted to be a bank chief executive for the past four years'. When asked how she manages to juggle career and caring responsibilities for her children, Kelly legitimises her position as honorary male in the banking sector by eschewing feminist discourses, noting that '“Achieving
balance with your family is always a difficult task for everyone … regardless of whether you are male or female …’ (White 2001, p. 2). The discourse of hard work is utilised by Cindy Pan, doctor and media personality, who observes that, ‘‘(w)hen I was doing medicine, I was still doing all my dancing and I started doing modelling as well’ … She worked in the theatre at night and during the day started working in general practice …’ (Elliott 2001, p. 3). Similarly, scientist Acrem Taji, advising young people on a career in science, ‘stressed that success involved a long and hard journey and to reach your goal you must be ready to work …’ (Gudgeon 2001, p. 1).

Succeeding against the odds of racism is invoked in a number of articles, including the story featuring Cindy Pan, who notes how she was taunted as a child for her Chinese origins (Elliott 2001; p. 3); and in another article in which the anti-semitism suffered by Neilma Gantner’s Myer family is observed (Cadzow, 2001). Interestingly, both articles explicitly locate the racism as belonging to the past, with Cindy Pan commenting that, ‘30 years ago people were very racist. There wasn’t the same acceptance of Chinese …’ (Elliott 2001, p. 3). By locating this critique as part of a history that is now past, Pan defuses any criticism of contemporary Australian society. The egalitarian mythology of Australia as a nation that provides a ‘fair go for all’ is reinscribed.

In contrast, the discourse of social justice is extremely marginalised. A profile of Katherine The-White, Chief Executive Officer of Reputation Qest, draws upon the twin discourses of social justice (learned from her mother) and business (learned from her father) to argue a case for companies to act morally in order to increase their bottom line (Houston 2001, p. 1). Even in this article, social justice must be articulated to a discourse of economic profitability in order to justify its stance.

In a similar way to the high achiever stories for Aboriginal women leaders, the biographical details and individual achievements of these minority ethnic women leaders are foregrounded. In locating these women within neoliberal discourses of individual success, the broader story of unequal power relations in Australia between its Anglo-Australian mainstream and minority ethnic groups, is silenced or marginalised. The discourse renders invisible structural and institutional racism and
the way in which dominant relations of power in Australia are constructed through inequitable relations of ethnicity, class and gender.

2. The Successful Businesswoman

This was a dominant discourse whose prevalence suggests that the business sphere may provide a space for minority ethnic women which exists to a far lesser extent in the Anglo-Australian and Aboriginal political spheres. The women who were portrayed as business successes came from a range of ethnic backgrounds (refer to commencement of chapter) and were variously described as having a ‘very, very successful business career …’ (Lacey 2001, p. 14); or as a ‘businesswoman who … has an impressive list of achievements’ (Carson 2001a, p. 3).

The successful businesswoman discourse reinforces a particular stereotype of the immigrant success story based on neoliberal discourses of individual enterprise and hard work overcoming the odds. Because one of the hard news values of broadsheets is that of business success (or the failure of a previously successful business), the successful businesswoman appeared to provide one of the few legitimating discourses for minority ethnic women. It was also a discourse drawn on by former Prime Minister Paul Keating in the early 1990s when promoting closer ties to our South-East Asian neighbours.

Even though the minority ethnic women leaders were located in a diverse range of occupations, the predominance of representations of successful businesswomen suggests the sexist nature of the news values operating in the two broadsheets. Minority ethnic women leaders from other fields such as education and arts are backgrounded and rendered marginal and largely invisible to the Anglo-Australian core. Hence, prevailing but paradoxical stereotypes about minority ethnic women as either the occasionally successful individual arising as if out of nowhere, or on the other hand, as passive and locked within patriarchal cultures, are reinforced, and the dualism between the invisible Anglo-Australian centre and a minority ethnic periphery, is maintained.
Moreover, businesswoman Eve Mahlab makes a crucial point about the symbolic violence to which contemporary women in business are subjected when she notes that they have to be, ‘fairly careful … because they’ll be stigmatised and punished in the corporate world if they’re too assertive about women’s issues, or radical’ (Mitchell, 2001). Gail Kelly’s response to her caring responsibilities noted in the preceding high achieving discourse section, could be read in the light of this comment.

3 Embodying Minority Ethnic Women Leaders

This was a dominant discourse in which consistent reference was made to the women’s physical appearance, bodies and/or demeanour. Like the raced references to Aboriginal women leaders, such women’s ethnicity was rendered visible and marked as both oppositional and inferior to Anglo-Australian masculine constructions of authority. In turn, the lack of reference to the skin colour or ethnic markers of the latter group, rendered their ethnicity invisible, unproblematic and hegemonic in terms of authority.

The chief means by which this marking occurred was through the location of the various women leaders on an implied ethnic continuum in which they were variously placed as part of an ‘ambivalent space of “almost the same … (as us) … but not quite”’ (Carson 2001a, pp. 45-46). Alternatively, they were positioned by the journalists as further away from the centre and thus, closer to nature/uncivilised/childlike. Those who fitted the ‘almost the same … (as us) …’ category were described in ways which hailed their achievements. Yet this positive valuation was subtly undercut and contained through the explicit foregrounding of their ethnicity. In other articles, the women leaders’ achievements were hailed but simultaneously trivialised through the calling upon of both sexist and racist stereotypes, which located them within the subject positions of the feminised and exoticised other. Both techniques operate as a form of symbolic violence.

For example, Catherine Ng, Melbourne City Councillor, is described as a ‘businesswoman who came from Hong Kong’ and is valorised for her ‘impressive list of achievements’ (Carson 2001, p. 3). She possesses both the desired qualities of
Asian economic success, but remains ‘not quite’ the same ‘as us’ in terms of her ethnicity – an ambivalent subject position, which can be ‘a source of power but also a trap, a predicament’ (Ang 1996, p. 46). In a similar fashion, a feature upon Sophie Panopoulos, a Liberal politician, discusses her early upbringing as a Greek-Australian. She is described as having a ‘large red smile that became synonymous with Panopoulos during the republic debate . . .’, and is portrayed as ‘the Liberal Party’s version of Natasha Stott Despoja . . .’ (Crossweller 2001, p. 11). On the one hand, the redness of her smile appears to connote the dangerous female, all the more dangerous because her marked ethnicity further others her from the Anglo-Australian centre. On the other hand, her gendered and raced diversity is depicted as a form of symbolic capital, for she ‘promises to be a breath of fresh air in the stuffy world of politics’ (Crossweller 2001, p. 11).

In contrast to the preceding descriptions of women who are succeeding within the metafield of power of Australian politics, the two Chinese and one Iranian women who had achieved success in the feminised sector of the Arts, were positioned through a clear inscription of difference/ inferiority. Their placement further along the ethnic continuum was achieved through describing the women as if they were closer to child status and thus ‘subject only to the laws of nature’ (Muecke 1992, p. 32). For example, the stereotype of Chinese women as child-like, that is, youthful, small in stature and perennially laughing (refer to Chapter Two), is called upon by a journalist when describing Chinese-Australian doctor and media personality, Cindy Pan. She is noted to be ‘cute’ and as, ‘breaking into the laughter that determined to break into every paragraph she speaks . . .’ (Elliott 2001, p. 3). The age of the opera singer, Shu-Cheen Yu, is speculated about by the journalist and we are told that ‘there’s the usual skirmish about age one has with opera singers and she says she’s “between 30 and 40” . . . (but) . . . close up and scarcely made up, she looks no more than 30 . . .’ She is described as talking about ‘the early years with sparkle and humour’, and after performing some songs, ‘worked the room tirelessly, bestowing smiles on everyone who wanted to meet her’ (Jones 2001b, p. 3).

The stereotype of some non Anglo-Australians as emotional, intense and ‘over the top’ is drawn upon constantly in the article on film maker Mojgan Khadem. Her ‘dark eyes’ are described as ‘welling up a little . . .’ when discussing her family’s
propensity to tears. She is depicted as ‘at her most operatically intense when she talks about her quest’ and is portrayed further on in the article as ‘get(ting) carried away, bobbing along on a river of rhetoric’ (Wynhauscn 2001, p. 4). The fact that Khadem’s family came to Australia as religious refugees from Iran is mentioned further on in the article, but there appears to be little or no connection made in the article between the family’s ongoing sorrow and their experiences as refugees. Instead, the nature/culture dualism is called upon, with sorrow and an intense passion about one’s work and faith, trivialised and degraded as the naturalised attributes of stereotypically emotional Iranians.

Compare the preceding descriptions with the representational choices called upon when describing St George’s chief bank executive, Gail Kelly11. Her physical and cultural similarities to Anglo-Australian males are focused upon with great approval – no ambivalent ethnically marked space here! For example, Kelly’s height and her father’s status as a major rugby player, are equated with her pseudo-masculine authority. She is described as ‘hard to miss … the 182-centimetre daughter of a South African sporting star radiates leadership...’ (Saville 2001, p. 4). Her ethnicity is marked, but only as a means of emphasising its similarity with the valued Anglo-Australian core, including the symbolic capital associated in Australia with sporting success and her location within the high status banking sub field. As a female she is still ‘other’ but far closer to the core than the other minority ethnic leaders who are not from Anglo-origins.

4. Feminism

This was a minor discourse, which some ethnic minority women leaders explicitly drew upon, either as a subject position, or as a mode of analysis. For example, film director Mojgan Khadem discusses her childhood as an Iranian member of the Baha’i faith, noting that in these families, ‘the girls are already secluded and controlled … Nobody ever asks them, Who are you? What does your heart tell you? … They never

11 I decided to include Gail Kelly as a minority ethnic women leader, by virtue of her South-African birth and upbringing. Her surname suggests however, that she may be of Irish origins. The broadsheets’ representations of her also imply that she is viewed as part of a honorary Anglo-Australian centre. I included her nonetheless, as her representations make a telling contrast to other minority ethnic women leaders whose ethnicity is clearly located as other and inferior.
dare to ask themselves”. She observes that in contrast, “I’ve just gone and done what my heart told me to do” (Wynhausen 2001, p. 4). Khadem evokes a feminist discourse which renders visible the intersection of gender and ethnicity, for in her film, the “heroine … (is) … conceived when her Afghan father wins her Aboriginal mother in a card game … Finally she has to give up everything else to claim herself” (Wynhausen 2001, p. 4). Mary Kalantzis, an Australian historian, calls upon a similar discourse in her analysis of federation, noting that in the new constitution, there “was no mention of universal franchise … because … women couldn’t vote until the Franchise Act of 1902, an act that at the same time explicitly barred Aborigines from voting .…” (Kalantzis 2001, p. 13).

In a profile of Eve Mahlab, ‘(h)igh-flying feminist businesswoman’, Eve Mahlab calls upon a marginalised discourse of socialist feminism when noting that

opportunities in the workforce for women have increased enormously. On the other hand, for most women, incomes have gone down … there are small numbers of both men and women usually … in the same sort of class … doing brilliantly …” (Mitchell 2001, p. 42).

Mahlab firmly rejects a neoliberal postfeminist discourse, arguing that in terms of contemporary women, ‘(T)here is no collective approach like the one that we took … (It) … is just not part of their agenda …’ (Mitchell 2001, p. 47). Neilma Gantner reveals the sexism of the Myer Company, when she observes that, “We were never invited to be on the board, my sister and I … it was a male chauvinist arrangement in the early days” (Cadzow 2001, p. 34).

6. Outsider as Positive Capital

This was a minor discourse in which ethnic minority women either positioned themselves or were positioned as outsiders. On the one hand, outsider status rendered some of the women leaders vulnerable to racism. On the other hand, it was drawn upon as positive capital. For example, Eve Mahlab drew upon the outsider as capital discourse and linked it with the business discourse of diversity, reflecting that:
I constantly feel like an outsider ... I learned .. that there is a benefit to being different. I actually add something of greater value to the group in the way of diversity, and I get something in return, which is probably appreciation and ... success ... (Mitchell 2001, p. 42).

Neilma Gantner is reported as describing herself as "the black sheep of the family ...", a role she 'enjoys'. She is noted at family gatherings as 'the person sitting slightly apart from the action with a subversive glint in her eye' (Cadzow 2001, p. 29). However, Mozgan Khadem’s status as an outsider in Iran compared to Australia, most starkly illustrates the paradoxical nature of the outsider as capital dualism. Her diversity in Iran may lead to her death – in Australia, it is viewed as a marketable commodity – as long as it remains contained within the discourse of the exotic and other. Moreover, both Faye Mahlab and Neilma Gantner possess sufficient social and cultural capital as legitimate members of the business field and, as daughters of Jewish Europeans, are possibly viewed in 2001 as closer along the ethnic continuum to the Anglo-Australian core than Khadem, whose Iranian and Baha'i faith origins and position within the feminised arts field, provides her with less symbolic capital.

Absences in the Discourses: Class as a Crucial Gap in Representations of Women’s Leadership

All three leadership groups were represented through a discourse of achievement within the two broadsheets. However, the way in which this discourse was played out amongst the three different ethnic groups varied widely. Aboriginal women leaders were represented as having succeeded against the odds of poverty, racism and sexism (triple disadvantage); and minority ethnic women leaders as succeeding against the odds of racism and sexism (double disadvantage) or for whom hard work had brought rewards. Anglo-Australian female politicians were often constructed as part of a sexist representational regime as golden girls (single disadvantage). The issue of class is silenced in Anglo-Australian women leaders’ representations, foregrounded in Aboriginal women leaders as members of a former underclass or working-class and hinted at in representations of minority ethnic women leaders as largely

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12 For example, Sandra Levy, the producer, took on Khadem’s film because 'she was intrigued by the epic scale of the project and the exoticism of the script' (Wynhausen 2001, p. 5).
members of the middle-class whose (business) success and hard work has reaped its rewards.

In terms of representations of Anglo-Australian women politicians, only two articles foreground the class origins of the politician being interviewed. A third article implies it and a fourth article refers to the voters from vulnerable backgrounds that will lose out in the ALP’s election victory. For example, much is made of the ALP politician Leonie Short’s working-class background (an obvious story angle as Ryan is a solidly middle-class seat that normally voted Liberal) and the way in which ‘class discrimination’ had politicised her (McGregor 2001a, p. 8). However, there is no broader dissection of how Short’s entry into politics also says much about the hegemonic nature of class within Australian politics. In contrast, an article on Jody Moore, an independent who is also running for the seat of Ryan, emphasises her working-class background and the fact that her current occupation (stripper) is made much of in the news. It unusually interrogates the middle-class hegemony of Australian politics, drawing on feminist discourses to analyse Moore’s representations in the media, arguing that they reveal ‘reflex prejudices against the working class, blatantly sexual chicks, chicks in general and politicians who choose to dress in something other than 100-piece suits’ (Tom 2001, p. 17). Nonetheless, the article is placed in the soft news section, is headlined ‘A politician with naked ambition’ and features a photograph of Jody Moore performing her stripping act.

Class as a predominant feature of the Liberal Party is alluded to in a feature on Janette Howard, wife of Prime Minister John Howard. She is described as possessing, ‘the blow-dried hair and immaculate appearance, so well turned out, such a quintessentially Liberal wife kind of image’ (Fraser et al. 2001, p. 13). Finally, in a profile of Jenny Macklin, the Deputy Leader of the Federal ALP, is reported as stating after the ALP’s election loss that, “the biggest losers are the people who really depend on the ALP, particularly in very tough times” (Rintoul 2001d, p. 18).

In contrast to the representations of Anglo-Australian women politicians in which their largely middle-class origins are rendered invisible as part of the natural order of Anglo-Australian leadership, a socioeconomically underprivileged background appears to be common sense for Aboriginal women leaders such as Dawn Casey, Ida West, Pat Dixon and Lowitja O’Donoghue and by analogy, other Aboriginal women
leaders. It is perhaps why a comment made by Professor Marcia Langton of the University of Melbourne in regard to her decision to send her daughter to a private school in Melbourne in order to avoid the racism of public schools, was given front page coverage in *The Australian* (Yaman 2001, p. 1) (refer also to Chapter Eleven). An unspoken aspect of the controversy possibly was that it reversed naturalised, asymmetrical relations of ruling, for here was a middle-class, privileged Aboriginal woman leader making a decision to increase the cultural capital of her daughter – a decision ordinarily seen as the property of Anglo-Australia and some minority ethnic groups. For example, had it been a Chinese-Australian leader making such a remark, would it have been given front page coverage in a major broadsheet?

In contrast to the Aboriginal women leaders who were represented as almost universally coming from poor, deprived backgrounds and for whom racism and poverty were inextricably linked, there was a fairly consistent backgrounding about class in representations of women from minority ethnic backgrounds. Reading between the lines however, it would appear that a number of the women came from middle-class backgrounds (for example, Cindy Pan, Kathrine The-White whose father was a mining engineer, Shu-Chen Yu whose father was a conductor and mother a singer; Gail Kelly’s father was a ‘sporting star’), with one from a skilled working-class background (Mojgan Kadem’s father was a mechanic in Iran).

The discourse of class was explicitly foregrounded in two articles on minority ethnic women leaders, which referred to the upper-class, that is, a class, which was clearly different from the middle-class norm of the two broadsheets. For example, an article on businesswoman and SBS chairperson Carla Zampatti refers to the ‘(s)ocialites Margaret Rose and Caroline Laws …’, who were ‘two of Zampatti’s “special friends” invited’ to the launch (Jackson 2001, p. 3). Numerous references to the wealth of the Myer family are made a profile of Neilma Gantner, ‘the Auntie Mamish matriarch of the wealthy Myer clan’ (Cadzow 2001, p. 26). The class backgrounds of the other women leaders were unclear.

Hence, with the exception of the foregrounding of the upper-class, class was largely backgrounded within the representations of minority ethnic women leaders. Thus, the
middle-class appeared to function as the silent norm from which representations of the women leaders were measured.

**Absences in the Discourses: (Anglo-Australian) Whiteness as the Silent Norm in Representations of Women’s Leadership**

In the broadsheets’ representations of Anglo-Australian female politicians, ethnicity was overwhelmingly represented as a problem for ‘them’ (that is, non Anglo-Australians) but not concerning ‘us’, except as compassionate members of the assumed Anglo-Australian mainstream. ‘Our’ ethnicity as members of this mainstream was not interrogated or rendered problematic. In addition, in the two examples in which ethnicity is raised as an issue, it is the ethnicity of Indigenous Australians which is referred to – there is an absence of people from other minority ethnic backgrounds. For example, in an article which profiled Leonie Short, the ALP candidate for the federal seat of Ryan, it is briefly noted that she was ‘bolstered by a fearless mother … who … scandalised … Temora’ because, as judge of a local baby show, she ‘chose an Aboriginal baby’ as its winner (McGregor 2001a, p. 8). An article on the newly-elected Clare Martin, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, dwells at length on social issues such as racism, with Martin castigated for showing a ‘lack of leadership on social issues in a part of the world that is arguably the most damaged in Australia’ (Toohey 2002, p. 27). However, ethnicity remains the property of the ‘damaged’ others whom Martin has been elected to represent.

The virtual silence around ethnicity in articles featuring Anglo-Australian women politicians was in major contrast to the emphasis upon ethnicity in representations of both Aboriginal and minority ethnic women leaders. It is a common media frame that to ‘indicate a person’s race/colour only when they are not white’ (Spelman 1988, p. 169). It suggests that the hegemonic construction of the white, Anglo-Australian as natural leader still appears to be the largely invisible centre from which representations of ethnically marked ‘other’ women leaders are constructed in the two broadsheets. In addition, the visibility of the discourse of the underprivileged or working-class origins of many Aboriginal women leaders, as opposed to the silence of discourses around the middle-class origins of Anglo-Australian and minority ethnic women leaders, also appears to suggest the hegemony of the subject position
of the Anglo-Australian middle-class in particular, when it comes to the construction of leadership as a norm in Australian society. The marginalisation of discourses around whiteness in the two broadsheets is striking. For example, in the broadsheets' representations of Aboriginal women leaders, it is 'black leaders' who are at the centre of conflict, not 'white leaders'; it is 'black women' who must bear the burden of violence in their communities, not white women or men (Leitch 1998, p. 124). Hence, despite the prominence and visibility of Aboriginal women leaders' representations, the women are represented as largely standing outside of and marginal to, the hegemonic Anglo-Australian middle-class subject position of leadership. It is this location, which still sets the rules of engagement and dominates the field in the two broadsheets.

This is not to say that the representations of Aboriginal women leaders examined in this chapter do not suggest that Aboriginal women have not made some progress in terms of challenging, disrupting and reworking the rules of engagement in the media field. Their visibility and the presence of their voices within key debates around Aboriginal issues, suggests a level of empowerment and agency, which is a positive sign. However, as Steven Mickler also observes in his analysis of the historical shifts in representations of Aboriginal people in the Western Australian media from the 1960s to the 1990s, the material effects of high visibility for disadvantaged groups such as Aborigines are that, '(a)attention-getting is often equated with service provision in equal measure when the actual relation is sometimes the reverse' (Mickler 1998, p. 210). Greater visibility does not always equate with increases in power. Moreover, the discourses through which the women are constructed as subjects do appear to suggest a fairly limited and limiting, stereotypical set of knowledge about Aboriginal women leaders that foreground ethnicity and at times, a specific class.

In my opening to this chapter, I sketched a picture of the racial tensions, which were a key theme within the media in 2001. Peter Gale has argued that the narrative of whiteness in the media is significant as 'part of an ongoing discourse on race which represents the privilege of whiteness as natural' (Gale 2000, p. 266). In particular, he posits that
media discourse continues to play a significant role in constituting the symbolic markers of an Australian national identity which aims at maintaining white privilege as being in the national interest and social inequality as natural (Gale 2000, p. 266).

He contends that the ‘challenge for oppositional voices’ is to construct ‘a competing discourse’ which ‘confront(s) the politics of division and offer(s) a more inclusive narrative on our national identity based on the strengths of cultural and linguistic difference’ (Gale 2000, p. 266).

I find Gale’s observations particularly useful for I feel that they capture the way in which the logic of the discourses I have examined in regard to Aboriginal women leaders appeared to position them in quite insistent, but contradictory ways. On the one hand, it is positive that there appears to be a major increase in the number of Aboriginal women leaders represented in the broadsheets, particularly in terms of major issues such as violence. On the other hand, I have great unease that the subject positions upon which the Aboriginal leaders are constructed, appear to endorse Anglo-Australian ethnicity as the hegemonic norm. Moreover, as bell hooks observes in the quotation which opens this chapter, the sheer ‘presence’ of black women in fashion magazines or broadsheets may not necessarily ‘challenge racist stereotypes’, but may in fact ‘reinscribe’ them (hooks 1997, p. 123).

In the light of Gale’s comments, it is noteworthy that the three key stories running on Aboriginal women leaders in the two broadsheets in 2001, were media-generated and founded upon the twin discourses of raced and gendered division and fear. The subject location of Aboriginal leaders such as Lowitja O’Donoghue, Evelyn Scott and Pat O’Shane within a media-generated context of fear and division may say more about the media and non Aboriginal society’s own fears and concerns about national identity and the fragility of their position at the epicentre of the Australian mainstream.

**Does Visibility Equate With Power?**

Jeannie Martin has noted that three large scale enquiries into representations of Non English Speaking Background peoples in the Australian media from the late 1980s,
argued that these groups were represented in Australian television as: foreign, invasive, exotic, criminal, violent, comical, sexual or not represented at all. Non English Speaking Background Australian women were virtually absent from television advertisements featuring Australians and Aboriginal women were not represented at all (Martin 1996a, pp. 146-147, 149). Georgina Tsolidis has noted that 'cultural difference is minimally represented' in Australian culture and that '(i)t would be difficult to recognise the ethnic minority in this popular culture' because the "popular" in popular culture is 'defined so narrowly'. She observes that the narrow definition of popular in Australia assumes 'an unproblematic and hegemonic understanding of "Australianness"' (Tsolidis 2001, pp. 101, 117). An article in The Sydney Morning Herald in 2000 argued that in Australian television, '(m)igrant Australia is still a tribe of ghosts, fluttering along the edges of mainstream TV..." (Verghis 2000, p. 12).

Norman Fairclough has noted that despite

a significant increase in the salience of women's political voices in the media ... an interesting question is how those women who figure prominently in the media ... are constructed — sheer presence is not in itself a straightforward measure of greater equity (Fairclough 1995b, pp. 186-187).

I agree with Fairclough but would also add that another interesting question is in which categories of women has there been a 'significant increase'? My research appears to reveal that at least in the two broadsheets examined, there is a significant silence in terms of minority ethnic women leaders' voices and hence, a major dearth of subject locations from which such women can articulate new subjectivities. The few voices which are heard, appear to be either exoticised, or placed in an ambivalent discursive space which positions them as 'not quite the same as' the hegemonic, middle-class, Anglo-Australian masculinist leadership core. Moreover, in a similar fashion to the representations of Aboriginal women leaders Pat O'Shane, Evelyn Scott and Lowitja O'Donoghue, a discourse of division and fear played out through the media and politically-generated Tampa and Children Overboard crises, simultaneously located particular minority ethnic groups such as Muslims, as 'the
other’. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the most stereotypical depiction of a woman leader in 2001, was that of Mojgan Khadem, a Baha’i Iranian.

What is most striking about the broadsheets’ representations of minority ethnic women leaders is the sheer paucity of representations. As bell hooks’ opening quotation and my analysis of women’s leadership representations imply, visibility does not necessarily equate with power (hooks 1997, p. 123). Yet the broadsheets’ overwhelming focus on a small number of Anglo-Australian and Aboriginal women leaders suggests the face of authority remains overwhelmingly Anglocentric, located within the metafield of politics but with the occasional nod to Aboriginality. The small numbers of minority ethnic women leaders and their reinscription in largely stereotypical subject locations, suggests that in contrast to Aboriginal women leaders, minority ethnic women leaders remain like “(m)ulticulturalism … the daggy cousin of radical chic postcolonialism …” (Gunew 1993, p. 54).

**Drawing the Threads Together**

An examination of the two broadsheets’ representations of three different categories of Australian women leaders, has revealed a series of dominant discourses and significant silences, gaps and marginalisations. It has noted that ethnicity and class are significant absences within representations of Anglo-Australian women leaders and that this invisibility connotes a taken-for-grantedness about being Anglo-Australian and middle-class which in turn, confers a significant ethnic and class advantage upon this group of women. This is not to deny the sexist and limited ways in which representations of women politicians continue to be constructed, but to make the point that the construction of Anglo-Australian whiteness, like other forms of ethnicity, ‘is not a biological category but a political one’ (Ang 1995, p. 69).

Hence, I would disagree with Peter Gale when he comments that the politics of representation is about whiteness as ‘the mainstream’, with ‘blackness … “racialised” as the other’ (Gale 2000, p. 266). Using terms such as ‘whiteness’ or ‘blackness’ essentialise these categories and render invisible the ways in which the ‘specific cultural dynamics’ of these ‘interrelationships are played out’ within the
context of the two broadsheets’ representations of women leaders (Ang 1995, p. 69). The way in which class and ethnicity are silently constructed in various leadership discourses as largely masculinist, Anglo-Australian and middle-class properties, allows Anglo-Australian women leaders to enjoy the privileges, which flow from their closeness to this subject position. Hence, the construction of the subject position, Anglo-Australian middle-class woman leader, operates as a form of symbolic violence by locating Aboriginal and minority ethnic women leaders as variously ‘other’ or, at times, ‘almost’ but never quite ‘us’. Moreover, Aboriginal women leaders in the Indigenous/non Indigenous political realm, appear to have gained a very contested and limited discursive space within the two broadsheets’ subject location of Aboriginal woman leader, albeit within discourses of division and fear that privilege specific forms of whiteness. It suggests the emergence in the media of ‘(an)other public identity … the … (female) … Aboriginal political actor’ (Mickler 1998, p. 129).

On the other hand, there appears to be no comparable political and discursive space for minority ethnic women leaders who still are virtually absent in the two broadsheets. Why are Aboriginal women so visible in contrast to minority ethnic women leaders? One can only speculate but the allegations of rape in 2001 against Geoff Clark, the chair of the premier Indigenous leadership body, ATSIC, allied to a dominant broadsheet discourse of Aboriginal masculinity in crisis, through constant stories of domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, may have left a symbolic lacuna which Aboriginal women have partially filled. The problem is that the broadsheet discourses of the matriarch/strong black woman which emerge in this context and in North American and British representations of black women, disguise the ‘high physical and emotional costs of … coping’ with a legacy of poverty, racism and sexism, and in Aboriginal people’s case, land dispossession (Larbalestier, 1980); (Pettman 1992, p. 66).

Interestingly, the visibility of refugees or ‘illegal immigrants’ noted in the opening sections of this chapter, did not translate across into higher visibility for minority ethnic women leaders in 2001. Perhaps this was because the broadsheets and politicians discursively constructed the refugees as alien to Australia and to be expelled, rather than viewed as part of an ongoing pattern of immigration to
Australian shores. Whatever the reasons, it would appear that minority ethnic women leaders 'remain within the particularist ghetto of ethnicity and are not allowed an active, constitutive role in the ongoing construction of "Australia"' (Ang 1995, p. 71). In contrast, Aboriginality and hence, Aboriginal women leaders, have 'now been accepted by white Australia, albeit reluctantly, as occupying an undeniable place ... in the heart of Australian national identity' (Ang 1995, p. 72).

The silencing of class as a category, the hegemonising of Anglo-Australian ethnicity as the mainstream from which other constructions of leadership are measured, the absence of minority ethnic women leaders from the two broadsheets and the construction of a subject position for Aboriginal women leaders within a media-generated realm of division and fear, combine to operate as a form of symbolic violence by privileging particular forms of white, classed leadership as mainstream within Australian society, at the expense of other groups of women leaders. By not challenging such constructions, the feminist literature on leadership continues to operate as a form of 'master discourse' (Ang 1995, p. 73), inflicting symbolic violence upon minority ethnic, Aboriginal women and working-class/origin women leaders who are othered by the dominant power relations that underlie the assumption of an Anglo-Australian middle-class subject position as the unexamined centre of Australian women's leadership.

Ashcraft and Mumby contend that an organisational critique needs to explore how popular representations of work potentially 'organise professional identities' and may be 'articulated through particular raced, classed, and gendered discourses' (Ashcraft and Mumby 2004, pp. 187-188). A number of questions then arise. What were the particular institutional contexts in which the six academic women leaders interviewed were situated? Were any of the mediatised discourses of leadership noted in this chapter being picked up in the academic field and if so, how did this occur? Alternatively, were a completely different set of discourses of women's leadership occurring that were exclusive to the institutional habitus of tertiary education? Let us now turn to an examination of the data gathered in regard to the six academic women leaders in order to explore these questions.
Chapter Six
Iris's Story: Performing Academia

Whatever I wear or not wear - they're all performances ... You're going to have to ... look beyond what you think is the 'bimbo look' or ... the 'wog chick look' and deal with me as a professional.

Locating Iris

Iris is a senior lecturer from an Italian peasant/working-class background. She has a male partner and child. Iris holds no formal position of leadership within her current university but her recent promotion to senior lectureship legitimates the cutting-edge research she is carrying out in a previously marginalised area of study. The Gumtree university\(^\text{13}\) in which she is located lacks the social capital of the Sandstones and Redbricks but has a proud record in terms of equity and diversity. It has been hard-hit by the deterioration in public funding to universities, and this has led to the university attempting to reinvent itself through an entrepreneurial thrust (Marginson and Considine, 2000). However, her faculty currently supports Iris in her work, both in terms of her research and her passionate commitment to ensuring that its results and benefits are shared with the people with whom she has conducted the research.

\(^{13}\) Simone Marginson and Mark Considine describe the contemporary Australian tertiary education system as being divided into five segments. These include: the Sandstone universities – the 'oldest foundations in each state', all of which have 'sandstone buildings'; The Redbricks – the 'strongest of the post-second world war universities' and nearly 'interchangeable with ... the Sandstones' in terms of 'political economy'; the Gumtrees – 'founded later in the post-war period, between 1960 and 1975, the main period of publicly financed expansion'; The Unitechs - the largest of the old CAEs ... (Colleges of Advanced Education) ... in five states, with a strong vocational and industry-orientation'; and the New Universities – 'a heterogeneous group of post-1986 foundations' (Marginson 2000, p. 189). The Sandstones and Redbricks 'are more resourceful and powerful than other universities' and, along with the Unitechs, appear to be 'coping relatively well in the new environment' (Marginson 2000, pp. 191; 197). The Gumtrees and New Universities, which lack the resources of the older universities, appear to be coping less well (Marginson 2000, pp. 198-202).
Representing Versus Re-Presenting

Iris identified a number of gendered, raced and classed stereotypes, which she had encountered from colleagues and students as a woman of minority ethnic and working-class background in the academic field. They included:

- The ‘wog chick’ or ‘bimbo’
- When hearing her name for the first time, student expectations that she would be round/large/have a bun in her hair/be an older woman
- The Italian ‘mamma’
- The hysterical wog
- The compliant, submissive female
- Lacking intelligence/being less intelligent or capable than majority ethnic Australians

Iris also noted an absence of any positive discourses of minority ethnic women’s leadership within academia.

Embodying Minority Ethnic Women

This was a dominant discourse in the broadsheet representations of minority ethnic and Anglo-Australian women leaders. However, a key difference between the broadsheets’ representations of the two groups as embodied was that the minority ethnic women’s ethnicity was marked, in contrast to the silence and taken-for-grantedness of the Anglo-Australian women politicians’ ethnicity (refer to Chapter Five). In terms of Iris’s subject location, she was embodied in terms of her ethnicity, her gender and in a later example I will recount, her working-class origin.

For example, when she was a new academic, Iris recounts how an older male academic attempted to evict her from the staff room, assuming because of her youth and minority ethnic appearance that she must be a student. Academic women’s bodies denote their outsider status to the ‘citizenry’ of the academy (Stanley 1997b, p. 3), for the body is the ‘physical site where the relations of class, gender, race …
come together and are embodied and practised’ (Skeggs 1997b, p. 82); (Bourdieu, 1984a). Iris’s gendered and raced body marks her as considerably distant from the ‘respectable’ academic female body which is ‘white, desexualised . . . and usually middle class’, and an even greater distance from the ‘middle-class, masculinising rationality’ that is the ‘dominant face of higher education’ (Hey 1997, pp. 147-148). As Iris ruefully notes, ‘ethnicity becomes an indicator of . . . inferiorities for some people’. I would add that gender does too.

However, the story does not end there. Iris draws on the strength of her family upbringing which encouraged her to ‘do it your way’, a discourse which is absent in the academic stereotypes of Italo-Australian women noted above. Iris utilises a range of ‘symbolic tools’ such as make-up, long hair, feminine clothes and high heels to subvert Anglo-Australian, middle-class definitions of academic women. In so doing, she simultaneously draws upon and critiques stereotypical popularised media discourses of Southern European origin women as ‘over the top’ in their dress and appearance (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004); (Tsolidis 2001, pp. 30; 33). She draws attention to the ways in which the female academic is ‘produced as the object of regulatory norms’ by the raced, classed and gendered ‘symbolic systems’ which underpin academia as a field (McNay 1999, p. 105). Her performance with these tools illustrates how she is ‘formed’ as a subject with agency who ‘resists these norms’ (McNay 1999, p. 105). Iris comments that

everything is a uniform and . . . conforming to something, therefore select what you feel the most comfortable in. I refuse on a hot day . . . to wear jeans because I have to sit here and they get sticky. So I will wear a little frock and I will wear comfortable clothes . . . if you’ve got a problem with that in a meeting you’ve got the problem, not me, and listen to what I’ve got to say . . .

Iris’s refusal to submit to the confines of the ‘wog bimbo/chick’ stereotype challenges the dominant masculinist and middle-class paradigm of Anglo-Australian academia – a form of sterile, disembodied authority described by Iris as, ‘the dryness of the way some things are done . . . writing . . . lecturing, the fact that someone will stand up . . . and read a paper for an hour’. I read Iris’s appearance as an active intervention in the politics of representation – a proud and confident statement of the
multiple identities she occupies as a woman, an academic and member of a minority ethnic group from working-class origins.

It is not simply Iris’s conscious performance of her appearance, which repositions her beyond the confines of the minority ethnic woman stereotypes. Her confidence derives from a habitus based upon her familial, cultural and class background, which taught her to challenge societal norms of womanhood. Her decision to re-present as an assertive Italo-Australian academic is a subject position, which directly contradicts the stereotype of the submissive minority ethnic woman previously noted. It suggests a gap in these representations, which, in turn, potentially constructs the Anglo-Australian, middle-class female, as the totalising norm for female academia. The material effects of this absence are revealed when some of Iris’s female students state, ‘I’m thinking now I might be able to have a career in academia … I don’t mean to be rude but if someone like you can …’. Iris’s stance appears to challenge her students’ habitus, which previously had perceived academia as a ‘taken-for-granted part of the middle-class, Anglo-Australian habitus’, but not as part of their ‘social world’ (Connolly 2000, p. 124).

Iris remarks:

I’ve been taught … be a bit uppity and answer back … be loud, be strong, muck up if you have to … don’t be intimidated … Yes, it looks really lower-class but … I don’t care … I think this politeness thing has been used to keep women subjugated and while I’m all for politeness, there is a place just to say … ‘Don’t interrupt me’ … I won’t stand for it … I think it comes from having experience as a kid from some of the men in my community … But also having parents who … taught me … not to put up with it.

This is where the category of class intersects with Iris’s gender and ethnicity. Iris draws on her hybridity – her working-class background and minority ethnicity – as positive symbolic capital which provides her with ‘good “crap detectors”’ and an ability to ‘“cross” classes’ and actively ‘“play” with demeanour’ in a kind of ‘“performance”’ (Mahoney and Zmroczek 1997, p. 5). She refutes the politeness, which constructs middle-class female academia and utilises her working-class loudness to assert a different academic habitus. This is where Bourdieu’s notion of working-class carrying negative symbolic capital within the academic field, needs to
be interrogated. Iris’s experience suggests that qualities such as loudness and ‘uppityness’ may be forms of capital developed by subordinate groups such as Italo-Australian women which can become ‘significant’ depending ‘upon … the particular field – in which individuals are located’ (Connolly 2000, p. 126). Iris’s comments also foreground her class origins as a significant form of capital, in contrast to the omission of the working-class as a discourse in minority ethnic representations of women leaders examined in the two broadsheets.

This is also where Iris differs from many of the working-class origin, academic women in the small body of feminist literature which examines women academics and class reviewed in Chapter Two. A crucial characteristic of the academic field in Australia is its middle to upper-class habitus, expressed in its power to decide ‘which capitals … have trading value’ in the academic market (Skeggs 1997b, pp. 11-12). The working-class is generally signified as negative capital in academia, suggesting the ‘allocative function’ of education as a general field (Skeggs 1997b, p. 11). As part of this delegitimation, working-class origin women academics often may feel the need to ‘masquerade’ and ‘pass’ in terms of the middle-class habitus of the academic field (Mahoney and Zmroczek 1997, p. 5). Part of learning to play the rules of the game for working-class origin women academics is ‘transforming key aspects around female embodiment’, including developing a ‘decorum and reserve that fits in with middle-class standards of acceptable female sexuality’ (Reay 1997, p. 20), thus bespeaking a form of ‘internalised oppression’ which is symbolic violence (Morley 1997, p. 114).

Yet the opposite appears to be true for Iris – her combination of working-class Italo-Australian origins along with access to the discourse of third wave feminism – appears to have given her a sense of agency and resistance which undercuts the symbolic violence denoted in both mediatised discourses of women’s leadership and the stereotypes noted at the start of the chapter. The lack of discussion of such alternatives in the feminist literature on working-class origin academics may suggest the dangers of ignoring the specificities of women’s experiences, that is, of essentialising them to a majority ethnic construction of working-classness. In addition, although there is a growing body of feminist research on the experiences of black women in academia, there appeared to be a dearth of literature which discussed
issues for non-black working-class origin academics who were not of Anglo origin. In other words, whiteness appeared to be positioned against blackness as the discursive other, with little or no deconstruction of it as a political category, whose boundaries shift depending upon the political and economic contexts of the specific period. As a minority ethnic, working-class origin academic, Iris ‘negotiate(s) various discourses and create(s) spaces “in-between” competing dominant discourses’ of female academics (Archer et al. 2003, p. 19). This is also where Bourdieu’s more deterministic interpretation of the interplay of habitus and field may be limited in terms of capturing the agency, which women academics such as Iris denote.

**Third Wave Feminism as a Discourse**

Feminism provided more marginalised discourses upon which the broadsheet representations of both minority ethnic and Anglo-Australian women leaders drew. The latter group tended to utilise or be framed by journalists in terms of second wave feminist notions of women as a collective. The minority ethnic women leaders also called upon this discourse, but at times they emphasised the intersection of their gender and ethnicity. In contrast to both these discourses, Iris called upon a third wave postmodernist discourse of feminism from which to create an alternative and legitimised discursive space within her field. Postmodernist and postcolonial discourses carry some positive capital and legitimacy within the segments of the academic field in which Iris is located, despite their absence in broadsheet media representations. In addition, because Iris was younger than the other participants, she grew up and then taught in a compulsory educational field, which resonated in the 1980s and early 1990s to the feminist discourses of 'girls can do anything'. This may also have allowed Iris crucial subject locations from which to develop as a feminist in ways that may have been denied to the older women participants.

Michel Foucault notes in terms of the distribution of discourses, one needs to examine not only who speaks and their ‘position of power’, but also ‘the institutional context in which he happens to be situated’ (Foucault 1990, p. 100). This is where the specific context in which Iris is located is crucial, for it is the degree to which feminist discourses are embedded within the habitus of the specific institution
(Hennessey 1993, p. 2) which may determine to what extent women such as Iris may sense being a ‘fish in water’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43). Her institution has a strong reputation in the higher education field for its commitment to equity and diversity. She has come from a compulsory education sector in which equity discourses were legitimated. Iris’s ability to access both third wave and postcolonial feminism as positive subject locations in terms of her professional habitus also signifies the degree of overlap between the fields of academia, feminism and the compulsory education sector from which Iris originated. It suggests that feminism as a field has had some success in redrawing the boundaries of both academia and the compulsory education sectors as fields, in terms of redefining ‘what is at stake and who is drawn into ... (their) ... domain’ (Connolly 2000, p. 125).

Iris’s utilisation of third wave discourses of feminism as hybridity, performance and play is a subject location that is absent in the broadsheets’ representations of any female leaders. It also may point to an intergenerational divide between her and the older women academics interviewed, as three out of five of the older interviewees located themselves within second wave feminism as a collective. However, the same three participants all held far more nuanced understandings of the colonising nature of second wave feminism due to their own Indigenous and/or minority ethnic origins.

**Second Wave Feminism as a ‘master-discourse’?**

Iris notes that the negative reactions to her appearance tend to come from older, male Anglo-Australian academics and some feminist academics and not from her students. For example, she notes, ‘it’s funny because I haven’t had any of these kinds of ... (negative) ... comments from students, they come from ... older male straight Anglo-Australian academics’ ... and some women’. In another example, she comments that when deciding to research ethnic women’s history, she was relieved that the Anglo-Australian feminist co-ordinator of her degree supported her enthusiastically. This was in contrast to ‘some other women academics who would say, “Why do you want to do that?” with this very concerned look – or when I wanted to do work on lesbians ... (from a minority ethnic background) – I remember one woman saying, “Are there any?”’ Iris’s appearance and research interests may be read as code for her non-membership of the Anglo-Australian feminist girls’ club.
Moreover, as Himani Bannerji observes in regard to the privileging which whiteness confers upon female academics:

As more white, middle-class, heterosexual women move into faculty ... positions, their ... centrality is so obvious that they ... don’t ... see them... selves as ... central. Most often it takes another person to point out this centrality and the power and privileges it can confer (Bannerji et al. 1991, pp. 7-8).

However, I would add to Bannerji’s comments that whiteness, like blackness, is a political category, and that in the Australian academic field, to be Anglo-Australian and middle-class, carries with it far greater capital than Iris’s Southern European, working-class origins.

Iris has had the courage to take the stereotype of the ‘wog chick’ and turn it to her advantage – to use her appearance as a powerful weapon with which to unsettle previously hidden dualisms, which have so strongly advantaged a particular type of masculine and Anglo-Australian construct within academia. Her clothes are a rejection of the contemporary female, middle-class suit of academia. Her little frock along with her overall appearance signals a danger – the arrival of the sexual (read feminine and dangerous), working-class exotic ‘other’ within the walls of the educational institution, no longer safely contained to the margins of Anglo-Australian society as a student or junior researcher. She refuses to be patronised by the stereotypical racial and sexist discourses, which would seek to place her as the subservient minority ethnic woman or the older, desexualised ‘Mamma’.

**Media Discourses of Minority Ethnic Women: The Public/Private Divide**

This discourse featured in media representations of Anglo-Australian political women leaders and was framed around the tension between a woman leader’s career and her commitment to an assumed nuclear family – a common news angle used when representing Australian women politicians (Baird 2004, pp. 73-89). It was extremely marginalised in minority ethnic women leaders’ representations. For Iris, childcare was not an issue – the extended family took care of that. This was in contrast to the tensions connoted in broadsheet representations of Anglo-Australian
women leaders. For Iris, the tension lay between duties to the extended family as a
daughter/daughter-in-law versus one’s professional duties, particularly when
dominant discourses of professionalism assume an Anglo-Australian ethnocentric
construct of academia in which private sphere duties are taken care of by a wife. Iris
comments:

This construct of the extended family ... can work really well, it certainly has for myself in
terms of childcare for ... (my child) ... but it also can be problematic ... You know if you
have to cook a meal for ten people on a Sunday afternoon because that’s your role as a
daughter ... and then you may have this bloody bulk of assessments that you have to get in
by Monday morning because your School Head says Monday morning ... Where do your
allegiances lie and what do you do, and who do you negotiate with?

Although the feminist literature on academia does comment on the issue of the
public/private divide for women academics, it is primarily framed in ethnocentric
terms that assume a nuclear family with the academic female as the primary
caregiver. For example, in international comparisons of the gender gap in academia,
Suzanne Stiver Lie notes that, ‘(t)he age of a woman’s children is a good predictor of
publication rates’ (Stiver Lie et al. 1994, p. 9). In addition, she comments that
‘(a)cademic men are more likely to be married than academic women (87% and
68%) and have more children’, presumably because they have less caring
responsibilities. Thus women are ‘subject to the processes of cumulative
disadvantage to a greater extent than men’ (Stiver Lie 1990, pp. 114-115). The only
mention of the extended family as an alternative frame for women academics is in
Carmen Luke’s study of issues facing women academic leaders from South-East
Asian countries. She notes that despite the fact a number of the women managers are
single, there are still great demands placed upon them as daughters in terms of
familial obligations towards ‘ageing parents and kin’, in contrast to sons who are
expected to fulfil these duties through financial support (Luke 2001, p. 159).

Second wave feminist critiques of woman as primary caregiver tend to assume a
nuclear family as the main model of family. This assumption has dominated the
feminist field and appears to be interpellated into the media via the public/private
divide. However, both the feminist critiques and the discourse of the public/private
divide act in essentialising ways, for they ignore the realities of the different kinds of
family structures (such as extended families) that exist within Anglo-Australian, minority ethnic and Indigenous societies. The lack of an alternative discourse of caring within the feminist field, such as that of the extended family, means that there is no legitimatated subject position from which the Irises of this world can speak. For example, feminist critiques of the public/private divide have meant that there is at least some recognition of the unequal burden that many women carry in the nuclear family in terms of caring responsibilities. Such a claim has some legitimacy in the workplace. However, there has been less recognition of the filial responsibilities that many women may shoulder in terms of the extended family. Feminism has not provided a subject location from which women can make such a claim and be legitimatated for it. The essentialising nature of discourse of woman as primary caregiver within a nuclear family potentially functions as a form of symbolic violence for it delegitimates alternative discourses such as that of the extended family and the filial responsibilities that such a position entails. It operates as a form of hegemony in privileging a middle-class, Anglo-Australian model of primary care giving which renders unsayable, subjugated knowledge about alternative forms of caring and family duties.

Absences and Dissonances in the Discourses

I noted in Chapter Five that media representations of minority ethnic women leaders tended to assume a naturalised middle to upper-class subject location. The feminist literature on minority ethnic women academics points out that for black British women, ‘the qualification most likely to get you into academia is to be upper class’ (Montgomery 1997, p. 63). In contrast to these dominant representations and to the negative capital, which working-class origins confer in the academic field, Iris draws upon her working-class background as positive capital that informs her practices and dispositions as an academic.

In addition, third wave feminism as a discourse is marginalised in media representations of all three categories of women leaders. However, Iris draws upon third wave feminist discourses of sexual politics as a crucial subject location for her leadership – thus raising the possibility of new forms of academic women’s
leadership which challenge the sexist and racist dualisms that underpin the embodiment of women's leadership (Fairclough 1992, p. 202).

What became particularly noticeable in analysing the data was the symbolic violence which the media discourses appeared to enact upon Iris as a minority ethnic academic. This occurred primarily through the dissonance between the stereotypical representations of minority ethnic women leaders noted in Chapter Five and at the commencement of this chapter on the one hand, and how Iris re-presents herself, on the other hand. What are the material effects of this form of violence? Iris at least has youth on her side, contests these discourses and attempts to produce a new kind of knowledge, through the performing of her ethnicity. However, not all minority ethnic academics have the same access to alternative discourses, which provide them with resistant subject locations. Iris notes how the material effects of feeling like a fish out of water (Wacquant 1989, p. 43), of not knowing how to play the game, and of experiencing a lack of 'entitlement' to the professional space occupied by the majority ethnic, middle-class academic (Skeggs 1997a, p. 133), act to silence and disempower some of the other minority ethnic academics. She comments:

I've noticed that with a few older academics here in different schools in our university who ... work really hard just to maintain their status within that department and will find themselves either sort of becoming less assertive ... or very stressed. Others manage it really well.

In her own case, Iris recounts how some academics laugh at her when she hands out chocolates to her students to celebrate the end of a course. Iris comments:

Why is it laughable to some other academics when at the end of every semester I bring in big boxes of celebration chocolates to all my students? You know, let's all eat ... this is a celebration. We've finished another course. So what is wrong with that? ... They say, 'That's her ethnicity coming out'.

It is fascinating that Iris's actions in handing out chocolates are automatically constructed through a racist discourse as emanating from her ethnicity. The patronising comments and laughter serve a number of purposes - they stereotype, trivialise, exoticise and visibilise Iris's behaviour, while at the same time concealing
the dominant ethnicity of Anglo-Australian academic practices which can then continue uninterrogated. Yet, if Iris's actions are truly so harmless, why the need to single them out for derision? There is a suggestion of defensiveness in the academics' reaction, for in these perilous economic times of universities, an academic whose courses are popular, threatens the viability of other courses. Indeed, Iris later remarks:

I've had a couple of people a bit resentful and making sort of funny comments ... it's not the students again, the students love it and this is the interesting thing because I hate all this - I sound so bloody arrogant - but like the numbers in the classes have just doubled and doubled and I've had to hire more tutors and put on more workshops. And the students will say things like, 'But it's just really cool and we're dealing with real issues and ... everyone's talking about stuff'.

In addition, Iris's unsettling leadership opens up a discursive space for her female and male students, both in terms of their professional and personal lives. Iris comments:

I notice then the number of young women from ethnic backgrounds who'll come up and talk and ask questions and share stuff ... Yeah, I think sometimes in just exposing yourself to a certain degree you just provide a space for other people, especially other women ...

Iris's open and consultative leadership style eschews the traditional hierarchies of Anglo-Australian academia. Her close relationship with students and her rejection of the 'dry' (male and sterile) teaching styles of traditional academia is also echoed in the warm relations she has developed with the general staff at her university. As Iris notes:

I come into this office in the morning, my bin's clean ... my desk might be wiped a bit ... and you think, I'm only one generation away from that. You know my parents were doing the cleaning.

In challenging the traditional divide between general and academic staff, student and lecturer, Iris is disrupting the traditional practices which work to maintain academic dominance in the field, that is, through the 'generat(ion and) ... maint(enance of) distance'. These strategies in turn 'produce a particular kind of body and set of
dispositions and values, so that the agent comes to feel ... “like a fish in water”’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 18). In deliberately positioning herself as resistant to these practices, Iris is questioning their legitimacy and attempting to produce a very different kind of academic body and set of dispositions. In so doing, she draws upon postmodern feminism as a crucial discourse in her struggle to transform the field of academnia.

Iris’s refusal to succumb to the discourse of the dominant construction of the Anglo-Australian, middle-class academic and her apparent success in her career, suggests the possibility that such a discourse may no longer be as hegemonic as in the past. Her local acts of resistance to the gendered, classed and raced hegemonic regime of her university can be read at one level as an ongoing and partially successful intervention within the ‘micropolitics’ of power, which operate within her workplace (Morley, 1999). Iris offers her students, other academics and the general staff she comes into contact with, a counter-hegemonic definition and interpretation of what it means to be an Australian academic and leader. Importantly, she rejects the sacrifices demanded by the ‘greedy institution’ of the enterprising university (Acker 1994, p. 126). She argues:

If I lost this job ... I’m quite happy to go back waiting tables. I’ll be able to survive on a basic income ... I could do that and still do the work I do and publish in different ways. So for me it’s ... not the only measure of my worth. And it can be really freeing when you can say that.

This is where the intergenerational divide between Iris and the other leaders seems to be most telling. She has refused to be seduced by the ‘superwoman’/‘you can have it all’ discourse which has beguiled so many other women. It is in this sense that youth is on her side, for as a comparative newcomer to academia, she has witnessed the price that one pays for privileging the public life over the private and hence, refuses to take this route. However, for how much longer will she be able to maintain this refusal, particularly if she moves further up the ladder?

There are attendant dangers in Iris’s position. Leadership is not an object to be struggled over but a construct and a set of signifying practices whose meaning shifts
and changes depending on who has the symbolic power to set the terms of the
debate. Iris’s rearticulation of leadership through her acts of resistance at both the
concrete and discursive level exposes and thus threatens the uncertain settlement
which underlies Anglo-Australian, masculinist constructs of academia and
leadership. She appears to have successfully carved out a discursive space for
herself, which holds out the hope that there is potential for fresh and exciting subject
positions for other women academics from minority ethnic backgrounds. However,
Iris is one academic in one university. The cultural capital she brings to her field may
provide her with the discursive space to experiment with a range of different subject
positions that shift the boundaries of what is acceptable in terms of Australian
academic identities. Significantly, she has chosen to locate in a university in which
postmodernist feminism has some legitimacy as a discourse and in which equity
discourses have legitimacy. However, Iris is at the most junior level of the senior
academic rung. If and when she is promoted, will the increasingly ‘competitive,
aggressive, and entrepreneurial culture’ of the academic field permit her to succeed
and flourish? (Currie et al. 2002, p. 2). Is there room for ‘wog chicks’ at the top?
Chapter Seven
Simone’s Story: Does Power Lack Armpits?

Being a wog and a woman and a leader, those three things are anxious ... or terrible things.

Locating Simone

Simone is a professor and senior manager who has worked in the fields of business and the media, but was originally a teacher. She is of Greek, peasant/working-class origin and is married with adult children. Simone works in a Unitech university – a segment which in contrast to the Gumtree segment in which Iris is located – is doing well in the new enterprise environment. Unitechs have strong links to industry and government and play a major role in postgraduate vocational education (Marginson and Considine, 2000, pp. 197-198). In terms of the overall field, their habitus has been characterised as

(L)arge, centralized and marketing-heavy, the most singularly corporate of all the universities ... this derives from their more hierarchical tradition, wherein line-of-command relations played a stronger part than faculty and collegial authority (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 198).

Representing Minority Ethnic Women Leaders

Simone noted the following stereotypes of academic women’s leadership she had encountered. They included:

- The little girl
- The ball-breaker
- The anti-feminist

In addition, an analysis of the interview data revealed the following additional discourses:
• The embodied woman

• Women leaders needing to be twice as good as men, that is, both professional and enabling

• The majority ethnic academic female as insider, that is, being viewed as a member of the 'kith and kin'

• The outsider/diversity as capital

• The sexually ‘neutral’ woman who eschews the ties of family

• The middle manager as boundary rider, providing emotional sustenance to the troops in their care

In terms of specific representations of minority women and/or leaders, Simone noted the following in academia:

• Absence: A dearth of women from post war immigrant backgrounds in senior levels within the academic;

• A tenor of prejudice and snobbery that ran as an undercurrent in the academic field; and

• An assimilationist discourse which expected minority ethnic women leaders to fit into the dominant culture.

At broader societal level, she observed the following discourses:

• A paternalistic discourse which showcased minority ethnic women leaders as beneficiaries of the broader Australian community’s largesse;

• Factory fodder: A first generation of post World War Two immigrants who were treated by Australia as ‘fodder’ for low status employment;

• Smoothing the pillow of the dying: An expectation on the part of majority ethnic Australia that first and second generations of post World War Two immigrants would die out and cease their demands for public space and leadership; and
• A contrasting position, in which Simone argued that the third generation of post World War Two descendants was positioned in terms of hybridity, that is, a group which is ‘very comfortable with their diversity and will want to see that reflected much more powerfully, not less powerfully … in everything from the way we think to the way we eat’.

In terms of a re-presentation of herself as a minority ethnic female academic, Simone argued for a feminist discourse of leadership located as:

• Womanly
• Expressive
• Passionate

High Achiever Succeeding Against the Odds: The Limitations of Sisterhood?

This was the dominant representation that the broadsheets called upon in their portrayal of minority ethnic women leaders. As Simone observes when asked how the media frames minority ethnic women leaders, ‘Having made it against the odds … that’s the one they like because … (it) … shows what a good society we are’.

It could be argued that Simone does partially fit this stereotype – she is one of the few post World War Two immigrants who have succeeded in scaling the ivory tower of academia against the odds of a racism that positions such women as factory fodder. However, it was a subject location that Simone rejected and critiqued in terms of its paternalistic and assimilationist undertones. She noted that one of the material effects of this representation was that:

   While you’re emerging as an ethnic woman, everybody … want(s) to assist you … it bestows … wisdom and charity … on them … but when you stand beside them or on top of them … They’ll let you in if you do it their way.

It can be argued that this may be a common experience for women leaders in general, no matter what their ethnic origin. However, Simone later in the interview makes some telling observations, which challenge this argument. She recounts her dismay
when the university’s newly appointed, strongly feminist senior manager who was of Anglo and middle-class origins, asked her to ‘tone down’ her emotions – an injunction that resonates with the ‘hysterical wog’ stereotype that Iris identifies in her interview. Simone despairingly concludes:

Maybe people like us shouldn’t be here ... maybe they’ve tamed me ... they have broken my spirit ... I think I’m bi-cultural ... I can move in and out of that. But if you’re of the kith-and-kin you’re looked after. If you’re not ... you’re hung out to dry ...

Simone notes that women such as her manager are often regarded as being like ‘sisters’, of the same ‘kith and kin’ as their senior managerial colleagues. Their shared ethnicity and class origins often provides them with an unspoken advantage which non Anglo women leaders lack (refer also to Eisenstein 1996, p. xix). In contrast, Simone’s self-described ‘expressive ... passionate ... (and) ... womanly’ habitus is constructed by her feminist senior manager as devalued, negative capital in the leadership game that is senior academic management. The manager’s request to Simone to tone down her emotions may illustrate the way in which the former individual has internalised her own oppression, or has been forced to play by the rules of a senior academic management game which is increasingly ‘individualistic ... competitive ... (and) ... based on power differentials’ (Currie et al. 2002, pp. 1-2). The manager’s comments may also imply that alternative discourses of management, such as those arising from feminism, are seen as less legitimate unless they come from a ‘sister’ who shares one’s racial and class origins. The comment from Simone’s senior manager connotes the ethnic and possibly class advantage she may share with her male colleagues.

The importance of the site-specific context of Simone’s leadership appears to be crucial. Not only is she more senior to Iris, she is located in a university whose professional habitus has been characterised as hierarchical, with ‘line-of-command relations’ rather than ‘faculty and collegial authority’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 198). It is possible that the more aggressive tendencies of Australian academic management’s increasingly entrepreneurial culture may be exacerbated by the existence of an individual university habitus that is already strongly hierarchical. Such a context may signify a lack of structural and discursive space for anything
other than a very limited and essentialising feminist discourse at senior academic management level. As Jane Kettle observed in her interviews with eight senior academic women leaders in UK academia:

The culture of individual institutions is crucial to the success or failure of initiatives to enhance women’s progress ... the results of current common practices and behaviours are to exclude, marginalise and undervalue women (Kettle 1996, pp. 63-64).

Simone’s comments that her spirit has been ‘broken’, suggest that gender on its own is not always a primary form of oppression within senior academic leadership. Secondly, they point to the possibility that the degree to which a specific university legitimates discourses of equity, may also determine the ‘fit’ between individual woman leaders and the habitus of the senior management context in which they operate.

The Successful Businesswoman Discourse

This was a dominant discourse in representations of minority ethnic women leaders for which Simone expressed some sympathy. Having worked extensively in both the higher education and business fields, she felt that unlike academia, the latter field appeared to have more discursive space open to women from minority ethnic backgrounds. She observed that this may be because in order to maintain their ‘distinctiveness of style or behaviour or values ... some businesses .... (r)ecognise the relationship between the customer and the product’.

Importantly, Simone notes that this discursive space was in major contrast to the field of academia which, in her specific site at least, appeared to pay lip service to notions of equity and diversity. I found this a particularly interesting observation given that Australian universities have adopted many of the practices and discourses of business in terms of the structuring, management and funding of the field – a practice for which they have been widely critiqued in terms of impact upon equity groups such as women (refer to Chapter One). Perhaps what Simone’s observations point to is the ways in which Australian academia as a field has ‘without reflection’ taken up ‘global practices that emanate from neoliberal economic policies’ in the
business field, such as working longer hours and valuing individualistic and competitive tendencies, without considering their relevance to the academic field (Currie et al. 2002, pp. 2-3). It is an area worthy of further investigation.

Embodying Minority Ethnic Women: Does Power Have Armpits?

This was another dominant broadsheet representation of minority women leaders, which underpinned constructions of Simone as a minority ethnic woman leader (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004). In being asked to tone down her emotions by her senior manager, Simone is being framed as the emotional child, a common strategy of dominance used by men as a group and colonising nations respectively. The emotional child/female/colonised nation is often signified as embodied and closer to nature (McDowell 1999, p. 48).

In terms of embodiment, Simone recounts her first meeting after her appointment as a senior academic manager in another university. Eager to be seen to be doing the right thing, she dressed in what she felt was appropriate clothing, tried to turn-take in the meeting and listened carefully. She was just congratulating herself on her success, when a minority ethnic male friend and colleague commented:

‘You blew it ... you had armpits ... you wore a sleeveless dress. If you looked around the table ... there was nobody who didn’t have sleeves on. The men had sleeves, the women had sleeves ... The first lesson that you have to learn is that power doesn’t have a body and it certainly doesn’t have armpits and you need to go in there covered ...’ (Simone then mused) ... Power ... knowledge ... and authority doesn’t have a body. All it has is a mind and a voice that operates in a coded way so any other visible things that distinguish you ... seem to create some ... unsettling thing ...

As a consequence of this discussion, Simone chose to modify her dress accordingly.

Simone’s story captures the lived realities of power within academia at a senior management level and the ways in which power as a relation is inscribed through the body. Firstly, formal power, knowledge and authority in academia are embodied. However, the embodiment is more commonly signified through a male body wearing a suit (Connell 1998, p. 3), or in the case of women, appearing to be ‘stylishly
neutral’, as Simone observes in another part of the interview. She unsettles the unwritten code of masculinist formal academic authority by revealing her femaleness through her sleeveless outfit. In so doing she demonstrates her lack of knowledge of the ‘internalised set of tacit rules governing strategies and practices in the field’ of academic management. It is precisely these ‘unspoken and unspeakable rules’, which structure academic management’s habitus – and which signal her initial lack of fit within the culture (Moi 2000, p. 318). As Melanie Walker notes, the masculinised, classed and raced habitus of academia works to obscure... the subtle barriers, the ‘clubbiness’, while leaving the technical aspects of the profession visible. Hence women’s confusion when they meet the technical demands, but still fail to advance, for they have fallen down in their ‘mastery’ ... of the academic occupational culture (Walker 1998, p. 336).

Moreover, it is the middle-class nature of this formal authority, which is pervasive within this meeting. The act of covering up one’s body functions as a sign of the middle-class, for in the climate in which Simone’s university was located, the fact that people were able to cover up their bodies without discomfort suggests the presence of air-conditioning. Knowledge and authority is thus signified as belonging to the educated middle-classes. At the same time as neutralising women’s bodies, covering up suggests that the gender advantage which males gain from such dress codes is also covered up, concealed and thus remains unproblematised. Simone accedes to this cover-up, arguing that there are more important battles for her to fight.

It is interesting however, that Iris consciously contests this unspoken dress code for academics, calling upon discourses of third wave feminism and postcolonialism in order to subvert unequal relations of power that are linked to gender and class. Certainly, Iris, as a relatively junior academic, has less authority and thus more freedom to challenge these unwritten codes. As a more senior manager and second wave feminist who holds a formal position of authority in a very hierarchical university, the discourses of leadership afforded to Simone are severely limited. In addition, they are possibly becoming even more constricted for feminists such as Simone, due to the increasingly ‘aggressive, top-down ... lacking in empathy’ new
managerial style that now characterises Australian universities (Collier 2001, p. 23). However, it is also possible that Iris’s comparative youth, her experience of growing up in Australia in the 1980s when the discourses of equal opportunity resonated and her location in a university that has less emphasis upon ‘line-of-command relations’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 198), may have given her a broader set of discourses and subject positions from which to contest the inequality that such gender, class and ethnic advantaging confers. Only more research would reveal whether this is the case or not.

**Embodying Minority Ethnic Women: Can a Cleaner’s Daughter Be Powerful?**

In both the wider community and the academic field, Simone noted that women leaders from Southern European post World War Two origins, were seen as a contradiction in terms. Simone commented:

> If you’re a woman professor, a wow woman as well ... who are you and what are you and how dare you? ... Here you are trying to make generalisations about a community that they think you’re a visitor in ... or the cleaner’s daughter or the recipient of benefits so when did you get so big to be able to make pronouncements?

The class divisions in such a comment are profound. Simone tells another story of how when she first took on her current leadership position, she was initially ignored because people read her dress code as signifying low status. She comments:

> I remember ... walking the corridors and trying to talk to people and ... I look like I’m of Greek origin ... and here I was dressed like I might have been the cleaner ... and ... I couldn’t get anybody to ... be civil ... I was the ... (senior academic) ... but here was this middle-aged woman being treated with ... disregard – simply asking for advice of where to go ...

The combination of Simone’s working-class origins, ethnicity, age and gender render her both invisible and unworthy of respect, for, as Liz Stanley observes, women in academia are, “other” to the citizenry here ... The status of citizen is reserved for those who are male/academic’ (Stanley 1997b, p. 3).
The incident in some ways is similar to the way in which women in management may be rendered invisible through being ignored by their male colleagues. However, the crucial difference between Simone’s story and that of women in management is that it is the combination of Simone’s ethnicity, gender and class which is read as signifying her lower status. It would appear that the status of honorary citizen may be extended at times to Anglo-Australian, middle-class academic women but to women of Southern European and working-class origin, this is far less likely.

Georgina Tsolakis has argued in relation to the daughters and granddaughters of the Southern European women who emigrated to Australia after the Second World War and were employed largely as ‘factory fodder’, that while their ‘positions ... may have altered, the representations of their communities and the gender relations which operate within them, is little altered’. In the media, they are commonly represented ‘in servant roles, or as fat, comical, earth-mommas serving their marginal “families”’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 30). As such

in the context of majority-minority power relations, we are faced with the distinction between the sophisticated, refined, urban, liberated and cerebral and the rural, earthy, sensual and in need of containment ... the distinction between the civilised and the uncivilised at the core of cultures as hierarchical (Tsolidis 2001, p. 33).

Both Iris and Simone’s observations in regard to the stereotypes of Southern European women support Tsolakis’s argument and point to a number of key gaps in the two newspapers’ discourses surrounding minority ethnic women leaders. The constant focus upon physical appearance, which Iris politically contests and to which Simone strategically accedes, connotes the embodiment of such women as ‘uncivilised’.

Moreover, the broadsheet representations of minority ethnic women leaders tended to connote a middle-class position for most of the leaders. In contrast, Iris and Simone’s experiences are clearly that of the peasant and working-class – suggesting a discursive gap for this group to which both women can attest. There is a strong class division between the two broadsheets’ representations of largely middle-class, high achieving businesswomen and Simone’s and Iris’s accounts of the negative capital
and stereotypical discourses associated with working-class, Southern European immigrants within academia.

The ethnic stereotypes identified by Simone and Iris and commented upon by Tsolidis are potentially extremely damaging for the former women’s leadership work. Simone’s and Iris’s experiences point to the symbolic violence wreaked upon individuals as a result of these kinds of limiting and limited stereotypes. Both the incidents of being mistaken for the cleaner or a senior male academic attempting to evict Iris from the staff room suggest the power and material consequences of the discourses of embodiment, underpinned by the negative capital of Southern European working-class origins. The under-representation of minority ethnic women leaders in the two broadsheets, aligned with the assumed middle-class stereotype of the few minority ethnic women leaders who do appear, seems to create a kind of discursive ‘black hole’ which the caricatures of Southern European women appear to fill. Moreover, the dualism that underpins majority-minority power relations between Anglo-Australian, middle-class women leaders and their Southern European, working-class origin counterparts, can then be sustained.

Simone comments:

So I do think some of those codings ... do impact ... they’re just there in the background all the time ... You can never let this come to the foreground because if you do ... you look like you’re bitter ... stupid. ... it’s something that ... you have to just learn how to handle.

It is precisely in these ‘minor things’, that is, the ‘micropolitics’ of Simone’s day-to-day encounters with prejudice and class snobbery, that ‘power is relayed in ... (the) ... everyday practices’ of the university field (Morley 1999, pp. 4-5). It is through these practices that one can ‘trace the specific and practical construction and implementation of a hegemonic ideology’ of racism, class prejudice and sexism (Moi 2000, p. 316). It is a means by which a primarily Anglo-Australian and middle-class management culture within the field is re legitimated whilst simultaneously casting as ‘stupid’ or ‘bitter’, Simone’s reactions to this delegitimation. In addition, the constant awareness of a ‘kind of subplot’ in one’s work, along with the pressure to ‘fit in’ to a culture that is antithetical to one’s ethnic and class origins (Jones 2001a,
p. 156), leaves women such as Simone ‘feeling undermined, confused and disempowered’ (Morley 1999, p. 1).

**Feminism as a Discourse**

This was a minor discourse in broadsheet representations of minority ethnic women leaders. In describing the very limited subject positions for academic women leaders, Simone noted that there was no discursive space available for herself as, ‘a mother … expressive and passionate … womanly’. Her re-presentation draws to a certain extent upon second wave feminist discourses of women as more caring and emotionally open – discourses which have been critiqued for their essentialising tendencies (Blackmore, 1999, p. 58). However, in calling upon the passionate and womanly mother figure, Simone may be drawing upon her own culturally specific habitus of womanhood in which greater symbolic capital is ascribed to the maternal role and the emotional realm, compared to both contemporary Anglo-Australian society and Australian feminism as a movement. This is also where the intergenerational divide between Iris and Simone is clear. Iris does not primarily identify as a mother, nor does she demonstrate any of the guilt associated with the tension between the public/private divide of woman as primary caregiver versus career woman, which a number of the other participants discuss in later case studies.

Simone’s discourse of female leadership is in some ways closer to Native American discourses of ‘motherwork’ (Udel, 2001) and the matriarchal figure identified in broadsheet representations of Aboriginal women leaders (refer to Chapter Five). This is neither to overlook the essentialising tendencies of such a discourse nor to ignore the way in which it may reduce femaleness to a biological construct. Nonetheless, it does suggest the greater amount of symbolic capital accorded motherhood in other, non Anglo cultures and the lack of space for such a discourse in Anglo-Australian feminism. It suggests that the capital of Simone’s passion and motherliness, which is devalued in the academic field, takes on a far more positive reading in the field of Greek-Australian society. Thus it provides Simone with a subject location of women’s leadership that affords her agency and resistance with which to subvert and challenge dominant discourses of leadership within the academic field.
The minority ethnic women in the two broadsheets called upon a range of feminist discourses – socialist, gender/race as well as liberal. This was in contrast to the Anglo-Australian women leaders who appeared mainly to draw upon liberal feminist discourses of women as a collective. Simone, on the other hand, rejects these subject locations, as well as Iris’s postmodernism. She is a second wave feminist for whom dress is a battle not worth fighting over and for whom there are more important struggles to be fought. She calls on an alternative second wave feminist discourse that is absent from the two broadsheets’ representations of minority ethnic women leaders, from academe and from largely Anglo-Australian, middle-class liberal feminist discourses.

For both Iris and Simone, feminist discourses do open up clear subject positions for their leadership work. However, their experiences of feminism within academia suggest that there is an ethnocentric and classed feminist discourse which has gained prominence in the media and appears to be primarily associated with middle-class, Anglo-Australian political women leaders. While such a discourse appears to have on the one hand opened up some leadership possibilities for minority ethnic women leaders, its apparent hegemony in the media and dominance within academia simultaneously acts as a form of symbolic violence through its ethnocentricity and refusal to admit multiple forms of oppression into the feminist ‘nation’ (Ang 1995, p. 73). As Tsolidis observes in relation to the Australian compulsory education sector, the repercussions of the silencing of different feminist voices within an ‘acknowledged feminist voice’ which is unitary, means that ‘diasporic identifications’, particularly those which emanate from the experiences of working-class or peasant background women, ‘have more limited possibilities’ (Tsolidis 2001, p. 2). Iris’s and Simone’s accounts support Tsolidis’s observations by suggesting that in academia, this symbolic violence may be particularly severe for minority ethnic women leaders from working-class or peasant backgrounds.

**Outsider/Diversity as Capital**

This was a minor discourse in the broadsheets’ representations of minority ethnic women leaders and upon which some of the women called. In academia, Simone
noted it as a subject location, which had paradoxical material effects upon women leaders.

The outsider as positive capital representation is similar to the discourse of diversity. The latter discourse is drawn from the business management field and has been taken up in Australian universities, often as a replacement for equal opportunity and equity policies (Bacchi, 2001). Feminists have argued that diversity discourses and policies may, on the one hand, provide equity policies in academia with a new lease of life. Alternatively, universities may use them as an excuse for cutting costs through the removal of equity officers and specialist units, and a shift in focus from equity groups to individuals (Bacchi, 2001). Given the culturally and socioeconomically diverse student clientele within Simone’s university and the fierce competition which universities are facing for a rapidly dwindling education dollar, part of the legitimacy of Simone’s university in terms of its public accountability, rests upon its reputation as an institution which embraces diversity. Hence, the presence of a high-profile scholar such as Simone gives her university crucial symbolic capital. However, Simone notes that diversity/outsider status as a marketing tool, which enhances perceptions of quality, may be acceptable, but as a practice, which may upset the hegemony of the Anglo-Australian female and male management, it is unwelcome. Simone reflects:

There has been for a number of years a certain cachet or attractiveness to being a woman and of minority background for universities ... They’ve wanted to include people so that they can live up to the kinds of values that they espouse ... that does make an opportunity for you ...

On the negative side ... the very things ... that make you attractive are ... the things that ... irritate, grate, or are attributes of an outsider ... you’re carrying an extra burden ... on top of the outsidersness that women bring ... in a place ... particularly in management ... that’s dominated by Anglo men.

As a middle manager at a university for whom diversity/outsider status appears to be rhetorical rather than actual, Simone’s visible diversity from the Anglo-Australian mainstream makes her a potential scapegoat. Universities may be ‘dangerous territories’ for women academics (Blackmore 1997a, p. 93), but they appear to be even more dangerous for women leaders such as Simone, because her gender.
ethnicity and class render her vulnerable to unreal expectations about what she can achieve. In this sense, the representation of diversity/outside can set Simone up to fail – in a similar fashion to the golden girls of the Anglo-Australian political field.

However, Simone is not simply a victim. She rejects what she sees as the gender neutrality of Anglo-Australian female academia and deepens the discourses of diversity by drawing upon postcolonial notions of hybridity. She demonstrates this in her ability as a leader to move between discourses of womanliness and the more Anglo-Australian, masculinised authority when necessary. However, she notes that the absence of the former discourse in academia means that her hybrid leadership is read as negative capital in the academic field, despite the positive capital it accrues in her own culture and habitus. Simone comments in regard to her academic management style:

I don't think to be assertive or to be powerful I have to operate in a way that stereotypically we say men behave. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don’t … those features … make the job of being a leader and a manager … better … but also harder in terms of questions of style and fit within an organisation that regards professionalism as not involving those tags of family.

For Simone, the diversity/outside discourse appears only to be acceptable when it presents a face to upper management that is containable and does not threaten its rationalist, aggressive, Anglocentric and middle-class centre. Alternative subject positions which Simone opens up, such as the hybrid leader who moves between subject locations of masculinist authority and womanliness, are censored within the field through the operation of symbolic violence.

The Outsider/Diversity Discourse: Still the Cleaner’s Daughter?

Simone, like many senior female middle managers in academia, has had to bear the brunt of the “emotional labour” (Munford and Rumball 2001, p. 140) which has eventuated as a result of the often brutal restructuring of the tertiary education system in Australia. She notes that as a middle manager:
The troops ... expect you ... to be the boundary rider against the ... (senior management) ...
And so you’re the meat in the sandwich in a sense without the power or active participation ... ... you’re not actually in the circle that makes the decisions because you’re down there on the ground trying to keep things running ... you wear the responsibility of the success or failure of the unit that you lead without having all the power to be able to determine its future.

Simone’s management experiences reflect the marginalisation and limitations of the outsider/diversity discourses, when they are interpellated in a field that has, apparently in Simone’s university at least, embraced a harder form of new ‘hegemonic, patriarchal management’ – ‘entrepreneurial masculinity’ – in preference to older forms of ‘paternalistic masculinity’ (Collier 2001, p. 23); (Currie et al. 2002, p. 3). The ‘entrepreneurial masculinity’ embedded in the hard face of new management appears to ‘“mak(c)-up” a new professional subjectiv(y)’ for Simone (Ball 2000, p. 2). It demands sacrifices through its exploitation of her mothering and passionate qualities as middle manager, ‘enabler’ and ‘boundary rider’, while simultaneously placing her in an irresolvable contradiction, through its concentration of power in upper management and its adoption of what appears to be a token commitment to diversity and collaborative decision-making. It renders invisible the emotional labour which it demands of her and at the same time symbolically punishes her diversity. In other words, it acts as a form of symbolic violence. The material effect of this toxic combination is to produce despair and bitterness within Simone as an individual, while simultaneously shutting down potential new subject positions, which the discourse of diversity may have offered minority women leaders in the academic field. One can only imagine that many women (particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds) may indeed embrace this punishing lesson by choosing not to move into positions of leadership. Let us now turn to an examination of whether this is also the case for Suzanne, another minority ethnic woman leader.
Chapter Eight
Suzanne’s Story: The Importance of ‘Fitting In’

*I have put forth a theory of practice as the product of a practical sense ... of a socially constituted ‘sense of the game’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43).*

**Locating Suzanne**

Suzanne is a professor who heads up a research unit in one of the New universities. She is of middle-class Chinese origin and took up an appointment at an Australian university after growing up in Asian and then Western nations. Suzanne is single and childfree, noting that she ‘never wanted to have children’. Her university is part of a segment characterised as ‘a heterogenous sub-sector ... (whose) ... academic cultures have been less well rooted ... and are often outward looking ...’ They ‘focus on student access, pastoral care and good teaching ...’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 201-202). Its student cohort is multicultural, urban and working-class and the university has a strong commitment to social justice. Suzanne notes the high number of respected women managers in her workplace and the university’s appointment of a committed equity worker as its leader. Hence, the habitus of the specific institution assists her to feel like a ‘fish in water’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43), for it appears to be far more accepting of diversity than Simone’s workplace. In this sense, Suzanne’s university is more similar to Iris’s.

Suzanne’s story of cultural diaspora and multiple cultural identities appears to ‘involve the crossing of an indeterminate number of borderlines’, in terms of ethnicity and culture (Pallotta-Chiarolli 1996, p. 87). The ‘halo effects’ of her international scholarship (Saha and Atkinson 1987, p. 208) are powerful cultural and symbolic capital for a new university struggling to establish its legitimacy and improve its position in a field dominated by the Sandstones and Redbricks.
Representing Suzanne

Suzanne observed that the dominant discourses she experienced growing up in a Chinese immigrant family were:

- The importance of education;
- Parental investment in Suzanne as the oldest child; and
- An assimilationist discourse of cultural agility, that is, the importance of ‘fitting in’.

In her leadership role, Suzanne encountered:

- Stereotypes of the junior, submissive Asian woman;
- The ‘little girl’ leadership stereotype, exemplified in sexist assumptions that she lacked knowledge;
- Male attempts at intimidation;
- An informal culture/cliqueness which concealed power differentials; and
- A small group of Anglo-Australian feminists who operated like a girls’ club.

Outside the university, Suzanne’s fluency in English, minority ethnic origins and senior academic role, led her to being positioned as:

- A spokesperson in the media for multiculturalism and diversity (despite the fact that this was not her specific area of expertise); and
- A spokesperson for minority ethnic students and minority ethnic cultures (in relation to this role she noted the ‘enormous gap’ between how Asian women who lacked fluency in English were perceived versus the ‘way they are’).

Suzanne also noted the following discourses in regard to leadership within academia:

- Merit;
• The paradox of disadvantage (that is, due to the lack of women in academic leadership roles, women get noticed more quickly and this can work in one’s favour); and
• The symbolic capital attached to one’s international experience as a scholar.

The key re-presentations, upon which Suzanne called, included:

• The intellectual
• Being culturally agile
• Hybridity
• Toughness, that is, utilising male-identified strategies in order to deal with sexism and racism

**Outsider/Diversity as Capital: Containable Commodities?**

This was a minor discourse in the media representations of minority ethnic women upon which Suzanne indirectly called (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004). For Suzanne, the discourse of outsider status/diversity was crucially articulated to an assimilationist discourse of the importance of ‘fitting in’ – a personal and cultural identity which shaped Suzanne’s bodily hexis and allowed her to ‘align’ her habitus very successfully to the new university in which she was located (Lingard and Rawolle 2004, p. 376). Suzanne comments that in her family and culture, ‘Education (is) extremely important and trying to fit in is very important also’. She notes that when her family first emigrated to the West when she was a child, multiculturalism as a discourse did not exist. Assimilation, as in Australia, was the dominant discourse and policy and was accepted by her family as such. Hence, there was no space created for the realities of Suzanne’s culturally diverse background. The political, economic and social contexts of the two host nations in which her family lived provided them with a stark choice – fit in or face the consequences. As such it operated as a form of symbolic violence. She comments:

That was the time ... when migration wasn’t that common ... so for my parents, it was just ... taken for granted that assimilation ... was what we needed to do ... rather ... (than) ... maintaining the culture ... (It was) ... not at all ... a multicultural situation.
The material effects of this discourse upon Suzanne and her siblings were

fitting into the education system especially … speaking the language … (of the host country)
… and having … (host country) … friends rather than maintaining the … (previous) …
culture.

Suzanne’s parents were both middle-class and Western-educated at tertiary level. Thus she was provided with an indispensable form of cultural capital due to her family’s class and educational status. It can be posited that the middle-class status of Suzanne’s family along with her location as the eldest child in a Chinese family, may have allowed Suzanne to internalise a habitus which provided her with ‘a sense of entitlement’ within the academic field which none of the other women interviewees who are from working-class/peasant backgrounds may have shared (Skoggs 1997a, p. 133). In addition, Suzanne’s assimilationist experiences as a child had provided her with linguistic and cultural capital along with an ability to read the codes of the host nation in which she was situated and respond accordingly. Suzanne appears to have internalised ‘a practical sense … a socially constituted “sense of the game”’ of academia, which allowed her to fit in – in contrast to Simone (Wacquant 1989, p. 43). Moreover, her established reputation as an international scholar is additional capital which she brings to the Australian academic field. When asked about the outsider/diversity as capital discourse, Suzanne commented:

I have the strong feeling that that’s definitely the case. It might not be consciously in
people’s heads but … it’s not just that I’m Asian – I think that I have strong international
experience, which is very important for … that kind of thing.

In sum, the considerable amount of cultural capital Suzanne has amassed may mean
that in the new university in which she is located, the intersection of her gender and
ethnicity are regarded as cultural capital and add to her legitimacy (Moi 2000, pp.
331-332).

Along with the discourse of ‘fitting in’, ‘cultural agility’ emerges as a key discourse
in Suzanne’s interview. She identifies it as the ability to, ‘move in the culture easily
and comfortably … as an agile kind of individual who … adjusts him or herself … it
requires very quick responses to certain things’. Suzanne links the concept of cultural agility to that of hybridity. She notes, ‘this is what one of the advantages of hybridity is ... that kind of in-between position that ... makes you ... quite mobile in a way’. However, I would argue that class also might be operating as a significant silence in these discourses. It would appear that Suzanne’s affiliation with the middle-class habitus of the academic field may position her as a “fish in water” who ‘takes the world about itself for granted’ in a way that neither Simone nor Iris are able to do (Wacquant 1989, p. 43). However, the danger is that the discourse of hybridity in relation to Suzanne is classed, for it assumes an ‘ideal(ised) middle class Chinese migrant’ (Chan 2000, p. 57). Thus, it potentially ‘sanitises’ and conceals the ‘histories of uneven and unsynthetic power relations’ (Chan 2000, pp. 54-55) underpinning the historical class and ethnic differences that constitute the negative capital a post World War Two Greek immigrant such as Simone brings to the academic field, versus the middle-class cultural capital of a Suzanne.

The discourses of outsider/diversity as capital and hybridity are subject locations upon which Suzanne and Simone call to varying degrees. Why do they appear to have worked more successfully for Suzanne than Simone? Is it purely because Suzanne’s class origins provide her with more of a ‘natural ease’ in the academic field that the working-class origin Simone lacks? (Bourdieu, 1984a). Let us turn to a comparison and contrast of the two women’s experiences of restructuring to tease this point out further.

**New Managerialism and Restructuring: The Containable Face of Outsider Status/Diversity?**

I noted in Chapter Seven how the new managerialist tendencies of Simone’s university, appeared to articulate with the discourses of outsider as capital/diversity, to exploit her motherly and passionate habitus. The discourse of new managerialism, in terms of notions of individualism, competition and efficiency, was not one upon which the women leaders called. Some of the interviewees however, such as Simone and Lauren in Chapter Nine, did comment upon the brutalising effects of new managerialist tendencies in their work as leaders. In addition, the discourse was hinted at in the broadsheet representations of women as the harbinger of change, for
one of the ways in which new managerialism locates itself is through viewing ‘women as the new source of leadership for the greedy organisation’, to position women as ‘change agents’ (Blackmore 1997b, p. 4). In the sense of women being viewed as ‘change agents’, new managerialism was also implied through the small number of minority ethnic women leaders in the broadsheets who suggested that their outsider status was, at times, a form of positive capital. However, in terms of Simone and Suzanne in academia, the material effects of the discourse of outsider as capital/diversity, were very different. For Suzanne, restructuring opened up a rich array of leadership experiences, which appear to have cemented her position as an upcoming leader within her current university. For Simone, a bold attempt at changing traditional management structures left her feeling ‘burn-out’ (Yeatman 1995, p. 203) by the lack of support from senior executive.

Suzanne comments on her experience of restructuring:

I was in the faculty of ... and there was complete paralysis ... So that’s when I ... ended up playing ... an initiating role ... that actually worked out very well ... an important aspect of this leadership task is really to get support from younger colleagues and I suppose it’s then very important to be clear, to be transparent, to be fair ... And I really don’t think that has a lot to do with ethnicity or gender ... a lot of the male colleagues who were more junior ... felt extremely disempowered and disgruntled ... I ... tried to be ... good friends with ... junior staff but also ... with senior management ... I did write a lot of policy papers that ... (senior management) ... liked.

Suzanne’s attempts at restructuring did not appear to threaten entrenched hierarchies, except, she crucially notes later, an established group of Anglo-Australian feminist academics. In aligning herself with the ‘disempowered’ and ‘disgruntled’ junior men and senior management, Suzanne works as a ‘change agent’ for senior management (Yeatman 1995, p. 203). She taps into soft managerialist discourses of transparency and fairness. In so doing, she appeared to draw upon her considerable intellectual capital as a middle-class, Western-educated global citizen and intellectual worker to unconsciously assert herself as an up-and-coming leader.

In contrast, Simone’s comments upon her experience in charge of a faculty restructuring:
I did say there would be different roles ... so in moving as I did to produce this change and to bring in new business processes, which were ... about fairness, openness, access, equitability, making sure that the TAFF and Higher Ed ... AdmIn staff and Higher Ed staff had equal status. When you set about democratising ... that group that felt they were no longer in control of resources were very bitter ...

When the going gets tough what you got is the rhetoric ... So even though you might produce excellent performance and excellent results, in the end it's the political balance that ... that ultimately prevail(s) ... it's old-fashioned politics, hierarchy, affinity, networks, looking after your patch ... People like myself are wasted when they try to deliver both what is required in terms of the financial as well as ... re-engineering for survival.

Simone’s implementation of restructuring appeared to go a step further than Suzanne’s. She attempts to be the ‘“breath of fresh air”’ (Yeatman 1995, p. 203) through her implementation of a more democratic regime, based on what she saw as key business principles of ‘fairness, openness, access, equitability’. It is a fascinating case scenario of the ways in which the attempted interpellation of business processes and discourses may fail because of a very different habitus in a tertiary field described as now ‘less collegial, less fratriarchal and less fraternal’ (Hearn 2001, p. 83). In addition, a key part of the strategy of maintaining hierarchy in the field is through the generation of distance between academics and general staff and students (Webb et al. 2002, p. 129), a set of hegemonic power relations which Simone’s proposed changes rendered visible through threats to its existence. Simone’s experience is symbolically violent for it functions as a ‘cautionary tale’ to other promising minority ethnic women academics of what may happen when one challenges entrenched power structures (Baird 2004, p. 164). Her stymied attempts at democratisation appear to suggest that rather than a ‘real fracturing of hegemony’ occurring, it is instead ‘taking new forms’ (Fairclough 1992, pp. 203-204). In contrast, Suzanne’s apparently less radical change and the alliances she formed between junior staff and senior management, appeared to be far less threatening to the hegemony of her faculty.

There are a number of key differences between Simone’s and Suzanne’s attempts at restructuring. Firstly, Simone is in a more senior formal position of management
compared to Suzanne, for as a manager, she is sandwiched between her staff and upper management in a university in which most of the decision-making is concentrated in the latter group’s hands. Secondly, the environment in which Simone attempted to implement changes was, in apparent contrast to Suzanne’s, one that appeared to embrace diversity, but in practice, placed severe limitations upon it as a construct. For example, Simone describes her university as operating like a tightly knit club. She notes:

I’m forthright, I engage, I’m frank ... and that’s not how it operates. There’s a code of operation around tea and coffee and ... networking ... I’m one of the few outsiders in this university. Usually ... you come up through the ranks ...

Simone’s outsider status is exacerbated by a personal habitus, which values openness in opposition to the ‘unspoken and unspeakable rules’, which structure academic management (Moi 2000, p. 318). Thus it clashes with the habitus of her university which works to ‘obscure... the subtle barriers, the “clubbiness”’, of a deeply hierarchical and insular culture of management (Walker 1998, p. 336). Interestingly, Suzanne also comments on the ‘informal culture’ of her university, thus suggesting the more ‘covert’ ways through which hegemony may be being asserted in the academic field overall. However, a key difference between the two environments is that Suzanne’s new university is described by Suzanne as less entrenched and centralised in terms of its decision-making structures, having less of a strong corporate focus, where diversity amongst students and staff is a norm and where to be an outsider is a form of cultural capital rather than negative.

In sum, both Suzanne and Simone may be described as part of ‘a privileged class’ of women in higher education management – a ‘new elite ... (of) ...knowledge experts ... who constitute a new class of professional non-partisan politicians serving on international organisations ...’ (Luke 2001, pp. 20-21). However, what it is crucial to recognise is the significant capital of the middle-class that Suzanne brings to this elite, and which in turn, appears to provide her with a taken-for-granted ‘natural ease’ in the field which Simone lacks (Tokarczyk and Fay 1993, p. 22). Suzanne’s apparently successful attempt at restructuring her faculty, potentially suggests a strong link between ethnicity, class, intellectual capital and the discourse of
outsider/diversity as capital. Both Suzanne and Simone agree that ‘there has been for a number of years a certain cachet or attractiveness to being a woman and of minority background for universities and education sectors’. However, the two women’s contrasting management experiences also suggest that at a deeper level, Suzanne’s middle-class habitus has allowed her to absorb and read the rules of the game of academia in ways which apparently are denied Simone. Their experiences imply that ‘new privileged hierarchies’ of power may be in danger of being asserted (Chan 2000, p. 56) when leadership discourses of outsider/diversity, hybridity and women as ‘change agents’ (Yeatman 1995, p. 203) are apolitically and ‘without reflection’, interpellated into the gendered, raced and classed habitus that constitutes the academic field (Currie et al. 2002, p. 3).

**Why Can’t a Female Leader Be More Like a Man? Discourses of the Public/Private Divide**

A crucial difference between Suzanne and the other five interviewees was that she had made a choice not to have children and though having had partners, was currently partner-free. The framing of Anglo-Australian female politicians’ careers as a choice between the private and public spheres remains a common news angle in newspaper representations of women’s leadership (Baird 2004, pp. 73-89). By choosing not to have children or maintain a long-term partnership, Suzanne is following a common pattern amongst many successful women academic leaders, which allows her career path to emulate a typically male trajectory. It is a similar pattern to senior female academics in that due to the long hours, the majority of women leaders are ‘single … divorced … or … (their) … children have left home’. This is in contrast to male academic leaders, ‘who can rise to the top, whether married or single, with or without young children’ (Currie et al. 2002, p. 3).

Suzanne replies to the question of what she would see as her primary identity, ‘I don’t know – it’s a hard one! … Intellectual, maybe’. The choice to remain childfree may allow Suzanne to claim this academic habitus – one which feminists have critiqued for its role in sustaining power asymmetries in the academic field through the hegemonic dualism it constructs between mind/male versus body/female. This is not to criticise Suzanne’s choice of subject location, but to point to the symbolic
violence that may occur due to the dearth within the media and academia, of diverse representations of female academic leadership – particularly those of minority ethnic origin – and the consequent reassertion of unequal power relations as part of the discursive consequences that may flow from the choice of one limited subject location versus another.

The Embodied Female Leader

Suzanne notes that like Iris, she has been mistaken as a junior member of staff because, ‘Asian women generally look younger’, and stereotyped as ‘submissive’, a common regime of representation for Asian women (Bhopal 1994, p. 129); (Farmer 1993, p. 215); (Glazer-Raymo 1999, p. 115). Alternatively, when male academics were aware of the position she held, Suzanne faced sexist behaviour such as ‘telling me things that they expect me not to know’. Suzanne’s response is to adopt male-identified tactics, explaining:

I’ve just made it stop by acting really tough ... But that took quite a while to ... develop so I suppose ... I realised that was the way to be effective ... things that probably a lot of men learn very early ... For example ... when people start interrupting you when you talk — you just don’t stop ... Yeah ... sometimes ... questions are asked in such a way that I know it’s supposed to ... intimidate me ... And then I just ... do a ‘fuck you’ ... metaphorically ...

A key point which Suzanne makes in the above quotation is that she has adopted ‘tactics’ which ‘probably a lot of men learn very early’ — embodying a masculinist habitus of leadership. This is in contrast to Simone, who argues for a more contingent leadership style, depending upon the situation. A crucial contrast between Simone and Suzanne lies in Simone’s passionate assertion of the value of her ‘womanliness’ in her role as a leader, drawing partially upon the subject location of the second wave feminist discourse of women’s caring and nurturing abilities. Suzanne, as a single childfree woman, thus better fits the masculinist, Anglo-Australian discourse of professionalism in a field which Simone comments, ‘regards professionalism as not involving those tags of family. Not in more than pictures on your table anyway’. Hence, Suzanne may be positioned as less threatening to masculine modes of managing and leading in a field in which to be a mother and an academic involves ‘silence and isolation’ and the ‘public/private divide’ (Leonard and Malina 1994, pp. 30-33).
In addition, Suzanne’s middle-class origins may assist her in claiming the apparently gender-neutral, disembodied discourse of intellectual, rather than the ‘expressive, passionate, mother’ or ‘uppity woman’ from a peasant background. In drawing upon this subject location, Suzanne is discursively located on the civilised side of the civilised/uncivilised dualism (Tsoidis 2001, p. 33), in contrast to Simone and Iris who are placed through their class and ethnicity, on the uncivilised side. Nonetheless, as Ien Ang reminds us, even such a discourse ‘produces ambivalent subject positions for majority and minority subjects alike …’ (Ang 1996, p. 36), for it still perpetuates a dualism that places minority ethnic women leaders at a perceived distance from the majority ethnic, middle-class subject of the academic leader.

Feminism

At a number of points in the interview, Suzanne expresses her deep discomfort and sense of alienation from what she perceived as an Anglo-Australian feminist ‘girls club’ which she had witnessed operating. She was at pains to stress that she did not see this particular group of women as representative of feminism as a whole. However, she did note that, ‘there were also some other women with whom I did get on very well and funnily enough not Anglo’. In addition, she commented on her considerable ambiguity about feminism as a movement because of its ‘sense of absolutism … female oppression was the be all and end all’.

Suzanne’s position is similar to that of Simone’s and Iris’s, in expressing her discomfort at the way in which an ethnocentric discourse of Anglo-Australian feminism interpellated within the Australian academic field, has ‘perpetrated both symbolic and actual violence on to non Western, non white women’ (Schaffer 1998, p. 323). Where the three women differ, however, is that Iris and Simone claim feminism as a primary subject location despite this ambivalence. Suzanne only partially identifies with feminism, choosing instead to locate herself within the discourse of the intellectual – representing majority ethnic, middle-class masculinist authority. In the restructuring of the two women’s faculties, Suzanne’s diversity may be the containable face of outsider status/diversity, for it does not pose the same
degree of threat to established power relations as Simone’s feminist, womanly, passionate subject position.

**Reasserting Distinction: A New Class of Female Academic Leader?**

In commenting upon the post-Fordist economy, James Paul Gee has argued that so-called ‘new capitalism is giving rise to a new kind of person – a ‘shape-shifting portfolio person’ in which increased mobility is a form and source of power (Gee 2000, p. 190). It also appears to be giving birth to a newly emerging class – a global labour ‘elite’ – identified as ‘knowledge workers’ who possess the mobility so highly valued by employers and managers in the global economy (Gee and Lankshear, 1995). Such a construct also privileges a particular type of first world, middle-class masculinity, for it is this mode of masculinity which is most likely to produce men who have the ability to be ‘mobile’, along with a loyal wife who will support their global mobility (Connell 1998, p. 10).

Although the construct of the ‘knowledge worker’ draws on a neoliberal agenda which appears on the surface to use gender, class and ethnically neutral language, the assumptions that lie behind the privileging of attributes such as ‘mobility’, bespeak a form of gendered, raced and classed politics – a gendered order in which it is the ‘attributes and interests’ of a Western/Western identified, middle-class male which are to the forefront (Connell 1998, p. 15).

The adoption of a corporate model of governance in Australian universities brings with it the privileging of different values and principles, particularly in leadership. The notion of ‘knowledge workers’ bespeaks a new form of professional identity, potentially dislocating traditional notions of the intellectual within academe. Does Suzanne’s mobility, characterised by her lack of ties to children or a partner, and her intellectual and cultural capital, suggest the possibility of the creation of a new type of transnational femininity, which draws upon the attributes of the newly emerging hegemonic masculinity Bob Connell has identified?

Let us consider Suzanne’s case. She possesses the power of extensive social and professional mobility. This feature, when combined with her class background, her
international reputation as a scholar (which importantly was achieved in a first world country other than Australia, thus giving her greater cultural capital in the Australian tertiary field), fluency in English and her status as a global intellectual worker, appears to give her a subject position which allows her to move between the ‘borderlines’ of multiple cultural identities. It allows her to position herself as a member of that privileged group – the female version of the Westernised global citizen. In addition, her membership of the historically diasporic Chinese origin community potentially strengthens this connection. Unlike the other women leaders interviewed, Suzanne has chosen to remain single – so her lack of family or spousal ties provides her with the ‘power of mobility’ – a valuable form of capital within this emergent class of workers. Hence, Suzanne’s position within the academy may be suggesting that there are new subject positions opening for a few women within such a class who, through their decision not to have children, have stepped outside the public/private discourse. However, this is hardly a victory for women. In privileging a masculinist model of leadership that lets in a few women leaders as honorary males, ‘fundamental oppositions’ of masculinist, disembodied authority versus feminine, embodied, lacking in authority may be being reasserted in terms of ‘symbolic domination’ (Bourdieu 1990a, pp. 24-25).

Who is Being Disadvantaged? The Absence of Class in Minority Feminist Analyses of Academia

Suzanne notes there is a clear paradox lying at the heart of the discourse of ‘disadvantage’, for it can be a site of ‘possible oppression and ... power and resistance’ (Pallotta-Chiarolli 1996, p. 98). Suzanne comments:

The paradox is that precisely because there are not that many women ... you actually get noticed more quickly ... The notion of being disadvantaged is ambiguous ... I suppose it has a lot to do also with personality issues – like if ... you were ... an aloof person or a very militant feminist ... I think ... then you would have ... less chances. So ... whether you like it or not there is a sense in which ... you have to ... definitely be able to move in Anglo-culture relatively easily ...

Sandra Acker comments on this paradox in universities, noting that women are ‘paradoxically both invisible and extra-visible’ (Acker 1994, p. 128); located as
“outsider” and “other”, and so rendered uncomfortably invisible as individuals’, as well as ‘extra-visible’ due to their place in the limelight as representative of all women’ (Walker 1997, p. 8).

But who exactly is being disadvantaged here? Simone notes that in contrast to the business and media fields in which she also works, academic middle management is a ‘chilly climate’ for some women leaders to work (Nidiffer and Bashaw 2001, pp. 120-122). Though not underestimating the sexism and prejudice Suzanne clearly encounters in her work as an academic leader, the major contrast between the two women appears to be the greater ease with which Suzanne’s middle-class habitus, allied to her child-free status as honorary male, aligns with the field of academia. Christine Zmroczek and Pat Mahony argue that:

We have known for some time how class can be a unifying category across other divisions ... Black, South Asian and white women from middle-class backgrounds may be similarly linked by their experiences of class despite being divided by racism or cultural difference ...

We would argue that there is a need for further research and analysis in these and related areas (Zmroczek and Mahony 1999, p. 6).

Tracey Reynolds – a working-class origin black British academic – makes a similar contention (Reynolds, 1997). The contrasting experiences of Suzanne and Simone reinforce the need for further analysis in the academic field. They suggest that the interpellation of discourses of outsider/diversity as capital in regard to women’s leadership, may operate as a covert means by which new hierarchies of power are being reasserted in a field in which to be middle-class confers a powerful form of legitimacy.
Chapter Nine

Lauren’s Story: Real Girls Don’t Cry

I’ve been surprised ... I feel that I’m a fairly seasoned warrior ... capable of making myself heard in an assertive manner... But I can’t just seem to break through ... it’s like a sound barrier ... in where it counts ...

Locating Lauren

Lauren is a professor and member of the senior executive of a New university located in regional Australia. Her university services a 'non-metropolitan constituenc(y) centred on the provincial cities', which surround it (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 208). The sub sector to which her university belongs attracts high numbers of non-school leavers, is 'more likely to admit students on bases other than previous academic record', and consequently attracts more students from middle to lower socioeconomic categories (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 208, 211).

As a leading researcher in the field of science, Lauren brings to her university, the cultural capital of her extensive links with science, industry and government -- a valuable resource for a New university wishing to establish its legitimacy in the region and the field of academia overall. Lauren has grown-up children and a husband who for much of her working life, assumed the role of primary caregiver -- a characteristic of many high-ranking academic women (Acker and Feuerverger 1997, p. 132). Her accent marks her clearly as a member of the British working-class, a reality of which she is defiantly proud. She notes, 'I am who I am and ... whatever comes with that and people can either take it or leave it'. She comments that she has faced some discrimination in Australia due to her British origins and that her working-class accent in England was 'quite a barrier to overcome' -- a comment made by other British working-class origin academics (Mahony and Zmroczez Smith, 1997). However, she has chosen to hold onto her accent, arguing that her experience of discrimination gives her an empathy with students, which has been a valuable quality 'in this university'.
Representing Lauren

Lauren observed the following in terms of women’s leadership in society:

- A dearth of female role models in her region;
- An absence of media representations of women leaders in the fields of academia, science and in female-dominated areas such as health and aged care; and
- A media focus on prominent feminists such as Germaine Greer and ‘glass-ceiling breaking stories’.

In academia, Lauren noted the following:

- Racism and sexism amongst some managers;
- The isolation of being the only senior female academic with high numbers of junior women;
- The paradox of the invisible/visible female manager;
- Paternalistic masculinity amongst management versus her more ‘intuitive … bottom-up’ style;
- A hard management culture that ‘kick(ed)’ people ‘into submission’; and
- Covert sexism towards women in academia in contrast to more overt sexism in her field of science.

In science, she observed the limited discourses for women scientists, including:

- The eccentric female; and
- The honorary male, exemplified in the gender-neutral guise of the professional researcher/specialist;

The key subject locations from which Lauren chose to re-present included:

- The professional researcher/specialist in the field;
• The empathetic, accessible manager who worked for change from the ‘bottom-up’;
• A manager who recognised the importance of balance between the public and the private; and
• A proudly working-class origin leader.

I will examine the ways in which media representations of Anglo-Australian female politicians may have been interpolated within Lauren’s site via an exploration of the discourse of new managerialism. The reason for this is that although the discourse of new managerialism appeared to be largely absent from media representations of women leaders, it was characterised by Simone and Lauren as a dominant part of the habitus of their universities. It has been argued that it has become part of the logics of practice of management within the contemporary tertiary field in Australia (Currie et al., 2002). As such, the discourse appears to ‘set the terms’ to which all other discourses of management ‘have to respond’ (Hall 1988, pp. 62, 71), in the ‘field of struggles’ that constitutes contemporary Australian academia (Wacquant 1989, p. 40).

**New and ‘Old’ Forms of Managerialism: Discourses of Suffering?**

Bob Connell emphasises the ‘plurality and hierarchy of masculinities, and their collective and dynamic character’ (Connell 1998, p. 3). Lauren’s work as a researcher and manager in the fields of scientific research and then academia, illustrates the ‘plurality and hierarchy’ that exists in senior management within these two different fields and within both new and older forms of managerialism. Lauren identified a number of different constructions of masculinity in science and academia. The first was drawn from the scientific field in which she had been previously employed. It was, ‘impersonal … all climbing up greasy poles’, allied to a sexist, ‘blokey’ culture, in which

some of the men used to go around olling … which they don’t do here … more civilising! …

They’d be forever making comments about the sexual attractiveness of various junior colleagues … and they wouldn’t bother to hide the fact. This is … the … (two senior managers) … and … I found it quite perplexing to deal with …
Lauren decided to leave this location in preference for what she felt would be a ‘more civilised’ culture of senior management in her provincial university. However, as Jeff Hearn comments, ‘universities remain incredibly hierarchical gendered institutions’ (Hearn 2001, p. 72). Thus, Lauren describes university’s management as exhibiting ‘a different kind of … (sexist) … annoyance’. Lauren notes a homosociality of management (Hearn 2001, p. 74), characterised by male domination, a culture in which one worked one’s way up the ranks and consequently, ‘there are very few newcomers so it’s hard to break into’. In this sense, it was very similar to Simone’s university. Most power appears to be centralised in the vice-chancellor and meetings are described as ‘a rubber-stamping exercise’. The overall management environment, she contends, is like ‘being in the feudal age sometimes’. It is only because Lauren has had previous experience of leadership in a very different setting that her confidence in her ability to manage well remains intact. She comments:

I suspect there’s a stereotype … that any leader has to be hard-nosed, authoritarian, aggressive … extremely decisive … my … natural approach is different … I have the confidence of having been the leader of a group … that worked extremely well and I have no intention of changing my style … It’s more to do with bringing people along than kicking them into submission … a softer style …

The homosociality and brutalising habitus of academic management is reinforced by Lauren’s account of being dismissed from membership of the most senior committee on the grounds that the numbers needed to be reduced. Despite the fact that the committee had a tiny minority of women and she was one of its most senior members, she was ‘ditched’ in favour of a more junior, male administrator on the grounds that he was the oldest-serving administrator. Consequently, Lauren decided as a form of protest to continue attending the meetings as an observer, sitting ‘outside the circle’ of managers. Lauren’s dismissal was redolent of older forms of managerialism in which seniority was evoked as a major basis of authority.

Lauren ponders the material effects of the symbolic violence that this management style evokes, asking:
How much better could it have been for me and how much aggravation has it been? How have individuals suffered in achieving those ends? Many have prospered but I think many have suffered too.

A final construction of masculinity in management, which Lauren identified, was typified by another member of senior executive who was highly paternalistic and from a business background. Lauren notes:

He's an industry leader – has only worked with ... boards and when he talks to me ... he'll say, 'How's the garden ...?' ... I really want to talk about ... policy and what the opportunities are ... and I ... get ... this ... brush-off.

In commenting on Lauren's decision not to renew her contract with the university, the senior manager was heard to state:

'What can you expect when you give women these high pressure jobs?' And I was absolutely furious because after ... (a personal tragedy in Lauren's life) ... he ... came to the funeral and he ... cried ... He said I should take several months off... I think I took a week off ... I did everything I could ... to keep this university going and it felt like it really was being kicked hard.

Acker and Feuerverger (1997, p. 137) note that the 'outsider status' which female academic leaders hold in universities, 'combined with narrow institutional criteria for success, result in a situation where they suffer considerable pain'. It would appear that the considerable cultural capital of Lauren's work as a highly respected science researcher in a very male-dominated field, is not sufficient to outweigh the negative capital of her gender in the highly masculinist, hierarchical and Anglo-Australian habitus of her institution. She is located as a 'double deviant' for both working in a 'male-dominated world, but also expecting to receive equitable rewards and recognition' (Bagilhole 1994, p. 15). As such, Lauren's subject location appears to be rather like media representations of the golden girls of the Anglo-Australian political field, for the level of expectation placed upon her, sets her up to fail. In addition, as one of the first and only women in a senior management role in her university and the harbinger of change, she appears to be punished for her 'outsider status', through symbolic forms of expulsion such as her removal from a senior committee.
Secondly, Jeff Hearn contends that rather than ‘layers of gendered relationships of ruling’ disappearing ‘with organisational restructurings’ in universities, they ‘are sedimented upon each other’ in the formal and informal practices of management (Hearn 2001, p. 72). This would appear to be the case in Lauren’s institution. The sometimes ‘feudal’ nature of management from the nineteenth century (Hearn 2001, p. 79) remains, along with a persistent layer of older styles of managerialism, for example, in terms of the evocation of seniority. This is overlain with the paternalistic masculinity of Lauren’s businessman manager who exhibits some feelings while remaining extraordinarily sexist. However a newer entrepreneurial masculinity also overlays this mix, described as ‘aggressive, top-down, resistant to dialogue and exchange, and singularly lacking in empathy to the human costs of the changes … instituted in many institutions’ (Collier 2001, p. 23). It is implied in Lauren’s remarks that people are ‘kick(ed) … into submission’.

Thirdly, Lauren appears to be discursively located within her university as the soft, feminised face of management—a role that is being increasingly allocated to women academic leaders who supply the ‘extra emotional labour’ needed in times of restructuring (Prichard, 2000). She notes, for example, that ‘the most important change’ she has tried to make as a senior manager, is ‘bottom-up ’ through ‘listening’ to staff. In carrying out this work, the danger is that women leaders such as Lauren and Simone are then positioned by feminist discourses of women’s ways of leading in terms which construct the genders as ‘irreconcilably different’. Formal authority characterised by ‘knowledge, judgement and capacity for ruling’ thus remains the property of males and gender as a category is ‘maintain(ed)’ rather than made ‘fluid’ (Blackmore 1997b, p. 20). In addition, there is ‘little recognition or reward’ for such work (Prichard, 2000) and indeed, in Lauren’s case, she appears to be symbolically punished for her transgression as a female.

Fourthly, Lauren’s observations point to the contradictory gender climate of the tertiary field. On the one hand, there is an official commitment to gender equity through the creation of formal policies. On the other hand, at the concrete level of practice, within the ‘micropolitics’ of faculties (Morley, 1999), senior management et cetera, the habitus of universities remains profoundly gendered (Hearn 2001, p.
81). This is cause for real concern, particularly given the ‘strong legislative framework’ in regard to Equal Opportunity that has existed in Australia for two decades (Chesterman 2002, pp. 236-237). For example, Lauren muses on the contradiction between her university's reports on equity 'which look very good' given the majority of academics are female, but notes that:

They're ... nearly all in the lower echelons. There is a view that sometimes women don't want those extra responsibilities – I don't think that's anywhere near a full explanation for what is happening ...

Finally, Lauren makes an interesting point that in comparison to the overtly sexist habitus of her previous employer, the university appeared to be ‘more civillis(cd)’ when it came to the use of language and sexual harassment. However, the overt sexism was replaced by a 'different kind of annoyance' – one which appeared in some ways to be more subtle, but was just as damaging. Once can only speculate as to why there was such a difference in the habitus of the two fields. Possibly, the more middle to upper-class identity of academe as a field along with strong formal policies of equal opportunity may have created more subtle forms of sexism. Whatever the reason, the dissonance between the ways in which Lauren re-presents as a leader, in contrast to the material realities of her site, operate as a form of symbolic violence.

In terms of gender relations and power, Norman Fairclough notes how ‘covert markers of power asymmetry’ in the media have ‘become more potent’, leading to ‘more subtle’ power asymmetry rather than ‘disappearing’ (Fairclough 1992, pp. 203-204). In a similar fashion in the academic field, ‘Women’s voices are heard more, are less easy for men to ignore’ (Hearn 2001, p. 83) and this shift has been accompanied by discourses that can lend themselves to potential democratisation of the field, for example, diversity, transparency, quality assurance, equity etcetera (Bacchi, 2001). In addition, ‘the intensification of male management’ under managerialism in universities ‘may both affirm and enhance existing patriarchal relationships in universities, and yet also create the spaces for some women to do more management ... in different ways ...’ (Hearn 2001, pp. 83-84). Lauren’s experiences of management suggest the complex ways in which more subtle asymmetries of power may be asserting themselves in ‘potent’ ways within her
workplace site, and the severe limitations of the spaces that have been created for
women managers to do management 'in different ways', at least at her university.
There appears to be continuities and discontinuities between old and new forms of
mangerialism which both serve to position women academics such as Lauren, in
particular ways. New managerialism, it would appear, has led both to the reassertion
of old forms of paternalism, as well as new forms of masculinity.

Women in Senior Academic Management: Rule-Breaking but not Rule-
Making?

In a similar manner to broadsheet representations of Anglo-Australian female
politicians as rule-breakers, Lauren appears to be discursively located within the
upper management of her university as the transgressive female leader, who listens to
staff and adopts a 'softer style' of management. In this sense, she experiences a 'lack
of fit' or 'disrupted habitus' (Anderson 2001, p. 141) and consequently exposes the
highly gendered nature of academic management. Despite clearly possessing the
academic capital required in the field in terms of research, she appears to lack the
social capital of access to powerful mentors and networks which would assist her in
understanding the 'unwritten' rules and 'informal norms' of management -- a gender
advantage generally enjoyed by senior male, Anglo-Australian academics (Malik and
Stiver Lie 1994, pp. 8-9). Lauren lacks the 'right to speak', to be heard and make the
rules (Moi 2000, p. 318). In this sense, she is in a similar predicament to many other
senior women academics and to the Anglo-Australian female politicians of the
broadsheet representations (Deem and Ozga 1997, p. 35). Hence, she experiences a
'sound barrier' when she attempts to be heard 'where it counts', and illustrates the
phenomenon of invisible/visible discussed in Chapter Eight, to which women
minority groups are exposed (Acker 1994, p. 128).

Crucially, Lauren's experience of sexism within management also illustrates the
'mobilisation of bias', which occurs for women who assume leadership (Connell,
1987). By being marked as the 'other' and attacked, Lauren's colleagues are actively
defending 'hegemonic masculinity' through an active resistance that 'involve(s)
objectifying' her 'in order to diminish ... (her) ... power and status' (Meyenn and
Parker 1996, p. 10). Like hegemonic masculinity over recent decades, their
endeavours appear to have been ‘impressively successful’, for Lauren makes a
decision not to renew her contract at the university (Connell 1995, p. 216).

**Embodying Lauren: Exposing the Researcher/Specialist**

Embodyment was a major discourse in broadsheet representations of Natasha Stott
Despoja, former leader of the Australian Democrats. Lauren, like Suzanne, took on at
an early stage in her career, one of the very few ‘routes’ for women researchers in
her field, that of the gender-neutral specialist (Sinclair 1994, p. 40). Given the male
domination of the field in her early years, the only choice open in those days for
women scientists to establish legitimacy and be heard, it would appear, was to accept
the Anglo-Australian, masculinist constructs which underlay the discourse of
researcher and work hard to position oneself within its boundaries. In Lauren’s case,
she did this both within the public sphere of her work as a researcher and in the
private sphere where her husband eventually took on the role of primary caregiver to
their children. The latter action allowed Lauren to adopt the apparently gender
neutral trajectory of a male researcher’s career. Lauren’s professional habitus became
that of disembodied/honorary male researcher and was so pervasive that she
observes, ‘(eventually) I didn’t really think much about being a woman although I
was so alone in the beginning. I … worked my way into being able to speak up …
without anybody thinking “oh, she’s a woman”’.

Crucially, however, Lauren gained much of her research and leadership experience in
a small, regional team environment, which exhibited the more traditionally feminine
qualities of co-operation, nurturing and communication. Her researcher habitus
became, ‘the product of a practical sense … of a socially constituted “sense of the
game”’, thus allowing Lauren to become a “fish in water” and take the … (scientific)
world about (her)self for granted’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43). However,
her shift to a different part of the same field – head office – and thence to the very
different field of academic management, demanded a very different professional
habitus and exposed the gendered and raced nature of management through its sexist
and racist practices.

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Bourdieu reminds us that the foundations of any kind of habitus are laid via the symbolic violence of ‘pedagogic action’ (Jenkins 1992, p. 107). A crucial part of the pedagogic action that underlies Lauren’s scientific habitus is the way in which knowledge and formal authority in both the fields of Australian science and academia is constructed as disembodied, gender neutral and ultimately, the property of Anglo-Australian, middle-class men. It is possible that Lauren’s Anglo/British origins along with her scientific expertise, provided her with the cultural capital that allowed her to speak from the legitimated subject position of specialist within her field. Thus, she was discursively placed, like Suzanne, on the civilised side of the civilised/uncivilised dualism (Tsolidis 2001, p. 33). However, females in the public sphere ‘are forever being caught out as women masquerading as genderless, dressed-up professionals’ (Trioli 1999, p. 124) and Lauren’s shift to the gendered and raced field of academia and consequent delegitimation, exposes the mask of gender neutrality which works to constitute masculinist, Anglo-Australian academic management. It also suggests that her university, like Simone’s, may have failed to absorb the discourses of equity at management level, despite superficial appearances to the contrary, thus leaving her feeling like a ‘fish out of water’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43).

Public/Private Divide: Sacrificing Individuals

This was a minor discourse in broadsheet representations of Anglo-Australian female politicians. Currie et al. contend that contemporary universities are ‘greedy institutions’ which devour their staff in terms of increasing hours of paid work and a resultant cost to one’s health and personal relations (Coser, 1974); (Currie et al. 2000, p. 270). Lauren’s interview appears to illustrate the truth of this claim, for example, in her observations about only taking a week off after a family tragedy. Moreover, she notes that she faced the tensions between career and family when her children were small, prior to her husband taking on the full-time primary caregiver’s role. She comments:

I used to get like all women who are working and looking after small children, extremely tired. I can remember going home in the evening, washing up in the sink and thinking, I’ll
do it tomorrow, and then I'd get up absolutely exhausted the next day and they'd ... still be there.

In this sense, Lauren experienced the gendered tension between the public and private spheres, which the Anglo feminist movement has noted, and which is a classic framing device used in media representations of Anglo-Australian women politicians. It is a balancing act that places many women academics at a 'cumulative disadvantage' in comparison to males in the field (Stiver Lie 1990, p. 124). Both Ruth (refer to Chapter Ten) and Lauren commented upon this tension, while the younger Iris did not.

Despite the fact that Lauren's husband eventually gave up his career to happily raise the children and support her in her breadwinner role, Lauren, along with Ruth, appears to experience a sense of guilt that she did not fulfil the 'traditional' full-time mothering role expected of her generation — a guilt which the younger generation of women academics, such as Iris, does not share (Stiver Lie 1990, p. 120). Indeed it has been argued that this latter generation provides a far more 'mixed picture' in terms of caring responsibilities compared to the older generation of women academics who tended to take on the role of full-time carer for much longer periods of time (David 1998, p. 285).

In addition, Iris's keen awareness as a younger woman leader of the importance of maintaining a balance between the personal and public spheres and her rejection of a career which demands the levels of sacrifice outlined by Simone and Lauren, also appears to be what separates Iris from the older generation of academic women leaders. Lauren comments tellingly:

I think the balance of life is absolutely critical and ... it was brought home by ... (two recent personal losses) ... those two events really have brought home to me how important it is to spend time with the people you love. Even in my case I was lucky to have a partner who looked after them ...

Lauren’s dilemma in favouring her career over her family, appears to encapsulate the more restricted discourses open to an older generation of female academics. The experience of Iris and a younger generation of women politicians (Lumby 2000, p.
suggests the possibility that middle-class women raised in the 1980s and 90s who have been regaled with the ‘you can have it all’ discourse, operate with a sense of entitlement in regard to career and family. This is not to dismiss the very real and prevalent issues, which still face younger women in regard to maintaining a family and career, but simply to observe that there is a taken-for-grantedness in Iris’s assumption that she will combine career and family that the older Lauren does not experience.

Feminism as Absence

Feminism as a media representation of Anglo-Australian women politicians was not part of Lauren’s professional or personal habitus to the same degree as Iris, Simone, Ruth and Amelia. Instead Lauren identified much more strongly with the professional scientist/specialist subject location. However, she did call upon feminism when analysing the sexism that she had experienced as a senior manager. For example she recounts strategies of resistance, such as insisting that other women’s suggestions in key committees be minuted, rather than ignored. However, she speculates that such acts of resistance may have led to her exclusion from the inner sanctum of the ‘boys’ club’ of senior executive (Montgomery 1997, p. 70).

As the only woman in the ‘aggressively competitive’ (Walsh 2002, p. 37) culture of her university’s management, feminist discourses for Lauren in terms of analysis of her situation appeared to provide her with some agency in terms of understanding and resisting such practices. Ultimately, however, as the sole senior female manager, she was ‘socially and psychologically located on the margins’ of academic management at her university (Acker and Feuerverger 1997, pp. 134-135). Lauren’s experiences point to the crucial need for support for women leaders from senior management, for this legitimates their position within the field. As Clare Burton notes, the ‘commitment of the Vice-Chancellor’ is ‘the single most helpful factor in creating an environment conducive to the effective management of a diverse workforce’ (Burton 1997, p. 149). It was a crucial precondition apparently lacking in Lauren’s university.
The Omission of Class

There was a major dissonance between the silence around class in media representations of Anglo-Australian female politicians and the feminist literature on academic leadership on the one hand; and Lauren’s personal and professional habitus as a proudly working-class origin, senior academic, on the other hand. This suggests a form of symbolic violence, for there appeared to be no discursive space within either the media or the field of academia for Lauren’s subject position. Moreover, symbolic violence is also operating in the ‘lack of fit between’ Lauren’s habitus which has been ‘powerfully influenced by a working-class past’, and the ‘middle-class field of education’ (Reay 1997, p. 229).

There are ‘very different kinds of working class’ (Reay 1997, pp. 21-22). Lauren comes from a line of coalminers and rail workers who view their working-class origins as positive capital. She carries this sense of legitimation in her professional and personal habitus. It is demonstrated in her acts of resistance – the retention of her accent – and her ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Morcton-Robinson 2000, pp. 2-3), such as her empathy for disadvantaged students. Unlike many of the working-class origin academics in the small body of literature, which examines this area, she does not appear to suffer from a ‘sense of disloyalty and dislocation’ as the cost she pays for upward mobility (Reay 1997, pp. 20-21). Rather, she celebrates the ‘unacknowledged cultural capital’ that her class origins bring her ‘in terms of… knowledge and understanding’ (Hey 1997, pp. 145-146). This suggests support for Zmroczeck and Mahony’s assertion that class experiences are ‘deeply imprinted, rooted and retained through life’, instead of ‘the more conventional notion of class as a social category left behind or newly entered as one moves up (or down) the “ladder of success”’ (Zmroczeck and Mahony 1999, pp. 3-4).

Lauren’s class origins may have assisted her in carving out a space ‘in-between’ competing dominant discourses’ of gender and class in senior academic management (Archer 2003, p. 19), in a similar fashion to Simone, Iris and Suzanne’s legitimisation of their ethnic origins. However, as Simone discovers, there may be a cost attached in subverting dominant discourses. In a field whose habitus is predominantly legitimised as ‘middle-class, masculin rationality’ (Hey 1997, pp. 147-148), the
price Lauren may have paid for her resistance is ‘ritualised expulsion’ (Hall 1997, p. 259). Given that the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity in feminist research on academic leadership is still largely unmapped territory (Walsh 1997, p. 169), further research is needed to explore this terrain.

Whiteness as Privilege?

The degree of sexism that Lauren appears to have experienced as a senior manager, could be seen to overshadow the possible privilege her ethnicity confers. However, this would be a mistaken assumption. Lauren herself notes that to be Aboriginal or black at senior management level in her institution would ‘probably ... (be a) ... great big disadvantage’, a statement supported by other research (Farmer 1993, p. 198). The fact that Lauren’s senior status within the male and Anglo-Australian dominated scientific field provided her with the symbolic capital to obtain her senior management position in the first place, suggests the advantaging factor of Anglo ethnicity. Similarly, in the academic field, her competition is Anglo origin males, whereas non-Anglo origin women must compete against Anglo origin males and females (Andrews 1993, p. 183).

Simone had noted that Australian men, ‘quite like the English girls, they’re immigrants but ... they like them even more than the home grown one(s) ... they know how to deal with them because they are like their sisters’. It is possible that Lauren’s English ethnicity may have initially conferred this advantage. However, if so, it was not sufficient to outweigh the negative capital of her gender and possibly class, which leads to the lack of fit of academic habitus she experiences within her institutional context.

Both Simone and Lauren comment upon the contrast between the degree of fit they experienced between their professional habitus and specific segments of the fields of media, business and science respectively, compared with the disjuncture of their habitus endured within academic management. Their experiences, along with that of Suzanne and Iris, potentially suggest something about the ways in which the largely masculinist, Anglo-Australian and middle-class habitus of academic management differentially structures gender, class and ethnic oppression for its women managers (Anderson 2001, p. 141). It also implies how a number of the dominant discourses of
leadership open to these women both within the specific field of academia and within media representations of women’s leadership, may be positioning them in symbolically violent ways through a significant disjuncture between their habitus as senior female academics and the limited and limiting discourses open to them. However, each woman also exhibits a strong sense of agency in terms of representing themselves in ways which attempt to reconstitute different knowledge and ways of leading. Let us turn to an examination of the experiences of two Aboriginal women leaders – one who holds an extremely senior academic position and one who is more junior – to examine these issues further.
Chapter Ten

Ruth’s Story: The Political Capital of Diversity

I was in the Golden Wing ... just after ... the ... (Olympic) ... Games ... I was feeling really great and wonderful about it all. I could see this fellow in the reflection and he was over at the bar ... I just saw that absolute face of ... hatred when he saw me.

I relayed the story to my son and to my friend ... (My son) ... said to me, ‘Mum, why didn’t you get up and just say something?’ I said, ‘because darling ... I felt powerless at that time’. The person that I am, yet I felt so powerless ...

Locating Ruth

Ruth is the only woman leader interviewed who is employed in a Sandstone university – the oldest foundation universities in each state (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 189). Sandstones are ‘more resourceful and powerful than other universities’ and at their strongest combine ‘positional advantage with ... institutional coherence in its contemporary form ... and broad-based and vibrant scholarly cultures’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 189, 195-196). Because of the ‘robust(ness)’ of these cultures, they can afford not to be ‘fully entrepreneurial’, and to attract ‘top scholars and researchers’ who possess the symbolic capital to ‘resist managerialism’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 193-194).

Ruth is a senior lecturer and deputy manager of a specialist unit. Simultaneously, she is actively involved as a leading Aboriginal feminist in the political field of government Indigenous/Non Indigenous relations. The print media regularly calls upon Ruth for commentary on Indigenous issues. She has one child, is from a working-class background and has a supportive extended family. She is currently partner-free.
Representing Ruth

Ruth identified the following dominant discourses at a broader societal level in terms of Aboriginal women and leadership. They included:

- Racist and sexist attitudes and assumptions about Aboriginal women at the broader societal level, as well as within the media, political and academic fields;
- Indigeneity as positive capital within the fields of politics, academia and media; and
- Gender as negative capital within the preceding fields.

Within academia, Ruth identified the following discourses of leadership:

- White male boss/black subservient woman attitudes which resonated with colonial relations of ruling;
- Bureaucratic discourse which ‘hamstrung’ middle managers who were dictated to from the ‘top’;
- The cultural capital of Indigeneity versus the negative capital of one’s gender; and
- Senior executive support for reconciliation between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians.

Within the media as a field she noted:

- Patriarchal and colonising assumptions about Aboriginal leadership which consistently framed a few Aboriginal men as the public face of leadership.

Within the political field of Indigenous/non Indigenous relations, she observed:

- Sexist collusion between Aboriginal/non Aboriginal men; and
• A challenging of the traditional colonial dualism of white male
  boss/subservient black female when a feminist Aboriginal elder takes over
  leadership of a key political committee.

Re-Presenting Ruth

Ruth called upon the following discourses in terms of Aboriginal women’s
leadership:

• Feminist discourses of women as a collective
• Feminist Aboriginal elder
• Subversion of the white male boss/subservient black female dichotomy
• Matriarch
• Leadership as a communal activity rather than an individual pursuit
• The notion of community leadership extending to inclusion of one’s ancestors

Gender Versus Race Dualism: A (White) Media Furphy?

Toril Moi emphasises the ‘unusually relational way’ in which gender, like class,
operates as part of the ‘general social field’ and ‘infiltrates and influences every other
category’ (Moi 2000, p. 329). She contends that ‘further investigation’ is required in
order to explore ‘whether race can be theorised in such terms’ (Moi 2000, p. 329).
The experiences of Iris, Simone, Suzanne, Lauren and Ruth suggest the ‘complex
variability’ of social factors such as ethnicity, gender and class in terms of
constituting each woman’s leadership habitus, ‘as well as the way in which’ such
categories ‘influence and modify each other in ... (the) ... different’ institutional
contexts in which the women work (Moi 2000, p. 329).

The media-generated debate between some white feminists and Aboriginal women
leaders in the wake of Pat O’Shane’s comments noted in Chapter Five, simplifies and
essentialises the ‘complex variability’ of social factors such as ethnicity and gender
into a series of racist and sexist dualisms between different groups of women. The
‘face of hatred’, which Ruth notes in the opening quotation of this chapter, is a major
difference which characterises Ruth’s accounts of leadership on the one hand, and
that of Lauren, Simone, Suzanne and Iris, on the other hand. It serves as a reminder that although women as a group are located in ‘common border zones’ within academia, ‘these same systems of power reproduce hierarchies within outsider-within locations’ (Hill Collins 1998, p. 234). “Race” is always “visceral and painfully visible” for Ruth and Amelia (refer to Chapter Eleven) (Kimmel, 1990); (Matthews 2000, p. 31). It is a phenomenon similarly experienced by African-American female professionals for whom racism in the workplace was so common, it came to be viewed as ‘routine’ (Hill Collins 1998, p. 86).

Whiteness continues to function as a silent privilege, for it is the white face of hatred that fixes Ruth. It points to the way in which one’s ethnicity – be it Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal – remains a major ‘structuring influence in terms of material effects on women’s lives’ in Australia (Walker 1998, p. 350). Elizabeth Spelman captures the symbolic violence that constitutes these representational regimes when she comments that

the conventions about self-description allow me to refer to myself simply as ‘woman’. But if I were a Black woman, people would think I was withholding important information if I did not qualify ‘woman’ with ‘Black’ (Spelman 1988, p. 96).

Closer to Nature?

Ruth notes a number of racist discourses, which she has encountered within the different fields in which she works. At the broader societal level, she pointed out the disparity between the positive media coverage of Aboriginal athlete Cathy Freeman winning a Gold Medal in the 2001 Olympics and the racism that still prevailed in broader Australian society. She comments:

Cathy is definitely a special case … but I don’t think people should read too closely into … (it) … There are many other little people in communities doing fantastic work … who are there fighting the hard-nosed racists … getting filthy letters dropped into their letter boxes, getting rocks thrown through their window, getting threats to their children at school …

Neither Ruth nor Amelia (refer to Chapter Eleven) noted being subjected to the closer to nature media representation of Aboriginal women leaders. However, Ruth’s
description of the pervasive racial hatred that she still experiences on a constant basis from some strangers suggests the way in which Aboriginality may be operating as a form of embodiment to place members of this group at the farther end of the uncivilised/closer to nature dualism and thus, as lesser human beings. As Aileen Morton-Robinson notes, ‘the hegemony of white ideology ... positions Indigenous women on the racial continuum as ... the least civilised’. For white women, the ‘same ideology ... position(s) ... (them) ... closer to the other end, where the dominant subject position “white male” represents culture and civilisation’ (Morton-Robinson 2000, p. 112). The racism Ruth recounts suggests that there is a discourse of racial hatred against Aboriginal people, which – though silenced or marginalised in the two broadsheets – is still prevalent in some parts of the non-Aboriginal community and constitutes part of the material conditions under which Aboriginal women academics such as Ruth carry out their leadership work.

**Gender Versus Race Dualism: Indigeneity as Cultural Capital Within Academia?**

Ruth’s experiences of leadership within academia, the media and Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations, illustrate how gender and ethnicity intersect in complex ways in the discourses and material practices of her work. This is in contrast to the simplified, stereotypical representation of the race versus gender dualism connoted within the broadsheets’ representations of the Pat O’Shane story, when white feminists were positioned against the ‘naughty nigger’, Pat O’Shane (refer to Chapter Five).

Within academia, it has been contended that in terms of the ‘elaborati(on) and validati(on)’ of ‘certain kinds of knowledge’, the tertiary field operates in contradictory ways, both as a ‘key site in the reproduction of racism and sexism, and possibly for anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles’ (Pettman 1992, p. 129). Ruth notes that her relationship with some of the senior (male) hierarchy in her university at times replicates the colonial dynamic of ‘black woman, white male boss, power dichotomy’. However, in terms of ‘anti-racist struggles’, she observes that as a result of her work in the political field of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations, the
leadership within the university has ‘been very supportive with reconciliation issues … protocols, policies and so forth’.

Ruth’s Indigeneity provides her with positive capital which allows her to ‘make some impact’ upon the tertiary and political fields in which she is located (Moi 2000, pp. 331-332). Interestingly, her gender is mostly constructed as negative capital – a point which Phyllis Strong Green, an African-American academic leader also makes in regard to her experiences as an academic leader (Strong Green 1997, pp. 155-156). Ruth comments that

in both of these … (positions) … I’m not constrained in any sense by my Indigeneity – it is a real bonus … I’ve never felt hampered or constrained. Certainly as a woman, in both of them, at times I have felt very subjugated.

Ruth appears to have found herself in a position of real power, in being able to turn her “difference” into intellectual and political capital (Ang 1995, p. 57). Similarly, Simone, Suzanne and Iris pointed to the fluctuating symbolic capital of their ethnicity within the academic field, and in the case of Suzanne and Simone, to the symbolic capital, which attached at times to their gender. However, Simone’s experience of the dual nature of the discourse of outsider/diversity as capital, and the ways in which such discourses can be constructed as deviant from a silent norm of ‘Anglo ness’, sounds a warning in regard to the potential ‘epistemic violence’ (Spivak 1988a, p. 280) that underlies these representations.

In addition, Ruth’s location within a Sandstone university which dominates the field with its ‘positional advantage’ and which possesses the symbolic capital to ‘resist managerialism’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 193-194), may also allow the university to fulfill its traditional role of dissent through providing a discursive space for ‘anti-racist struggles’ (Pettman 1992, p. 129). There is also the suggestion that the university itself derives symbolic capital by being seen to support reconciliation through its formal policies and protocols. The legitimacy that such work may now be attracting can be contrasted with Simone’s university, which, though drawing upon a very high number of students from ethnically diverse backgrounds, no longer has an
expert on cultural diversity, due to funding cutbacks. In addition, it appears to treat
diversity as negative capital, despite rhetoric to the contrary.

Ruth’s emphasis upon the positive capital, which her Indigeneity brought to the
academic and political fields contrasts with most of the feminist literature on the
experiences of non-Anglo women in academia. The research tends to emphasise the
negative capital of one’s ethnicity, in a similar fashion to the literature on working-
class origin academic women. Emphasis was placed on women’s double outsider
status within the field, both in terms of their gender and ethnicity. A marginalised
postcolonial discourse occasionally surfaced, for example, when Uma Kothari
discusses her simultaneous location of ‘power and powerlessness’ as a black
academic teaching development studies in the United Kingdom (Kothari 1997, pp.
162-163). Kothari’s observations underline the tenuous nature of the symbolic capital
that currently attaches to Ruth’s Indigeneity within the fields of politics and
academia. Moreover, the more one-sided emphasis upon powerlessness and
subordination within the feminist literature on academia, suggests the need for more
complex analyses of the ways in which non Anglo-origin female academics’
identities are constituted both within a ‘plurality of fields’ and in multiple and
contradictory ways within specific sites within the academic field (Connolly 2000, p.
128). As Bourdieu notes, ‘relations of domination ... (cannot) ... possibly operate
without implying, activating resistance’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 36). It is this
examination of resistance that appears to be marginalised in the contemporary
feminist literature on non-Anglo origin academics.

Kothari and Ruth’s comments point to the fundamental importance of examining the
specific historical era of 2001 (refer to Chapter Five), in order to understand how and
why discourses such as reconciliation and Aboriginal civil rights were mobilized
within the media, political and academic fields at this time, and the ‘material effects’
of this mobilisation, in terms of Aboriginal women’s leadership (Ashcraft and
Mumby 2004, p. 166). They also point to the importance of understanding the
specificities of the field, which allow such discourses to be taken up at that particular
time. For example, a crucial part of the traditional habitus of academia is affording a
space where ‘it is possible to disagree’ (Montgomery 1997, p. 67), within a field
whose ‘borders’ are ‘still relatively open to the stateless and migrant’ (Stanley 1997c,
p. 183). It is a space, which appears to be increasingly threatened by neoliberal discourses of new managerialism. Significantly, however, I note that Ruth’s university has sufficient dominance of the field to ‘resist managerialism’, unlike Simone’s university whose less ‘robust … scholarly culture’ and strong links to industry (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 193-194) makes it potentially more amenable to this latter discourse. This may explain why Ruth’s university feels able to support more marginal discourses such as Aboriginal rights to a greater degree than universities with less symbolic capital.

Gender Versus Race Dualism: Indigeneity as Cultural Capital Within the Media?

Although Ruth’s Indigeneity provides her with sufficient capital to be consistently called upon by the media as a news source, she notes how sexist practices are built into the process of newsgathering. For example, she observed that mainstream journalists in her state rely on their contacts with a small handful of Aboriginal male leaders for their sources. Rarely, if ever, do they go to Aboriginal women or alternative Aboriginal men for information. She reflects:

It’s almost like an extra effort to find an Aboriginal woman who can actually talk. ATSIC women … who were leaders in the country don’t get an opportunity to speak out to the media as much as ATSIC men.

A second example she cites is when news footage of Aboriginal meetings is shown. She observes that

the images are usually at meetings or … in parks … and are men’s images. They are … built up on a powerful, individualistic persona type. Therefore, Aboriginal men are given more air space and airplay to say things.

Whose interests are served by this selective framing? Ruth’s observations indicate the symbolic power of the media to selectively frame, constitute and normalise Western, patriarchal discourses of leadership. This is in opposition to more marginalised discourses of Aboriginal leadership, for example, leadership as a collective entity, or recognition of ‘complementary female-male responsibilities in relation to land or “place”’ (Tripcony 1998, p. 255). Her comments point to the ways
in which mediatised constructions of Aboriginal leadership form part of a representational regime which privileges specific Aboriginal male leaders’ perspectives whilst marginalising alternative/subjugated knowledges such as Aboriginal women or the group as a collective. It suggests the construction of a hegemonic masculinity of Aboriginal leadership built on a ‘powerful, individualistic persona type’ which may serve the interests of the white mainstream media or political fields, while subjugating other constructions of Aboriginal masculinity or femininity. Thus, it potentially operates as a form of symbolic violence through legitimating and naturalising in a ‘disguised form…’ (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 128) taken-for-granted assumptions about Western and masculinist ways of leading.

**Will (Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal) Boys Always Be Boys?**

Ruth’s preceding comments suggest the power of the mainstream media to colonise Aboriginal ways of leading. This colonisation process is further illustrated when she discusses the sexist leadership of the former Aboriginal male chair of the political committtee of which she was a member. She observes:

> I felt it was very male-identified and the women with any power were in fact toeing the male line and those of us who weren’t were either ignored or shoved aside … each time you tried to make a point in a meeting, you would get two minutes - the men, no matter what colour they were - would speak for as long as they liked …

Toril Moi argues that gender ‘carries different amounts of symbolic capital in different contexts … the capital at stake is always the symbolic capital relevant for the specific field under examination’ (Moi 2000, p. 330). Ruth’s preceding observations illustrate the ways in which ‘under current social conditions and in most contexts maleness functions as positive and femaleness as negative symbolic capital’ (Moi 2000, p. 330). The positive capital of the women’s Indigeneity is insufficient to outweigh the negative capital of their gender. Collusion between the male leaders, and between Aboriginal women willing to ‘toe the line’ of the Aboriginal male members of the committee, provides both groups of males with more legitimacy and power, particularly in a committee within the political field which carries a great deal of symbolic power. It indicates the way in which the shared privilege of being a male operates as a colonising process (Matthews 2000, p. 32) by sanctioning sexist
discourses of Western patriarchal masculinity, which, Ruth later notes, are not legitimate within the broader Aboriginal social field. It also functions as a form of symbolic violence, by marginalising women who speak out while simultaneously denying that such sexism is occurring.

Comparing the Political and Academic Fields

Despite the apparent discursive space that Ruth’s Indigeneity brings to the fields of academia and politics, she notes a crucial difference between the habitus of the two fields. She reflects that

being on ... (a political committee) ... has allowed me to have a wider network and a ... higher national profile ... There’s many times I feel very hamstrung by my position as ... (middle manager in the university) ... because ... it does feel like a bureaucracy ... like you’re being dictated to all the time from the top. You don’t have great opportunities to make changes or any decisions.

Clearly, there is a level of power, public profile and freedom afforded by Ruth’s work in the political realm, which her role as an academic middle manager cannot afford. Nonetheless, Simone and Lauren echo Ruth’s complaints about her lack of real managerial power and the top-down nature of senior university management. They contrast with Suzanne who was given the freedom to play ‘an initiating role’ in her faculty’s restructure. Despite the symbolic capital of Ruth’s Indigeneity in the academic field, her comments imply a strong alignment between her habitus as an active feminist Aboriginal woman leader in the political field versus her apparent lack of fit within academic management.

Although non Anglo-Australian women academics such as Ruth are traditionally located as outsiders in the academy, the concern is that the habitus of senior management is becoming ‘increasingly gendered’ (and, I would argue, raced), by the selective interpellation of entreprenurial discourses from the business field. For example, Currie et al. (2002, p. 9) note the existence in Anglo academia of

a peak masculinist discourse used mainly by those in the more powerful positions in these institutions, which acts to disenfranchise all those who do not operate within its restricted and restrictive boundaries.
In terms of women or other groups who do not fit this culture, the chances are that ‘promotion into higher ranks ... of management will become even more difficult’, less inclusive, rather than more (Currie et al. 2002, p. 9). Therefore, the space afforded for critical thought and dissent within academia, including for academic ‘women of colour’ like Ruth who inhabit ‘“the borderlands” ... know(ing) ... more than one world’ and ‘“travel(ling) ... between different “worlds”’, appears to becoming less (Espin 1995, p. 135).

**Feminism: Is Sisterhood Powerful?**

Although feminism was absent in media representations of Aboriginal women leaders, it was strongly connoted in broadsheet discourses of the Aboriginal matriarch. Feminism as a white women’s movement has been extensively critiqued by black women (refer to Chapter Two). However, Ruth’s feminism was predicated upon an awareness of the complex ways in which both racism and sexism intersected within her and other Aboriginal women’s lives. In this sense, her subject location was somewhat similar to Simone and Iris, for all three women’s habitus was powerfully shaped by feminism. However, Ruth’s feminism tended to draw more upon a more second wave feminist discourse of women as a collective, rather than Iris’s third wave feminist discourse of embodiment and hybridity. Moreover, Ruth’s position within the academic and black feminist fields provided her with access to postcolonial feminist discourses – discourses that have achieved some legitimacy within the academic field despite their omission from broadsheet representations of women’s leadership. This suggests the power of feminism to shift the borders of what constitutes the academic field, through the interpellation of these discourses. In turn, it implies the opening up of a discursive space for Aboriginal women leaders with Ruth’s intellectual capital within the academic field -- despite its increasingly restricted boundaries. This is a point that writers such as Kothari (1997) and Stanley (1997c) make, but which appears to be muted within the overall feminist literature on black women’s experiences of academe.
The Matriarch

Both the broadsheets and Ruth draw upon this representation of Aboriginal women leaders. The problematic nature of this media representation lies in how it can be utilised to essentialise and depoliticise leadership so that power is constructed as if it were, ‘a possession ... (of whites) ... rather than a relation ... (between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal) ...’ (Greenfield and Williams 1988, p. 79). However, the potential power this discourse suggests for Aboriginal women leaders is exemplified by the following story Ruth narrates when the chair of the committee switched from an Aboriginal male to a feminist elder. She observes:

I've learnt so many messages ... through that whole process in just watching how it operates ... at a very top level where you have a woman as boss. It just changes the whole climate and the whole thinking of the white men ... the black men usually know their place, some of them have to be slapped into place as the boss always did. The white men had to sit back a bit and listen more. For them that was a real eye-opener ...

This is not new in our community ... but I could see the white men really grappling with it.

I find Ruth’s comments illuminating in terms of illustrating the ‘social variab(ility)’ of categories such as gender and race. It demonstrates how in contrast to most Anglo-Australian ‘conditions and ... contexts’ of formal political authority, the symbolic capital associated in Aboriginal society with femaleness and age, operates to ‘appropriate the specific products at stake in the game’ of Aboriginal/non Aboriginal politics (Wacquant 1989, p. 40). The elder appears to utilise her habitus as a leader within Aboriginal society and her ‘practical sense of the game’ of white politics, allied to feminist understandings of Western patriarchy (Wacquant 1989, p. 42), in order to challenge the colonised/coloniser dichotomy. In so doing, we gain a glimpse of Aboriginal women’s leadership as a legitimated form of knowledge, which potentially opens up ‘possibilities unknown by others’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 179)

In contemporary Australian society, it still appears to be unnatural to have powerful white men forced to ‘sit back and listen’ to a black woman. This phenomenon underlines the hegemonic power of common sense. Western forms of leadership and
the representational regimes in which such forms of knowledge or truth are produced. It suggests that the 'traditional relationship between the sexes ... (which) ... is structured by a habitus which makes male power appear legitimate even to women' (Moi 2000, p. 325) has been subverted by the feminist elder. It also implies that 'the fundamental oppositions of the social order' of patriarchy, which Bourdieu argues underpin all societies, can be challenged, and thus, that the determinism which I have critiqued in relation to Bourdieu's perspectives of the sexes, may be interrogated (Bourdieu, 1990b).

In addition, Ruth's observations point to a major gap in the feminist literature in regard to Indigenous women's forms of leadership that are not predicated upon an Anglo feminist, middle-class essentialist leadership model (refer to Chapter Two). Her narrative, along with the discussion of the 'motherwork' of Native Indian women (Udel, 2001); Maori women academics' experiences in the academy (Tuhiwai Smith, 1998); and a small body of work in the compulsory education sector discussing Aboriginal women's leadership (Fitzgerald, 2003); (Ngurruwuthun and Stewart, 1996); provides a powerful glimpse of leadership 'narratives and ... practices' that have the potential to 're-image and transform' colonised and gendered relations of ruling (Matthews 2000, p. 41).

The Public/Private Divide

Although the public/private divide was not a dominant discourse in the broadsheet representations of Aboriginal women leaders, Ruth herself notes that as the mother of a teenager, she suffers the 'heartache' of having very little time to spend with him. Instead, like Simone and Iris, she relies on her supportive extended family. Ruth comments, 'it makes you feel very guilty but it's probably not going to stop me ... as I've learnt from many people, especially my Mum ... he'll see what we're doing now as great rewards for the future'. It is Ruth's struggle to combine the public and the personal and the way in which the maternal discourse is embodied within her habitus, which most unites the older women leaders and marks them off from Iris, the younger woman, and Suzanne, who has chosen never to marry or have children.
Leadership as a Collective Activity

The two broadsheets’ representations of Aboriginal women’s leadership were predicated upon a Western individual persona of leadership. Ruth points to a very different concept of leadership in Aboriginal Australian communities, which has shaped her habitus. She observes that

we were ... once a fairly egalitarian society where ... men and women had separate roles, separate responsibilities, separate spheres of knowledge of sacred sites and custodianship to land and I think that’s very much ingrained with me.

Secondly, she contends, one very important part of Aboriginal culture is that ‘you don’t big note yourself ... if you stick yourself out and ... big note yourself and be an individual, then obviously people are going to buck against that’. Finally, the notion of community within Aboriginal society extends to one’s ancestors and therefore, one cannot discuss leadership as a communal activity without understanding this aspect of power relations. Ruth reveals that

we call in our ancestors. It’s a spiritual thing ... I take deep breaths from the diaphragm and I can just picture and imagine my Mother there with me and I say, ‘Come on, come on old girl ... you’re here’ ... I feel a tap on the shoulder and then before I know it I’m instantly calm. I can face whoever has questions to throw at me.

Ruth’s disclosure illustrates how Western masculinist norms colonise terms such as leadership, imbuing it with a set of values and beliefs, which render it irrelevant to a communal form of leadership, which encompasses a spiritual dimension, which is ultimately unknowable to most Westerners. It suggests the incommensurability of particular ways of knowing about leadership in different cultures, and the extent of the symbolic violence that is enacted upon Aboriginal women leaders when media discourses of their leadership locate it as the property of an individual, divorced from community and ancestors. There is a yawning gap between top-down, entrepreneurial discourses of academic senior management which argue that to bring about change, decisions should be made ‘quickly’ by managers and ‘in secret’ (Currie et al. 2002, p. 5) and Ruth’s description of a collective, grassroots leadership
that opens up, ‘new experiences, new territories and new languages not known by those who inhabit only one world or speak in only one language’ (Espin 1995, p. 135).

Conclusion

Like Simone, Ruth experiences a lack of fit between the inner logic of the field of academia with its bureaucracy and top-down decision-making and her own leadership habitus which powerfully fuses subjugated forms of communal knowledge predicated upon her feminist Aboriginality. Both feel more like a ‘fish in water’ in other fields (Wacquant 1989, p. 43) and Ruth, at least, is able to experience new subject locations for her leadership within the Indigenous/non Indigenous political field. Unlike Simone, however, the symbolic capital attached to her Indigeneity appears to afford her greater legitimacy within the fields of politics and academia. Moreover, her more junior leadership position, the strong support for reconciliation provided by the senior management of her powerful Sandstone university, and her own sense of agency and resistance suggest a confidence and strength which demand that in terms of her leadership, she be ‘known and respected as ... (an) ... equal’ rather than an ‘object...’ who remains ‘unknown’ (Espin 1995, p. 135). Let us now turn to the final interview with Amelia, another Aboriginal leader of greater seniority, to compare and contrast their experiences.
Chapter Eleven

Amelia’s Story: Taking On the System from Within

There’s no greater threat to the system than ... an intelligent, analytical, strong and obviously powerful Aboriginal woman. I mean if you think about ... the ... power structures in society which are law, government and the fourth estate ... they are very powerful male constructs ... I ... challenge the paradigm ... the ideology ... the practice ... that’s a ... massive threat.

Locating Amelia

Amelia is the most senior of the women leaders interviewed and a strong feminist from a working-class background. She originally worked as a teacher before retraining as a lawyer, and was previously the head of a state public service department. She has grown-up children and a partner. As chancellor of a New university she holds a powerful figurehead role, which carries a great deal of symbolic capital. Simultaneously, as a member of her state’s judiciary, the legitimacy she has earned in the legal field in terms of the Anglo-Australian masculinist authority of the law is carried over into academia and her position as chancellor.

Although she holds no formal leadership role within Aboriginal politics or feminism as fields, Amelia’s public profile and willingness to speak out on a range of topics, including Aboriginal/feminist issues, means that she is regularly featured in the media. Her seniority within the fields of power of the law and higher education and her regular presence in two other dominant fields of media and politics, locates Amelia within a ‘metafield ... which acts on other fields and influences their practices’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 85). Her leadership habitus is powerfully shaped by her location within the fields of feminism, law and academia and she calls upon feminist discourses to enact change at the most senior level of her university. Moreover, she possesses the formal authority to bring about change within her university to a far greater degree than the other five women interviewees, while
simultaneously being subjected to the power which arises from her location within the metafield.

In addition, Amelia is located within a regional rural New university which she describes as having a ‘pretty good record with respect to Indigenous education’, and which appointed her because she was viewed as an ‘Indigenous female role model’. However, she notes, its culture was also rooted in ‘long decades of a sense of privilege’ both for men and ‘the landed gentry’, with ‘less attention’ paid to the position of women, and racist and sexist attitudes amongst upper management.

Crucially, Amelia was appointed at a time when the university was ‘in such a condition that it was necessary’ for her to take a lead role in terms of major reforms, including the overhaul of upper management. Thus, as Chancellor, she observes, she had a unique ‘opportunity to have a major impact on the higher education sector in this country’. In this sense, Amelia’s New university fits, like Lauren’s, within a sub sector described as ‘often outward looking’ – whose student population tends to draw from ‘large numbers of mature-age students and … from first generation higher education families’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 202). Amelia’s university has lower stakes in the academic field and less symbolic capital to lose compared to Ruth’s Sandstone and Simone’s Unitech. In this sense, it is ‘precariously free to reinvent … (it)self’ by appointing an Aboriginal feminist chancellor who comes from outside the academic field and complements their student profile (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 202).

Amelia’s appointment to a New university rather than a Sandstone points to the way in which class, ethnicity and gender intersect to produce differential relations of power within the academic field. The Sandstone universities traditionally educate the middle to upper-class stratum of Australian society and as ‘leading universities’ dominate the field (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 193). Although they may welcome scholars such as Ruth at middle management level, the face of their upper management has remained generally Anglo-Australian, middle-class and generally male, suggesting the symbolic capital attached to these qualities. As a ‘network of relationships’ and a ‘distribution of power’, each sub sector within the field of academe is ‘related to each other in determinate ways’ and has a ‘specific “weight”'
or authority' (Ringer 2000, p. 67). The 'weight' of the Sandstones defines what counts as 'intellectually established and culturally legitimate' within academia and hence, the symbolic capital attached to 'Angloness', middle/upper 'classness' and masculinity, suggests the power and authority designated to white, Western forms of knowledge and leading. By appointing Amelia as chancellor, her New university both indicates its lesser 'weight' within the field, but also, 'in the absence of a history they can use', attempts to 'reinvent...' itself with a bold strategy of selecting a chancellor from outside dominant paradigms of ruling (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 202).

**Representing Amelia**

Amelia identified the following discourses in regard to Aboriginal women leaders and women leaders in general. At broader societal level they included:

- Racist and sexist attitudes;
- Individual Aboriginal women leaders being constructed as representative of their whole group (the burden of representation);
- Aboriginal women leaders as a threat to the system;
- Damned whores/God’s Police dualism;
- Women as ball-breakers; and
- Women needing to be twice as good as men to succeed.

In terms of the media, Amelia noted the following discourses and tendencies:

- Lack of representation of women leaders, in particular, Aboriginal women;
- Sexist attitudes including the tendency to focus on one or two prominent Aboriginal male leaders;
- No analysis of Aboriginal women’s leadership, in terms of style, content of programs etcetera;
- Preconceived representational frames which individual journalists brought to interviews with Amelia, which resulted in an ongoing campaign of media vilification against her;
• Aboriginal women leaders having a chip on their shoulder;
• Making it against the odds; and
• Charges of tokenism when women leaders were appointed as opposed to merit.

In regard to the fields of academia and the law, Amelia commented upon:

• Both fields being ‘the strongest bastions of sexism and male privilege’;
• Racist and sexist attitudes amongst academic management and judiciary; and
• A sexist double standard which viewed a male leader who took the ‘easy ... comfortable’ option in public life as a ‘good chap’, whereas women in authority who took such a path lacked respect.

Re-Presenting Amelia

Amelia argued for the following in terms of the ways in which she chose to represent herself:

• As an Indigenous female role model who placed a high value upon integrity, commitment and intellectual, personal and professional honesty;
• A strong feminist;
• A change agent within the fields of university and the law;
• A democratic leader as opposed to authoritarian, masculinist forms of domination; and
• The symbolic capital of her gender and Indigeneity.

The First Woman

The media discourse of the first woman is connoted in Amelia’s interview. She is invited to be chancellor because of her longstanding reputation for activism within the fields of Aboriginal relations, law and feminism. She was the first Aboriginal member of the judiciary in her state. In this sense, her Aboriginality carries with it symbolic capital. However, the attendant dangers of the discourse of the first woman
are that it places unrealistically high expectations upon a few visible minority individuals, while simultaneously rendering invisible and unproblematic the hegemonic norm of Anglo origin masculinist leadership. Golden girls are thus potentially constructed by such discourses to fail. If one is an Aboriginal woman leader, the stakes are even higher for the burden of representation dictates that one’s failure will be seen as the consequence of one’s ethnicity as well as gender. It is not Amelia failing but Aboriginal women as a whole. Amelia herself notes this burden of representation when she comments that in growing up she ‘learnt that Aboriginals were lazy, shiftless, untrustworthy,’ and that in the legal and academic fields, ‘as an Indigenous person I have an added responsibility’.

The symbolic violence, which underpins this representational regime is revealed in the quotation which opens this chapter: in terms of the challenge to the system that ‘an intelligent, analytical, strong and obviously powerful Aboriginal woman’ poses. It requires a great deal of strength to continue on one’s path. Amelia herself notes this pressure and the temptation to take the easy way out, commenting that, ‘there was a time when I would like to take the easy option ... But I found that I was uncomfortable being comfortable and I wasn’t really being true to myself.’

**Just Another Angry ‘Nigger’?**

There is a clear similarity between Amelia’s comments that to be ‘an intelligent, analytical, strong and obviously powerful Aboriginal woman’ constitutes a ‘massive threat to the system’, and Simone’s observation that ‘being a wog and a woman and a leader ... are anxious ... or terrible things’. Broadsheet representations of some Aboriginal women leaders as ‘angry “niggers”’ who, unlike good ‘niggers’, don’t ‘know how to behave properly in public’ (O’Regan 2001a, p. 6) connote the symbolic violence of the media to exercice a form of ‘ritualised expulsion’ upon women who present a threat to hegemonic norms of leadership within dominant fields of power (Hall 1997, p. 259). Simone’s feeling that the university has broken her spirit and Lauren’s tales of ‘symbolic expulsion’ from the inner circle of upper management suggest the ways in which ‘silence, censure and erasure continue to be painful and ... spirit-killing issues’ for academic ‘women of colour, including those who have –
ostensibly – been afforded a particularly privileged voice through academic credentialing’ (Washington and Harris 2001, p. 1).

What is interesting about Amelia is that her narrative does not fit the preceding discourse of powerlessness. She is not symbolically expelled from her role as chancellor (Hall 1997, p. 259) for, unlike Simone and Lauren, she holds a level of formal power and legitimacy to dictate the rules of the game in upper management in an institution that needed ‘to reinvent’ its identity (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 202) or face possible extinction. Amelia may constitute a threat to the system but her ‘outsider position’ provides her with ‘an advantage in times of change’, for her lack of loyalty to the status quo means that in terms of the restructuring required, she is perceived as an ‘effective change agent…’ (Munford and Rumball 2001, p. 139); (Prichard, 2000). The symbolic capital of Amelia’s gender and race, combined with the legitimacy of her authority as a judicial officer within the legal field and the senior position she holds as chancellor, affords her a unique opportunity to be able to change attitudes within – the universities … (which) … have been … like law … the strongest bastions of sexism and male privilege and there’s an enormous opportunity … to break that down.

Women as the Harbinger of Change

In a similar way to the media representations of some Anglo-Australian women politicians, Amelia’s role is as harbinger of change, ‘to “call” all the fustian, patriarchal inefficiencies of the old institutional culture’ (Yeatman 1995, p. 203). She seizes her power with alacrity, drawing on her significant pool of knowledge about the change process as a former head of a public servant department. For example, she describes a major change she brought about to the gender balance of the governing committee over which she presided and which was to select the new vice-chancellor. She comments:

I ... looked around the ... table and saw that there were only ... (a minority of) ... women ... and I said that this had to change. Whereupon I got a blast from ... men ... I suppose they could see ... that this was actually a threat to their incumbency ... I intended to get rid of them and ... that's precisely what I did.
It is relatively unusual to find accounts of the exercise of power by women at this level of seniority in the feminist literature, particularly in relation to minority ethnic and Indigenous women academics. There is some documentation by researchers such as David and Woodward (1998) which examines the careers of high-ranking European and British female academics; Munford and Rumball (2001) who examine how senior feminist women leaders can manage innovatively; and Ramsay (2001) who recounts how a major restructure of her university occurred under its feminist management. Most of this literature tends to centre on Anglo origin or white European women. The American feminist literature does contain some accounts of African-American women presidents' leadership (for example, Benjamin (1997); Waring (2003)).

Amelia has the power to change the habitus of her university's management to reflect her commitment to equity, feminism and more democratic management. Instead of being brought in as a harbinger of change and then struggling, like Simone and Lauren, with a lack of fit within senior management, little formal authority, and symbolic punishment for one's outsider status, she has the authority to challenge the university's habitus so it does fit her feminist principles and values, for example, in terms of democratising the institution. Munford and Rumball (2001, p. 142) argue that part of managing innovatively involves "pushing the boundaries" in order for 'universities to remain as sites of struggle and contest ... encourage(ing) practices that lead to collaboration and collegiality' and 'identify(ing) the barriers to ... full inclusion' of groups such as Indigenous peoples. Amelia comments:

I do try to treat everybody around me ... as a human being. I know ... of men who walk past and don't even acknowledge the presence of people like typists or ... their PAs ... they treat them like dogs ... I have the view that everybody ... has a view on how the institution can run ... So that's important to try to include everybody in the team rather than being ... the head honcho ...

Amelia rejects the 'corporate culture discourse' of senior academic management (Blackmore 1997b, p. 9) in favour of a marginalised feminist equity discourse which privileges democratic and inclusive forms of decision-making. Amelia's adoption of
this form of leadership suggests that the drive towards an increasingly centralised, ‘peak masculinist discourse’ within Australian academic management, may not be monolithic (Currie et al. 2002, p. 9) and that one needs to examine the local context in which discourses of leadership are played out. Her institution demonstrates a very different habitus from Lauren’s and Simone’s, for the discourses of corporate management may have less resonance in a rural regional location which does not have a strong industry base and is struggling to reinvent itself in a field undergoing major transformations.

Closer to Nature?

The media’s representation of Aboriginal women leaders as closer to nature picks up the civilised/uncivilised dualism, which locates Anglo origin middle-class males as the centre of disembodied knowledge. The binary divide also privileges academe as the centre of production of this kind of valued knowledge. This discourse is firstly signified in media coverage, which portrayed Amelia as irrational/uncivilised, that is, ‘some sort of loose cannon’ who was ‘impetuous’ – whereas she chose to re-present as ‘a very calculating person’. In contrast to her ‘loose cannon’ image, Amelia draws upon her deep knowledge of white masculinist forms of leadership in the public sector, to advise that in terms of bringing about change in patriarchal institutions such as academia and the law, one needs to be utterly strategic. She reflects:

You need to be absolutely clear about why you are there, what is your agenda, what is it you think you’re going to achieve and how do you think you’re going to achieve it ... You’ve got to keep your eyes on the prize — you don’t waver.

The big challenge is to find your way through the morass of rules and the regulations and conventional practices ... but ... if you’ve got a very clear idea of what it is you want to do and how you want to do it, you soon find your way through those things ... I think it’s because people are impatient or that they haven’t done their own work on themselves ... So they become acted upon instead of acting upon themselves.

Unlike the remainder of the women interviewees, Amelia’s habitus as an ex-head of a public service department and member of the judiciary, provides her with a very strong *practical sense* ... of a socially constituted “sense of the game” of the fields.
of power in law and the public service which she brings to her role as chancellor (Wacquant 1989, p. 42). The dominant fields of politics, law and academia produce ‘certain commonalities of habitus and practice as they are translated within the differing logics of … (the) … separate fields’ (Jenkins 1992, p. 86). Thus, unlike Simone and Lauren, Amelia is not confused by the inner logic of academia’s habitus of ‘subtle barriers’ and ‘clubbiness’, for it has parallels within the ‘occupational culture’ of the legal and public servant fields – locations whose games she has ‘master(ed)’ and in which she is situated as part of a metafield of power (Walker 1997, p. 336).

High Achiever Who Succeeds Against the Odds

The remarkable aspect of Amelia’s rise to the top is that it has not been the typical “fast track…” accorded to some academic women who ‘enjoy good mentoring, dress appropriately, secure the right credentials … exhibit unerring judgement’ and thus reap the rewards of ‘promotions and other forms of recognition’ (Glazer-Raymo 1999, p. 197). It is Amelia’s very diversity from the norm – in a similar fashion to Simone, Iris, Lauren and Suzanne – which appears to provide her with the legitimacy and symbolic capital as a ‘female Indigenous role model’. Her background appears to operate as a form of ‘ethnic privilege’ to be exploited (Ang 1993, p. 4).

In many ways, Amelia fits the profile of the high achieving Aboriginal woman leader of the broadsheets, who has succeeded against the odds of racism and poverty. However, a crucial difference is that Amelia rejects its individualising tendencies, which divorce consideration of broader societal relations of ruling from Aboriginal women leaders’ success. She remains deeply conscious of the complex responsibilities her position carries.

Feminism as Power

Like Ruth, Amelia drew strongly upon feminist discourses as a key part of her habitus as a leader. This was in contrast to the absence of feminism within broadsheets’ representations of Aboriginal women leaders. Moreover, Amelia retains a more second wave feminist notion of women as a collective as opposed to third wave feminism’s postmodernist concepts of performance and play. Amelia’s
feminism, like Ruth’s, draws upon black feminist discourses which critique feminism as largely a white middle-class woman’s movement. She remains highly conscious of the ways in which the ‘very minutiae of racism’ saturates Aboriginal women’s day-to-day lives. For Amelia, race may be the ‘most important feature shaping the experiences’ of Aboriginal women as a group (Hill Collins 1998, p. 209) but she is also acutely aware of the ‘double bind … of marginalisation in terms of race and gender’ (Aparicio 1999, p. 1) within the dominant fields of power of the law, the media and academia.

For example, Amelia calls upon feminist discourses when she criticises the media for enacting a form of symbolic violence in utilising one or two prominent Aboriginal male leaders such as Noel Pearson while failing to accord respect to women such as Lowitja O’Donoghue and Evelyn Scott. Amelia observes:

> They are not accorded the respect from the media as leaders that they are rightly entitled to. There’s no analysis of their leadership style or of the content of their programs and how they actually argue that content.

In terms of the media and legal fields, Amelia observes that they and academia still work under ‘male paradigms’ of power. On the other hand, she contends that the presence of feminist women at the most senior levels of her university had actually change(d) the culture in the place’. However, she also notes the enduring nature of the sexism and racism that underpins society, commenting

> that’s not to say that there are not deep-seated pockets of racism and always attempts at male domination. And that’s not to say that … the male paradigm doesn’t operate very strongly. It … permeates society and how we change that is another thing.

Simone, Ruth and Iris shared Amelia’s observation of the importance of having not simply women, but feminists in positions of management. It was rejected to a certain extent by Suzanne who argued that ‘feminising the culture – I don’t think that that is what is needed’.

Although both Ruth and Amelia point to the ‘deep seated pockets of racism and … attempts at male domination’ within academe, their gender and ethnicity appears to
carry a certain degree of symbolic capital within the field. It could be speculated that both may experience a certain degree of ‘fit’ in the field because part of its inner logic of legitimation remains the right ‘to disagree’, to contest and interrogate established forms of knowledge (Montgomery 1997, p. 67). This is a right which may provide feminism and Aboriginal civil rights discourses with a certain weight within specific sections of the field such as Iris’s Gumtree university, albeit in increasingly marginalised ways since the advent of neoliberal discourses of entrepreneurialism. In turn, some leadership opportunities for Aboriginal women leaders of their social and intellectual capital appear to be opened up by these discourses. Moreover, the scale and visibility of a variety of representations of Aboriginal women’s leadership in the two broadsheets – albeit stereotypical and conflict-ridden – suggest that a symbolic space has opened up for Aboriginal women’s leadership, in contrast to minority ethnic women as a category, exemplified by Simone.

It is interesting to contrast the complex ways in which Amelia and Ruth describe the interplay of gender and ethnicity in their leadership work, with the stereotypical broadsheet discourse of white feminists versus black women – the race versus gender dualism drawn upon by the broadsheets in the controversy surrounding Pat O’Shane’s comments. The simplified binary opposition that pits black against white may sell newspapers but simultaneously operates as a form of symbolic violence upon Aboriginal women leaders by disguising the fraught ways in which ethnicity and gender intersect in Amelia’s and Ruth’s lives.

What’s Class Got to Do With It?

I noted in Iris’s and Simone’s chapters the negative capital associated with Southern European immigrants who emigrated to Australia post World War Two. For example, Simone observes that despite the high numbers of such immigrants and the educational success of their children, she was ‘the first daughter of an immigrant in a leadership position in an Australian university’. Both Amelia and Ruth are from working-class backgrounds but their ethnicity and gender appear on first glance to be more paramount in terms of the capital such categories carried within the differing fields of academia, law, media etcetera.
Academia in Australia is primarily an occupation for those from ‘privileged backgrounds’ and hence is a key part of the ‘logic of practice’, which operates within the field (Hatton, 1999 p. 223). Thus, their working-class origins already make Amelia and Ruth the ‘miraculous exceptions’ (Moi 2000, p. 321); (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). African-American and black British academics tend to come from middle-class origins with ‘race and gender’ being ‘salient for the majority’ of black American women academics and ‘social class’ being ‘rarely mentioned’ (Waring 2003, p. 21). The middle to upper ‘class’ origins of black women academics appear to operate as a silent privilege and are only occasionally challenged by feminist researchers (for example, hooks (1993); Montgomery (1997); Reynolds (1997, p. 15). In contrast to the more privileged backgrounds of American and British black academics, the majority of Aboriginal and Indigenous Australians tend to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Amelia’s and Ruth’s working-class origins appear to form a crucial part of their professional and personal habitus. For example, Ruth speaks knowingly of the ‘little people’ who bear the brunt of racism in Australia as they carry out their reconciliation work. Amelia articulates her class-consciousness and the powerful sense of social justice she carries into her work as a judicial officer when she notes that

I really do believe that people are entitled to justice ... The overwhelming majority of people we get in the local courts are people who are under-educated, unemployed or ... casually employed ... very often they lack life skills and ... their families ... come from communities where there’s been generations of that experience ... You find that you’re actually having to take those kinds of issues into account ... in dealing with people as individuals.

Amelia’s comments illustrate that rather than her middle-class habitus as a judicial officer and chancellor ‘overrid(ing)’ her original working-class habitus, the ‘embodied and social capital’ she carries as a working-class origin leader continues to structure ‘the system of dispositions’ which she acquired in her ‘earlier and ... tougher life’ (Hatton 1999, p. 221). These class origins remain a sufficiently powerful form of symbolic capital within her habitus that allow her to continue to ‘capture a working-class voice’ in her crucial work (Hatton 1999, p. 221). The ‘remnants’ of her class origins ‘play a disruptive, dislocating role’ which ‘make seamless subjective identification’ with the middle-class not only ‘problematic’ but
undesired (Hatton 1999, p. 221). Amelia specifically repudiates taking the 'easy option' in her work, for she reconstructs her working-class origins, her gender and her ethnicity as powerful symbolic capital that provides her with a passion for social justice and a rationale for continuing her work in challenging the sexist and racist systems and structures within the legal and academic fields (Hatton 1999, pp. 221-222).

Outsider/Diversity as Capital?

The Aboriginal civil rights movement of the past three decades has opened up new subject positions for Aboriginal women leaders as political players. This is reflected in the two broadsheets through the increasing visibility and presence of a reasonably diverse series of discourses of leadership for Aboriginal women in non-Aboriginal society. It suggests that the outsider/diversity as capital discourse noted in media representations of minority ethnic women leaders, may also be operating for Aboriginal women leaders. The trend of Aboriginal women leaders' visibility also serves to highlight the contrasting position of minority ethnic women leaders, whose case studies and paucity of media representations reveal a major absence in the discourses of minority ethnic leadership, despite the dominance of multiculturalism as a discourse for the past two and a half decades (refer to Chapter Five).

The acceptance of Aboriginality as 'occupying a ... place ... in the heart of Australian national identity' (Ang 1995, p. 72) can be seen in a number of different ways. Ruth holds key positions in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous political field, feminism and academia. Amelia is a player in the legal and academic fields. Their roles in the metafield of power provide them with legitimacy and symbolic capital, which, in turn, open up powerful possibilities for leadership. The comparison with Simone is telling. Despite the fact that she performs key work in the fields of business and the media, it does not appear to carry the same degree of symbolic capital of Ruth's and Amelia's, perhaps because of the negative capital which her working-class/Southern European origin carries in the academic field. The degree of status the two Aboriginal women possess suggests that they may be enjoying the shift that has occurred which places Aboriginality within 'Australian national identity', in contrast to Simone, Iris and Suzanne, whose construction of minority
ethnicity symbolically places them as external to the Australian nation’s ‘symbolic space’ (Ang 1995, p. 72).

**Rule-Maker and Rule-Breaker**

Amelia appears to turn the negative capital of her gender, ethnicity and class into positive capital, thus illustrating the paradoxical and ambiguous nature of the concept of disadvantage. She appears to occupy ‘that “creative interval” which is, in reality, a multiplaced location … of possible oppression and … power and resistance’ (Pallotta-Chiarolli 1996, p. 98). In Amelia’s case, it seems that the site has become one of ‘power and resistance’. In contrast to media representations of Anglo-Australian female politicians as rule-breakers who lack the power to be rule-makers, she appears to be the only one of the women interviewed, who possesses the power to be both a rule-maker and rule-breaker. It is a powerful location, which she rightly notes, constitutes her as a ‘massive threat to the system’. Lauren’s and Simone’s stories illustrate that this site is hard-won, precarious and fragile.
Chapter Twelve

Where To From Here?

Academic Women Leaders: Beyond a Discourse of ‘Despair’?\(^\text{14}\)

I commenced this thesis by noting that the trigger for the research was the contradictions I experienced as an educational leader caught between equal opportunity discourses in the compulsory education sector which affirmed women’s right to leadership, postfeminist discourses in the media and at broader societal level which suggested that women had achieved equality and no longer required equity strategies, and the material realities of being an education leader in a rural region which remained highly sexist and racist. This dissonance was accentuated by my sense of entrapment as a deputy principal in narrow and confining discourses of women’s leadership that discursively placed me as either the nurturing mother figure or the feminist ball breaker.

I noted that these contradictions were amplified by statistics in Chapter One, which showed that although women’s overall status in academia had improved, female academics as a group were still concentrated in the lowest paying, most casualised and insecure positions within the university field. Moreover, the latter situation was a scenario that was played out in other sectors within the contemporary Australian workforce.

A consequent examination of the feminist literature on academic women and leadership revealed prevailing assumptions that the subject location of women’s leadership was Anglocentric and middle-class. A small body of international literature had begun to challenge this positioning, but the Australian research appeared to largely ignore this work. Hence, I contended that Australian feminist leadership research in particular, was acting as a ‘practice... of containment’, in its

\(^{14}\) Kenway et al. 1994, p.188.
regulation of what kinds of women should be included or excluded from the academic leadership domain (Hage 1998, pp. 130, 132).

An analysis of broadsheet representations of Australian women leaders connoted a face of women’s leadership that was chiefly middle-class, Anglocentric and located within the political field, albeit, as one postcolonical scholar has argued, with some space ‘reluctantly’ carved out for Aboriginal women leaders (Ang 1995, p. 72). No equivalent discursive space appeared to exist for minority ethnic women leaders. In addition, the visibility of one’s class and ethnicity when it deviated from an Anglo-Australian middle-class centre, signalled the hegemonic nature of these properties in the broadsheets, as the naturalised and assumed subject location of Australian women’s leadership. Thus, I argued, both the feminist literature’s and the broadsheets’ representational regime of women’s leadership, operated as forms of symbolic violence upon women leaders who did not fit their raced, classed and gendered regime. Moreover, I contended that there were first and second order effects of symbolic violence on different categories of women, depending upon their ethnicity and class.

Yet the material and symbolic realities of the six women interviewees suggested a very different picture from the Anglocentric feminist subject location of academic leadership and the limiting and largely stereotypical broadsheet discourses of women’s leadership. They revealed a multiplicity of leadership experiences, which variously included resistance, challenge and strategic submission to the dominant status quo of entrepreneurial masculinist leadership within Australian academia. They provided glimpses of ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 3) about alternative forms of leading through the women’s re-presentation of frequently very different discourses of leadership from those within the feminist literature, the broadsheets and academia as a field.

The interviews also revealed that the gendered, classed and raced habitus which the women academics brought to the academic field, played a crucial role in ‘defin(ing) and constitut(ing)’ their embodiment as leaders (Connolly 2000, p. 125). This had a major material impact upon how they were received as leaders. Moreover, the differences between the younger generation Iris in terms of take-up of postmodernist
feminist discourses and attitudes to the public/private divide, versus the older women with children, suggested an intergenerational difference, which is worthy of further exploration. The experiences of the one middle-class, childfree academic, Suzanne, and the contrast between her largely positive experience of leadership, versus that of Lauren and Simone, suggested that to be middle-class, as well as Anglo-Australian, may be a critical advantage in terms of dominant discourses of leadership within academe. Suzanne’s ambivalence towards feminism, along with her childfree status and a career trajectory which parallels the traditional male path, means that she does not make demands upon her institution to be family friendly. For all these reasons, she may be positioned as the more containable face of diversity.

The specific institutional context in which each woman leader found themselves, appeared to be a crucial factor in the degree to which they felt themselves to be ‘fish in water’ (Wacquant 1989, p. 43). A supportive upper management within a university, which appeared to have internalised the discourses of equity and had less to lose in terms of legitimacy within the field, appeared to offer a far more conducive environment for women managers such as Suzanne and Iris.

Moreover, the experience of the six leaders suggests that outsider status brings with it attendant dangers and rewards. It appeared to provide the women with additional capital in which to gain management positions in their universities. For Ruth and Amelia, their Indigeneity appeared to bring positive capital with which to conduct their leadership work, while not underestimating the material realities of racism and sexism in their lives. Like Suzanne and Iris, they also worked in sites, which appeared to have a strategic commitment from the top to equity discourses. For Lauren and Simone, however, the lack of embeddedness of discourses of equity and diversity in their upper management, led to a degree of symbolic violence being wreaked upon them which created ‘burn-out’ (Yeatman 1995, p. 203) disillusionment and a ‘cautionary tale’ (Baird 2004, p. 271) to other women and diverse groups about what happens when one attempts to do leadership differently. Moreover, even in Ruth’s Sandstone university, in which her Indigeneity is constructed as positive capital, she finds greater freedom for her leadership in the field of Indigenous/non Indigenous relations – despite its sexism – compared to her academic site.
The degree of real power, which the women leaders possessed, appeared to be crucial. Although Lauren was in senior management and Simone in middle management, both women noted the lack of genuine authority they exercised. In contrast, Amelia’s appointment to a new university whose state of crisis meant they were prepared to take risks in their leadership selection, afforded her a unique opportunity to exercise real power, that is, to be a rule-maker. It provides a glimpse of the different kinds of possibilities of leadership when a leader who is genuinely committed to discourses of equity, is at the helm. However, a cautionary note needs to be sounded here, as self-reporting may often lead to a rosicr interpretation of one’s management/leadership.

The dissonance between the media, societal and academic discourses of leadership on the one hand, and the women leaders’ re-presentation of their symbolic and material realities on the other hand, signals the degree of symbolic violence under which such women operated as managers. Moreover, this dissonance was exacerbated by the material realities of the sexism, snobbery and at times racism, which the women leaders variously endured. Their experiences suggested an academic field whose raced, classed and gendered habitus continued to exert a major level of symbolic violence upon the women as outsiders to the hegemonic norm of Anglo-Australian, middle-class masculinist leadership. The symbolic and material realities of the women’s leadership suggests the shallowness of broadsheet and broader societal postfeminist discourses which position women as no longer requiring equity strategies and having achieved equality with males as a group. It also repudiates pipeline theories of equity, which suggest that if we wait long enough, sufficient women will come up through the ranks to take on leadership. The exacerbation of a peak masculine culture within academic leadership (Currie et al., 2002) experienced by senior women such as Simone and Lauren, suggests that talented younger women such as Iris, may self select out of management because of ‘little room to manoeuvre and high pressures to confirm’ (Currie et al. 2002, p. 34).

However, the contradictions between the broadsheets’ representational regime of women’s leadership and the individual women’s narratives, also implies that the hegemony of Anglo-Australian middle-class discourses of academic leadership is
never fixed. It must be continually reasserted via the manufacture of ‘consent rather than ... coercion’ (Fairclough 1995b, p. 67). Moreover, the agentic qualities, which underlie the women’s diverse forms of leadership challenge ‘the frequent assumption of the essential passivity of the subject’, implied in Foucauldian concepts of discourse (McNay 2000, p. 3). It also calls into question the determinism which is implied in Bourdieu’s emphasis upon the underlying structures of gendered power relations which symbolic violence perpetuates, at the expense of individual and collective agency and resistance (refer to Chapter Three). Moreover, the diversity of the interviewees’ management experiences suggest that women’s leadership as a category is not ‘stable’, but ‘socially and historically constructed, and subject to political tensions and contradictions’ (Apple 1993, p. vii); (Hall 1992). Thus, it offers some hope that there are ways forward beyond a feminist discourse of ‘despair’ in regard to leadership (Kenway et al. 1994, p. 188).

Rethinking Cultural Capital

I have found Bourdieu’s notions of field, capital and habitus extremely productive in terms of analysing the different ways in which the interviewees’ habitus as leaders was ‘defined and constituted’ within the academic field (Connolly 2000, p. 125). However, I found Bourdieu’s assertion of the primacy of class in regard to the ‘acquisition of various forms of capital for working-class and middle-class people’, and his minimisation of other structural factors such as gender and ethnicity (refer to Chapter Three), inadequate for my analysis of the interview data (Bourdieu, 1984a); (Connolly 2000, p. 125). Bourdieu has argued that professors possess significant amounts of cultural capital, which legitimise and institutionalise their position within the academic field. It is a site that in France (and to a lesser degree in Australia) still commands considerable authority and prestige (Bourdieu, 2000). Yet such a contention appears to ignore the reality that it is a gendered, raced and classed habitus, which is ‘defined and constituted’ within this field. For example, Simone – a professor who has achieved distinction through the accrual of significant amounts of cultural capital – talks of her ‘spirit’ having been ‘broken’ within her university. Similarly, Lauren talks of the ‘aggravation’ and individual ‘suffer(ing)…’ that has occurred and makes a decision not to renew her contract. Simone’s habitus as a Greek-Australian academic of working-class origin appears to embody her in
symbolically violent ways which undercut the impact of the cultural capital she brings to her leadership position within her Unitech site. In a parallel fashion, the gendered and possibly classed habitus of Lauren’s ‘softer style’ of leadership, delegitimizes the considerable cultural capital she brings as a member of the senior executive into her New university. Hence, the assertion of the primacy of class in acquiring distinction in academia is inadequate in understanding how the cultural capital acquired by the various women interviewees is moderated by their gendered, classed and raced habitus, particularly as they assume management positions within a variety of sites within the field.

Whither Academic Women’s Leadership?

In stressing the agency and resistance, which the individual women demonstrated in their re-presentations as leaders, I am not ignoring the material realities of the current political climate in Australia. A recently re-elected federal conservative government in Australia has foreshadowed an acceleration of the restructuring of the sector based upon neoliberal reforms such as an increasingly deregulated and competitive funding system. It is predicted that this system will lead to two tiers of universities – richer institutions who will benefit “from price liberalisation and intensified competition” and in which prestigious research work will be concentrated – and ‘newer or poorer universities’ which will become teaching-only institutions, more ‘vulnerable to Government … control’, with high numbers of casualised, poorly-paid academics (McCulloch 2004, p. 3). I would contend that such policies will have the material effect of further exacerbating already-existing structural divisions of inequality within academia. Specifically, I predict that traditionally disadvantaged groups such as Indigenous, minority ethnic women and men and Anglo-Australian women, will find themselves increasingly losing out in such a system. It is these groups which traditionally perform the ‘shit work’ in society and academia (Greer 1999, p. 12) and who become increasingly concentrated in the bottom tier of poorer universities and amongst casualised labour in both groups of universities.

I would also suggest, however, that the discourses and policies of diversity currently in place in universities will continue, despite the federal government’s winding back of equity legislation and their reliance upon the market to correct discriminatory practices – a practice which ignores structural and systemic causes of discrimination.
(Sinclair and Wilson 2002, pp. 103-104). This is both because of the demands of an increasingly diverse market of students and because it is viewed in the field as part of good management practice within human resources (Blackmore, J. 2004, pers. comm. 25 November). I predict that small numbers of individual women will continue to do very well from the restructuring of universities. This is because the dominant discourse that we need more women in management positions will continue, both because of the preceding reasons cited and because women’s ‘outsider status’ and lack of adherence to the status quo increasingly positions them as the institutional ‘breath of fresh air’ in the restructured climate of academe (Yeatman 1995, p. 203).

Yet what sort of leadership dispositions in academia will the essentialising discourse that we need more women as leaders encourage, when it is interpellated with:

- The new orthodoxy of an academic leadership habitus of entrepreneurial globalising masculinities; and

- A depoliticised diversity discourse, which emphasises the individual and leaches recognition of structural factors such as gender, ethnicity and class from its representational frame?

James Gee has contended that for a small global elite, mobility is a ‘form and source of power’ (Gee 2000, p. 190). It would appear that the mobility of the Suzanne’s of academia – signified in their lack of ties to nation, children or partner – may increasingly form the face of women’s management in academia, particularly at senior executive level. Although ‘women in higher education management’ may form part of a global ‘new elite … (of) … knowledge experts’ (Luke 2001, pp. 20-21), it would appear that even within this grouping, those qualities which are coded masculine (Suzanne’s geographical mobility) and middle-class (Suzanne’s origins) enhance a leader’s cultural capital and assume greater power, because they are ‘invisible’ and thus ‘rendered normal’ (Curric et al. 2002, p. 34).

The experiences of the six women interviewees suggest that the discourses of outsider/diversity, women as the harbinger of change and as the bearers of positive capital in terms of their outsider status, are limiting and limited. Unless there is a
major rethink of what academic leadership is, why it is exercised and who benefits and loses from a peak masculine culture of university management (Currie et al., 2002), allied to an apolitical discourse of diversity, women of talent and skills from diverse ethnic and class origins such as Iris, will be discouraged from management. Moreover, an increasingly centralised and undemocratic form of masculinised, raced and classed leadership will continue as the taken-for-granted subject location of a ‘new regime of power’ in enterprise universities (Blackmore 2004, p. 383); (Currie et al., 2002); (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 11).

In addition, the discourse that we need more women in leadership is problematic for it rests upon the largely unexamined assumption that women are a homogenous group, and that if we can only get more women into power, they will lead differently, more collaboratively and democratically than males as a group. I would argue that this essentialist discourse of feminist leadership, though serving a limited number of women individuals, has tended to perpetuate a homogenising view of leadership, which locates gender as a primary structural category and renders invisible key differences between women in terms of sexuality, ethnicity and class. It also perpetuates a biological determinism in regard to the genders, which masks structural divisions that continue to perpetuate discrimination and inequality within and between the genders. Getting more largely Anglo-Australian middle-class women into leadership in academia is not sufficient. This is particularly the case if the kinds of women encouraged into senior management are those who are forced to sing to a corporate discourse, which perpetuates an increasingly individualised and autocratic status quo and which in turn, silences issues of equity and social justice.

Does having women in public positions of leadership, such as in academia, necessarily guarantee that women’s interests will be looked after? (Whip 2003, p. 74). Even if the answer is yes to the latter question (and I am dubious about this), whose interests and which groups of women are we talking about? Is it enough to achieve numerical representation, which reflects the numbers of different groups of women in the academic community? (Rayner 2003, p. 131); (Thomson 2001, p. 194). It is salutary to look at the experience of the political field in which the discourse of needing more women politicians has been dominant. Why is it that at a time when Australia has the highest number of women parliamentary representatives at federal
level, gains for women as a group are being progressively wound back (Probert 2002, p. 7) and in Britain, ‘an almost continuous tale of disappointment and betrayal’ is expressed at the lack of ‘real difference to government’, despite the record number of women MPs in the Labour government? (Thomson 2001, p. 194).

There are no easy answers to these questions. In the next section, I will suggest some broad general principles in regard to advancing claims of equity in academic leadership. However, at the level of feminist politics, I would like to make two recommendations. Firstly, it is crucial that feminism as a movement in Australia, and more specifically, feminist researchers in the area of leadership, adopt a ‘politics of partiality’ which ‘accepts the principle’ that for ‘many groups of women … other identifications are sometimes more important … or even incompatible with … being women’ (Ang 1995, p. 73). This is a material reality that the interviews with the six women illustrate. Such a stance would assist feminism researchers in not falling into the trap of assuming that sheer numbers of women managers alone in academia or other fields, will alter existing power structures. Moreover, adding more women of diverse ethnic and class background into the Anglocentric middle-class brew that constitutes women’s management, will not be a sufficient answer, for the ‘politics of inclusion’ is predicated on the basis that ‘those who have the power to include’ (Ang 1995, p. 72-73), do so. This form of politics does not overturn fundamental power structures.

Secondly, I would suggest that although feminist leadership literature in academia is good at getting its hands ‘dirty in the kitchens of empirical research’ (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 19), it needs to deepen and embed its analysis in postmodernist and other theoretical insights into power. This would assist the corps of work in shifting from a largely uncritical examination of how power operates in organisations, allied with an individualising focus upon women; to deeper and more nuanced understandings of the ‘micropolitics’ of power (Morley, 1999) and how organisations work as gendered, classed and raced institutions within broader representational regimes (I include my own work in this criticism). This also would assist the body of literature in making an even more significant contribution to the field, in terms of contributions to theory, policy recommendations, practices and feminist praxis. Ashcraft and Mumby’s development of a feminist communicology of organisation would be an
excellent place to start and offers exciting opportunities to push the boundaries of Australian feminist leadership literature beyond its current impasse (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004).

An Attempt to Move the Agenda Forward for Academic Women’s Leadership: Some Suggestions for Policy and Practice

In order to ‘make “hope practical” rather than “despair convincing”’ in terms of academic women’s leadership (Kenway et al. 1994, p. 187), it is important to point out that the embedding of equity policies in Australian universities, despite their depoliticisation in a discourse of diversity, has led to improvements in the status of women academics as an overall group. We now have a language with which to speak about sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination and formal policies and practices (no matter how watered down) with which to address these forms of oppression. The fact that a debate is occurring in regard to the kinds of leadership we desire in academia or other fields, suggests that things have changed for women as a group. Moreover, the data from the interviews suggests that the differing individual habitus of the institutions did appear to make a significant difference to the women’s experiences of management. This occurred despite the fact that the production of the new enterprise university appears to be leading to a greater homogenisation of academic governance and habitus (Marginson and Considine 2000, pp. 4, 6, 12). This is an important point, particularly when a political climate at federal level suggests a fairly grim outlook for equity groups within the academic field.

The following broad principles are based upon a reading of the feminist educational leadership literature, an analysis of what made a difference in the leadership work of the six women interviewees and my own experiences as a manager of equity programs for women teachers and female students in the compulsory education system in Victoria. I have avoided specific recommendations because the level of institutional difference between universities in terms of policies and practices of governance makes such a strategy lacking in feasibility. However, there are certain basic principles, which can be drawn out. A key point the principles attempt to address is how universities as a field may shift from an essentialising feminist

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11 It is much harder to make this statement with confidence for Indigenous or minority ethnic women academics because of the difficulty of obtaining data – refer to Chapter Two.
discourse that homogenises women as a whole, while not ignoring the very real oppression that underlines the experiences of women as a group.

Principles

1. That as a matter of ethical and principled leadership amongst vice-chancellors, commitment to equity be made a fundamental cornerstone of all aspects of organisational life.

2. That as a matter of ethical and principled leadership amongst vice-chancellors, commitment to democratic, collaborative, open and transparent decision-making be made a fundamental principle of all aspects of organisational life.

3. That as a matter of ethical and principled leadership amongst vice-chancellors, commitment be made to clear, transparent, inclusive, accountable equity policies, practices and programs which examine and address the intersection of structural discrimination, such as sexism and racism, in terms of every aspect of organisational life and which are well-funded and headed by specialist senior staff.

4. That as a matter of ethical and principled leadership amongst vice-chancellors, a fundamental commitment be made to equally valuing and clearly rewarding diverse forms of leadership and knowledge in every aspect of organisational life.

5. That as a matter of ethical and principled leadership amongst vice-chancellors, commitment to equity be made a fundamental cornerstone of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) in terms of all aspects of decision-making and policy directions.

6. That as a matter of ethical and principled leadership amongst vice-chancellors, a fundamental commitment be made to funding ongoing research and development of programs of academic management which exemplify best practices in terms of equity, social justice, inclusiveness, democracy and
collaboration and which clearly demonstrate that they can make a difference in terms of representation of equity groups of staff at all levels of promotion within universities.

7. That as a matter of ethics and principles, women academics make a commitment to 'air their diversity' as women 'openly and critically' and undertake a 'careful critique of their positioning within the academy' in order to construct 'a more inclusive ... and fully human account' of their 'social reality' within academe (Walker 1998, pp. 352-353).

Conclusion: Throwing Down the Gauntlet

Where do I belong? In my first weeks as an undergraduate at a Redbrick university, I was told by my very cultured, upper-class Literature lecturer that I had failed my first essay and should reconsider my decision to do a major in English. I walked away crushed. As I descended the escalator I was beset with doubts about whether I truly had any right to think I could ever belong in this Anglocentric middle-class culture. By the time I reached the end of the escalator, I had made up my mind. I returned to the lecturer's office and asked him to show me what I needed to do to improve my writing. He was mildly surprised but obligingly spent some time with me on the essay. By the end of the year I was achieving High Distinctions in English and was asked to do Honours in the subject.

I was fortunate enough to have a mother who, despite her limited English and lack of education, insisted that all three of her children be well educated. I was also fortunate enough to be taught in my primary and secondary schools by two teachers who had an ethical and moral commitment to making a difference in the lives of the working-class, ethnically diverse students who were in their care. All three gave me a belief in myself and the strength to return to the lecturer and ask him to explain the unwritten rules of the game of writing an essay. In Bourdieu's terms, my educational success suggests that I, like he, am one of the 'miraculous exceptions' which neoliberal discourses of enterprise can point to as evidence that individual meritocracy works (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977); (Moi 2000, p. 321). Bourdieu would argue that instead, my success points to the symbolic violence of a public system of education whose power to credentialise generally rewards middle to upper-class students whose
cultural capital allows them to feel as ‘fish in water’ when they encounter schooling and university (Wacquant 1989, p. 43).

Although I agree to a major extent with Bourdieu’s argument, it has a crucial limitation in terms of consideration of agency. My mother and two teachers demonstrated a form of leadership, which I have taken into my adult life. They showed that resistance and challenge to the status quo is possible. The interviews with the women managers suggested that the individual habitus of a university can make a difference in terms of supporting women leaders of diverse origins. This is particularly the case when its own leadership has a primary commitment to equity and social justice that is embedded in clear policies and practices and which encourages grassroots involvement and collaboration. Eleanor Ramsay provides an account of how she and two other senior feminist managers were given the task of managing a major academic restructuring at the University of South Australia. It provides a refreshing example of how a concerted effort to work collaboratively with staff brought about an outcome, which was equitable and just (Ramsay, 2001). Robyn Munford and Sylvia Rumball recount how they, as senior managers, were able to resist negative managerialist practices and work with Indigenous staff to change decision-making practices, in order to ensure ‘the knowledge of all staff was gathered (Munford and Rumball 2001, p. 142). Both examples occurred in universities that encouraged the production of new academic identities based on an enterprise culture. Their experiences reveal that it is possible to lead in ways, which challenge the at-times seemingly unstoppable juggernaut of the enterprise university.

In contrast to the broadsheets’ representations of women’s leadership and much of the Australian feminist leadership literature, the six women interviewees’ personal accounts of leadership begin to ‘challenge … bodies of knowledge’ about academic leadership in which to be ‘male and (w)hite is the norm’ (Walker 1998, p. 352). Hopefully they have assisted in generating ‘alternative … accounts’ and ‘new possibilities’ for academic leadership, and in providing a glimpse of what leadership as ‘feminist and antiracist practice’ might ‘look like in (u)niversities’ (Walker 1998, pp. 352-353). It is up to universities and feminist leadership researchers to take up the gauntlet.
Appendix One

Rhoda’s and Lisa’s Interview Questions

1. Could you tell me about yourself and your career?

2. What is your understanding of the word ‘leadership’? Where do your understandings of the word ‘leader’ come from? Do you see yourself as a leader? Why/Why not?

3. What do you see as the main narratives/stories about women and leadership in a. the broader Australian community and b. in the education system? Do you think these stories have changed in the past decade and if so, in what way?

4. Do you think these narratives/stories represent your own reality as a woman principal/deputy-principal in the … region?

5. When we talk about women and leadership, who are the people you think of and why?

6. What are your main understandings of the women leaders you identify in Question Five and where do you get these understandings from?

7. Could you select one of the women leaders you’ve identified above and tell me what your feelings and reactions are/were to her as a leader?

8. Possible follow up questions and an opportunity for you to add information you feel it is important for me to know.
Appendix Two

Interview Questions of Women Leaders in the Higher Education Field

1. In your position of leadership as ..., what are the key opportunities and constraints in your role? What can these opportunities and constraints be attributed to? (For example, your gender, your ethnic background, the position itself or other factors?).

2. What do you see as your main responsibilities of your role as ...? Do you feel an added responsibility or pressure because you are a woman? If so, how does such pressure operate and influence your actions in your current role? Is this pressure similar or different from past positions of responsibility you have held?

3. As ..., have you attempted to make changes within your institution? If so, could you give some examples of these changes and how they have worked out? Do you feel it is important to work within the institution as it stands in order to bring about change or are there other ways of achieving change?

4. What do you see are the main discourses about women leaders in a. the broader Australian community and b. the mainstream Australian media? Do you think these discourses have changed in the past decade and if so, in what way? Where do such discourses originate? Do you think they represent your own reality as an Australian woman leader? Why/why not?

5. In reflecting on the ways in which Australian women leaders have been represented in the mainstream media (for example, yourself), how does the media reporting make you feel and why?

6. An opportunity for you to add information or thoughts that you feel it is important for me to know.
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