1992

Women in Leadership National Conference 1992: Women, communication and power

Margaret Butterworth (Ed.)
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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 1992

WOMEN, COMMUNICATION AND POWER

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
women, communication and power

women in leadership
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Edith Cowan University

Conference Convenor: Susan Robertson
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women in leadership conference 1992
Introduction

Women's worlds have changed and so has women's work. Yet, despite such significant changes, there has been little ground gained with regard to women occupying key positions in significant aspects of social, political and organizational life in Australia. Organizations still operate to exclude women from positions of power and influence. The challenge remains: How can women individually and collectively work at various levels of the organization and have their contributions are acknowledged, valued and rewarded?

Clearly there are no simple answers. Instead, this general question raises further more specific ones. For example, what does effective organizational leadership mean for women? How might women define and understand power in ways that are enabling rather than limiting? How might women develop their voices authentically yet strategically so that they are not only be heard but listened to?

The Women in Leadership (WIL) Programme, out of which the 1992 Conference flowed, sought to address these very questions. The Conference theme, Women Communication and Power, provided a powerful means for opening up a lively and insightful debate on such important issues. The Conference focussed on women, power and communication in the contexts of place, work and the wider world, and drew women from diverse organizations and backgrounds around Australia and overseas. Keynote speakers of international standing presented keynote addresses, and more than fifty women offered workshops across a broad range of issues related to the conference theme. In short the Conference was a forum for women to share, celebrate, and publicly air a diversity of voices.

The Conference was only one component of the Women in Leadership Programme. It nonetheless concluded more than a year of reflecting, development and strategizing. The Women in Leadership Programme drew its momentum from the anger and alienation of women at Edith Cowan University. Women there felt that "for too long they had been excluded from leadership and decision-making" (Milligan and Genoni, 1993: 11). The result was the development of a systematic and strategic programme which challenged the culture and shape of the organization. It drew upon a conceptual framework for leadership and change developed by the Programme's organizing group. This conceptual framework was based upon four key capacities central to leadership: work identity and competence, creator of environments, strategist, and public voice.

Very early on the Conference organizing committee recognized the need to use the conceptual framework on leadership and change as a touchstone for its own organization. As a result, every effort was made to work collectively and strategically, to develop a public voice and to create an appropriate environment in which the Conference could succeed under the terms it had set for itself. On all of those counts it was a stunning success.

The Conference opened with an insightful address from Commissioner of Equal Opportunity, June Williams. She pointed to the uneasy and complex relationship between women and power and argued that "power is about the ability to do, and having access to whatever is needed for the doing." However, as Commissioner Williams pointed out, the daily reality of employment discrimination and sexual harassment for women is a constant reminder of just how little power women have over key aspects of their lives. For that reason it is critical that progress is made on legislative support to women. However, while these forms of legal support for women can be empowering, they nonetheless still discriminate against women with aboriginal or ethnic backgrounds.

Professor Anna Yeatman from Waikato University New Zealand gave the keynote address. It was an inspiring exploration of the Conference theme - power. She began by asking whether the feminist movement's conceptions of power and communication were adequate in order to create a vision for the future. Professor Yeatman explored three distinct feminist conceptions of power: protection, coercion and capacity. Protection and coercion, she claimed are both negative. For that reason these paternalistic models of power must be challenged in favour of an alternative model which enhanced the capacities of individuals or self-identified groups to govern themselves. Professor Yeatman argued that by developing a conception of power as action and capacity, we are then able to be both agents and ethical beings. This conception of power has three outcomes: it locates women within power, not outside it; it distinguishes between power and domination; and it allows males and females to respond in individualized ways rather than as males or females. This opens up new possibilities for governing and emancipatory interests to work together to chart a more inclusive and democratic path.

In addressing the Conference sub-theme, women's work, Dr. Sally Kennedy, Commissioner in Industrial Relations in Western Australia explored the limitations women impose on themselves when they simply fail to know the basics about our work and workplace rights raised the important question: Just how much do we know about our world of work? Very quickly she could show we are guilty of knowing very little. And if that is the case, how is it possible that we might exercise power in our workplace and over our workplace conditions? This has become all the more significant as we go through a period of rapid workplace change. Commissioner Kennedy paid particular attention to enterprise bargaining.
Victorian feminist lawyer and social activist, Dr. Jocelynne Scutt, confronted the issue of women and power by drawing upon a powerful reading of stories from women. These stories, drawn from ordinary and not so ordinary women, showed the barriers that face women as they attempt to deal with a daily reality infused with masculine power, violence, fright, shame, and self-realization. She spoke poignantly of a world that is all too familiar to women; women whose capacities have been curbed sharply by a common theme in their lives: domination and coercion.

The challenge to Conference participants was to acknowledge and explore the realities women face both within their world and workplace and to work toward a new understanding of power and empowerment for women. This means that women must learn to tell their stories, and to communicate with each other in order to develop a sense of common purpose, common understanding and common strategy.

The papers presented at the Conference are an attempt to explore the central theme of this Conference. At the same time the Conference successfully created a forum where women could, through a variety of means (art, music, conversations, workshops or formal presentations), confront and challenge themselves and their colleagues. These papers are a collection that offer provocative and fascinating reading.

Finally, and on behalf of the Conference Committee, I wish to sincerely thank Margaret Butterworth from the Department of Library and Information Science at Edith Cowan University for her editorial work on the papers. She took on this enormous task with energy and graciousness and the final collection is a tribute to this effort.

DR. SUSAN ROBERTSON
Conference Convenor
I am delighted to open the Women, Communication and Power Conference.

The very idea of considering Dimensions of Power in relation to women raises some interesting issues, and I would like to begin by making a few observations by juxtaposing women with power.

The term "power" has been generally associated with men. Putting women and power together somehow seems unnatural, whereas men and power seem to go hand in hand. When attention has focussed on women and power, the focus has tended to be on:

- how little power women have in a world organised by men;
- how women use power differently;
- how women view power differently; and,
- how uncomfortable women are with the use or misuse of power.

For example, I recently read an article in The Age titled "Women politicians may not be kinder, gentler". The article questioned the proposition that women politicians would replace the male values of "competitiveness and power lust" with their own nurturing "feminine values" of "constructive compromise, sensitivity of relationships and a stronger ethic of honesty" (The Age, Wednesday 25 November - Tempo Magazine, p. 3).

The reality is that just as all male politicians are not power hungry and lusting egomaniacs, all female politicians are not nurturing, compromising and ethical. And, I don't intend to list names for either category!!

To associate women with power is to acknowledge how the status of women in society has changed, and continues to change. The term "femocrat", for instance indicates, at the very least that some women have been able to access positions of power. At the same time, the negative connotations associated with femocrat which include "co-option" or "sell-out" indicate how uneasy some women are about other women acquiring power and about acquiring or seeking power themselves.

So at the outset, I would like to say that the relationship between women and power remains complex. It seems to me that issues such as how we, as women, view power and seek to redefine what is meant by power are pertinent in the current economic and social climate. And so, I welcome this Conference which provides a forum for open and informed discussion.

To me it seems that power is about the ability to do, and having access to whatever is needed for the doing. I realise that this a restrictive and simplistic definition. However, it provides a starting point for our discussion, and I am sure that speakers at the Conference will examine more elaborate concepts of power.

Power and sexual harassment
Having said that, I would like to discuss one aspect of power relations - sexual harassment.

It is now generally accepted that sexual harassment is an expression or abuse of power by people who feel free to exercise that power. It is an abuse of power which affects work quality, productivity and self-esteem.

Media and radio talk back shows and people generally argue that it is difficult to define sexual harassment. For example, according to Geoffrey Barker, (The Age, 24/11/91, pg 13) the notion of sexual harassment has been stretched to "cover a vaguely specified and uncertain range of behaviours".

I emphatically assert that any man or women who is the object of unwanted attention is certain that he or she is being harassed.

Discrimination by sexual harassment tells someone that the most important thing about them at work or at school or as a customer or client or tenant is their sex, sexual availability or sexual activity.

It is worth noting that the word "harass" comes from an old French word which describes setting dogs on to wounded or trapped animals. The Oxford Concise dictionary defines harass as meaning "vex by repeated attacks; trouble or worry; to importune sexually".

I see a correlation between sheep worrying dogs and sexual harassers worrying people. And, when we see dogs worrying sheep we think of power, we don't think that it's about playing, good fun or getting to know each other.

Examples of cases I have dealt with include:

1. A female who was employed as an assistant in a traditionally male position within the retail industry, lodged complaints against her employer alleging that she had been subjected to sexual harassment by her co-workers. The complainant alleged that the campaign of sexual harassment and discrimination occurred...
from the commencement of her employment and continued despite union intervention in the matter.

She alleged that inappropriate actions by her supervisor and the respondent allowed unwelcome comment and advances to continue for a lengthy period which led to her leaving her employment.

The complaint was conciliated after a conciliation conference was held and the respondent agreed to review policies and procedures relating to sexual harassment. The company further agreed to provide an apology to the complainant along with the individuals concerned and consider future employment at a later date.

The respondent was concerned when he was informed of the allegations. He stated that he had not indicated that his comments were unwelcome. He apologised profusely to the complainant who indicated that this, plus the educative effect had resolved her complaint.

The complainant stated that they went to lunch with the company and worked from a spare desk in the owner's office. She stated that he asked her out to dinner and lunch, that she refused but that he persisted until she accepted a lunch invitation. The complainant stated that they went to lunch that day, during which the owner made many verbal advances to her. She noted that she felt uncomfortable but did not know how to react and consequently did not return to the job again.

She stated that she started as a telemarketer with the company and worked from a spare desk in the owner's office. She stated that he asked her out to dinner and lunch, that she refused but that he persisted until she accepted a lunch invitation. The complainant stated that they went to lunch that day, during which the owner made many verbal advances to her. She noted that she felt uncomfortable but did not know how to react and consequently did not return to the job again.

The respondent was concerned when he was informed of the allegations. He stated that he had taken the complainant to lunch but could not remember what he had said due to the amount of wine consumed. He stated that he had not realised that he was offending the complainant because she had not indicated that his comments were unwelcome. He apologised profusely to the complainant who indicated that this, plus the educative effect had resolved her complaint.

These cases show how powerless women can be in employment. They indicate how stereotypical notions about behaviour are still prevalent. But, I would like to strongly emphasise that the Equal Opportunity Act approaches the question of sexual harassment from the point of view of the complainant. By this what I mean is that the Tribunal will look at how the woman responded and not how they assume a reasonable woman may have responded. Even the notion of a reasonable woman is made from a male perspective. Tribunals look at the reaction of the complainant. So it's not a case of being over-sensitive or being seen to be over-sensitive. As one Federal Court Judge put it - in gender specific language:

"a sexual harasser takes his victim as he finds her"


And, I believe that to the extent that legal provisions deal with sexual harassment, it is empowering. For women, it is public acknowledgement of behaviour which was not so long ago acceptable because "that's the way men are".

If men have "power" for whatever reason, women can exercise power by access to the Act.

As an aside I would like to add that we appear to be moving to new forms of sexual harassment. For instance:

"A group of men are gathered around an office work station. On the computer screen an animated, anatomically correct woman says, "hello, I'm Maxie, your date from MacPlaymate. Would you like to take off my clothes? I'll guide you. Start with my blouse"

(Johnson & Lewis 1991:5).

I call this technology incited sexual harassment - and it is sexual harassment.

This sort of harassment is covered by the Equal Opportunity Act, and certainly the proposed extension of provisions dealing with sexual harassment will mean that individuals will be able to make complaints even when there is no common employer.

The existence of law against sexual harassment has affected both social interaction and the concrete delivery of rights through the legal system. The sexually harassed have been given a name for their discrimination (suffering), a forum to speak, authority to make claims and an avenue for relief.

Like you, I wonder at the energy that has to be expended to get the law to recognise the wrongs. But, the legal basis of sexual harassment make it unlawful legally and unacceptably socially (MacInnon 1987:77). It is about being empowered and moving on.

**Law and power**

I would also like to touch upon the limitations of the Equal Opportunity Act with respect to empowering women.

I have often thought that the contradictions inherent in the law are best summed up by Antole France's comment:

"The law, in its majestic equality, forbids all men to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread - the rich as well as the poor"


It has been frequently pointed out that people's lives do not fit easily into legal categories. In relation to women, these classifications can be problematic because they fail to take into account the specifics of women's experiences. This disparity is obvious to me every time a woman walks into my office to make a complaint. She tells me her story of what has happened to her. She does not refer to legal categories, and is sometimes uncertain as to whether the Act is applicable to her situation.
The failure of legal categories to reflect the reality of women's experiences in relation of equality of opportunity or domestic violence is disempowering. And, I find it heartening everytime I note changes in definitions of legal categories which encompass women's experiences.

Another issue that I would like to touch upon is that while the Equal Opportunity Act may be accessible to white, middle class, educated women, it is significantly less accessible to Aboriginal women, and perhaps women from other cultural groups.

In my experience, the complaint process alone which focuses on the discrimination experienced by an individual, is inadequate to tackle the scope and extent of discrimination experienced by Aboriginal people. Other measures are also necessary if Aboriginal women are to have a voice, and to find their experiences reflected in legal provisions.

Law is a strategy for power
At the same time, it is important to note that the law is a means of empowering women. It provides protection through the procedural protection of the judicial system, its attempt to equalise power relationships through representations, and its emphasis on rights.

One of the significant merits of the Equal Opportunity Act is that it provides representation for the complainant, if the complaint has substance and is not conciliated. It means that the complainant can have legal representation, and does not have to present her case.

In many ways this approach addresses some of the inequalities between the complainant and the respondent. For example:

Secretary alleging sexual harassment without legal representation in the Tribunal, while the respondent can afford a QC, or as a man and her employer, is more at ease in the Tribunal than the secretary.

The law is not everything, but it is not nothing either. Perhaps what decisions regarding sexual harassment show is that even the law can and does do something for the first time, without any legal precedent. Secondly, it is hoped that as more, women become lawyers and magistrates and judges, the law will more accurately encompass the reality of women's lives.

At the very least the fact that women are judges serves an educative function, and helps to shatter stereotypes about the role of women in society. Stereotypes that are held by judges and lawyers as well as jurors and witnesses (Sherry 1988:169).

According to Justice Bertha Wilson, the longest serving members of the Canadian Supreme Court:

"If women lawyers and women judges though their differing perspectives on life can bring a new humanity to bear on the decision making process, perhaps they will make a difference. Perhaps they will succeed in infusing the law with an understanding of what it means to be fully human" (Graycar and Morgan 1992:413).

Conclusions
In conclusion, I would like to stress that working within the law and using the law can and does lead to empowerment. For example, in relation to sexual harassment, what the legislation has attempted to achieve is to define in legal terms the experience of women in the workplace.

While the idea of a gender neutral law has its attractions, there are important aspects of life, such as conception, childbirth, sex and sexual violence in which women's experience is quite different from that of men. It is difficult for me to postulate how the law can be gender neutral in areas where the specific experience of women needs recognition or where there is continuing disadvantage. As Justice Elizabeth Evatt noted:

"It is only in the hazy future that we might think of replacing the reasonable man, not with the reasonable women, but with the reasonable person, able to present an integrated and balanced view of human experience" (Graycar and Morgan 1990:vii).

I have tried to touch upon some of the dimensions of power - and have left much unsaid. The exercise of power is a day to day occurrence, in the behaviour of employers, in decisions made by judges, and in a parent to a child.

I am empowered as Commissioner but am disempowered as a single parent.

However, power can be abused, misused and used for the greater good of the wider community.

However, while the question about how much or how little women have achieved in the past decades continues to be debated, it is an achievement that we, as women are considering what we mean by power, and how we might acquire and use power.
Introduction

Feminism takes its place as one of the central emancipatory movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As an emancipatory movement it is deeply connected with issues of power and communication. In particular it is connected with questions concerning which ideas of power and communication may foster democratically oriented social change. It turns out that a great deal depends on how an emancipatory movement conceives power and communication. This is where its vision for change is located, and the adequacy of this vision depends on the adequacy of this conception of power and communication.

At this point of the twentieth century when we approach the dawn of a new century and of a new millennium, it is worth enquiring as to the adequacy of the ideas of power and communication to which feminism as a social movement has been attached. Are these ideas which offer a vision which is likely to be compelling and wise in guiding democratically oriented change at this time?

There are two specific challenges for democratically oriented change at this time to which I would like to draw attention at the outset. The first one concerns the crisis of legitimacy for a paternalistic state. There can be no doubt that the current ideological success of free market models of distribution is in good part owed to a democratic reaction against top-down, bureaucratic and paternalistic modes of state intervention. This crisis of legitimacy for a paternalistic state bears on precisely what model of power we think may be most congruent with democratic values. "Power over" is widely viewed as an inappropriate way of regulating the relationship of individuals to social life, even when this power over is directed by a benevolent and protective interest of the state in individuals. Instead, self-regulation where the individual is made responsible for their relationship to social life, is seen as the more appropriate model of power. On this model state intervention has to work in ways which are congruent with individual capacities for self-government. It is unsurprising that the first experimental steps in working with this demand is to elaborate the model of consumer sovereignty in the market place to cover self-regulated relationships of individuals to social life. Neither market freedom nor economic modes of relationships are adequate to the expression of self-government, but they may seem to be when the only alternative posed is the paternalistic, bureaucratic state.

The second challenge concerns the democratic demands of a postcolonial era, where the assimilationist ethic of a modern colonalist relationship is no longer legitimate. Postcolonial democracy demands that the political community in question—the Australian political community in our case—be so constructed as to be multicultural and multiracial. This is a type of democratic jurisdiction where the principle of equal treatment before the law is able to take up the potential significance of cultural, social and embodied difference for ensuring the delivery of such equal treatment. Postcolonial democratic challenges demand a capacity to work with developing and transforming modern universalistic values—equality, freedom, democracy—so that the universalism they connote is not of a homogenising kind, but one that can accommodate difference.

These challenges work also with a model of power that is oriented to self-government rather than to power over. For example, it is standard good practice in multicultural program delivery to design the program and its methods of delivery around the expressed needs of the users, both actual and potential. In this way, these users enter a politics of needs formation, where in dialogue with policy makers, program managers, and service deliverers, they help shape the program as it is delivered in their particular neck of the woods. When program delivery is understood in this way it becomes an emergent strategy, in constant process of being shaped and reinterpreted in respect of the needs and interests of all these stakeholders. This is a very different conception of power than that which accords the policy makers and professionals the status of professionals who know what is best for their clients, and who proceed to design the program and service accordingly.

It is apparent that these two types of democratic challenge are basically distinct aspects of the same fundamental challenge, namely a challenge to paternalistic models of power in favour of an alternative model of power which enhances the capacities of individuals or self-identified groups to govern themselves. Self-government is to be understood to refer to the capacity of these individuals or self-identified groups to govern themselves. Self-government is to be understood to refer to the capacity of these individuals or self-identified groups to govern themselves. It is to be understood to refer to the capacity of these individuals or self-identified groups to govern themselves. It is to be understood to refer to the capacity of these individuals or self-identified groups to govern themselves. If this is the kind of broad emancipatory direction for change at this point of transition into the
twenty first century, we may ask what role feminism may play in contributing to this direction of change. Specifically what model of power does feminism seem to offer, and is it adequate to these democratic challenges? This question will require us also to consider the relationship between power, politics and policy, and it is in this connection that I wish to conclude with some remarks about communication.

Feminism and Power

Feminism is a movement with a complex and internally contested history of ideological affiliations both with other emancipatory movements and the institutions of modern liberal democratic society. My intent here is not to produce an adequate account of how this complexity is to be traced in feminist concepts of power. Rather I wish to identify several important strands within feminist concepts of power which bear on the capacity of feminism to respond with positive vision to these democratic challenges. The three distinct feminist conceptions of power that I identify are:

1. feminism and power as protection;
2. feminism and power as coercion;
3. feminism and power as capacity.

Feminism and power as protection

It is a paradoxical fact of history that women’s liberation from patriarchal despotic authority in individual households has come at the hands of the patriarchal state. The rights of women—e.g. the rights of married women to own property, to sue and be sued, to have custody of their children, etc.—were all conferred by the state, and were rhetorically understood to be rights which empowered women against the despotic excesses of their husbands. In general, women’s accession to the rights of the modern individual is a process understood to have been dependent on the state’s positive conferral of these rights on women. This is in direct contrast to the origins myth of men’s rights as modern individuals. In the case of men, the state is held not to confer rights but to recognise rights already held, “natural” rights. Thus, women do not have “natural” rights; they have state-conferring rights.

This prominence of the state in the construction of women as right-bearing subjects bears scrutiny. It suggests that women’s right-bearing status may be a qualified one, namely that it exists only to the extent that it is reconcilable with the idea of state-sponsored patriarchal protection of women.

Protection is an undemocratic concept. It is used to legitimise domination over groups who are constituted as weak, unable for some reason to take care of themselves, and thus in need of protection. These groups historically have included: women, children, and peoples regarded by a colonizing modern western state as primitive or undeveloped. The idea of power operating here is power over, but “power over” is justified in the name of protection. This is a concept of power, then, that accords domination the privileges and obligations of benevolent despotism. Protection may be an undemocratic concept but it is exceedingly alive and well in contemporary conceptions of power. This is particularly true of a prominent tendency in feminism, a tendency we may term feminist protectionism.

Feminist protectionism is exemplified in the social purity reforming feminism of the nineteenth century. The ethos of this type of reform required the state to enter into various relationships of social control in order either to protect women and children from the inability of men to control their own appetites, or to restrict the extent to which men could satisfy these appetites. Thus, prostitutes who were perceived as victims of circumstance were to be saved, and the licensing of public entertainment such as music halls was to be premised on strict licensing controls and surveillance oriented to keeping them free of indecency and vice (see Bland, 1992, for an account of the late-Victorian National Vigilance Association’s activities in London). For social purity reformers, the goal of protecting innocent women and children from vice and corruption justified the dubious means of extending the legitimacy of state repression and surveillance. The history of social work—a feminised profession—is inescapably bound up with the development of the state’s protective embrace of all those elements and classes in society viewed as needing control and surveillance for the good of those amongst them who were and are regarded as redeemable.

Contemporary feminism still looks to the state as protector. This is most evident in the feminist discourse of domestic violence. In most instances the policy orientation of this discourse is to the development of state-based methods of social control in order to extend more effective protection of women and children against men type-cast as violent and sexually rapacious. It is this which explains the readiness of femocrats in Australian State/Territory welfare governmental agencies not only to participate in but in many cases lead contemporary child protection programs.

It will be clear that protectionist feminism actually works to reproduce the bureaucratic and assimilationist paternalism of the state which is under contemporary democratic challenge. Child protection strategies, for example, both extend the net of state surveillance and social control, and ensure its focus is concentrated as those who are type cast as the most likely villains: poor, working class men, or when the discourse operates in a highly racialised context, poor minority men and women (Maori and Pacific Islanders, in the New Zealand context).

Protectionist feminism sustains a patriarchal concept of “power over”. It deploys the state as the good father against the bad fathers and the bad men. This is a split view of the father, which
identifies good fathering with patriarchal protection. Feminism thereby confirms the protector's status and role, and contributes its share in reproducing the morality of paternalism. This permits feminism to play out a dependency role in regard to the state, a role which legitimises a paternalistic, bureaucratic expression of state authority. It also permits feminism an uncritical relationship to its own ethic of maternalism. On this ethic, women's goodness is identified with paternalism, no less an undemocratic relationship to others than paternalism.

Several assumptions appear to operate in this approach to power. On the first, women are assumed to both lie outside power and to be powerless. Therefore, they need the powerful to protect them against those who threaten them. This is a non-political relationship to power. Women do not have to take responsibility for themselves as both implicated in patriarchal domination and as subjects with the capacity for positive, self-governing action.

On the second assumption, power is assumed to be either evil or benign, and when benign not power at all, if it is directed by benevolent, protective motives. Goodness is attested to by the effort made to control evil. Such effort is all. Good people thereby do not have to be responsible for the consequences of their actions, and thus do not have to be politically accountable for them. This is a recipe for allowing the ends to justify the means. For example, in child protection programs, child welfare effort and resources tend to be used up in the policing stages of the operation. Children are taken into care with very little effort of will or attention being given to what happens to them next. State-sponsored efforts to rescue these children mean that many of them experience serial foster placements in a context where there is no guarantee that foster parents are non-abusive adults. The simple binary of good and evil ensures that parental domination is affirmed by the assumption that good parents are those who use their domination over children to protect rather than abuse them. The more complex politics of democratising adult authority over children is evaded (for elaboration of some of this argument, see Yeatman, 1992).

On the third assumption, those who are weak become powerful only as they are "empowered" by the strong arm of the patriarchal state. The etymology of the term "empowerment" suggests we might treat it with some suspicion. From the OED, the meanings of "empower" are: 1. to invest legally or formally with power or authority; to license; 2. to impart or bestow power to an end or for a purpose; to enable, permit; 3. to gain or assume power over (obsolete). "Empowerment" is the act of empowering or the state of being empowered. In this context, it is worth recalling that on the natural law approach to rights, men do not need to be empowered by the state. They represent a masculinist and democratic version of an old idea: aristocrats by nature.

Empowerment is an idea we may have good reason to wish to retain. However, we need to note that historically this term is used of those who are positioned as powerless, who are to be "empowered" by or through the benign, paternalistic agency of the state. This being the case we may wonder whether this term reproduces the relationship of tutelage between powerful protector and those who, being powerless, are seen to need help. Against this, it may be argued that "empowering" - just as "enabling" and "capacitating" - are all terms which have legal connotations, but that the authority which they invoke can work in democratic rather than paternalistic ways. In short, these terms are suggestive of the contested terrain of state intervention itself. They are what William Connolly (1984) calls contested concepts. Or, at least, they are so potentially, for it is not clear that we have experienced either elaborated or explicit debate and discussion concerning how empowering (empowerment), enabling (enablement) and capacitating (capacitation) can be developed as relationships which foster self-regulation rather than protection.

It makes historical sense that feminism has looked to the patriarchal state as the protector of women. Women were and are placed as victims in relation to men's unconstrained violence and rapine. Protectionism, however, reproduces the very problem it purports to address. Women are better served if they work on a democratic model of power which challenges protectionist conceptions of power and where politics is the vehicle through which individuals become powerful in the sense of self-governing.

**Feminism and Power as Coercion**

Feminism like all other emancipatory social movements tends to collapse power into domination (for the distinction between power and domination, see Patton, 1992). Power is identified with "power over" in all the coercive and non-benign senses of "power over". On this approach to power, the emancipatory movement sees itself as representing those who are dominated and exploited by some kind of ruling class: the bourgeoisie, the colonialists, men, etc.. The focus for change thereby becomes this movement's efforts to throw off this relationship of domination and exploitation by a mix of various means: ideological contestation of this relationship, mobilization of mass resistance, revolutionary struggle. Since power is equated with force, counter-power has to be a counter-force. This being the case, the emancipatory movements including feminism tend to pursue an undemocratic and often non-political practice of counter-force.

This point is an important one to elaborate. When the dominant exploiter class's power is equated...
with the various forms of force (economic, physical, moral, ideological), it follows that established democratic procedure and process cannot be accorded face value. Instead the achievements of modern democracy are construed as the false appearance of a systemically coercive set of relations which is the “base” or truth of this society.

Even if an emancipatory movement declares its interest in promoting a more democratic society, this interest is rendered null and void by its inability to accord reality to such democratic achievements as have been made. For example, the rule of law, freedoms of speech and assembly, representative government. Moreover, since the oppressor class is homogenised as a class committed to the domination of others, all men or all members of the bourgeoisie or all colonialists, “at bottom”, are accorded only an interested and instrumental relationship to their professions of modern democratic values. Because power is conflated with domination it is assumed that the powerful have no interest in democratic process, but manipulate a pseudo-democratic process to serve their own ends of domination. It follows that all professions of democratic values by the powerful have to be treated cynically. This means that the emancipatory movement needs to make no effort to work with the powerful in the development of these values. It makes very little sense to work to develop a politics with those whom one assumes are oriented fundamentally to power as domination.

Historically, emancipatory movements have contributed enormously to the terms of critique of relationships of domination. In this way they have contributed to a democratic project, for they show how different groups are constituted as marginal by being wronged by the established modes of governance. These constructions of wrong establish directions for particular projects of democratisation. Without a positive relationship to a democratic politics, however, emancipatory movements have failed to contribute to the development of modern democratic institutions and values. This has been a major historical weakness, and one which has posed little constraint on their internal political practices. For example, feminist consciousness raising is not intrinsically democratic, and, indeed, it can be made over to particular kinds of moral blackmail and personal tyranny.

There is no doubt that the powerful—those we may term the aristocracies of history—combine power and domination in their relationship to power. That is, they combine their own distinctive historical project of self-government with the domination of others. These, however, should be treated as separable aspects of their relationship to power. To separate means that we can come to appreciate the historical achievements in regard to self-government that different of these aristocracies have made. We can ask what their constructions of freedom of action may offer to us now. We can recognise as Nietzsche (1956, 170) called it their “triumphant self-affirmation”. This is very much more complex critical evaluative relationship to the aristocracies of power than emancipatory movements have permitted themselves.

The historical weakness of emancipatory movements in regard to positive conceptions of power, including those which are associated with democratic procedures and politics, is indicated in their worldlessness, and their tendency to practise a politics of resentment. I borrow the term worldlessness from Hannah Arendt who used it to characterise the relationship of the court and financier Jews to the absolute monarchies and subsequent development of the nation-state (Feldman, 1978, 24-5). When a movement understands itself as representing those who are powerless, the victims of the powerful, it neither permits itself responsibility for nor engagement in the affairs of the world. It is thereby able to maintain an innocence of worldly affairs, and in particular an innocence in regard to power. It does not have to confront the truth that power inheres in all relationships and that any interpretation of reality is itself a manifestation of power. A truth which indicates that those who are relatively powerless are nonetheless still participative in power.

Worldlessness shields those who construct themselves as passive and innocent victims of world history from any responsibility for their fate. It also permits them to locate their resistance to their relatively powerless status in a hatred of those to whom they attribute all power, and, it follows, all evil. This is the politics of resentment which Nietzsche (1956) so insightfully analyses. This is a negative politics. All that is identified with the world of the powerful is rejected as participating in the oppressor’s evil. Thus, feminism tends to identify all that is worldly with the evil of patriarchy, and thereby to reject all values that are associated with the “triumphant self-affirmation” (Nietzsche, 1956, 170) of the powerful class, men. These values include those of reason, competitive performance, heroism, dispassionate judgment, ambition.

This is a politics of rancor, “the rancor of beings who, deprived of the direct outlet of action, compensate by an imaginary vengeance (Nietzsche, 1956, 170).” A feminism oriented by rancor and resentment casts women as good, men as evil. It is thereby committed to discovering what good there is in the ethical domain of women’s distinctive ways of relating and doing things. This is a creative project which extends critical insight into the mix of power and domination that characterises men’s distinctive ways of relating and doing things. But this creativity is blocked from becoming a positive project of transformation of the world. All that is permitted a feminism oriented by rancor is a separatist retreat from the world. As Nietzsche (1956, 171) puts it, “all its action is reaction.”
This is a feminism inevitably committed to substituting an identity politics for a more inclusive and transformative politics. An identity politics follows from the binary opposition of the good and the powerless to the evil and the powerful. Neither of these terms is permitted to participate in the attributes of the other; differences between individuals are ironed out and they are homogenised on behalf of one of these terms or the other; their identity is made to appear coherently expressive of who they are (good or evil); and, finally, as will be clear their identity is treated as though it is a given rather than being subject to transformation through historical-politico practice.

The identity of the oppressed subject is accorded utopian value because it is viewed as lying beyond and outside domination. As we have seen, the confusion of power with domination means that the emancipatory movement is unable to take over and reinterpret the attributes of the powerful, self-governing subject on behalf of those whom it represents. Instead it ends up celebrating as virtues all those aspects of the identity of the oppressed which are associated with strategic self-preservation in a condition of weakness: acuity of perception of the other's feelings; the masking of assertive and direct modes of leadership in those of indirect suggestion and persuasion; the assertion of power through goodness where this works to occlude the subject's interest in power and makes it appear that all they are doing is operating on behalf of the needs of others.

This is a politics of reaction oriented more to the preservation of the identity of the oppressed subject than it is to a project of social transformation where the objective is one of contesting domination by encouraging all individuals and groups to assume a positive relationship to power. Such encouragement of a positive relationship to power would challenge the attribution of identity to individuals and the correlating requirement that their identity is the expression of a given condition as a member of a group (on this point see Honig, 1992). Instead individuals would be encouraged to explore their capacities, to discover the contingencies and multiplicity of identity, and to celebrate those moments of transformative practice when their sense of self completely changes.

**Feminism and Power as Capacity**

Protectionist and negative conceptions of power have not been the only ways of conceiving power within feminism. As we have seen they make good sense in reflecting the conditions of strategic survival for women as a relatively powerless group. An emancipatory movement such as feminism, however, also develops a politics of inclusion in respect of what are seen to be the privileges of the powerful, in particular their privilege of action. There has been a long and sophisticated feminist politics of advocacy for the inclusion of women within modern democratic freedoms.

This is a reactive politics to the extent that inclusion is sought within the established conception of democratic freedoms. For as feminists have come to recognise these established freedoms reflect the ways in which the powerful and dominant class have conceived freedom. Thus, we discover a thoroughgoing conflations of the very idea of self-governance with private proprity status as master of a household and of all who lie within the household (see Yeatman, 1988). The consequence of this is that when feminism works for the right of women to be included within the established model of self-governance ("freedom"), they are effectively working for women to become like men in this sense of patriarchal private proprity householder status. As we know, precisely because of the terms of the gender division of labour that is entailed in patriarchal mastery of households, the vast majority of women are positioned in ways which mean they cannot become like men in this sense (for the working of what Pateman (1988) calls the "sexual contract" in work organisations, see Cockburn, 1991). Only a small minority of women can.

One response to the discovery of the patriarchally inflected models of self-governance is, as we have seen, to reject them altogether in favour of an equally reactive but separatist orientation to the virtue of women. Another response is evident in an emerging feminist response which permits itself an active and experimental relationship to established and not-yet-established models of self-governance. This response is evident in the poststructuralist feminist literature which disrupts the binaries of power/powerlessness, masculinity/femininity, good/evil, and so on (see for example Butler and Scott, 1992). Judith Butler's work for example brings out the performative aspects of who we are as sexual and gendered beings: gender is not only something we are but something we do. When we do rather than express gender, our action contributes to a micropolitics of contested gender relations. In small ways we may inflect our performance of gender relations with irony and, thus, critical distance. In other ways we select within a repertoire of ways of doing gender where we may dramatise our contestation of what we see as conservative and oppressive ways of doing gender.

What this work does is develop a conception of power as action and capacity. It indicates that even when we appear to be passively reacting to domination, this is a species of action, a particular kind of assertion of power, albeit one that denies it is power. When a conception of power as action and capacity is operative, we come to understand Foucault's point that a discursive formation interpellates us not as passive subjects of power but as specific kinds of agency or capacity. Thus women as subjects within a patriarchally oppressive order are interpellated as particular kinds of agents. It is because they are agents that they are ethical beings. Thus women as intelligent and practical strategists of survival within a patriarchal
gender order develop not just an ethics of ressentiment but an ethics of caring, however mixed up together these become.

When we approach those who suffer oppression as agents within their oppression, we are inevitably embarked on an inquiry into how their agency works to comply with and reproduce this oppression. This is precisely what I have been doing in this paper. Such an inquiry indicates women, like other oppressed groups, are located within power, not outside it. It attributes to women a capacity for action, and discerns this capacity in their agency of reaction. This approach indicates that women are more powerful than their protectionist or reactive conceptions of power allow them to think they are. It brings out how their power as actors to do rather than be gendered subjects permits them considerable scope for a micro-politics of challenge, contestation and disruption within the interactive field of men and women doing gender.

**Power, policy and politics**

When there is an orientation to power as capacity, we can break out of identity politics. We no longer require men and women to represent two homogenous poles of a binary oppressor and oppressed relationship. This permits us two further steps.

First, an orientation to power as capacity means that we can distinguish between power and domination. Allowing that these become confused together in patriarchal modes of governance, when we as feminists make this distinction we are suggesting that patriarchs can make this distinction too.

Second, when we approach power as capacity, and view gender as something which men and women do rather than are, we necessarily commit ourselves to the idea that not all men will do their gender in the same way, and not all women will do theirs in the same way. Specifically we allow for the individualised aspects of agency which arise from the performative nature of agency. To perform is to transform how things get done, are perceived, are understood. The dynamics of transformation change the selfhood of the agent concerned. It is this change which individualises the self. Thus, if gender is done rather than expressed, it follows that there are individualised differences within women, individualised differences within men—both as groups and as individuals. That is, neither the group (men, woman) nor the individual (this man, this woman) are coherent identities.

We can bring these two steps together in the proposition that as agents, men are ethical beings who may confuse the ethics of patriarchal domination with the ethics of self-governance but who may not do this confusion depending on their individualised ways of doing gender in relation to women's individualised ways of doing gender. It is clear that when an emancipatory movement contests the established ways of governance—policy (for this meaning of policy, see Ranciere 1992)—it does so by showing how these exclude and marginalise the group in question. The argument as to how policy wrongs a particular group is conducted in the name of equality. The very process of contesting this wrong equalises the status of those who have been marginalised by and those who are included within established policy. This equalising process is true of the politics of contestation, a politics which involves an interlocutory and performative relationship of confrontation, negotiation, and dialogue between the established players and the emancipatory movement.

Within this politics of contestation there is a lot of room to move precisely because of its interlocutory and performative characteristics. As the emancipatory movement challenges established policy, it calls into being an entirely different interactive dynamics of selfhood than prevails outside this politics. The emancipatory subject is called into being as someone who lies in-between legitimate participation in governance (policy) and exclusion from governance (policy). This is someone who is quite different from the marginalised self outside politics, a selfhood perforcefully defined in terms of intelligent strategies of adaptation and survival. The governing subject is called into being as someone who is capable of doing something other than conservatively resist the emancipatory movement's demand for inclusion, as someone who can work with the emancipatory movement to rectify the wrong concerned.

In this context there are many possibilities for emancipatory and governing subjects working together to change established policy so that it becomes more inclusive and democratic. Particular men who for reasons of their contingencies of selfhood are especially responsive to feminist emancipatory contestation become important colleagues for feminists within this process of change.

Politics is the domain of action. As we have seen it is not neatly contained within the space of what is usually conceived as public, political and governmental. It happens in kitchens, classrooms, bedrooms, doctor's offices, case-work meetings, managerialist auditing practices and so on. It is true that we don't do in the sense of perform who we are all the time. Much of how we proceed in life is oriented by our needs not to act, to be oriented by habit for example, or to shelter the contingencies of our individuality within the communal embrace of group identity. However, politics is the sphere of ethics and the sphere of ethical change. Democratic developments and transformations are not possible without ethical change.
Contemporary demands for a self-regulated relationship to social life have extended the domain of the political beyond what have been thought to be its traditional boundaries. The conjugal bed is not always the site of politics but it can be, and when it has become so it is because women's demands for a self-regulated relationship to conjugal sex has politically disrupted their husbands' patriarchal insistence on his conjugal rights.

It is clear that self-regulated modes of governance are ways of constructing the social relationships of power so that they are democratic in orientation. They depend precisely on a relational approach. This is why market-based individual freedoms may be a condition of self-regulated modes of governance but, beyond this, have nothing to do with extending the conditions for self-regulated modes of governance as such. Market freedom encourages individuals to pursue their power understood as capacity in an atomistic and self-interested way. This is not susceptible of a democratic politics.

Women, power and communication

It will be clear that each conception of power—power as protection, power as coercion, power as capacity—bring in their train entirely different conceptions of communication. When feminism is oriented to power as protection, its communicative rhetoric is structured in terms of dependent virtue, passionate outrage against male aggressors, and appeal to the good corporate father of the state. When feminism is oriented to power as coercion, its communicative rhetoric is structured in terms of the performance of virtue without power. Each of these communicative rhetorics are directed by a requirement to conform to given and very real constraints.

When feminism is oriented to power as capacity, these constraints disappear and what communicative rhetorics are adopted are subject to experimental and contextually variable political practice. This permits feminists to become sophisticated political players who endow their political protagonists with equal possibilities of sophistication. It becomes readily appreciated that one does not approach a male ally with the full rhetorical armoury of a litany of wrongs committed by men against women, even while both this feminist and her male ally understand when it is contextually appropriate for her to wheel out this rhetorical armour. Perhaps more important than anything else is that this is a communicative rhetoric which never wheels out the accusation of wrong without simultaneously issuing an invitation that interpellates the wrongdoer as someone who can change, as someone who can form with the feminist subject a “we” of bringing about shared ethical directions of change.

References:


"Ignorance is not bliss"; and a couple of other points besides

Sally Kennedy
Commissioner,
W.A. Industrial Relations Commission

As I understand it this stage constitutes about the mid point of your conference. The programme seems a very full one and I have no doubt that those of you who have had the opportunity to participate fully in it so far have already absorbed much.

Nonetheless I thought a useful starting point for my comments might be a drawing of your attention back to the cover of your conference programme and some of the preamble to the theme "Women, Communication and Power".

These are -
"Despite significant changes, including the introduction of legislation pertaining to women, there has been little ground gained with regard to women occupying leadership positions in all aspects of social, political and organisational life in Australia.

Women's world has changed and so has women's work. Yet organisations still operate to exclude women from positions of power and influence. How then can women individually and collectively create environments and develop strategies which value their contributions as workers and leaders? How can their voices be heard?"

As you know this segment of the programme is headed "Women's Work"; I note the possessive apostrophe. Taking that out one has "Work of Women".

Now I could probably take up all of my allotted time reciting data on women in the work force in Australia.

I could tell you that in 1966 only 37% of the work force was female; and that in January 1992 the figure was 52.4%; that of the approximately 52% of women in the work force, 40% work in a part-time capacity averaging 14 hours per week; that Australia has one of the most gender segregated work forces in the industrialised world with 55% of women working in the occupational groupings of clerks and sales people and personnel services; that despite some developments in recent years women are much less likely than men to be either employers or self employed; that the wages for women currently average 83% that of men but when we take into account over-award payments, overtime and bonuses, women earn only 67% of average weekly earnings; that despite the relatively high proportion of female law graduates in Australia in recent years, the number of female partners in established law firms is very small; that 87.18% of part-time public servants in Australia are women; that 42% of working women have children; and so on and on and on.

But I suspect that this audience would be aware of all this and the other data I could recite - if not specific figures; then at least in general terms. So I am not going to canvas data on women in the paid work force in Australia. The rest of my remarks will be focussed on just three aspects which I will attempt to relate back to the conference preamble I quoted earlier with a view to leaving you with some thoughts.

Ignorance?
First, "women's work", with the possessive apostrophe. Your work: that is, those of you who are either in paid employment or have been in paid employment. Of course if you are an employee (or have been an employee), you are a party to a contract in law (or have been a party to a contract in law).

So let me put some questions of fact to you about that work.

1. If you have an entitlement to annual leave, how does that arise?
   • through legislation?
   • through an award of an industrial tribunal?
   • through a written contract with the employer?

2. Do you have a right to strike?

3. Is there a minimum wage in Western Australia?

4. Do you know what a summary dismissal is?

5. Do you know what an implied term in a contract of employment is?

6. Do you know what an express term is?

7. At the time you actually entered into the contract of employment; that is at the time of offer and acceptance of a job, did you know whether or not you had an entitlement to any pay at all in lieu of notice should the employer dismiss you instantly?

8. Do you have an entitlement in your contract of employment to any payment should your position be made redundant?

If so, what is it and how does it arise?
9. Do you know what the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission is?

10. Do you know what the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission does?

11. If you have received pay rises during any term of employment did you know the reason why at the time?

12. Have you received pay rises without any contact between you and the employer over it?

13. Is it lawful for an employer to terminate a contract of employment without giving a reason to the employee?

14. If there is an award which covers your employment do you know whether it is a minimum rates award?

15. Do you know what a minimum rates award is?

I could go on.

I am not going to cross examine you on your answers to those questions. But if I did, I would say it was odds on that there would be some very significant gaps in your knowledge. I would wager that quite a few of you would be pressing the “don’t know” button quite a lot of the time.

Is there a need to know? I put it to you that there is. Muriel Hageney, a vigorous campaigner in the 1930s for equal pay once described “economics as the citadel of a woman’s soul”. All that means is that the ability of women to be economically independent is power. I use the word “power” in its original sense here. That is, the power “to be” as distinct from the usual meaning now applied; that being power “over”.

It seems to me that the fundamental difference between paid and unpaid work is opportunity or “power to be”. If through your employment you have a power to be, doesn’t it make sense that the very root of that, the employment contract, should be of vital concern? And doesn’t it make sense that the means, the avenues and the practices in our community for preserving that “power to be” should be known to you and understood? Of course the answer to both of these questions must be yes. But if you didn’t do very well in my little test, then you have quite a way to go. Your ignorance is in effect an unconscious decrying of the “power to be”.

It goes further than the individual though. If you think your score left a lot to be desired, then in my experience, you would have plenty of company - and right across the spectrum of women in paid work. If there is one abundance in our recession ridden Australia it is ignorance about our own rights and obligations in our employment. We may yet suffer from it. Perhaps I can best point up my remarks by drawing on the phrase “the lucky country”. Of course that was the title of probably the most well known of Donald Horne’s books. It was published in the late 1960s and is a significant commentary of the state of Australian society at that time. But how he must rue his choice of title. The phrase “the lucky country” has become, commonly, a purported fact applying to that time against which all subsequent Australian history can be measured negatively whereas Horne meant it ironically. He was commenting then on an absence of appreciation, a blissful ignorance of reality which, through luck, had not resulted in too much harm - then.

So far as work relationships in Australia are concerned I have thought sometimes that the situation parallels that of a cargo cult: somehow, somewhere, someone or something mysteriously does something which gives rise to some individual employment benefit such as paid sick leave. We do ourselves a disservice in this accepting ignorance.

What I am suggesting is that the abundance of ignorance in our community about employment relationships is deleterious to the condition of women in paid work. Perhaps certain work standards have been “hard won”. As a student of Australian history I know that to be fact in some cases. But history lessons are not the answer. I would settle for basic knowledge of the employment relationship at its fundamental level. Ignorance is not bliss. And for women it remains a block to their power to be.

Women's experience?

I would like to go now to another aspect of the preamble notes to the conference and link these to my further comments. They are the references to leadership positions, or more pertinently, the apparently small number of women in leadership positions.

I have seen from the programme that a number of papers have been or are going to be presented on issues which form barriers for women, visible and invisible, in the work place. And I have no doubt that the papers identified as being in this segment of the conference will illuminate particular work places and factors. I would not like to cut across or anticipate these in any way. I would like to come at this from another angle. And I hope you will bear with me a little because I think this angle may be illustrated better by my personalizing it. In this I need to ask you to take care not to misconstrue my comments or misinterpret them. I would be disappointed to see them pigeon-holed in any particular facet of feminism or political process. Nonetheless, in view of the nature of this gathering I think the points I am about to raise may be worth making.

When I was appointed to the Industrial Commission in 1986 there was quite a lot of publicity on
account of the fact that I was a woman. I accepted the situation at the time as unavoidable and just hoped the spotlight on the person would disappear fast. Thankfully it did. One of the questions repeatedly put to me at the time was whether I saw myself as a role model. I generally answered by saying that if others saw me as a role model that was a matter for them and it was not a mantle I either sought, or would foster, or would acknowledge. In these answers I was being quite careful. I'll tell you why.

There is no question that at that time the Government was keen to appoint a woman to the Commission. I was a woman. I was in the Industrial relations field and I had been appearing regularly before the Commission for some time. I got appointed. But to emphasize the gender aspect as the media then did may carry an implication that the criterion of ability was irrelevant. And I was not and am not going to be party to that at all!

Having been appointed I proceeded on the basis that while my background was undoubtedly different from the conventional progression of the male appointees, the fact of the decision to appoint was an endorsement of my, to then, unconventional range of work experience. That is, I presumed equality on the basis of experience; some of which was particular to being a woman. It logically follows that the decision to appoint me in 1986 should be interpreted not as a breakthrough for women in the form of one person, but in a breakthrough in the thinking of the then decision makers which confirmed formally what we know is reality: that women's experience is to be valued. I saw myself, therefore, as coming to the Commission very much as an equal.

My disquiet about the tag "role model", extends to any references to "the woman on the Commission". An unfortunate corollary of that, it seems to me, could be a reasoning that the fact of my appointment is sufficient to preclude the appointment of another woman in her own right.

I have been at the Commission nearly 7 years. I can say now that at the time of appointment I was certainly concerned that I would not measure up. But I think this natural enough. In fact, whether the appointment was of a man or woman, an absence of such anxiety would be a bit of a worry for anyone caring about the work of the Institution or the wider community responsibility which is very much inherent in its functioning. But the anxiety on appointment was only capable of being dealt with by action: by work and quality of work. The measure of that can only be on the record and, very much inherent in its functioning. But the was a matter for them and thought my task was to characterise that work as good as (or better) at the job than any of my colleagues. If the record is judged as faulty then it must lie with my failures in either or both of those two conditions or ability and not in the fact of my sex. Then any failure by me, as judged, can't be an excuse for not appointing another woman.

And finally, on this aspect, if I could just go back a step. While the fact of being a woman has been a matter of curiosity on occasions, in the work I do in my view, there has not been a challenge of note to my exercising the full range of authority and powers under the Act on the basis that somehow the fact of my being a woman renders such illegitimate or less significant; or at least, no successful challenge or any that bore any scrutiny.

Are there reasons why not? Who knows? I don't. And nor am I interested. I exercise the same powers and have the same authority under the legislation as the male members of the Commission. Who could quarrel with this situation? But this state must mean that I am not the woman on the Commission in the sense of representing a lobby or section of society. It must simply mean that I am a member of the Commission with a range of experience and attitudes and background which are not and should not be divorced from the fact of being a woman.

There is no single position on the Commission reserved for a woman. And the next woman appointed will no doubt bring a different range of experiences and skills to bear on the job. There is no prototype. I certainly look forward to some company!

All I am suggesting, of course, is that there needs to be great care taken by women that the fact of the solitary or the few in particular positions does not get converted to some version of reserved places for women which of itself may create a new barrier: a barrier condened or even endorsed by women.

Myths?
Before turning to some detail on the new orthodoxy in Industrial relations - enterprise bargaining - I would like to make some remarks about cultural constraints on work place reform.

Prevailing attitudes in a society commonly result in myths. A myth may have some basis in reality but, by its nature, it is a construct out of a society not a reflection of that society. Myths serve a purpose. In the case of women that purpose often has been constraint. Myths can change. And, of course so far as any prevailing myths about women impose constraints upon their full functioning within our society, they should be changed. I suggest that in Australian society there has been marked change in the myths applying to women and work since the Second World War. We need to recognise these and, more importantly, the beneficiaires of the changes. Otherwise a vacuum could
exist in our appreciation of women's history and we may fail to tackle the real problems well in the face of new myths.

Perhaps I could illustrate this.

My mother, who left school at 12, was never employed in the paid work force after she married at the age of 24 and went on to bear 4 children. She was an intelligent, resourceful woman who at times would have liked to venture into some sort of further paid employment. No doubt there are a variety of reasons why she didn't. Living as she did in a succession of small country towns probably meant opportunities were somewhat limited. Nonetheless I am convinced that a principal reason is the degree of cultural constraint imposed by virtue of the fact that she was married, the fact that she had children and the fact that she had a husband with a steady, albeit unspectacular, wage. The myth had it that it was not the done thing for women of my mother's generation to work after marriage.

I don't mean to suggest that my mother was rendered mindless by the myth. She definitely was not. For instance I have strong memories of her emphasizing the need for every woman to gain a piece of paper, a qualification. In effect she was translating for her daughters her experience of unemployment in the Great Depression into what she believed would be a measure of economic security or a power "to be". In this, of course, she was flying somewhat in the face of the then received myth which was that women's ultimate goal was the married state - in the home.

For my mother the ultimate goal for women was the pursuance of economic security as a means for independence should that need arise at any time. That was her generation. Leave my generation out. What of my 22 year old daughter's generation? What myths face young women now?

A good barometer of popular culture is advertising. What common images of women are presented in advertisements in the mass media? I suggest to you that we now are generally told that the ideal woman must be in paid work. And more of course. She should be slim; sexy but elegant; assertive but feminine; a cordon bleu cook; a brilliant housekeeper but not house proud; a home decorator (but not quite a home maker); an attractive, witty companion to her New Age man; and, as well as all this, a successful nurturer of children but, invisibly, so far as the work place is concerned. As for the paid work, she should be in or aiming at a high powered, highly paid, jet-setting job where she gets to wear super gear and sit cross legged on a big desk in front of spectacular views.

Of course all this is about as real as the images which confronted my mother. It is another myth. What is interesting though is the change in the myth. What was expected of women in my mother's time is now, pretty effectively, derided. And what in her time was ignored or regarded as akin to immorality (prolonged participation by women in the paid work force) is, culturally, now postulated as an ideal in many quarters; albeit, as usual, terribly stereotyped.

I have lots of theories about why the myths have changed over time. Indeed as soon as industrial peace breaks out I hope to develop them. These range from the use of women as industrial fodder in the early post Second World War years when there was a shortage of labour; the effective marketing of home ownership as a right, and an ever more grandiose one to achieve; the very rapid expansion of credit and financial institutions in this country with a dependency on two income family units; and others. Thus while migration has traditionally been seen as a source of waves of growth in Australia, I think this overlooks the impact of women and the images which played some part in the economic conscription of them.

But what of women's perceptions? I suspect that women have too readily overlooked their own historical experiences in the pursuit of places in the paid work force and in the process we have failed to demand an adequate shaping of opportunities there in tune with the other aspects of our lives. And I think a factor in this is that child caring and rearing are simply not respected within our society. If that respect was there it would be reflected much more in the shaping of paid work to the fact that child care goes on and is important. If that respect was there it would be reflected in the conditions applying to child carers being an issue of general concern. If that respect was there issues of equity in child care would not be categorised as bizarre or corralled as a 'woman' issue.

But why is it that in 1992 we give so little credit in employment practices to experience in running a home or rearing children?

Those of you who have done or are doing these things know the degree of multi-skilling and management expertise required. Does your curriculum vitae include this experience? Or if you have sat on a selection panel, have you been at all interested in such experience and, more importantly, given any credit to it in the weighing up of relative worth? If not why not? Could it be that this is an area of employment practices which could see more justice being done to the truth of women's common range of experience (and men's if they have it) and the valuing of it in substance and with equity?

Some months ago I was invited to give a keynote address at an awards night for the accountancy profession. Afterwards I had the opportunity to talk to a number of recent women graduates. One had a daughter of twelve that she was bringing up alone and had been doing so for about eight years.
She had worked, studied, and cared for her daughter and herself throughout.

She told me that because of the need to work to support her daughter and herself, the time she could devote to her studies had been relatively limited. She had passed all exams, but in the current economic climate her prospects for further employment were grim simply because she could not compete on the basis of the level of her results. Her struggle for those results in the circumstances of child rearing and her considerable achievements in this “other” field at the same time as her work and study did not count.

So dismissing the con trick of status out of the myths of women on pedestals and the power of the hand rocking the cradle, I think we need to grasp neglected parts of women’s historical experience and bash the cultural mores in Australia over the head with them. One of the best places for this to occur would be in employment practices.

A common term used by sociologists and others today is “empowering”. I take this to mean the grafting on of abilities to achieve full potential; or the gaining of control over one’s situation by the use of various tools. But I go back to my original comments too in saying we should not lose sight of the meaning of power as the opportunity “to be”. Women’s history is an important part of “being”. It needs to be acknowledged. Otherwise the society’s view of itself is skewed and the results warped.

Perhaps you could give this some thought.

Enterprise bargaining and women

And finally some brief words on the new industrial orthodoxy in the 1990s: enterprise bargaining. Many of you will be familiar with it in the context of the centralised wage fixing system. I am going to confine my remarks to questions and prospects for women.

I think there will be many questions. In some cases the answers will be obvious. In others they will not. Here are some:

What is the “enterprise” for the purpose of your bargaining? Will separate locations of the one company nevertheless be regarded as an enterprise? If your course is to involve a bargaining unit within an enterprise, how is it to be defined? If you have more than one bargaining unit within an enterprise, are these to undertake negotiations independently? In other words just how much authority is actually to reside within such bargaining units? Or will it be a case of simply bureaucratising the process with a maintenance of centralisation of the decision making in the head office or board room? Is the bargaining unit to be site based? If so, will it involve all employees regardless of the type of work? For instance, will processing work be separated from maintenance work?

And more interesting perhaps, will the old demarcation between blue collar and white collar work, which has been maintained every bit as much if not more by employers as by unions, be continued despite a change from industry focus to enterprise focus? What about issues of training across bargaining units or enterprises? Do employees who directly supervise sit on the same side of the negotiating table as the employees they supervise? To take that a step further, just how far up the management line is the enterprise bargaining approach to apply or how open are the results to be within the enterprise? If enterprise bargaining is to be limited to the terms and conditions of work of employees currently covered by awards under the centralised wage fixing system, do you anticipate demands from that quarter for information on the terms and conditions, the salary packages, applying to other employees within the same enterprise?

Let us focus on this last for a moment. If comparative wage justice translated as “flow ons” is to be buried instead of just being pronounced dead under the centralised wage fixing system as is the case now, it seems to me this may well be an important issue to be faced within an enterprise. It goes to productivity too.

For instance if the pay for performance principle is to be credible then it is reasonable to presume that it should not only be consistent but soundly based. If public sector salaries at the highest levels are to be set by reference to the private sector, that can only have credibility if the salary or salary packages in the private sector are justified on performance and the levels of performance across public and private equate.

I could go on. But I hope the point is made. Enterprise bargaining will involve serious and direct questions. Participation will be essential. Ignorance will produce no bliss. The 1990s will be a critical period for women’s work. Generally speaking women are not well placed to engage in enterprise bargaining. The reasons for this are varied but they include the degree of concentration of employment in service industries where union penetration is less; the failure of unions to attract women members; the increasing incidence of part time and casual work for women; and the development of home-based technology.

The impact of all these factors can be summed up in one word: Isolation of the individual employee. To be truly successful in the community’s interests as a whole, enterprise bargaining requires a fair balance between the ends of the employer and the employees. Isolation and ignorance will be disastrous ingredients for women in the outcomes.

That leaves awards. For a better appreciation of the impact of award regulation on women’s wages in Australia since the Second World War you may wish to refer to the work of Professor Bob Gregory.
of the Australian National University, and particularly his and Anne Daly's comparative analysis of women's wages under the centralised wage fixing system in Australia with the outcomes in the United States of America with its system of collective bargaining. (2)

But if your work is covered by an award and you know that you failed my little test, then you really need to brush up at a more basic level. The 1990s will see the end of the cargo cult scene. And if you now know that you are too ignorant of your position vis à vis your employment then you have made progress because assuredly you will know that that is no condition which should give rise to bliss.

I do think that the next decade will be an important period for shaping women's employment in Australia. Hopefully it will not be blighted by ignorance, by myths sustained by default or by failure to force respect for women's total experience. It will be a long haul. It's over to you.

Notes


Women are powerful!
Believing in ourselves and making the difference

Jocelynne A. Scutt
Feminist lawyer and author

Always have something of your own.

Of all the things my mother told me, this was the most memorable. Although at times I wished I could forget it, like a beetroot stain on a white cotton shirt it seeped into my brain and would not come out.

While other mothers wanted good husbands for their daughters, my mother’s aspirations for me were much higher. She wanted my happiness to be the result of my own achievements, not somebody else’s. It was not that she did not see being a wife and mother as an achievement. She saw it as the icing on the cake. The cake you had to make yourself.

That ‘something of my own’ has sustained me when others have let me down.


Jane Cafarella is a cartoonist and journalist with the Age in Melbourne. She began her career with a suburban newspaper group in suburban Melbourne. Since the late 1980s Jane Cafarella has written for the ‘Accent’ page in the Age and since 1991 she has been editor of ‘Accent’. The ‘Accent’ page is the ‘women’s page’ of the daily Melbourne newspaper. It covers all aspects of women’s lives, of issues of concern to women, and which should be of concern to both women and men: rape, criminal assault at home and other forms of domestic violence, equal pay, women’s activism, childcare, government cutbacks, women’s art, women’s photography, women’s plays, feminist writers, feminist artists, feminist playwrights. The list is endless.

Jane Cafarella is a powerful woman. She is powerful in the sense of herself, which is boldly patterned on that theme her mother drummed into her in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. She is powerful as a journalist and cartoonist, a social and political commentator. She is powerful as an editor, selecting and editing material for publication in ‘Accent’. Ironically, many women might now, or might in the past, have figuratively turned up their noses at the ‘women’s page’, the idea that there should be a section of any daily newspaper devoted to ‘women’s interests’. Certainly women going into the journalist profession have varied in their views of the need for such a page, the part it plays - whether positive or negative, and whether or not they will work on it.

Gay Davidson is a journalist in Canberra, who recently spent four years in public/government relations. Born in Christchurch, New Zealand, she has been a political correspondent and head of bureau in the federal Press Gallery, and president of the National Press Club. When a student at university in Christchurch, Gay Davidson needed to earn some cash. ‘I had a brainwave,’ she writes:

My aging artist friend kept himself in cheap red and smokes by working the odd night in something called the reading room at the Christchurch Press. I talked to the chief-of-staff (who turned out to be the father of one of the boys I’d known since high school dances). Jim Caffin started off huffing and puffing about how he couldn’t employ women in the reading room: knock-off time was 2 am, well after public transport, and they’d have to provide taxis for any women! Then he began telling me about journalists’ pay, from 20 pounds at the top to 5 pounds for first-year cadets. Utterly in the dark about what journalism meant, so acting totally on the goosebumps, I asked if I could be a journalist. I did have the sense to say: ‘Not the women’s pages.’ (1)

Shirley Stott Despoja began her career in journalism writing for a church newspaper, the Anglican, in Sydney. She joined the Adelaide Advertiser in 1960 as the only woman journalist in general reporting and later became the first arts editor of the Advertiser. She was working in Canberra, as a journalist with the Canberra Times. Then the Adelaide Advertiser offered her a C grade and a promise of no “women’s page work”. (2)

Gay Davidson and Shirley Stott Despoja have each made their mark as journalists, one in political journalism, the other in arts and feminist politics. (For a time, Shirley Stott Despoja had a regular column, ‘Saturday Serve’, in which she dealt with the census, criminal assault at home, pornography, marital property division, from a feminist perspective,.) Each is powerful in her own way: journalism and the media are areas where power is very real. The persuasive powers of the press, and the enormous impact writing, particularly journalistic writing, can have, cannot be ignored. We would acknowledge that women have less power in these areas than men, due to lack of ultimate editorial control, and not generally being the...
owners of television stations, newspapers, radio stations. Nonetheless, what power women do have must be recognised.

That Jane Cafarella has taken a different path from Gay Davidson and (to a lesser extent) Shirley Stott Despoja does not mean that she is less powerful, or that her work is less rigorous, intellectually demanding, or personally rewarding. (Certainly there may well be income differentials according to the perceived 'importance' of the work done.) If we are to change the world, to ensure that the world is a better place for women and men, then we need powerful women at all levels, and in all areas. Without the women working in 'women's fields' and on 'women's issues' (whatever area of endeavour they are engaged in), and without women working in the so-called 'mainstream', on so-called 'mainstream issues', we are ill served. It is not a case of either or. We need both.

In Australia for 60,000 years women lived in a culture that recognised women as a part of the community and the collectivity, whilst simultaneously acknowledging women's entitlement to group together in the 'women's camp'. Debates continue about the role and place of women in Aboriginal society. Yet what is accepted as a long-existing Aboriginal tradition is that the Aboriginal cultural tradition was for the women to work alongside the men, at the same time establishing in the women's camp a women's traditional culture. This history provides us with strong roots for women, of all cultural backgrounds, in Australia today.

Women coming to Australia at the time of white colonisation worked alongside men, whether in building huts and homes, settling in the outback, farming or raising cattle. The Australia of early colonisation is mostly seen as 'man's country'. Yet that picture is false. Men outnumbered women in the outback and the bush, but the bush and outback were not empty of women - both Aboriginal and colonial. We can draw on this co-operative tradition, too, to find a direction for the future.

'Power', 'ambition', 'success' and 'achievement' are words which women are unlikely to say out loud, in positive tones, particularly when talking about ourselves. Women have a healthy abhorrence for arrogance, self-applause and self-promotion, particularly where this will eliminate someone else from the possibility of appreciation and feelings of self-worth. Yet this reluctance to adopt the language of success, and to embrace concepts of power, can be unhelpful, too. Women must learn to recognise our own success and achievement as important. We must remember that ambition can be positive and uplifting. It need not be egocentric and bellicose. Power need not connote 'power over' others, or the use of power in ways that deny to others their own autonomy, their own ability and right to make their own decisions, to determine for themselves what they will do and be. 'Power corrupts'. Yet lack of power corrupts absolutely. The powerful can be dangerous. Just as surely, albeit in a different way, to be powerless, or to overestimate one's powerlessness, harbours its own dangers.

We need to recognise and celebrate our achievements, our successes, our power. We need also to recognise that we have achieved, are successes - and are powerful. Often, we forget this. Or we fail to see how powerful we are, to correctly assess the wonder of our achievements, and to congratulate ourselves for our success.

A biologist, researcher and activist in Women's Studies, Renate Klein was born and educated in Switzerland, then continued her studies and work in South America, Africa, the United States, Britain and Australia, with regular forays to Germany, Japan, Canada, Bangladesh and elsewhere. In 1978 she went to Berkeley, after a time spent in Canberra, accompanying her then husband who had a fellowship to that university. She had learned from Australian feminists of the establishment and burgeoning of Women's Studies in the United States. She gave herself two months to find something which would give her life a new direction. Otherwise, she decided, she would return to Switzerland. She writes:

The day I walked into the office of the Women's Studies co-ordinator in Berkeley, my heart was trembling. I was thinking: 'God, I just hope something good will come of this.' Gloria Bowles, on the other hand, remembers me as a rather self-confident woman who said: 'Hello, I'm a biologist, and Swiss and a feminist, can I do something?' Not the way I recall it. I didn't know what I expected of this woman but knew it had better be something good. She said: 'Oh what, oh how wonderful, would you like to teach the part in the introduction to Women's Studies, concerned with the biology of women?' And I said: 'Well, yes. Certainly, I'd love to do that.' shaking inside, thinking my god, I wonder what that means; I really did not have a clue. And again, the way she heard it was me saying: 'Sure, I'll do that.' I left, going straight to the nearest bookshop which already in 1978, Berkeley being Berkeley, had a considerable range of feminist science books. I bought about 20 and prepared like crazy for the course. It went well. I quickly became submerged in the many feminist activities. I was asked to give a talk at the campus Women's Centre. Which still embarrasses me. In my paper I asked whether it was possible to do research with jumping spiders and desert ants (both of which I had done) from a feminist perspective! Nevertheless my (contrived) feminist analysis of jumping spiders inspired a woman in the audience - Shelley Minden - to suggest we start a 'Women in Science' group. It was great to meet with other feminist scientists and the group lasted for a long time, and Shelley and I later co-operated again. (3)

It is not unusual for a woman whom we perceive as strong, capable, independent, powerful to see herself as lacking power, even incapable. Her own
The major barrier to success in law was my being distracted by personal relationship problems, lack of self-esteem (hidden under a gruff exterior); the gruff exterior too, perhaps; and my sex.

Because I express opinions firmly I am a little daunting to some - I once overheard a senior Magistrate tell his clerk: 'We're not afraid of Mrs Rayner, are we!' while I was very nervously waiting to see him ...

Susan Duffy, a journalist and radio commentator with community radio 3CR in Melbourne, had a perception and an understanding of her own life which was not shared by others. She saw herself as weak and 'done to'. Her friends saw her differently:

Good girls get married don't they? I married, the marriage broke up (not surprisingly). But I was being good! Doing all the right things, the dishes, ironing shirts, washing nappies, perusing the women's magazines for tips on keeping curtains cleaner, what was going wrong? Another partner, another child, more trouble. Obviously the guilty party was myself. I was not being good enough. One morning I crept quietly out of the connubial bed, careful not to disturb the sleeping partner, tiptoed to the bathroom to inspect my face. Not too bad this time. Not much swelling. Whack on a bit of cold cucumber and then cover up the mess with make-up, no-one will see the bruises for at least a day. Easy. Assiduously I applied the cover up. Within one short hour the daily routine began. Children began to move about their morning, demanding food, the cat screeched for attention. The porridge boiled over. He can't find his sock, another can't find the last page of his slog on, despite the abuse, the patience, the fortitude to keep resisting, all the time women like Susan Duffy think they are succumbing, that keeps women alive. The forces that are arrayed against women are not insignificant. Yet women resist, answer back, organise.

Certainly we would wish that the strength of Susan Duffy had always been able to be used as it is, now, on political action, on speaking out publicly, on making her life enjoyable rather than barely livable. Yet women's resistance in the face of terror is a very real strength and power that cannot be ignored. It has kept women perpendicular in a world where the force of negative power has sought to deny women any existence at all.

Sue Schmolke has spent the past 22 years in the Northern Territory. In the 1980s she was appointed by the Chief Minister as convenor of the Territory's Women's Advisory Council. She was born in Melbourne, raised in Victoria, and set out on her professional career by enrolling in a commerce degree at Melbourne University. As she says, based on her lack of life experience and any

view of herself is in an important sense a nonsense. Yet to her, It is very real.

Moira Rayner, now Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in Victoria and formerly solicitor in private practice in Perth, convenor of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and head of the Western Australian Law Reform Commission, writes of her career: Why didn't I tell anyone? Why did I hide all this humiliation? Because I was too humiliated to admit that things were wrong in my life, that my goodness did not keep me from abuse. As for telling my women friends, I avoided them, stopped phoning, hid in the house, put on weight, day-dreamed over the television, lied to the neighbours. Even now, many years later, my embarrassment is such that this is the first time I speak of those years. My wonderful and strong women friends have no idea that I lived through, and accepted, that abuse. They have no idea when they see me marching for people's rights, when they see me standing up in courts for others, when they see me counselling and advising others, when they hear me speak out in anger at injustice (clearly and fluently) that, for all those years I was either physically unable to speak or else too cowardly, too downright terrified to get away from a brute who called himself a man and enter the world on my own, homeless, with children in arms. It is only through writing this story that my women friends now know the dreadful truth about me. (6)
knowledgeable advice and guidance, she chose the security of the established place of learning and 'the acceptability of the staid and safe discipline'. Her decision to study commerce was based on social and cultural influences: 'After all, what do those arts students get up to and how useful will their degree be to them in getting a job?' For Sue Schmolke, this step into commerce and Melbourne University constituted her 'first momentous life-affecting major wrong decision'. She passed some subjects, failed others and decided to travel north to learn something of life before continuing with her studies. Today, some 20 years later, she says:

I have not had a 'career' - rather a succession of jobs, much the same, I suspect, as a huge number of other women: from shop assistant, waitress, clerical office worker, receptionist in my early working life to the more dynamic and self-motivated roles that have come with added years. Now nearly 44 years old, I feel as if I am just starting to get my act together. Long ago I realised I would always be learning, growing and changing - nothing is predictable and certain. Especially if life is to be interesting!

I have always felt a nagging sense of personal failure in all aspects of my life - particularly with employment, professional skills and income. It is only in the past few years that I have realised that 'the system' has been stacked against me as a woman, and to have succeeded in the way I yearned for would have been a small miracle." (7)

Yet is Sue Schmolke's assessment of her own worth justified? Hardly. In 1974 when Darwin was devastated by Cyclone Tracey, Sue Schmolke was the senior public servant in Tennant Creek. Her 'boss' was absent at the time of the cyclone, on holiday. Tennant Creek was the major centre to which people from Darwin were evacuated. Sue Schmolke was confronted with a choice: to figuratively drop her bundle, or to methodically, competently and innovatively handle a situation that had never before arisen in today's Australia. In reality, for Sue Schmolke, there was no choice. She expertly and with compassion ran the programme of accepting evacuees, with all the trauma, sadness and drama accompanying it. She has no right to have 'a nagging sense of personal failure'. Yet - she does.

As women, we tend to downgrade our own talents, dismiss any sense of ourselves as powerful and strong that might creep up on us, unaware. We tend to be embarrassed, or immune to the notion of ourselves as successful, as achievers, as grand in the scheme of things. Yet at the same time, we take blame upon ourselves for the wrongs that befall us, sexism, discrimination, violence, harassment. In a swift sleight of hand we, who have less political scope for effecting powerful ends, become apparently all powerful: so powerful that we are 'responsible' for those very acts and circumstances which render us less powerful. We see ourselves as blameworthy for plain and simple 'failures' to achieve. Why is there no real equal pay, runs the question. 'Because the Women's Movement has failed,' runs the answer. Why is there an apparently rising tide of violence against women, or at least why is it not getting better? 'Because women haven't tried hard enough,' the response. Or, worse, because the Women's Movement has deprived men of a sense of their own manhood. It's challenging men on their own territory. Why is it that we see ourselves as relatively powerless, whilst 'society' has a tendency to see us as all powerful: the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

When I invited Sue Schmolke, Renate Klein, Jane Cafarella, Gay Davidson, Shirley Stott Despoja, Susan Duffy and others to contribute to the books As a Woman - Writing Women's Lives, Breaking Through - Women, Work and Careers and Glorious Age - Growing Older Gloriously, I began receiving telephone calls or letters in return. Almost as one, the women wrote or said:

You've got the wrong person. I'm not interesting enough.

Why don't you ask so-and-so. She's far more interesting than I am.

I started to write something for the book, but it's too boring. I've never done anything.

I'm too ordinary.

The ultimate in these telephone calls came from Lynne Spender. I had spent hours on the telephone, encouraging and cajoling, boosting and supporting the women whom I'd invited to write for As a Woman and Breaking Through. Then - the call from Lynne Spender.

Lynne Spender trained as a teacher, taught in New South Wales and Canada. Joined the Women's Political Party of Canada. Returned to Australia with a husband and two children. Worked, taught, kept together home and family life, began a masters degree in Women's Studies at the University of New South Wales, and enrolled in law at the University of Technology of Sydney. Despite having been told no one could complete a law degree whilst undertaking other studies, Lynne Spender finished her Women's Studies masters degree and her law degree, together. She has written books and published articles, including Scribbling Sisters and Intruders on the Rights of Man. She has edited numerous books on legal subjects, as the publisher at Redfern Legal Centre Publishing. She told me she wasn't sufficiently interesting to write her life.

Exhausted from expending so much energy in boosting the Women's sense of themselves to a real level, and encouraging them to be contributors, I was somewhat terse with Lynne Spender:
Lynne, I'm not going to spend half an hour on the telephone telling you you're wonderful and absolutely and utterly appropriate as a contributor to As a Woman. Please go away and start writing.

I then hung up the phone. Half an hour or so later, feeling rather responsible for having been so short and sharp, I dialled her number:

I'm sorry Lynne. I was a little harsh. But have you finished writing it yet?!

She hadn't. But she did. (8)

Lynne Spender is a truly extraordinary woman. Yet in so many ways, she is 'ordinary' too. Everyone of us is ordinary, and extraordinary simultaneously. Or, at least, these aspects co-exist within each of us. It is foolish to project certain women as 'role models' as if these women are so far in excess of what we might be and do, that we can only try to achieve what they have, knowing the impossibility of emulating them. It is important to celebrate women and women's achievements. But it is unhelpful to imagine that there is a 'state of grace' other women have achieved, because they are seen as 'important' in world terms. The reality is that all of us harbour doubts, are self-critical, are hurt by the barbs that too often project themselves into the lives of women who live in patriarchal times. Every one of us believes that if only we worked harder, if only we secured another qualification, if only we published one more article, if only we gained higher marks in the exams, if only we gained a mentor, if only we produced more garments, packaged more goods, assembled more items - if only -

Each of the women in As a Woman, Glorious Age and Breaking Through has aspirations for herself and her sisters. Growing up, Rebecca Maxwell wanted to be a teacher. Her father said she must be a teacher, and visit her pupils on her trusty tricycle, handing them education like bunches of keys to personal freedom. That scenario played itself over and over in my day-dreams; freedom, openings, possibilities; perhaps the picture came nearer to reality as I grew older, and really I don't know exactly when the idea came to me, but it rescued me from dad's decree; and just as I didn't think of myself with a closed definition, I didn't define my dream pupils either, they were neither blind nor seeing, nor one age only; they just needed education, and I wanted to share my sense of ever-available possibility, opening, freedom, discovery, growth, achievement. Nothing ever seemed impossible or unreachable to me. Some of that ebullience is still with me. (9)

Ellie Gaffney was born on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait on 18 August 1932. She is the coordinator of Mura ('all' - in Western Island) Kosker ('Women' in Eastern Island) Sorority ('sisters' in English), which works towards uniting all women in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area of Australia, and meeting the social, emotional, housing, educational, economical, health, cultural, spiritual and welfare needs of women and their children and dependents. Ellie Gaffney trained in Brisbane as a nurse. When she returned to Thursday Island to practice her profession, she 'made history':

I was allowed to live in the sisters quarters and have meals in the staff dining room, which catered for the nursing sisters and doctors and any other white staff, whether they were academics or labourers. There was another dining room, catering for the Torres Strait Island nurses, domestics or any other local staff, who were usually industrial staff. When I was acting matron, I employed the first Torres Strait Islander trained and registered as an Enroled Nurse's Aid (ENA). When I returned from a statistics conference in Brisbane, I noticed this young woman was not about; I thought she may have gone home for the weekend. On Monday morning I waited for her to arrive but she didn't turn up for breakfast. At lunch time, we arrived together at the dining room. She made for the other dining room. I called to her, enquiring why she wasn't dining with us. She looked embarrassed and said she would see me in the office after lunch to explain. She told me the acting matron in my absence had suggested to her that perhaps she would feel far more comfortable living in the coloured nurses quarters, and eating with them. She had felt that the acting matron was giving her a hint that she wasn't welcome in the white quarters; hence her shift.

This was, to me, an unusual approach. Here at this tiny tin pot hospital we had to put up with racial discrimination! When I approached my reliever, she didn't deny it or apologise, but she made sure she told the matron on her return that I had questioned the decision. I was told this later, after I left ... (10)

Mary Andrews, born in the Broome-Derby area of Western Australia and a member of the Bardi people, intends to become a judge. 'I would like to be a judge,' she writes:

When I was a lot younger, perhaps with my Catholic influence I thought that was the worst thing I could ever be. How could you possibly judge another person's behaviour? From a moral and philosophical point of view that was abhorrent. But going through law school and reading some terrible judgements, especially about women and women's perceived role in society, I am angry and appalled. I think: 'Well, they don't have a lot of
sense these judges,' and not only that, they are for the most part white anglo-saxon, privileged males making judgements far removed from the rest of society, but they have no wider perspective of how the world operates for some people, how poor people are caught in the system and how it works against them. They have no understanding of that whatsoever, no understanding of Aboriginal issues and certainly no understanding of women's issues. I can bring that experience into the law. But not only that. I have a lot of commonsense. I thought: 'Yes, I can do just as good a job as them if not better.' So I've begun to think it is important for people like myself to become judges and to create changes in the law. (11)

Marie Andrews is sufficiently brave to state her ambition, without equivocation, without some moue of deference to the notion that she might not be 'good enough'. She knows she is 'good enough'and more; and she also, in the early hours of the morning, has her doubts. For her, like all of us, there is that very manly feeling that maybe we won't bring the changes we desire; maybe we won't make the difference, maybe those ambitions, the pressing push that is within all of us to change the world, to make the world into what we want it to be and what it must be to ensure that all women (together with all men) are able to live in full humanity, achieving full success in our aims, will not be realised.

Over the centuries, hundreds of thousands of women have come forward, in a collective spirit, to join the Women's Movement. Throughout history there have been women, many women, who have recognised the inequities of living in a world where women are figuratively or literally imprisoned in the household, the injustices perpetrated in the name of 'order', the unfairness that lies in the unequal treatment of women. Our foremothers - our greatgrandmothers, grandmothers, maiden aunts, mothers, sisters, aunts, greatgreatgrandmothers as far back in time as memory exists - have fought to gain power. This striving to be and to become powerful has had a clear purpose: to challenge injustice, to break the bonds of private ownership of women, to dispute inequality of treatment, and to create disorder. Glorious disorder, which can enable women to live and to grow in ways that enhance our human existence.

For us as women to resist the notion that we are powerful and can be powerful is to turn our backs on our own history and that of our foremothers. It is also to ignore history. History is replete with examples of women taking control over their own lives, and exercising power and control in relation to externalities. Today, we are confronted with notions of 'backlash': warnings that dominant society is acting to repel the advances women have made, to resist women's movement forward. Ironically (yet, sadly, perhaps all too predictably) the 'backlash' is invariably portrayed as a solid movement against. Yet the Women's Movement is not represented in the dominant ethos as a strong and solid movement forward. Rather, the achievements of women are reported as isolated, one off events. We are constantly regaled with stories of 'the first' woman 'this', the 'first' woman 'that'. Certainly the individual achievements of women are to be gloried in, applauded and noted. Yet projecting what women have done, what women do, what women can be as 'firsts' falsely imposes an isolationist pattern on what is in reality women's activism on a grand scale. Women's movement forward is not a succession of isolated 'firsts', of unrelated happenings. Rather, it is an organised, overall swell of energy and action. To represent individual women as 'succeeding' only because they are alone in their achievement, is to misrepresent and to force onto women, and onto a political movement, a sense of random or ad hoc advance. This is far from the truth.

No one could say that the movement forward of women has been all steps forward, no steps back. But women have gained power from and through collective action, from and through working together, from and through being sufficiently brave to branch out into fields where it has been assumed women have not been before. Of course, in branching into these fields we find too often that women have been there before: history tells the truth; the recording of history tells another story.

Women have moved forward, following in an intelligent and organised way where groups of women have led, and where individuals have stormed through. Where individuals have stormed the barricades, it has been as a consequence of what women have done, and through the support of other women.

As women, we must be wary not to resist empowerment, not to deny we have power. It is essential not to adopt a mode of 'blame the victim': projecting onto women, as dominant society has done, power where there is none, or power where others are far more powerful. At the same time, it is not in our interests, nor those ultimately of the world, to ignore the power we have. In powers of the Weak the United States feminist Elizabeth Janeway recognises this. She describes an incident occurring during the presidency of Richard Nixon. Outside the Pentagon, a small group of activists drew a hexagonal, then began dancing in an exaggerated parody of magic-making. 'A hex on the Pentagon,' they intoned, together with other chants and ditties, directing their words toward that solid building, and jabbing their arms and hands, and pointing their fingers, in a grand display of wizardry and witchcraft. Richard Nixon was furious. He brought down upon the demonstrators the wrath of the internal security forces. His problem? Those who are in positions of 'illegitimate' authority and 'power', or who do not derive their authority and power from true egalitarian agreement and understandings, are sensitive to any challenge to their authority and power. They recognise that power that relies on force for its existence is tenuous indeed. (12)
There is little point in romanticising women's ability to deal with and develop power in ways that are different from the dominant mode. Women are fallible, can abuse power, are susceptible to imprecations that take them away from their earlier stated goals. Yet there are many reasons why women may be less likely to claim power over others, rather than see power as a force within oneself that can be developed positively in conjunction with others. The everyday work women do, the keeping on, the persistence and patience that women have developed because of the lives women have led, gives women a strength and understanding that is lacking in those who have not been obliged to live their lives in this way. Being part of a disadvantaged group can provide an insight that is lacking in those who have lived most or all of their lives with the assurance of advantage. It is a truism to acknowledge that all men have gained a short term profit from privilege: whatever socio-economic, racial, ethnic or other grouping men belong to, there are women in that group who are less advantaged.

When we speak of, think of, write of power, achievement and success for women, we must embrace a collective notion: that our individual achievements add up to achievements for all; that our collective achievements are real and demand recognition. That the power we know lies within ourselves, and that we express in various ways, is a power that does not have to be used to oppress or exploit.

This means also that individual women have a right to feel pride in their individual achievements. It means, too, that we should be honest about the power we possess, and practical about its uses. In experiencing this pride, women do not need to deny others' success. In being 'up front' about the need for us to develop a sense of ourselves as powerful, we can work positively toward uses of power which are not exploitative, abusive and oppressive. Nor does having pride in our achievements and recognising the power within us mean an ignorance of the pain and powerlessness of others who continue to suffer gross disadvantage and despair born of the way the world is.

To gain power is not easy. People who have power over, generally do not want to give that form of power up. Once gained, the positive use of power has to be worked at. But women have a capacity for this, as the United States feminist Adrienne Rich has recognised:

If I could have one wish for my own sons, it is that they should have the courage of women. I mean by this something very concrete and precise: the courage I have seen in women who, in their private and public lives, both in the interior world of their dreaming, thinking, and creating, and the outer world of patriarchy, are taking greater and greater risks, both psychic and physical, in the evolution of a new vision. (13)

Women of courage are powerful. All women can be courageous. Most women - perhaps all women - are.

JAS, November 1992

Notes


6. Ibid.

32 women, communication and power
Gender Differences in Spreadsheet Development: Can Women do Spreadsheets?

M J J Hall
Edith Cowan University

Abstract
A survey was conducted of computer spreadsheet applications and their developers. Male developers were twice as likely to self-categorise their expertise as "knowledgeable" or greater, than female developers were.

Notwithstanding the gender differences in the self-perceptions of expertise, there was no statistically significant association between developer, gender and either employment status, size or the organisation, academic qualification or spreadsheet training. Similarly no association was demonstrated between gender and the importance of the application, extent of distribution of the printout, or likelihood of the application creating or changing corporate data. Male and female developers were equally likely to use graphics, macros, and links to other spreadsheets in their applications. However men were more likely to create larger spreadsheets, showing more complexity in the logical control mechanisms and formulae used that those applications developed by women.

Spreadsheet size and logical complexity may be inappropriate measures of developer expertise. Smaller, simpler spreadsheets are easier to develop and maintain and may result in less errors that be preferable from a management control perspective.

Paper
Spreadsheets are one of the more commonly run applications on personal computers. They are used for many tasks in a wide range of industries, and are frequently developed by end-users rather than by professional computer programmers. Concern is often expressed about the quality of end-user developed spreadsheets.

A study on current Australian spreadsheet practice was conducted in 1991 and 1992. The aim of this study was to establish a special purpose taxonomy of spreadsheet development projects of relevance to the security, quality assurance and the maintenance of data integrity within the spreadsheet product. The study also sought to determine the degree of control applied to end-user developed spreadsheets and the developers' opinion as to the necessity of applying control to their particular spreadsheet. The study was not designed to determine differences in spreadsheets developed by women and men. Originally there was no intention to enquire as to the gender of the developer as it was considered that this would have no bearing on the goals of the study. The author is grateful to the University research consultant who suggested the inclusion of developer gender as he felt that this was a variable that should be included and that the results might prove of interest.

Australian spreadsheet developers were surveyed in late 1991. (Hall, 1992) No sample frame of spreadsheet developers was available however considerable effort was undertaken to ensure that spreadsheet developers were drawn from diverse backgrounds in the private and public sectors. A particular effort was made to include the work of female spreadsheet developers in the sample.

Questionnaires were distributed to 267 spreadsheet developers from Perth, the South West of W.A. and interstate, and useable replies were received from 16 women and 90 men. The distribution of male and female developers across industries is shown in Table 1 with men having a higher representation in the mining industry and women in business, finance and banking, and agriculture and forestry.

Table 1. Spreadsheet Survey. Industry distribution of developers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>men %</th>
<th>women %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture / Forestry / Fishing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining / Refining</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance / Banking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each developer used a recent example of their spreadsheet development work to answer a questionnaire seeking information on over one hundred aspects of themselves, their spreadsheet development project and their work environment. One of
the questions asked developers to self categorise their spreadsheet development expertise. A frequently used scale to measure end-user computing expertise as 'novice', 'knowledgeable' or 'power user' was chosen as these terms have become well established through their usage in the popular computer press (Schneiderman, 1980).  

**Figure 1**: Spreadsheet survey. Developer gender and expertise.

![Pie charts showing self-ranking of spreadsheet development expertise by men and women.](image)

Figure 1 compares the self ranking of spreadsheet development expertise by male and female survey respondents. 56% of women and only 13% of men considered themselves to be novice developers. A contingency Table 2 was drawn up, showing the frequencies of gender and developer expertise. 'Knowledgeable' and 'power users' were combined in this table and in the subsequent data analysis as only one woman categorised herself as a 'power user' and another respondent reported that she felt that women may have been uncomfortable with the term 'power user', disliking the association of expertise with power.

**Table 2. Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and expertise.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>novice</th>
<th>power use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in Table 2 were used to test the hypothesis:

**H0**: There is no difference in the spreadsheet development expertise of women and men.

c2 calculated was 15.766 (c2 critical = 3.84146, a = .05, 1 d.f.), so H0 was rejected. There was an association between the gender and spreadsheet development expertise of developers in the sample.

Men reported that they had a higher expertise than that reported by women. I had noticed in my career as a Computer Science Lecturer, that some female students appeared to have more difficulty learning how to use a spreadsheet package, than they experienced when learning a word processor or data base management package. Such difficulties seemed less common amongst male students. In an effort to examine whether other factors might have a bearing on why men in this sample reported a higher spreadsheet development expertise than that reported by women, a series of chi square analyses was conducted, comparing developer gender to other factors which may have an influence on the self perception of expertise. Gender was compared to factors measuring the status and training of the developer, the importance of the task and the technological complexity of the developed spreadsheet. The detailed contingency tables and results can be found in the appendix at the end of this paper.

Gender was compared with employment status, organisation size, qualification and training in spreadsheet development. No statistically significant association was found. The women in the sample were not disadvantaged in these areas. The possibility that men were using spreadsheets for more important tasks was canvassed as this may have had an influence on developers' perceptions of their expertise. Gender was compared to perceived spreadsheet importance, range of spreadsheet distribution, rate of creating and...
changing corporate data. Again no association was found. The women in the sample were developing spreadsheets of similar significance to their organisations as those spreadsheets developed by men.

Finally gender was compared with variables which gave an indication of the technical sophistication of a spreadsheet. There was no association between gender and the use of graphics or macros. Male and female developers showed similar tendencies to develop spreadsheets with links to other applications. Associations were found between gender and spreadsheet size, logical complexity and the complexity of the formulae used. Men tended to design larger, more complex spreadsheets with a greater usage of complex mathematical formulae. Such practices could be considered as a measure of the expertise of the developer, with developers of higher expertise, designing more complex spreadsheets.

However it can be argued that greater size, logical and formulae complexity are inappropriate measures of developer expertise. An alternative interpretation is possible, with the expert developers avoiding large and complex spreadsheets, rather restricting their templates to smaller cohesive worksheets possibly linked to other spreadsheets. Smaller, simpler spreadsheets may result in less errors and be preferable from management control and software maintenance perspectives.

Moskowitz attributes the following to Dale Christensen product manager for Microsoft Multiplan:

Anyone who thinks they understand what is going on in a model bigger than 100 by 100 cells is probably fooling themselves.

(Moskowitz, 1987, p.36)

The whole methodology of structured software development promotes the concept, that 'small and simple' is 'manageable and maintainable'. Quality Assurance applied to software development by professional programmers encourages structured software development.

Women in the sample did not seem disadvantaged in their work functions or be less prepared for performing their duties. They did not exhibit less expert spreadsheet development practices than men except in the doubtful areas of spreadsheet size and complexity discussed above. Yet women still perceived they had a low spreadsheet development expertise. Whilst these results are interesting, we can not infer anything about gender inequity amongst spreadsheet developers in general, due to the non-random nature of the sample. Expertise is a difficult feature to assess particularly for an end-user who may have no overall understanding of the variation within the spreadsheet developer population. Qualifications, training, experience, time taken to complete a standard task, error rate etc. could be used to measure expertise. Further work to develop a metric is required. This matter is worthy of further investigation using a random sample of spreadsheet developers and measures for expertise other than developer self-rating to test the hypothesis:

HO: There is no difference in the spreadsheet development expertise of women and men.

If the hypothesis can not be rejected, the implication is that spreadsheet development expertise is similar amongst men and women and other reasons should be canvassed as to why women feel that their spreadsheet development expertise is low.

Spreadsheets make more use of mathematical concepts than other commonly used software applications such as word processing and data base management systems. There is considerable evidence that girls express greater uncertainty about the performance in mathematics than boys do as Sue Willis reports in her monograph 'Real girls don't do Maths':

...there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that many children and adults lack confidence in their ability to understand mathematics ...Anecdotal evidence would have it that this is more prevalent amongst girls and women than amongst boys and men.

(Willis, 1989, p.26)

Perhaps because of this, together with covert family and possibly overt peer pressure, many girls choose not to study mathematics courses at school and thus limit their options on entering the workforce. However the women who took part in this survey did not appear to fall into this category as 81% of them had tertiary qualifications, nearly half of them post-graduate. They would have been familiar with using mathematical principles in their normal work as 25% were involved with the accounting or finance professions, another 25% were either teachers of mathematics, science or computing or were practicing data processing professionals and most of the remainder (31%) were managers or administrators. These women 'had arrived' in the technological sense, yet still had doubts about their capabilities to use computer spreadsheets.

Achieving equity in qualifications, training and status in the workforce may still be insufficient. It is not enough to equip women for the technological workplace, and give them the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, they also have to feel comfortable being there.

References:

Appendix: Chi square Tests on Developer Gender

Gender and Measures of Status and Training

Table 3 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>unpaid helper</th>
<th>employee</th>
<th>executive</th>
<th>consultant/total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 3 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the employment status of women and men spreadsheet developers. c2 calculated was 2.755 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no association between developer gender and employment status.

Table 4 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and organisation size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>single person</th>
<th>one dept</th>
<th>many dept</th>
<th>many sites</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 4 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the size of the organisations where men and women spreadsheet developers are employed. c2 calculated was 0.975 (c2 critical = 7.84173, a = .05, 3 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no association between developer gender and size of the organisation for which a developer works.

Table 5 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and qualification.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
<td>degree</td>
<td>post</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 5 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the qualifications of women and men spreadsheet developers. c2 calculated was 1.901 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no association between gender and the educational qualifications of spreadsheet developers.

Table 6 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>self</th>
<th>train</th>
<th>attended</th>
<th>DP pro.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>train</td>
<td>by work mates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 6 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the training of women and men spreadsheet developers. c2 calculated was 0.391 (c2 critical = 7.81473, a = .05, 3 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no association between the gender and the training of spreadsheet developers.

Gender and Task Importance

Table 7 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and spreadsheet importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>unimp.</th>
<th>moderate</th>
<th>major</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>imp.</td>
<td>imp.</td>
<td>imp.</td>
<td>imp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 7 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the importance of spreadsheets developed by women or by men. c2 calculated was 0.903 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no association between developer gender and the importance of a spreadsheet.
The frequencies in table 8 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the range of distribution of spreadsheets developed by men or women.
c2 calculated was 1.763 (c2 critical = 7.81473, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no
association between developer gender and the range of distribution of a spreadsheet.

Table 9
Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and the development of spreadsheets which create corporate data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>does not create corporate data</th>
<th>creates corporate data</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 9 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the frequency of creating corporate data in spreadsheets developed by women or by men.
c2 calculated was 0.007 (c2 critical = 3.84146, a = .05, 1 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no
association between the gender of a spreadsheet developer and the frequency of developing spreadsheets where new corporate data is created.

Table 10 Spreadsheet Survey: Developer gender and the creation of spreadsheets which update corporate data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>no corp data</th>
<th>corp data read only</th>
<th>corp data update allowed</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 10 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the frequency of changing corporate data in spreadsheets developed by women or by men.
c2 calculated was 1.060 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no
association between the gender of the developer and the frequency of developing spreadsheets which alter corporate data.

Gender and Spreadsheet Technical Complexity

Table 11: Spreadsheet Survey: Developer gender and spreadsheet link complexity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>no links to other spreadsheets</th>
<th>links to other objects</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 11 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the link complexity of spreadsheets developed by women or men.
c2 calculated was 1.498 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no
association between developer gender and spreadsheet link complexity.

Table 12 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and the use of graphics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>none</th>
<th>simple</th>
<th>intermediate</th>
<th>complex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 12 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the frequency with which graphics are used in spreadsheets developed by women or by men.
c2 calculated was 4.254 (c2 critical = 7.81473, a = .05, 3 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no
association between gender and the frequency with which graphics are used in spreadsheets.
Table 13 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and the use of macros

<table>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>men</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 13 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the frequency with which macros are used in spreadsheets developed by women or by men.
c2 calculated was 1.966 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 could not be rejected. There is no association between developer gender and use of macros in spreadsheets.

Table 14 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and spreadsheet size

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<th>10,001-100,000</th>
<th>greater than this</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 14 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the size of spreadsheets developed by women or by men.
c2 calculated was 12.524 (c2 critical = 7.81473, a = .05, 3 d.f.), so H0 was rejected. There is an association between gender and spreadsheet size. Men tend to develop larger spreadsheets than women do.

Table 15 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and spreadsheet logical complexity

<table>
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<th>nested IFs or lookup tables</th>
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<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies in table 15 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the logical complexity of spreadsheets developed by women or by men.
c2 calculated was 6.166 (c2 critical = 5.99147, a = .05, 2 d.f.), so H0 was rejected. There is an association between gender and logical complexity of spreadsheets with men designing more complex spreadsheets.

Table 16 Spreadsheet Survey. Developer gender and spreadsheet formula complexity

<table>
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<th>simple formula</th>
<th>complex formula</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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The frequencies in table 16 were used to test the hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference in the complexity of the formulas in spreadsheets developed by women or men.
c2 calculated was 4.931 (c2 critical = 3.84146, a = .05, 1 d.f.), so H0 was rejected. There is an association between developer gender and formula complexity with men using more complex formulas in spreadsheets.
Women: Communication, Power and New Technologies

Linda Wilkins
Monash University

Abstract
This paper examines the expectations and outcomes identified by female overseas students in the electrical engineering course at Monash University. Students in second and third year do one semester management and communications courses which are particularly concerned to develop group participation and assertiveness skills. The paper would be based on journal entries and interviews with students as well as some reference to similar work being undertaken at Swinburne.

Engineering is a profession engaged in the management of people and resources. With projections of a serious shortfall in the number of graduating engineers, the Williams Committee (1988), as well as discussion papers like "A Fair Chance for All : higher education within everyone's reach" (DEET, 1990) spurred on engineering schools throughout Australia to "prioritize" the issue of low participation rates by women in engineering. Annual targets have been set with the emphasis on utilising this "pool of wasted talent".

Data from the United States where there has been a similar approach to raising participation rates of women in engineering indicate problems with this approach. Here I refer to the approach that affirms "public policy objectives couched in terms of economic goods" as a model for change. Thus while the numbers of women attached to engineering courses in the US increased markedly in the 1980's, the retention rate of the profession has not kept pace with the growth in intake.

This paper falls into two sections. The first section offers a critique of the economic rationalist or top down approach of policy implementation (referred to above) where it has been applied to achieving educational objectives. The second section of the paper relates anecdotal material from students and academic staff interviewed at Monash University Clayton Faculty of Engineering. This latter section is presented as an initial attempt to define some needs-based criteria for a gender-neutral faculty. Gale and Fellows construct (GASAT 1991) of 5 defined areas "to bring about change in the education work continuum" is related to material gathered from the interviews. The paper concludes with a reference to the establishment of WEPAN (Women in Engineering Program Advocates Network) in the US in 1990 as a possible consultative model in the Australian context.

Paper

A singular lack of data
Research on the experience of women in Australian engineering courses is remarkable for its very limited and recent appearance in journals or conference papers. Apart from GASAT 91 and AAEE conferences and workshops nearly all papers cite data and statistics derived from related fields or other countries rather than research in progress in Australian schools of engineering.

There is a serious absence of data on matters affecting recruitment and retention of women to engineering. For example:

- why specific engineering disciplines attract up to three times as many women as others (see Appendix 1 for 1992 Monash University figures);

- whether the experience of women engineers is similar to that of women scientists, i.e. that convergence in early career attainments of men and women scientists is undercut by an increasing divergence as they age with higher salaries, greater organizational rank and many more awards going to men (Rosser, S., 1992).

Issues such as these which can be crucial to the participation of women in engineering can only occasion speculative responses; anecdotal evidence is all that exists. Despite women in engineering open day activities at universities and schools, studies of the career paths of women engineering graduates in Australia have not to my knowledge appeared in mainstream journals or as part of any coordinated program.

In a recent paper, figures collated by Jean Armstrong indicated a disproportionate increase in the number of women commencing bachelor degrees in engineering at Australian universities. Numbers rose from 66 in 1974 to 423 in 1988, representing 12% of those commencing bachelor degrees in engineering at universities. This was in comparison with male undergraduate student commencements which showed no overall increase between 1974 and 1988 (Figures 1 and 2, Armstrong, J., 1990). Longitudinal studies of this cohort of women students and their career paths while sorely needed are remarkable only by their absence.
Armstrong also found "over representation" of women amongst postgraduate engineering students. Once again the study found that "...there appears to have been no research on the specific area of women postgraduates in engineering in Australia..." (Armstrong, J., 1991). Armstrong's paper pioneered this area of investigation using statistics collated for the first time (and frequently cited since) from ABS and DEET. She provided irrefutable evidence of the strong financial disadvantage suffered by part-time graduate students (many of whom are women with family commitments) due to the terms of scholarships offered which "have not caught up with the different needs of women engineers." (Armstrong, 1991)

So to reiterate, research on gender issues in Australian engineering is either nascent or non-existent and certainly not funded on a national basis despite supposed Government Interest in increasing the participation of women in the field. The reasons for the significant growth in the number of women in engineering schools in Australia between the mid 70's and 80's again remains largely a matter of speculation with no coordinated data gathering procedures in place.

Who wants more women in engineering and why?

There are many reasons to treat this situation — I mean the lack of statistical data and research about women in engineering in Australia — as remarkable. A number of reports, directives and reviews commissioned at federal and state level have underlined the importance of Improving the gender balance in "non traditional courses of study" (DEET 1988, 1989). Increasing the number of females in engineering courses has been given high priority, at least verbally, by almost every dean of Engineering in the country.

It may well be that a certain perspective on educational priorities informs the target setting of such bodies as the Williams Committee (whose conclusions are referred to below) — a perspective which, when examined, may explain why the active recruitment of women to engineering has taken priority over evaluating the outcomes of tertiary level engineering programs for all students.

Undoubtedly, a major reason for the increasing interest in gender issues in engineering is the result of projections that indicate a serious shortage of engineering personnel in the near future. (See Figure 3 B.S. Degrees in Engineering 1984-1995 Actual and Projected, Daniels J. GASAT 1991, p.743). "Although women are approximately 53% of the U.S. population and now comprise more than half of the college and university population, engineering still has the lowest representation of women among all major disciplines."

(Figure 3, Daniels, J., 744). In Australia “women comprise fewer than 2% of practising engineers”, Taylor and Johnston 1991).

In 1988 the Williams Committee, in a major review of the discipline of engineering in Australia, found an urgent need to increase the number of undergraduates in engineering. It recommended that "the most effective way to increase the enrolment of students likely to complete degree requirements is to persuade more females to study engineering." (Williams, 1988). It set a target "to increase the proportion of women in engineering courses from 7% to 15% by 1995".

At national and often even at faculty level, interest in increasing the number of women in engineering is undoubtedly based on the "pool of wasted talent" approach. There are inherent dangers in applying the input/output model of economic instrumentalism to education. Firstly, it implicitly devalues the content and process of education for all participants. Secondly, "improving the gender mix" is no longer seen as a human right or a socially desirable end in itself. (J. Blackmore and J. Kenway, 1986).

"Public policy objectives couched in terms of social goods are replaced by public policy objectives couched in terms of economic goods." (A. Yeatman, 1991). The economic rationalist model allows educational policy to be defined in terms of measurable economic efficiency and productivity rather than a full range of educational goals. Inherent in this model is the assumption that there are no outputs apart from the number of students, i.e. increased participation is the sole measure of success. (Marginson, S., 1992).

The minimalist approach - the vanishing curriculum - or you can only have what you can measure, quantify or compute

Why should it matter if the motives for "improving the gender mix" draws together strange allies? What is the problem with motives if the results are highly desirable?

In expansionary times there may for a time exist an alignment of national priorities based on the economic rationalist model with the priorities of humanists pressing for increased participation by women and minority groups. However, in an economic recession initiatives designed to challenge sex stereotypes may well be set back if bureaucratic values are allowed to displace an ethical and professional commitment to the public good. "In the interests of efficiency the connection between education and the economy is being drawn tighter so that this time around public expenditure on human capital is more specifically targeted to market-defined economic objectives and only those objectives. (Marginson, S. 1992, p.6). Thus not only is the economic rationalist a dubious ally in terms of his narrow outlook and ethical blinkers he is also likely to be a fair weather friend deserting the cause when times are tough! The viability of the approach taken in the economic model for public policy in education breaks down embarrassingly quickly under scrutiny. There is
an inherent disregard for context and process — for what Anna Yeatman describes as "the substantive purposes of public administration and service". Educational activities at university on this model are limited to "...the formation of skills and knowledges with calculable, hence plannable, economic outcomes", Marginson, 1992.

It is impossible to compute the quality of teaching or research, the development of new knowledge, the social maturation of students or the learning of initiative and creativity. These complexities are by implication immediately excluded by the economic requirement which seeks to differentiate formal from informal learning. The reductio ad absurdum of abstracting learning from its context is the crux of Marginson's paper and taken as the basis of this critique of the universalist claims of the economic rationalist.

The current emphasis on increasing female participation by set percentage points over a set period of time is to put in place a top-down model. It is starting with a determinist solution rather than the problem. One consequence of the top down approach type of planning may be that while enrolments of women in engineering may be increased, retention rates (where figures are available) tend to remain a problem. "...You really have to take some special steps to encourage and retain the young women who enter your program because if you look at (U.S.) dropout rates nationally, the dropout rates for women are very, very high." (Baum, E. 1992). The focus on plannable and calculable factors such as a percentage increase in female enrolments obscures the need to attend adequately to the "culture" of engineering faculties which is often inimical to women.

Gender as a change agent
The model provided by Learmont and Harris (see Figure 4 below) sets out stages in the recruitment and retention of women into engineering. Monash University's Dean of Engineering refers to this model to indicate that very few of even the progressive Schools of Engineering in Australia could claim to have moved beyond stage three, i.e. beyond attempting to change the client to changing the system (Darvall, 1992).

The case for improving the gender mix as a socially desirable end in itself has been the focus of a number of recent papers on engineering education. They have argued that feminists are not simply concerned with women's access to areas of low participation such as engineering. They offer a critique of such fields suggesting how society might be otherwise. (Rosser, S. 1992, Taylor and Johnston, 1991). Looking at definitions of what engineering is about, identifying problems before looking for the solutions is part of the feminist paradigm which accepts complexity and blurred edges much more readily than the economic rationalist model with its tendency to over simplify and separate measurement and context.

A holistic approach to the teaching of engineering which emphasises the connections and interrelation between the subjects of study, the involvement of the investigator with the objects of study and on the value of the work for society — i.e. the context of the problem-solving activity — is attractive not only to many women but also to science and engineering students from more varied and non-traditional backgrounds. It may even result in better engineering practice!

"Society so radically altered by the technology introduced by engineers, demands much of its decision makers. It requires accountability, not only technically but financially, socially and environmentally. The law reflects this and enforces accountability. Decision making in the community is now more participatory and managers are required to justify their decisions to a wider variety of stakeholders. Changes already occurring in many areas of engineering suggest that the authoritarian style is no longer as acceptable or as pervasive as it once was. Continuing engineering education forums now focus on issues such as alternative dispute resolution, negotiation, communication skills, environmental impact assessment and other issues which reflect the changing concerns and priorities of society. Such changes will determine the style of person who will succeed in engineering in the future."


Let us turn from this brief summary of the issues Australian women engineers are facing to the women students and staff at an established traditional university who so graciously gave of their time to reflect on where these matters impinged on them personally both now and in the past.

The context: getting there, staying there and going on
At this established traditional university, figures for 1992 show the proportion of women students in various branches of engineering to be: Materials 26%; Chemical 24%; Civil 11%; Mechanical 11%; Electrical 8%. Of about 1790 students, 285 or 15.9% are women. An unpublished survey of first year engineering students found that 88% had cited their own personal attributes and interests as a major influence on their decision to enrol in Engineering. The same survey also found that the most popular form of affirmative action strategy with 80% approval rating was the provision of equal numbers of scholarships tagged for male/female. (Hutchinson, A. quoted in Darvall, P. 1992).

Third year students in the Electrical Engineering Computer systems department as part of their course must complete a one semester subject. Management 2 one of three units of Management taken between second and fourth year. Three
women in one tutorial group consented to look at some briefing papers provided (see Appendix 2) as a preliminary to reviewing their attitudes and feelings about themselves as engineering students. Two of them (L. and O.) were international students; the third (A.) had graduated from an academic girls' private school. At this stage the latter has been the only one to conclude her report to me. A., the Australian student, found all five features described by Hegarty-Hazel and Johnston as a constellation of positive reinforcements in her background. She attended an independent single-sex school with a strong emphasis on science. Her father is a physicist and her mother is a science graduate. Both supported her in her interest in mathematics as well as financially. She cited her father's encouragement as the most influential factor - "...he always tried to get me involved and interested in what he was doing."

Her outlook on engineering as a profession she expressed as follows: "I have not thought of engineering as 'adversarial pitting man against nature' but as a 'creating profession'. There is nothing particularly masculine about that."

Whereas engineers often describe their activities in terms of creating wealth, seeing the finished task or making things happen. A. is aware that "girls tend to favour biologically and chemically oriented sciences." She sees engineering being more attractive to girls if "those fields of engineering involving biological and chemical sciences like bioengineering, chemical and materials engineering" were highlighted. More project oriented subjects are suggested as a means of improving and fostering engineers' communications skills.

An academic staff member in the electrical engineering department as well as a materials engineer also consented to be interviewed for this paper. As this study was exploratory rather than rigorous the approach was very informal and accepting of their statements with no attempt to address issues of self-reporting. So what follows is largely anecdotal. However, the content of the interviews seemed to fit quite well under the five areas focussed on by Gale and Fellows (GASAT, 1991; p.673) in their study of women in the construction industry in the U.K. The five areas defined "in order to bring about change in the education-work continuum" are:

1. Curriculum, assessment and challenging stereotyping;
2. Career and/or further/higher education choice;
3. First destination occupation recruitment/choice;
4. Career progression: comfort zones, career breaks;
5. The characteristics of a post patriarchal work place.

In reporting on these two interviews, I have referred to these areas of change in terms of the personal experience of these two women, putting their experience in a broader context.

The historical context

The first woman to graduate in engineering in Australia was Dianne Lemaire who completed her degree at Melbourne University in 1944 (Darvall 1992). The first of the two women academic staff members interviewed, (referred to here as A.), was also the first woman appointed as a lecturer in Engineering in 1977 at Melbourne University. She was also the first woman lecturer ever appointed in Electrical Engineering at the traditional established university where I interviewed her. The second woman academic staff member I interviewed was the first woman to graduate with a Ph.D. in Engineering in Australia in 1975.

I found this information to be simultaneously shocking and thrilling — shocking that there were no earlier 'breaches' in the male ramparts of engineering and thrilling to speak to people who were literally remaking the image of engineering in their departments.

Interview with a — Part-time (and only) Woman Senior Lecturer in Electrical Engineering

A. had taught communications while working as Director of First Year Studies at Melbourne University and here as in many other aspects of teaching and administration she introduced many innovative practices. Her strong interest in teaching and faculty policy impinging on teaching was evident. A brilliant student at Edinburgh University where she won the prize for the best final year student in electrical engineering she has followed this with many other prestigious scholarships and awards. A. exemplifies what Powles found, i.e. that women cite intrinsic interest in their subject more often than men as a main reason for doing postgraduate research (Powles, 1986).

A. sees the main problems for women to be the imbalance in the relative career value accorded to the three areas of research, teaching and administrative experience. She has had the experience of being given double the lecture load of another staff member as a "reward" for being a good teacher; hence less research time.

So whereas her administrative and teaching record is a strong one, her publication record is weaker than if she had had a straightforward career path with no disruptions due to family commitments. Consequently A. feels her chances of gaining tenure in the near future are not hopeful.

From A.'s experience and research on the subject, the terms of scholarship awards actively discriminate against part-time postgraduate students, often women with young families. The lack of
financial support for such part-time students often based on bureaucratic reasons is seen as a major impediment to the academic progress of women. "The rules are geared up for full time people".

It was noted earlier in a survey of women engineering students by Alan Hutchinson that the most favoured form of affirmative action was for equal numbers of undergraduate scholarships for males and females. A's experience and research suggests that any such widening of affirmative action should also consider as a high priority the equity of scholarships offered at postgraduate level for part-time students who are often women with fixed family commitments over a number of years.

A was also aware of the lack of networking opportunities for women academics in engineering on campus. For example, having separate tea-rooms for each department meant no facilities for informal meetings between the few women scattered between each department of engineering. Another well documented concern of women in non-traditional areas of work and education featured in this interview. As a conscientious and gifted teacher A spoke of facing the on-going problem of balancing her roles as counsellor and advisor to students particularly women and commitment to her own career development. Damned if you do and damned if you don't would be a fair description of this situation!

Interview with B — Subdean and Senior Lecturer Materials Engineering

B, a tenured staff member and somewhat older than A, started life as a country girl proceeding to Horsham High where only 6 students in her year completed the final year. B's mother, widowed early, always felt that girls had to have a career because of her experience in raising two girls on her nursing salary. B's first career destination came about due to her husband's move to work at Rolls Royce in the U.K. B started work in the Materials Division of the same company initiating the move from her chemistry background to materials engineering.

B has a strong commitment to the welfare of her students and was proud of the fact that 50% of final year students in Materials had already found vacation employment. She felt that Materials did not have a strong masculine image compared to other areas of engineering. This was reflected in the proportion of girls choosing materials — 6 of the 32 students in Materials being female.

B has a self-deprecating manner particularly about publications. She felt quite strongly that publication for its own sake was to be avoided and treated with suspicion. Interestingly, she also felt that self-promotion via unnecessary publications was not a female thing to do — perhaps implying a lack of "overweening ambition"?

B. did not feel she had suffered greatly from gender problems in her career. On the other hand, she did note that in her experience there was "no such thing as affirmative action" and she had always been appointed at the bottom of the scale which may not have been a principle applied across the board. This matches a recent study by Fay Gale and Sandra Lindemann which "argues that whilst equality of opportunity is more apparent in the initial appointment of staff to an institution, it is not so in promotions...and female appointments are always at a lower level...." (Blackmore, 1992)

Creating a gender-neutral profession

So if we are going to see a professional workforce in the 21st Century with women engineers participating in management and leadership roles on an equal footing what needs to change?

In all non-traditional areas of employment role models, structured networks and more flexible working conditions are fundamental to smoothing the entry of groups with low participation rates whether they are women or a minority group.

More specifically, the women who are currently employed as engineers in the workforce provide a unique source of information on what they find congenial or otherwise in their current position. A group of 7 women engineers at Melbourne University felt that:

"...Projects to be avoided were those which involved experiments with long running times which might require the student to be present at fixed times over a number of days, those which might involve contact with chemicals with unknown properties (particularly if the student was pregnant) and projects where one was competing with other researchers who were able to work full-time. Projects involving a high percentage of theoretical work or computer programming which could be done from home seemed particularly suitable." (Armstrong, 1992).

If retention rates for women in engineering are to improve then there is a need to utilise the research that women show more initiative in the laboratory with female partners than they do with male partners and that women benefit from having time to become familiar with the equipment in the laboratory.

Perceptions of the profession of engineering and the nature of employment choices within the profession are problematic. Thus the type of women attracted to engineering — mature, highly intelligent and individualistic are an elite who may...
by their very nature lead to rejection of the engineering option by girls who feel they don't measure up.

"...we often project the image that you have to be a genius to be an engineer, particularly if you are a woman, and that's upsetting, because very average males go into engineering, and yet the women who go into engineering tend not to be average at all" (Baum, 1992.)

Choice of work options within the profession, e.g. on-site or in the office is sometimes a problem in terms of the relative and very different valuation given by the woman graduate concerned with hours, flexibility and congeniality and the employer who looks for management skills, group leadership qualities and cost benefit factors in his staff.

A study of women in the construction industry in the U.K., found that:

"...women are not involved for the great part in the production management of construction. They are more likely to be found in office based roles associated with design, management services, education and research. These occupations may well be perceived as generally accommodating career breaks and family commitments more easily than site based jobs." (GASAT 1991, p.680).

They are also not the occupations which lead to promotion and recognition!

In 1990 WEPAN (the Women In Engineering Program Advocates Network) was established in the United States with 200 members. This followed the development of a number of programs in the 1970's and 1980's with variable outcomes:

"...little or no coordination existed for these (recruitment and retention) programs resulting in a duplication of efforts, inefficient use of available funds, insufficient program evaluation and a slowing of progress toward educational equity for women in engineering.” (GASAT, p.744).

The problems outlined above are likely to have their parallels in Australia and any other countries attempting “social” engineering.

WEPAN as a coordinating body, provides a list of objectives and a data base of resource materials (Figure ). The question is — do women in engineering need such a body in Australia?

Would it help to have a systematic identification of the problems before looking for the solutions? Would including the full range and diversity of opinions on the nature and future directions of engineering in developing recruitment strategies provide better answers? Many would argue so. Clarification of questions such as the following could be initiated:

What is engineering? How is it structured? Who does it appeal to? What range of candidates are filtered out by our present approach? (E. Taylor and S. Johnston, 1991)

A national body possibly affiliated with a professional association as a significant interest group would be a means of initiating and publicising such concerns.

It is, I feel, appropriate to end this paper by referring back to the concerns of a group attending GASAT who participated in a round table discussion last year. The subject they discussed was: Is there a feminist perspective or theoretical framework which can guide us in policy formation and change management, in engineering? They produced the following action statement with which I will conclude this paper:

• an interdisciplinary approach involving women from a plethora of backgrounds is most likely to be successful;
• look for incremental change on every aspect of professional life;
• encourage the teaching of engineering through an Integrated, holistic approach analogous with the medical courses developed at McMaster in Ontario and Newcastle in New South Wales;
• changing the culture of the profession involves increased visibility for women, e.g. attending professional meetings and getting into committee positions where women can influence the program;
• solidarity among women engineers and networking skills can be learnt from the women's movement.

Bibliography

Armstrong, J., 1991


The Relationship Between Sex-Role Identity and Role Portrayal of Women in Advertising

Margie White
University of Central Queensland

Abstract
The paper examines how women respond to a modern and traditional role portrayal of women in financial services advertising. It will investigate the relationship between a woman's sex-role identity, her preferences for modern versus traditional role portrayal of women in advertising, and its impact on advertising effectiveness.

Academic research comparing the effectiveness of traditional and modern role portrayals of women in advertising is inconclusive. It is also uncertain if the same role portrayal would appeal to different segments of the female market (Jaffe, 1991).

According to Fennell and Weber (1984) the existing research is little more than a documentation of the existing problems, and provides very little practical guidance.

Roberts and Koggan (1979) state that advertisers are calling for research that will provide guidance for advertisers when they must choose among a multitude of options when executing their promotional strategies.

During the last several decades, the economic and social status of women has changed dramatically, with women becoming more financially independent. Consequently, women have become a growing and viable segment for financial services.

The changing roles of women in our society, evident through the number of women entering and remaining in the workforce has also brought about a change in sex roles (Stern, 1988 (b)).

Stern (1987) has suggested that sex-role identity is a significant predictor of women's advertising response to different positionings for financial services. Jaffe (1991, p. 58) states that "by measuring the relationship of sex-role identity to advertising effectiveness for modern and traditional positionings, marketers can use the results to construct specific advertising campaigns".

This paper will extend our knowledge of sex-roles and consumer behaviour. It will enhance our understanding of how to position financial services when developing advertising strategies for personal superannuation products targeted to the female consumer.
The paper will examine how to position financial service products in advertising, designed to attract the growing and viable market segment of working women. According to Yorke and Hayes (1982) the economic and social status of women has changed dramatically during the past several decades, with working women becoming more financially independent. Consequently, women have become a growing and viable segment for financial services.

The changing roles of women in our society, evident through the number of women entering and remaining in the workforce has also bought about a change in sex roles (Stern, 1988 (b)).

Stern (1987) has suggested that sex-role identity is a significant predictor of women's advertising response to different positionings for financial services. Jaffe (1991, p. 58) states that "by measuring the relationship of sex-role identity to advertising effectiveness for modern and traditional positionings, marketers can use the results to construct specific advertising campaigns".

Jaffe and Berger (1988) state that the growing number of women entering the workforce has triggered a change in sex-roles, the effects of which will have important implications for effective marketing strategies, in particular on the positioning and promotional strategies implemented (Debevec and Iyer, 1986).

In the past, advertisements tailored to the female market have included positioning strategies aimed at including both the traditional and modern female. Traditional approaches include the product being positioned for nurturing women whose main focus is their families. The modern approach positions the product for successful working women, competent both at home and at work (Jaffe, 1991).

Jaffe (1991) states that academic research comparing the effectiveness of the traditional and modern positioning strategy is inconclusive. It is also uncertain if the same positioning approach would appeal to different segments of the female market.

According to Leigh, Rethans and Whitley (1987, p. 55) the "key is the relationship between role portrayal in the advertisement and the target audiences expectation". It could be expected that traditional women would be motivated by traditional positionings while a modern woman motivated by modern positionings. This assumption, however logical it appears, has little academic research to substantiate it (Jaffe, 1991).

During the last decade, the manner in which advertising portrays women has been a source of active and continuing interest to researchers. Fennell and Weber (1984, p. 88) state that "advertisers want to avoid offending potential customers yet lack a tool to help identify possible controversial elements during the course of advertising development".

According to Fennell and Weber (1984) the existing research is little more than a documentation of the existing problems, and provides very little practical guidance. Roberts and Koggan (1979) state that advertisers are calling for research that will provide guidance for advertisers when they must choose among a multitude of options when executing their promotional strategies.

The paper will extend our knowledge of sex-roles and consumer behaviour by exploring the impact of sex-role identity on high-involvement purchase behaviour.

The paper will also enhance our understanding of how to position superannuation products when developing advertising strategies targeted to the female consumer.

2. The Changing Roles of Women in Society

Before 1976, "the words 'marketing', 'financial' and 'women' were never mentioned in the same sentence" according to Joanne Black, senior Vice-President of MasterCard International (Conklin, 1986).

David Kreink (1976) states in his article "Women: A growing force to be reckoned with in advertising financial services", that what advertising says is a reflection of the marketing objectives and the existing market situation. Advertising strategies must relate to demand, to product and service availability, to competitive forces and to a consumer, who is described as the "breadwinner".

The past two decades has seen significant changes in the "breadwinner" status of women. There has been a marked increase in the participation rate of women in the formal labour market, with women moving from a primarily nurturing and home-making role to women as wage-earners. This increase has been most pronounced amongst married women.

These findings have been supported by Stern (1988(b)) who argues that the post-industrial 1970s has witnessed rapid socioeconomic change, with the full force of this change now being felt. Much of this change relating to sex-roles is due to more women entering the workforce and dual career families becoming commonplace. A woman's role has changed from being primarily economic consumers to producers AND consumers as well. The primary role of men in the traditional family has shifted from producer roles to producers AND consumers. With dual income families, partners are now sharing in purchasing activities.
to a greater extent than when only one person worked outside the home.

Green and Cunningham (1975) state that the changing role of women will manifest itself in several aspects of male-female behaviour. It is anticipated that, some women will adopt the attitudes and values associated with the emerging female role, whereas other women's attitudes and values will be a state of flux, while others will continue to adhere to traditional attitudes and values.

It is anticipated that the trend of increased participation in the workforce and entry into educational institutions by women will characterise the rest of this century. As women become more educated wage-earners, their needs for information about finance, money management and business-related services will become similar to the needs of men (Stern, 1990).

According to Stern (1990) during the past decade, financial services marketers have recognised the importance of women consumers as a segment worth pursuing. It is now assumed that the consumer of financial products and services, as well as related business items such as computer equipment, travel and entertainment, is now female as well as male. This is a result of the socio-cultural changes in women's roles.

These major shifts in societal role structures should be reflected in the marketplace, presenting new opportunities for marketers. Marketing managers have responded to the changing role of women through the introduction of new products specifically designed to appeal to these emerging attitudes as well as through partial repositioning of existing products (Green and Cunningham, 1975).

These views are reinforced by Stern (1988 (b) p. 94) who states that "marketers can benefit from research on product, pricing, distribution and promotion which takes into account the ongoing impact of societal changes on sex-roles, traits, and self-concepts."

3. Women as a Market Segment for Personal Superannuation

It has been predicted that in the next 35 years, life expectancy at the age of 65 will increase almost 24 years for women but only 16 years for men. In 1988, 15 percent of the population were aged over 60 years. By 2021, this percentage is expected to increase to 24 percent. One implication of these demographic trends is that women are particularly likely to have an extended period over which they will have to manage their retirement incomes. This has implications for retirement income planning both from the individual and societal viewpoint (Rosenman and Winnocur, 1989).

Current statistics available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that:

- Fifty-two percent (52%) of women are in the labour force;
- Forty-two percent (42%) of the labour force are women;
- Women constitute 78% of the part-time workforce;
- Sixty percent (60%) of women in the workforce work full-time (Women's Bureau (DEET), 1991 in Wieneke, 1991).

Despite the increased longevity of the female and the increasing number of women entering and remaining in the workforce, the percentage of women with superannuation coverage is low relative to working men. The estimated superannuation coverage for employed persons aged 15 to 74 at November 1988 was 61% for males and 37% of females (Cass, 1991 in Wieneke, 1991).

Qualitative research carried out by Casey and Dwyer (1991) in the female superannuation market in Australia has revealed that women believe that financial independence is imperative. Related issues include: security through financial independence is important; financial independence is extremely important to women from all spheres; women did not want to be financially reliant on anybody; women did not see marriage as being synonymous with wealth or security; and there is an undercurrent of fear of female poverty.

Exploratory research carried out in Britain by Yorke and Hayes (1982) has examined the working female as a market segment for financial services, comparing the woman of the 80s with her elders. The following demographic and sociological changes are highlighted in their research: 1) younger women are likely to spend many more years of their life working; 2) they will have more money to spend; 3) she will have fewer children and have them later; 4) she will have a more advanced education leading to higher career paths; and 5) compared with her elders, if she marries there is a higher probability of divorce.

Stern (1978) states that in line with these changes, women are becoming more financially aware and becoming more actively involved in financial decision making. Women are now requiring more information about finance, money management and business. They have become actively involved in the purchase of financial products including, insurance, credit and bank cards, chequing and savings accounts, shares and retirement planning in the form of personal superannuation.

The changing roles of women has created a challenging task for marketers in the personal superannuation industry. Research quoted by Carnigle
(1969, p. 51) indicated that older women (over 35 years) are a very receptive market for financial information and products. This segment "evaluate products carefully and make sound, if conservative, investment choices. They want simply stated facts and are certainly not receptive to being patronised". Younger professional women need to be convinced about the value of long-term savings plans.

Financial marketers have realised that the female segment of the market represents a growing and "untapped" opportunity for product development and that the educated working women can no longer be stereotyped as "financial featherweights" (Conklin, 1986).

New product offerings have been developed, tailored specifically for the needs of the women's market. Advertising strategies are being developed in line with the new product offerings, reflecting the increasing influence of the women in the financial product market. Yorke and Hayes (1982, p. 84) state that the trend "is towards working women, as a marketing segment, who are more financially independent than before".

4. Portrayals of Women in Advertising

In the past decade, researchers have been suggesting that traditional stereotyped roles no longer reflect the role of women and have become increasingly less effective as an advertising tool. Critics contend that women's roles are changing, however advertisers are not keeping pace with these changes or portraying women realistically in advertisements (Courtney and Whipple, 1984; Debevec and Iyer, 1986).

Much of the earlier research has documented women's roles in print advertisements and television commercials to determine if the critics are justified in their views on stereotypical roles of women in advertising (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Venkatesan and Losco, 1975; Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney and Whipple 1984).

Research by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) analysed the roles portrayed by women in seven general audience magazines. The results indicated that four stereotypes were represented in magazine advertising: 1) a woman's place is in the home; 2) women do not make important decisions or do important things; 3) women are dependent and need men's protection; 4) men regard women as sexual objects, not people.

A comprehensive content analysis of the portrayal of women in magazine advertising was carried out by Venkatesan and Losco (1975) during 1959 to 1971. They concluded that the portrayal of women as sex objects had decreased since 1961, and the representation of women as housewives appeared less frequently. However, the theme of women dependent upon man appeared stable during that period. It was concluded that the role portrayal of women should reflect their individuality and positive attributes, as well as the changing role of women in our society.

Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) undertook a similar analysis of print advertisements designed to evaluate the roles portrayed by women in print advertisements in 1958, 1970 and 1972. In their analysis, comparisons were made to determine the extent to which stereotypes had been maintained and reinforced, as well as determining the degree of social change with regard to women's roles as reflected in the advertising messages.

The comparative analysis research conducted by Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976, p. 172) concluded "that advertisements have not kept up with the times in portraying women in the wide variety of roles they play in today's world." They also concluded that advertisers are making a serious mistake by misjudging the impact of the "economically" liberated woman. Mass media has tended to portray women in unrealistic settings and in under-represented numbers.

Courtney and Whipple (1974) compared the results of four studies, which analysed the roles of women in television commercials. These studies took place during April 1971 and February 1973 in the United States and Canada. All of the four studies analysed, suggested similar conclusions about the portrayal of women in television commercials. Women are portrayed in a domestic world, where they are housewives, worried about cleanliness and food preparation for their husband and children. Women were seldom shown combining out-of-home employment with the management of both her home and personal life.

Courtney and Whipple (1974, p. 117) conclude that "women are not portrayed as autonomous, independent human beings, but are primarily sex typed ... women's roles continued to change and expand at a faster rate that the advertisers' response during that time period."

According to Duker and Tucker (1977) the above studies represent thorough descriptive research studies of women in advertising. The general conclusion from these research studies supported the accuracy of the criticisms proffered by the feminist movements. Each study, suggests that advertisers should investigate the manner in which they feature women in their advertising messages. However, none of these studies have attempted to test empirically the impact of such messages on the female audience.

Wortzel and Frisbie (1974) were the first researchers to specifically test the influence of role depiction on the effectiveness of advertising from the perspective of the female consumer. In their research, they addressed empirically the question of advertising effectiveness, to determine women's role portrayal preferences. Their hypotheses aimed at testing whether the desirability of a product was
The hypothesis used by Duker and Tucker (1977) stated that subjects holding pro-feminist opinions were not significantly affected by the roles assigned to women in the advertisements. This includes those women whose personality characteristics are such as those subsumed under the independence classification.

Duker and Tucker (1977) state that the findings of their research is contrary to the intuitively held assumption that females with pro-feminist views perceive advertising messages differently from their traditional counterparts.

Several researchers have attempted to predict advertising effectiveness of gendered advertisements based on certain demographic variables (Barry, Gilly and Doran, 1985; Bellizzi and Milner, 1991). However, the results from this research has been inconclusive as sex-role identity and certain demographic variables are only partially correlated. Jaffe (1991) has made the assumption that sex-role identity is capturing additional information that cannot be explained by demographic variables such as age, marital status, and occupation.

Research by Barry et al. (1985) examined the advertising response of women with different career orientations, being their desire to work outside the home. The categories used to describe the differences were: 1) low desire-to-work women 2) moderate desire-to-work women and 3) high desire-to-work women. Subjects' responses to experimental advertisements for a hypothetical magazine were analysed.

Results of the research by Barry et al. (1985) revealed that the home-maker advertisement appealed more to the low-desire-to-work women whereas the career advertisement had more appeal among the high desire-to-work women. However, women with the moderate desire-to-work had no distinct pattern of response. This has led Barry et al. (1985) to conclude that caution is recommended when developing advertising creative strategies either emphasising the home- or work-oriented woman when the product is targeted to a large audience.

However, Bellizzi and Milner (1991) found no difference between those with high and low career orientations and their response to traditional and modern positioning strategies. In their conclusions, Bellizzi and Milner (1991) state these results could be due to the universal acceptance of the values of the women's movement by women in general.

Several studies have concluded that there were no clear preferences for either a modern or traditional positioning of women in advertising for the product categories tested (Wortzel and Frisbie, 1974; Duker and Tucker, 1977; Bellizzi and Milner, 1991) leaving practitioners in a quandary as how to develop effective advertising strategies when targeting women (Jaffe, 1991).
However, research carried out by The Equal Opportunities Commission in the United States by The Sherman Group found that the modern position enhanced the advertising effectiveness in all product categories tested and among all segments of women. The Sherman Group (1982) in Jaffe and Berger (1988, p. 260) concluded that the modern positionings of women were more effective as they portrayed women as "attractive, independent, capable people in and out of the home".

Similar research conducted by the United Kingdom Equal Opportunity Commission by Hamilton, Haworth and Sadar (1982) found similar results. They concluded that there were two factors pertaining to a woman's role portrayal in advertisements that determine its persuasiveness and appeal. Firstly, the modern, liberated roles were more effective than the traditional ones. Secondly, the more realistically and naturally the role is portrayed, the more effectively the message is communicated. These two factors have a multiplying effect, in that while a traditional role portrayed realistically will be persuasive, a modern, liberated role portrayed realistically will be even more effective.

Research by Jaffe and Berger (1988) and Jaffe (1990, 1991) suggests that the product category tested may influence the relationship between market segment and positioning. Jaffe and Berger (1988) tested low-involvement products including food and cleaners, and found that women who ascribe to a masculine sex-role identity prefer a modern positioning to a traditional one, whereas, a traditional positioning was preferred by women with a feminine sex-role identity.

Jaffe (1990, 1991) when testing modern and traditional positioning of women in financial services advertising found that when averaging across all segments of women with differing sex-role identities, the modern positioning was more effective. It was found that high and low femininity women responded more favourably to a modern positioning for financial products.

In similar research carried out by Jaffe, Jamieson and Berger (1992) the impact of comprehension of an ad's positioning on advertising response was assessed. Their research found that an ad's positioning has a real and measurable impact on advertising response. Marketers should ensure the positioning is clearly comprehended by the target segment to achieve maximal advantage from their positioning/segmentation strategy.

Leigh et al. (1987) states that research in the area of role portrayals of women in advertising has not been consistent in their results and/or their recommendations. It is argued that this is partly due to differences in study methods. More importantly, Leigh et al. (1987) argue this is due to the fact that the studies have not investigated the communications processes which link role portrayals and communications effectiveness.

The aim of the research carried out by Leigh et al. (1987) was to examine the effects of women's role portrayals on advertising effectiveness by exploring how both modern and traditional women responded to a commercial. The study adopted a cognitive response framework, allowing for the measurement of the thought reactions of women as they view either the modern or traditional role portrayals. The research was based on the expectation that a match between the role portrayal in an advertisement and the target audience's role orientation would be the key to communication effectiveness.

Leigh et al. (1987) concluded that there was consistency between an advertisement's role portrayal and the audience's role orientation, generating more favourable attitudes towards the advertisement and the spokesperson used. Conversely, less favourable attitudes were generated when there were inconsistencies between these factors. The study found that these attitudes were carried over, however less strongly, to attitude toward buying the product.

Stern (1987) has suggested that sex-role identity is a significant predictor of women's advertising response to different positionings for financial services. Jaffe (1991, p. 58) states that "by measuring the relationship of sex-role identity to advertising effectiveness for modern and traditional positionings, marketers can use the results to construct specific advertising campaigns".

Several recent studies state that research examining the effects of sex roles, both modern and traditional, is generally lacking. It is recommended that future research should focus not only on the preferences for each type of portrayal, but on various effectiveness measures (Debevec and Allan, 1984; Debevec and Iyer, 1986; Jaffe and Berger, 1988; Jaffe, 1990, 1991).

5. The Difference Between Traditional and Modern Women

Examination of the literature has revealed there has been various categories used to describe the roles of women ranging from conservatives, liberals or moderates (Green and Cunningham, 1975); career or neutral roles (described as less traditional) or as a sex-object, family or fashion object (more traditional role) (Wortzel and Frisbie, 1974), or traditional or modern (Jaffe and Berger 1988; Jaffe, 1990, 1991).

Research conducted by Sciglimpaglia, Lundstrom and Vaner (1980) segmented the female market into liberal and traditional women. In this research it was found that liberal women tended to be younger, less likely to endorse a traditional marriage situation and less ideologically conservative. The traditional women were found to pay more attention to house cleaning and take considerable pride in the home. Also they tend to be more
receptive to the advice of others on what products to buy and where to shop.

While the above findings tend to be consistent with popular stereotypes, the results indicated that there were not significant differences between liberal and conservative women with respect to other dimension examined in the research, including, opinion leadership, price leadership or price-conscious orientation (Sciglimpaglia et al, 1980).

Fennell and Weber (1984) have developed a guide for practitioners analysing the critical dimensions differentiating “traditional” and “nontraditional” versions of an advertisements. These dimensions are a useful conceptual tool indicating to marketers which aspects of a scenario are considered “traditional” and “nontraditional”.

When developing their list of dimensions Fennell and Weber (1984) addressed both objective elements i.e. what is actually shown in the advertisement, as well as subjective elements i.e. those inferred attributes of the person being portrayed, such as dependence.

According to Fennell and Weber (1984) gender differences in role portrayals are of two kinds:

(i) those in which there is a female and male version of an activity, where women are shown engaging in an activity which may also be performed by men. The “nontraditional” version of the dimension shows women assuming what has traditionally been considered a male activity;

(ii) those in which there are “female” activities that have no male counterpart, eg. putting her finger to her mouth.

The dimensions developed by Fennell and Weber (1984) will assist marketers in choosing between a traditional, nontraditional or ambiguous executions of an advertisement, as well as avoiding potentially controversial elements in the creative strategy.

6. Sex-role Identity and Marketing

According to Stern (1987) gender research in the marketing literature has addressed questions relating to the interior sexual self-concept, especially the relationship of psychological sex traits to biological sex. As well, research has examined the interpretations of exterior stereotypical sex roles, particularly in relation to advertising and segmenting the “women’s market”.

Gender research has originated from psychology, with the influence of biological sex dominating research prior to the 1970s. The assumption was that biological gender was the major determinant of sex-related behaviour (Stern, 1987). According to Constantinople (1973) “healthy” individuals were judged to be those who conformed to sex role appropriate to their gender, manifesting only those traits socially approved for that gender.

The changing social roles of women in the 60s was responsible for researchers challenging these traditional assumptions. With more women entering the workforce and improving their educational qualifications, a belief developed that sex roles, biological sex, and sex-related personality traits may not necessarily be either fixed or identical (Stern, 1987).

Since 1974, the relationships between biological sex, psychological gender traits and socio-economic sex roles have captured the interests of marketers aiming to explore the possible usefulness of sex identity as a dimension of consumer behaviour. In general, marketing research has produced conflicting findings in its history of applied gender research (Stern, 1988(b)).

In the early 70s, Sandra Lipsitz Bem developed a new theory based on sex traits of masculinity and femininity as separate, orthogonal constructs, not biologically-based, and able to coexist in varying degrees within an individual of either sex. Bem’s theory is based on the hypothesis that individuals should be encouraged to be “both masculine and feminine, both assertive and yielding, both instrumental and expressive - depending upon the situational appropriateness of these various behaviors” (Bem, 1974, p. 155).

The androgynous individual joined the “masculine” and “feminine” psychological aspects of personage into a single unified whole, with the capacity to show both the masculine and feminine personality characteristics, depending on the situation (Bem, 1974; Locksley and Colten, 1979; Spence and Helmreich, 1979).

Bem (1974) has defined sex-role identity as the degree to which one adheres to traditional female roles. The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, 1974) was the scale developed by Bem to operationalize her theory and provided research in psychology with a new theoretical framework for measuring, scoring and combining traits judged as either feminine or masculine (Stern, 1988(b)).

To determine a person’s sex-role self-concept, respondents fill in a self-descriptive survey instrument, relying on a seven-point scale to measure the individual’s identification with sixty characteristic qualities expressed as adjectives or adjectival phrases.

Forty of the qualities are sex-related, and twenty are sex neutral. Respondents are asked to identify with the sex-related qualities to provide insight into a person’s self-perception as being feminine or masculine.

Bem’s typology was revised in 1977, with respondents being categorised into four groups::

- Feminine (High Femininity, Low Masculinity)
• Masculine (High Masculinity, Low Femininity)
• Androgynous (High Masculinity, High Femininity)
• Undifferentiated (Low Masculinity, Low Femininity)

From 1979 to the present, the relationship between gender, sex roles, and self-concept have been studied in marketing and consumer behaviour using the longer and shorter version of Bern's self-descriptive survey instrument, known as the BSRI-Long and BSRI-Short respectively.

The BSRI-Short consists of 10 masculine and 10 feminine items, instead of the original pool of 60 items. Those items with low item-to-total correlations were dropped from the original pool (Bem, 1981).

Barak and Stern (1986); Stern (1987) and Stern (1988(b)) have had some reservations about the usefulness of BSRI in marketing research, as it seems relatively independent of consumer behaviour variables. However the BSRI scale has been the most commonly used scale in post-1979 gender research in marketing. During the last decade marketing studies have tested Bem's theory and it is now thought that a "main effect" in both psychological and marketing studies may be the dominance of the masculinity trait (Adams and Sherer, 1982; Taylor and Hall, 1982).

Barak and Stern (1986); Coughlin and O'Connor (1985) Stern (1988(b), p. 92) In their evaluation of sex-role self-concept measures in marketing, have concluded it has been generally found in the marketing studies of the past decade "that high masculinity explains more than typological combinations in terms of family decision making, reactions to women's roles in advertisements, and a variety of consumer behaviour variables".

7. Conclusion
A general conclusion made by Stern (1988(b) p. 93) is that "In spite of the problems associated with sex-role research, and the lack of a coherent body of findings in marketing literature, it may be premature to leave the field after less than a decade's worth of empirical research with any one instrument". There is a need for new directions that research can take, rather than abandonment of the field altogether. Of particular relevance has been the difficulty of measuring changes in sex roles in our society because of the rapidity with which it has been occurring.

As a consequence, the financial service companies must reflect contemporary female roles in their advertising to effectively communicate with their target audience. A challenge for academic researchers in advertising is to determine the optimal positioning strategies for products in line with the socioeconomic changes affecting the roles of women in our society.

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Language, Identity and Women in Leadership

Pat Klinck
Edith Cowan University

Abstract
Since July 1992, the Women in Leadership collegial groups have met a series of challenges. One of these challenges is based upon how a collegial group might be constructed, and how it might form part of the work women do. The second challenge relates to how women communicate with each other. The third concerns managing the dynamics of the group when the basis of collegial groups is no "job-alike membership", but where women bring with them educational and experimental backgrounds. A further challenge relates to how women define their role as women in an organization and identity with it. Finally, the collegial groups raised the issue of leadership as a more formal collegial relationship rather than an inform-
Relevant Research

As our group came to terms with the new way of learning and tried out new patterns of interaction, I returned to books and articles I had read about female relationships. In many respects these articles and concepts helped to illuminate the struggles we were having.

One of the writers is Anne Wilson Schaef and her book 'Women's Reality.' Schaef is a counsellor and therapist and works with groups of women. These women come from all walks of life, but from her experience, are haunted by a common concern. She defines this concern "as the original of being born female." In exploring this concept she states the following: "to be born female in this culture means that you are born 'tainted,' that there is something intrinsically wrong with you, that you can never change, that your birthright is one of innate inferiority." Her work with women helps them understand this and put it to rest. The sense of inferiority is strongly linked with women's desires to be associated with the white male system and not with other women. Through our association with the white male system we see ourselves as part of those who are most powerful.

Schaef sees the role of talk as assisting women in defining the new female system. The female system contains a different perspective on the relationship with the self. The relationship with the self is necessary in order to form strong relationships with others. A major portion of the program of Women in Leadership is a focus on the self. Understanding ones own values, attitudes, knowledge and skills is central to the work done by participants. The sense of inferiority and the very strong need to define ourselves were very obvious from our first meetings. The learning model inherent in the collegial group demanded that nothing less be acceptable.

Kristeva in 'Women's Time' examines a three-tiered model. From her perspective the feminist struggle against the powerlessness associated with being a woman is taken up in different ways. The three tier model shows three strands of feminist thinking. Although the three strands might appear contradictory in sequence, she sees them as parallel and interwoven. The first strand is women who demand access to the symbolic order. This demand is for equality: equal access to positions, to education, to benefits etc. The second strand refers to are women who reject the male symbolic order. These women name and extol the differences that are basic in feminity. This strand sees women as expert communicators, as nurturers and as caring individuals. The third level are women who reject the dichotomy between male and female. They work towards new understandings of relationships between men and women and of a new concept of self. Davies points out that the third level is the most personally confronting, it seeks to deconstruct the dichotomy of "male" and "female." The third level is often expressed in language and a narrative form.

A recent work by Carol Tavris, puts these three strands into an interesting perspective. Tavris discusses the change from women as deficient to women as experts in intimacy. The new stereotype praises women and it validates much of the female experience. Today female friendships are celebrated as being deep, intimate and true.

Women are seen as having a greater sense of connections and therefore a greater sense of intimacy. Within this new stereotype men are seen as deficient. They do not seek connections, are not nurturing and don't have the same sense of caring. However, as Tavris points out this stereotype is damaging to both men and women. She suggests that we move toward the following questions: 'what are the consequences for women and men of the belief that women are intimacy experts?' "What are the consequences of the family, when one partner demands and pursues intimacy and the other retreats into silence?" All three writers bring help and understanding to the issues of women's relationships.

Our collegial support group was composed of seven general staff and three academics. We reflected the structures and tensions of the University and our society. Although Schaef states that women assume peer relationships until proven otherwise, it was obvious from the beginnings of our discussion that people were very much aware that positional privilege included education, salary, freedom within work and responsibilities. The stereotype of general versus academic staff haunted us. It was difficult to pursue many of our discussions.

The question of positional privileges brought the feelings of inclusion and exclusion into high relief. As well, there were the issues each of us carried as women, regarding our understanding of ourselves and the question of inferiority. As a sense of trust grew, women addressed both the question of inferiority and its origins. Slowly but surely, as we dealt with each others concerns, the group began to form a bond.

We were undeniably living with questions of privilege, often ones into which we were born. Could we go beyond these stereotypes and develop bonds with unique, talented, outstanding human beings who are women and who are also colleagues.

The question of identity is closely interwoven with language. Research would say that women are more sensitive, more tentative and more given to nurturing in all their conversational patterns. Our experiences as a group was one of silence within our talk. Stereotypes impose silence upon us. We skirted many issues by invoking the stereotype of privilege: "If I speak out too strongly general staff will see me as being overwhelming. I am more committed to this organisation because I am at my desk till 5.00" etc.

The second aspect of language that was curiously

women, communication and power
absent was the language of colleagues. Both in terms of topic and talk, it was missing.

In other words we could not deal with the issues that face the university from our different perspectives. When we embarked upon issues that dealt with the university, we initially fell into silence. We were unable to accommodate our different perspectives and therefore unable to discuss issues of the organisation.

So much of our understanding is morally based. The language that describes knowledge reflects these norms and morals. We had to consider what was real knowledge. Was the knowledge that was held by the general staff on the day to day workings of the University as ‘real’ as the knowledge of the academics who dealt with their discipline and dealt with students? The very question of relevance therefore, became essential to us. In one of our seminars with a guest speaker, the topic became the working of one of our general staff. For academic staff the topic was not relevant. For the general staff however, the woman gained status. She was forthright, courageous and deeply committed to the University. The question of relevance within groups is not a new question. For us however, it was paradoxical that women who are supposed to nurture and care for each other were finding themselves deeply divided over whether within their work life as a colleague and as a woman in university they had any relevance to each other.

Language also defines what is right. We had many questions. There was a dependance on finding a right answer, an answer which would be there for the questions and would be the right answer. It became apparent that we had to break this sense of dependancy on an external answer. As we worked through the eighty hours together, the answers that each one of us found had commonalities but unique differences. It was quite frightening to break away from the text book form of professional development in tertiary education. It took courage and it took commitment.

The final issue was that of women in leadership. Possibly the major reason for the programme being established is that women’s concept of leadership appears to be quite different from that of men’s. I do not believe that the difference is what is crucial, I believe our problem is much more central. We do not as women have enough competent role models of women leaders. In our quest to understand leadership we are continuously bumping up against the dominant paradigm, which is that of the while male symbolic order. We see the uses and abuses of this power. As we see its arrogance and we tend to shun it, we had to redefine the concept of leadership, it emerged as having influence on a day by day basis. We also examined personal power and its influence.

We redefined leadership, looked on it as personal power: (i.e.) the power which happens on a five minute basis, which allows you to write letters, to speak your mind, to choose silence. The women also recognised that the position of power, if they wished to have it, was theirs. Choice is essential to any sense of power.

Did we ever surmount the stereotypes? Did we ever come past the point of “general” and “support” staff? The answer to that is ‘yes’. We had many struggles. It took much courage and commitment. It was not a struggle that was for everyone (one of our members withdrew from the group). In the final analysis a bond was formed by valuing diversity and honesty. There was with the group a sense of belonging. We were colleagues, we were women, we had things in common to discuss.

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The woman's place is in the home.
But today would she serve the home she must go beyond the house...
Habermas Should Have Been a Woman

Jean Hillier
Curtin University

Abstract

Jurgen Habermas' theory of Communicative Action, in which he exposes the subtle ways in which powerful groups

(i) legitimate and perpetuate themselves whilst seeking to extend their power;

(ii) systematically exclude particular groups from decision-making processes affecting their lives;

(iii) promote the political and moral illusion that science and technology, professionals and experts can solve problems, and

(iv) restrict public argument, participation and mobilisation which are inconvenient.

could easily have been writing about the ways in which men subjugate women and prevent women from taking part in anything which would resemble participatory decision-making.

Habermassian communicative action involves invoking the four criteria for an ideal speech situation, that decisions are comprehensible, sincere, legitimate and truthful to enable all parties to understand and respect each other's discourse and viewpoints and to work towards win-win outcomes by pre-empting conflict through negotiated agreement rather than entrenching it.

This paper suggests that these actions of engaging in respectful discussion within the between discursive communities, with respect implying recognising, valuing, listening and searching for translatable possibilities between different communities, are essentially women's skills and competences. Much research has indicated that women are far more adept than men at listening, accommodating and facilitating. It is therefore suggested that the theory of communicative action is based on principles more appropriate to women than to men and that indeed, Habermas should have been a woman!

Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action

Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action reformulates the Marxist critique of social relations systematically distorted by symbolic and system-steering codes. He suggests that domination has to be reconceptualised as involving not only economic deprivation, but other distortions of the relations of production and reproduction. Habermas then “tries to re-energise the silenced proletariat by appealing to its innate (but currently distorted) competence in self-determining thought and action.” His communicative action theory thus provides a basis for understanding social relations and for attempting to overcome oppressions and deprivations.

Habermas' theory suggests that relations of power not only transmit information, but they also promote the political and moral illusion that science and technology, professionals and experts can solve problems; and restrict public argument, participation and mobilisation which are inconvenient. It could have been writing about the ways in which men subjugate women and prevent women from taking part in anything which resembles true participatory decision-making. Yet Habermas says virtually nothing about gender in his theory. This is a serious deficiency, and one which this paper attempts to remedy by reading the theory of communicative action from the point of an absence, by providing a feminist critique, extrapolating from things Habermas does say to those he does not and demonstrating how a theory which is based on principles more appropriate to women than to men could have been improved further if Habermas had been a woman!
For Habermas, rational (reasoned) consensus is achieved through free and equal discussion within the framework of the ‘ideal speech situation’ in which he distinguishes various rules or constraints of discourse, recalling a notion of reciprocal recognition on all sides of the other’s claims as having equal plausibility and justification. The ‘rules’ maintain that all parties should speak comprehensively, sincerely, legitimately and truthfully. (Habermas, 1973, 1979). The goal of communication involves coming to an understanding with regard to each of the types of rules or validity claims above in order to culminate in “reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another.” (Habermas, 1979:3) Communicative action rests on agreement based on reasons and grounds rather than coercion and force. In this way, all may understand and respect each other’s discourses and viewpoints and work towards win-win outcomes by pre-empting conflict through negotiated agreement rather than entrenching it.

Action is thus regarded fundamentally as a matter of communicative competence on the part of speakers and hearers. All social action implies a reciprocity of perspective and a dialogue of justification. Only through the dialogue of language may mutual, shared and uncoerced understanding be achieved. Here Habermas relies heavily on the notion of intuition as a way of reading the difference between “treating another person as something like an object versus treating her/him as something like an end in itself, worthy of some respect.” (White, 1986:45) In principle, it should always be possible to settle any conflict if the parties are mindful to do so and are prepared to build a speech-community based on trust, rather than power. (Clegg, 1989).

Habermas argues that on the basis of a false perception of necessity, people (I would argue, particularly women) acquiesce and fail to overcome a communicative reluctance which has been socially engendered. He regards the lack of a viewpoint of reciprocity and the loss of people’s ‘dialogue chances’ as the most fundamental modes of ideological dominance.

Young (1990) suggests that Habermas has gone further than any other philosopher in elaborating the project of a moral reason that recognises the plurality of subjects through their differing lifeworlds, yet he still appears to maintain a standpoint of universal normative reason that transcends particularist pluralist perspectives. It is unclear whether meanings must be generalisable in order to be shared and respected by all concerned. If so, those meanings, such as the particular and private, which may be unshareable, because they derive from a person’s particular story, may be lost. As demonstrated below, this issue is of special significance for women, often dominated by men in intersubjective discussions through the linguistic mechanisms of control of language and speech.

Is Communicative Action Feminine?

One of the great women philosophers, Hannah Arendt argued that political action should take the form of ‘sharing’ words and deeds. Her understanding of the polis is not a masculine view of a fierce, competitive system but rather one which operates both as an equalising institution and a meaning-creating, immortality-ensuring, human construction. Arendt (1958) urges achievement of results through working together collaboratively with those with whom one shares a common life and common concerns.

Many of Habermas’ communicative ideas appear rooted in anarchist philosophy and are reflected in the new Feminine Management style of business operation (Loden, 1985), advocating participative management as providing the best solutions to complex problems. According to Loden successful management skills reflect an egalitarian philosophy, consisting primarily of facilitating skills that bring out the best thinking within groups, help to integrate different points of view and encourage consensus problem-solving.

Although Loden suggests that such a style of management “comes much more naturally to women managers than to most men” (1985:56), I take issue with the use of the word ‘naturally’. Men, I believe, have been conditioned out of participatory action, whereas women have been conditioned into it by not having the power to enforce their wills without rational negotiative discussion. Women’s experiential tradition of patriarchal domination emphasises the importance of building and maintaining productive relationships and of delivering service to others. Women tend to regard themselves primarily as empowerers, encouraging rather than controlling others. Such skills are now being recognised for their true value and advocated as those which men should cultivate in order to become good managers (Spender, 1992).

Research indicates that whilst male managers tend to operate by control and manoeuvre, women aim for consensus-building and shared ownership of decisions. “To them, participative management, from fostering open communication and soliciting employee input to establishing mutually agreed upon goals and encouraging creativity and increased autonomy among team members, is more than a set of techniques. It is a basic operating philosophy that guides their every action.” (Loden, 1985:126-7).

Grossly over-generalising, the skills which women have more finely developed than men, and which are often demeaningly and falsely labelled ‘feminine’ include:

- sensing skills - the ability to pick up on non-verbal cues; to place oneself in another’s position and to understand other people’s reactions,
• listening skills - paying attention to what is being said by others and how it is stated; using nonverbal cues to encourage open discussion; letting people finish without interrupting.

• management of feelings - being attuned to one's feelings; expressing feelings as a method of enhancing communications and asking for feeling reactions from others; reacting spontaneously; considering other people's feelings.

• intimacy/authenticity - developing a personal rapport with others; focussing on the whole individual.

• assessing personal impact - understanding the impact of one's behaviour on others; recognising how one is being perceived and the consequences of one's actions.

(after Loden, 1985:135).

All the skills identified above are now being recognised as having value in their own right and are implicit in implementing Habermassian communicative action and achieving an ideal speech situation.

Listening, in particular, is one area in which women have been socially constructed into women. Traditionally, girls are taught to take a conciliatory role in conflict situations, to relieve tensions rather than to escalate them and to be fair in treatment of others. It is such skills and competence which Habermas (most probably unconsciously) builds upon as a basis for his theory of communicative action. His consensus-building strategy for resolving conflict is essentially what men would traditionally belittlingly label 'feminine' in nature. It assumes that a satisfying solution, which all parties can support, is achievable, and that such a solution can be developed through discussion, sharing of personal viewpoints and creative problem-solving - a strategy which women have utilised for years.

Spender (1992) has further identified how women are good decision-makers, problem-solvers and conflict managers. Negotiation and facilitation are essentially women's skills, involving observing, listening, gathering information and making connections, important skills which men have traditionally devalued as "intuition". "Women do not have the same parameters of win/lose as do men, we do not insist on being right. We are more subtle, sensitive and sophisticated and avoid imposing our beliefs on others." (Spender, 1992 [well, not Mrs Thatcher perhaps]) Generations of experience of child rearing, family relationships and attempts to maintain harmony have literally engendered vital abilities of encouragement, information-sharing and facilitating decisions.

A Feminist Critique

Feminist models tend to be non-hierarchical, egalitarian and co-operative. Habermas' theory of communicative action scores highly on these three criteria. However, the theory still essentially represents a notion of equality based on the assumption that all people could have equally respected voices and, by inference, that women could be just like men, if only we were allowed to participate fully in society. Habermas conflates representation of the two sexes into a single model in which the specificity of women is represented in male terms. In this way he is guilty of assimilating feminist contributions, which become positioned as "subservient" (Bondi and Domosh, 1992:205). Feminists reach instead for the concept of essential difference which accepts women as women, rather than as citizens who can be like men, (eg. Young, 1990).

The message behind this paper is that a 'democratic' theory that is not at the same time feminine but feminist serves only to maintain a fundamental form of domination over women and "makes a mockery of the ideals and values that democracy is held to embody." (Pateman, 1989:223). Habermas' theory of communicative action, by subsuming women, represents a version of pluralism which is universalistic and neglects recognition of heterogeneity, otherness and difference.

A feminist version of communicative action would represent plurality rather than pluralism. It would recognise that feminist knowledge also has its orthodoxies and exclusions and reject a hegemonic feminist approach in favour of one with which all groups of women are able to engage. It would construct definitions of 'women' and 'female' not from a position of either entrenched disposition or socially constituted definitions, but from one in which women are empowered to construct their own identities and celebrate their differences. Habermas eliminates social exclusion (Richters, 1988) and 'naturalises' the idea of gender within the supposedly universal concepts of 'citizenship' and 'community' (Bondi, 1992). He thus continues the long tradition of democratic theorists who perpetuate the idea of citizenship as a masculine or fraternal pact.

The theory of communicative action is thus a metanarrative, tacitly presupposing "some commonly held but unwarranted and essentialist
assumptions about the nature of human beings and the conditions for social life.” (Fraser & Nicholson, 1988:382). Not only does Habermas therefore falsely universalise gender, but also differences within gender of class, age, culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, attitude, etc etc.

In his theory, Habermas seeks to develop a conception of rationality based on discussion that aims to reach an understanding. However, reason is never value-free and tends to uphold patriarchal interests. Not everyone has the same understanding of the meaning of concepts and words, and as Hartsock warns, for women, “the interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free” (1990:25).

Young (1990a:105) demonstrates that, behind Habermas' “apparently innocent way of talking about discourse lies the presumption of several unities: the unity of the speaking subject, who knows himself or herself and seeks faithfully to represent his or her feelings; the unity of subjects with one another, which makes it possible for them to have the same meaning.” Young argues that such a model of communication expels and devalues difference, reproduces the opposition between reason and desire (“communication is not only motivated by the aim to reach consensus, a shared understanding of the world, but also and even more basically by a desire to love and be loved” (1990a:107)) and abstracts from the specifically bodily aspects of speech. Work by both Forester (1989) and Young (1990a) illustrates how people speak excitedly, angrily, etc. in different tones of voice, with various facial expressions and gestures and that such body language should not be discounted. Meanings thus often become irreducibly ambiguous and multiple, particularly for women.

Habermas therefore overlooks the “obvious and important question” of “who makes sense on whose terms for whom?” (Forester, 1989:130), and ignores the fact that enormous inequalities between men and women are reinforced by the use of language. For example, “professional jargon, argumentative speaking styles, can all alienate, confuse or render women speechless” (Sandercocck and Forsyth, 1990:77).

Feminist authors, (see for example Spender, 1981, 1985; Hillier, 1991) have demonstrated how a speaker's or writer's choice of words enables certain kinds of interpretation and understanding, while closing off and suppressing others. It is difficult for listeners and readers to go beyond the language and to consciously resist the meaning being offered to them. Meanings and messages are often at best gender-blind or patriarchal, and usually phallocentric.

Patriarchy, as Grosz (1989) points out, does not prevent women from speaking, but it refuses to listen when we do not speak 'as men'. Universality of understanding, which Habermas advocates in the theory of communicative action, is possible only by ignoring the specificity of particular groups (such as women): "a language which presents itself as universal, and which is in fact produced by men only, is this not what maintains the alienation and exploitation of women in and by society?" (Irigaray; 1977:1) Another area in which more theoretical consideration is needed than is provided by Habermas, is the assumption that given the opportunity, women can articulate their demands in an equivalent manner to men. Many women are socialised to believe they have nothing valuable to say and although attending public meetings and discussions, may remain silent. Work by Mansbridge (1980) and Gutmann (1980) has indicated that even in circumstances when all people have the right to participate in the decision-making process, white, middle-class men from English-speaking backgrounds assume more authority than women, who also experience difficulty in attending evening meetings. Universalistic approaches to democracy (such as proposed in the basic model of communicative action) thus tend to reproduce existing oppressions.

The key to the patriarchal metalinguistic tradition of women remaining silent in public gatherings, according to Jenkins and Kramarke (1981), is the boundary between public (rhetorical) and private (familial). Women symbolise the private as opposed to the public in which we are marginalised and ignored.

One possible interpretation of communicative ethics, (Young, 1990b), is that normative claims are the outcome of the expression of needs, feelings and desires which individuals have recognised by others under conditions where all have an equal voice in the expression of their needs and desires. This interpretation tends to collapse the distinction between public rhetoric or reason and the private realm of desire, need and feeling; essentially, as indicated above, women's realm.

This dichotomy between public and private is central to women's struggle and although Habermas provides a sophisticated account of the relations between public and private institutions ('system' and 'lifeworld'), he fails to understand the gender subtext of the relations and arrangements he describes. For example, the roles of worker (with its masculine connotations) and consumer (with a feminine subtext) are shown to link the public economic system and the private lifeworld. (For an excellent feminist critique of Habermas' treatment of the public and private, see Fraser (1989)). By falling to take into account the feminist conception of 'private' life, the 'natural' sphere of women, by ignoring the family, and valuing only the public realm, the 'natural' arena of men, Habermas’ participatory democracy arguments have thus "ignored an important dimension of democratic social transformation" (Pateman, 1989:220)
Because Habermas' model is blind to the significance and operation of gender, it is bound to misunderstand and misrepresent the public sphere of language and speech. The concepts of citizenship, participation and democracy have implicit gender subtexts which a reformed model of communicative action should appreciate.

What Would a Feminist Theory of Communicative Action Look Like?

Is Habermas' theory of communicative action simply a "colonisation of women's experience, an appropriation of feminist arguments, and a defensive insistence on pluralism"? (Bondi, 1992:101-102), another instance of "white Western men (who) write academic texts and interpret the world for each other"? (Massey, 1991:53), or does it hold more potential for women? If so, how can feminist thought take the theory further?

In place of the universality and rationalism of Habermas, a feminist theory would include recognition of pluralities, of the historical, spatial and cultural evolution of differences and an appreciation of contingency both of identity and decisions rather than of rational certainty.

The Habermassian concept of 'lifeworld' may be enriched by adding to it a Foucauldian appreciation of genealogy and biopower to gain clearer understanding of how the patterns of acculturation characteristic of liberal societies have imposed constraints on women from taking a more active/powerful role in decision-making. "Renounce yourself or be suppressed, do not appear if you do not want to disappear, your existence will be tolerated only on my terms which - by a logic both paradoxical and circular - consists of silence, non-appearance, non-existence." (Sheridan, 1980:181). Into Habermassian symmetry, therefore, feminists would introduce a measure of Foucauldian asymmetry of power complexes.

Feminism confirms that dialogue and negotiating together should be a key model for respectful and non-dominating relationships in our productive and reproductive activities.

Feminism can help to truly liberate communicative competence, to empower women, women's speech and its plurality of meanings in negotiative discussion.

Feminism teaches that learning to speak politically is insufficient if speaking politically means speaking phallocentrically. Feminism recognises the gender subtexts which underpin traditional interpretations of public and private. Feminist theories emphasise and value the private realms of desire, needs and feelings and the roles of women in relation to the family and childbearing. Women must not be subordinated, subsumed or sublimated by men either in theory or in practice.

In conclusion, Habermas' theory of communicative action has the potential to become a profoundly important and relevant model of discursive democracy if it considers the above points. Based on its framework of mutual respect and understanding, it should replace its unitary notions of 'citizens' and 'people' with plural conceptions of social identity, treating gender, in particular, as an issue encompassing its differences, along with others such as ethnicity, age, etc etc. It should recognise that there are no universalities, but a multiplicity of differences. While generally agreeing that Habermas' theory takes participatory democracy a long way forward, it still stops short at present of recognising asymmetrical power relationships and therefore of achieving full participation in the socio-sexual-textual divisions of labour and of public life. The plurality of women's stories has much to offer of value in this respect and illustrates that really, to develop his theory to its full potential, Habermas should have been a woman!

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References


Sexing the Cherry: Re-Conceiving Women

Lekkie Hopkins
Edith Cowan University

Abstract
This paper introduces listeners to the Dog Woman - vibrant, forthright and vocal, - who strides across medieval London, and through time and space, shattering all previous conceptions about sexual politics, women and women's centrality.

In an exploration of the relationship between contemporary women's fiction and feminist theory, the paper focuses on the subversive power of the fictional world and its potential to transform women's lives.

Paper
I'm delighted to be here today, because one of the things I love doing above all others is telling stories. And today I'm going to be telling you at least one story - but maybe there'll be several, because as I tell it, we'll probably find that there are stories within stories. So sit back, and relax, and make yourselves comfortable.

There are a few things you should know about this story before I begin. First of all, it's not original. Like all good stories, it's been told before. And like all the best stories, its tellers have been women. Its most recent teller, the one who passed it on to me, is Jeanette Winterson. She's a novelist living in London, and it's in her novel Sexing the Cherry that our story is told. Second of all, it's a story with no beginning and no end. This is deliberate, because although it's a story about life and living, and although it seems to be set in a particular place (medieval London), it's a story that eludes notions of boundaries, and plays around with notions of time and space, so that nothing is ever singular, or fixed, or as we expect it to be.

Before I begin, too, I should perhaps explain why I'm doing this at a conference like this.

The catalyst for my wanting to present this paper was the feeling of alienation I had when listening to a most articulate and intelligent feminist presenting a paper about men and women and power in the workplace. Most particularly she spoke about men feeling threatened by women invading their territory in the workplace, and the feeling that women always seem to be grabbing for male power, and themselves seem to feel as if they are invading men's workspaces. Hence the emphasis on male language, and on women's peripherality vs men's centrality. She spoke of the need to change the culture ie attitudes and values, before we can hope to address the question of women's marginalisation. Now although I find those issues as issues extremely important in my own working life and recognise their importance for many women in the public sphere, what I needed in listening to that speaker was some context to put all this in. What did she mean by power? Who owns power? How do we take power? How does being marginalised make us feel powerless? And most importantly, how can we reconceive ourselves so that we don't see ourselves as always on the outside grabbing for something that someone else has got? These questions started to do battle in my head. And it occurred to me then that the most transforming, most subversive, most liberating ways of reconceiving woman have come to me through contemporary women's fiction.

Lest we be in any doubt that Sexing the Cherry is indeed transforming, subversive, and liberating, on the very first page of this novel we read:

Every journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken, and the forgotten angle. These are the journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made, but the ones I might have made, or perhaps did make in some other place or time.

Now, rather than trying to match these ideas to your own sense of journey, or time or space, I propose that you should abandon all inhibiting notions of boundaries, and surrender yourselves to the story.

Central to the story is the Dog Woman - huge, vibrant and vocal - who strides across medieval London, creating havoc, or order, (whichever you like), wherever she goes. We are introduced to her first through the eyes of her son Jordan who, (and now here's a surprise), is not really her son, but rather is a foundling, who was found by the Dog Woman wrapped up in a rotting sack such as kittens are found in, in the slime by the river. His first memories of her are thus: I heard dogs coming towards me, and a roar in the water, and a face as round as the moon with hair falling on either side bobbed over me. She scooped me up, and she tied me between her breasts whose nipples stood out like walnuts. She took me home and kept me there with her own. (p.10)

From the Dog Woman herself we learn:

When a woman gives birth her waters break and she pours out the child and the child runs free. I would have liked to pour out a
He lifted it up above his head, and the crowd, seeing it for the first time, roared and nudged each other and demanded to know what poor fool had been so reduced as to sell his vitality.

"It's either painted or infected," said I, "for there's none such a colour that I know."

Johnson shouted above the din as best he could... "THIS IS NOT SOME UNFORTUNATE'S RAKE. IT IS THE FRUIT OF A TREE. IT IS TO BE PEELED AND EATEN."

At this there was a unanimous retching.

There was no good woman could put that to her mouth, and for a man it was the practise of cannibals. We had not gone to church all these years and been washed in the blood of Jesus only to eat ourselves up the way the Heathen do.

I pulled on the hound-lead in order to take Jordan away, but the lead came up in my hands. I ducked down into the shuffle of bare feet and torn stockings and a gentleman's buckle here and there. He was gone. My boy was gone. I let out a great bellow such as cattle do and would have gone on bellowing till Kingdom Come had not some sinner taken my ear and turned me to look under Johnson's devilish table.

I saw Jordan standing stock still. He was standing with both his arms upraised and staring at the banana above Johnson's head. I put my head next to his head and looked where he looked and I saw deep blue waters against a pale shore and trees whose branches sang with green and birds in fairground colours and an old man in a loin-cloth.

This was the first time Jordan had set sail. (pp.11-13)

And this, of course, is a perfect introduction to Jeanette Winterson's magic. In this passage we are drawn irresistibly into the Dog Woman's world, so that we see the world entirely through her eyes—until, that is, we are forced, with her, to see the world of faraway fantasy through the eyes of the boy Jordan. The novel is built on such juxtapositions of the earthiness of the Dog Woman's view with the wistful and enchanting imaginative wanderings of Jordan. There is a constant emphasis on the distance between language and the reality/realities that underlie it.

Now try this for a bit of subversion of contemporary feminine vanity and concern for the way women respond to notions of beauty: the Dog Woman says of herself:
How hideous am I?

My nose is flat, my eyebrows are heavy. I have only a few teeth and those are a poor show, being black and broken. I had smallpox when I was a girl and the caves in my face are home enough for fleas. But I have fine blue eyes that see in the dark. As for my size, I know only that before Jordan was found a travelling circus came through Cheapside, and in that circus was an elephant. We were all pleased to see the elephant, a huge beast with a wandering nose. Its trick was to sit itself in a seat like any well-bred gentleman, and wear an eyeglass. There was a seat on its opposite side, and a guessing game was to offer up a certain number of persons to climb on to the other seat, topsyturvy, as best they could, and outweigh Samson, as the elephant was named. No one had succeeded, though the prize was a vat of ale.

One night, pushing along with a ribbon in my hair, I thought to try to outweigh Samson myself.

...I took a deep breath, filling my lungs with air, and threw myself at the seat with all my might. There was a roar from round about me. I opened my eyes and looked towards Samson. He had vanished. His chair swung empty like a summer-house seat, his eyeglass lay at the bottom. I looked higher, following the gaze of the people. Far above us, far away like a black star in a white sky, was Samson.

It is a responsibility for a woman to have forced an elephant into the sky. What it says of my size I cannot tell, for an elephant looks big, but how am I to know what it weighs? A balloon looks big and weighs nothing.

I know that people are afraid of me, either for the yapping of my dogs or because I stand taller that any of them. When I was a child my father swung me up onto his knees to tell a story and I broke both his legs. He never touched me again, except with the point of the whip he used for the dogs. But my mother, who lived only a while and was so light she dared not go out in a wind, could swing me on her back and carry me for miles. There was talk of witchcraft but what is stronger than love?

When Jordan was new I sat him in the palm of my hand the way I would a puppy, and I held him to my face and let him pick the fleas out of my scars.

He was always happy. We were happy together, and if he noticed that I am bigger than most he never mentioned it. He was proud of me because no other child had a mother who could hold a dozen oranges in her mouth at once.

How hideous am I?

(pp.24-26)

The significance of the fabulous Dog Woman is reinforced later in the novel by Jordan:

...When I think about her, or dream about her, she is always huge and I am always tiny. I'm sitting on her hand, the way she holds her puppies, and picking at her face for something, I don't know what. She's laughing, and so am I.

(p.79)

The Dog Woman tells us of her strength: in an argument with her neighbour, she finds:

...I had no choice but to strangle him, and though I used only one hand and held him from the ground at arm's length, he was purple in no time...

(p.28)

She muses on love:

What is love?... I am too huge for love. No one, male or female, has ever dared to approach me. They are afraid to scale mountains... I fell in love once, if love be that cruelty which takes us straight to the gates of Paradise only to remind us they are closed forever.

There was a boy who used to come by with a coatful of things to sell. Beads and ribbons hung on the inside and his pockets were crammed with knives and handkerchiefs and buckles and bright thread. He had a face that made me glad.

I used to get up an hour early and comb my hair, which normally I would do only at Christmas time in honour of our Saviour. I decked myself in my best clothes like a decked myself in my best clothes like a bullock at a fair, but none of this made him notice me and I felt my heart shrivel to the size of a pea. Whenever he turned his back to leave I always stretched out my hand to hold him a moment, but his shoulder blades were too sharp to touch. I drew his image in the dirt beside my bed and named all my mother's chickens after him.

Eventually I decided that true love must be clean love and I boiled myself a cake of soap...

I hate to wash, for it exposes the skin to contamination. I follow the habit of King James, who only ever washed his fingertips and yet was pure in heart enough to give us the Bible in good English.
I hate to wash, but knowing it to be a symptom of love I was not surprised to find myself creeping towards the pump in the dead of night like a ghoul to a tomb. I had determined to cleanse all of my clothes, my underclothes and myself. I did this in one passage by plying at the pump handle, first with my right arm and washing my left self, then with my left arm and washing my right self. When I was so drenched that to wring any part of me left a puddle at my feet I waited outside the baker's until she began her work and sat myself by the ovens until morning. I had a white coating from the flour, but that served to make my swarthy skin more fair.

In this new state I presented myself to my loved one, who graced me with all of his teeth at once and swore that if only he could reach my mouth he would kiss me there and then. I swept him from his feet and said 'Kiss me now,' and closed my eyes for father's shoe; it was only later that I began to grow, to make my swarthy skin more fair.

Well at this stage I guess we could say that the Dog Woman has a slightly different view of the world from that of your normal aspiring late twentieth century femocrat. If you do nothing else with this picture of her wondrous hugeness and energy and love, I want you at least to think of the Dog Woman in terms of power and the ways she takes and uses it. And I'd like you to think too, of the centrality of that power, the awesome certainty of it. The Dog Woman is at the centre of her own story; she sees herself in relation to nobody. But although we can perceive her as fixed and certain, her identity is fractured into at least one other manifestation in another time and space - the twentieth century. But that's another story. And her symbolic value is so great that she can come to represent elements of all women through time and through space. But those are other stories.

One of the fascinating things about this novel is that although the Dog Woman ridicules, strangles, castrates and murders any number of idiotic, ridiculous men who tangle with her, this is not simply a novel which has to oust and discredit the masculine in order to centralize women's experience, because the narrative is told not just by the Dog Woman, but alternately with Jordan. And Jordan's journeys are not ordinary journeys. Their astonishing fragility and whimsy contrasts strikingly with the earthiness of the Dog Woman's escapades. I am indebted to Stephanie Mitchell, one of my Women's Studies students, for the observation that this is not a novel which rejects the masculine to centralize the feminine. Rather, Winterson has created a chorus of voices and images in shifting perspectives of time and space with the feminine claiming itself an enormous energy that is inseparable from the masculine. On the first page of this novel it is Jordan who tells us:

_"Every journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made, but the ones I might have made, or perhaps did make in some other place or time._

Winterson plays constantly with the idea that language is a facade masking or inadequately expressing a multiplicity of realities. And...I discovered that my own life was written invisibly, was squashed between the facts, was flying without me like the Twelve Dancing Princesses who shot from their window every night and returned home every morning with torn dresses and worn out slippers and remembered nothing.
series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road.... The people who throng the streets shout at one another, their voices rising from the mass of heads and floating upwards towards the church spires and the great copper bells that clang the end of the day. Their words, rising up, form a thick cloud over the city, which every so often must be thoroughly cleansed of too much language. Men and women in balloons fly up from the main square and, armed with maps and scrubbing brushes, do battle with the canopy of words trapped under the sun.

(p.17)

Soon we learn that:

"In the city of words that I have told you about, the smell of wild strawberries was the smell characteristic of the house that I have not yet told you about.... The family who lived in the house were dedicated to a strange custom. Not one of them would allow their feet to touch the floor. Open the doors off the hall and you will see, not floors, but bottomless pits. The furniture of the house is suspended of racks from the ceiling; the dining table supported by great chains, each link six inches thick. To dine here is a great curiosity, for the visitor must sit in a gilded chair and allow himself to be winched up to join his place setting. He comes last, the householders already seated and making merry, swinging their feet over the abyss where crocodiles live.... It is well known that the ceiling of one room is the floor of another, but the household ignores this ever-downward necessity and continues ever upward, celebrating ceilings but denying floors, and so their house never ends and they must travel by winch from room to room, calling to one another as they go. It was there, dangling over dinner, that I noticed a woman whose face was a sea voyage I had not the courage to attempt.... I did not speak to her, though I spoke to all the rest, and at midnight she put on flat pumps and balanced the yards of rope without faltering. She was a dancer.... I spent the night in my suspended bed and slept badly. At dawn I was leaning out of the window, a rope around my waist. The moon was still visible: it seemed to me that I was closer to the moon than to the ground. A cold wind numbed my ears. Then I saw her. She was climbing down from her window on a thin rope which she cut and re-knotted a number of times during the descent. I strained my eyes to see her, but she was gone."  

(p.21)

Jordan's quest is to find the beautiful, elusive Fortunata whom he has just described. She is one of the twelve dancing princesses. Those of you who were lucky enough to see Chrissie Parrott's ballet, Terra, will recall the story of the Twelve Dancing Princesses who lived happily ever after, but not with their husbands. These princesses came directly from Sexing the Cherry. And in their stories, we have a rewrite of many of the fairy stories, the myths and legends which form part of our cultural inheritance.

Now I've quoted this episode in Jordan's life at length, partly for the sheer joy of hearing the words and visiting these wonderful ideas again, but also because I want to alert you to the whimsy and the fluidity of the masculine, and to the presence of such a wealth of realities in this novel. Jordan tells us:

"Time has no meaning, space and place have no meaning, on this journey. All times can be inhabited, all places visited."  

(p.80)

So - why tell you any of these stories? Why tease you with glimpses of a novel whose complexity is so great that any retelling must be an injustice? Because if we're talking about reconceiving woman, this is where it happens most readily - in art.

In Sexing the Cherry, for example, the very process of reading involves a shift from viewing women in relation to men, to viewing women as central, enduring, all powerful, and viewing exploitative, narrow thinking men as inconsequential and indeed in need of some kind of modification; while a few significant others like Jordan and the gardener Tradescant are seen to wield their own kind of power, but in ways which are complementary to women's power, not competitive with it. The point is, Winterson has completely replaced the usual masculine framework inside which most of our thinking about power and behaviour occurs, and replaced it with a wholly woman centred perspective, so that the Dog Woman is indeed the centre of her own story. The whole idea of reconceiving woman echoes on many levels in this novel: the title, Sexing the Cherry, apart from its obvious sexual overtones, refers quite explicitly to the practice (introduced to Jordan by the gardener Tradescant) of grafting a new strain of cherry onto an old one. As Jordan explains:

"Grafting is the means whereby a plant, perhaps tender or uncertain, is fused into a harder member of its strain, and so the two take advantage of each other and produce a third kind, without seed or parent...."  

And the significant finding for this argument is that when this seedless, parentless cherry is grafted, it is found to be female. Hence - sexing the cherry reveals that women are central, women will endure, women are resilient - because, as Jordan tells us further: "in this way certain fruits have been made resistant to disease and certain plants have learned to grow where previously they could not."  

(p.78)
So - the very title of this novel tells us that the end result of the elaborate process of creating new ways of growing, of being, is to find that woman is central - the newly grafted cherry tree is female. In addition, this novel plays around with the notion of our inheritance our language, our stories, revalu­
ing and replaying them for us in ways which make women inescapably present.

Well, where has all this come from? Of course this novel hasn’t just happened to appear out of an abyss. It seems to me that what’s happening in Sexing the Cherry is a celebration of the Other, In precisely the manner of postmodernist feminist theory. As Rosemarie Tong so succinctly stresses: Emphasis on the positive side of Otherness of being excluded, shunned, “frozen out”, disadvan­taged, unprivileged, rejected, unwanted, aban­
doned, dislocated, marginalized - is a major theme in deconstruction (an element of postmodernist theory that some of you will be familiar with). One of the very significant aspects of deconstruction is that it actively challenges the traditional bounda­
 ries between oppositions such as reason and emotion, beautiful and ugly, and self and other, as well as disciplines such as art, science, psychology and biology. I would suggest that Sexing the Cherry is a direct playing out of deconstructionist/postmodernist ideas. One of the ways this is signalled in the novel is that the symbols for male and female speakers are reversed: the Dog Woman’s speeches are signalled by a drawing of a phallic banana; the speeches of Jordan are sig­
nalled by a drawing of a fecund, round pineapple. As many of you know, according to postmodernist theory there is no truth, no fixed reality, no es­
 sence: time and space are fluid, identity is multi­ple: REALITY IS CONSTRUCTED.

And if this is so, then it can be reconstructed, reconceived to match our desires. The binary oppo­
sitions, phallocentrism, and logocentrism of organisational structures is challenged by these notions. So instead of women languishing in the shadow of successful men, wanting to learn how to acclimatize themselves so they are able to scrape a tiny crumb of the power cake, this approach indicates that it’s possible to reconceive power, to reshape its meaning; and to do this we have to place ourselves in the centre of our own stories, reconceiving ourselves as strong, worthy, enduring, capable even of growing where previously we could not. While the sociologists and organisational theorists are plugging away out there in the corpo­rate world, struggling with the idea of power from within the masculine ways of thinking about it, the most revolutionary changes, from my point of view, are happening in art, most particularly, for me, in the fictional world. The crippling universalising single reality demanded by organisational culture and the public workplace has been replaced in Winterson’s fictional world by a multiplicity of realities.

Winterson signals this again and again: she has Jordan say at the beginning:

For the Greeks, the hidden life demanded invisible ink. They wrote an ordinary letter and in between the lines set out another letter, written in milk. The document looked innocent enough until one who knew sprinkled coal-dust over it. What the letter had been no longer mattered; what mattered was the life flaring up undetected... till now.

(p.10)

Subversive thoughts indeed. It’s here, I would argue, in the versatile, fluid, fecund world of contemporary feminist fiction that feminist theory is most clearly played out: it’s here that the strongest, most enduring role models are created.

One of my favourite segments of this novel is a quite didactic statement called The Flat Earth Theory. I’m going to conclude with that, because it seems to me that it’s wise, challenging, and appropri­ately subversive. So - here goes -

The earth is round and flat at the same time. This is obvious. That it is round appears indisputable; that it is flat is our common experience, also indisputable. The globe does not supersede the map; the map does not distort the globe.

Maps are magic. In the bottom corner are whales; at the top, cormorants carrying popped fish. In between is a subjective account of the lie of the land. Rough shapes of countries that may or may not exist, broken red lines marking paths that are at best hazardous, at worst already gone. Maps are constantly being remade as knowledge appears to increase. But is knowledge increasing or is detail accumulating?

A map can tell me how to find a place I have not seen but have often imagined. When I get there, following the map faithfully, the place is not the place of my imagination. Maps, growing ever more real, are much less true. And now, swarming over the earth with our tiny insect bodies and putting up flags and building houses, it seems that all the jour­n eys are done.

Not so. Fold up the maps and put away the globe. If someone else had charted it, let them. Start another drawing with whales at the bottom and cormorants at the top, and in between identify, if you can, the places you have not found yet on those other maps, the connections obvious only to you. Round and flat, only a very little has been discovered.

(p.81)
Employer Sponsored Child Care - A Public Policy Perspective

Cathy Scott
*Edith Cowan University*

**Abstract**

Employer sponsored child care is a major initiative by the Commonwealth government in the provision of child care and can be viewed as assisting affirmative action policies within organisations. The paper provides an overview of the current extent to which this initiative has been developed in Australia, and in Western Australia in particular.

**Paper**

Employer sponsored child care has become a major emphasis in government child care policy in recent years. This form of child care has not been significant in the overall provision of child care in the past. This paper is based on research which explored some of the factors which motivate employers to provide child care for workers or those which act as barriers to this provision in Western Australia. The research seemed timely as the Commonwealth government and some State governments have been encouraging employers to develop child care services for their workers through various incentives and initiatives and there had been little research conducted in Western Australia in this area. My paper considers the broad context for this increasing emphasis on employer sponsored child care and then presents some of the data collected during the research.

**Context**

The move towards employer sponsored child care takes place in the context of social, political and economic changes. One of the major changes which has been identified by many writers in this area has been that of the changing composition of the work force. There has been significant increases in the entry of women, particularly women with children, into the paid labour market. The proportion of women in the paid work force has risen from 17% in 1954 to 53% in 1990. By mid 1989, 43% of all women and 41% of all men in the work force had dependent children (Wolcott, 1991: 7). The highest rates of growth for both labour force participation and the numbers in employment have been experienced by women with children under school age (Maas, 1989). Demand for child care places currently outstrips supply and a 1987 survey indicated that the parents of approximately 62,000 children would have preferred formal child care places for work related purposes (Maas, 1986).

A second area of change has been in government legislation and policy initiatives relating to equal employment opportunity and workers with family responsibilities. The Commonwealth’s Sex Discrimination Act and Affirmative Action Acts were introduced to help women achieve educational and vocational goals. Australia has also ratified the International Labour Organisation’s Convention 156 which requires its signatories to ‘aim for national policies which enable people to work without conflict between employment and family responsibilities’ (‘Child care’, 1990).

A third area of change has been in the Commonwealth government’s role as a provider of publicly funded child care. Since 1972 the Commonwealth has provided a national system of child care and continues to provide the most significant contribution to child care through funding for long day care, family day care, occasional day care and other forms of child care. During the 1970s and 1980s work related child care centres were opened. Unions, private developers and local councils were instigators in their establishment. The Commonwealth government funded a number of these centres where they were managed by non-profit incorporated organisations and were available to members of the general community (Adam, 1991). Generally they were established in close proximity to businesses such as in industrial parks.

Since 1983 there has been a rapid expansion in Commonwealth funded child care places which increased almost 60% during Labor’s first two years in office (Brennan and O’Donnell, 1986). However, during this period the Commonwealth has also linked the provision of child care to its broad economic and social policies. There has been an emphasis on the provision of child care places for work force participants and those undertaking education and training programmes with a view towards entering or reentering the work force (Brennan, 1991). Child care has been linked to
national directions to help single parents make the transition from welfare to the work force, accruing savings through reductions in transfer payments. During this time the Commonwealth has also been attempting to reduce expenditure.

During the 1980s the Commonwealth used a number of approaches to encourage employers to develop child care services. Current Commonwealth expectations are for the establishment of 14,000 centre based places under employer sponsorship by 1995/6. In the same period expectations are for 14,000 new places in commercial centres and 10,000 new places in publicly funded centres (Adam, 1991). A number of incentives have been offered to employers and private centres in recent years to increase the supply of child care places. In 1991 fee relief was extended to all child care centres which effectively provides a form of Commonwealth recurrent subsidy. Three child care advisory services have been established by the Commonwealth in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane to provide advice to organisations on employer sponsored child care options. Child care services provided by employers are Fringe Benefit Tax exempt if the employer retains control over the premises used for child care. There are also taxation concessions for a range of items such as depreciation on furniture and fittings, etc.

A fourth area which must be considered is the organisational context, because government initiatives rely on anticipated positive responses from industry. The economic recession and industry restructuring have resulted in an emphasis on productivity within organisations and also in increased levels of unemployment. There are links in the literature between employers addressing work and family conflicts and increases in productivity. At the same time organisations have a limited amount of 'attentional resources' (Miliken, Dutton and Beyer, 1990) and if industry restructuring takes the bulk of these resources then there is little left over for the range of issues which organisations have to address.

The research

Employer sponsored child care was defined in this study as child care to which the employer made direct financial contribution in order to meet the needs of workers with children. It was used synonymously with employer provided care. The form of child care varies and the child care service can be based on-site or in a location convenient to the organisation's workers.

The data collected during the research is based upon semi-structured interviews which were conducted with respondents from six Western Australian organisations. Three of these already had a child care service in operation, one was moving towards an on-site centre and two others were in the early stages of considering the way in which child care needs of workers within the organisation would be addressed. Three organisations were in the public sector and three in the private sector. The sample is small and it is difficult to determine its representativeness. However, the data collected does permit an identification of a range of possible factors which affected organisational decision making within this group and an examination of the most influential factors. I also conducted supplementary interviews with five individuals who I believed provided valuable reference data for the study.

The factors listed below affected organisations in their determination of whether a child care need existed within the organisation and the type of service that was offered:

- Financial costs and benefits
- Demographic characteristics of the actual or desired work force
- Size and geographic location
- Demand for child care
- Role of management
- Personal and organisational values
- Role of unions
- Role of government.

Today I would like to address those which were most important for the Western Australian organisations. Financial costs were important considerations in relation to child care initiatives. It was unlikely that any of the child care initiatives undertaken by organisations in the study could have proceeded unless they were likely to be of minimal cost or cost neutral for the organisation. Almost all the respondents in my study emphasised that costs of the child care service to the organisation had to be minimised. Most organisations assisted with establishment costs and absorbed some of the administrative costs of the child care service into their own administrative costs but once operational, the services had to be conducted on a cost recovery basis. In most cases this meant that the fees charged to parents covered the costs of care. Comprehensive costings for different types of child care services had been completed by a number of the organisations in this study prior to their decision on the appropriate type of service. Only one organisation intended to subsidise the ongoing costs of child care for their workers.

Related to the area of financial costs incurred in establishing the child care service is the issue of worker demand for child care. Employers were concerned that all places in child care services would be occupied as this ensures that fees charged to parents are kept to a minimum while at the same time covering all costs. Surveys of demand for services were used in all organisations in the study although the way in which data was collected varied. In two cases surveys of the local community had also been conducted to ensure that any spare capacity not taken up by parents...
within the organisation would be used by the local community.

Although many of those interviewed identified a range of benefits in the provision of child care, there had been little attempt to analyse the benefits of child care support to the organisation through reductions in absenteeism, turnover or any increase in productivity. The current economic climate, particularly the high level of unemployment, seemed to affect this attitude. The general belief among those surveyed seemed to be that child care could positively affect worker morale and productivity. This could reflect the high profile of these benefits in government publicity and United States research.

The size of the organisation was also of relevance to respondents for my study. Only one of the organisations which was currently committed to developing child care services for its workers employed under one hundred people. In Western Australia, size seemed to affect the ability of the organisation to respond to child care needs in a variety of ways. Most of the organisations had multiple sites with large numbers of workers at each of those sites and the development of specific child care initiatives could have a 'ripple effect' within the organisation. In addition, organisations with multiple sites were often significant local employers and this could lead to the provision of services which could also be used by the community. Finally, larger organisations had an infrastructure for the conduct of internal research into child care needs and a bigger 'pool' of children from which to fill child care places. My data also seemed to suggest a relationship between long-term planning and the size of the organisation. Although most of the organisations in this study indicated that the economic climate affected current planning, they were also planning for the longer term and were examining ways of retaining workers when the economy improved.

The personal values held by middle and senior management exerted a substantial influence on the organisation's involvement in child care was. These values are brought into the workplace from the broader culture and reflect personal experiences and 'ways of seeing' (Burton, 1992). Middle and senior managers were important initiators of child care within most of the organisations in my study. Their personal experiences as parents and workers within the organisation contributed to their attitudes regarding employer-sponsored solutions to child care problems and were also important in ensuring that any momentum to develop the services was maintained. The significance of management's role was even more critical given the actual and perceived negative attitudes of some workers within the organisation. These negative attitudes towards child care as a women's issue and towards women in the paid work place have the capacity to affect the organisation's involvement in child care services.

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Officially sanctioned organisational values were also cited by three respondents in this study as providing a framework for facilitating the establishment of child care services. There was a sense from these three respondents that the general statements of official values did provide a structure for considering the provision of child care which may not have existed before.

Another important factor in the Western Australian organisations in my study was the role of government. The influence of Commonwealth government in terms of publicity, financial and advisory support was evident during the interviews. The involvement of the public sector organisations in child care provision reflected the existence of guidelines for Commonwealth agencies which encouraged their participation in child care provision and also the effect of public sector unions in promoting employer-sponsored child care initiatives throughout Australia. One of the most important aspects of Commonwealth involvement was the link between organisation initiatives and the Commonwealth child care programmes. Thus organisations were developing links to the Family Day Care Schemes, After School and Vacation Care Programmes and Long Day Care Centres and were using these in some cases to provide a 'no-cost' or 'low-cost' child care referral service. In addition, existing Commonwealth consultancy services were accessed by some of the organisations and the extension of fee relief was cited as being important in assisting with costs. In contrast, however, there was no evidence that the State and Local levels of government were perceived to have been an important stimulus to organisations in developing child care services.

A factor which was prominent in the overseas research was the positive relationship between the number of women in the organisation's workforce and the adoption of child care initiatives. This was not apparent in my study. Only one organisation in the study employed more women than men workers. Nor in this study was there a preponderance of service-based industries in which large numbers of women are employed. There could be several reasons why there were few gender segregated industries in the sample for this study. The relationship between employer-sponsored child care and the size of the organisation could be more important in this State where most organisations are small in size. The lack of relation in the study sample between gender, type of industry and child care could also be due to organisations adopting 'ad hoc' flexible work arrangements which allowed workers to attend to child care problems when they occurred during working hours. An alternative explanation could be related to the inability of women to express their need for child care within the workplace, either because of negative perceptions of women who remain or enter the paid workforce or because women felt unable to do so due to their belief that their child care problems were their own responsibility.
The organisations in this study could be termed 'pacesetters' in their provision of child care. The data in the study revealed a number of factors which had also been identified in overseas or east coast Australia research. Assumptions about the effect of some of these in Western Australia had already been affecting child care provision in this state. For example, assumptions about size have assisted in the siting of three Commonwealth funded centres on the rim of the Central Business District. However, it would be fair to say that the number of employer sponsored child care programmes in Western Australia is quite small. The organisations have made substantial use of an infrastructure supported by Commonwealth funding. The personal values of managers have greatly assisted in the initiation and establishment of services and raises the issue of what happens in organisations where worker demand for child care exists but management is not supportive.

References


Disciplining Academia: Women academics and possibilities for change

Janine Collins
Griffith University

Abstract
When women take on positions as academics within Australian universities, they must negotiate their way through four major discourses. The oldest, the discourse of the traditional university, has left us with a legacy of ideas, concepts and structures which have all served to disadvantage women: the academic as 'abstract knower', objective seeker and purveyor of knowledge; 'hard' (masculine) and 'soft' (feminine) disciplines; and masculine hierarchies of power. Whether they adhere to a feminist viewpoint or not, women academics also operate within the two quite distinct discourses of feminism: that of 'sameness' which attempts to mainstream women into the male domain of the university through equality based strategies; and that of 'difference' or autonomy/identity, which seeks to subvert the masculine nature of universities and create new spaces for women. The fourth discourse is the inherently contradictory one of high education policy. Although confirming women's unequal status, the policy's masculine preoccupation with rationality, instrumentality and control, and its prioritisation of 'masculine' disciplines implicitly reproduces the view that the masculine way of 'knowing' and 'doing' is the only valid way of 'knowing' and 'doing'.

While a number of subject positions are available to women within these discourses, how these discourses are practised, how they intersect and interact with each other cannot be predicted. They will vary depending on factors such as the organisational structure, faculty mix, individual ideologies and the institution's overall philosophy. Universities can thus be regarded as 'sites of contest' in which masculine power structures, dominant for so long, are open to challenge. The 'fact' that women's participation across and within institutions in Australia is not uniform suggests, however, that some universities may be more open to challenge, and hence to change in power relations between men and women, than others. This 'work in progress' paper poses the question of whether a university whose organisational structure, philosophy and faculty mix were originally based on a 'problem-oriented' interdisciplinary approach to teaching offers more scope for intervention by women than the 'discipline based' approach of the traditional university.

Paper
I want to stress at the outset that this is a 'work in progress' paper. A PhD is what I'm working towards and as those of you who have been there would know, progress can be somewhat erratic at times. At this stage I seem to have more questions than answers. I do not, as all the male social scientists I know would say, have any valid data worth reporting. What you will be subjected to here today, then, are merely the machinations of my mind as it tries to develop a new framework for analysing gender relations as they are practised in universities today with particular emphasis on what this means for women academics.

In his text Gender and Power, Bob Connell argues that:

"[f]or the ultimate goal of the transformation of gender relations there are two logical candidates. One is the abolition of gender, the other its reconstitution on new bases"


While there is some sort of irony I expect in starting this talk with a quote from a man, in a sense it is both a quote and an act which is most appropriate to the topic. For me the feminist goal has always been a transformation of gender relations but despite the exciting work of feminist theorists such as Judith Butler (1990a & b) in subverting notions of a coherent gender, the abolition of gender seems a long way off in the practice of everyday life.

However incoherently or inconsistently constituted gender identity is in different historical or regional contexts, it would appear that we are still stuck, for the time being at least, with examining relations between different bodies in terms of dichotomies such as masculine/feminine, male/female, men/women. As yet there are no practical alternatives to these categories. So I will state at the outset that when I talk about 'academic woman' it is not because I believe in some essence of 'womanness' (or 'academicness' for that matter!) but that Connell's second suggestion seems the most practical solution at this point in time.

One would wonder when confronted by the vast array of literature on women academics that there
were any gaps left to explore - the literature is prolific to say the least. It is not my intention to bring you a tedious literature review but in reading even the vast number of feminist texts and articles which chart, from varying theoretical perspectives, the abysmal participation figures, the gender-related barriers, the conflicting views over the worth of equality based strategies, the revelations about the masculine nature of knowledge and the apparent embeddedness of male power, the political struggle over setting up women's studies courses, and the varying degrees of support women give each other, I was struck by the diversity of images that emerged. I began to wonder just who was she, this 'academic woman'?  

Was she the feminist activist confidently carving out a new space for herself and other women by challenging the basic premises of male-stream discourses? Was she the 'superwoman' who had added an academic career to her traditional responsibilities and who tried, with varying degrees of success, to do justice to all her competing obligations (Jensen, 1982; Moses, 1991) without altering the structures in any way? Could she have been the bright young student of Moses' research, turned off an academic career because she could see how overworked her superwoman role model was? (So much for sex role theory!)

Or maybe she was the young 'unattached' woman who Jensen found 'fitted in' to academia by trying to perfect dominant academic norms (which I think is a polite way of saying surrogate male)? I particularly liked the one who, like many a male God-professor before her, was excited at the prospect of shaping the organisation in her own image! (Jensen, 1982:81). Was she one of those high status academics I now see around me who does all in her power to support her academic sisters? Or perhaps one of those successful Queen Bees Poiner (1983) and Wieneke (1991) tell us about, who offer no support to academic women down the ladder because, after all, if she made it through the system, there's nothing wrong with the system is there? You just have to put the ladder away after you, that's all (Dale, ND).

This academic woman was a contradictory creature. I had to admit. She seemed to be all of these women and yet no particular one of them. Not only was she different from academic man, she was different from other academic women. 'Academic woman', it seems, has been constructed as 'woman' has at any other point in history: both victim and agent, powerless and powerful, she appears to both participate in and resist events or acts which attempt to regulate her (Smart, 1992).

Poststructuralist theorists argue that 'woman' is contradictory because she is not the unified, fixed, autonomous being that liberal humanists would have us believe exists outside of any social or historical contexts. Rather she is a site of conflict and disunity; brought into being by various socio/historical discourses (Smart, 1992; Weedon, 1987). Despite the notions of determinism implicit in this concept, woman is not, however, without a sense of agency. As Carol Smart points out:

Not only have there always been contradictory discursive constructs of Woman at any one time, thus allowing Woman herself to be contradictory, but the subject, Woman, is not merely subjugated; she has practised the agency of constructing her subjectivity as well. Woman is not merely a category, she is also a subject positioning within which there is room for manoeuvre (Smart, 1992:7-8).

But if it was so difficult to pin down 'academic woman', what justification was there for attempting to include her in some homogeneous category labelled 'academic women' who continues to struggle against the patriarchal misdemeanours of that other apparently homogeneous group that nobody has ever thought to categorise as 'academic men'? (They are simply 'academics' are they not?) And how was it possible to analyse women's difference vis-à-vis other women and vis-à-vis men without falling back on some version of socialisation theory (with its inherent reliance on the liberal humanist notion of a unified, autonomous individual) to explain the apparent contradictions?

The answer was provided, in part, by a number of feminist theorists (see, for example, Brown, 1991; Fouque, 1991; Phelan, 1991) who have recently begun to argue that it is possible to acknowledge difference, diversity, even specificity within the category labelled women without a commitment to liberal concepts of the individual and a universal female essence. Yet as Elaine Jeffrey points out:

The recognition of differences between women poses a formidable and paradoxical task for feminist theory. It has to account for the difference between women and men, and also account for the differences that exist between women. It must acknowledge that 'woman' is not an undifferentiated category yet construct a theory able to realise the totalising goal of liberation for all women (1991:14).

The persistent problem appears to be not a failure to come to grips with the notion of a non-unitary subject or the idea that femininity and masculinity "are not fixed features located exclusively in men and women" (Pringle, 1989:174) but that systematic gender differences are continually reproduced and gendered subject positions remain relatively fixed. Both socialisation or sex role theory and psychoanalytically informed feminist work have attempted to explain this relative fixity of gender difference. It is not my intention to engage with either of these positions. Rather I was more than willing to join the growing throng of theorists who suggested abandoning grand theorising "in favour of more detailed, small-scale, historically specific analyses" (Smart, 1992:2) which are more attuned...
Discovering ‘why’ women were under-represented as academics as compared to men no longer seemed an appropriate research focus. Rather it seemed more appropriate to look instead at ‘how’ women academics have been constructed by and are negotiating their positions within the often contradictory discourses within which they must operate and to ask ‘what’ changes in gender relations have occurred/are occurring within the boundaries of these discourses. Implicit in this new focus was the notion of uncovering ‘what’ differences exist between women academics and asking ‘how’ these differences might impact on their negotiating strategies.

It is obviously a research focus which requires a move away from both sociological and psychoanalytically informed theories. It is also a research focus which requires a move away from the notion of power that has dominated much of the literature on women: that power is a commodity that is possessed by men and unilaterally imposed on women (Pringle, 1989). Rather it is a position which turns on three inter-related poststructuralist theoretical premises which, while they may themselves seem like ‘grand theorising’, nevertheless offer the possibility of a more detailed understanding of relations between genders and hence possibilities for change.

The first is the fundamental idea that both institutional structures and individuals are mutually constituted (Muetzelfeldt, 1990), a notion which enables us to analyse both structures and individuals (and changes that occur within both) without suggesting that one is exclusively determined by the other. The second is the Foucauldian inspired notion that “gender relations are a process involving strategies and counter-strategies of power” (Pringle, 1989:168). Although he was not greatly interested in analysing gender (if there was no unitary subject, how could there be a gendered subject?), Michel Foucault’s notion of power is useful in understanding relations between women and men (Pringle, 1989; Weeden, 1987).

“Intermingled with other types of relations” (Foucault, ND:55), power is not a commodity that is possessed by some and not by others. Rather all of us have the capacity to either exercise or resist power. The deciding factor in individual situations comes down not to who ‘possesses’ power but rather who has the ‘upper hand’ in a given situation and who mobilises this advantage more effectively (Muetzelfeldt, 1990).

The third theoretical premise comes from Judith Butler’s (1990a & b) notion that gender is not a biological given but rather a series of repeated acts or performances which, because of their constant repetition over time, become naturalised and, consequently, ‘fixed’. As Anna Yeatman put it so succinctly yesterday, gender is not what we ‘are’ but rather what we ‘do’. If we take this view, then not only are changes in relations between men and women possible, the gender performances of men and women themselves are open to change. Hence Connell’s notion of the reconstitution of gender on new bases becomes a distinct possibility.

The task that remained was to find a framework within which an historically specific (in this case contemporary) analysis of gender relations within Australian universities could be carried out; that is, to identify first in which discourses academic woman has been ‘brought into being’ and how she has been constructed or represented within those discourses before looking at what possibilities for change existed either within or at the intersection of these discourses.

**The Framework**

Although a variety of interactive discourses (eg the family, the educational system, the media, religion) undoubtedly impact on the actions women take, when women work as academics within higher education institutions in Australia today, they operate at the intersection of four major discourses.

**Traditional University**

The first, and oldest, is the discourse of the ‘traditional’ university within which academic woman has been constructed in a number of ways which rely on traditional notions of a woman’s nature and a woman’s place in society. Within this discourse we have hierarchical structures that are decidedly masculine (as we understand the term); the organisational structure is based, formally, on a committee structure which ensures a systematic filtering out of input from lower status staff (include women here), and, informally, on an old boys network which many believe to be the primary cause of discriminatory employment and promotion procedures. The job model and career structure (eg long hours for research which is regarded as more prestigious than teaching, being seen at the most prestigious conference, usually away from home [McDowell, 1990]) have traditionally assumed support (include the adjective female here) in the domestic sphere or, at least, non-interference of ‘private concerns’.

The traditional organising principle for academic work is the discipline. Yet as science and technology have, over time, replaced languages as the mechanism for sorting the ‘men from the boys’, we have seen the emergence of either ‘hard’ (read masculine) or ‘soft’ (read feminine) disciplines which are prioritised in favour of the masculine. Because of the long tradition of excluding women from public debate, most of the knowledge produced and disseminated by universities is also said to be masculine (see, for example, Kelly and Slaughter, 1991; Poineer, 1983).
While many feminists were later to argue that 'objective' was synonymous with 'male subjective', the whole discourse of the traditional university is premised on the idea of the academic as abstract knower, objective seeker and purveyor of knowledge. Within this discourse the values of competitiveness and individualism were to become highly regarded. Yet it is only the male who has traditionally been represented as rational, objective knower. Academic woman, on the other hand, is represented as, if not downright irrational, at the very least as subjective, and one who values qualities such as collectivity and nurturance (Bulbeck, 1991). In line with these 'attributes', she was (and arguably still is) more often than not clustered in the lower levels of the so-called feminine disciplines such as the humanities and teaching, often expected to play "nursenmaid to first year students or adjutants to male academics, as research assistants, tutors, demonstrators" (Bulbeck, 1991:35), "responsible for the transmission of non-controversial knowledge ... while [her] male colleagues teach in new and exciting areas and educate the graduate students" (Whitlock & Bulbeck, 1988:163).

As Tony Schirato points out, when women are defined in terms of the negative side of various binaries (rational/irrational, objective/subjective) and the university valorizes the positive sides of those binaries (rational, objective) women are constructed as a marginal group within the institution. Undoubtedly there are women who have 'made it' (or almost made it) to the top within this traditional university discourse. Schirato argues, however, that "those women who are allowed in as full members of the [university] community are accepted because they are different from women, because they are superior to women; that is to say they have demonstrated that they are like men" (Schirato, 1991:145). This idea appears as an underlying tension within feminist discourse which is also at work within universities.

The Two Discourses of Feminism

Feminist discourse can be separated into two quite distinct discourses: that of 'sameness' or equality which attempts to mainstream women into the male domain of the university through equality based strategies; and that of 'difference' or autonomy/identity, which seeks to subvert the masculine nature of the traditional objective knower and knowledge and create new spaces for women, often through affirmative action strategies.

Sameness

Adherents to the sameness model, which is largely underwritten by socialisation or sex role theories, argued that while women were, intellectually, no different from men, their life experiences certainly were. Once those structural barriers like discriminatory selection procedures and sexist language were removed, once we had more women 'at the top' to serve as role models, and once we all had access to on-campus child care etc. etc., that nebulous thing called equality would be achieved, they argued. Woman's place as academic on equal terms with men would be assured. The philosophy behind this 'sameness' model, seemed to say, as Carol Bacchi (1990:82) notes, that once females were educated and treated in the same way as males "they would develop the strength and assertiveness needed to succeed in a system which demanded these qualities". This discourse tends to construct academic woman as someone who needs to be more like academic man, someone who has to "fit in" to the established structures if she is to succeed.

Difference

While acknowledging that equality based strategies have been necessary for 'getting women in' to male domains, feminist advocates of the 'difference' perspective remain convinced of the limitations of these measures. As Eisenstein says, policies based on sex role theory appear to risk the all too successful assimilation of women "into an unchanged structure embodying masculine values" (Eisenstein, 1985:107). The early feminist literature shows that there were many women who wanted their values and their knowledges recognized and were prepared to engage in political struggle to achieve this recognition - the difficulties of obtaining support for feminist research and setting up Women's Studies courses are well documented (Allen, 1991; Bulbeck, 1987, 1991; Matthews & Broom, 1991; McNamee, 1991). Within this discourse academic woman is constructed as someone to be valued in her own right, different from academic man, and in more recent debates different from other academic women. Although constrained by the limitations of the traditional male structures she is nevertheless someone with a strong sense of agency.

Higher Education Policy

The fourth discourse is the often contradictory one of higher education policy. Policy has often been described as the 'authoritative allocation of values', which of course begs the question of "whose values are validated in policy, and whose are not" (Ball, 1990a:3). On the one hand current higher education policy presents a very masculine discourse of competitiveness, rationality, instrumentality and control in its push to prioritise the masculine fields of science and technology, force amalgamations ('bigger' is 'better' - a sexual metaphor?), centralise bureaucratic control, commercialise academic activities, and encourage short-term contract labour, all of which stand to have a detrimental effect on women in academic employment. On the other hand, the policy document recognises women's difference by cautioning institutions to remember their obligations under the Affirmative...
In the discourse of current higher education policy, academic woman seems to be constructed purely in masculine economic rationalist terms - a largely 'untapped resource' to be utilised in time of economic need (much as women were during World War II). The literature which accompanied the release of the Dawkins' White Paper, however, constructed academic woman much more forcefully as once again a victim of masculine values (see Blackmore & Kenway, 1988; Junor, 1988-89; Kenway & Blackmore, 1988; Marginson, 1989; Yeatman, 1988) and consequently one who must adhere to the traditional 'masculine model' of academic if she was to succeed.

While the noticeable difference in the literature at this time is that there were many more women in so-called 'positions of power' who were willing and able to speak out of behalf of academic women (and, it must be noted, some men prepared to do the same), as Judith Allen points out, the strategies contained within higher education policy 'look periously close to a contempt for the feminine and applause for the masculine as they currently prevail, all in the name of economic rationalism' (Allen, 1991:10). The policy implicitly reproduces the values of the traditional university discourse: that the masculine way of 'knowing' and 'doing' is the only valid way of 'knowing' and 'doing'.

Methodology (or 'The How to Actually Put it Into Practice' section)

Discourse analysis at a less abstract level than that of the broad discourses I have been discussing here offers a way of analysing the 'workings of power' at both an institutional and Individual level. As Stephen Ball (1990b:2) points out: 'Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority'. Analysis of Individual institution's written documentation is necessary in order to assess what is said and thought about 'academic woman' within a particular university, what authority she has to speak within the institution, which discourse, if any, is dominant, and what possibilities for intervention are offered to women within the institution's organisational structure. Within this framework, documentation includes recorded histories and statistical records as well as institutional responses to relevant government policies such as those contained within affirmative action management plans, mission statements, staffing policies, and relevant minutes of meetings.

Listening to what individual women have to 'say' about their experiences and actions within particular universities is, however, equally as important as analysing written discourse. As Wendy Brown (1991:72) points out, dispensing with the notion of a unified subject does not mean that we cease "to be able to speak about our experiences as women, only that our words cannot be legitimately deployed or construed as larger or longer than the moments of the lives they speak from". Consequently interviews with women faculty staff are seen as an invaluable way of assessing gender relations within a particular university and 'teasing out' some of the differences that exist between women academics and the actions they take both in and across the different faculties.

No analysis of gender relations or 'gender performances' would, however, be complete without also recording the experiences and actions of men. As no systematic attempt to assess the extent of change in gender performances in male academics, that is how male academics are currently 'doing' their gender within universities has, to my knowledge, been undertaken, interviews with a male academics as well as analysis of verbal discourse such as that which occurs between women and
men in meetings and recordings of snippets of conversation are seen as adding the final necessary dimension to any analysis of gender relations.

Progress to date
While this study will eventually expand to include an examination of three institutional sites, my research to date been confined to an examination of a university whose organisational structure, philosophy and faculty mix were based on a 'problem-oriented' interdisciplinary approach to teaching. The notion that will be explored from this is whether such an institution offers more scope for intervention by women than either the 'discipline-based' approach of an old and traditionally structured university or the 'school-based' structure of a former college of advanced education which has recently been granted university status.

The university I have been looking at is Griffith University in Brisbane. The philosophy behind the university, which began teaching its first undergraduate courses in 1975, was that it should offer an 'alternative' type of tertiary education; alternative, that is, to the traditional or conventional university in both structure and courses offered and alternative, more particularly, to that which was offered by the University of Queensland, a large and well-established traditional university also located in Brisbane.

Teaching programs at this new university were to involve a multi-disciplinary, problem-oriented approach rather than the traditional approach of teaching and studying in specified subject areas. As a result, Griffith adopted the 'school' as its basic academic unit rather than the conventional department (Margetson, 1984). Its primary sub-division, therefore, was seen in terms of themes or sets of problems which were perceived to exist in the 'outside' world. Such a structure supposedly encouraged an openness to significant and contemporary issues and was supposed to result in multi-disciplinary schools in which students and staff could concentrate on 'real world' problems and complexities (Willett, 1984). Representatives of particular disciplines were therefore to be found in more than one school rather than concentrated or 'isolated' in separate disciplinary areas.

The new structure was also an attempt to minimise some of the dysfunctions of the traditional university. For example, it attempted to do away with the pyramidal committee structure and all staff were encouraged to participate in 'collective' decision-making. This "participatory democracy" as it was called (Segall, 1984:44) also extended to teaching, with collective or team teaching the norm within schools. Common rooms were also egalitarian affairs, with staff and students mingling. Minimal status was accorded to rank within the university (i.e. no God-professors were to be found [Henry, 1984]). Although described by some as utopian (Henry, 1984:53), it was a structure and philosophy which could also be described as 'feminine' reifying as it did on the so-called feminine value of collectivity. It should have provided the ideal climate for taking on board the 'gender problem' and for promoting social change. Such has not necessarily been the case across the university although the situation is far from grim. The University did make an early commitment to the principles of equal opportunity while the (at the time) relatively high participation rate of women at Griffith prompted an invitation in 1984 for the University to participate in the Federal Government's affirmative action pilot scheme (GU, 1991). Nevertheless the problems associated with getting the gender studies concentration area up and running in 1985 are well-documented and highlight the fact that despite the University's commitment to the principles of equality, men have been granted the privilege of speaking with far more authority than women have, even in subject areas in which they are not qualified to speak with any authority (see eg Bulbeck 1987, 1991).

Undoubtedly Griffith's 'difference' was linked not only to its philosophy but its size. While the original planning committee did not anticipate future enrolments exceeding 8,000 full-time students, Griffith's response to the Dawkins White Paper has meant the University has virtually changed overnight. Over the past few years it has amalgamated with four other institutions and now has six campuses between Mackay and the Gold Coast and 12,000 EFTSUs. It now boasts a conservatorium of music and college of art as well as the professional activities of law, nursing and education. This expansion of course hasn't been without its problems. Nevertheless, there are enough remnants of the early philosophy and structures left to enable a comparison between Griffith and a more traditional university, and to suggest that Griffith may offer women more space for intervention in the masculine structures than might be available elsewhere.

As the previous comments suggest, analysis of written documentation is revealing much about what this university has to say about women. As might be expected, the picture that is emerging so far is a contradictory one - academic woman is variously constructed in different texts as an interloper in a male domain or, paradoxically, as someone who has much to offer and is valued in her own right. For example, affirmative action policies undoubtedly value women and respect their traditional commitments to their families. They are specifically designed to accommodate women's different experiences and needs, particularly in regard to pregnancy and child-rearing (e.g. fractional appointments, leave provisions). Nevertheless such policies do not threaten the validity of the male job model in any significant way. Indeed there is mention made within the University's Affirmative Action Management Plan (Phase II,
of the difficulties faced by the institution in dealing with fractional appointments and flexible leave provisions - 'woman's difference' is obviously something of a 'nuisance' in this regard. While the management plan provides practical suggestions for overcoming these problems, these suggestions ultimately rely on the provision of further resources which in turn must come from scarce government funding.

The structure and philosophy of the university do, however, appear to offer more space for intervention and change than other more traditionally structured universities. Although women often have to rely on the language or concepts of traditional university discourse when attempting change, participatory decision-making, the problem oriented approach to teaching (where such an approach is indeed practised), appointment to a faculty rather than a concentration area, and team teaching all allow women the opportunity for articulating 'difference' and 'diversity' and for early intervention in the production of knowledge. For example, one female academic's feminist reading of the expression of student anger/unease over gender inequality issues raised in the Humanities compulsory Foundation Year course is an interesting use of strategy for change. By making the distinction "between men and masculinity, and women and femininity" she managed to depersonalise these issues, thus providing "a safe place from which both male staff and students could address the issues". Indeed it was, she says, "the space that western philosophy allocates to men, that of detached observer and knower of the world" (Bulbeck, 1991:31).

However, while team teaching may mean that men are unable to ignore gender issues, gender balance in this area has by no means been achieved. While women in one faculty are no longer expected to pay their way to first year students, and indeed are heavily involved in postgraduate teaching and supervision, they are still very much adjuncts to male academics. Although women make up only 34% of the faculty staff, they carry out 47% of the teaching load in undergraduate courses (figures provided by Prof. J J Bailey, 1992). Because of the closing of the gap between private and public in the gender studies area, women faculty members are also more likely to become involved in student's personal problems. Feminist academics do not see this as a problem. On the contrary it has been suggested that it is men who should develop more of the so-called feminine skills of nurturance, understanding and communication (Bulbeck, 1991). Women are undoubtedly perceived as different from men within this faculty and the word is that men should be become more like women if they are to make really successful academics!

Some academic areas obviously offer greater scope for intervention than others. For example, while in 1991 the Faculty of Commerce and Administration offered, among other things, four out of five of its divisional research fellowships to women who had the potential but had not had the opportunities to advance their careers, the major affirmative action achievement for the Faculty of Science and Technology in 1991 was the provision of four car parking spaces close to the buildings for women who lectured part-time for the Faculty in the evenings (AA Report, 1992). As Grosz and de Lepervanche (1988) point out, despite the increasing participation by women, science remains a male dominated discipline. It is a 'problem' which appears to have been 'avoided' early in Griffith's history, in part, I suspect, because of the inability of the original School of Science to adopt an interdisciplinary, problem oriented approach to teaching (Segall, 1984) and thus its isolation from the University's underlying philosophy.

In contrast to science, education has long been regarded as a feminine discipline. However, despite having one of the most comprehensive affirmative action programmes in the University, the Faculty recently failed to attract any female applicants for the position of Deputy Dean. In speaking to this issue, the Vice Chancellor agreed the University still had a long way to go to achieve gender balance, particularly at senior level (Council Meeting, 5/10/92). Again the rhetoric is there, but the action and results seem to be missing.

However, there are some very positive things happening for women within the University. For example the Australian Institute for Women's Research and Policy (AIWRAP) was established in 1991 with $30 000 annual funding from the Vice Chancellor as well as substantial contributions from the six participating faculties. With the Humanities Faculty as its first host, and Humanities Professor Judith Allen, Australia's first appointed Chair in Women's Studies, as its first Director (and, I must add, ably directed by Dr Chilla Bulbeck in Prof. Allen's absence), AIWRAP is committed to fostering women's research interests at both faculty and postgraduate level and to fostering relations between women researchers and faculties across the University (via seminars etc). AIWRAP also sees itself as being beneficial in developing links between women academics, government and industry - links which are necessary if women are to participate in consultative work as encouraged by the present higher education policy (Humanities AA Report, 1991). AIWRAP is also using the language of equity in its attempts to bring in larger grants in gender areas to support individuals in teams and to instigate discussions on gender blind structures with the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET). Rather than falling victim to the masculine values implicit in Higher Education Policy, women working in this area are utilizing the discourse of government policy to create new spaces for women and bring about positive changes in gender relations.
Doubtless this type of action is having its rewards. While interviews with faculty staff remain a task for the future, preliminary observation of meetings has revealed that some men at Griffith are trying to ‘do’ their gender differently, thereby acknowledging ‘difference’ and ‘diversity’ and allowing greater scope for changes in relations between men and women. On the other hand, there are those who would obviously prefer to see women still ‘doing their gender’ at home. Sexist remarks about women’s behaviour are not uncommon while at work. One meeting two male staff members (who, I must add, were also only observers as opposed to members) further devalued women by chatting quite loudly to each other each time discussion focused on women or equity issues involving staff and students. In contrast, in those few meetings that I have observed, women committe members were far less likely to speak than men in meetings in which they were under-represented, while in meetings where they were represented in equal numbers to men, women still ‘spoke’ for less than half the time that men did.

One mechanism for control within the University continues to be that of the ‘individual male’, that is, those men who resent the ‘intrusion’ of women in their male domain and use their positions of greater power to thwart any possible changes in the way gender relations are practised. Women trying to bring about change (e.g. through participation in decision-making committees) are then forced to develop more sophisticated counter strategies to achieve their goals than would be necessary with more egalitarian minded men. For example, women’s actions or suggestions can be made to appeal to these individual males if they rely on or appear to reinforce values, notions or the rhetoric of either traditional university discourse or the masculine discourse of current higher education policy rather than on notions of women’s difference (e.g. justifying funding for a project in the name of ‘quality of education’ rather than ‘equity’).

It is too early to tell yet which discourse is dominant in this particular University. While I must stress that what I have presented here today are only preliminary findings, they nevertheless point the way for a successful utilization of this framework. It is obvious even from this early research that the four identified discourses are at work within the university, they do interact and intersect and possibilities for positive change do exist within them. While I will no doubt encounter my share of problems working within this framework, I believe the project has the potential to offer a new reading of gender relations as they are practised in universities in Australia today which may, in turn, enable us to develop and suggest strategies, structures and policies which do allow for more ‘equal’ relationships between men and women within academia in the future.

Watch this space!

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Note:
Discourses (or discursive formations as they are also known), are defined here in the Foucauldian sense as bodies of knowledge or systems of rules and the mutually constituted ways in which that knowledge or those rules are expressed or represented so that some things appear as true and other things either do not appear at all or are made out to be false (Muetzelfeldt, 1990). For Foucault (1974) discourse analysis involved asking why certain statements and not others appeared at particular times and in particular institutional settings.
The Glass Ceiling - Applicable in Academia

Alison Sheridan
University of New England

Abstract
Despite the fact affirmative action legislation has been operational in high education institutions since 1 October 1986, women are still underrepresented, particularly at senior academic levels, in all Australian universities. In this paper, the University of New England, Armidale (UNE-Armidale) is used as a case study to explore whether the "glass ceiling" issue is relevant to academia.

Firstly, a comparison is made between the status of women in academic positions at UNE-Armidale both before and after the affirmative action legislation. As well, the status of women in academic positions at UNE-Armidale is compared with the national average. The proportion of women at UNE-Armidale across most senior academic levels is less than the national average of universities, but greater than the national average for Level A academics. It seems that UNE-Armidale does not have a problem attracting women to the lower academic levels, rather the problem appears to be attracting and promoting women to the more senior academic positions. In the next section of the paper there is a discussion of the possible factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior academic positions in all universities, and UNE-Armidale in particular. Finally, useful strategies that could be adopted to improve the representation of women in senior academic positions are canvassed.

Paper
Women are underrepresented, particularly at senior academic levels, in all Australian universities, in the University of New England, Armidale (UNE-Armidale) is no exception. In fact, the proportion of women at UNE-Armidale across most senior academic levels is less than the national average of universities. The aim of this paper is to review the factors which may be operating within Australian universities generally, and UNE-Armidale in particular, to sustain the imbalance of women in senior academic positions and suggest alternatives to counter this imbalance. The first part of the paper compares the status of academic women at UNE-Armidale before and after affirmative action legislation and with other Australian universities. The arguments commonly put forth to explain the poor representation of women in senior academic positions are then reviewed before examining particular factors which may be contribute to the "glass ceiling" which limits opportunities available to academic women.

Academic Women 1984 vs 1992
In 1984, the Equal Opportunity Unit of the (then single campus) University of New England compiled a gender profile of the academic staff by Faculty and Department based on information contained in the University handbook. At that time, women made up only 15.5 percent of total academic staff. As seen in Table 1, however, they were heavily concentrated in the lower academic levels. A reverse order of representation is evident in the table, that is, proportionately more of the female staff are found in the lowest status categories. There were no women at Level E. Women made up only 5 percent of the staff at Level D, 2 percent of the staff at Level C, 16 percent of the Level B staff, while at Level A women represented 41 percent of the staff. (For ease of comparison, the titles of staff were adjusted to reflect the currently accepted titles.)

Listing of forenames of staff in the University handbook is now seen as discriminatory and all staff are listed by surname and initials only. Consequently, collection of gender information from the University handbook is no longer possible. Madison (1992) collected the gender information of all academic staff included in the 1992 UNE-Armidale handbook by personally contacting every department—a very time consuming method of collection, but the only option available. Her findings indicate that in 1992 women make up 27 percent of the academic staff, and they are still heavily concentrated at the lower academic levels.

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>1984</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lev A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>149</td>
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Table 1
Academic Women, UNE-Armidale

women in leadership conference 1992
In Table 2, these figures are broken down on a Faculty basis. The Faculty of Education, Nursing & Professional Studies has the greatest proportion of women in academic positions. The changing representation of women across academic levels is somewhat clouded by the amalgamation of the old CAE and UNE in 1989. Traditionally, the CAE had a greater representation of female academic staff than UNE, so amalgamation of the two institutions resulted in an increased representation of women in academic positions, predominantly in the Faculty of Education, Nursing & Professional Studies.

If one looks only at those Faculties which did not gain staff from the CAE, that is the Faculty of the Sciences and the Faculty of Economics, Business & Law, the proportion of women in academic positions has remained relatively constant across the eight year period, with the exception of Level A where women have increased their representation from 37 percent to 53 percent. (See Table 3.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Proportion of Academic Women by Faculty, UNE-Armidale, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'84</td>
<td>'92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev E</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev D</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev C</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev B</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev A</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in Faculty</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Following amalgamation, the Faculty of Arts was enlarged to include certain staff from the Armidale CAE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The 1984 figures are from the then Faculty of Education. Following amalgamation, this Faculty became Education, Nursing and Professional Studies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To make a direct comparison between 1984 and 1992 possible, the Faculties of Resource Management, Rural Science and Science were summed to give the 1984 Faculty of Science numbers included here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would seem that since the enactment of the affirmative action legislation in 1986 there has not been a significant improvement in the status of academic women at UNE-Armidale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Academic Women in the Faculties of Sciences and Economics, Business &amp; Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lev E</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev B</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev A</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[These are the Faculties not directly affected by amalgamation.]

A further issue of concern relates to the proportion of male and female academics who have tenure. These data were not readily available from UNE-Armdale, but Allen (1990) cites statistics collected by DEET from all universities in 1987 which indicate that 50 percent of academic staff are tenured men, whereas tenured women make up only 6.7 percent of total academic staff. The remaining 43 per cent of academic staff are full-time and part-time men and women. A similar scenario appears to hold at UNE-Armdale; for instance, there is only one tenured female academic in the Faculty of Economics, Business & Law. The other 20 academic women in the Faculty are untenured. In contrast, 45 of the 67 academic men employed in the Faculty are tenured. The importance of tenure is recognised by Allen (1990).

"Tenured senior academics have job security, superannuation, and a range of leave provisions such as study, long-service and parental leave provisions vary between States and individual institutions, access to research grants and greater opportunities for promotion. They participate in university decision-making which confers considerable control over conditions of work."

(p.7).

Untenured academics, of which proportionately more are women, generally do not enjoy the same entitlements to leave, superannuation or other work conditions, nor do they have the same input into university-wide or faculty-wide decision-making as their tenured counterparts.

**UNE-Armdale Relative to Other Universities**

Affirmative action legislation has been operational in higher education institutions since 1 October, 1986. With respect to increasing the proportion of women in senior academic positions, some universities appear to have achieved more than UNE-Armdale. Gale & Lindemann (1989) note that:
“under the same legislative requirements and theoretically the same academic appointment procedures there are vast differences in the results achieved from one university to another” (p.3).

As is clear from Table 4, the proportion of women at UNE-Armidale is less than the national average in the categories of Level E, Level C and Level B. For Level D academics, UNE-Armidale is on par with the national average, while at Level A, UNE-Armidale has a higher proportion of women than the national average.

Table 4
Proportion of Academic Women, 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All Universities</th>
<th>UNE-Armidale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lev E</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev D</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev C</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev B</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev A</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It seems then that UNE-Armidale does not have a problem in attracting women at the lower levels. Rather, the problem appears to be attracting and promoting women to the more senior academic positions. A “glass ceiling” - or invisible barrier – appears to be restricting women’s chances of senior appointment or promotion.

In Table 5, the position of UNE-Armidale relative to other Australian universities with respect to the proportion of senior women academics (that is, Level C academics and above) is presented. Given the relatively poor performance of UNE-Armidale, the issue of low representation of women in senior academic positions generally, is of particular interest to the academic women at UNE-Armidale.

Table 5
% of Senior Women Academics by University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNE</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANU</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cook</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Trobe</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deakin</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Why Women are Clustered In the Lower Levels

The issue of women's lack of representation in senior academic positions has received considerable attention over the last ten years (Davies, 1982; Cass et al, 1983; Everett & Entrekin, 1987; Grimes, 1987; Maling, 1990; Mares, 1990; Allen, 1990). Allen (1990) summarises the major arguments put forth to explain the clustering of women in the lower levels of academia as:

1) Selection and promotion procedures in academic employment;
2) Low levels of turnover in academic employment;
3) Women's reluctance to apply for positions;
4) Incompatibility of academic employment and domestic responsibilities; and
5) Sex-based differences in academic merit.

In the following sections, Allen's review of the content and validity of these arguments will be examined.

Selection and Promotion Procedures

Since the introduction of the Affirmative Action legislation in 1986, most universities have reviewed their selection and promotion procedures for permanent or long-term contract positions to ensure they are consistent with equal employment opportunity principles.

For instance, at UNE-Armidale there is now a detailed set of academic selection procedures for Level B positions and above which are circulated to all members of selection committees. The material consists of the following:

(i) information relating to the processes that must be adhered to prior to the advertisement of the position;
(ii) details about the advertising requirements (the minimum requirement for advertising a position must be inclusion of an advertisement in the Wednesday edition of The Australian and three suitably qualified women must be advised of the advertisement);
(iii) the composition of the selection committee (which must include at least two women in the six member committee);
(iv) instructions that members of the selection committee cannot act as referees for applicants;
(v) notice of the confidentiality of the selection process;
(vi) the actual procedures to be followed; and
(vii) the documentation required for the selection process.

Although appointment to Level A positions or appointments for less than 12 months are not
subject to these rigorous processes, it would seem that some effort has been made, at the more senior positions at least, to minimise the effect of direct and indirect discrimination in selection procedures. As well, promotions committees must comply with similar procedures.

Low Levels of Turnover in Academic Employment
The argument that the movement of women into senior academic positions has been limited by the large number of tenured men appointed in the expansionary years for tertiary institutions in the late 1960s and early 1970s is shown by Allen to have no support from the data collected from a number of universities. In fact, these studies generally found that turnover at the top levels of academia was quite high. This discounts low turnover as a factor contributing to the small proportion of women in the very senior positions.

Reluctance to Apply for Appointment or Promotion
Another argument commonly proffered to explain the more junior status of academic women relative to academic men is that women are reluctant to apply for appointment or promotion. Although Allen cites a number of studies which indicate that women applicants for academic positions or promotion have a greater chance of success than men, there is evidence to suggest that women may be less likely than men to apply for appointment or promotion in the first instance (Poiner and Burke, 1988).

The promotional round from Level B to Level C in 1991 at UNE-Armidale would seem to support these findings. In that round for promotion, there were 47 male applicants, of which 19 (or 40 per cent) were successful, while there were only 13 female applicants, of which 7 (or 54 per cent) were successful. However, for the promotion round for Level C to Level D in that same year, the situation was somewhat different. Of the 47 male applicants, 16 (or 34 per cent) were successful, while of the 6 female applicants, only one (or 17 per cent) was successful (UNE, 1992).

The significantly smaller number of women applicants for promotion at these levels cannot be attributed to reluctance to apply on the part of women alone. The fact is there are, in absolute terms, fewer women than men in Level B and Level C positions. At Level B there are currently 138 men compared to 65 women, while at Level C there are 140 men and 21 women. It appears that proportionately more men at Level B applied for promotion in 1991 than women (34 per cent compared to 20 per cent). The difference in applicants from C to D was somewhat smaller as 34 per cent of men in the Level C category applied for promotion as did 29 per cent of women. Why there are differences, in applications for promotion between academic women and men at UNE-Armidale is an issue that will be addressed in more detail in a later section of the paper.

Domestic Responsibilities
Studies of the division of household tasks have overwhelmingly concluded that women continue to bear the primary responsibility for home-related tasks. The ABS survey of one thousand households in Sydney in 1987 found that, regardless of education, income, social background, employment status or age, women do significantly more unpaid work than men. "On average, women do approximately 36 hours a week of unpaid work while men on average do less than half that amount" (OSW, 1991, p.5). Moreover, the survey also found that no matter how many hours of paid work a wife does, her husband's contribution remains relatively constant. This discrepancy in unpaid workloads, and the career interruptions women experience with child bearing and rearing, have also been presented as reasons why there is such an imbalance of women and men in senior academic positions. According to this argument, domestic and academic responsibilities are incompatible. Allen (1990) reports that the only research carried out to test the hypothesis that such uneven domestic responsibilities limited women's ability to carry out research found no evidence to support this contention. She does report, however, that Sawer (1984) found that some women reported "feeling obliged to choose between career and family and either have fewer children than they wanted, or none" (Allen, 1990, p. 19). With respect to domestic responsibilities limiting women's mobility, Allen cites research by Over and Lancaster (1984) which found that similar proportions of women and men reported moving between Australian universities.

Sex-based Differences in Academic Merit
The final argument Allen notes as commonly cited as a reason for discrepancies in the status of academic women and men was that there are differences in academic merit between the sexes. Allen addressed this final argument in the most comprehensive manner of all the arguments. Using information from several studies, she systematically rejects the hypotheses that there are significant sex differences between men and women with respect to:

i) academic qualifications in senior positions;
ii) publication rates;
iii) teaching ability; or
iv) levels of participation in administration.

Allen's final conclusion is that there is inadequate evidence to support the claim that the poor representation of women in senior academic positions can be explained by sex differences in merit, aspirations or domestic responsibilities. Rather, she argues that geographic variation in the propor-
tions of women in senior academic positions (as seen in Table 5) would seem to indicate that there are some factors operating within individual universities which affect opportunities available to women to achieve senior academic positions.

Allen suggests there are two major factors which contribute to the differences in the observed proportions of men and women in senior academic positions. These two factors are faculty mix and climate within particular universities. First, faculty mix. Universities without such traditionally male dominated disciplines as Engineering may be expected to have higher proportions of academic women. No empirical work has been done, however, to test this hypothesis since Gale (1980) found no relationship between faculty mix and women academics in the late 1970s. UNE-Armidale's relatively poor representation of academic women relative to the other Australian universities seems to support Gale's findings (of no relationship), as the faculty mix would tend to suggest there should be a relatively high proportion of women in senior academic positions, instead of the relatively low proportion observed. As a School of Engineering at UNE-Armidale will not be operational until 1993, it would seem fairly safe to rule out faculty mix for the lack of women in senior academic positions at UNE-Armidale.

Another argument Allen (1990) alludes to in her attempts to explain the low representation of women in senior academic positions is that there is "a climate of opinion in which women are more easily accepted in some universities than others" (Allen, p.25). It is this issue of the presence of a "glass ceiling" in some universities which will be developed further in relation to UNE-Armidale in the final section of the paper.

The "Glass Ceiling"

"Women report that it is the cumulative effect of the succession of petty dominations that makes them angry, adversely affecting their concentration, their career aspirations and even their continued participation in university study."

(Mares, 1990, p. 77).

Using the then single campus UNE as a case study, Davies (1982) provided a detailed analysis of how discrimination manifested itself in a perpetual cycle of discriminatory attitudes, acts and outcomes. Davies showed how systemic discrimination both directly and indirectly decreases employment and promotion opportunities for women. Since that time, the "glass ceiling" has become a popular phrase to describe these invisible barriers limiting the opportunities available to women in organisations. Ten years on, the situation at UNE-Armidale does not appear to have changed a great deal, despite the enactment of the Affirmative Action legislation in 1986. Women are still clustered in the Level A and Level B positions. The "glass ceiling" still appears intact.

Mares (1990) provides an illuminating discussion of the insidious practices which can operate in universities to subordinate women

"both in the formal curriculum through the spillover into everyday university practices of patriarchal forms of behaviour and popular myths of cognitive difference"

(Mares, 1990, p. 74).

Drawing on both published material and anecdotal evidence from the University of Adelaide, Mares provides a range of examples to show how women continue to be marginalised in both teaching and work experiences in universities. In the teaching context, she cites the case of a lecturer, who when discussing the working conditions in the early nineteenth century, was reported as saying:

"the workers were working sixteen hours a day in factories, and the workers' wives were working sixteen hours a day in the factories".

(Mares, 1990, p. 77).

Whether consciously or unconsciously meant, the message from this statement is that women are not "workers" and the role of "worker" is necessarily masculine. Women's rights to participate equally in the workforce are undermined in the minds of both male and female students by this type of statement. As well, Mares reports that many women experience:

"discomfort arising from the lecturers' assumption that all staff and all students are, or ought to be, male, and from signs that there is an implicit, deep-seated uneasiness about the intrusion of women into the discipline"

(Mares, 1990, p. 76).

The University of Adelaide is not the only institution in which such discomfort has been expressed. Academic women at UNE-Armidale have also reported incidents where they feel the role of women in academia has been demeaned. An example of the sort of incident prompting these feelings occurred recently. In September 1992, the Academic Women's Association (AWA) attempted to raise the awareness of the Deans about the imbalance of male and female post-graduate students in their Faculties. In a letter to the Deans, a suggestion was made by the AWA that perhaps the Faculties could implement affirmative action policies – policies that were tailored to the specific needs of the Faculty. The response from one Dean indicated that the Faculty he represented did not feel the need to introduce any such schemes (despite the fact that Faculty had the poorest record for enrolments of women in post-graduate studies). Furthermore, the Dean's response included the following comments:

"You may be interested in the following extract..."
from a recent article entitled 'Sex Differences in the Brain' by D. Kimura in Scientific American 267:80 (September 1992). The opening paragraph is as follows:

Women and men differ not only in physical attributes and reproductive function but also in the way in which they solve intellectual problems. It has been fashionable to insist that these developments are minimal, the consequence of variations in experience during development. The bulk of the evidence suggests, however, that the effects of sex hormones on brain organization occur so early in life that from the start the environment is acting on differently wired brains in girls and boys. Such differences make it almost impossible to evaluate the effects of experience independent of physiological predisposition.

The final paragraph reads:

The finding of consistent and, in some cases, quite substantial sex differences suggests that men and women may have different occupational interests and capabilities, independent of societal influences. I would not expect, for example, that men and women would necessarily be equally represented in activities or professions that emphasize spatial or math skills, such as engineering or physics. But I might expect more women in medical diagnostic fields where perceptual skills are important. So that even though any one individual might have the capacity to be in a 'nontypical' field, the sex proportions as a whole may vary.

Yours sincerely

Ignoring the issue of the scientific validity of the contents of the letter, a response such as this from a senior member of the University on behalf of a Faculty does not suggest an environment in which women are encouraged to actively seek promotion. In fact, the academic women aware of this response have reported feeling that this is yet another example of women being "put down" and not taken seriously in their work environment. They are the "other".

A response from another Faculty to the letter from the AWA was to form a subcommittee of academic women in the Faculty charged with the task of developing suitable policies for the Faculty to implement to encourage women to enrol in post-graduate programs and apply for academic positions. An informal survey carried out by a member of the sub-committee found that morale amongst academic women in the Faculty was very low. An example of the responses to the question concerning the work environment in the Faculty are illustrative of the extent of the problem.

"There are so few women above tutor level. Where are the role models?"

"Discussing about career paths and work loads should be conducted without reference to childcare and babies."

"When working in the profession I did encounter discrimination due to my sex but generally they would listen and respect your opinion and generally treat you as an equal. I have never encountered such blatant discrimination anywhere else as is displayed in the academic environment."

"Research applications should be considered without reference to gender or marital status."

A particularly telling comment about the work environment is the following:

"There is a recognition of the problems, but the Faculty is doing something about them because they have to, not because they want to."

As Tancred-Sheriff (1988) argues, universities are alien to academic women as they continue to be 'male spaces'. The academic women in this Faculty certainly support this argument. Such pessimistic attitudes held by women about their work environment as a result of what Mares refers to as the "cumulative effect of petty (male) discriminations' has implications for women's continued participation in the academic environment. Davies (1982) cited "the inevitable negative attitudes women develop towards themselves and their careers" (p.16) as a major factor contributing to the low representation of women in senior (and tenured) academic positions. The perception of the University system as a male-dominated hostile environment becomes a self-perpetuating perception. Women may be deferred from more actively seeking senior positions. This may explain the differences in applications for promotion between academic women and men at UNE-Armidale referred to earlier.

Strategies for Effective Change

For academic women to increase their representation in senior academic positions in universities generally and UNE-Armidale in particular, the climate within universities of 'male space' must change. The Affirmative Action Agency (1989) has identified three factors which support change. These are:

1) Legislative change
2) Management commitment
3) Pressure from women

Legislative Change

Anti-discrimination and affirmative action legislation has been an important first step in dismantling the arbitrary barriers to women's participation and progress in the workforce generally. As
Management commitment

For any organisational change program to be successful it is essential that management be committed to the change process (Dunphy, 1981). Changing the climate within universities from one of ‘male spaces’ to one of ‘human spaces’ is no different. Those in senior positions within the University must be seen to be committed to this change process. Legislation will not change the prevailing attitudes if there is no commitment to change evident among those in positions of power.

One way to communicate this commitment to change is to ensure that affirmative action is made an integral part of management practices at Campus, Faculty and Departmental levels. Randall (1990) argues that:

"demonstrated commitment to social justices and (affirmative action) should be included in the selection criteria for all supervisory positions, and used as a performance indicator in staff assessment procedures" (p.19).

Commitment to affirmative action policies to change the ‘male space’ climate can also be conveyed by those in senior positions by ensuring behaviour within the University is consistent with equal opportunity principles. Behaviour which is inconsistent with these principles (such as the letter from the Dean cited earlier) must be considered unacceptable and this should be clearly communicated to those behaving in such a manner. As well, the desired new behaviours should be systematically rewarded. Both formal rewards (eg promotion and official recognition) and informal, social rewards should be reviewed within the university and restructured to reinforce the change. Mitchell et al (1990) note that “like any other behaviour that takes place in an organisation, change is strongly influenced by its consequences” (p.527).

Relevant to the notion of management ensuring that behaviour supporting the climate of male space is changed despite the fact that the attitudes by some may be resistant to change is dissonance theory. Mitchell et al (1990) note that

"dissonance theory points out that by changing one’s behaviour, one’s attitudes can be changed. This principle has been used to explain why we often stick with bad decisions and why we come to like tasks that we initially felt were unpleasant” (p.141).

So, if individuals resistant to the change in climate are forced to behave in a manner encouraging change, a favourable attitude to the change may evolve. Rather than waiting for the prevailing attitudes to change, the idea is to first change the behaviour.

Pressure from Women

The commitment of senior management to changing the current climate is not automatic. Management needs to be convinced of the merits of changing the climate. Dissatisfaction with the status quo must be conveyed to management if there is going to be any motivation for change. Women’s groups can provide an effective means of conveying the dissatisfaction many women feel with the present climate in particular universities. The Academic Women’s Association (AWA) at UNE-Armidale has recently celebrated its first anniversary. The AWA currently has over 60 members, which represents about 45 per cent of the academic women at UNE-Armidale. The inaugural President of the AWA, Dr Izabel Soliman, in explaining the catalyst for the formation of the AWA, focussed on the recognised benefits of building a collaborative network to challenge the ‘male space’ climate working within the university.

"We were seeking to strengthen our perceived fragile positions within our individual departments through industrious academic efforts without devoting time to cultivating the networks which are also important for academic advancement. We were not aware of the support we could have obtained from each other. We were not aware of the importance of ‘lifting as we climbed” (Soliman, 1992, p.2).

"Lift as we climb” was the phrase used by people of colour in the US in their struggle for liberation from slavery and for civil rights. This phrase, Soliman maintains,

"acknowledges the legitimacy of personal advancement and the importance of networking in that process, but, at the same time, it connects personal advancement with a collective effort to improve the quality of academic life for many” (p.2).

Furthermore, as Randall (1990) points out, a vigorous women’s network can strengthen the morale and purpose of the academic women in the institution. At UNE-Armidale, the experience of the AWA has been energising for its members, and active efforts are now being undertaken by the association to instigate the change process. For
instance, seminars have been organised by the AWA on how to prepare applications for promotion. The process of change may be slow, but we feel we have increased the momentum through our own efforts.

Conclusion
As has been clearly demonstrated, women are underrepresented at senior academic levels in all Australian universities. There are, however, significant differences between the representation of women in senior academic positions across universities. Women make up only 3.6 per cent of senior academics at the University of Tasmania, but over 17 per cent at Macquarie University (Allen, 1990). This variation suggests there may be some climatic factors operating in some universities which may be creating a "glass ceiling". An atmosphere of "male space" may be limiting the opportunities available for women to advance in particular universities.

Legislative action has gone some way toward dismantling the "glass ceiling", but real change will only come about if there is commitment to changing the current climate from those in positions of power. Women's groups within universities may be an effective approach to convincing management that the status quo is no longer acceptable and a change in climate is necessary for the long-term well-being of the university. Randall's statement about the value of women's support would seem to be an appropriate note to conclude on.

"Women need to support each other in claiming some space in this world where we are seen as alien intruders, so that we continue to shape the work environment to become more human" (Randall, 1990, p.24).

References
Women Managers in a Diversified Management Team: Prospects for the Australian Mining Industry

Catherine Smith, Margaret Crowley and Jacque Hutchinson
Edith Cowan University

Abstract
For the last ten years there has been substantial encouragement for women to broaden their career horizons and enter into non-traditional areas of work. Against considerable odds, women have made this move. In the mining industry in particular, women do work as geologists, surveyors, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, environmental scientists, chemical engineers, and production workers, in some of the most remote and hostile locations in Australia.

Given the strategic role of the mining industry within the Australian economy, and the resources which individuals, organisations and governments have already invested in training and development, one would expect that these women could look forward to a long and productive future in the industry. Instead, just at the time when they might be expected to move from a technical to a managerial role, many younger women in particular are considering leaving the industry. In 1991 Commonwealth funding was made available by WREIP for a research project on Women in Mining (Crowley, Hutchison and Smith, 1992). As part of this research a workshop was held in Perth to explore the career development of women in the mining industry. Based on data derived from this workshop, this paper examines the reasons women are considering deserting a workplace they strove so hard to enter. It considers issues such as:

- the implications of ineffective management practices, particularly within the context of career development
- the implications of management failure to acknowledge the 'genderedness' of organisations;
- the limitations of current Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmation Action legislation to produce the necessary structural attitudinal changes.

Paper
Introduction
For the last ten years there has been substantial encouragement for women to broaden their career horizons and enter into non-traditional areas of work. Against considerable odds women have made this move, particularly within the mining industry, where they now work as geologists, surveyors, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, environmental scientists and chemical engineers, as well as in the production process, in some of the most remote and geographically hostile locations in Australia.

Given the strategic role of the mining industry within the Australian economy, and both the personal and organisational resources already invested in training and development, one would expect that these women could look forward to a long and productive future in the industry. Instead, just at the time when they might be expected to move from a technical to a managerial role, many women - particularly younger ones - are considering leaving the industry. Based on data derived from a recent mining industry workshop held in Perth, this paper examines the reasons women are considering deserting a workplace they strove so hard to enter. To set the broader contextual framework, this paper briefly considers some of the recent research on women's participation in the workforce in general, and in management in particular. It then considers the participation of women within the Australian mining industry, and examines the reasons advanced for this.

Women in the workforce
Over the last twenty years there has been a steady increase in the participation rate of women in the Australian labour force while that of men has declined (Australian Bureau of Statistics, (ABS) 1990). This is consistent with trends in comparable industrial nations such as the United States and Great Britain (Davidson, 1987), where women increasingly expect to combine marriage and a job, often with motherhood. Women now constitute 41.6% of the workforce, and 51.9% of the Australian (and 53.8% of the Western Australian) labour market (ABS 1991a), although the trend of increasing female participation has not been reflected within the mining industry (ABS 1991b). It has been projected that by the year 2000 there will be equal numbers of men and women in full-time work (ABS, 1988).
Many women choose to work not solely for economic reasons, but to achieve meaningfulness and self-fulfilment beyond the home environment. Because they have also found that job satisfaction tends to increase commensurate with skill level, more women are now pursuing careers through the middle and upper ranks of the organisational hierarchy (Asplund, 1988; Powell, 1988; Still, 1990), indicating that perceived career salience and ego involvement in work can be as strong for women as they have traditionally been for men (Sekaran, 1982; Wilson, 1991).

Women in Management

However, despite their increasing participation within the workforce, women still find it hard to penetrate the "glass ceiling" and more particularly to reach senior management positions. There exists a substantial body of literature on the factors which inhibit women's career development, which has been reviewed by a number of authors including Tharenou & Conroy (1988).

Barriers may exist due to a variety of factors, including personal and home variables such as marital status, number of children and dependents, partner support, educational level and perceived conflicts between home and work (Alban-Metcalfe, 1985; Fitzgerald & Betz, 1983; Still, 1985; Terborg, 1977; Bass, 1981; Davidson & Cooper, 1983; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Conroy, 1985).

A number of structural barriers has also been identified within organisations such as personnel policies, procedures and practices which, while lawful, may indirectly in practice adversely affect women. For example, there may be different criteria applied for selection, promotion and training, or different degrees of formality used to identify potential for promotion, which may ultimately limit the possibility of advancement for women (Ashridge Management College, 1980; Povall, 1984; Pazy, 1978). Discrimination in selection processes has been well documented (Alban-Metcalfe, 1985; Riger & Galligan, 1980; Terborg, 1977; Gale, 1980), but less well investigated is 'treatment' discrimination once the person is in the organisation, for example through actual or perceived differences in job evaluation or identification of career development opportunities for women and men (Rowland, 1980; Tharenou & Conroy, 1988). Burton, Hag & Thompson (1987) have demonstrated how job evaluation processes involve social judgements which result in the undervaluation of traditional 'female' jobs.

Many organisations have been reticent to provide management development opportunities for women (Still, 1986a, 1986b; Bryson, 1987). Women still predominate in specialist technical areas such as human resource management rather than line management positions, and this horizontal segregation is found in business, the professions, tertiary educational institutions and the public sector in general (Bryson, 1987; Still, 1988).

In addition, attitudinal barriers have also been identified, such as prejudicial attitudes towards women as managers on the part of both managers and subordinates (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1983; Hunt, 1975; O'Leary, 1974; Riger & Galligan, 1980; Still & Jones, 1984; Terborg, 1979; Yost & Herbert, 1985). Despite research identifying few operating differences between male and female managers (Donnell & Hall, 1980), Still (1988) suggests that there is still an uneasy feeling that women do not fit the managerial mould.

The sex structuring of the organisation is often cited as a significant barrier to women's career development, with managerial hierarchies, role models, networking systems and organisational politics exhibiting a male ambience (Bartol 1979; Fitzgerald & Betz 1983; Gale 1980; Kanter 1977; Miller & Garrison 1982; Riger & Galligan 1980).

Novak & Ward (1989) found women's career ambitions to be closely related to their investment of resources into career qualifications, although socialisation and structural variables were also relevant. In a recent European survey of matched pairs of middle managers, both men and women agreed that the attitudes of senior and middle managers represent the greatest problem for women's career prospects (Cooke & Stoessl, 1990).

Women in the mining sector

The mining industry currently employs 1.13% of employed persons within Australia. However, of the total number of female employees, the mining industry employs only 0.22%, representing the lowest percentage of female employees within any industry classification of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 1991c).

Since 1982 women have occupied between 7.3% and 10.7% of jobs in the industry, and they currently constitute 8.3% (ABS 1991c). The 1986 Census provided detailed information on national and local participation rates, showing that Western Australia had a higher proportion of women employees in the mining industry, a figure of 13.4% compared with 9.9% Australia-wide. A further significant fact to emerge from this Census was that, of the total number of employees in the mining industry in the Perth area classification, 25.2% were female, almost double the proportion for the whole of Western Australia (ABS 1990).

A number of reasons may be advanced for the higher proportion of females within the Perth area. Firstly, many mining companies locate their administrative operations in Perth, away from the mine sites, and it is possible that women continue to be concentrated in administrative and clerical occupations, rather than working in non-traditional areas. Secondly, employment outside a city,
Thirdly, those women who are employed within the administrative and support positions, rather than technical/professional and management positions.

Mining has traditionally been seen as a masculine domain. While women have been allowed to undertake secretarial and administrative tasks, they have largely been formally and informally excluded from areas such as production, transport, maintenance, exploration, engineering and management (Howard, 1986). Indeed, researching the participation of women in the mining industry Mitchell (1991:2) reports that the literature includes very little direct reference to women at all, even within those areas where women have traditionally been employed.

In a 1986 Commonwealth Government publication 'Industrial Relations and Industrial Democracy within the Mining Industry', women were not mentioned at all. The document did, however, mention a number of characteristics of the mining industry which may partially explain the absence of women. One is the dominance of an engineering ethos which sees management in terms of systems, not people. Another is the existence of rigidly compartmentalized management structures with lengthy vertical hierarchies which are a far cry from modern organisational development charts which favour a flatter structure (Howard, 1986:4).

While these structures may be a historical outcome of the mining process, they offer little hope for the career paths of the few women in the industry who are generally found at the lowest organisational levels, (McMurchy, Oliver & Thornley, 1983).

Some companies have addressed the position of women very seriously, and the results of a study of the participation of women in Esso hold out some hope for the career development prospects of women in the oil industry (Collins 1991:42).

Conclusions to be drawn from the literature
A number of conclusions can be drawn from this review of women's participation in mining. Firstly, this most important of Australian industries, the mining industry, employs fewer women than any other industry in Australia. Secondly, the majority of women who are employed are largely found in administrative and support positions, rather than technical/professional and management positions. Thirdly, those women who are employed within the industry are more likely to be in Western Australia than in other states.

All of these factors lead us to believe that the women who were brought together in Perth for the Women in Mining Workshop represent, for a number of reasons, a very significant group within the industry. Historically they represent a break with past employment traditions; strategically they represent the beginnings of a new era of diversified management; and economically they constitute the “cream” of a very talented human resource pool. This is why we believe that the observations, perceptions and personal experiences of women in this group, though largely anecdotal in nature, may well have implications far beyond the Western Australian context, and indeed may address the problems of women involved in the non-traditional areas more generally.

Women In Mining Workshop
The workshop was run in 1991 as part of a case study of women in mining, funded by the Women's Research and Initiatives Program of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (Crowley, Hutchinson & Smith, 1992). As a means of focusing this case study research, a workshop was held to identify the career development needs of women within the mining industry.

Participants were drawn from a wide range of mining interests based in Western Australia, and included women working as metallurgists, geologists, engineers, electricians, environmental planners, personnel managers, industrial relations officers, mill superintendents and survey assistants. While there were several women in the group with substantial experience in middle-management positions, the majority were young women who, since completing their professional/technical qualifications, had been in the workforce for between 4-5 years.

All participants welcomed the opportunity to develop networks with their colleagues, and for many this provided their first opportunity to do so. In fact, some reported that they had used leave entitlement to attend, since they had difficulty convincing their employers that the workshop would be beneficial for them, and managers did not recognise the need to attend. Initially some expressed a degree of ambivalence about their participation, as they did not wish to misrepresent their employer's intentions, particularly as they occupied visible positions as women employed in non-traditional occupations.

They were predominantly a very young and enthusiastic group of women, who recognised the need for organisational changes, and who were ready to confront the issues directly. At the same time the picture they painted of their participation within the industry was clearly problematic. These women:
• felt strongly the need to blend into the dominant male culture by being less visible;
• enjoyed the intrinsic aspects of their work enormously but felt under continuing pressure by being a member of the minority group; and
• felt that they had no role models to demonstrate whether or how it was possible to combine work and family responsibilities successfully.

For many of these women the political and organisational messages of the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s had not been significant. Most of the younger women, accepting the popular rhetoric, firmly believed that equal employment opportunity in the workforce and equity in conditions had already been achieved, and were therefore not issues for consideration or concern. The consequence of this was a belief that, if they were facing obstacles, this must be an individual and not an organisational problem, and certainly not an issue related to gender.

Despite the fact that these young women in some instances had been the only girls to complete maths and science in their high school class, and perhaps the only women in highly competitive university classes, and despite the fact that they enjoyed their work a great deal, several were considering leaving the industry. In spite of their achievements, most were very humble about their own skills and abilities, and did not fully appreciate their own career potential or management opportunities.

Findings from the Workshop
The workshop clearly indicated that little mentoring was occurring in organisations, and that women did not perceive management as a career path. Consequently, they did not envisage progressing beyond a professional or technical position in the field. They believed that they could not easily sustain the combination of long periods of fieldwork with marriage and young children, and yet they could see no other place for them within the mining industry. Several were considering retraining as teachers.

This must be considered as an indictment of both the education system and the mining industry, if these few women who have achieved high-level professional qualifications in non-traditional areas can then find no way of remaining in their chosen occupation during the very limited time, of approximately five years, when Australian women commonly disengage from the workforce to raise children.

During the workshop women spoke freely, and in some instances for the first time, about the problems of being either the only one or one of very few women employees in a traditionally male workforce. They spoke not from a perspective of a disadvantaged group, to which they would not acknowledge themselves belonging, but rather in a matter-of-fact way about how they, as young professionals, experienced the structures and processes of the organisation. Many were quite surprised to learn that their experiences were shared by other women in the group. The following are some of the major problems they identified from their working experience:

• Poor communication skills of managers. This lack of skills was seen across all management functions but was particularly evident in areas such as performance appraisal. It was exacerbated where male managers had to deal with women but did not feel comfortable to approach them on a wide range of issues.
• The lack of career pathways for women in the industry and hence a lack of role models for younger women new to the industry.
• The need to develop a "critical mass" of young women in the industry such that the isolation of women is reduced, together with the feeling of being treated not as an individual but as a representative of all women.
• Poor skills of managers generally, particularly in dealing with women in non-traditional occupations. This was illustrated by women in one organisation effectively being excluded from team-bonding activities, since they took place on a remote island with communal sleeping and washing facilities.
• The need to be unfeminine, and to adopt stereotypically male behaviour. Participants described how they needed to be "coldly calculating" rather than emotional, and "extra sure of oneself", if they were to be accepted.
• Not fitting into the male-oriented organisational culture, particularly on "men's junkets", which sometimes included "womanising" and "boyish behaviour".

Recommendations from the Workshop
A number of recommendations arose from the workshop. Some of these are, of course, already being implemented within the industry, albeit in only a very small number of companies:

Encouraging the development of a critical mass of women within the industry:
• Information should be made available to students about the structures, culture and organisation of the mining industry;
• placement of women students and/or graduates with women currently employed in non-traditional areas;
• Induction programmes which include bush skills, field practice, company organisation; to encourage retention of female employees;
• graduate and apprentice intake programmes including job rotation to develop a broad base of experience;
• vacation employment for women students.

Providing development opportunities for those women already in the industry:
• more effective performance and development reviews in order to give women the necessary job feedback they currently lack;
• establishment of a mentor system including senior female mentors;
• annual career planning programme;
• encouragement of study leave for women employees;
• financial support for study as a reward for examination passes (covering HECS fees, tuition fees paid, etc);
• internal advertisement of all positions initially;
• multi-skilling, job rotation and opportunities to work on other company sites;
• the opportunity to publicly represent the company, eg. at Careers Expos, the Perth Royal Show, company promotions;
• formal training covering technical as well as personal development issues;
• productivity and training groups to help identify training and career development needs for award employees;
• job sharing opportunities for professional couples and women with children.

Providing opportunities for industry-wide development:
• the development of an industry-wide network supported by government, industry and relevant professional associations which would include a skills data base and training opportunities;
• support for post-graduate education and training through time release and financial assistance;
• programme of visits for current and potential women in the industry, to other mine sites in Australia and overseas to broaden their skills and more particularly their knowledge of the industry;
• the development of a management training programme particularly focused on women within the industry;
• the development of a management training programme focused on team building and effective communication between women and men at all levels of the industry, and management in particular.

The measures described above would be expected to benefit not only women employees and potential entrants to the mining industry, but would serve to reduce attrition rates and career dislocations, thereby enhancing labour productivity and industry competitiveness.

Who's to blame?
One must ask why such detailed measures should be needed to retain and ensure the effective participation of such a visibly talented group of employees within the mining industry. The early literature on equal employment opportunity for women emphasised that women themselves should do more to avoid the "glass ceiling" and improve career development. To enhance their own opportunities women were encouraged to take measures such as assertiveness training, professional development, networking, and to improve their political skills. However, more recent literature has acknowledged that the role of the employing organisation is also critical. Hearn (1991) believes that this should extend to a recognition of the "genderedness" of organisations, which has a number of important implications for management.

The role of the organisation is particularly important, given the fact that the equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation places the responsibility for change at the organisational level. The Affirmative Action Act 1986, for example, does not require employers to establish quotas or a fixed percentage of women employees to achieve certain levels and positions within the organisation. Employers, therefore, need only confine themselves to removing what they consider to be discriminatory policies and practices, and need not undertake positive strategies to compensate for past discrimination or to redistribute power and opportunity by changing organisational culture and structures.

From the workshop it became evident that many managers within the mining industry do not have the human resource management training or skills to identify organisation-wide or industry-wide human resource needs. They have not realised that changing demographic patterns now mean that women are an important group of consumers, workers and hence managers.

Many current managers appear not have the interpersonal skills or training to carry out fundamental management tasks such as supervision, selection, performance appraisal, training and career development. These deficiencies are highlighted when they are presented with a group who obviously need the benefit of these skills, and who cannot operate effectively within the organisation without them. It is clearly the responsibility of the organisation to provide these most basic of managerial competencies.

There is also an unstated recognition, at a number of different levels in the organisation, that more
female managers must inevitably result in fewer male managers. It is, therefore, of no use to pretend that there will not be a redistribution of power by bringing more women into the senior ranks. In the interests of equity, such a redistribution must occur, and therefore the issue needs to be clearly placed on the organisational and political agenda.

One of the ways in which organisations avoid addressing the fundamental issues, of course, is to keep the participation of women below a "critical mass". This means that, by definition, the few women who are employed are marginalised, and hence the organisation loses access to their skills and abilities. This contributes to a deterioration in organisational "health" and may lead to a widespread demoralisation of employees, and sends clear messages to other minority groups that their participation is not valued or welcome. These feelings were obviously evident within the mining industry, according to the views expressed by the participants.

Conclusions
This paper set out to examine the reasons for a number of women considering leaving employment within the mining sector. In exploring these issues, the conclusions of the workshop participants independently confirmed those discussed within the research literature, which describes women managers as "the untapped resource" (National Economic Development Office/Royal Institute of Public Administration, 1990). These valuable assets will be lost if organisations do not adopt deliberate corporate policies and practices aimed at improving their opportunities to progress into management positions.

Policies should include a code of practice outlining steps to be taken, and should be regularly audited by ascertaining the occupancy rates at different levels of the organisation, and the recruitment, promotion and wastage patterns of women compared with men. Periodic monitoring is also essential to evaluate the effectiveness of particular initiatives. Strategies and action plans need to be in place concerning the organisational culture (both formal and informal), career development and succession planning, including equal access to training and development, and the consideration of work and family issues, in view of their impact on labour retention.

While past reasons for the small numbers of women in mining could be attributed to the dearth of highly qualified women entering the industry, the challenge now lies not with women themselves, but with their employers. Organisations need commitment and ability to harness the talents and potential of their female employees, who will constitute an increasingly significant proportion of the labour force of the future.

While the number of women employed within mining has been steadily increasing, the industry still lacks a sufficiently critical mass of women at the middle and senior management levels. Research has shown that increased participation of women at management levels will only occur when explicit policies, processes and targets are in place to ensure that this happens. If for no other reason, organisations should consider the business imperative of failure to take appropriate action to prevent labour turnover of a generation of potential managers for an increasingly diverse workforce (Schwartz, 1992).

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Biographical Note
Catherine Smith is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business, Edith Cowan University, and is currently undertaking doctoral research on Dual-Career Couples. Her industrial experience was gained in the oil, engineering, and retail sectors in England, and she has lectured extensively in Great Britain and in Australia.

Margaret Crowley is an Associate Professor in Policy & Administrative Studies within the Faculty of Education, Edith Cowan University. She has been director of a research and development institute for the last five years, and has had significant public sector management experience at state and national levels.

Jacquie Hutchinson is Deputy Director of Human Resources, Edith Cowan University. She has worked in the area of industrial relations and change management in both the private and public sectors.
The Hidden Criteria which Contribute to your Position in the Workplace

Marilys Guillemin
Edith Cowan University

Abstract
The Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) (AA/EEO) Act has operated since October 1986. Many critiques and reviews of the Act have since emerged. However, what is the perception of women workers on its effects in their workplace? In a recent study of 25 professional women microbiologists exploring issues of career pathways and their positions within their profession, the women were asked to reflect on their perceptions of gender inequities in their workplace. The majority of the women responded that since the implementation of the AA Act, gender inequities were no longer possible and they denied being the victims of gender discrimination. However, as the women told their stories and issues were explored in individual and group interviews, it became apparent (both to themselves and to me) that systemic discrimination against women was truly rooted within their organisations. Hidden criteria were in force which reinforced the marginal positions which these women occupied within their profession. The culture, the genderisation of work, the grooming of men for senior positions were among some of the factors which contributed to the discrimination which the women faced. Once made aware, most of the women acknowledged that their poor status was being reinforced through discriminatory practices within their largely patriarchal organisations. Taking the experiences of the women in this study as an example, I wish to prompt a discussion of the existence of systemic discrimination in the workplace and its effect on women’s position. Some of the issues raised will include the need for awareness of often indirect and subtle discriminatory practices against women workers, the ideologies which govern these practices and measures used that have proved successful in combating these discriminatory forces.

Paper

Introduction
Following the passing of two major pieces of legislative reform directed at gender equality in the 80’s, it is timely to ask if gender discrimination in the workplace still exists. Although the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) (AA/EEO) Act 1986 deal with the unequal treatment of women, the two acts have different approaches to inequality (1). The Sex Discrimination Act attempts to address particular instances of discriminatory treatment by providing remedies to individual complainants (2). Although this type of legislation is required as a compensatory measure, it does not directly address systemic discrimination. In contrast to the sex discrimination legislation, the AA/EEO Act is proactive and addresses structural discrimination within organisations. The AA/EEO Act emphasises review of employment policies and practices in light of potential discrimination of women, and promotes the reform of policies and practices to provide equal opportunities for women (3).

Critiques of the legislation in Australia are beginning to emerge. Of particular benefit within the Australian context, has been the critiques of Burton and Poiner and Wills (4). Poiner and Wills differentiate between affirmative action (AA) as a corrective measure for particular instances of discrimination and AA as a means of resolving systemic inequality. Although these authors agree that corrective action is necessary to deal with individual discriminatory behaviour, it is only by focussing proactively at systemic discrimination that the problem can be adequately addressed. Systemic discrimination goes beyond overt and intended unfair treatment in the workplace. Rather, it encompasses the often indirect and unintended discrimination which is deeply rooted in the fibre of the organisation and the social structures which form organisations. Bacchi claims that systemic or structural discrimination is more serious and more entrenched than other forms of discrimination (5). Strategies can be more easily targeted at direct and overt means of discrimination, but discrimination which stems from structural inequities is far more difficult to address. However, it is at this level where the focus must be placed.

Lees and Scott discuss equal opportunity (EO) legislation in Britain within higher educational institutions (6). Although they conclude that there has been little fundamental change, they acknowledge that EO is now on the agenda of many institutions. Achievements within British higher education institutions have mainly been in curriculum reform and EO training with little improvement in the appointment and promotion of women. However, the general conclusion from this and other critiques is that although overt discriminatory practices are no longer prevalent in many workplaces, hidden practices which reinforce women’s marginal positions still continue.
A challenging paradox, highlighted by Poineer and Wills is that EEO, which is initiated by the state, is integrally constructed from masculine values and interests. In primarily focussing on paid work, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) unintentionally (or perhaps intentionally) devalues the importance of unpaid work and the private sphere. This focus refuses to acknowledge the complex intermeshing of private and work domains which, for women, is the root of many of their problems.

In its emphasis on masculine values, it is not surprising that EEO policies place such importance on quantitative measures (7). The legislation demands quantitative 'proof' of organisations' implementation of EEO policies. Employers are required to submit to the governmental AA agency both a statistical analysis of employment profile of the organisation together with a report outlining the objectives set for the forthcoming year (8). Measurement of the organisation's affirmative action outcomes is determined by the organisation's statistical review which is seen to provide scientific and objective data. However, statistical analysis omits the often much more valuable and relevant data available through qualitative analyses. This emphasis on numbers can be misleading in not making visible underlying practices and hidden agendas which may pervade the organisation.

To adequately determine the achievements of the AA/EEO legislation, we must look beyond the statistical measures and examine the structural features - the features which govern how an organisation functions and the implications this has for its members. In light of this, this study examined the work practices of microbiologists from the perceptions of women microbiologists in an effort to determine how these practices contribute to systemic discrimination in the microbiology workplace. Although this study specifically explores the work practices within microbiology, many of the issues are relevant to other professions where women's professional and personal positions have been marginalised.

Methodology

The study sample comprised 25 women microbiologists from a total of 12 public hospital, private and State Health laboratories (9). The method used in the study consisted of the completion of a brief questionnaire and individual interviews, in which all the women participated. In addition, the women were invited to form and attend groups of interested participants. The purpose of these group sessions was multi-fold. The groups provided an opportunity to feed back to the women their collective data, my interpretations of their responses, together with providing a means of validating my interpretations of the preliminary results. Critique and reflection of both the study's and the women's personal experiences were encouraged during the individual and group interviews. The group sessions also provided an opportunity for networking for the women. Feminist methodology, advocated by Oakley in maintaining dialogue and subject positioning, was employed throughout all the interactive phases of the study (10). This was to ensure that the resulting analysis was both meaningful and mindful of the women from whom the study originated.

Women's position in microbiology

Typical of many other biological and health sciences, microbiology is dominated by women (11). However, this dominance is in numbers alone. A pyramidal structure exists within microbiology with women concentrated at the base and men forming the power-yielding apex. Within the 12 laboratories represented in the study, women made up 92/152 (60%) of the total number of scientists. However, only 13 of the 92 women (13%) occupied senior level positions in contrast to 33 of the 60 men (53%). This power structure exists despite many of the women having fulfilled their employer's promotional objectives in having acquired post-graduate qualifications and many years of experience (12).

Although many of the women were seeking promotions, interestingly, none were aiming to fill the current top positions in their laboratories. The women insisted that they were not interested in the work involved in these senior positions, nor were they willing to become involved in the politicking considered to be essential in these positions. These positions are largely administrative and managerial and the women considered that the work and cultural practices entwined in these posts were contrary to their personal professional interests and ambitions. Burton similarly claims that women are reluctant to take on positions of authority on the grounds that (13):

...they (women) believe it to be a bit on the ugly side and they do not want to be part of an environment where decision-making seems more to do with point-scoring and the protection of existing status differences than with reasonable policy-making and implementation.

In their rejection of the top positions, the women are refusing to partake in the masculine cultural practices which envelop these posts.

Promotional requirements

Within microbiology laboratories, in particular public hospital laboratories, increased emphasis is being placed on clear, defined promotional objectives. Attempts are currently being made to standardise these objectives within the microbiology profession. Within the public sector in micro-
biology, post-graduate qualifications, research and development and associated publications, and management skills are perceived to be important requirements for promotion. However, despite attempts to clearly define these criteria, hidden criteria are still in force which influence promotion. It is within these covert areas that gender inequalities are enacted.

**Merit principle**

Burton discusses the problematic issue of merit within the context of EEO policies (14). As most appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit, its definition is paramount. Burton attempts to define 'merit' in terms of the relationship between the qualifications of a person and the requirements of the position or organisation. However, the decision to appoint often hinges on subjective opinions of the appropriateness of the qualifications and abilities of the person in meeting the position. Decisions based on 'merit' are therefore prone to stereotypic definitions as well as having elements introduced which contradict the principles of EEO. Some of the problems associated with merit are exemplified within the context of this study. When responding to what they thought was required of a good microbiologist, many of the women named good organisation skills, thoroughness in work practices and close attention to detail.

*...I pay a fair degree of attention to detail and microbiology requires some nitpicking, so that's good. If you didn't see those nitty gritty things, then you wouldn't be very good at microbiology.*

(Wilma, Public Hospital Level 1 Scientist)

(15).

In contrast to this, the women perceived their male colleagues often taking short cuts in methods and taking more risks in their daily work practices. Although a few of the women admired their male peers for being innovative, they felt that the men were often too quick to draw conclusions.

*...Some people who are very innovative and have a lot of energy tend to think of bright ideas all the time and are itching to try them out. These tend to be males actually, but they also seem to be a little like a bull at the gate and launch in too quickly and draw conclusions too soon. I myself take a slower, safer approach which is possibly viewed as being less decisive. I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist.*

(Fran, Public Hospital Level 2 Scientist).

Many of the women prided themselves on being methodical and on their accuracy and attention to detail. Not only were these considered to be worthy personal attributes, the women regarded them as essential in a microbiologist. The women were therefore confused by the apparent paradox when they were criticised by their employers for being too meticulous and not taking enough risks in their work. Characteristics considered by the women to be of merit in the position were not affirmed by their employers.

**The look**

In addition to the stated promotional objectives of the laboratories, many of the women commented that other factors were at play; these factors were often subsumed under the vague term of 'leadership qualities'. The women felt that the display of these qualities was often an unstated contributory factor in the award of promotions. In describing these qualities, one woman succinctly termed it "the look":

*I think my only career barrier is me as an individual- my personality in the way that they don't think I'm quite suited to being Level 3 material- level 2 OK, because I think you have to have a certain look as well, and certain body language; I think that's really important. I think you have to look the part basically. If you don't, I don't care what anybody says, it's not only experience and natural flair for being a good technologist, but you have to have the look. You have to look like you can dominate for a start and you have to look like you're a leader and that you can't be pushed around, and you have to look like you can command respect as well from people above you because there are a lot of people in our department who are a lot older than say me, or level 1 technologists; we've had problems in the past with them actually wanting to take orders from us, because they think why should we, we're older; they just don't like the idea and it causes a lot of problems whereas there are some people, who might be younger, but they just command respect because of the way they carry themselves and their personality and their height and everything; they look the part and so people just naturally automatically listen to them and obey them in a way, and I think that's really important. I've noticed it; I'm not just making it up, it's not just my own opinion; I've noticed it happening.*

(Brenda, Public Hospital Level 1 Scientist).

The characteristics described by Brenda of domination, 'can't be pushed around', demanding obedience, are generally associated with masculinity. Translating Brenda's statement reveals that what her employers are asking of her is to be more masculine and to conform to an organisational structure governed by masculine-oriented practices. A comment from Fran affirms this as she describes a job interview for which she was not successful:

*In this particular case, this male was more outspoken than me, more forceful in getting his thoughts, getting his point across.....you*
The women who were aware of these factors gave mixed responses as to whether they would choose to assume these characteristics for the benefit of a promotion:

I think I'm a bit of a softie really; my nature is that way ... I don't want to change. This is my personality, I don't want to become some monster, you know what I mean. I've noticed a lot of women in our department like they go to these self-assertive courses; I think they're really good and I'd like to; I actually put my name down to go but something happened and it didn't actually come about, but I think they get a bit carried away too, like they start. I've noticed happening, they become more arrogant and sort of overdo it; to be assertive, they become arrogant... I don't want to be like that, that's just not my nature.

(Beth, Public Hospital Level 1 Scientist.)

However, Anne claims that she has decided that to gain a promotion, she must develop and express these characteristics:

With the meetings we have, I try and make a point of really contributing to the meeting by saying something or making my feelings felt; if somebody says something, I'll say I agree with that or something rather than just sitting there and listening and not saying anything. I have started to change in that way. It's not the sort of thing I find easy because I'm not really flamboyant, whereas some of the men in the department are; no problems at all in standing up and saying what they think, cracking a few jokes, they're almost entertainers. It's just something you have to try and work towards.

(Anne, Public Hospital Level 2 Scientist.)

It is clear from these comments that in addition to the more overt promotional requirements are more subtle factors. The characteristics required are those upheld by the male senior decision makers. These masculine characteristics of dominance and force do not sit comfortably with the women in laboratories; they are characteristics which they do not possess and must acquire and develop if they are to meet the requirements of their male managers. For the women who expressed concern regarding competing with men for promotions, their concern was due to their perceived inability in expressing these masculine characteristics. They were not confident in competing and felt threatened by the 'male drive' demonstrated in their male colleagues. The decision whether to develop these characteristics is difficult for many of these women, as they feel that they are forsaking personal feminine traits merely for the benefit of a promotion. In the balance of their overall life priorities, for some of these women, meeting promotional requirements is not an especially high priority; they resented having to become more 'masculine' in their behaviour to do so.

Homosociability argument

Burton uses the homosociability argument to explain the maintenance of the status quo in the workplace (16). Burton argues that it is the masculine characteristics of particular types of work that attract men to it. If women show that they can do the work, then the work becomes devalued. This argument is extended to homosocial reproduction which suggests that men confirm and reproduce their masculine attitudes and values by empowering those like themselves. These strategies are designed to protect the men's positions and ensure the continuation of the status quo. Within the context of this study, the women perceived that certain areas of work, such as management, were imbued with strong masculine characteristics. In addition, the women recognised that the practices played within these management positions were similarly fraught with masculine characteristics. Not feeling comfortable with the value placed on this, the women chose not to apply for these positions and in so doing, maintain the status quo. The perceptions from the women of the younger men being groomed for senior positions, together with having to have 'a certain look' are clear examples of homosocial reproduction within the laboratory. The patriarchal hierarchy is maintained through the reproduction by the younger men of the values deemed to be important resulting in their promotion and empowerment.

Gendered work

Contributing to gender inequities in microbiology laboratories is the genderisation of work. Both between different areas of work and within the same areas in laboratories, work was clearly gendered. In addition, work was perceived to have different status. For example, in one laboratory, research and development (R&D) was seen as a 'plum job', while computing, safety and staff education assumed less status:

None of the chaps, quite honestly, wanted the computing position. Computing is looked down on a bit in our department. It's not seen as microbiology. It's seen as another area; it's also not seen as a long term area because once the computer is up and running, what can you do? Also none of the chaps really wanted to get involved in safety. They didn't see that as a microbiology area and also funny enough, staff education. They didn't see that either as being important; scientists already know what they need to know and why bother to educate the laboratory assistants. Those were the areas that quite honestly, none of the men wanted. Other than
that, the really plum role went to a man, and that was research.

(Connie, Public Hospital Level 2 Scientist).

Historically, science (and microbiology) gained its status through its search for knowledge; this knowledge was acquired largely through research and development (R&D). The perceived importance of R&D is bound within masculinist scientific ideology. In contrast, areas such as safety and education are relative newcomers on the scientific scene and do not carry with them much status, although their importance could not be disputed. It appears that within this particular laboratory at least, work ascribed high status (R&D) was actively sought by the men in the laboratories, while work such as safety, education and computing, deemed to be of less importance, was largely disregarded by the men and awarded to the women as 'second rate' jobs.

Research and Development (R&D)

In addition to the genderisation of work between different areas of laboratory work and within some areas, such as research and development, the work is itself gendered. It was clear that the design and initiation of the R&D was done by males while the execution of the R&D work was primarily the domain of the women. In a few of the laboratories, the execution was deemed to be the responsibility of the most appropriate person (male or female) currently working in the area of the R&D project. Some of the women commented that within their laboratories, women were perceived to be better suited to performing the routine work:

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\text{Men are more likely to be involved in the design of R&D. It's almost like males are seen to be in the mathematical, analytical area, whereas females are seen more in the, for want of a better word, in the home economics area- the routine; from a design point of view, they're seen as better at it... they think that females are better at doing something routine which requires consistency. But I'm not sure that's necessarily true.}
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(Betty, Public Hospital Level 1 Scientist).

There are serious implications to the gendered work in laboratories in terms of both promotion and professional fulfilment. In the laboratories which performed R&D work, it was the designated scientific officers (all males with one exception) who are responsible for approving the R&D work performed in the laboratory. This can pose difficulties for having proposals for R&D accepted, as indicated by an account told by one of the women:

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\text{We have our research person now, and he more or less peruses everything that someone comes up with. I had a couple of things which we came up with that I particularly wanted done. They were knocked back at the time but now there are postgraduate students doing my projects under him [Research scientific officer]. So I've given it away.}
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(Cathy, Public Hospital Level 2 Scientist).

As the R&D work in the laboratories is largely initiated by the male scientific officers, it is not surprising to find that the majority of the women who have published in professional journals have done so as co-authors rather than as primary authors. Many of the women recounted incidents of having been largely responsible for the execution of R&D projects without having received official acknowledgments. This combination of factors contributes in reducing the promotional opportunities for the women microbiologists, whilst providing effective 'helpers' for the male scientists.

Domestic tasks

Within the laboratories, work perceived to be of high status, such as (the design of) research and development was largely a male domain. In contrast, work perceived of low status, such as laboratory domestic tasks was predominantly done by women. The majority of women stated that they, and their female colleagues, performed more domestic tasks in the laboratory compared with their male peers, irrespective of position.

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\text{In our laboratory, well it's always the females that clean the freezers, check on the stock, tidying up, that sort of thing. Occasionally a male will do it and surprise us all and then we'll comment.}
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(Tess, Public Hospital Level 1 Scientist).

In relation to domestic tasks, the women commented that 'It was easier to just do it' rather than ask a laboratory assistant (whose job duties include cleaning) to do it. Women spent a disproportionate time performing domestic tasks, while men in the laboratory spent more time attending meetings and doing administrative work.

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\text{In our lab, it seems that the men put things like meetings and administrative type things before the actual routine work, and they'll take shortcuts in the routine work or just leave things whereas the females, who are the lower levels, will tend to get the routine work done before doing other things.}
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(Sally, Public Hospital Level 1 Scientist).

Homans, in her study of British clinical chemists, similarly describes laboratory work as gendered (17). Overall, Homans found that irrespective of grade, men spent more time on research, staff management and administration; women, however, spent more time on clearing up, clerical work and diagnostic work. For many of the women, the domestic situation in their laboratories was equated to that of their homes.
When I first went to [Lab F] I was the only female in the lab, and it was really filthy. With basic house cleaning tasks, the guys just don't see the dust, that's at home as well. They don't think like that and I think that's the male way of thinking. I don't know if you can really change that unless you change their upbringing.

(Karen, Private Laboratory Level 2 Scientist).

For many of these women, it was difficult not to transfer their domestic role from their private domain to the professional setting. The professional and promotional implications of this gross discrepancy in performing domestic tasks is obvious, for after all, who gets promoted for regularly cleaning out the laboratory freezer? Many of the women participating in the study were not consciously aware of the implications of their acceptance of these apparent discrepancies. Most were unaware that they were reproducing the expectation of female domesticity within their laboratories, and in so doing, providing opportunities for the men to fulfil both their professional and promotional ambitions, while negating their own professional goals.

**Laboratory culture: Uniforms**

A contributing factor to the culture of an environment is the mode of dress of its constituents. Within many cultures uniforms act as a symbol of conformity and loss of individuality. In all the laboratories examined wearing of uniforms was optional. With the exception of one man, only the women chose to wear uniforms. In three laboratories all the female scientific staff wore uniforms. In most cases the uniform consisted of a white nurse's uniform.

Many of the women holding more senior posts gave anecdotes of being overlooked by visitors seeking the senior person, if they were wearing a uniform. These same women commented that they always changed out of their uniforms to give lectures or attend meetings so as to appear 'more professional'. The women gave reasons of convenience and safety for their choosing to wear uniforms, but were uncertain when asked why they thought men chose to remain in their civilian clothes in laboratories. Nurses have a long history of being the submissive assistants within the hospital hierarchy. Female medical microbiologists wearing the nurse's uniform reproduce this deference to male dominance existing within laboratories. Submerged under reasons of convenience is an apparent lack of awareness on the part of the women wearing uniforms that they are in fact reinforcing the structure which locks them in their submissive position.

**Discussion**

The quantitative data presented in this study shows that women are disproportionately represented in the lower positions within the microbiology profession. Given this data alone, it could be argued that by implementing positive discriminatory measures in moving women into senior positions, the problem could easily be solved. However, the insight provided by the qualitative data reveals a different picture. It is clear that the women are not interested in occupying the top positions in their laboratories as they currently exist. The women are consciously rejecting the masculine attributes associated with these positions. Instead, the women are seeking positions where they could fulfil their professional goals and personal ethos rather than fulfil the career ambitions and goals set by their male counterparts. In terms of the EEO policy's redistribution of women across hierarchical levels in which they are poorly represented, the legislation would in fact be doing the women a disservice in terms of their professional self-fulfilment.

Within the context of EEO policies is the difficult issue of promotion based on merit. As Burton points out, defining merit is problematic. Although criteria such as post-graduate qualifications and research record are being used to determine promotions, there continues to be more subjective criteria on which promotions are based. Summed under the term of 'leadership qualities' are characteristics emphasising domination, power and self assertiveness. This emphasis refuses to acknowledge feminine traits of co-operation, team work and participation as being legitimate for leadership. The women are then faced with the dilemma of whether to acquire and express these traits and forsake their own feminine traits for the sake of promotion.

Work within the microbiology laboratories was clearly gendered. Work deemed to be of high status, such as R&D was generally chosen by men and was seen to be important in terms of promotional criteria. However, the routine diagnostic work and necessary domestic tasks was perceived to be of much lower status and was generally the domain of the women scientists.

The gendered work evidenced in this study is not unique to microbiology or any other scientific profession. Harding claims that the root of gender inequality within science is to be found, not within science, but within the gendered division of labour within society (18). This is applicable to the workplace generally. A revaluing of the division between 'men's work' and 'women's work' in society is necessary before this can be translated to the division of labour in the workplace. Poiner and Wills argue that moving women into 'men's jobs' reinforces the high value ascribed to 'men's work'.
and low value of 'women's work' (19). In the context of this study, the division of labour fails to acknowledge the value and importance of work carried out by women scientists and instead promotes that work which the men have adopted as their domain.

The culture of an organisation influences the perceptions and behaviour of its members. The women discerned their position to be of less status and less power than that of the men in their workplace. In choosing to wear uniforms, the women expressed the devaluing messages given by the laboratory culture and in so doing, continued to reinforce this message.

Conclusion
What this study offers is an insight into the work practices of microbiology laboratories and how these practices contribute to the systemic discrimination within these organisations. Burton, and Poiner and Wills agree that although implementation of EEO policies has resulted in some beneficial changes for women, mainly regarding income, there is still little acknowledgment of the systemic discrimination which occurs in workplaces. Systemic discrimination goes beyond compensation for instances of individual discrimination; it is much more subtle and pervades the culture of an organisation. Bacchi argues that women's behaviour is influenced by the messages they internalise from the organisation's culture. If these messages portray women's skills and knowing as less valued and not legitimate within a particular work setting, then Bacchi argues, women's behaviour will reflect this message. This work culture therefore results in women lacking confidence in their abilities and not willing to compete for the decision making positions. Bacchi continues by saying that it is this type of covert discrimination which must be addressed in dealing with women's structural positions (20). I would argue that this form of address is beyond the scope of the existing AA/EEO legislation. The AA/EEO legislation has been the initiating factor for many organisations' address of equal opportunity issues, but the legislation has not, and will not, provide all the solutions. The responsibility for this redress within the workplace must lie within individual organisations. A work culture must be created which is non-threatening and supportive. Essential to this process are the perceptions of women within these organisations of their particular work cultures. More qualitative studies are required which legitimate women's experiences and attitudes. It is only by increased awareness of these hidden factors that systemic discrimination can be addressed.

Notes
1. The Sex Discrimination Act was passed by the Australian Commonwealth Parliament in March 1984 and has operated since 1 August 1984. The Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act was passed by the Australian Commonwealth Parliament in August 1986 and has operated since 1 October 1986.


9. The study sample was distributed as follows: 18 women were represented from 6 public hospital microbiology laboratories; 3 women from 3 State Health microbiology laboratories and 4 women from 3 private microbiology laboratories servicing the general community.


15. The professional levels which the women participating in the study occupied were arbitrarily classified as levels 1 to 5 to account for the different industrial awards of the various laboratories. Of these, Level 4 was the highest represented level and Level 1 the lowest.


