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FOREVER TROUBLING

Feminist Theoretical Work in Education

My life and intellectual history are closely connected to the late 20th Century rise of the second wave women's, student and civil rights movements. These decades also witnessed the professionalization of women's traditional fields of work—teaching and nursing—with their introduction into the academy. But as all feminists know, and my intellectual and personal history illustrates, there is no gradual progress towards the betterment of all or a fairer redistribution of power, and there is no safe discourse of equality. Any restructuring of the social relations of gender arising from local, national or global social, economic and political shifts often reasserts masculine privilege.

EARLY YEARS

As a baby-boomer born in 1947 into the first generation of a family of teachers, I benefitted from the rapid economic growth based on the temporary post-war settlement between capital and labour. Education was viewed as a public good and, just as health, a priority for government investment. Teaching offered social mobility to "talented" children of the working class such as my parents, my grandfathers being in small business and "on the trains" and my grandmothers being "homemakers." In 1937, my parents met at Melbourne Teacher's College as scholarships holders after teaching as apprentices, a decade before teaching became a university-trained profession. As a child of the 1940s living in a small country town where my father taught, I contracted polio at three, affecting my lower left leg. This was followed by time in hospital, rehabilitation and part-time school until I turned eight. My mother taught me to read, sing, and walk again while I exercised, before she reentered teaching part-time, then full-time, progressing from primary to secondary teaching, only then completing by correspondence an undergraduate degree in maths and science while credentialling as a lay Methodist minister.

My first instance of discrimination arose from being positioned as "crippled," although this was not how I felt. My parents encouraged my physical activity, which I followed by playing competitive hockey, swimming, squash, tennis—random play rather than the structured treatment advocated by the physiotherapists' norm. I then encountered systemic discrimination as a teaching studentship to fund my undergraduate arts degree at university was revoked because the doctor stated I was physically unfit to teach. Funded by a federal

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government scholarship and my parents, I completed a Bachelor of Arts honours degree in history and mathematics. At Melbourne University, I was amongst the ten percent of school leavers in Australia attending university in the 1960s, and one of the tiny cohort of those from government schools. My sense of marginalization was not fully overcome by my involvement in the large anti-Vietnam War protests beside a friend who had been conscripted and with the sound in my ears of Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream" recorded by my American History professor.

Systemic gender discrimination became overt in the workplace where, as a married woman just like my mother, I was excluded from the government superannuation fund in which my husband, also a secondary teacher, was a member. I was also ignored in all correspondence about our jointly owned house and bank account, recognised neither as an individual or equal. My mother had always insisted on being named, a battle she fought as an individual prior to the second wave of the women's movement and for which she suffered in the small country high school where both my parents taught. Equally, my father, a gentle and loving man respected by students and staff for his humour and intelligence, was depicted as passive, as if my mother's strong femininity meant his weak masculinity. A clear gender division of labour permeated the belief systems, structures and cultures of teaching in the 1960s. Despite my mother's promotion to a Melbourne secondary school, she was denied transport costs to her new job because her husband "owned the furniture." After a successful landmark appeal, she was elected Vice-President of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association from where she won equal pay for women teachers in Victoria and put the first strike motion to stop employment of unqualified teachers, both events occurring in the first week that I commenced teaching in 1970. Over the next decades, she graduated in the first Master of Educational Administration by correspondence cohort, and she was the first female principal of a co-educational high school in Victoria, while she developed child-care facilities, community centres and low rent houses for single mothers. Her history is also my story, informing my activism as a feminist and teacher.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVISM

A conjuncture of events interlinking teacher professionalism and unionism shaped my first years of teaching. Due to the lack of trained teachers and unprecedented numbers of students completing secondary schooling, in my second year I became Year 11 Coordinator of 250 students in a large metropolitan high school. This meant managing the equivalent of an entire small school, with responsibility for timetabling, welfare, career advice, and, of course, discipline. There was no discourse of leadership in schools or the professional literature, and this role was for me indistinguishable from my elected positions of leadership in the union branch and staff association. Union activism in 1970s Australian schools focused less on wages and more on demanding registration of teachers; opposing

centralized external examinations and assessment practices; resisting teacher inspections; and supporting colleagues facing discrimination.

With little government investment in professional development in schools, the weekly *Victorian Secondary Teachers Association News* was the source of educational theory and debates around texts such as the *Manifesto for Democratic Schooling* (Hannan, 1976) and a women's newsletter after the 1975 International Woman's Day. Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Illich's (1971) *De-schooling* lay on my bedside table jostling Germaine Greer's (1970) *The Female Eunuch* and Marilyn French's (1977) *The Women's Room*, propped up by the *Little Red Schoolbook*. Reading radical professional literature was widespread amongst my colleagues, an enthusiastic team with whom I initiated and taught Year 8 General Studies that integrated English, history, geography, drama, media and sometime math through project-based curriculum. Such grass root activism reinforced my experiences as to the power of collegiality and how innovation in practice is nurtured through collaborative professionalism rather than top-down reform.

In 1975, having divorced and then backpacked around Europe, I volunteered for the failed Labor campaign after the federal Whitlam Labor Government's contentious "dismissal" by the Governor General, one characterized by vicious attacks by religious and social conservatives targeting Labor members of parliament who supported women's right to abortion. This was a lesson in how social and religious conservatives could mobilise public opinion to the detriment of most women. Education was for most teachers and feminists the religion of the 1970s and 1980s, the means to bring about social change and greater equality, and I was on a mission fuelled by this collectivist impulse. Teacher and parent activism mirrored high levels of political participation that informed policy through party committee systems, as was the case with the federal Whitlam Labor Government's program of reform in health, welfare and education (1972-5). Under pressure from the Women's Electoral Lobby, of which I was a member, feminist advocates were installed within the government as bureaucrats and advisors ("femocrats") including a Women's Advisor to the Prime Minister, who instigated the first Women's Budget process that led to scrutiny of all policies for their impact on women. As in Scandinavia, state feminism provided a model for gender equity, informing gender-mainstreaming policies in the EU decades later.

State education bureaucracies were during the 1970s expanding rapidly, with principals often distant figures. The loosely coupled 20th Century educational bureaucracies were relatively benign, providing space for school-based reform compared to the tightly coupled corporate devolved "self-managing" market-driven systems after the 1990s. There were no strategic plans, mentoring, induction or succession planning programs. Indeed, in Victoria, bureaucracies "incorporated" representatives of the social movements (teachers, parents) as part of the policy process. Partial administrative decentralization in Victoria during the 1970s meant school councils included elected teacher representatives. Union activism advocating school-based decision-making together with a strong parent movement led to the establishment of Local School Administrative Committees and Equal

Opportunity Officers in all Victorian secondary schools in the early 1980s. Junior teachers such as myself were elected to manage the school *with* the principal and council. Despite this, my positioning towards authority was clearly more oppositional than compliant, as I practiced (often unreflexively) leadership from below. Not surprisingly, a key theme of my intellectual work has been tracking how feminism as a social, political and epistemological movement has negotiated the changing relations between the individual, the family, the nation state, through education to achieve gender equity and social justice.

MOBILITY AND CAREER TRANSITIONING

Back teaching fulltime in 1976, I commenced a part-time Masters degree at Monash University focusing on sociology, history as well as comparative education while dabbling in media studies—the feminist courses under attack from conservative women in the press. The book pile beside my bed grew to include feminist historians such as Anne Summers' (1975) *Damned Whores and God's Police*, who identified the historical stereotypes of Australian women as being either moral arbiters or the source of moral decay in society. Questioning my role as Year 11 Coordinator in the reproduction of class and gender differentiation through my advice to senior school students at a time of the collapse of the youth employment market in the 1970s led me in my Master thesis to an investigation descriptively titled *Education Policy Responses to Youth Unemployment in the 1930s*. Seeking an intellectual challenge after travelling around Southeast Asia and China with the Australia-China Association in 1980, I applied for a doctorate supervised by—and working as a research assistant with—David Tyack at Stanford University, well known for his landmark US historical text *The One Best System.* History was my passion. Tyack illustrated how history could avoid presentism while also writing a narrative that made his texts relevant to contemporary readers. In writing my doctoral thesis, *The Vocationalisation of Victorian Schooling 1900-60*, I was told to "just tell the story" and "not put theory in." To focus on gender was seen to be a poor career move, although gender was a dominant theme in how schools differentiated through school type, curriculum, and how skill was defined and rewarded in the workplace.

For me, being single and mobile had created significant possibilities for career enhancement. Stanford offered a breadth of courses ranging from feminist history to ethics with Nel Noddings, comparative education with Martin Carnoy, teacher education with Milbrey McLaughlin, curriculum with Joan Talbert, economics of education with Hank Levin and statistics with Sam Bowles. My doctoral supervisory panel was headed by Tyack with the feminist economist Myra Strober, and Larry Cuban who researched school reform. My grad student colleagues included Patti Gumport and Bill Tierney, both now key scholars in higher education, an emergent field in Australia. Despite my eclecticism, I chose to concentrate on organizational theory, leadership and policy, graduating in 1986 with a Masters of Educational Administration and Policy Analysis as well as a doctorate in history written on a Macintosh computer purchased in 1984.

While such curriculum breadth appealed to my interdisciplinary instincts, my somewhat critical eye due to fifteen years as a progressive teacher practitioner, a geographically marginalised "southerner," and a feminist alerted me to the America-centric assumptions embedded in organizational and sociological theory. Reading Bowles and Gintis' (1974) *Schooling in Capitalist America* again reminded me of the function of elite education in reproducing class, ironically a word not used by social scientists at Stanford. Working amongst a critical mass of international students also illustrated the importance of a strong postgraduate research culture, the benefits of coursework across sociology and history as well as quantitative and qualitative methodology in preparation for beyond the doctorate, as well as a structured doctoral program including supervisory panels, colloquia and orals. Such experiences informed my approach to supervision and my involvement with the development of doctoral programs at Deakin University, where with colleagues from the UK such as Rob Walker, colloquia and professional doctorates were first introduced in Australian education faculties.

Back in Australia in 1984, I taught part-time at a different school and lectured at Monash University part-time in the history and sociology of education while completing my PhD in any spare time. I enthusiastically based a school professional development workshop on Wilf Carr and Stephen Kemmis' (1986) *Becoming Critical* and Raewyn Connell et al.'s (1982) landmark sociological text, *Making the Difference: Schools Family and Social Division;* it was an introductory foray into critical theory and action research less enthusiastically received by my teaching colleagues more due to my poor pedagogy than their ideas. Penalized in a teacher promotion system that focused on seniority and subject specialisms both by my interdisciplinarity and my over-credentialling (2 Masters degrees and a near complete PhD), I applied in frustration for a three-year contract lectureship at Monash University in educational administration. With few applicants with similar qualifications in this emerging field in Australia, I got the job. When asked about my research agenda, I intuitively responded: school-based decision-making.

BECOMING AND BEING A FEMINIST ACADEMIC

My research has been informed by these familial, teaching, activist and education experiences in the formation of my academic—as distinct from my teacher—"habitus." My first article in the *Journal of Educational Administration* was on participation and school-based decision-making informed by the feminist political theorist Carole Pateman's (1980) *Participation and Democratic Theory* and organizational research indicating how worker involvement in decision-making led to greater commitment and productivity. My first book chapter was on teacher unionism and its role in policy and education reform within the corporate state. I put theory back into a chapter from my PhD for the *History of Education Review* with an historical examination of the reproduction of class through a study of how Melbourne University blocked school curriculum and assessment reform through control of assessment, in this instance drawing from Bernstein's (1975) notion of closed and open systems. Fascinated by the feminist debates seeking to reconcile

neo-Marxist materialist theories of labour and class with theories of patriarchy, I used feminist theories on technology, skill and the gender division of labour for a *Journal of Education Policy* article out of my PhD on the *Gendering of Skill and Vocationalism in Twentieth Century Australian Education*. Meanwhile, discontented with how the research in the field of educational administration, leadership and policy in which I was lecturing at Monash disconnected from my experience as a teacher, I found solace in a regular academic forum comprising of Melbourne, Monash and Deakin academics in the field. Here I encountered the critical perspectives of Deakin education academics: Richard Bates on power/knowledge relationships, Fazal Rizvi on multiculturalism, Laurie Angus on organizational culture, Peter Watkins' labour process analysis of teachers' work, and John Smyth on teacher professionalism that articulated with my own feminist concerns about the mainstream literature. I felt intellectually and politically at home once I gained a lectureship at Deakin in 1987 (Tinning & Sirna, 2011).

At Deakin, with Jane Kenway (see her essay, this volume), whose background was in sociology and feminist theory, our work was to introduce feminist perspectives into the field of educational administration and policy. While Jane initially concentrated on gender equity policy for girls and the marketization of education, my focus was on educational administration and leadership and "the managerial turn." This was highly competitive "big boy territory," largely dominated from the US, and wide open to feminist critique. Despite contestation within the field arising from the geographic margins (Bates in Australia, Greenfield in Canada, Grace in the UK and Codd in New Zealand), there was little feminist critique other than in the UK, USA, and NZ focusing on the under-representation of women in school leadership (e.g., Charole Shakeshaft and Gaby Weiner). Given the limited theoretical base of the masculinist mainstream literature, informed predominantly from scientific management, management theory, and structural functionalist sociology, my intellectual inspiration came from reading widely across the prolific feminist theory in philosophy, politics, history, sociology, and critical organizational theory—including the feminist standpoint theory of Sandra Harding (1986) *The Science Question in Feminism* and Dorothy Smith (1987) in *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology;* feminist theorists of the state such as Anna Yeatman's (1990) *Bureaucrats, Technocrats, Femocrats: Essays on the Contemporary Australian State*; and the femocrat, Hester Eisenstein's (1996) commentary on feminism as a social movement and gender equity policy in Australia and the USA.

These texts pointed to emerging feminist debates over the politics of difference, gender/power/knowledge and social justice, and they foreshadowed the rise of feminist poststructuralist theory around the body and subjectivity, much of this by Australian feminists such as Elizabeth Grosz (Caine et al., 1998). Texts I read included Carole Pateman's (1988) *The Sexual Contract*; Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell's (1987) *Feminism as Critique*; Rosemary Tong's (1989) *Feminist Thought*; Roberta Hamilton and Michele Barrett's (1987) *Politics of Diversity*; Barbara Caine, Elizabeth Grosz and Marie de Lepervanches (1988) *Crossing Boundaries: Feminism and the Critique of Knowledges*; Iris Marion Young's

(1988) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*; Linda Nicholson's (1990) *Feminism/Postmodernism;* and Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell and Nancy Fraser's (1995) *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange.* These outstanding feminist scholars highlighted how gendered dualisms between mind/body, public/private, and rationality/emotionality embedded in social, scientific, philosophical and political theory positioned women as lesser and weaker, incapable of leadership for example, or, as in liberal theory, assumed gender neutrality in terms of individual or collective experience. Such gender binaries or assumed gender neutrality were entrenched in the literature on educational administration and leadership which was littered with claims premised upon the universality of the male experience, hierarchical principles of scientific management, gender-neutral organisational theory, the competitive individualism of human capital theory, homogenous notions of organizational culture, and research based only on male hero leaders. In what has come to be a much cited pathbreaking chapter titled "Educational Leadership: A Feminist Critique and Reconstruction" published in Smyth's (1989) *Critical Perspectives on Educational Leadership,* I undertook a systematic critique of the epistemological, political and sociological assumptions embedded in the field.

THE DEAKIN CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Deakin scholarship was perceived to be subversive to the dominant positivism of US scholars in the field of educational administration and leadership in the late 1980s. A Deakin symposium proposal to AERA was rejected in 1987, my abstract's reviewer commenting that feminism was irrelevant to leadership and educational administration. The threat of alternative perspectives to the established educational administration field became transparent at the 1988 AERA conference. My co-presenters, both male stalwarts of US educational administration positivism, attacked me as a Bates "clone," damned feminist theory, and demeaned as insubstantial because not informed by quantitative methodologies my feminist policy sociological perspective using Yeatman's theories of the state to examine how the integration of social movements (women's and parent movements) into the Victorian state education bureaucracy informed equity policy. Yet support from the audience for my feminist epistemological position that there were different ways of researching and knowing and forms of knowledge indicated that significant theoretical and methodological shifts were underway.

The scholarly environment at Deakin fostered critical perspectives and encouraged collaborative work in teaching and research in an unstructured and fluid organizational context. Stephen Kemmis had amassed scholars around action research alongside the Social and Administrative Studies group recruited by Richard Bates. Together with Jane Kenway, I organised a landmark conference in 1988 that led to the 1993 edited collection *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy: A Feminist Introduction*; developed national and international networks and feminist scholars to visit, including Catherine Marshall, Gaby Weiner, Nancy Jackson, and Patti Lather, resulting in Lather's (1991)

influential monograph *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/In the Postmodern* (see also her essay, this volume); and developed the compulsory off-campus Gender and Education Masters unit which students evaluated as being theoretically demanding and personally challenging. Our desire to promote feminist pedagogies "at a distance" was achieved through group teleconferences and reading groups, pushing ideas elaborated in feminist critiques of critical pedagogy by Elizabeth Ellsworth and Australian feminists Carmen Luke and Jenny Gore.

In terms of practice at Deakin, there was also a strong convergence between what we as scholars theorised around democratic participation and collegial practice such as electing Deans, which also provided opportunities for young female academics to participate in university wide committees. Deakin, modelled on the UK Open University, became an Antipodean node in the international network of critical scholars such Lawrence Stenhouse, Henry Giroux, Bob Stake, Michael Apple, and Tom Popkewitz. Such scholars contributed to the high quality off-campus course materials produced by interdisciplinary teams and published by Deakin University Press. Doctoral students were similarly attracted to Deakin, for its criticality and flexibility, as Deakin provided non-traditional approaches to entrance and supervision. Deakin's reputation for "criticality" spread internationally as the "Deakin diaspora" of academics and graduate students moved on to other universities nationally and internationally during the 1990s (Tinning & Sirca, 2011). My intellectual pursuits were grounded by having a baby at forty-two as a mid-career academic in 1989, prompting my awareness as to lack of child-care support. Pregnancy was still viewed as "something private" by some and "not something a feminist did" by others.

GENDERED RESTRUCTURING, RESTRUCTURING GENDER

My overarching research program had now developed, on reflection rather than through planning, into an examination of the changing relationship between education, the state, the individual, and the family using the lens of leadership and governance and the analytical tools of policy sociology and feminist theory. Considering the impact of neoliberal restructuring on educational work and gender equity has been a long-term project of inquiry and the subject of three Australian Research Council discovery grants. The 1990s was a period of major educational and workforce restructuring in Australia instigated by the Hawke federal Labor Government and a neoliberal conservative government in Victoria. The latter downsized and marketised government schools, creating competition between "self managing" schools in a devolved system of governance that appropriated the earlier discourse of participation but which, ironically, disempowered teacher and parent organisations. "Choice" was to be exercised by the self maximizing individual without regard for others or "the public."

The university sector had also been reconfigured post-1989, with Deakin amalgamating with a large College of Advanced Education in ways that had a negative impact on its research culture. Deakin's Faculty of Education was

constantly restructured and downsized throughout the 1990s as Australian universities became corporatised through the processes of managerialisation and marketization. My research identified a "structural backlash" as the gendered nature of organisations advantaged those in power, largely men, in any restructuring, at the same time the conservative Howard federal Government provoked a popular backlash against feminism, multiculturalism and reconciliation with indigenous people. These studies drew on feminist theories of the state: Yeatman's (1994) *Postmodern Revisionings of the Political;* John Clarke and Janet Newman's (1994) *The Managerial State;* in organizational theory Clare Burton's (1991) *The Promise and the Price: The Struggle for Equal Opportunity in Women's Employment*, which challenged the gender neutrality of notions of merit, and Cynthia Cockburn's (1991) analysis of the processes of gendering of organisations in *In the Way of Women.*

As one who has stayed at Deakin through multiple restructurings, I experienced the sense of loss and grief as my colleagues departed and as executive management was asserted over the academic voice (Blackmore, 1993). Emerging from the study of self-managing schools was evidence of the significance of emotions in organizational change and leadership in times of uncertainty. "Doing Emotional Labor in the Educational Market Place: Stories from the Field of Women in Leadership" (1996) drew a link between emotions, gender and markets within schooling during the reform period of the 1990s. In it I explored how the emotions of envy, desire, hope, greed and anxiety are critical to education markets and the affective economies of organisations in gendered ways, an analysis informed by Steven Fineman's (1993) *Emotions in Organisations*, Jennifer Nias (1996) on the emotions of teaching and Arlene Hochschild's (1984) *The Managed Heart*. Emotionality and rationality as feminists have long argued are inextricably connected, embodied and gendered. More recently, I have argued that emotionality is not just an individual but a collective behaviour—relational and contextual—and thus manifest in the emotional economies of organisations, in the politics of emotions exemplified by educator's anger about neoliberal reforms, and in the post-9/11 "structures of feeling" (Williams, 1975) characterized by the generalized class anxiety manifest in educational policies of choice.

WHY LEADERSHIP?

Leadership became the lexicon for political, social and economic reform during the 1990s and the solution for devolved governance to self-managing institutions. While as a teacher and academic I have tended to lead informally, often against those in formal positions, leadership has been a useful lens through which to investigate the reconfiguration of educational organisations, academics' and teachers' work, and identity. Focusing on leadership facilitates unpacking different perceptions of the unequal distribution and effects of power and how gender works through what Smith refers to as the "relations of ruling." Exploring women's notions of being and knowing (Belenky et al., 1997), Nel Nodding's (1984) ethic of care, and feminist research on women in leadership (Catherine Marshall on

feminist critical policy analysis and leadership; Gaby Weiner on gender equity policies; Miriam David on family/school relations [see also her essay, this volume]; Madeleine Arnot on sociology of gender; Kathleen Weiler on feminist educational history). The danger in my earlier work was to avoid the seductive notion that all women were infused with a sense of care and social justice. Such thinking "set women up" as the "natural" moral guardians of "the social," recreating Enlightenment binaries that essentialised gender stereotypes, with little potential to produce social change generally or gender reform in particular as male advantage was left unexamined.

Raewyn Connell's *Gender and Power* (1987; also see her essay, this volume) avoided this theoretical dilemma by focusing on the social relations of gender and how multiple masculinities and femininities are systematically produced in relation to each other through the gender regimes within organisations such as schools and the gender order of society, thus moving beyond simplistic male/female categories. The notion of hegemonic masculinity provided a capacity to understand how there were dominant notions of organizational culture(s) and images of leadership that were masculinist but which individual men did not necessarily "fit" while recognising that there were subversive and marginalized cultures existing in organisations and society. Connell's theories of gender thus disrupted key organizational theories in mainstream educational administration that assumed a homogenous organisational culture that could be created, managed and directed by leaders. Gender is integral in the production and constitution of such culture(s) in ex/inclusionary ways.

These ideas informed my book *Troubling Women: Feminism, Leadership and Educational Change* (1999), the title drawing from Judith Butler's (1990) *Gender Trouble*, in which I positioned my work as "feminist post-structuralism with a material bent." *Troubling Women* focused on what I perceived to be three problematics in educational leadership: how the underrepresentation of women in leadership was a problem for democratic societies in uncertain times when leadership itself was in trouble; how women in leadership were trouble as they symbolized difference and undermined traditional structures and authority; but thirdly how feminists needed to trouble essentialising discourses about women leaders being more caring and sharing, thus conflating "being female" into "being feminist" while ignoring political, racial, ethnic and religious differences amongst women. Feminist research had, I argued, as with research on and by men, produced its own normative discourse that was impeding critical thinking within the field by focusing only on successful women and leadership while neglecting the wider restructuring of the social relations of gender, such as the casualisation and feminization of educational labour. Thus it was critical to shift focus onto material conditions, the ongoing unequal distribution of power and the social relations of gender within organizational and policy contexts. The feminist issue is not just representational equality for women in leadership but also about substantive ethical and value positions. While flirting with Foucault as many feminists did in the 1990s, I was nervous of its subtle determinism, and turned to feminist reworking of Foucault's notion of power as being both positive and negative and not

incommensurate with the feminist theoretical and practical desire to better understand social change. Foucault's disciplinary technology captured how women leaders individually and collectively exercised agency within certain cultural, structural and social constraints and performance management regimes.

In an increasingly corporatised university sector, being a female professor required choices about my own positioning. As an elected Deputy Chair of Academic Board from 2000 to 2004 and on numerous executive committees, I oversaw the academy becoming internationalized, curriculum commodified and disaggregated into discrete packages of content to be "delivered" not taught and re-branded as instructional design; academics evaluated by generic "satisfaction" market surveys rather than substantive evaluations of content and pedagogy; and a counterproductive skewing of administration towards quality assurance rather than quality improvement, as indicated by the sidelining of Academic Boards from line management (Blackmore, 2007). At the time, I was examining the impact of restructuring on leaders in schools, technical and further education institutes and universities. The data indicated that many but not all women leaders felt a strong sense of dissonance—similar to my own experience—between co-option into a management culture requiring compliance, and their scholarly commitment to their field and, for some, feminist commitment to social justice. The tension was between "being good" and "doing good." Academics and teachers alike expressed feelings of disempowerment and de-professionalisation.

In *Performing and Reforming Leaders: Gender, Educational Restructuring and Organisational Change,* Lyotard's (1984) notion of performativity—be efficient or disappear—had analytical value. But I also argued that "being seen to be doing something" had symbolic power without actually "doing something" of substance. Performativity was producing counterproductive tendencies, a focus on measurable proxies (citations, standardized assessment) as a poor substitute for quality and success, diverting the focus from "the real work" of teaching and research. Performativity also changes, as Judith Butler (1990) argues, practices and identities through repeated performances of gender. Stephen Ball (2000) also explored how performativity had local and global policy effects, and how performative organisations produce fabrication and loss of identity. Linking Ball's work on performativity to critiques of New Public Administration by Newman and Clarke (1996) in *The Managerial State*, Deborah Kerfoot and David Knight's (1993) work on management and masculinity with that of Alvesson and Billing's (1996) theorising of gender and organisations provided a coherent framework for analyzing the way global relations were informing localised social relations of gender in organisations.

Feminist critical policy analysis, particularly through the work of Carol Bacchi (1999), raised the issue of how policy is treated as a solution to a problem rather than being seen as a process of solving a problem, raising the dilemma of categories with regard to equity (Marshall, 1997; Bacchi, 1999). To name women as a policy category essentialised women as a group; not to name them ignored gender inequality. At the same time, shifts in language meant notions of equity or equal opportunity were being weakened by the discourse of diversity (Blackmore,

2006) as difference was reduced to individual preference rather than the legacy of systemic group disadvantage. Nor was there a safe policy haven for feminists or "the other," as the discourse of male disadvantage was mobilized as backlash gender politics during the 1990s. In leadership it meant reasserting old privileges in new forms of entrepreneurial masculinity.

GLOBALISATION: A USEFUL THEORY FOR FEMINISTS?

Poststructuralism became the theoretical fetish of the 1990s in education theory and, amongst feminists, it supplanted the unitary individual by a multiplicity of subjectivities, foregrounding the power of discourse and positionality through the work of Bronwyn Davies in Australia, Valerie Walkerdine in the UK and a key critique of psychology's unitary subject in *Changing the Subject* (Henriques et al., 1984). Positionality usefully provided feminist poststructuralists a way to understand how women leaders experienced the contradictions of agency and constraint, their sense of ambivalence and ambiguity, even when in powerful positions. At the same time, while much attention was being paid to the production of gendered subjectivities, black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1990) in *Black Feminism* and postcolonial feminists such as Gutterai Spivak (1988) in *In Other Worlds* were pointing to how globalization was fundamentally reconfiguring the social relations of gender and material conditions of women's work and lives differently depending on their race, ethnicity and class. Feminists such as Elaine Unterhalter (2007) and Nelly Stromquist (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000) were charting how women and children were bearing the brunt of the structural adjustment programs in the 1980s in Africa and South America. The rise of the Australian Indigenous movement and recognition of how indigenous people suffered under colonial rule provoked national reflection as did Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (1999) challenge in *Talkin' Up to the White Woman* to white feminists. Taking seriously the politics of difference, how were white women, including myself, complicit in the whiteness of educational leadership (Blackmore 2010)? Meanwhile, the field of educational administration and policy has remained relatively untouched by theoretical moves in postcolonial, cultural studies, critical pedagogy and antiracist theories, continuing to assume a gender and racial neutrality in the focus on leadership as a quick solution to the complexities of increasingly culturally diverse educational relationships.

The new policy sociology developing from Stephen Ball's (1994) notion of policy as discourse and text provided a useful tool in analyzing gender equity reform. It recognised the power of policy as discourse, and informed how policy informed leadership practices, created boundaries, could be enabling and disabling, and have contradictory and unexpected effects arising from how policy articulated into practice through multiple readings. Policy's capacity to "steer from a distance" in systems of devolved governance also explained how academics and teachers felt more controlled than under the former bureaucratic regimes as they internalized the performance expectations. By the late 1990s, globalisation was a concept being mobilised across policy sociology, with early explorations about how the

local/global articulate particularly through travelling policies like neoliberal market theory and New Public Administration. As a feminist, suspicious of any new concept or theory in terms of what it meant for gender equity, I queried whether globalization was a useful concept for feminists, or was it merely obfuscating other fundamental changes in gender relations (Blackmore, 1999)? Questioning the notion of globalisation produced different questions. Where could feminists now make claims for equity if the nation state was weakened? Privatisation and commodification raised issues around the post welfare state as it moved from provision towards regulation. How did post-welfarism change women's position in work as they took up the slack of the state around care for the aged, young and sick? What does the changing nature of educational governance across national systems and within nation states mean in terms of the role of international bodies such as the OECD and UNICEF for social justice (Blackmore, 2011)?

Further, the fragmentation of the public sector of health, welfare and education due to neoliberal market reforms increasingly feminized workplaces and produced glaring locational disadvantage by the end of the 1990s. My continuing interest in "at risk" youth led to an Australian Research Council research project on the Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria, created as a policy solution to better coordinate agencies managing youth transitions form school to work or further education in disadvantaged communities. This study produced evidence of network modes of working and leading, indeed a form of network sociality, and it raised questions as to whether corporate modes of governance can survive in transnationally and locally networked organisations, an issue I am currently exploring around the changing role of the entrepreneurial university.

Yet to focus on the global was not to neglect the local, and the identity work of teaching and leading. Throughout I have engaged in a critique of the dominant paradigms of school reform and leadership, in particular the narrow and reductionist focus of the school effectiveness and improvement movements which have decontextualised school reform and have provided justification for blaming individual schools for systemic failures, most explicitly through standardized testing and the comparison of individual "like" schools. Given the body of research on what produces educational disadvantage, my recent research focuses on what can be done, what is innovative and strategic, in school-based reform within disadvantaged communities. One trajectory explores how interagency collaboration supports resilient students and schools, and the role of government and non-government agencies in the formation of new networks of governance. Another focuses on how leaders can provide conditions for innovative learning environments, utilizing the concept of redesign from the New London Group's (1996) multi-literacies. Redesign as conceptualised by Pat Thomson and myself (Thomson & Blackmore, 2006) is a purposeful collaborative process, about undergoing fundamental changes in practice, a notion that has informed case studies around spatiality, connectivity and pedagogical innovation in disadvantaged school communities. This body of research continues to highlight how public investment is required to produce systems conducive to enabling

school based reform that benefits all, and education has become a transnational and not a national project, treated no longer as a public but an individual positional good or form of capital.

With the shifting ideological and material terrain post-9/11, Bourdieu's (1997) notions of field, habitus, capital and doxa have become appealing in my research on the regendering of academic and intellectual leadership in the transnational university, although necessarily reworked by feminists such as Lois McNay (2000) in *Gender and Agency*. Bourdieu has argued that education as a field has been subjugated to the fields of politics, economics and journalism, thus changing the rules, language and values of the field of education. The media is a recurrent interest since my honours history thesis on *The Press and the First Victorian Parliament*. Since then, I have explored how Melbourne University used the media to subvert inclusive science curriculum reform; how a Premier of Victoria mobilised the media to manufacture discontent and justify neoliberal school reform (Blackmore & Thorpe, 2003); and how the media represents leadership. These have contributed to theoretical explorations around the emergent area of "mediatisation" of educational policy in policy sociology.

REFLECTIONS ON THIS REFLECTION

As with all narratives, this narrative makes my life history more coherent than it seemed at the time. Much of what I did was opportunistic and serendipitous, out of kilter with the current organizational desire for alignment. My research has inevitably been inextricably intertwined with my life and teaching, in which I have, just as my research participants, experienced ambivalence about the seduction of formal leadership out of a fear of succumbing to the "managerial habitus" which privileges the logics of the market and managerialism over professional and ethical choices. These are new hard times for education and I would argue for women. Evidence continues to mount as to the casualization and feminization of educational work; the widening gender wage gap despite women's educational overachievement; a growing disparity between rich and poor students, schools and communities; and the intransigence of the under-representation of women in leadership. Throughout, social justice in and through education has been the driver of my intellectual work. Most recently, feminist philosophers and political theorists such as Nancy Fraser (1997) on redistributive justice as well as Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (e.g., Nussbaum, 2011) on capability theory have provided new insights. Feminism as an epistemological, political and social movement continues to inform my daily practice in and through research, although feminism is not a unitary movement, more a range of practices and activities that has family resemblances transnationally, and in a constant state of contestation, as I am, over power/knowledge/identity.

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