

PROFESSIONAL PAPER

I Think She's Decided To Be a Manager Now: Women, Management and Leadership in the Knowledge Factory



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ABSTRACT

*Stanley Aronowitz wrote a prescient book in 2000. Titled *The Knowledge Factory*, it did not take women academics as its focus, but emphasized the consequences of separating the teaching/researching academic from the 'manager.' This demarcation of teaching, research and management has intensified through the 2000s. This is also a gendered separation. This article offers a model for women moving into higher education leadership, based on a considered integration of teaching, research and university service. We argue for a transformation, moving from Rosemary Deem's "manager-academics" to "academics who manage." This is not simply a movement from a compound noun to a noun and verb, but a reminder that university leaders are academics first, and manage within the context of their academic responsibilities*

KEY WORDS: *higher education, women in leadership, academic management, succession planning, Generation X, feminism*

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The question of true equality and opportunity for women versus the perceived reality is a popular topic of conversation and thought for women in, or aspiring to be in, leadership roles in the workforce (2015, 316).

Kasey Neece-Fielder

This article did not emerge from an inspiring keynote speaker, an innovative grant submission or a powerful seminar. Instead, this piece juttred from the most uncreative and uninspiring of sources. Tara Brabazon, one of the authors of this article, was conducting a performance management review. Stressful for the interviewee and pedantic and passionless for the interviewer, these events are punctuated by compliance, excuses, ego and narcissism. Staff cry with disappointment for themselves. They shudder and shirk at the possibilities of what could have been achieved. Mediocrity is common. Excellence is rare.

In one meeting, a senior scholar noted in their paperwork that they mentored junior colleagues. Little undergraduate or postgraduate teaching was completed and no singly-authored publications were listed. Tara asked for examples, as ‘mentoring’ carries an Orwellian inflection that stretches and bends to suit the priorities of the speaker. This speaker stammered. A couple of names were mentioned, followed by the mention of a colleague with an unusual caveat: “but I think she’s decided to be a manager now.”

This phrase captures much of what is wrong in higher education. Professors used to complete the high service functions within universities. The revolving departmental chair is still present in some systems. But the post-fordist university has highly differentiated teaching, research and service functions. This system dissolves when a ‘research professor’ produces less research than much more junior academics who are also fulfilling a full workload of teaching responsibilities (Evans, 2012; Evans, 2014). It is also a profound problem that the word ‘manager’ becomes a label of disrespect for a colleague who has chosen to commit to service for students and staff. More significantly, women in universities – like men in universities – operate at their highest and most sustained levels when creating an integrated matrix of teaching, research and service to higher education. It is not a choice between functions, but combining all the elements that enable a career.

This article is written by a head of school and an associate head of school in a regional Australian university. Tara Brabazon is a professor of

education and head of school, aged in her forties. Elizabeth Murray is a lecturer and associate head of school, and in her thirties. Both are committed teachers and research active by any university's definition or determination. Both fulfil the full spectrum of academic life. This is an effective mash of functions. This meshing of functions should also be normal. Therefore this article is written to understand how and why women become leaders, and how they can be supported to integrate leadership into their academic portfolio. Elizabeth Murray, like thousands of emerging female leaders in our universities, deserves a better future and greater opportunities than have been available to the previous generations of women scholars. This article maintains a meta-function. In form and content, it holds its ground. Research activity matters to leaders and future leaders in universities. To address this premise, two academics, who are also a middle manager and an emerging manager, have worked together to ensure that research activity is part of any future discussion of women and leadership. It is a personal project with professional resonance.

Manspreading

Why are there so few women academics, and more so, senior ones? Why have women's high educational achievement levels not produced greater female representations in the university sector? These questions continue to be pertinent, and they point to a gap in current scholarly knowledge, that requires further research.

Pamela Adhiambo Raburu (2015, 360)

Men occupy space and they are naturalized to do so. 'Manspreading' was a Tumblr campaign (2014) and Twitter hashtag (2014) that captured men's behaviour on public transport where they occupied two seats while other commuters stood. It is also a metaphor and trope to understand masculinity in a patriarchy. Men spread – they occupy space – and are naturalized when they do so. Manspreading is also naturalized in our universities. The last twenty years – the decades when women's qualifications and experience have matched men (White, 2004) and far greater gender equality in senior posts should have been realized – have seen manspreading in action, carried through the word "manager." This (lack of) social justice could – and can – be explained through

understanding the failed processes and products of neoliberalism and how the entrails of injustice remain in our universities. This has been termed the Zombie Academy (Whelan, Walker and Moore, 2013). This (lack of) change could – and can – be explained through the fordist automation of online learning, where mapping learning outcomes over assessment ‘products’ has become more important than ensuring expertise and excellence in teaching staff. This (lack of) change could – and can – be explained through research assessment exercises that claim and validate particular modes of research and particular types of researchers as of value. Such schemes and systems have shaped the definitions and utility of words such as leadership, management and administration. Yet there is a parallel problem: the women and men that could be entering positions of management and leadership are denying and demeaning these roles to focus on their own research. Therefore, management is left to the men and women who do not teach and research.

There is a legitimate origin for this dismissal of service and conflating it with neoliberal management. In 2000, Stanley Aronowitz wrote *The Knowledge Factory*. He described and theorized the disconnection between ‘managers,’ ‘teachers’ and ‘researchers.’ His title captured the unstable sociology of higher education that emerged in the late 1990s and reached levels of toxicity, confusion, fear and bullying through the 2010s. He argued that academics who failed to demonstrate excellence in teaching and research, which would be rewarded through promotion, move into a third path: administration. Aronowitz argued that this group then worked their way through the Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor posts at the very point that these titles started to proliferate.

Over the past thirty years, administration has become a separate career in academic life ... What are the consequences of administration as a career? First and perhaps foremost, career administrators tend to lose touch with the educational enterprise. Their allegiances and self-conception becomes increasingly corporate as they gradually surrender any pretence of doing consistent writing and teaching ... It doesn’t take long before he views himself as a member of a separate social layer within the academic system and sees the faculty and students as adversaries or, at least, as a different stratum (2000, 164-165).

Aronowitz logged a foundational reality of contemporary higher education. The best teachers are committed to teaching and continue to

teach. The best researchers are immersed in long-term projects and continue researching. Those who fail or are un(der)skilled or un(der)successful in teaching and research enter the third strand of academic life: administration. Therefore, this group of 'academics' are making decisions about those who achieve in the spheres where they underachieved. The result of such a structure is that Professional Development Reviews and promotional processes are conducted by managers who demand standards that are beyond their own academic knowledge and experience. Ironically, or perhaps not, they do not have the self-awareness to recognize the hypocrisy of their position. How can a research inactive dean offer commentary about research? How can an inexperienced doctoral supervisor, who happens to be dean, offer advice to his or her staff? Within Aronowitz's argument, this hypocrisy is ignored. Credibility is not questioned, as it is based on intimidation and a title. Management in universities is therefore based on a façade and a lie. Lacking expertise in teaching and research supposedly does not hamper the capacity to manage staff and students.

There are alternatives. A revolving departmental chair is a way to even out the load of administrative responsibilities and also spread the expertise and decision making more widely. It can also have remarkable consequences. David McNally, Professor of Political Science at York University in Toronto, had his career 'interrupted' by university service.

This book has been a long time coming. I hope it is better for the wait. I first started work on it in 2003, only to have my labours interrupted by a three-year stint (2005-8) as Chair of the Department of Political Science at York University. When I resumed this study, global capitalism had entered its most profound crisis since the 1930s, adding a special resonance to the themes I explore here (McNally 2012).

By the time he could resume this work, the Global Financial Crisis had happened, but his awareness had also increased about the arbitrariness of power and decision making. He had witnessed "the capitalist grotesque" (2012, 2). This system of revolving department chairs means that the burden (and power) is shared, and the 'interruptions' in teaching and research are minimized. Further, the connection to staff and students is maintained. In such a system, Aronowitz's third parallel strand of university administration does not occur, because administrators emerge from teaching and research and return to it.

The question is who is promoted through this Aronowitz-inspired post-achievement model of university? How does patronage operate in the knowledge factory? The answer is a series of excuses to explain why men continue to run universities. Work and Careers in Australia conducted a survey of academics in 19 Australian universities. It is based on 22,000 responses (Work and Careers Report, 2012). When discussing the rationale for the shape of this data, the focus – the justification – is that women have made a choice to ‘have families’ which ‘explains’ why promotions have not taken place (Broadbent, Strachan, Troup, 2015). This supposedly explains why women are appointed at Level A lectureships, rather than B, and why their careers taper at level C (senior lectureship). While census data sets lag and fertility commentaries are volatile and ideological, there is a clear trend that women are having fewer children, with one quarter of women predicted not to have children in Australia through the 21st century (ABS 2016). There is also one other observation from the emerging demographic studies: the higher the level of education a woman possesses, the fewer children she produces (Fitzgerald Reading, 2011). With a doctorate a requirement for permanence in a university post, there is a casual and complex relationship between procreation, educational attainment, appointment and promotion as an academic. While ‘family responsibilities’ is a justification for women not occupying the highest levels of seniority, behind these figures on a graph is a large component of women without children. Therefore, an argument about promotion and commitment to the workforce because of family responsibilities is not rational. It does not recognize the role of older women and “encore careers” (Denmark, Goldstein, Thies and Tworecke, 2015). Also, and most basically, the men captured in this data set also have children. Their caring responsibilities are supposedly not relevant or have little impact on their professional lives. Finally, the assumption of this study is that academic women (and men) are situated in a heteronormative, procreative, nuclear family. Those assumptions are providing excuses for the data, not explanations and future trajectories and trends.

Women’s sexuality is a barrier for the promotion of both childless and childbearing women. As Dianne Kaseman described nearly twenty years ago, “in the past ... childless single women were considered to be deceptive and the childless married woman was viewed as power driven and selfish and that childbearing was sacrificed for professional life. Although the double bind is present today, it is often covertly hidden in discussions of the sexuality of women in public roles” (1998). Such binaries – procreative and barren, selfless and selfish - create narratives of disempowerment,

competition between women and judgments about sex, sexuality and femininity. Emerging from such binaries, women with children cannot commit to paid employment. They should not be hired. Women without children have failed the femininity 'test' and therefore should be watched. This is the "double bind" of women in leadership (Kaseman, 1998).

It is important to present another set of numbers that sketch a more significant snapshot of men and women in Australian universities. Men are 64% of Pro Vice Chancellors, 65% of Deputy Vice Chancellors and 77% of Vice Chancellors in Australian Universities (Fitzgerald, 2014). Such proportions of men and women in leadership are not an accident. Such a pattern cannot be explained by individual women making choices. They signify how gender operates in universities, via "homosociability" (Blackmore and Barty, 2004). It is not a series of choices made by women to balance work and family life. This is institutional sexism (Bagilhole 1993). Power – and leadership – in Australian universities is carried and held by white men. Considering that there are more female students in our universities than male, this leaky pipeline of women in leadership is actually a waterfall. There is no pipe left.

How can these figures be explained? Justification for such a gendered pattern is even harder to configure. Researchers can return to the simplistic argument about 'caring' responsibilities, assuming that these men in leadership have no caring functionality for spouses, children or parents (Armenti, 2004). Further, the self-defeating argument is also a justification: women really do not want to lead, as they are happy completing the 'housework' of a university. Tanya Fitzgerald, a Head of School, explained the problem in these terms:

Women are travellers in a male world in which they are confronted with expectations of being managerial (read masculine) enough to be acknowledged as managers, yet feminine enough to be recognised as women. But to be accepted, they need to conform to established stereotypes and stay out of powerful positions (2014a).

The Head of School or Department is an intriguing position from which to comment on these issues. Women in these roles are not so much limited by a glass ceiling, but are squashed between a microscope's glass slides. They occupy the housework posts of university management, the lowest rung of 'senior management' with little autonomy, agency or the possibility for innovation. The Key Performance Indicators cascade to the Heads of School who have to take an often untested and flawed policy and make it

operate in some form. Yet the Heads who are outstanding teachers and researchers are often told – overtly – that those functions and abilities are not relevant to management. Tara has been told on multiple occasions and in multiple posts that research is not an expectation of a Head. It is as if the research-active head of school is an embarrassment, an aberrance, a unicorn, that must not be publicized because of the wider questions this activity asks about other managers. This research activity also reflects badly on the ‘research professors’ who work completely on their own scholarship with few wider institutional demands. Yet if their ‘productivity’ is assessed against the research active head of school, serious questions are asked of the professoriate, untethered by service responsibilities.

Leadership is not a series of characteristics or a checklist. It is the development and management of relationships (Fitzgerald, 2014b). Institutional risk and responsibility are cascaded to a departmental level and the “manager-academic” (Deem, 2003). The notion of individual agency and responsibility is displaced in a management structure that foregrounds competition, efficiency and productivity, often justified as ‘quality assurance.’ However, as Tanya Fitzgerald has argued, this process “co-opt[s] women into neo-liberal and managerial discourses that run counter to the security of equitable outcomes” (2014, 32). Line management is based on the presumption that employees are in a line and are managed in a linear fashion. While this configuration may operate in banking and retail industries, higher education is based on an excellence model for teaching and research. The irrationality of line management means that individual “manager-academics” are line managing people who are better teachers and researchers than they are. The only solution to that paradox, inequity and irrationality is the one proposed in this paper: only the best teachers and researchers occupy the role of “manager-academic.” It is also a transitory role that is moved between staff. What possible authority – except one based on clinging and clawing neo-liberalism – could an under-performing academic hold in a managerial role? There is the question of skill level: does the manager know the editors, the journals, the publishing processes and the ability to recommend, assist and draft an article for a staff member? Can the manager solve student or teacher problems, challenges and difficulties, embedding information scaffolds, ensuring an arc of achievement through the degree and ensure the maintenance of international standards in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)? He or she is performing a lie, assuming a power and authority that they do not deserve. The power that they hold is brittle and tenuous, granted on the basis of a title, rather than

ability (Kruncken, Blumel and Kloke, 2013). Instead, we recommend an academic who manages, rather than a 'manager-academic.' The academic expertise is much more important than the managerial element.

Discussing women's style of management or leadership is a mode of meta sexism. There were so few women in leadership in Australian universities before 2000 that they appeared to be men in drag. There was no space or place for women. Now, through the proliferation of neo liberal ideologies including the configuration of a university as a business and students as consumers, middle management roles focus on compliance and micro-flares of disciplinary actions and complaints. To complete such a set of banal tasks, it is necessary to dissociate, to separate 'academic' and 'manager.' Actually, the problem is not in and of women. The originating error is that universities are a business, based on compliance and not excellence. Andrea Simpson and Tanya Fitzgerald argued that,

Changes within higher education have been relatively artificial in terms of opening up new possibilities and opportunities. What has remained largely unchanged is that universities are relentless sites of exclusion and elitism (2013, 11).

Universities should be sites of exclusion and elitism: on the basis of intellectual ability. They are elite organizations that value and validate high levels of scholarly achievement. This is not a sifting or sorting based on class, gender, race, age or sexuality. Universities admit students and conduct research on the basis of excellence. Where the slippage occurs – from intellectual elitism into social elitism - is that intellectual achievement is too often assumed to reside in a white, male body.

Are women underperforming in such a context? Researchers confirm that women publish less frequently than men in most disciplines (Bellas and Toutkoushian, 1999). However, the next analytical leap, made by scholars such as Justine Mercer, cannot be made: "women themselves, want a better work-life balance and view research as a less prominent part of their identities" (2013). Intriguingly Susan Gardner, when studying the women who left an institution, found in her study that "women faculty tend to publish and present at the same rate as men, but existing gender bias in academia often recognizes men's achievement over women's and tends to see women's achievement as owing to something other than ability" (2013). The ambiguity of this statement is powerful. She suggests that the same level of achievement is not recognized. When women do succeed and are

promoted, ‘something other than ability’ is recognized. Is this patronage? Is there the suggestion of sexual favours?

Jeff Hearn, the great scholar of masculinity, offered three additional rationales for such gendered structures and distinctions.

Women were excluded from universities for much of their history. Men still dominate the highest positions in universities in most disciplines. The higher the status of the university, the more male dominated it is (2001, 71).

This gap between competency and credibility could be masked when financial conditions were buoyant. The Global Financial Crisis confirmed that the inflated imaginings of finance capitalism, real estate capitalism and higher education capitalism were not real, sustainable or actual. It is no surprise therefore that the research literature on the political economy has been filled with metaphors, tropes and theories of zombies. The undead, walking and infecting the people in which they come into contact, has also entered discourses of the university. Andrew Whelan, Ruth Walker and Christopher Moore’s *Zombies in the Academy* (2013) showed the consequence of automating and dumbing down teaching through simplistic learning management systems, the pretensions of academic publishers that ask universities to pay for access to publications that scholars have provided to journals for free, and line management systems, professional development meetings and committee structures.

Part of this zombification is the confusion between management and leadership. Christine Teelken and Rosemary Deem realized that,

In the broader context, managerialism may have either an adverse or at best neutral impact on the promotion of gender equality in European higher education systems. Women have not been very prominent in senior management positions (2014, 526).

What their study revealed is that the sociological group which developed and implemented theories of governance then validated and supported the already existing model of leadership. Therefore, what is called “vertical segregation” (Deem 2014, 524) is increased. That phrase means that there is a high proportion of female undergraduates. This proportion lessens in doctoral programmes, reduces further at doctoral graduation, and at each subsequent stage of seniority in academic life. Increased participation does not guarantee success at a higher level. There is no vertical integration. Participation does not equate with progress into and through seniority in higher education. These disruptions and blockages are

described as the 'leaky pipeline' of women moving into leadership (Global Human Capital 2008).

Our model of leadership promoted in this article – integrating research, teaching and administration – is difficult to implement and receives little support from the current regime of power in the knowledge factory. But the question is, how do we encourage academics – and particularly women – to enter leadership? If they attempt such a movement will they be blocked? To answer these questions, the next section of this paper explains why the second author of this paper made a decision to enter a leadership role. As a young leader, managing the “gendered ageism for the young professional woman” (Turnbow and Williamson 2015, 16), her view should be logged and understood.

The Story of a New Leader: Elizabeth

Leadership is sometimes learned, but often innate. Researchers have identified a number of key traits associated with leadership, such as intelligence, confidence, charisma, determination, sociability and integrity. Good leaders are inspiring. They are respectful, refreshing, selfless and reflective. They encourage success and promote competence in others, and they are not threatened by that competence. Good leaders make others want to be leaders.

When I arrived at university to study my undergraduate education degree, I was inspired by a lone, young, intelligent, female academic. I respected her knowledge and her pedagogies. I respected her obvious dedication and empathy. I noticed the difference between her teaching and the teaching of other academics that had perhaps less to prove, and I aspired to be as committed as her.

I toyed with the idea of becoming an academic myself, early on. I undertook an Honours degree through a research specialisation over the third and fourth year of my undergraduate degree, and after obtaining a first class honours, I embarked on a PhD for the next three and a half years. During this time I worked part time as a teacher in primary schools and part time as a lecturer at a university, and enjoyed seeing the different leadership styles of those principals and managers with whom I worked. I wanted to be an academic. I wanted to do research and teach tertiary students to be great teachers. I wanted to make a difference to more children's lives than I could

if I taught in one classroom, in one school. I am still eager to achieve these goals.

Completing a PhD a number of years before turning 30, certainly did not convince prospective employers that I knew anything – and nor should it. Prospective employers in the school system wondered why I needed a PhD at all, and prospective employers in the university system, questioned why I did not have more publications and more years with a PhD ‘under my belt’, or more years as a teacher in schools so I ‘knew what I was talking about’ when teaching tertiary students. When I was appointed as a lecturer, I was one of the youngest staff members in the Faculty, if not the youngest, and I enjoyed that challenge.

Six years (and two children) later, when I was presented with the opportunity to apply to be an Associate Head of School, and when I discussed this opportunity with various colleagues, I was intrigued by the responses from others. I envisioned my new role in the Faculty as one which could provide support and leadership for colleagues in teaching, research and administration. I imagined increased opportunities to support students and make a difference in their academic lives and future teaching careers. These were the reasons why I wanted to become an academic. However, it was soon apparent that these ideas might be idealistic. I did not, and still do not, want to believe that I have to choose between being a good teacher and being a good leader. I do not want to believe that I have to choose between being a good researcher and being a good leader. It was apparent that I was experiencing an “identity schism” which Winter had outlined (2009), yet I had not confronted this before, and I was not comfortable confronting it at this stage. Reflecting on my teaching philosophy, on who I was and who I wanted to be, was an important step in understanding the reasons behind wanting to further develop my leadership skills.

I applied for the role of Associate Head of School to make a difference. To challenge myself. To show my students that hard work is rewarded and that age and gender did not have to be limitations. I was aware that I would have an increased workload, and that at times, I would need to dedicate more of my focus to a management task, but this is not unique. This is the challenge of any academic who has a multi-function role. I continue to be perplexed by the notion that those in leadership positions have to solely become managers or administrators, that they cannot also be leaders in their teaching, or leaders in research. There are certainly occasions where management tasks demand more attention and time, and where research, for

example, may have to take a back seat for a short period of time, but I would argue that this happens in any position, and can be attributed to a number of factors.

To be or not to be a leader should *not* be the question. What type of leader we strive to be, should be at the forefront of our thinking, and our planning, as managers, teachers, researchers, administrators, whoever. As a Generation Xer academic (Brabazon 2014), I am part of the movement that will drive universities forward for the next 30 years. This a responsibility but not a burden. An honour. This will require more than one leader to do, and more than one academic to do. It would seem that in all of our focus on leadership in academia, we have pushed aside the importance of collaboration, of being part of a team. Leading is not about being out in front and forgetting who is behind you. It is about standing beside your colleagues and being an advocate. It is about inclusivity, about listening, caring and empathising with others, and encouraging competence. It is about being an exemplary scholar.

The best scholars should be high quality teachers, high quality researchers and high quality leaders. They should be those who provide a leadership service to all aspects of our profession. The future relies on developing strong relationships with each other – with our colleagues and with our students. We also need to develop a strong understanding of ourselves, so we are aware of our own identity as academics and can not only be reflective but reflexive in our scholarly work and teaching.

A Middle Manager's Story: Tara

After Elizabeth's revealing statements about goals, aspirations and hopes, it is now Tara's turn. Middle management in higher education is the equivalent of cross fit. It creates exhaustion and not much is achieved. Also, we look pretty strange while we are doing it. But as higher education becomes wedded to failed neo-liberal ideologies, the rituals and banalities of middle management increase. Compliance, rather than excellence, is the goal. Meetings do not enable productive work. They are the work. The consequences of this bizarre disjuncture between the highest standards of scholarship required in a university with the mediocrity of meetings sustains an open sore of scholarship, creating a culture of bullying, abuse, bitterness and jealousy.

I made a decision, after watching years of systematic bullying and abuse of dignified staff by mediocre (at best) Deans, to do something about it. Colleagues had committed suicide from the bullying. Dear friends were one email away from crying, most hours of most working days. Alcohol abuse proliferated as men and women survived an acidic workplace by entering a stupor. I had watched nasty managers – with little research or teaching to recommend their own records – destroy academic lives. My decision to move to a management post, while attempting to sustain excellence in my teaching and research, had a very precise origin. My husband Professor Steve Redhead is also a senior academic. The challenge of being part of a two professor family, particularly in nations without formal and regulated spousal policies, is that we often accepted posts at lesser universities so that we could work together.

At one such university, a Dean brought us in to see her at 8am. Her reasoning was unclear, but her goal was obvious: to humiliate, attack, create fear and damage our international profile. On this particular morning, she had two tasks. Firstly, a teaching evaluation had just been released that positioned me as the best teacher in the university. This result was produced from my first term at the institution.

When the Dean presented this table for discussion, she did not offer congratulations. Instead, she shouted that “You are not as good as you think you are” and “Everybody gets results like this.” When I made the statement that the mean on the survey showed that this was not the case, she threatened me with disciplinary action for questioning her views.

She then turned to my husband and stated that she was refusing his request to attend his father’s funeral. Because of her behaviour, I had not even applied for the leave to attend my father-in-law’s service. However she refused Steve’s request with a flourish: “all of us have personal problems.” The representative from the Human Resources department remained silent. David McNally described these types of moments best: “the genuinely traumatic (monstrous) experiences of subjugation and exploitation that occur when people find themselves subordinated to the market-economy” (2012). Steve did not attend his father’s funeral.

As I left the Dean’s office on that cold morning – in temperament as much as temperature – I made a decision that if we ever left this Hotel California of a university, then I would move into leadership so that no one in my care would have to confront this disrespect, personal and professional attacks and abuse. A few management posts followed, and I am now a head

of school. My hope is that colleagues will consider the importance of leadership in their own lives and that I can support Elizabeth Murray to grasp not only the value and significance of intellectual rigour, teaching and research excellence, but also respect. A leader can change the lives of students and academics. The consequences of bullying staff or sitting and doing nothing, as exhibited by that HR representative, are vast. This is not only a question of role. It is question of how we overcome the systemic and systematized bullying and attacks on academics. The suicide – triggered by management bullying – of academics is now being revealed (Parr 2014). Yet the silent stories of attacks on the self from damaging and dangerous managers are rarely shared. Let me share one example with readers.

I had an unfortunate run of university managers that were brittle, hostile and demeaning of scholars, creating an environment of bullying and professional violence. In one of these universities, I was a low level manager, running 13 degree programmes and 100 staff. The first week I worked at this university, the Vice Chancellor called all staff into the hall and reported that, in each row of ten academics, one would be sacked in the next month. Then another staff member would be removed the following month. All professors received a warning email that their jobs were at risk. Although the professors in the institution were hard working, teaching, researching and maintaining high level service responsibilities because of the few senior staff at the University, all were sent an email. (Even) professors were disposable to a dumbed down institution.

Here is the email that was sent.

From:
Sent: 11 October 2012 11:24
To: Brabazon, Tara
Subject: Message from Associate Director of HR Strategy and Personnel

Dear Colleague,

As you will be aware proposals for consideration of the new University structure are currently being considered as part of a 30 day collective consultation process. The first of a series of Union consultation meetings will take place at 10.30am today.

In the proposal that is being considered for the new University structure your role is one of a number that the University has potentially identified to be at risk. As a consequence the University feels that prior to the

commencement of the first of the Union consultation meetings it is important to make you aware of the discussions that will take place with regards to your substantive role.

The University wishes to emphasise that this is the initial stage of a collective consultation process which will provide an opportunity for all concerned to consider the new structure and propose alternatives if deemed necessary. The purpose of the collective consultation is also to seek ways of avoiding dismissals, reducing the number of employees to be dismissed and mitigating the consequences of redundancies.

The University would like you to be reassured that only after collective consultation has been completed will roles be confirmed to be at risk. At this point all individuals whose role is affected will be invited to take part in individual consultation meetings.

The University appreciates that this is a very difficult and unsettling time for employees but undertakes to ensure that employees are updated at the earliest opportunity as the collective consultation meetings progress.

Regards,

There were only eight professors in the university. They became targets for this generic email. Yet the professors were treated much better than the rest of the staff. Paranoia, gossip, fear and loss became the punctuation of daily life. HR managed this process with a unique cruelty. The staff member who sent this message was the 'Associate Director of HR Strategy and Personnel.' In the havoc of that October, thirty-one of my staff left, being pushed and offered a financial reward to leave the institution. Most mornings, a staff member cleaned their office, packed boxes and carried them to their car. We watched them walk across the carpark and leave the campus for the last time. Most afternoons, my staff sat in my office, bent with worry, crying and fearful. I was fortunate. From the first week of the threats from the Vice Chancellor, I realized this would not be a stable institution. I applied for a few posts around the world, attained most of them, chose one, and moved back to Australia. Most staff were not so lucky. They left with no future plans or security.

What made my case distinct is that because I was the only staff member who left under my own terms, I was also the only staff member who did not have to sign a 'gag' clause. Colleagues were paid to never speak of the

conditions, actions and behaviour confronted within this institution and signed a legal document to confirm this gag. The staff needed the money, so they signed it. But I am the only insider who knows what happened, possess all the emails and moved to another post. This institution has continued to behave in this way towards its staff, and is receiving national press and legal action for the way they recently dismissed two staff. Conversely, I have continued my career with great happiness and success in another role. During a burst of renewed publicity about my former Vice Chancellor's ethics and behaviours, and 33 months after I left this institution, the former 'Associate Director of HR Strategy and Personnel' who wrote that message to me, sent me another, this time on Facebook.

Hi Tara, How are you? Your pics on here look fab! I hope you are truly (sic) happy and your institution is better than the last one in the UK. I left a year ago as I'd moved to ***** with my partner and I'm now heading up HR at ***** for one of the colleges. Absolutely love it and I'm now enjoying my work; something which I didn't at *****. Sorry we didn't get a chance to work together more in a positive institution but I'm sure we will both agree we are better off out of there. It would be great to hear from you. Love #####
Ps I had a little girl on December 27th...loving being a mum...the most rewarding job in the world!!!
How's tricks down under for you? Xxx

This woman caused incalculable harm to hundreds of people. Yet Facebook is not a confessional. Justifying it because 'it was her job' is not appropriate or adequate. But what is interesting – intriguing even – is after over two years without a message, she contacted me again. Was it fear that I would tell the truth and speak of the institution and her behaviour? We will never know the answer to that question. But one truth of women in leadership is that our behaviour has consequences, and sending a message on Facebook, mentioning a new job and motherhood, will never erase her behaviour and the cost to other staff and their families. Intriguingly, it was only when her personal fear that the woman without a gag clause, who had left the country and moved into a successful post, may remember her role in this institutional armageddon that she tried to pretend we were friends, sharing particular ideologies of femininity. She failed.

Being Better. Doing Better.

Women are not better administrators, managers or leaders than men. They are not worse administrators, managers or leaders than men. This article is poststructuralist in intent. We are not arguing that women are nurturing, caring, collaborative and kind and that men are ruthless, antagonistic and competitive. We leave such comments to the second wave of feminism. We raise a much more serious problem.

The problem emerges when an ideology of masculinity – that is not tethered to the male body – is naturalized in and as leadership. That is why 77% of vice chancellors in Australia are men and few ask how this has happened. The lack of outrage, the lack of questioning, is not only or primarily a structural dismissal and disregard of the feminine and/or the woman in our universities. It is a cascading series of assumptions about men, competence, innovation, power, authority and leadership (Hearn 2001) that not only block change, but block the development of the questions that may enable change. Dominating the A level lecturer ranks, women are teaching in an environment of hyper-casualization and contracts – which creates fear of labour surplus and redundancy – alongside the permanent revolution of online learning. When reaching management posts, they are capped at head of department / school and may aspire to the dean role in feminine-dominated areas such as health, education and the humanities. The ‘entrepreneurial university’ only intensifies the “techno-scientific masculinist norms” (Hearn 2001, 335). There is another way to be a leader. This is not about being a nurturing woman. It is about recognizing that women – like men – in our universities are fully human and have a responsibility to represent and convey the best of our culture, rather than its debris. We do not have to stand for fear, injustice, neglect, bullying and ridicule.

The final story in this article captures this spirit, desire and imperative to be better and do better. It involves Elizabeth Murray and Tara Brabazon making a decision to do the right thing – showing leadership – rather than compliant neoliberal management. As with most moment of ethical choices in our university, this incident commenced with an email.

From:
Sent: Monday, 4 May 2015 3:44 PM
To: Brabazon, Tara
Subject: Presentation of Deans Merit

Hello Tara,

My name is *****. I am a 4th Year student.

Today I received an email to tell me that I will be receiving a Dean's Merit certificate at the Deans Merit ceremony on May 27th.

My father is currently in the palliative care stages of pancreatic cancer and the doctors do not think he has long to live - they are talking days. This means that my very proud and devoted dad will probably not be able to make it to the ceremony at the end of the month as he will either be not alive or not able to move. He was very excited when I told him that I was getting another award.

I am writing to you to ask if it would be possible for you or another member of staff to travel to Orange where I am currently living with my parents to present the award to me with my father there to witness the occasion and be in a photo with me, my family and a faculty member. Sometime this early/mid week would probably be best to ensure that dad is still cognitively aware and awake. I know that it would make him very happy and less stressed with the thought that he may miss out on another important occasion of my life.

Of course, I understand that this is an incredibly huge ask of the university and I totally understand if you are not able to organise for this to happen - I know that all staff members are incredibly busy. Please know that I will not be upset if you are unable to do this.

Thankyou for your time!
Kind regards,

Tara immediately made a decision to drive to Orange, from the neighbouring small city Bathurst, the next day. The School's administrators prepared the certificate. The only problem was that a management meeting was being held. Tara contacted Elizabeth and at very short notice, and recognizing the importance of this situation, she agreed to attend the

meeting as the Associate Head of School. Her decision to step up to another level of management allowed the School and the University to demonstrate both leadership and care for our students. With these arrangements in order, Tara replied.

From: Brabazon, Tara

To: Date: Tue, 5 May 2015 09:28:47 +1000

Subject: RE: Presentation of Deans Merit

Wonderful *****, I have just received your message. I am so proud of you. I am so proud of your father and your entire family.

I am thrilled and privileged to travel to Orange tomorrow, if that is convenient. Does the morning suit your father? You let me know. We'll prepare the certificate today. You give me the best address where you would like the presentation to take place – and I'm there ☺

Congratulations angel. And ***** – what is your father's name? So I can wish him well in person.

With every best wish to you. You are a fabulous person.

T

The address was given and the visit organized. As Tara was about to get in the car – with certificate and flowers in hand – an even sadder email arrived.

From:

Sent: Wednesday, 6 May 2015 8:49 AM

To: Brabazon, Tara

Subject: RE: Presentation of Deans Merit

Hi Tara,

I am regretfully writing to you to tell you that dad has gone down hill a lot in the past 12 hours. He is no longer cognitively aware, able to talk, walk or get up out of bed.

mum and I do not think it would be a good idea for you to come up to our house today as it is very confronting - I am so sorry to do this to you!! I was honestly not expecting this to happen so soon! when I was talking to you yesterday he was still awake and walking around!!! if you do still want to come up please let me know! I just don't want to put you in an awkward position!

I cannot tell you how sorry I am to be such a pain and how truly grateful (sic) I am for you to do what you have done for me!!! I hope that your day can be put back on track!! I am so sorry Tara!

kind regards,

Tara replied that if her mother was comfortable, then the visit would continue. Upon arrival, it was an incredibly moving and important experience. The extended family was present, photographs were taken and the student and Tara went into the father's room. Tara spoke to him, told him how proud the School was of his daughter, and showed him the certificate. It was an incredible moment when this man walking through corporeal twilight and supposedly unconscious, opened his eyes, focussed on the certificate and said "Dean." Although this remarkable man had given Tara a promotion, he had acknowledged the Dean's merit award given to his outstanding daughter.

Elizabeth attended the meeting, fulfilled the role of a Head of School and provided effective notes for Tara to progress. The following day, Tara received the – perhaps inevitable – email.

From:
Sent: Thursday, 7 May 2015 1:42 PM
To: Brabazon, Tara
Subject: RE: Presentation of Deans Merit

Hello Tara,

We just wanted to say a huge thankyou for making the trip to Orange yesterday to present my Dean's Merit.

Dad passed away this morning and I know that, with help from you, he felt he had witnessed as much as he could before he did pass. Nothing would have made him more content to have known how proud the university is of me and how much I am valued by the uni. So for that, we say thankyou. Thankyou for making some of my last moments with my dad so incredibly special!!!!!!

It is rare in life that any of us have the opportunity to do something that is entirely good, beneficial, hopeful and right. Too much of our working lives is punctuated by jealousy, brutality and competitiveness. Yet because Elizabeth recognized the importance of this situation, she moved her

responsibilities so that Tara could complete this one task for one family. This task will not change the world, transform the stature of higher education, achieve key performance indicators, lift the calibre of research or teaching. But it is a reminder of the truly human nature of our universities. It captures the belief that universities and the academics within them can represent, capture and sustain the best of what a nation can be.

Phrases like ‘leadership’ and ‘succession planning’ are proxies for understanding how power and the global financial crisis have changed the foundational project of universities. Stanley Aronowitz’s *The Knowledge Factory*, offered the most ruthless guide through university management. What is required is a new approach and a new way of thinking about management and leadership in our universities. It must be organic, integrated and aligned. In many ways, the older system of revolving departmental chairs is most effective. Professors cannot dismiss ‘management’ as a series of tasks that other (lesser) scholars conduct because they are called to higher (research) duties. Such a separation has had a profound impact on the organic nature of teaching and research.

If we do not assist the next generation of scholars to create an integrated portfolio of functions for their career, then higher education, as much as individual academics, will suffer. Steve Hall stated that, “the question we must ask in future theory and research is whether an attenuated, modified variant of the potentially violent dissociated self has throughout the capitalist-modernist era been cultivated as an everyday form of subjectivity that combines the ability to exist as a normal law-abiding citizen yet retain and act out ruthlessly aggressive impulses in non-violent modes in the interconnected realms of consumerism, business and politics” (2014, 27). Following on from his statements, in higher education are we validating and accepting the unacceptable through our compliance? Are we saying the unsayable through our silence? Are we maintaining a commitment to strategic plans and key performance outcomes while bullying lashes out from the compliance?

This generational and institutional crisis is also a gendered crisis. Morley stated that “quality is audited, equality is not” (2003, 522). The time has come for transparent auditing of social justice. How do women understand their lives – let alone their lived experience - in the contemporary university? Is it possible to disrupt the coded masculinity normalities, without reverting to “a range of simplistic male/female binaries that characterise research around leadership and gender” (Blackmore,

Sanchez-Moreno and Sawers 2015, iii). Instead of questioning such binaries and norms, the horizontal division of labour in universities is increasing. Women, such as the two authors of this article, “are clustered horizontally in middle management positions which they only occupy for a limited period of time” (Blackmore, Sanchez-Moreno and Sawers 2015, vi). The male academics maintain vertical power over finances, resources, bureaucracy or research. Yet this article is defiant and stands for difference. It stands for Generation X women making changes in our institutions, `integrating teaching, research and service, displaying intellectual generosity to colleagues and students while demanding standards of excellence. This piece also stands for women (and men) working together, enabling succession planning, so as to assist the next generation of female leaders to gain strength, consistency, clarity of purpose and courage.

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Mislim da je ona sad odlučila da bude menadžer: žene, upravljanje i liderstvo u Fabrici znanja

A P S T R A K T

Stanley Aronowitz je napisala knjigu 2000. godine koja je predvidela mnoge stvari. Nazvala ju je Fabrica znanja, ne stavljaajući žene akademike u fokus, ali naglašavajući posledice odvajanja predavanja/istraživanja akademika od „menadžera“. Ova razgraničenja nastave, istraživanja i menadžmenta su intezivirana kroz 2000-e. Ovo predstavlja polno odvajanje. Članak nudi model ženama koje se okreću liderstvu u visokom obrazovanju, na osnovu integracije nastave, istraživanja i univerzitetskih usluga. Mi se zalažemo za transformaciju, od Rosemary Deem „menadžera-akademika“ do „akademika koji upravljaju“. Ovo nije jednostavan preokret iz složenice na imenicu i glagol, već podsetnik da su lideri univerziteta pre svega akademici, koji upravljaju u skladu sa njihovim akademskim odgovornostima

KLJUČNE REČI: *visoko obrazovanje, žene lideri, akademski menadžment, sukcesija planiranja, Generacija X, feminiza*

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