**‘Deviant divas’: Lindy Chamberlain and Schapelle Corby and the case for a new category of celebrity for**

**criminally implicated women**

**Abstract**

In the field of celebrity studies much has been written about the superficiality of contemporary celebrity culture in which ordinary individuals are recognised as exceptional or worthy of public attention in the absence of any particular talent, contribution or achievement (Boorstin 1972; Langer in Edgar 1980; Gamson 1994; Turner 2004 and 2014; Turner, Bonner, and Marshall 2000; Rojek 2001; Bell 2010; Marwick and boyd 2011; Redmond 2013). Much less has been written about the link between celebrity and criminality and the types of categories into which celebrified criminals fall (Jenks and Lorentzen 1997; Penfold-Mounce 2009). In the scant studies that do exist there is a thinness of attention to gender despite persuasive arguments within feminist criminological studies that crime is a gendered concept in news discourse (Smart 1977; Jewkes 2011). Using a qualitative content analysis of a selection of news articles on two high profile cases involving women convicted of a crime, Lindy Chamberlain (now exonerated)and Schapelle Corby, as well as recent work in the sociology of risk on desire and transgression, this research suggests that the current naming practices surrounding criminally implicated women do not adequately capture the constellation of gender-inflected media messages and the meanings with which they are imbued by sections of newsworkers. The implications of this research warrant a re-think of the customary labels ascribed to women convicted of a crime and the addition to existing taxonomies of a new category of celebrity, the ‘deviant diva’.

***The classification of contemporary celebrity***Within celebrity studies research Daniel Boorstin’s much cited definition is still relevant for our understanding of the construction of contemporary celebrity. He explains that celebrity is a ‘condition of being much talked about; famousness, notoriety’ and the individual celebrity is a person who is ‘well-known for their well-knownness’ (Boorstin, 1972: 57). Boorstin’s definition points to the inauthenticity of contemporary celebrity culture characterised by the pursuit of public recognition for its own sake rather than as a result of individual achievement, contribution or worth. A prominent debate in the research field centres on the celebrity as commodity within a commercially-driven system. Marshall underlines the superficiality of contemporary celebrity in arguments about the figure’s ‘exchange value’ over ‘use value’ (Marshall 2004: 11). As he explains the ‘convertibility’ and rapid succession of celebrities, so presciently captured in Andy Warhol’s prediction that ‘in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes’ (Warhol in Turner, Bonner, and Marshall 2000: 170), are outcomes of consumer capitalist culture with its emphasis on modes of exchange, and not any one individual in the system (Marshall, 2004). Gamson (1994) concurs in arguments that one of the defining features of contemporary celebrity is the public figure’s positioning as the product of, not simply a vehicle for media marketing and exchange. In his own definition he explains the celebrity as a figure who is ‘famous for being famous and [had] only themselves to promote’ (as cited in Turner, Bonner, and Marshall 2000: 170).

While there is debate about the commercial practices integral to the manufacture of contemporary celebrity, there is limited interrogation of the links between celebrity and criminality and a corresponding classification of types. There are some exceptions including the work of Kooistra (1989) which includes an historical account of heroic North American male criminals such as Jesse James, Billy the Kid and Butch Cassidy; Jenks and Lorentzen (1997) who draw on the Bataillean theory of transgression to explore media and public fascination with the 1960s East London gangster twins, the Kray brothers, and in one of the leading studies of celebrity Chris Rojek (2001: 177) connects celebrity and transgression through the concept of difference and the crossing of normative boundaries and expectations. Rojek identifies four distinct types from which celebrity status is derived: ‘ascribed celebrity’ based on biological destiny or lineage; ‘achieved celebrity’ as a result of accomplishment or individual achievement; ‘attributed celebrity’ which, without special talent or skill denotes the ordinary individual whose fame is the result of ‘concentrated representation’ by ‘cultural intermediaries’ such as PR professionals; and the ‘celetoid’ figure who exists as an accessory to culture and whose prominence is fleeting, such as reality television stars, lottery winners or one-hit wonders (Rojek 2001: 17-22). Rojek also proposed a sub-category of the celetoid in the fictional ‘celeactor’ whose imaginary status often embodies stereotypes and prejudices, eg. British Secret Service agent James Bond and *Sex and The City*’s Carrie Bradshaw.

Rojek’s classifications are helpful though the link between celebrity and deviance and/or transgression which he defines as ‘conscious desire and behaviour that breaks moral and social conventions’ (Rojek 2001: 54), might be more fully explored in the figure of the celebrified criminal.

Aside from these notable exceptions the focus of recent celebrity studies research has centred on the contemporary celebrity’s ephemerality in the context of significant technological change. Turner, Bonner and Marshall (2000) argue that ‘accidental celebrity’ and ‘accidental heroes’ are not deserving of a celebrity category at all since they are impermanent, replaceable figures in a highly visible, post mass-mediated age. Their fleeting existence is similar to John Langer’s news group of ‘victims’ who are ‘ordinary people going about their daily affairs, caught in unenvisioned occurrences which are promoted into newsworthy events’ (Langer in Edgar 1980: 23). In the pantheon of contemporary celebrity types the strategic, self-commodifying ‘micro-celebrity’ of the Twitter-sphere is yet another self-branded, famous-for-being-famous, commercial type (Marwick and boyd, 2011). Others have questioned the taxonomy of the field given the slippages between celebrity types that follow the rise and fall of celebrity trajectories and the ebb and flow of media attention (Redmond 2013). Though such arguments are compelling, celebrity classifications are useful for highlighting the differential construction, development and maintenance of celebrity, particularly along gendered lines.

Penfold Mounce (2009) was the first to observe a dearth in rigorous academic scholarship on the subject of celebrified criminals explaining that ‘the process of outlining, engaging with and analyzing the criminal/celebrity relationship remains ripe for a critical dialogue’ (Penfold-Mounce 2009: 7-8). She begins that critical dialogue by narrowing her focus on ‘notorious’ celebrity or celebrated-criminality and its four-sub-categories: the ‘social bandit’ whose law-breaking is intended to liberate the oppressed; the romanticised ‘criminal hero’ motivated by greed, the ‘underworld exhibitionist’ with their self-constructed life of mobbish, criminal behaviour and the ‘iniquitous criminal’ whose horrific crimes offend public decency and inspire loathing and hatred (Penfold-Mounce 2009: 82-93). The iniquitous criminal has the most relevance for this study as the celebrity figure encapsulates both the morally offensive and incredulous crimes for which Chamberlain and Corby were charged: incredulous by community standards, that is, because infanticide is a crime so monstrous as to render the offender the ‘ultimate maternal delinquent’ (Douglas and Michaels 2004 in Barnett 2016: 3), while Corby’s crime of smuggling marijuana *into* Bali – a reputed global narcotics distribution centre because of its centrality to the Asia Pacific market (Bonella 2012) – seemed inconceivable.

Yet, despite briefly acknowledging the othering of criminal women and the sex-role stereotypes against which their transgressions are judged, Penfold-Mounce homogenises the phenomenon of criminal celebrity as a ‘generic group of people who commit criminal and deviant acts’ (2009: 92) and into the broad category of ‘iniquitous criminal’ she includes, for instance, the 1960s British Moors murderess Myra Hindley and American serial killer Ted Bundy (90-91). Though Penfold-Mounce mentions in passing that Hindley’s crimes were magnified because of her gender, no substantial comparative gender analysis follows. This paper suggests a separate category of criminal-celebrity is warranted as is a re-think of the customary labels often applied to criminally implicated women.

While an argument might be mounted for Lindy Chamberlain and Schapelle Corby’s resemblance to Turner, Bonner and Marshall’s ‘accidental celebrity’ and ‘accidental hero’, Rojek’s ‘celetoid’, Langer’s ‘victim’ or Penfold-Mounce’s ‘iniquitous criminal’ none of these celebrity types and effects adequately capture the constellation of gender-inflected media messages about Chamberlain and Corby and the meanings with which they were imbued by sections of the news media. For instance, the discourse of male heroism encapsulated in the ‘accidental hero’ overlooks the common patterns in news representations of criminal women and the sometimes gendered nature of their construction (Jewkes 2011); additionally, the label ‘victim’ is inadequate for describing women convicted of a serious crime (though Chamberlain was later exonerated) and, in the public domain, the enduring visibility of women of crime (as I will soon illustrate) was more protracted than the celetoid’s fleeting existence would allow.

In all, the inattention to gender in landmark works on celebrity and heroism suggests the need to revisit these cases and thereby offer a new conceptual grid for understanding their wider media and public reception.Through a qualitative content analysis that draws on recent work in the sociology of risk on transgression as well as criminological/media interventions I will make a claim for a new category of celebrity in the ‘deviant diva’ figure.The role of the media in identifying and constructing deviance has an established history (Cohen 1972; Cohen and Young 1973; Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987; Ferrell and Websdale 2009) and I use the term deliberately here to point to the ‘recurring slippages’ between deviance and other terms such as ‘difference’ (as variance from the norm) and ‘pathology’ (Terry and Urla 1995: 9). With its history in theatrical and operatic performance, the term ‘diva’ points to the performativity of gendered identities in line with Butler (1990), and those ‘transgressive figures who blur boundaries and refuse discipline’ (Leonardi and Pope 1996: 25). Coupling deviance and diva enables us to explore not only the transgression of conservative behavioural norms by offending women, but also the public spectacle of their performance in a mediated context.

This article also includes a preliminary analysis of media coverage of Lindy Chamberlain’s husband Michael who appeared, in the sample of news reports analysed here, as feminised and an emotional effete. This finding highlights the fact that men too are pressured to adhere to gender norms and that the deviant diva, as a figure of marginality and alterity (Leonardi and Pope 1996: 20), highlights the way in which deviance is amplified in difference by association with the Other.

Ultimately, the task here is two-fold: firstly to examine two celebrity ‘women of crime’, namely Schapelle Corby and Lindy Chamberlain and to challenge the customary labels their category of celebrity imply; and secondly to argue that while the media is a site of ongoing conflict and contestation – of differing meanings and interpretations – it is important to highlight gender difference and to see Lindy and Schapelle’s celebrification in these terms.

***Chamberlain and Corby case facts***

It is necessary to appraise for readers unfamiliar with the Chamberlain and Corby narratives the particular circumstances surrounding two cases that dominated Australian news headlines. On the night of 17 August 1980, nine and a half week-old Azaria Chamberlain disappeared from her family’s tent at the base of Ayers Rock (now known as Uluru) in the heart of central Australia. Despite claims from parents, Michael and Lindy, that a dingo was responsible for their daughter’s death, continuing suspicion plagued the headlining couple even after their official exoneration by a Supreme Court in 1988.

In the extensive media coverage of a three-decade long legal battle for justice spanning four coronial inquests, a trial, two appeals and a commission of inquiry along with unprecedented public innuendo and speculation about her involvement in Azaria’s disappearance, Lindy Chamberlain’s celebrity was created and recreated through reams of news copy documenting (or imagining) every aspect of her life and body – her mode of dress, weight gain, weight loss, pregnancy and prison diet. As Lindy herself remarked, each time the public saw her she was described as: ‘Either pregnant or just getting over it’ (Munday et.al. 1986, p.8). Whether Lindy appeared ‘hard-faced’ or ‘in shock’, in a ‘black dress’ with ‘red lips’ (Johnson, 1984, p.147), or a ‘floral-print sundress, bobbysocks and sneakers’ (Shears, 1982, p.149), the persistence of her image in the public domain functioned in much the same way that media presence was used to build individuals into celebrities. Headlines containing the name ‘Lindy’ or news articles with a photograph of her beside them needed no elaboration, since, to the Australian public, her image was so recognisable.Reflecting on ABC News coverage of Lindy’s prison release in February 1986, one of the station’s hosts, Wendy Carlisle, commented that, ‘When ABC Radio News reported the story, there was never any need to explain just who Lindy Chamberlain was’ (*ABC Radio National*, 24 July 2005). Before her daughter disappeared Lindy was an ‘ordinary’ woman living in the remote Queensland mining town of Mt Isa. By the end of the decade, however, there could ‘only be one candidate for the title ‘face of the 80s’ in Australia − Lindy Chamberlain’ (Cunningham 1997, p.103).

Another young woman who became the subject of a national fixation was 27 year-old, Gold Coast beauty student Schapelle Corby. On 8 October 2004 Corby was intercepted at Ngurah Rai International Airport in Denpasar carrying 4.2kg (9.3lb) of cannabis hidden in the carry-bag of a surfboard. At her internationally televised trial on 27 May 2005 Corby was found guilty of drug importation and sentenced to 20 years in prison. She was released on conditional parole on 10 February 2014 after nine years’ incarceration and must remain in Indonesia until July 2017 to serve the remainder of her parole. Typical of Corby’s media representations, her appearance was described as ‘quite beautiful’ and she possessed a ‘girl from the Gold Coast’ charm (*The Bulletin*, 7 June 2005). Images of her behind bars were circulated across the Timor Sea in the *Jakarta Post* as well as in a staple of imported Australian newspapers such as the *West Australian*, Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and Hobart *Mercury*. On the streets of Bali, the Adelaide *Advertiser* was being sold for ‘six-times-the-cover-price’ and marketed to the ‘‘Schapellites [who] were in town − a white-skinned juggernaut of media, diplomats, lawyers, advisers, family, camp followers and rubberneckers – … all [of whom] were primed for plundering, as Bali does particularly skilfully of foreign visitors’ (Toohey and Ellis, 2005, p.24). This comment highlights both the inflated value of the Schapelle celebrity commodity and the way in which the case tapped into communal fears about the helpless white girl at the mercy of a foreign and perceivably antiquated justice system, an argument I will explore later in this article.

***Method and data collection***

This study is principally concerned with print media coverage of two high profile Australian women who were charged and convicted of serious criminal offences, though Chamberlain was later exonerated and Corby is currently serving her parole sentence. A literature review of the overall corpus of intellectual work on the Chamberlain and Corby cases will be examined along with a qualitative content analysis (conducted by hand) of a selection of news articles on the Chamberlain and Corby cases. As Krippendorff outlines, ‘Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use’ (2004, p.18). Mayring extended the concept of ‘qualitative content analysis’ and proposed that ‘the basic idea of a qualitative content analysis consists of maintaining the systematic nature of content analysis for the various stages of qualitative analysis, without undertaking overhasty quantification’ (in Flick et.al. 2004, p.267). Using Mayring’s formulation, this study will undertake a qualitative-interpretive analysis of various media texts referencing two high profile events in Australia.

The qualitative approach will be further guided by Neuendorf’s (2002) prescription that qualitative content analysis should examine significant latent content or context information and, as demonstrated by Kacowicz (2005), be used to draw descriptive inferences from the text. In the main, news items have been selected for their evocative language, that is, the use of adjectives describing the Chamberlain couple’s and Corby’s appearance and behaviour (eg. ‘attractive’, ‘despairingly’, ‘sobbed’, ‘boyish self’) and the moral evaluations and judgments made of individuals and events (eg. ‘bizarre’, ‘dramatic’, ‘national obsession’, ‘cheque-book journalism’), as well astheir timing in relation to wider developments taking place in the legal processing of the Chamberlain case. Additionally, this type of method has been proven useful for examining gendered subject groups (see Kahn and Goldberg 1991).

The two high profile events examined here have been chosen because of the media storm they generated and the justification for comparing an exonerated woman to a convicted drug smuggler lies in their similar patterns of media representation; in no way should this overlook the distinct nature of the crimes for which they were convicted or the differing legal processes and territorial contexts in which their cases were heard.

These eventsmay be the basis for generalizations of high profile cases outside Australia, specifically those involving offending women such as Seattle’s exonerated murderer Amanda Knox, a woman the press dubbed ‘Foxy Knoxy’ and declared was in possession of a ‘vigorous sexual appetite’ (Bowman 2011, p.60); Florida’s exonerated child killer, ‘tot mom’ Casey Marie Anthony, the subject of over a dozen books and a tele-movie (Battaglia 2012; Barnett 2016),or convicted South Carolina woman, Susan Smith, whose claims her two young sons were abducted in a carjacking gained worldwide attention after it was revealed she had drowned them in a nearby lake (Barnett 2016, p.77). These and other ‘monstrous mothers’ have been the focus of recent research in the context of a changing digital landscape (Barnett 2016), and future research that explores Asia Pacific and North American case studies – while beyond the scope of this paper – would find productive comparisons here.

***Rationale for selection***

For both cases the analysis was primarily focused on the leading, mass market print publications in each state of Australia, namely*The Sydney Morning Herald, Sun-Herald and Daily Telegraph* (New South Wales), *The Age (Victoria), The Advertiser* (South Australia), *Courier-Mail* (Queensland), *The Canberra Times* (Australian Capital Territory), *The West Australian* (Western Australia) as well as the country’s national newspaper *The Australian.* To further strengthen the reliability of this study other international publications are referred to including the *Jakarta Post* (Indonesia), *The Guardian* and *The Spectator* (United Kingdom) as well as relevant news items from a variety of platforms, namely television (*60 Minutes* program, Nine Network; *Media Watch* program, ABC Television), radio (ABC Radio National), magazine (*The Bulletin* and *The Australian Women’s Weekly*), activist periodical (*The Azaria Newsletter*) and online (*ABC News Online* and *The Punch* blog site).

***Sample***

This study was not intended to examine the quantity of news coverage of the Chamberlain and Corby cases, of which there is copious material across print, radio, television and online. Instead, a specific timeline is used based on significant legal events in the judicial processing of each case. For Chamberlain the timeline for analysis begins with the first Coronial Inquest findings in February 1981, the Supreme Court trial from September to October 1982, Lindy’s release from prison in February 1986 and the quashing of the couple’s convictions in September 1988; for Corby the timeline for analysis encompasses her arrest in Indonesia in October 2004, the signing of her parole application in August 2013 and subsequent release on conditional parole in February 2014. Eventually**,** only those news reports containing evocative language (identified manually in a preliminary reading of the material that used adjectives to describe appearance and behaviour as well as moral judgements) were considered valid and included in the study. In all, 50 items were identified for analysis across a range of publications and genres, namely print news articles, magazine features, radio broadcasts, television programs, cartoons and a blog site. These items were used as evidence of the celebrification of Lindy Chamberlain and Schapelle Corby and to highlight in the scholarly literature on celebrity the inadequacy of current naming practices for women of crime. Before turning to an analysis of the intersection of gender and transgression it is necessary to establish the Chamberlain and Corby celebrity commodities within a system of media marketing and exchange. ***The Azaria industry and the Lindy celebrity commodity***

In many ways, Lindy Chamberlain fulfils the category of contemporary celebrity, having emerged from an obscure existence to arouse a maximum degree of public interest as the convicted murderer of her baby daughter, and then as the victim of a flawed judicial system following her legal exoneration in 1988. Media coverage of the event was disproportionate; in fact, the first coronial inquest findings were telecast live to the nation for the first time in Australian legal history, and perhaps this decision is an early indication of the unprecedented level and intensity of exposure the case generated. Despite objections from the legal fraternity, millions tuned into Coroner Denis Barritt’s Alice Springs courtroom at 11.00 am on Friday, 20 February 1981 to watch the Chamberlain verdict, a number comparable in size (two million) to the number of Australians who watched the moon landing in July 1969 (Sanders in Frow and Morris 1993: 88). As Anne Summers remarked, both the Chamberlain and Corby verdicts were delivered via Australian television screens to engrossed and highly mediated publics: ‘In both cases, the nation stopped and turned its eyes to the television to learn from live broadcasts what fate the courts had decided for these women’ (Summers, 2005).

While newspaper coverage undoubtedly shaped Australia’s perception of both Chamberlain and Corby, television contributed to the intense exposure of their images within the media. As was demonstrated in Alice Springs in 1981 and inside an Indonesian courtroom at the Corby verdict in 2005, the ‘live’ dimension of each broadcast enabled audiences to watch the cases unfold in real time and experience a sense of participation in the verdicts. Despite Coroner Barritt’s best efforts to contain, in particular, the Chamberlain spectacle in 1981, both legal verdicts were marketed in two spectacularised and commodified television specials.

The commodification of Lindy Chamberlain in a media marketplace was apparent as early as 1981 when, during the first inquest, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that: ‘Bids [were] in for Azaria story’ and that amidst ‘rumours of big cheques being signed at Alice Springs, Brisbane and Sydney, the frontrunner was thought to be the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 February 1981). At the Supreme Court trial ‘journalists and members of the public scrambled to get inside for the verdict after the six-hour wait [as] scores of people were locked outside’ (*Daily Telegraph*, 30 October 1982). Then, of course, the narrative was the subject of an ‘Azaria Industry’ (*The Age*, 3 February 1982) with tea towels, the ‘Dingo is Innocent’ tee shirts and badges sold outside the Darwin courthouse and books, lines of clothing and other related merchandise readily available (Bryson, 2000: 351).

Once the guilty verdict was announced in 1982, the competition among Chamberlain authors to achieve first release of their manuscripts was heralded as the ‘Sprint into Print’ (*Sun Herald*, 31 October 1982). Other commercial ventures included ‘A three-part television series and at least four books’ (*Advertiser*, 2 November 1982). Marketing of the Chamberlain narrative was not confined to the media, as one Chamberlain supporter group in Victoria − albeit for a different purpose − advertised car bumper stickers for 50 cents each, printed with the words ‘Support Justice, Support Lindy’, while the *Azaria Newsletter* (a previously unanalysed niche bulletin of fifteen issues published by a loyal band of Chamberlain supporters and currently held in archives at the State Library of New South Wales) sold tee shirts for $7.00 printed with the slogan ‘I believe the Eye-Witnesses’ (*The Azaria Newsletter*, 1 August 1985 and 31 October 1985). According to one journalist writing for the *National Times*, it is little wonder this industry developed, given the media’s gross investment in the story was conservatively estimated at $1 million (*National Times*, 23-29 March 1984). On both sides of the debate items were bought and sold, capitalising on a circumstance that was readily exploitable.

In academic re-evaluations of the Chamberlain event there was at least one scholar who identified Lindy’s potential for celebrity production. In a 1994 essay on the dingo baby saga, Christine Higgins argued that within media representations of the case a ‘discourse of stardom’ developed around Lindy’s image. Unlike the bulk of feminists writing before her, Higgins saw Lindy as more the ‘film star’ and less ‘the witch’ of western popular imaginings (Higgins, 1994: 145). However Higgins’ main concern is to analyse the story’s construction as an archetype of a ‘strange tale’ with ‘gothic overtones’ rather than Lindy’s status as a modern celebrity figure (Higgins, 1994: 137). Lindy’s celebrity status was also implied in John Bryson’s 1985 publication *Evil Angels*, on which Fred Schepisi’s 1988 Hollywood film of the same name (released as ‘A Cry in the Dark’ for international audiences) was based. Bryson devoted the last 500 pages of the book entirely to Lindy who, as the central protagonist of the piece, overshadowed her husbandMichael, the dingo and even the victim, Azaria (Pierce 1999: 175). For this move, he was highly criticised by feminist academics, who argued that weighty descriptions of Lindy’s ‘girlish’ figure and ‘slowness at the bosom’ merely perpetuated journalistic and patriarchal bias (Goldsworthy in Howe 2005: 162-3). Despite being a curious observation, perhaps it was Bryson’s comment on Lindy’s ascendance in the public imagination and the differing deployments of her image. Certainly, in contemporary news discourse, she had grown into a recognisable ‘social type’ with her changing physical form the subject of continuing speculation and controversy.

As the Chamberlain case demonstrates, the production of celebrity merchandise can serve a critical function in the maintenance of celebrity by inviting the public to directly participate in the case’s outcomes. From the ‘Darwin’s Theory’ tee shirt depicting a cartoon Lindy dressed in a dingo suit (*Eternity* exhibit, National Museum of Australia) to the ‘Four kilo anti-hero’ tee shirts sold in Bali (*Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 2007), merchandise ensures the celebrity’s continued visibility in the public eye and we see this in the case of Schapelle Corby.   
  
***The Schapellites and the Corby celebrity commodity***In January 2005, amid a throng of international media jockeying for position, Schapelle Corby’s overseas trial for drug importation began in the Denpasar District Court in Bali. Across the Indian Ocean harrowing images of the startled and shackled Australian woman in a foreign courtroom captured the hearts and minds of many fellow Australians. Four months later, these images would reach their synaesthesic crescendo when the guilty verdict was handed down live to the nation on 27 May 2005. Three networks, Channels Seven, Nine and SkyNews streamed the verdict live in a three-hour satellite broadcast. Despite being broadcast in a non-ratings timeslot (at midday on a Friday afternoon), the TV special attracted over one million viewers. (Schwartz, 2005: 139-140). Outrage at the guilty verdict was channelled through local talkback radio programs including Macquarie Radio Network’s 2GB which received much criticism from the ABC’s *Media Watch* for fanning racial hatred through its comments about the Indonesian legal system and its judges (*Media Watch*, 30 May 2005). The offending comments were made by radio host Malcolm T. Elliott about the Indonesian judges hearing Corby’s case and exemplified some of the xenophobic attitudes circulating in the media at the time: ‘The judges don't even speak English, mate, they’re straight out of the trees if you excuse my expression’ (*Media Watch*, 23 May 2005). Religion, race and settler-colonial anxieties about belonging were aroused in the context of Corby’s arrest which took place in a predominately Muslim country against the geo-political background of the global ‘War on Terror’ (Lambert 2008) and, locally, in the wake of the Cronulla race riots and ensuing reprisal attacks (Little 2006).

Aside from phoning their local talkback programs, many Australians offered support to the imprisoned beauty by writing letters, petitioning local members of parliament, boycotting the purchase of Indonesian products and travel to the country and participating in public rallies. The English press dubbed them the ‘Schapellites’ for their unflinching support for Corby’s cause (*The Spectator*, 11 June 2005). Some, however, including Gold Coast millionaire businessman, Ron Bakir, who funded Corby’s defence, were criticised for their interventions. Described in news reports as the ‘white knight’ or ‘Mad Ron’ − a direct reference to Bakir’s main business competitor, ‘Crazy John’s’ − Bakir became the first to register the name ‘Schapelle Corby’ with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). Others capitalised on the name with the ‘Free Schapelle’ label appearing on various merchandise including tee shirts, caps and stubbie coolers, G-strings and dog coats. These items were made available on the internet via a US website with the proceeds from each sale used to fund Corby’s appeal. In addition to the ‘Free Schapelle’ label, a Melbourne man released a CD single called ‘Song for Schapelle’, a rap duo released a parody of her arrest in a video clip, a New Zealand pizza chain offered customers a ‘holiday that could last a lifetime’ as part of a Corby promotion (*Herald Sun*, 7 February 2014), while another applied to register Corby’s name as a luggage brand under the moniker, ‘The Corby Case’ (*The Age*, 7 June 2005).

So intense was the competition over her name that the Queensland Department of Fair Trading and the Australian Taxation Office made moves to regulate the newly established industry. In the view of Perth-based QC, Mark Trowell: ‘…[Corby’s] really been a piece of merchandise that everyone wanted to take apart and have for themselves’ (*ABC Radio National*, 25 June 2005). As one *Herald-Sun* journalist reflected on the eve of Corby’s release following nine years of imprisonment, ‘Corby’s sentence provoked some bizarre entrepreneurial endeavours’ (7 February 2014). Some of the more bizarre enterpreneurial endeavours included the sale of several items of clothing identical to those Corby wore in court, as well as the eBay listing of Corby’s ‘freedom’ with an asking price of $US350, a figure that carried thousands of dollars more in shipping fees. Then there were the more parodic attempts at making a quick buck. Employing a bit of undergraduate humour, a group of Melbourne University students published in a student newspaper a full page article titled ‘Cooking with Schapelle’ which gave readers instructions for cooking hash cookies and ‘stoner’s spaghetti’ (*Herald Sun*, 7 February 2014). These examples reveal Corby’s consumptive value within the celebrity system, not unlike Chamberlain’s own two decades earlier.

Given the persistent media and public interest in the Queensland beauty school drop-out’s story, it comes as no surprise that her long awaited parole following nine years of incarceration was met with more than a froth and bubble of commercial interest. What is particularly revealing of the news coverage in the months prior to her conditional release is the local media’s representation of the saga. Around August 2013 when the Governor of Kerobokan Prison officially signed off on Corby’s parole application, a number of Newscorp papers (including Melbourne’s *Herald Sun*, the Adelaide *Advertiser* and news.com.au) gave notable mention to her marketability as a celebrity figure when other news outlets were more focused on the legalities of the parole process under Indonesian law (*ABC News*, 11 September 2013), Corby’s ‘moves closer to freedom’ (Bachelard, 2013b), and reflexive concerns about ‘our [national] obsession’ with the case (Bachelard, 2013a).

The News Corp headline, as published in the *Herald Sun*, which read ‘Schapelle Corby’s TV payday could make her a multi-millionaire’, emphasised Corby’s value as a commercial product by comparing the inmate with other Australian women of crime whose exclusive stories have attracted fierce competition between rival media outlets (Byrnes, 2013). Among them was Lindy Chamberlain, positioned as the benchmark of legal injustice in Australia. For her own post-prison ‘survival scoop’, the *Herald Sun* reported that Lindy received what seems now a meagre $250,000 which included exclusive interviews with the Nine Network and stablemate ACP magazines after being wrongfully convicted of her daughter’s murder. As one observer noted at the time, even though it was nothing new for the media to pay for stories, ‘…when Lindy Chamberlain was released from Darwin prison in February 1986, chequebook journalism took on a whole new dimension’ (Little, 1984:150). Since Chamberlain’s appearance on the program *60 Minutes* these comments have proven prescient with Australia’s richest TV tell-all interviewees being Thredbo landslide survivor Stuart Diver ($250,000), Iraqi kidnap victim Douglas Wood ($400,000) and rescued Beaconsfield miners Brant Webb and Todd Russell ($2.6 million) (figures cited in Byrnes, 2013).

When news broke of the Seven Network’s alleged $2 to $3 million offer of payment to Schapelle Corby for her tell-all interview there was growing public indignation over the bloated figure. Fearing the interview would spark ‘restlessness in the community’ the Indonesian Justice Ministry banned Corby from any media interviews until she satisfied the conditions of her parole to be served in Indonesia (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 February 2014). In Australia, the Queensland Premier Campbell Newman vowed to review the state’s proceeds of crime laws (*ABC News*, 12 February 2014), while Federal Treasurer Joe Hockey posted his thoughts on Twitter, ‘It sends all the wrong messages on drugs for a convicted trafficker to be paid for her story’ (*Daily Telegraph*, 12-13 February 2014). Amidst the controversy the Australian Federal Police (AFP) launched ‘a series of dramatic raids’ on the Sydney premises of Seven West Media (the multiplatform media company that owns the Seven Network) searching for evidence of any payments made to the Corby family (*The Australian*, 19 February 2014). No evidence was found and for the raids the Australian Federal Police was forced to issue an apology to Seven West Media (*The West Australian*, 22 August 2014). The incident illustrates AFP sensitivities over its own practices in dealing with drug smugglers and Corby’s monetary value, as one journalist remarked, ‘Money, predictably, is at the root of it all, and Schapelle Corby’s undying ability to earn it’ (Bachelard 2014b).

Despite the AFP’s legal imbroglio and the media hype surrounding Corby’s exclusive interview that promised to be ‘one of the biggest chequebook journalism deals in Australian TV history’ **(**McMahon**,** 2014), the Channel 7 piece that went to air failed to generate the public interest anticipated since Corby’s parole conditions prevented her from being interviewed on camera.

The commercial enterprises surrounding Chamberlain and Corby are evidence of the celebrity figure’s carriage of ‘the central commodity (attention-getting capacity)’ which is consistent with relevant studies in the field that situate the celebrity product within a system of material, commercial exchange (Gamson 1994: 64).The following sections highlight Chamberlain and Corby’s media representation in two different time frames as well as their self-promotional strategies and media management.

***Two Australian Mediascapes: 1980s and 2000s***There are differences in the mediascapes that prevailed in the early 1980s and the early 2000s that need mentioning here. In particular, media representations of Corby must be understood in the context of the mediatisation of social life and the diffusion and adoption of new media (namely social media) that did not exist at the time of Azaria’s disappearance. Moreover, it has been been argued that the connection between Lindy Chamberlain and Schapelle Corby is overstated (Howe 2005: 3) particularly since their judicial outcomes differed, that is, Lindy was exonerated of the murder of her daughter whereas Schapelle remained a convicted criminal despite her claims of innocence.

Their differences aside, what is particularly interesting about these mediascapes is the way in which Corby’s media representations of the early 2000s recalled Chamberlain’s own in a landmark event that dominated Australian news headlines in the 1980s. In particular, in alternative media such as blogs and cartoons about the Corby case the Chamberlain event is interpellated. On claims made by Corby’s defence team that a corrupt baggage handler smuggled the marijuana into the surf-board case or ‘boogie board bag’, *The Punch* blog site headlined its news item with: ‘Schapelle Corby: The drongo did it, maybe’ (*The Punch*, 1 July 2011). The ‘drongo’, aside from being Australian slang for an incompetent person, is part of a cultural slogan that alludes to the Chamberlains’ defence caseline, ‘The dingo did it’ which, in 1980s common parlance was also shorthand for a scapegoat or dupe (namely, the baggage handler). So hackneyed was the expression that in 2002 the internet service provider (ISP) OzEmail paid for an entire one page advertisement containing only the words ‘The Dingo Did It’ to encourage customers of rival ISP DingoBlue, which had recently gone into receivership to switch to a more reliable server (*Sun Herald*, 10 March 2002). To a large Australian readership the reference to Azaria Chamberlain’s disappearance was clearly underscored in this advertisement.

Still other irreverent explorations of the Lindy-Schapelle connection found their expression in popular culture. For instance, a cartoon by Kudelka published in the *Weekend Australian* depicted a dingo riding a surfboard with the caption: ‘Ironically, it turned out that a dingo had taken Schapelle’s boogie board’ (Salusinszky, 2005, p.40). The article accompanying Kudelka’s cartoon described an imprisoned Schapelle in language that bore close similarity to news articles describing Lindy during her own incarceration as an ‘attractive, young Australian woman’, possessing a ‘face [that] now looks despairingly from behind bars’ (Summers 2005). Aside from resolving two culturally significant and seemingly inexplicable events (ie. a missing infant in the desert and an unexplained bag of marijuana in a boogie board bag), which ties in with arguments that mediated social responses to the Chamberlain case revealed a lingering cultural trauma (Staines, 2006; Morrissey and Davis, 2007), the cartoon reflects an awareness of the similarities they bore as celebrities. While being careful not to elide their differences in any discussion of resemblance, these examples highlight the commoditising of deviant and desireable women whose stories take place in remote or foreign locales – Lindy’s in the central Australian desert and Corby’s in the paradisial island of Bali.

In academic writing on both cases much has been made of the significance of remote physical settings as iconic sites in an unsettled Australian postcolonial milieu (Little 2006; Staines 2006), as territorial and political spaces whose boundaries, borders and displacement are explored in the metaphorical bodies of Lindy and Schapelle (Lambert 2008), and as symbolic settings for exploring bilateral relations between Australia and Indonesia, namely Corby, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, namely Chamberlain (Lambert 2008). These writings reveal the grid of intersecting discourses connecting territorial and physical bodies in debates about national sovereignty and belonging. They also strengthen the link between Corby and Chamberlain in the national imaginary, an association that is re-inscribed and reproduced in academic writing, news media coverage and popular culture.

The Corby case’s articulation of ongoing prejudice against the Indonesian justice system and resurgence of Anglo-Australian nationalism is an argument well developed elsewhere (Lambert 2008; Little 2006)*.* Similarly, in the Chamberlain literature are claims that the couple’s belief in the little known religion of Adventism, the involvement of frontier characters such as dingoes and ‘white campers’, and the national myths aroused by the infant’s death at ‘the Rock’ – an Aboriginal ancestral site in the heart of central Australia – were important in the processing of public opinion on the case (Howe 2005; Schaffer 1988). Consideringboth the Chamberlain and Corby cases in the context of religion (Adventism and Islam) and Anglo-Australian anxieties about belonging (in outback Australia and in Bali, long recognized as an Australian outpost and holidaymakers’ paradise) is important in supporting the magnification and directing of attention that celebrity entails. There is also evidence in these arguments that, as two significant high profile crimes, the Chamberlain and Corby cases became symbolic of social issues that captured the public imagination in two different historical periods (see Chancer 2005 on international ‘high profile crimes’ that are representative of much larger forces and conflicts).

Identifying the similar evocative language used to frame media coverage of both Lindy and Schapelle in no way equates their experiences, particularly since they were convicted of different crimes, namely murder and marijuana importation, in different historical periods. Nonetheless, teasing out the similarities between these two mediascapes highlights the difficulty in naming criminally implicated women and the patterned representation of women whose circumstantial celebrity would otherwise render them ‘accidental heroes’, ‘victims’, ‘celetoids’ and ‘iniquitous criminals’. However, as subsequent sections will illustrate, these categories of celebrity and, in the case of the ‘accidental hero’ ‘effects’ of a contemporary news media cycle are inadequate for capturing what is distinctive (and disruptive) about the Chamberlain-Corby type of celebrity.

***Managing celebrity – two approaches***It should be noted there are differences in the way both women managed media interest which is important for understanding their celebrity development. Not until Lindy’s release from Berrimah Prison in 1986 (almost six years after Azaria’s disappearance), did the Chamberlains ‘manage’ public interest by hiring publicity agent Harry M. Miller who negotiated their media appearances, the most notable being the post-prison tell-all interview with the Nine Network’s *60 Minutes* and associated ACP magazines. The Corby family, however, were more strategic in their early dealings with the media. Less than five weeks after her arrest Schapelle was interviewed in Bali’s Kerobokan Prison by *60 Minutes* reporter Liz Hayes (*60 Minutes*, 14 November 2004). Hayes conducted subsequent interviews with members of the Corby family on 15 and 29 May 2005 (Hayes, 2005; Bonella and Sacre, 2005), but was noticeably snubbed in favour of journalist Mike Willesee at rival Channel 7’s *Sunday Night* program who secured the much-publicised prison release interview broadcast in March 2014.

The Corby family brand was also protected through numerous threats of legal action against large-scale media outlets. For instance, legal threats were made to the Seven Network’s *Today Tonight* which aired unsubstantiated allegations of drug use by Schapelle’s sister, Mercedes Corby (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 February 2007); the Nine Network which aired the documentary *The Hidden Truth* (later broadcast by HBO under the title, *Ganja Queen*) and questioned the baggage handler theory, and Eamonn Duff, author of the book *Sins of the Father*, who alleged Schapelle’s father, Mick Corby, was connected to an Adelaide drug network. But the Corby family’s greater accessibility to newsworkers in the early 2000s (compared with that of the Chamberlains twenty years earlier) and arguably, over-exposure on various media platforms through television and press interviews, contributed to the intensity of newsworker interest in Schapelle’s story. These differences aside, Lindy Chamberlain and Schapelle Corby represent points on a continuum leading toward the media’s heightened creation of certain individuals (namely, women) as celebrity criminals.

However, this is not to make blanket assumptions about a wholly patriarchal media or, as other feminists writing on the Chamberlain case have implied, that there was a sustained media bias against Lindy who remained a victim of stereotyped representations (Howe 1989 and 2005; Johnson 1984). Indeed, to do so would overlook the rise and packaging of feminism as a social movement within popular discourse as well as the industry-related issues affecting the production and consumption of media texts such as the financial constraints imposed by advertisers, the relationship between editors and copywriters, the presence of female journalists in a male-dominated environment and the individual response of news workers. Instead, it is necessary to view Lindy and Schapelle’s portrayal within a complex discursive system, in which anxieties about the performance of gender were projected. Acknowledging that gender is one lens through which media representations are filtered provides an opportunity to see Lindy and Schapelle’s celebrification in this way.

The unsuitability of the aforementioned labels reveals an inherent difficulty in conceptualising the figure I call the ‘deviant diva’, particularly when that individual is a woman whose media representations are entangled with discourses of desire and transgression. Can we speak of Lindy Chamberlain, a valuable commodity within a commercially driven system of image exchange, without recalling the question of her innocence or guilt and the overall issue of moral transgression (that is, despite her legal exoneration)? In turn, can we refer to Schapelle Corby without conjuring ‘the trope of the celebrity “did she or didn’t she?” woman of crime’ that was so effectively captured in a *Guardian* news article and in voiceover and caption in the heavily promoted Channel Nine TV special ‘Schapelle’? (*The Guardian*, 8 February 2014). Problematising the media representations of both women were not only questions about the veracity of their stories but the conflicting feelings of fascination and desire that physically attractive and transgressive women evoke. But why are criminally implicated women deemed newsworthy to a degree that men are not? If, as Rojek argues, ‘media representation is the basis of celebrity’ (Rojek 2001: 16), what are the representational strategies informing their mediated appearance on the public stage?

***A new category of celebrity: deviant diva***It was not until the 1970s that the first feminist criminological perspectives emerged to challenge the androcentric foundations of traditional criminology. Carol Smart’s *Women, Crime and Criminology: A Feminist Critique* (1977) is regarded as the germinal work of the period for its exposure of the culturally biased and patriarchal assumptions about women that had girded traditional ideas about female criminality (Jewkes, 2011: 125). Smart’s research inspired a number of other influential feminist studies including Heidensohn (1985), Gelsthorpe & Morris (1990), and Lloyd (1995), which critiqued mainstream (or conventional) criminology and argued that essentialist assumptions about women’s psychological makeup and biological purpose condemned them to differential treatment within the law. Put simply, ‘women who commit serious offences are judged to have transgressed two sets of laws: criminal laws and the laws of nature’ (Jewkes, 2011: 125). Ann Lloyd (1995) captured this duality in the the title of her book on society’s treatment of violent women who, she argued, are ‘doubly deviant and doubly damned’.

In the persistent production and circulation of their images in climates of national obsession, both Chamberlain and Corby can be thought of as examples of different varieties of ‘humanized desire’, a fact which Rojek and Redmond separately argue is characteristic of the celebrity figure in whom desire is not just aroused but embodied (Rojek 2001; Redmond 2013: 12). I use the term ‘national obsession’ intentionally because it was a headline so often employed in local and international news articles published after Schapelle Corby’s conditional release to describe the public fascination with her image, including, ‘How a convicted drug smuggler obsessed a nation’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 2014), ‘Schapelle Corby: a national obsession’ (*The Guardian*, 8 February 2014), and ‘Drug mule Schapelle Corby: An Australian obsession’ (Reeves, 2014). Within climates of national obsession two offending women were judged by sections of the media on their physicality and sexual appeal as well as their alleged crimes. For some, this kind of gender-based scrutiny is simply a reflection of the treatment of women in wider society:

In addition to their sexuality and sexual history, women who kill or who commit other very serious offences are subjected to intense scrutiny regarding their physical appearance and attractiveness; a fact that is entirely in keeping with general life (Jewkes, 2011: 139).

Ponderous descriptions of their attractiveness – Lindy’s ‘sultry good looks’ and ‘ravishing’ appearance (Howe, 2005: 228-9) and Schapelle’s ‘magazine cover girl [looks] with selling blue eyes’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 2014) – imply they were capable of not just mobilizing the public’s ‘abstract desire’ as is typical in celebrity parasocial relationships but embodying desire through a focus on their physical appearance. Rather than positioned as celebrities or well known for their alleged crimes, Chamberlain and Corby were identified by their gender difference as the nation’s ‘two most celebrated *women* of crime’ (Summers 2005, my emphasis).

The standard narratives used by sections of the media to construct criminally implicated women employ the frames of sexual deviance, physical attractiveness (or absence of), bad wives, bad mothers, mythical monsters, mad cows, evil manipulators, non-agents (Jewkes 2011, p.127). In the context of Chamberlain and Corby the category of ‘physical attractiveness’ captures the tenor of their depiction in a variety of news representations, though there have been a number of persuasive studies exploring media framing of Lindy Chamberlain as a ‘bad mother’ (Marcus in Howe, 2005; Goldsworthy in Howe, 2005; Howe 2005; Goc 2009). In his examination of the Corby case, news columnist Sam de Brito attributed the national fixation on Schapelle to her physical appeal in comments that, ‘Corby was a half-good sort a certain type of Aussie man finds attractive’ (*The Canberra Times*, 11 February 2014). For Janine Little, the seductive pull of the Schapelle Corby case can be partly understood in the operation of ‘stereotypes of femininity and innocence [that] are activated in stories about women’ (Little 2006, p.132), whereas for Stephen Crofts, Corby’s appeal was stoked by her gendered vulnerability since, ‘as a woman, she carries connotations of victimhood more readily than would a man’ (Crofts 2006, p.8).

While there is a volume of evidence in news coverage that points to the sexualisation of female celebrity criminals, there will always be focal points of resistance and, notably in the case of Lindy Chamberlain, a number of journalists were sympathetic to her plight such as Malcolm Brown (*Sydney Morning Herald*), Kevin Childs (*The Age*), Kevin Hitchcock (*Channel Ten*), Mike Lester (*Channel Nine*) and Ken Blanch (*Courier-Mail*), while Bill Hitchings (*The Herald-Sun*) and Jim Oram (*Daily Telegraph*) were late defectors to the Chamberlains’ cause (Young 1989: 12-13). Identifying dissenters within the rank and file of journalists reporting on the case highlights the complex discursive system in which news workers operate.

Moreover, acknowledging that media portrayals of female and male celebrity-criminals vary considerably in their intensity should not overlook the gendered assumptions and stereotyping surrounding male offenders (Walklate 2004). Heeding Walklate’s call to avoid focusing on ‘the woman question’ and over-emphasising gender differences, the following section will address the embedded assumptions governing male criminal-celebrities using Lindy’s husband Michael Chamberlain as an example (Walklate 2004: 23)

***But men, too, are gendered***  
Lindy Chamberlain’s overt sexualisation in news discourse was the subject of Adrian Howe’s writings on the case published in 1989, 1997 and 2005. In all, she found evidence of ‘a damning configuration of misogynous slurs’ against Chamberlain, an unmistakable ‘trial by sex’ that led to her wrongful imprisonment, and a gendered condition that was ‘quite simply inconceivable’ for her husband Michael Chamberlain (Howe 2005: 7-12). By this Howe concluded that there was no equivalent frame of reference for Michael whose press coverage was spared the gender inflected media messages of those of his wife.

But the activation of ‘physical appearance’ frames in news reports about offending women should not ignore the sometimes gendered dimension of media coverage of men under suspicion of a crime. As criminologists Flavin and Artz argue ‘men, too, are gendered’ (2013: 22). Michael Chamberlain was the subject of media commentary and he was often depicted in stereotypically feminised terms. When the findings of the first inquest were handed down he ‘sobbed’ (Maguire, 1981, p.7) and ‘seemed to show the strain more than his wife’ (Stephens, Brown and Brien 1981, p.4). When graphic evidence was presented to the murder trial: ‘[he] slumped forward on his seat, bending over his knees’ (Brown, 1982, p.4), and looking ‘quite ashen, sometimes turned away and winced’ (Brown, 1982, p.11). Before his trial sentencing he was ‘terribly weighed down with worry [and] wanted it finished. As soon as possible’ (Brown and Brien, 1982, p.3). On the following day *The Daily Telegraph* reported that ‘A shattered Michael Chamberlain collapsed after his sentencing and vowed: “I haven’t begun to fight yet”’ (Oram, 1982, p.1). Upon his arrival in Darwin to learn the outcome of applications to have his conviction overturned he was wearing: ‘a casual white linen suit and sporting a new short hairstyle’ (Coomber and Hitchings, 1988, p.7), then, two days later, at the announcement the convictions had been quashed, the *Courier-Mail* reported Michael ‘looked his old boyish self as he smiled through his tears and put his arm out for his wife who was near to collapse’ (Hitchings, 1988, p.8).

While there is compelling evidence for the argument proposed by Adrian Howe and Julie Marcus that the intensity of Lindy Chamberlain’s media representations across time cannot be equated with Michael’s own, the aforementioned examples illustrate his stereotypically feminized portrayal across time. At the first coronial inquest in 1981, the trial in 1982, and the couple’s Supreme Court exoneration in 1988, Michael was periodically framed as a ‘weeping woman’ or emotional effete. One possible explanation for the evocation of the ‘weeping woman’ archetype (incidentally, so often seen in media representations of Corby, see Lambert 2008: 242) is that deviance in male perpetrators is amplified when the male offender is represented in feminized terms as the ‘Other’. This is because ‘*difference* is readily constructed as *deviance* by causal association with crime’ (Jewkes 2011: 123). While the construction of otherness is a necessary condition in media representations of deviance (Greer and Jewkes, 2005), it is offending women which have a greater erotic potential since their moral worth is determined by the preservation of their chastity (D’Cruze et.al. 2006).

This line of argument is given credence in the bulk of feminist criminological studies which highlight that, ‘the media tap into, and magnify, deep seated public fears about deviant women, while paying much less attention to equally serious male offenders whose profile does not meet the *psychosocial* criteria of *otherness*’ (Jewkes 2011: 123). The ‘psychosocial criteria of otherness’ points to an understanding of the sociological and psychoanalytical reasons why offending women such as Lindy, to a greater extent than offending men such as Michael, arouse disproportionate emotional responses among mediated publics.

In the updated edition of her important work on sociological risk, Deborah Lupton devoted an entire chapter to exploring the othering potential of religious and pagan ceremonies, advertisements and films which deal with the concepts of desire and transgression. She wrote that in their construction of alterity and difference these performances reveal a collective and cross-cultural fascination with the abomination: ‘That which we most fear, which we construct as the Other, is also often that which we most desire’ (Lupton 2013: 138). The paradox of desire – inspiring both yearning and revulsion for the desired object – was aroused at various times in the production and circulation of Chamberlain and Corby’s images.

Given the comparative intensity and persistence of their images and the actual (Corby) and imagined (Chamberlain) crimes for which they were convicted, an entirely new, gender-specific category of celebrity is warranted. The ‘deviant diva’ appellation readily captures the offending woman as a figure of marginality and difference with the ‘power to disrupt traditional gender categories and oppositions’ (Leonardi and Pope 1996: 20).Moreover, this type of celebrity encompasses the public figure whose fame is attributed and derives from an unrelenting media presence rather than any outstanding achievement; it also foregoes any label denoting the individual’s resemblance to either a ‘victim’ or a ‘hero’ since, as is evident in the media representations of both women, Lindy and Schapelle have alternated between the antithetical categories of hero/villain, victim/perpetrator and ingénue/femme fatale in the course of their public existence. The term ‘femme fatale’ is a cultural construct similar to ‘deviant diva’ and ‘…provoke[s] a particularly conflicted tangle of emotions, including horrified fascination, titillation, stern reproach and damning judgment’ (Simkin 2013: 36). Moreover, the ‘deviant diva’ label recognises the number and range of discourses centring on women such as Lindy and Schapelle that, while informed by archetypes of femininity such as the Biblical Eve and Shakespearean Desdemona, whose desirability is bound up in their transgression (Dollimore 1991), provide audiences with an opportunity to read their appearance in sometimes dominant, alternate and contradictory ways.

***Conclusion***A central tenet of this article has been that while current categories of celebrity capture the ‘attributed’ as opposed to ‘ascribed’ or ‘achieved’ forms of celebrity, they overlook the importance of gender and criminality in the construction of celebrity types. Using a qualitative content analysis of media coverage of two high profile, criminally implicated Australian women, Schapelle Corby and exonerated Lindy Chamberlain, the study traces their celebrification in the context of typologies of celebrity proposed in leading studies of contemporary fame. Firstly, the qualitative content analysis established Chamberlain and Corby’s status as celebrity commodities in two different mediascapes (the early 1980s and early 2000s) by examining 50 news items from leading publications across the country in print, magazine, radio, television and online media; secondly, by comparing Chamberlain and Corby’s celebrity type with the categories of celebrity outlined in the scholarly literature, the research found that the ‘accidental hero’, ‘victim’, ‘celetoid’ and ‘iniquitous criminal’ labels were inadquate descriptors for criminally implicated women. Drawing on risk sociology’s conceptualisation of desire and transgression this study argued that the ‘deviant diva’ label is a more fitting description of women such as Lindy and Schapelle, in whom anxieties about the performance of gender were projected in a longitudinal selection of media representations.

While the comparative analysis of Michael Chamberlain’s media representation indicated it is important not to overlook the operationalisation of male gendered stereotypes in news discourse, the level and intensity of his media exposure differed compared with Lindy’s own. Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that claims made about the intensity and durability of media representation of female celebrity criminals are based on proof rather than an assumption of different reporting for women. By proposing a new celebrity category in the ‘deviant diva’ this study has implications for the way we conceive celebrity at the intersection of gender and transgression.

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