Mentoring, women and the construction

of academic identities

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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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Abstract

In this thesis I investigate the influence of mentoring on the formation of the identities of women academics in Australian universities. Many Australian and New Zealand universities have introduced some form of mentoring initiative for women academics over the last decade. The aim of these initiatives is usually expressed in terms of supporting women's career development in order to increase the representation of women in senior positions in universities.

I take up Foucault's theory of governmentality together with feminist theories of subjectivity, to examine the ways in which mentoring contributes to 'producing' the women as academic subjects of the times. My analysis of the formation of the subjectivities of the women concerned is set in the context of a political economy of contemporary higher education accompanied by the changing nature of academic work. I argue that mentoring has found support in recent years because it responds to the concerns of 'the enterprise university' with improving performance while also being seen to respond to the problem of gender inequality.

The thesis is based on interviews conducted with 17 women academics who have participated in a formal mentoring program or who have been mentored informally by a colleague in their universities, six of which are discussed in detail. I use a feminist interpretive framework to analyse the discourses through which the women and I construct their accounts at interview. I also highlight the parallels between the confessional aspects of feminist research interviewing and the confessional space of the mentoring relationship itself, particularly mentoring of women *by* women.

On the basis of this analysis, I argue that mentoring has a number of productive effects, producing particular sorts of self-regulating subjects, together with new knowledges and discourses of work and of the self. In their engagement in mentoring, the women take up a project of self-review and self-regulation. This can be understood as a biographical project of the self. It is a project that is iterative and ongoing, as the women navigate the discourses of academic work, career,

gender, mothering, sexuality, social class and ethnicity, amongst others. This process is frequently fragmented and contested as the women confront the contradictions within the combined positioning of themselves and their positioning by others. Rather than try to resolve the tensions and contradictions that characterise this process, these tensions might be better explored in terms of their productive potential for disrupting the gendered work order of universities.

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Notes on Notations

I have changed the names of participants and some identifying details in line with my commitment to ensure confidentiality.

I have indented quotations from publications in the text in the same size font as the main text.

Quotations from interview transcripts are indented in the text in *italics*.

I have also used *italics* from time to time to emphasise a point.

Chapter One

Investigating women academics and mentoring in Australian universities

This thesis is about women academics, workplace mentoring and academic identities in Australian universities. In particular it is about the uptake of academic identities and of the function of mentoring within that process. The idea for the thesis grew out of my experience setting up and running a research development program ('WomenResearch 21') for women academics at one university. My experience with this program raised two broad questions to which this thesis is addressed. These are: what are the relations of power that produce mentoring for women programs in Australian universities; and secondly, how does mentoring form subjects and what kind of subjects does it form? In the thesis I draw in detail on interviews I conducted with six women who had participated in a formal mentoring program at their university or who had been mentored in the course of their work by another more experienced academic. I use a feminist poststructuralist approach informed by Foucault's theories of discourse and of governmentality to investigate the ways in which the women assemble themselves, and are assembled by others, as academic workers. I begin this chapter with an account of the origins of my engagement with issues of women and mentoring, including my discomfort with some of the accepted wisdom and practices of this field of work. Following this I explain the focus of the study, outline my theoretical framework and set out the structure of the thesis.

My interest in women academics and mentoring

> I think that WomenResearch 21 launched my research career and I
> don't think that would have happened without it. I would have continued
> to think of myself as a competent and committed teacher, but not a real

researcher. The psychological and institutional barriers would have been too great without WR21 s(Leah, Participant, WomenResearch 21 program, UNSW) (Casson & Devos, 2001, p. 1).

WomenResearch 21 is a research development program for women academics at the University of New South Wales, at or near the start of their research careers. The aim of the program is to support women academics to develop the skills and confidence to participate in the research communities of their discipline and of the University. The program has attracted participants from across all faculties of the University and includes women who are new to academia, and those who may have been employed as an academic for some years but have not previously been active as researchers. In the quote above, Leah, a participant in the first intake into the program, refers to some of the varied identity demands of academic work, in her anxiety about not being a 'real' researcher. Leah is one of many participants who have spoken about the challenges of forging new identities to fit the emergent conditions of higher education and of their school and discipline contexts. My involvement in setting up and running this program with a colleague acted as the stimulus to undertake this doctoral research project.

I took up my first full-time academic position as a lecturer in a professional development centre at an Australian university after completing a master's degree in adult education and deciding I wanted to try and pursue an academic career. The centre in which I worked was responsible for staff development with general (non-academic) staff, and for teaching and learning development with individual academic staff and with schools. While I had been appointed with a brief to work in the area of organisation development, I contributed across many of the centre's programs, including teaching on a masters degree program in university teaching and learning. I was one of two women in the centre at my level, with our colleagues all at more senior levels and with more academic experience.

As well as my prior professional experience, I had been active for over 10 years in feminist organisations in the community and in trade unions, so when I arrived at

UNSW I joined my colleague on the committee of the women's association at our University.

In my first year, the committee decided to undertake a survey of academic and general staff women's experiences of working at the University. The survey results reaffirmed many aspects of academic women's employment as discussed in the published literature and summarised in Chapter Two of this thesis. Importantly the survey made its most important contribution as one of the few studies of the experiences of women on the *general* staff (see McLean, 1996). Over the years immediately following the release of the survey results, my colleague was successful in securing special funds from the Vice Chancellor, the 'chief executive' of the University, for programs aimed at supporting women general staff and their career aspirations. These programs were unusual at the time as they supported participants in a number of ways over a sustained period of time, rather than simply offering one off workshops on topics of interest.

We next turned our attention to women academics, and applied for an external competitive grant from the then national Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD) to develop and run a research development program for beginning women academics at our University. The grant would allow us to run a comprehensive program for two years. Our application was motivated by our concern that women academics were not receiving the institutional support they needed in order to get established as researchers. Further, our local survey evidence together with the published literature supported the view that many women academics feel isolated and alienated from the research cultures and networks of their disciplines and schools. This sense of isolation, coupled with heavy teaching and administrative workloads, and in many cases family responsibilities, discourages many women from undertaking research and hence prevents them from contributing to knowledge production and dissemination in their fields. Because the women are not participating in the research enterprise of the University, they are positioned institutionally as 'inactive researchers' irrespective of their teaching, administrative and other contributions. Their chances of gaining ongoing employment or promotion are thereby significantly reduced.

In the course of researching our grant application, we made contact with people around Australia and New Zealand who had set up women's programs at their own universities. Many of these programs were broadly based development programs for women on the academic and general staff. Most had a mentoring component, and in a few instances the programs were exclusively built around individual mentoring of participants. (In this thesis I take up this definition of mentoring as a more senior person in an organisation providing support and guidance to another person on a range of work and career matters on a confidential basis.) Most of these programs had not been evaluated and hence it was difficult to gauge their success or the success of mentoring within them.

Our assessment was that mentoring had been widely adopted across the sector over the 1990s, at least in Australia and New Zealand, as a favoured strategy for supporting women's professional development in universities. The rationale often given for introducing a formal mentoring program for women is that women do not usually receive mentoring in the course of their every day working lives, for reasons associated with the gendered nature of organisations. It is argued that women must establish networks and provide mentoring in order to progress in the institution. In other words, the accepted wisdom is that (many) men get mentoring in the course of their work and that women need mentoring.

This view was also supported in the literature at the time on the position of women in academia (and on women in corporate life) in which mentoring is frequently cited as crucial to building a successful career, whether in the corporate or higher education sectors (see for example, Crosby, 1999).

These testimonials in support of mentoring are often polemical in nature with little in the way of research giving clear evidence of its value. The small number of published studies on advantages and disadvantages present mixed evidence of the value of individual mentoring. A number on the other hand recommended multiple approaches to supporting women in organisations and in their career development. While there is a growing literature on the topic of mentoring, most of this literature is based on evaluative research of individual projects and is often

concerned with demonstrating success to funding bodies. That is, it provides post-hoc justification for the allocation of resources by the funding body to the program, or demonstrates success in order to secure further funding. There is not a large literature that expands or develops theoretical concepts or models of mentoring. North American researcher, Kathy Kram's early descriptive work (1983; 1985) in which she developed a schema of concepts and phases of workplace mentoring is still widely cited as authoritative.

Other commentators have also noted the lack of a theoretical literature on mentoring. Colley (2001) for example comments that the literature tends to be descriptive and biased in favour of mentoring, with a much smaller critical literature that discusses harmful or problematic relationships. This critical literature is noteworthy, she goes on to remark, when compared to the "apolitical world that contemporary mentoring initiatives seemingly inhabit" (Gulam & Zulfiqar, 1998, p. 39). Colley (2001) notes too that the "… critiques tend to be focussed on power *within* the relationships, rather than with the wider power relations in which those relationships, and both members of the dyad, are located" (p. 182). These observations raise two critical issues in regarding to mentoring both of which I address in my consideration of the topic. The first of these is the importance of institutional and socio-political context in any discussion of mentoring; and relatedly, the importance of an analysis of the power relations in which mentoring is situated.

What role then did we want mentoring to play in our own program? My colleague and I recognised the benefits that might flow from receiving guidance and feedback from a more experienced researcher. As newer researchers ourselves we too would have appreciated this form of support. We were however, uncomfortable with the hierarchical relations implied in traditional forms of individual mentoring. We had witnessed (and continue to witness) the operation of networks and systems of patronage amongst (certain groups of) men that support the development and career advancement of other younger similar men. We asked ourselves: Is this a model women (and feminists) want to emulate? If we want to change how universities work, should we merely copy the masters? A

concentration on individual mentoring seems to focus attention on women as the site for intervention rather than institutional policies and practices. It suggests that women lack something that mentoring can provide rather than that institutions discriminate and exclude.

As adult educators too, we were concerned at the implied approaches of learning that underpin mentoring. One such approach is that those people who are successful (the mentor) firstly *know* why they are successful. This suggests a high level of reflexivity on the part of the mentor in regard to the factors shaping their own career trajectory. Another is that the mentor can un-problematically *transmit* this understanding to another person. Thirdly, it suggests that this person (the mentee) is positioned to act upon this knowledge presumably in pursuit of his or her own interests. This problematisation raises a number of issues with regard to knowledge production and meaning making, subject formation and structural discrimination.

In the WomenResearch 21 program, we ultimately decided to include a form of focused research mentoring in the form of a 'research adviser', alongside an emphasis on learning through group development through seminars and informal networking. Participants therefore draw on a number of sources of information, direction and support in their learning including their research adviser, other participants, the program coordinators, and seminar speakers and contributors.

The program ran for two years on our grant, was funded from a special pot of University funds for a further two years, and at the time of writing this thesis, a commitment has been made by the Vice Chancellor to incorporate the program in the core activities the Office of Research Services at the University. Ironically, in the year in which my colleague and I won our grant to start running this women's career development program, the centre in which we worked was closed down, leaving my colleague and I to reposition the new program – and ourselves and our own academic careers – within new structures and under new management regimes.

As indicated in the opening paragraph to this thesis, my experience with WomenResearch 21 raised two important questions about mentoring. The first of these was: what are the relations of power that produce mentoring for women programs? This question grew out of my reflections on the contradictory spaces that the program occupied institutionally. Our explicit aim was to support women to pursue their ambitions as researchers, and hence their careers in the organisation. Yet our presence drew attention to shortcomings in the way in which the University supported its newer researchers. We were also, in our view, engaged critically with the research life and cultures of the institution. By this I mean we adopted a highly reflexive and critical perspective on the ways in which research was undertaken and supported within academia. Our focus was unashamedly on systemic problems rather than on the 'deficits' of individual women.

The second question evolved out of our experience running the program in its first year, and relates to my opening quote from Leah: how does mentoring form subjects and what kinds of subjects does it form? As indicated earlier, many participants spoke at length over the course of the program about what it is to *become* a researcher, and more broadly speaking, to become an academic. 'Becoming' was not simply a matter of acquiring new skills and knowledge, or of developing networks – it was about the taking up of new identities, new ways of understanding and conducting oneself in the organisation and within a disciplinary field.

This study and thesis is the outcome of my critical engagement with these two questions.

The focus of this study

From my broad engagement with professional development for academic women, I decided to focus on the troubling dimensions of mentoring. The purpose of my study as it developed was to identify and analyse the ways in which women are constructed as academic subjects through the discourses and practices of mentoring in Australian universities. Further, the research aimed to consider the

implications of mentoring for feminist analyses of gender equity in higher education. In particular my research addresses the following questions:

1. What are the discourses and practices of mentoring at Australian universities?

2. How are women's identities shaped through mentoring?

3. What 'technologies' of power and of self are at work in mentoring?

4. How do mentoring practices and discourses relate to wider feminist debates about institutional change in higher education?

For the study I interviewed 17 academic women from ten universities around Australia, six of which are considered in detail in this thesis. I chose to undertake a small-scale qualitative study for a number of reasons. In recent years, there have been a number of large quantitative studies of gender equity in Australian higher education (see for example Probert & Ewer, 2002; Probert, Ewer, & Whiting, 1998). While such studies provide useful data on the comparative position of women and men in universities, they do not offer insights into the daily, lived experiences of women academics in their schools and faculties. Localised studies are needed that focus on the ways in which gendered work orders are enacted in specific sites. It is possible in such studies to more carefully interrogate the connection between knowledge and power in those sites (Morley, 1999). While initially I had hoped to undertake my research in three universities, my study evolved into an analysis not of specific mentoring practices at these universities but of the productive effects of practices across a number of sites (see Chapter Three). The 'site' then shifted from that of universities to mentoring relationships themselves. This orientation allowed me to unpack issues of gender, power and knowledge within those relationships.

My approach to mentoring differs markedly from other studies in a number of important respects. Firstly, the mentoring literature in the fields of management and professional development tends to focus on the merits or otherwise of specific mentoring programs, or with issues arising from the conduct of programs. The

focus of this literature is principally on research that contributes to program development and improvement.

The focus of my study is, by contrast, on contributing to the development of a theoretical base for thinking about mentoring. It is not intended primarily as a guide for practice. Secondly, the feminist literature in this area – as reported in higher education and feminist journals and books – overwhelmingly eulogises mentoring but does not draw on an extensive empirical or theoretical base. There is very little literature that both addresses mentoring for women from an explicitly feminist perspective and that also formulates a well-developed theoretical and conceptual framework for thinking about mentoring. My study is intended to contribute to addressing this gap.

Developing the theoretical tools for the job

My approach to the topic demanded a number of things. I wanted to investigate the conditions under which mentoring for women programs have emerged in recent times, or the conditions of possibility of those programs. I was not concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of particular programs, nor with undertaking a history of mentoring for women programs, so much as examining *how* and *why* they have become possible in Australian universities over the last decade or so. My approach needed to be able to offer insights into the institutional *work* of mentoring, or the role or function being performed by such mentoring programs institutionally. Institutions have supported these initiatives *for particular sets of reasons.* Further, the framework needed to inform my methodological approach for collecting and analysing data for the research. Lastly, the framework needed to shed light on issues of identity formation in contemporary workplaces. Most importantly, my approach needed to be compatible with my commitments as a feminist to my concern with the position of women and my use of gender as a central analytical category.

These requirements were most aptly met through the development of a framework drawing on Foucault's concepts of governmentality and discourse, to which I was increasingly attracted, combined with feminist theories of subjectivity and

scholarship on the conduct of feminist research. In recent years a number of scholars in education and in the social sciences have taken up Foucault's concepts to explore the ways in which 'individuals' are constituted in contemporary workplaces. Governmentality is a concern with the ways in which individuals are governed by others and by themselves; the way in which power is exercised over individuals in order to produce 'governable subjects', or those subjects who are 'easy to manage' in that they 'manage themselves'. Rose (1999 {1989}) gives a useful definition of governmentality as:

> … all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others, (…). And it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one's own conduct, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself (p. 3).

In other words, a central feature of governmentality is the way in which one takes up the project of managing one's own conduct within the prevailing conditions. The case has been well made in the governmentality literature that through the discursive practices of neo-liberal reform of organisations – in some contexts referred to as managerialism – workers have been reconstituted as self-regulating, self-managing subjects (Devos, 2004b). It seems to me that a governmentality approach afforded an ideal explanatory schema with which to examine women's participation and conduct of themselves in mentoring relationships.

Many studies have emphasised the central role of language in the formation of identity. This 'linguistic turn' as it is described has led to the widespread uptake within post-Enlightenment, poststructuralist and deconstructive approaches of forms of discourse analysis (MacLure, 2003). It is argued:

> … that words and ideas … are not neutral representations of a pre-existing reality, but act as powerful practices that 'do work' by constructing particular realities (…) Put simply, our conception of who we are, our identity, is constituted by the power of all of the discursive practices in which we speak and which in turn 'speak' us (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant, & Yates, 2003, p.41).

In Foucault's terms, discourses are technologies of power that act as "… an inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by internalising to the point that he is his own supervisor, each individual thus exercising surveillance over, and against, himself {sic}" (Miller & Rose, 1993, p.223). The ways in which the individual acts upon him or herself are referred to in this approach as 'technologies of the self'. The use of the term 'technologies' in this context highlights the instrumental nature of these devices in effecting their purposes.

Discourses are powerful because they construct regimes of truth with their attendant disciplinary practices. They are processes of governing that align individual conduct with socio-economic objectives (Chappell et al., 2003) and may be either constraining or enabling of ways of being in the world. Importantly "discourses hide their presence in their construction" (op. cit. p. 42) thus disguising their role in determining what may or may not be said and by whom at particular points in time. An analysis of discourse offers both a methodological tool and a theoretical framework with which to make sense of the interview data collected for this study. The concepts of governmentality and discourse when read together offered considerable insights into how we are made up as subjects, and in particular how we are made up as subjects *in and through mentoring*.

The concept of governmentality affords insights into the relationship between work and learning. Mentoring, as widely adopted workplace pedagogy, sits squarely at that intersection between the labour process and learning. The mentee's work usually forms the curriculum of mentoring or to put it another way, constitutes the material around which the mentoring relationship turns, the material that becomes subject to transformation through mentoring. Increasingly in my assessment, however, mentoring does not simply act to bring about changes in one's work and work practices but acts to produce new ways of thinking about oneself. It is the process of the production of these new ways of thinking that are the focus of this thesis.

In this thesis I refer to the concepts of 'identity' and of 'subjectivity'. One or other, and sometimes both, of these concepts are at play in the conceptual literature on which I draw in this thesis. I conceptualise 'identity' as identifying as a member of a group constituted in discourse, for example, 'working class woman', or 'research active academic'. 'Subjectivity' I characterise as the subject's understanding of herself, or self-conception. These self-conceptions are formed through the processes of subjectification, such as those elaborated on in the work of Foucault, or through 'the biographical project of the self', as articulated in the work of Rose. The focus of the thesis is upon these processes of subjectification and how they are enacted through mentoring.

The structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured around a discussion of the context in which mentoring initiatives for women have emerged in Australian universities in recent years. In Chapter Two I explore the conditions of emergence of those initiatives arguing that mentoring programs have become possible as the result of the confluence of two discourses, namely of neo-liberal governance of universities, with its attendant concerns with institutional and individual performance; and discourses of gender equity that have been sustained over recent decades in spite of the decline of gender equity as a central policy platform within higher education. With reference to the emergence of an organisational template of 'the enterprise university' (Marginson & Considine, 2000), I argue that these discourses provide the conditions of possibility for mentoring programs for women. This is not to suggest that mentoring programs have not existed prior to or elsewhere than in organisations shaped through these discursive conditions, but to argue instead how these conditions have framed and sustained them.

Having established the context for mentoring, in Part One of Chapter Three 'Feminist Research: On knowing, befriending, confessing', I introduce my research participants and discuss my research methodology including major influences on my approach. These include theories of feminist poststructuralist research, and Foucault's theory of discourse. In taking up this framework I problematise my own

conduct and position as a researcher. The purpose of this reflexivity is to trouble my relationship to the data – indeed the notion of 'data' itself – and my investments and engagements in the processes of data collection and analysis.

In Part Two of Chapter Three, I identify and analyse a number of issues that arose in the conduct of my research, including questions of discipline, power and knowledge in research relationships. I suggest that feminist research may have transformative aims but may also be conservative in that it does not allow for assumptions about relations between women in research to be voiced and subjected to critique. In this Chapter I first discuss the role of confession as a feature of feminist research, and problematise confession from with a poststructuralist discussion of research as co-constructed. This theme of confession is later visited in my discussion of the women's mentoring relationships. In Chapter Three I draw attention to the parallels between features of the conduct of feminist research and women's mentoring, in terms for instance, of questions of gender, power, knowledge production and intersubjectivity.

Chapters Four, Five and Six are devoted to an analysis of the interview transcripts. Over the course of Chapters Four and Five, I draw on the interviews with four of the women in my study to explore the ways in which mentoring functions as a site of governmentality (Foucault, 1991). I have chosen to focus on a close reading of excerpts from the interviews with these four women as their accounts illustrate most effectively the processes of subject formation as, I argue, these are enacted in mentoring. I develop the argument that mentoring is a form of identity work in which women academics assemble themselves as academic subjects. This assemblage is never fully complete and is frequently fragmented and contested within the women's own stories.

Chapter Four 'Managing the Self' focuses on an analysis of the transcripts of interviews with two of the women, Karen and Deirdre, exploring themes of self-management and governmentality. Through my readings of the transcripts I trace both the ways in which the women self-regulate as academic workers and the

ways in which they are acted upon by another in mentoring to produce the desired academic subjectivity.

In Chapter Five 'Feminism, governmentality and the active subject' I build on the governmentality framework established in Chapter Four but with further reference to feminist theories of subjectivity. I argue that these theories are compatible with the governmentality framework because they too presume an active self-directed subject at their core. This subject is central to feminist views on the importance of women's agency. I advance the case that this active subject is engaged in practices of the self that may be constrained, *and made possible*, through the terms of the discourses through which she speaks. This reading emphasises the enabling effects of discourse in subject formation.

In my analysis of the interviews with Marian and Michelle in this chapter, I draw attention to the ways in which mentoring relates to, and may be rendered problematic as a feminist practice, when analysed from within a governmentality framework. For Marian and Michelle (and some of the other women in my study) mentoring occupies an important place within the feminist discursive context in which they locate themselves. When located in this way we can see much more clearly the complexity of the production of subjectivity of the women – and more particularly of the women who identify as feminists – as they seek to engage in the life of their disciplines and their institutions and pursue success within the terms defined in the discourses of academic life.

In Chapter Six 'Assembling the woman academic in discourse' I undertake a close reading of excerpts from the accounts of four women, two of whom were introduced in earlier chapters – Karen and Michelle – and two additional women, Barb and Angela. In this discussion I work with three questions, namely: what discursive resources do the women draw upon to construct their subjectivity as academics; how do the women position themselves and how do others position them in relation to these discourses; and what are the productive effects of this positioning? I argue the women's relations to the positions they occupy at any one time are vexed and fluid. I draw on Butler's concept of gender performativity (1993;

1997; 1999 {1990}) to explore the complex assembling and management of oneself as a woman – and in some cases, as a lesbian and as a minority ethnic group member – within the discursive limits of what it is possible to be as a woman academic.

In my concluding chapter, Chapter Seven 'Subjectivity, power and, desire: fashioning the woman academic through mentoring', I summarise the key contributions the thesis makes to the field. I contend the study makes an important contribution towards our understanding of the formation of subjectivities of women as academic workers within the discursive formations of contemporary higher education in Australia. Further the study contributes to the field of governmentality studies through its original investigation of mentoring as a device for activating the operation of technologies of the self among women academics. In this way the study brings important feminist insights to our understanding of governmentality. I contend the study also makes an original contribution to the research and growing literature on mentoring in contemporary workplaces through its investigation of the role of mentoring in identity formation. In doing this, the study takes up concepts and debates within the field of workplace learning on the question of the relationship between work, learning and learner identity (see for example Chappell et al., 2003).

In the preceding pages I have presented to you an account of how I came to be doing this thesis and how I went about setting it up. I admit to feeling some discomfort with the story I have just told. It was my aim to present a coherent account of my study by constructing a narrative that makes the text readable and hopefully engages your interest as a reader. This narrative structure was imposed after the event and tells a 'different' story to the one I lived. The story in my account here is only possible with hindsight and through a process of talking over the top of false starts, serendipitous events, mistakes and contradictions. This contingent feature of interpretive research is a theme I revisit at different intervals, in my reflections on my own practices as a researcher and in my discussion of the women's production of their accounts during our interviews.

Chapter Two

The emergence of mentoring for women academics in Australian universities

In this chapter I investigate the emergence of mentoring for women, from a number of different perspectives. To begin, I take up the way in which mentoring is discussed in the generalist literature in education and management development, drawing attention to the uses to which the myth of Mentor from Homer's story of *The Odyssey* (1946) is applied in this field. Next I summarise my argument that mentoring for women initiatives have become possible at this time because of the confluence of discourses of enterprise and gender equity in Australian universities. Following this I give a background to mentoring specifically in the higher education sector. I then locate mentoring against a backdrop of 'the knowledge economy' and 'the enterprise university'. This discussion is then supplemented with a summary of changes to the nature of academic work and specifically the position of women in academic employment. In this way I offer a number of different but intersecting 'takes' on mentoring for women in Australian universities. My aim in doing this is to highlight the range of discursive contexts through which it has become possible to speak of mentoring for women and the effects of this production.

A short history of mentoring

Over the last 10-15 years, a number of Australian universities have introduced mentoring initiatives for academic women, and in some universities, also for women on the administrative or 'general' staff (see AVCC, 2001b). Some of these initiatives have been seed funded as projects through agencies of the Australian Commonwealth Government, such as the former Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development and its precursor, the Commonwealth Staff Development Fund. A number have subsequently been funded for further periods or on an ongoing basis directly by their university.

In November 2001, the inaugural meeting of the Staff Development for Women (SDFW) Network of Australasia was held in Canberra, bringing together over 30 women working on specialist programs targeted at women general and academic staff at their universities. Many of these people work on mentoring programs or programs such as women's leadership development that include a mentoring component. A further meeting of the network in November 2003 in Launceston brought participants together again to discuss developments and support those seeking to establish such programs. Mentoring has now well and truly 'entered the repertoire' (Colley, 2001) of professional developers in Australian and New Zealand universities, and resources are being allocated towards the implementation and development of mentoring programs. The Leadership Development for Women program at the University of Western Australia this year celebrated its 20th anniversary, alongside the appointment of two new women executive members at that University. This brings the total number of women on that University's Executive (Vice Chancellor and pro and deputy vice chancellors) to three out of six.

Within the recent published literature (see for example Poole, Bornholt, & Summers, 1997; Probert & Ewer, 2002; Probert et al., 1998), mentoring is frequently mentioned as a vehicle for improving women's low representation in senior positions. The proliferation of women's mentoring initiatives begs the question of why and how mentoring has become so popular as a form of women's development in Australian and New Zealand universities. What are the circumstances that have given rise to, and sustain this trend?

A review of the literature on mentoring reflects a similar development. Colley (2001) noted the growing academic interest in mentoring. Her searches of relevant databases showed the number of publications on mentoring has more than doubled over a 20 year period, from an average of 12 articles a year in 1979-1984, to an average of 150 a year in the late 1990s (p. 178). Mentoring has been taken up in a number of different disciplinary frameworks, including – in the workplace context – in management development and learning, initial teacher education, professional development generally, and in higher education.

As indicated in Chapter One of this thesis, the published material on mentoring tends to be based on evaluations of specific programs. As Colley notes, this work is usually descriptive and supportive of mentoring, with a much smaller available critical literature that discusses harmful or problematic relationships. Some critics, she notes, point to the lack of firm evidence of the value of mentoring, while others argue that mentoring reproduces dominant middle class interests in its focus on taking the marginalised and bringing them into the mainstream under the guidance of a mentor. This practice hence entrenches social inequalities and reinforces the status quo. The small critical literature is important however when compared to the apolitical ways in which mentoring is usually explored (Gulam & Zulfiqar, 1998). Colley (2001) observes too that the "… critiques tend to be focussed on power *within* the relationships, rather than with the wider power relations in which those relationships, and both members of the dyad, are located" (p. 182). That is, attention is rarely given to the conditions under which mentoring initiatives emerged and take shape.

In the different disciplinary contexts in which it is discussed, mentoring is approached instrumentally in terms of how it might be deployed most effectively to further some specified or implied goals as defined by the context. That is, mentoring is always posed as the solution to a problem named within the context. In the context of mentoring programs for women in Australian universities, I suggest the 'problem' is presented as the low representation of women in senior positions.

Of particular interest in the published literature on mentoring is the frequency with which the myth of Mentor is invoked. The myth of Mentor is drawn from the poem of *The Odyssey,* recorded by the Greek writer and historian Homer about 3,000 years ago. In the mentoring literature the story is usually summarised along the following lines. Odysseus, King of Ithaca, sets off for the Trojan War, leaving behind his wife Penelope and his young son, Telemachus. He entrusts the guardianship of his kingdom, and his son to his servant/advisor, Mentor. Mentor it is reported served as model, counsellor and teacher, with Telemachus as apprentice, disciple and student. The goddess Athene, who plays a key role in

Homer's original poem, does not generally appear in the contemporary references. In her detailed review of the mentoring literature, Carden (1990), described the mentoring relationship based on Homer's story as a 'comprehensive mutual commitment', defining it as the prototype for contemporary 'mentor-protégé' relationships (p. 275).

Carden (1990) notes that protégé is 'the most popular label' to describe the recipient of the mentor's aid (in the corporate sector), with 'mentee' and 'mentoree' also in use. She notes 'protégé' derives from the French verb proteger, meaning 'to protect'. Those who speak of mentoring in higher education usually stumble over their words when referring to the object of mentoring. The term 'protégé' is seen to imply patronage, or the offer of unfair advantage, and is in my experience not used in the Australian context, with 'mentee' the preferred term. This discomfort with the term 'protégé' may reflect discomfort with the implied unequal and hierarchical relations of power enacted in such a relationship and embodied in this term.

Taking up Carden's characterisation of mentoring implicitly invites one to take up a number of beliefs about mentoring. One of these is of mentoring as a form of parental, and in particular, paternal surrogacy in the absence of the father. Another is of mentoring as protection or 'guardianship', where the mentor protects the 'protégé'. A third is of mentoring as a learning relationship, within which a variety of pedagogical approaches are deployed including the didactic (teacher), consultative (counsellor), imitative (model) and exemplary (disciple). The protégé learns therefore through listening, watching the master (sic), copying, and reflecting on sound advice. The fourth implied belief is of mentoring as a long-term relationship.

What purposes are served by the frequent deployment of this story in the mentoring literature? The myth of mentor invokes a positive relationship between Mentor and Telemachus that, it is implied, is worthy of replication thousands of years later. The retelling also credentialises mentoring by bringing historical respectability and in that way authority to a familiar relationship. It is a relationship similar to a godparent within an Anglican Christian tradition for example, which if

done well, promises simultaneously nurturance *and* support for independence, and has proven resilient and widely attractive.

From my own reading of *The Odyssey* I arrived at a very different interpretation of the relationship between Mentor and Telemachus than that summarised in the contemporary mentoring literature. This led me to infer that the myth of mentor is in fact being reworked and redeployed in a range of ways reflecting different understandings of the story itself.

Colley (2001) takes up this point in depth in her analysis of the story of mentor, as follows. Odysseus leaves for the Trojan wars, leaving his wife Penelope and son Telemachus in the care of Mentor. The wars last for ten years as Odysseus is kept wandering because he incurs the wrath of the gods. Meanwhile, back at Ithaca young nobles attempt to usurp Odysseus by marrying Penelope and taking over his kingdom. The goddess Athene intervenes on two accounts, firstly to persuade the gods to allow Odysseus to return safely; and secondly to prepare Telemachus to be reunited with his father. Telemachus has struggled to make the transition to adulthood and Athene takes on the job of assisting him. She appears to him in a number of guises, one of which is as Mentor. When Odysseus returns, he and Telemachus violently repel the usurpers, and they regain control of Ithaca.

This interpretation contrasts in a number of interesting ways with the modern accounts. Firstly Mentor has presided over chaos back at Ithaca, and he has clearly not fulfilled his commitment to Odysseus to protect his kingdom. Secondly, Telemachus is approaching the age of 21 and has still not made a successful transition to independence, so in this respect, too, Mentor has failed. It is the goddess Athene who plays the successful mentoring role, interestingly sometimes in the persona of Mentor himself. Colley (2001) notes that those mainly feminist accounts that discuss Athene's role focus on her special-ness and inspirational character. While Athene is appropriately reintroduced into many feminist accounts, Colley argues her representation in these texts as capable of special powers is problematic for women when we seek to live out her example in contemporary organisational settings.

Colley argues however the main thing to note is that Athene's mentoring is part of her over all sponsorship of Telemachus' father: "Having won the gods' agreement that Odysseus should now be allowed to return home, she leaves the task of guiding him to another deity and turns her own attention to rectifying the inadequacies of his son" (p. 185). The stakes involved in the successful mentoring of Telemachus therefore relate to the future of the social order as a whole.

The other significant point of difference between Colley's (and my) reading and contemporary mentoring accounts is how the stories end. *The Odyssey* does not have a happy ending. There is a long and bloody battle where father and son slay their enemies following which Telemachus murders the women who consorted with their enemies. Ultimately, Athene has to intervene to stop further bloodthirsty killings that might again incur the wrath of the gods and re-jeopardise the future of the kingdom. Colley summarises the story as a tale of the powerful mentoring the powerful to retain the social order. Its outcomes, she argues, are political, economic and sexual domination (op. cit.).

The gender aspects of this story are worth noting. It is Athene who assumes a wide range of roles and functions in this story including mentoring the young Telemachus, although it is (re) presented as an archetype of male role modelling. Ironically though Athene's mentoring is often in the guise of Mentor, reinforcing the notion of the male as appropriate role model.

Colley (2001) proposes a number of ways in which myths might exercise power. She suggests myths may be educational, and validating of personal experience. They impose a collective heritage against which we can interpret and judge the present. Most importantly myths can make the contingent and often the expedient, appear eternal and immutable. They suggest that 'it was ever so' and in so doing entrench a belief that 'it must ever be so'. She cites Conkey (1991) who described the search for ancient origins as a kind of 'seduction' – "the greater antiquity we ascribe to an 'essential' feature of human nature or society, the more 'natural' and 'given' it appears and the more continuity and tenacity it gains" (Colley, 2001, p. 186). Modern reconstructions of mentoring are thus *simulacra,* "identical copies for

which no original has ever existed" (Jameson, 1984, p. 68); as Colley (2001) puts it: "The present is 'presented' as filtered down from the past – yet this 'past' is itself a social construction filtered through the prism of the specific socio-historical context of the present" (p. 187).

While clearly influenced by the mainstream readings of the myth of mentor, Carden (1990) was not completely persuaded by the force of its rhetoric, musing:

> The question is, have we rediscovered (in mentoring) an ancient
> treasure with the power to enhance knowledge ... emotional stability ...
> problem-solving and decision-making ability ... opportunity ... leadership.
> and generativity ... individuals and morale and productivity in
> organizations ... and professions ...? Or are we sanctioning an elitist
> patron system that excludes the socially different ... clones managers
> and administrators ... and maintains a status quo based on
> 'accumulation of advantage' and replication of exploitative hierarchical
> systems? (p. 275-276)

Her problematisation here may be a rhetorical device intended to stimulate critical enquiry about mentoring. It does however set up a simplistic binary according to which mentoring is either 'a good thing' or 'a bad thing', that is, whether it is hegemonic in its effects or not. In this she foreshadows concerns explored later by those authors whose work Colley reviews. As Carden and Colley note, the empirical research evidence differs in its findings with some studies proclaiming the value of mentoring, and others questioning its efficacy. Certainly, the published feminist research, together with the 'grey literature' of mentoring program materials (see for example Chesterman, 2001), and many of the women interviewed for this study, speak of the many and positive benefits to be gained from mentoring.

The myth of mentor as it is deployed in the contemporary literature serves as a regime of truth that 'brooks no opposition' (Colley, 2001, p.191). With reference to feminist writers on mentoring and reflecting in particular on the role of *mentors*, Colley argues more caution must be taken in order that feminists do not draw on alternative but still romanticised versions of ourselves as special and self-less and

always wise, like Athene. Rather than doing utopian feminist re-framings of mentoring that remain within the mythic discourse and which valorise the feminine qualities of nurture, care and selfless love, we should, Colley argues, focus attention on the personal and institutional factors that impact on mentoring and its outcomes.

Colley's reading of the story of mentor is significant for my study because it offers an alternative reading of mentoring to the one summarised in the mentoring literature. This alternative reading offers insights of gender and class that are absent from most of the mentoring literature. That literature which does pay attention to gender is critiqued because it valorises women as mentors, in so doing ignoring the gender stereotypes reflected in mentoring, and the organisational and political context in which the mentoring occurs.

Gender equity and enterprise: the confluence of discourses

In this chapter, I argue that mentoring for women initiatives have developed at Australian universities over the last 10-15 years as a result of the confluence of two key discourses in the higher education sector. The first of these is the discourse of 'enterprise' that has accompanied neo-liberal reforms of universities and the second is of gender equity in higher education.

Since the 1980s, universities in Australia have been subject to state and federal anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation in the wake of the1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Anti-discrimination laws provided remedies for women to make complaints of discrimination and seek redress, while equal opportunity laws required first the public sector and universities and later private sector organisations with more than 100 employees, to introduce equal opportunity (or 'affirmative action') plans. Each organisation was required to examine its employment profiles, policies and practices in order to identify areas in which it may be discriminating against women. It was further required to develop strategies and targets to address these areas, and to report on progress to government agencies charged with administering the laws.

Despite gains in some areas, particularly in regard to a reported reduction in direct discrimination against women, recent statistical evidence points to the ongoing occupational segregation of academic women in certain discipline areas, and their horizontal segregation in the lower levels of the academic hierarchy (QUT Equity Section, 2004). Feminist researchers over the course of the1990s have well documented the backlash against feminism, equal opportunity and gender equity claims, and the negative impact on women of the restructuring of public services and universities, which together with the emergence of discourses of effectiveness and efficiency accompanying neo-liberal reforms have, it has been argued, effectively silenced discourses of gender equity in (higher) education (Blackmore, 1997).

At the point at which these two discourses of enterprise and of gender equity intersect 'mentoring for women' emerges as a new discursive formation with a range of productive effects. In its formation, mentoring for women functions in contradictory ways. With its emphasis in gender equity discourse (often, but not exclusively) on women helping women and on building community amongst women within an institution or disciplinary field, mentoring for women seeks implicitly to counter those forms of managerialism that encourage individualism and self-interest.

Yet while it functions to provide support for women and to improve the collective position of women in universities, mentoring for women simultaneously provides a vehicle for the production of appropriate subjectivities of women academics within the governing conditions of contemporary higher education. Mackinnon and Brooks (2001) refer to a women's executive development program across one network of Australian universities pointing out the ways in which this program positions women to be simultaneously collaborative, and competitive and entrepreneurial in response to changing university cultures. In a recent article I explored a similar question of the contradictory spaces in which newer women researchers at one university are positioned as they endeavour to engage with the research cultures and life of their institution (Devos, 2004b).

Contemporary forms of governance are characterised by a range of technologies deployed to manage the subjectivities of workers, and so in this task, mentoring is not alone (see Grey, 1994; McWilliam, 2004; McWilliam, Hatcher, & Meadmore, 1999; Townley, 1994). Notably over a period during which gender equity has struggled for institutional space in the face of sustained 'discourses of derision' (Kenway, 1987) and discourses of managerialism (Blackmore, 1997), support for women's mentoring has become a key demand by feminists on the academy. Notably also, mentoring for women is an equity initiative in which many universities have been willing to invest some resources at a time of declining funding levels.

The central proposition of this Chapter is that mentoring contributes to the constitution of the female academic subject in ways particular to, and a product of, the times. Through professional development for women and in particular, mentoring, a set of discourses is activated which creates possible identities for women academics which speak to institutional imperatives of increasing productivity and performance, *and* that can also claim to meet feminist demands for addressing the 'problem' of gender inequity within higher education. In problematising the emergence of mentoring for academic women in this way, I aim to trouble the unsteady and unsteady-ing relationship between those discourses through which mentoring for women has been produced and taken up as feminist strategy.

When deployed within the discourses of managerialism, mentoring functions as a technology for acting upon academic subjectivities by encouraging academic subjects to take up the project of working upon themselves, a matter I examine in detail in Chapters Four and Five. Within the gender equity discourse, mentoring is encouraged as a vehicle for supporting and enhancing academic women's career development, and in this way, increasing the numbers of women in senior positions in universities. Feminists argue that increasing the numbers of women in senior positions will alter the culture of universities in ways more sympathetic and responsive to the needs and aspirations of women, and provide a just and equitable distribution of men and women throughout institutions.

My argument is located within the context of a review of the changing context of universities and the changing nature of academic work, with reference mainly to the literature in industrialised English-speaking countries. In this review I focus on the emergence of 'the enterprise university' and the impact of this development on academic work. In many respects the higher education sector mirrors trends across industry sectors in which the discourse of 'the knowledge economy' is changing the nature of work and organisations, and within which worker subjectivity is emerging as the new terrain of management (Usher & Solomon, 1999), an area I explore in a later section of this chapter. In the latter part of the chapter I review gender equity concerns in higher education, and the particular impact of the enterprise university on the position of women academics.

In developing my argument as outlined here, I am not suggesting that mentoring for women only *started* with the enterprise university – mentoring in universities clearly predates the rise of the enterprise university in the 1990s. Instead I suggest that mentoring for women has taken on a set of meanings that like the re-writings of Homer's myth generate a meaning for the times and the place. Mentoring I suggest has come to occupy a central place in the rhetoric of gender equity and professional development over the last decade *as a consequence of* the discursive environment of contemporary universities and the prominence of 'enterprise' within that environment.

Mentoring in higher education

Mentoring has long been part of academic life, as experienced academics have advised, guided and supported postgraduate students in the development of their research (Marshall, Adams, & Cameron, 1998; Welch, 1997). Within traditional and science-based models of postgraduate research supervision, students are inculcated into the research cultures of the discipline and the institution through their supervisor and in the context of a research team. The current interest in higher education on the quality of the postgraduate student experience suggests that this process of inculcation may only be occurring for some and in some places

but none the less the potential of supervision to function as a form of mentoring or induction into a discipline is frequently alluded to.

Writing on academic women, Quinlan (1999) notes that most of the published writing on mentoring in higher education borrows heavily from the corporate sector and hence there is only a small literature specifically on mentoring in higher education. Quinlan draws attention to the work of Maack and Passet (1993) who conceptualised a range of career supportive relationships in academic settings. They argued the main difference between academic and corporate settings is that in academia there are many critical relationships with people who are outside the daily work environment. Many academics for example, relate firstly to discipline networks nationally and internationally, rather than to their university.

Women academics' experiences of mentoring are explored in some detail by Bode in her analysis of the New Faculty Project (NFP) data in North America (1999). The NFP was a large-scale, longitudinal study of new academics in the United States in the 1990s. Bode suggests mentoring and collegiality are two ways in which new faculty are socialised into a new institution. Different perceptions of these terms can affect the levels of satisfaction of new faculty. Bode defines mentoring as usually a one-to-one relationship, while collegiality refers to the relationship of one to many others. Bode suggested some mentoring relationships are seen as short-term or temporary while collegiality she argues is about ongoing relationships (p. 121).

Of interest, Bode (1999) found that mentoring and collegiality appeared to be unrelated to measures of perceived success or more objective measures of productivity developed in the project (p. 136). That is, increased mentoring and collegiality did not necessarily lead to an increased sense of success or higher productivity. This runs counter to the received wisdom that mentoring leads to career success, and further, that mentoring is *essential* to career success (see Crosby, 1999).

In one study, where mentoring formed the basis on which the program was built, the main reported benefit was the chance to interact and network with other

inexperienced researchers, which was a largely unintended outcome (Johnston & McCormack, 1997). The authors here suggest programs that combine mentors and participants should rely on group support rather than pairs. Boice (1992) also proposes mentoring committees, as these may be more likely to provide successful mentoring.

Blake-Beard (2001), in a review of the limitations of formal mentoring programs in organisations, cites a number of writers who argue that women should seek support from many sources, such as peers, other more senior staff, and organisational groups, and not just from formal mentoring (p. 342). She highlights Kram et al.'s (1985) 'constellation model of support', in which interpersonal and career support are gathered from a number of sources and not just one relationship.

Quinlan (1999) takes up the same point when talking about women academics' experiences, arguing mentoring focuses attention on hierarchical one to one relationships. Yet she notes that individuals, particularly women who do not have access to mentors, "… rely on and actively seek out a wide range of career supportive relationships for instrumental or career-related functions and expressive and psychosocial support" (p. 33). Quinlan suggests a wide network of 'weak ties' can be more effective that reliance on one or two 'strong ties'. The benefits of a wide range of supportive relationships are reflected too in Casson & Devos (2001; 2003; 2004).

Quinlan (1999) notes though that peers, unlike mentors, cannot generally provide sponsorship, exposure, protection or coaching, which are important features of mentoring relationships for women faculty. National and international networks can offer some of these forms of support, however homophilous tendencies – "… the tendency to choose people who are similar in appearance, social background and experiences …" – can disadvantage women in making contacts with 'important others' (Quinlan, 1999, p. 36). In summary many recent writers argue that a mix of supportive relationships should be encouraged, aimed strategically at particular

needs that women might face in their organisations or universities (Blake-Beard, 2001; Marshall et al., 1998; Quinlan, 1999).

With regard to job satisfaction, in the NFP new faculty who were more satisfied with their mentoring reported greater overall job satisfaction. However the connection with outcomes was minimal (Bode, 1999, p. 137). Bode argues in conclusion that perhaps mentoring programs for new faculty should be regarded as stepping-stones to collegiality. She notes that once people get acclimatised there is evidence they prefer collegial relationships (p. 141), leading her to conclude that mentoring is most useful as a vehicle for initial socialisation after which its effectiveness diminishes.

Research mentoring relationships have been explored in numerous studies, including Balint (1994), Johnston (1997) and Maack (1994). While a number of such studies report schemes that operate successfully (Cullen & Luna, 1993; Wunsch, 1993), there are also a number that report negative consequences arising from mentoring relationships, such as the potential for exploitation due to the unbalanced nature of the relationship, and the lack of senior women available, or willing and able, to take on a mentoring role given their already large workloads (Poiner & Temple, 1990).

Marshall et al. (1998) suggest the more recent interest in *formal* mentoring programs in universities has developed "… in response to the more competitive environment in which universities operate, and the requirement for more accountability and performance appraisal" (p. 1). Marshall et al.'s proposition as to the genesis of interest in formal mentoring offers an institutional context for mentoring not discussed elsewhere in the literature. It locates the 'work' of mentoring within the discourses and practices of contemporary neo-liberal university governance.

The literature then generally supports opportunities for women to gain mentoring particularly in the early stages of their careers, and also on specific aspects of the academic role such as research. The view of many contributors is that beyond this initial period of employment support should be offered for women to form and

sustain a range of varied and ongoing collegial relationships. These relationships can be most productive in the longer term for the women involved. While some of the mentoring literature focuses on the needs of women as they enter academia and the challenges they face at that time there has been no systematic analysis of women's mentoring from the standpoint of identity formation. It is to this question that I address this thesis.

The changing context: 'The knowledge economy'

The higher education sector is experiencing a range of changes similar in many respects to changes occurring across other industry sectors. These changes have been precipitated by global and local economic factors, and the prominence of the discourse of 'the knowledge economy' in industrialised countries (OECD, 1996). One of the productive effects of this discourse is to drive education and training systems to meet the demands for new skills and knowledges required in this new economy. Policy discourse in this area is driven by human capital theory according to which investment in the skills of the workforce is viewed as central to global competitiveness (op. cit.).

Chappell (2003) notes that within this discourse, the concept of skill has been transformed to include not only technical knowledge and skills but also general capacities and attitudes, with increased expectations of workers in terms of work skills and qualifications (p. 5). 'The knowledge economy' is seen to require knowledge workers who will be capable of creating, applying and manipulating new knowledges in workplaces. Furthermore within this discourse, the workplace is regarded as a site of learning and knowledge production, fundamentally altering the traditional role of vocationally oriented education in preparing workers for the workplace. Much scholarly and policy interest now focuses on how to better facilitate learning in the workplace in order that workers might better meet the demands of contemporary organisations.

There is some room for debate as to whether these features of the knowledge economy *map* the present nature of work, or *create* through discourse a vision the future. That is, the discourse of which they form a part has been effective in

constituting the scenario it claims to describe. Some evidence of this is in the changed expectations of workers in some industries, and how these changed expectations have impacted on understandings of education.

Over the course of the twentieth century, and particularly since the 1980s, changes to the nature of organisations and work have led to a mobilisation of technologies for governing the life of individuals, in organisations and in society more generally (Rose, 1999 {1989}). These technologies give effect to the aspirations of those who 'program' change, and "… seek to act upon and instrumentalize the self-regulating propensities of individuals in order to ally them with socio-political objectives" (Miller & Rose, 1990, p. 28). Worker identity becomes central to understanding organisation and individual change, and in particular how workers deploy notions of self-hood in the management of their conduct at work. Worker identity becomes the lens through which changes in the nature of work can be read and understood. To trace worker identity then is to trace changes to the nature of work itself.

The knowledge economy affects academics in two main ways. Firstly, universities themselves participate in global competitive education markets and hence form part of that economy. Academics find themselves confronted by changed demands and expectations, and shifting notions of identity. Secondly, academics are also affected through their role in the preparation of workers for other industries where economic imperatives increasingly impact on curricula and teaching approaches. In the following section I elaborate on these impacts.

The changing context: 'The Enterprise University'

In their study of 17 Australian universities, Marginson & Considine (2000) identified the emergence of 'a common organisational template' that they dubbed 'the Enterprise University' ('EU'). The EU has a number of characteristics that are present to a greater or lesser extent in all the institutions they studied. Importantly though, the *discourses* of the enterprise university have a range of productive effects regardless of the actual level of uptake by individual institutions of enterprise characteristics and practices. In the enterprise university:

- University purpose is defined by strong forms of executive control;

- University missions and governing bodies take on a corporate character, drawn not so much from business itself they note as from an 'ideal form' corporation modelled on public sector reform;

- Vice chancellor's advisory committees and 'shadowy' university structures replace established institutions such as senates, academic boards departments and collegial rules;

- Academic work also reflects this dual structure with cooperative research centres and other 'soft money' funded entities contesting space with departments and disciplines;

- Under-funding drives a 'pseudo-market' in fee incomes, soft budget allocations for special purposes and contested earnings for new enrolments and research grants;

- Elements of this market particularly the education of international students are driven by a commercial and entrepreneurial spirit now a key feature of enterprise culture;

- Definitions of quality and lines of accountability are drawn less from traditional public sector and political cultures and more from the private sector and the culture of economic consumption, and

- The paradox of this new openness to outside funding and competition is a process of 'isomorphic closure' through which universities with diverse histories choose from an increasingly restricted menu of commercial options and strategies (p. 4).

Other major studies identified and chronicled similar trends. In *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University,* Slaughter and Leslie (1997) examined the state of academic institutions and careers across the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. In *The Entrepreneurial University: organisational pathways to transformation,* Clark (1998) analysed

changes based on case studies of five universities in Europe – two in the United Kingdom, and one each in Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands. These three concepts, namely 'new managerialism', 'entrepreneurialism' and 'academic capitalism' overlap considerably (Deem, 2004). To this list I add a fourth term with similar meanings, namely 'the enterprise university' (Marginson & Considine, 2000). All four are concerned with changes to academic institutions and practices, and identify the origins of these changes in international developments (Deem, 2004, p.294). In the case of Marginson & Considine, these international developments are traced through a detailed account of shifts in Australian higher education policy over the last two decades.

The three studies argue a story of convergence between institutions or systems – within a national system, internationally across Anglo-American universities, and within Europe. By 'convergence' I refer to what the authors of these studies observe as the growing homogeneity in responses of higher education institutions as they go about reinventing themselves in the face of global and national changes, the phenomena Marginson & Considine refer to as a common organisational template. This account of convergence – and the validity of some of the research on which these findings have been based – has been challenged by some commentators on the grounds that the researchers do not pay sufficient attention to local conditions nor do they demonstrate how these relate to and interact with national and global conditions (see for example Deem, 2004). The extent of convergence that makes it possible to speak of an entity such as 'the enterprise university', 'academic capitalism', 'and the entrepreneurial university' is therefore the subject of some debate. It is not the work of this thesis to elaborate on or resolve this debate, so for my purposes I propose to accept the concept of 'the enterprise university' as it relates to university governance. 'Governance' here refers to the ways in which the university is structured and managed and includes "… internal relationships, external relationships and the intersection between them" (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.7). Governance may not 'contain' teaching and research, but it provides the conditions under which these take place.

To expand on the earlier summary points, Marginson & Considine (2000) identified five key features of governance in the enterprise university. Firstly, there is a new kind of executive power characterised by a 'will to manage', and in some ways greater freedom to act within national policy settings. University leaders manage according to seemingly universal principles of 'good practice' and have an operational separation from that which is managed. Secondly, structural innovations have led to the remaking or replacement of collegial or democratic forms of governance with structures that operationalise executive power. The role of university corporations outside the reach of governing bodies and collegial debate is growing often in sensitive and lucrative areas such as fee-based international education. Thirdly, there is enhanced flexibility of staffing and resources with ongoing demands for greater flexibility of staffing through further deregulation of internal labour markets. Universities, Marginson & Considine argue, are no longer governed by legislation but by 'formulae, incentives, targets and actions plans' that are more amenable to 'executive-led re-engineering' than are the deliberations of an academic board or council; and that also fit better with mechanisms such as soft money budgets, commercial companies and so on.

Fourthly, there is a decline in the role of academic disciplines, with disciplines and the collegial structures that sustain them regarded as a nuisance and an obstacle by executive leaders and outside policy makers. This has led, the researchers note, to a widespread movement towards cross-disciplinary schools and research institutes "in which identities and resources are amenable to a high degree of selection and restructuring from above" (p. 11). Fifthly, devolution is used as a key mechanism of executive power and centralised control with targets and performance measures serving as 'powerful constraints' on the devolved manager's capacity to innovate or resist (op. cit.).

The precise meaning of the term 'enterprise' and 'entrepreneurialism' when used in the context of universities (and the public sector generally) is the subject of some discussion. In his work on public sector reform in the United Kingdom (in which he included universities), du Gay (2004) is at pains to clarify his use of the term in

ways that are highly relevant to the work of this thesis. He argued a 'novel and expanded' use of the term:

> No longer does 'enterprise' refer simply to the creation of an independent business venture or to the characteristic habiti of model entrepreneurs or (successful) persons in business for themselves, rather it refers to the ways in which economic, political, social and personal vitality is considered best achieved by the generalization of a particular conception of the enterprise form to all forms of conduct – to the conduct of organizations previously seen as non-commercial ('grant-incomed'), to the conduct of government and its agencies and to the conduct of individuals (p. 38-39).

The forms of action constructed for employees of these organisations and the techniques deployed to make these practicable, he explains, do not parallel or imitate the actual conduct of small businesses or entrepreneurs, but instead these forms are 'lashed together' from a variety of sources. They are not simply extensions or reproductions of accepted 'entrepreneurial' practices, but rather, says du Gay, (2004, p.39) "… attempt to mimic through a relatively limited repertoire of formal administrative mechanisms (devolved budgeting; audit; performance appraisal and so forth) 'certain paradigmatic conceptions of appropriate market-based relations and subjectivities' (Law, 2002, p.34)".

du Gay echoes Marginson & Considine's observations on convergence, when he suggests the 'limited repertoire' of practices employed by agencies makes it fairly easy to recognise a pattern that du Gay, citing Osborne (1992), refers to as 'entrepreneurial government' (du Gay, 2004, p. 39). du Gay's observations also foreground the productive effects of the discourse of enterprise in its influence on shaping the conduct of groups and of individual subjects at work in particular ways.

As noted earlier, many practices of the enterprise university operate alongside traditional practices, for example, vice chancellors' advisory committees alongside academic senates and university councils. Many researchers however argue that

the new forms of governance alter the fundamental nature of universities. With reference to Canada, Polster (2000) argues:

> As for corporate links, they are not an add-on to the university, such that after their establishment one has the old university plus these links. Corporate links are an add-into the university, which produce the qualitative changes that pervade its multiple and interacting aspects and dimensions including its culture, operating practices, funding systems and reward structures, etc. (p. 183)

The consensus is that universities are being changed in fundamental ways through a mix of policies and practices associated with the enterprise discourse. In this mix universities embrace forms of governance that replace traditional models of decision-making leading to a centralisation of control and decision-making within each institution. These trends impact on the day-to-day functioning of academic and administrative units and on the work of university staff in fundamental ways, and are relevant to this thesis in a number of ways.

The imperatives of the enterprise university generate the institutional environment of performativity (Lyotard, 1984) within which academic women (and men) work and, importantly for this thesis, understand themselves as workers. As Marginson & Considine note, the enterprise university has impacted on the visibility and variety of academic and disciplinary identities in universities leading to a changed and more standardised construction of what it means to be an academic across discipline areas and institutions – 'the enterprising academic'. As Currie et al. note, there has been "a shift from the independent quasi-monastic scholar who produces the outstanding paper to the strategic entrepreneur who knows how to obtain grants" (Currie, Thiele, & Harris, 2002, p.33). (Currie et al. add that 'Both these {identities} are coded masculine', a matter I take up later in this chapter).

The particular forms of governance that characterise 'the enterprise university' have created the conditions under which mentoring programs for women academics have emerged. New mechanisms of governance adopted by university managers activate the deployment of mechanisms of self-regulation by (women)

academics. This is because new institutional agendas and expectations demand new forms of work and work practices that can be described as enterprising or entrepreneurial. Both units within universities *and* individuals are exhorted to become more enterprising, to improve themselves in order to improve organisational performance. This climate of demand for self-improvement leads women increasingly to seek out and participate in programs that might support their development within the terms dictated by performativity. This climate of demand, when 'read' alongside sustained feminist demands for improvements in the representation of women across and at all levels of the organisation, gives rise to the conditions under which mentoring for women gains a foothold.

Academic work in the enterprise university

The shift towards an enterprise university template has in turn brought changes to the nature of academic work. These changes have been studied from a number of different perspectives, including in terms of the student population (King, 1995; Schuller, 1995); curricula (McInnes, 1995); the impact on academic freedom (Altbach, 2001; Kayrooz, Kinnear, & Preston, 2001); the conduct of research (Scheeres & Solomon, 2000; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997); academic identities (McWilliam, 2004; McWilliam et al., 1999; Metcalfe, 1992; Scheeres & Solomon, 2000; Usher & Solomon); and on the rise of entrepreneurial behaviour amongst academics (Hay, Butt, & Kirby, 2003; I. McNay, 2003; Williams, 2003).

Changes to academic work have also been analysed in terms of the impact of globalisation and internationalisation (for a sample of this literature see Currie & Newson, 1998; deWit, 1995; Gale & Kitto, 2003; P. Scott, 1998; Yang, 2002); and from a gender perspective (see Blackmore, 1999; Brooks & Mackinnon, 2001; Currie et al., 2002; Morley, Unterhalter, & Gold, 2003). Broadly speaking, this literature charts the impact on academic work of: the development of global markets in education; the internationalisation of education as institutions and nation-states seek to position themselves within these markets; the application of enterprise and private sector models of governance within institutions; the 'massification' of higher education (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999; P. Scott, 1998); a

decline in public funding for higher education across many countries; and the introduction of new technologies that facilitate knowledge transfer, collaboration nationally and internationally, and wider participation by institutions in education markets through online education.

In Australia other changes include the increased deregulation of labour markets through enterprise bargaining and individual workplace agreements (employment contracts) over the last decade. In the following section I map in further detail some of the key impacts of these changes. This provides a more finely grained picture of the discursive and material conditions under which the women in my study (and women academics generally) endeavour to manage themselves.

Academics are teaching more students with fewer resources. Between 1975 and 1985 the average student-staff ratio was just under 12:1, 13:1 in 1987. By 1996 it had jumped to 16 equivalent full-time students per equivalent full-time academic staff member (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 59), and 18.1:1 in 2000 (AVCC, 2001a, p. 2) with some disciplines such as Management as high as 28.3:1 (Schapper & Mayson, 2004). Public funding for higher education dropped from 85% of all funds in 1987, to 55% in 1998, and the proportion of funds from fees and charges rose from 2% to 15% over the same period (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.57).

The 'massification' of higher education which started with the Dawkins reforms in the late 1980s has led to a more diverse student body in terms of students' cultural, social, economic and educational backgrounds. This increases the demands on academics as they endeavour to design courses and teach most effectively to students with varying educational histories and needs.

 As a result of marketing of courses within Australia and internationally particularly in parts of Asia, academics may now be teaching students on-campus at their home institution and 'off shore' at remote campuses. These students may be enrolled in the same degree program as local students, in a program combining online and/or the use of distance materials with short intensive periods of face-to-face tuition; or may be enrolled in a program specific to the remote site (see

Schapper & Mayson, 2004). The development of accredited work based degree programs means that site may now be an enterprise setting, such as a large company or government department. Within the discourses of the education marketplace, students are recast as 'customers', and 'education' as the product. This discursive shift redefines the relationship between teacher/institution and students. It also repositions the university as a site of economic and managerial transformation (Prichard & Wilmott, 1997; S. Scott, 1999).

Quality systems introduced to improve teaching and learning within a competitive international marketplace have led to the increased standardisation of curricula. This enables institutions to quantify their outputs and in so doing enable cross-institutional comparisons and benchmarking (Blackmore & Sachs, 2000). These systems have also entailed new forms of surveillance of academic work through the requirement for detailed documentation particularly of curriculum and assessment. 'Efficiencies' gained from the standardisation of curricula allows academics to 'churn through' greater numbers of students.

There has been a reduction in academic freedom as a consequence of the reduction in public funding and increased reliance on funding from the corporate sector, including for example, in the form of corporate 'chairs' and research funding (see for example Altbach, 2001; Davis, 1996; Kayrooz et al., 2001). The standardisation of curricula on-shore and offshore is also argued to reduce the freedom of academics to develop courses and teach appropriate to the context (Schapper & Mayson, 2004).

Academics are expected to actively and continuously engage in income-generating activities through research collaborations with industry partners and government agencies, and to take an increasingly entrepreneurial approach to the commercialisation of their research through such devices as consulting and patent applications (see Scheeres & Solomon, 2000; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Usher & Solomon, 1998).

In order to support the development of entrepreneurial fund raising activities, an increasing proportion of academic work (teaching, course design and coordination,

marking, student support, research) is outsourced and performed by casual and short-term contract staff. This leads to the creation of a two-tiered workforce of tenured workers at the core, and a periphery of those in insecure, low paid positions (Hey, 2001; Kimber, 2003).

Academic workers in general are exposed to a wider repertoire of technologies aimed at managing staff performance in line with organisational priorities. Currie et al. (2002) refer to 'three interlocking forms of control', namely indirect strategies that rely on the protocols and discourses of managed competition; detailed assessments at both individual and organisational level; and coercion through such things as forced amalgamations, job losses, funding decline, and program closures (p. 31). Other technologies identified by those scholars drawing on a governmentality framework include performance appraisal (Blackmore, 1996), teaching awards (McWilliam et al., 1999) and professional development programs for women (Devos, 2001, 2004a, 2004b).

Increased workloads resulting from higher student numbers, reduced public funding and increased expectations have led to the breakdown of any remaining boundaries between the work and lives of academics. Academic work is difficult to contain within clear industrial, temporal or spatial limits. Currie et al. (2002) cite Coser (1974) who described universities as 'greedy institutions' in that "they make total claims on their members and seek exclusive and undivided loyalty from them (…) such institutions do not coerce participants into total commitment. Rather, there is something about their nature that attracts voluntary compliance" (Currie et al., 2002, p. 140-41), an observation I take up a little later in this section.

All the conditions I catalogue here are not impacting equally on all groups of academics at all universities at all times. As Marginson & Considine (2000) note, there is a wide variation in the extent of take up of these practices across institutions, and within institutions. Prichard (1997) comments, many senior university office holders:

> … are themselves subject to existing discursive regimes and localized
> practices which have a strong mediating effect on the reception and

articulation of management disciplines. Thus whatever 'transition' may
be occurring, it is likely to be patchy, extended and incomplete (p. 311).

The point to note is that changes to academic work as articulated in the discourses of enterprise contribute to creating the conditions they seek to describe in that they create the context in which academics come to identify and manage themselves, and consider their futures.

The 'voluntary compliance' to which Currie et al. (2002) refer (above) can best be understood from within a governmentality framework (Devos, 2004b). New forms of governance and regulation and new work demands create new forms of subjectivities (Rose, 1999 {1989}) such that the management of the subjectivity of workers becomes a central task of contemporary organisations (Usher & Solomon, 1999). The object is not to crush or repress workers, but, "… to create active subjects with appropriate subjectivities who precisely because of this will be more efficient and productive. This is a 'disciplining' without coercion into a freely accepted particular form of life" (op. cit. p. 156). Governmentality infiltrates into the interior of subjects, a process that involves subjects "educating themselves into accepting, valuing and working to achieve an alliance of personal and organisational objectives …" (op. cit.). Within this framework 'voluntary compliance' is reframed as self-regulation.

Universities "… increasingly operate on the principle of performativity (Lyotard, 1984) where efficiency is the bottom line" (Blackmore & Sachs, 2001, p. 45). Lyotard argued, "contemporary demands of performativity … have progressively reconstructed the educational project in terms of the socio-economic system" (Usher & Solomon, 1998, p. 2). According to Lyotard, the task of education is to produce knowledge needed by and for those operating in a competitive globalised market system. In this understanding of performativity, efficiency and effectiveness become the criterion for judging knowledge and its value, and questions of truth or justice in knowledge production are replaced by concerns with its efficiency and marketability (Blackmore & Sachs, 2001, p. 46).

The performativity principle changes conceptions of what constitutes worthwhile knowledge, as well as changing the means by which knowledge will be produced, and the subjectivities of those engaged in knowledge production (Usher & Solomon, 1998). Blackmore & Sachs (2001) argue further that performativity is as much about image as about content, such that 'being seen to perform' – that is taking on and enacting the new demands that are redefining academic identity – is as important as the performance itself.

The increasingly instrumental orientation of knowledge production in line with a neo-liberal economic agenda leads to a heightened concern with the capacity of staff to deliver desired outcomes, and with ensuring that they do so. In this environment of heightened and changed demands university governance assumes greater significance. Individual staff and institutions as a whole are held accountable for outputs, through such technologies as quality audits and comparative performance tables. Measurement and reward systems, and the public nature of many statements of performance, leads to self-regulation by academic staff and a focus by many academics on performativity-oriented research and activities.

In the new enterprise university, ''unmitigated careerism, credentialism and managerialism leave little space for critical scholarship or challenging teaching" (Parker & Jary, 1995, p.321):

> The new academic becomes an organization person one dedicated to a 'career' with certain progressions and rewards, someone who knows theirs (and others') quality ratings. (op. cit. p. 328-9).

The emphasis shifts from intrinsic rewards to measurable outcomes and "the increased operational output of the organization becomes its rationale and legitimation" (op. cit. p. 329).

The published literature recounts the ways in which academics in different disciplines, contexts and countries are grappling with these pressures. The changed identity demands arising from the needs of performativity are well explored in Iedema and Scheeres (2003) study of the 'textualisation of the

workplace' in two very different industry sectors, namely amongst medical teams in hospitals and amongst teams in a factory in the manufacturing industry in Australia. The textualisation of work requires workers to talk about their work with fellow workers, for example in team meetings or other group contexts, requiring the worker to learn a new language to describe their work. This in turns requires workers to come to understand themselves and their work differently, and creates a tension with the professional ideal into which the workers were first socialised. Iedema and Scheeres argue this textualisation of the workplace requires radically new ways of relating to others and of identifying as a worker.

Taking up this concept, the textualisation of work in the university context requires academics to move beyond identification with fixed, stable, authorised positions of teacher and researcher, and to take up a number of new speaking positions associated with the discourse of enterprise including that of international marketer, entrepreneur, consultant, teacher, researcher, media performer, manager, and counsellor. Taking up new speaking positions alters the ways in which workers identify and understand themselves. In the following section I explore the implications of these developments as they apply particularly to women academics.

Gender and academic work in the enterprise university

As Currie et al. (2002) note, universities are historically male institutions into which women have been admitted (p. 35). Small numbers of women have been present in ancillary roles, as secretaries and assistants to male professors, but women have only been present in any significant number as students since the late 1960s, and then more recently as academic staff. Recent figures based on data collected from universities by the Australian Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) shows women represent 39% of academic staff across all universities (range= 8% to 58%) and 19% of Senior Academic staff (level D and E academics – associate professors and professors) (QUT Equity Section, 2004, pp. 8-9). The ratio of female representation in senior academic staff to female representation overall is then just over 0.5, reflecting a change over the period 1996-2003 of 0.11 (p. 13). That is, women are represented in senior ranks at

roughly half the level of their representation in the over all academic workforce, and this ratio has improved by only 25% over the period 1996-2003.

Analysing the period 1985-2003 – over which time Australian universities have been subject to affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation – Carrington et al. (2003) indicate that although the proportion of women has risen from 22% to just under 39% of the total academic workforce, women are still concentrated in the lower end of the hierarchy (p. 5). In 2002, women accounted for 55% of employees at associate lecturer (tutor) level (Level A), 47% at lecturer (level B), 34% at senior lecturer (Level C), and as indicated above, only 19% at levels D and E (p. 6). On a more positive note, the authors noted that women have benefited from the trend over the last decade towards a higher ratio of tenured staff (p. 5).

Carrington et al. also note the most significant increase in the numbers of academic women occurred with structural changes that led to the establishment of the current Unified National System of higher education. Previously under the binary system, colleges of advanced education had a higher proportion of female teaching staff and a higher proportion of women employed at senior levels than universities. That is, universities' gender profiles were inflated through amalgamation of colleges of advanced education and universities rather than as a result of proactive steps taken to address the sources of discrimination.

Academic women are also segregated horizontally as well as vertically with academic women heavily represented in teaching, nursing, arts, humanities and social sciences, and under-represented in the science-related disciplines such as medicine, engineering, information technology and dentistry. These profiles are replicated in the undergraduate and postgraduate student bodies (op. cit . p. 7), with new gender divisions emerging in fields such as technology-related courses (p. 18).

Over the years, a number of reasons have been advanced for the gender inequities in academic staffing. These include:

- The low representation of women on decision-making bodies such as senates, councils and promotion panels (Brooks, 1997);

- Notions of merit and success are based more closely on what men in universities do well, to the overall detriment of women (Burton, 1987, 1997);

- Academic women's career paths are more likely to be interrupted by caring for children than are men's, undermining women's competitiveness in promotion (Burton, 1997; Castleman, Allen, Bastalich, & Wright, 1995; Raddon, 2002);

- The emphasis on research and research outputs in promotion means women who assume a greater share of family responsibility and do less research are disadvantaged (Brooks, 1997; Devos, 2004a, 2004b; Raddon, 2002);

- Women tend to be first appointed to academic jobs at a lower level and are less likely than men to have a PhD at time of appointment (Castleman et al., 1995; Probert & Ewer, 2002; Probert et al., 1998). They therefore have less 'human capital' than men;

- Women have less access to mentors than men, and related to this, have a lack of female role models (Cullen & Luna, 1993; Curthoys, 1995; Deane, Johnson, Jones, & Lengkeek, 1996; Soliman, 1995);

- Women academics are less likely than male academics to work in areas which can attract research funding (see for example, Pratt, 2001); and

- With the exception of health, national research priorities tend to favour areas in which men predominate (see DEST, 2003).

Another issue addressed at length in the literature is the problem of organisational cultures that inhibit women's career advancement (Burton, 1997; Castleman et al., 1995). Research on this topic has drawn heavily on Burton's (1987) and Acker's (1990) work on the concept of gendered organisations:

> … to say that an organization is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather it is an integral

part of those processes that cannot properly be understood without an analysis of gender (Acker, 1990, p. 146).

The gendering of organisation culture (Gherardi, 1994) enters the very logic of the organisation and its processes (Acker, 1990; Burton, 1997), structuring the artefacts, values and assumptions of which organisation culture is composed (Currie et al., 2002). Gherardi (1994) argues "… gender is not just located at the level of interactional and institutional behaviour (the gender we do) but at the level of deep and trans-psychic symbolic structures (the gender we think)" (p. 595). At this second level of gendering she argues the suppositions have stability "to the point where we conceive of them as universal and ahistorical" (op. cit.). In other words they become naturalised and hence invisible. Central to Gherardi's gender we think is the establishment of men as the primary referent (Currie et al., 2002, p.46).

Currie et al. (2002) note that much of the work on why there are so few women in management positions in universities and other organisations focuses on the masculinist assumptions underlying management structures and practices (see for example, Blackmore, 1993; Burton, 1991; Cockburn, 1990; Lingard & Limerick, 1995). Universities feature a male-defined culture based on male experience, which continues to affect the ways women's work is valued. White (2000) quotes prominent Australian Professor of Discrimination Law, Margaret Thornton, on this question of the male norm, when she said,

> Within the university, the key decision makers, or gatekeepers, … are invariably men – white Anglo-Celtic, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle class men. I term them Benchmark Men because they constitute the standard against which women and others are measured. In determining who should occupy positions of authority, benchmark men tend to favour those who most look like themselves. That is they have historically constituted themselves as the standard (p. 14).

The lack of a critical mass of women in educational management is both a reflection of, and reproduces, its masculinist orientation. Based on their empirical

analysis of the position of women and men in higher education management, Castleman et al. (1995) specifically discount domestic and family responsibilities or a lack of merit to explain the paucity of women, attributing it instead to management's own masculine styles and cultures. Within this framework, when judged against the male norm women are assessed as 'disadvantaged', the premise upon which equal opportunity initiatives in universities have historically been built. A 1993 international study on women in senior higher eduction management sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) found that as a consequence of the gendering of jobs as 'male', women are disadvantaged simply by the fact they are not men (Dines, 1993, p. 22).

Eveline (1994) reframed the 'problem' of women's disadvantage arguing instead that the male norm operates to *advantage* men. She notes: "The discourses of women's disadvantage reinforce an assumption that processes advantaging men are immutable, indeed normative" (p. 129). The under-stated power of the male norm is that it works to make men's advantage and its own operations invisible. The political import of the feminist project is lost, Eveline argues, if women are content to point to a *relative* advantage, relative to the male norm, rather than a *relational* disadvantage. The former tends to result in disadvantage being seen as a women's problem, whether in the sense of having a problem or being a problem. Professional development programs for women, including those that involve mentoring, operate from this form of problematisation (Devos, 2004b). What is missed here, Eveline (1994) argues, is the way that men are advantaged by women's disadvantage:

> When encoded into concerns about gender, the everyday spectrum of privileges that accrue to men are taken as unremarkable, and instead attention is directed to any instances where the situation seems to be reversed. Hence not only the ways in which men are implicated in sustaining that sexual ordering is obfuscated; the material advantages, and the dynamics by which they are accorded, also remain unspoken (p. 130).

Feminist research in a range of disciplines including philosophy (see for example Gatens, 1991; Lloyd, 1993/1995) and social theory (see for example Seidler, 1994) has analysed how the Enlightenment tradition that shapes and dominates higher education in western countries is coded masculine in that it takes as its subject the male person. Seidler shows how modernity established an 'essential' duality between reason and emotion with reason prioritised over emotion as 'the *sine qua non* of claims to truth'. As Seidler (1994) notes, "with the identification of masculinity with reason, men became the protectors of and gatekeepers for this dominant vision of modernity" (p. 19). The production and management of knowledge are terrains dominated by men. Within this framework women are positioned by what they lack "and have to prove their reason in the terms that are provided for them by men" (op. cit.). What counts as valuable knowledge and how those knowledge claims are validated is determined by men with women's claims measured up against the tests devised by men.

More recent feminist scholarship in education has continued to explore issues of gendered organisation cultures, particularly in regard to the impact of globalisation on universities and academic work. Much of this work argues that the neo-liberal reforms accompanying globalisation have gendered impacts, and threaten progress made on gender equity goals over the last decade (see for instance Mackinnon & Brooks, 2001).

Currie et al. (2002) have argued that women are disproportionately affected by the reforms bringing universities closer to market forces (p. 36). This is because women are located at the bottom of the hierarchy and are more likely to lose their job in the event of cuts; women are further away from those areas closest to the market; women are less likely to be able to play 'the roving strategist' in pursuing their careers (p. 33); and because the enterprise university values individualism and competitiveness over collegiality and collaboration in so doing reinforcing the masculinist cultures of those institutions.

Other researchers who take up a more Foucauldian reading of power in regards to academic work challenge the binaries constructed in these analyses in which

globalisation and its associated practices are constructed in exclusively hegemonic terms (see for example, Gale & Kitto, 2003; Scheeres & Solomon, 2000; Usher & Solomon, 1998). In this construction, the only positions available to (male or female) academic staff (or for that matter, to institutions) are that of compliance with or resistance to the discursive regimes of the enterprise university. These analyses explore the ways in which academics might exploit the productive effects of forms of power associated with change. Luke (1997) for example suggests that the productive potential of power may be harnessed by identifying ways in which the discourses and practices of the new managerialism may be exploited in pursuit of feminist goals within universities. This type of analysis may offer new and potentially productive avenues for feminist theorising and political practice.

Drawing on data gathered in their study of women in leadership across schools, technical and further education and universities, Blackmore & Sachs (2000) argue that the notion of leadership has been transformed in contemporary times. Within contemporary universities leadership is no longer the domain of those staff designated as heads of units or managers but has been transformed such that "… every professional person should understand themselves to be a leader" (McWilliam et al., 1999, p. 60). They identified five paradoxes that shape the work of women in leadership and management positions in universities in contemporary times, most of which apply equally to all women academics. These are that:

> (i) women are doing more work but it is less valued; (ii) the academic as intellectual worker versus the academic leader as manager; (iii) new technologies of surveillance to measure quality and performance while academic work is being intensified through demands to be more productive with fewer resources; (iv) new notions of academic identity which are collegial while merit is rewarded on the basis of individual achievement; and (v) being a source of leadership but being institutionally powerless (p. 2).

The authors reported on a high level of ambivalence amongst women towards their roles and their place in processes of knowledge production. Many women felt that

in spite of universities being built on notions of privilege and male domination, the academy prior to the massive restructurings of the late 1990s provided some space for women. They note, "their {the women's} academic identity was still tied to ideologies … which were connected to notions of academic freedom, professional autonomy and the pursuit of knowledge" (op. cit., p. 13). Changes over recent years have challenged academic women's identities and created ambivalence towards aspects of change.

Some women in Blackmore & Sachs' study praised quality assurance (QA) mechanisms because QA demanded more overt attention to pedagogy, yet felt uncomfortable with the managerialist values driving the changes. Women leaders needed to display the old nurturing skills but were also required to learn 'new skills of emotional management under stress' (op. cit., p. 14). They were 'ambivalent academics' (Bensimon, 1995) "in the sense that they never actually participated fully in the academy and felt complicit in particular modes of management and knowledge production which actually positioned them as marginal" (Blackmore & Sachs, 2000, p. 14). Blackmore & Sachs suggest this ambivalence towards their roles may be viewed as a means of surviving in the academy as it simultaneously allows both distance and detachment in the face of being positioned in untenable and un-reconcilable ways (Gray, 1995).

Some participants in Blackmore & Sachs' study believed that the enterprise or 'postmodern' university offered career opportunities in management that bypassed older career routes that relied on patronage, mentoring, and research publications. This was in the context though of 'an unfair and uneven education market place' dominated by the performativity principle, where the demands of being a performative academic competed with some women's feminist principles (op. cit., p. 14). Opportunities made available then are 'bittersweet' for many women and sharpen the sense of ambivalence many feel towards their roles. These more subtle readings of the gendered impacts of change are not able to produce unequivocal statements as to whether women are better off or not but instead allow scope for exploring possible courses of action that women may take in the face of the impacts of change.

By using the illustration of the myth of Mentor in this Chapter, I have endeavoured to unsettle taken for granted assumptions of the wisdom of mentoring as reflected in much of the contemporary mentoring literature. Further, through a discussion of the emergence of the enterprise university model and of the position of women academics in higher education, I have argued in this Chapter that the development of mentoring initiatives for women in Australian universities over the last 10-15 years is a result of the confluence of two key discourses in the higher education sector, namely the discourse of enterprise that has accompanied neo-liberal reforms of universities; and the discourse of gender equity. Mentoring I suggest should be read within the context of contemporary forms of governance as one technology for the production of appropriate worker subjectivities, an argument I develop in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis. This reading of mentoring raises questions regarding the uptake of mentoring as feminist strategy.

Chapter Three

Feminist research: On knowing, befriending, confessing

> This text appears to represent the real, but this inscription is a
> simulacrum, today's story, and the following attempt to unfold the
> methodological processes of this project is limited and partial and a bit
> absurd, like all attempts to capture the real (St Pierre, 1995, p. 114).

In Chapters One and Two I set out the background to this study and the discourses
in which mentoring for women is located. In this Chapter Three, I propose to now
focus on the conduct of the research itself. In Part One of this chapter, I introduce
my research participants and discuss my research methodology including major
influences on my approach. In Part Two, I identify and analyse a number of issues
that arose in the conduct of my research, around questions of discipline, power and
knowledge in research relationships. In writing this chapter I have been mindful of
St Pierre's and others' problematisation of methodological accounts in the research
literature in which the researcher seeks to present a coherent and seamless
narrative account of the research process, as if research design leads to
knowledge production in one straight line (St Pierre, 1997). With reference again to
my own discomfort with such a contrivance, I propose to disrupt this linearity by
discussing the problematic ways in which I, as a feminist researcher, and the
women I interviewed are positioned and take up positions within discourse in the
research process, and the implications of this for the direction and conduct of this
study.

Part 1: My approach to the research

The women in this study

For this study I interviewed 17 women whom I recruited through two avenues – the
higher education industry trade union, the National Tertiary Education Union
(NTEU); and through the professional body, the Higher Education Research and

Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA). At my request both these organisations agreed to circulate an email message to their members about my project. In the email I explained the title and purpose of my research, how I planned to go about the research, a little about my background and invited interested women to make contact with me. I was overwhelmed with replies, and ultimately chose participants on the basis of geographical location (I was restricted in how much travel I could undertake), availability, and according to my basic criteria – the woman was employed on the academic staff of an Australian university and she had first hand experience of mentoring in a university. I interviewed 17 women in five cities and employed in ten universities over a two-month period from October to December 2002.

All the participants were employed on a continuing or tenured basis, with the exception of two who worked in contract based research-only positions in two research centres at one university. The other fifteen were employed in academic teaching positions in a school or faculty. One woman was about to leave her academic position to take up a senior administrative post. The women varied in age from their late twenties to their sixties, with similar variations in academic experience. The youngest woman was in her first year of academic employment, while at the other end of the spectrum one respondent had worked in research and teaching positions in Australia and overseas for over thirty years. At the time of interview ten participants were employed at Lecturer B level, one at Associate Lecturer A level (formerly referred to as 'tutors'), a few at Senior Lecturer C level, two at Associate Professor D level, and the two research staff as Senior Research Fellows.

Lecturer A is generally regarded as an entry-level position and staff here may be completing a doctoral qualification. At Lecturer B level, most staff would be expected to have completed a PhD and would take responsibility for designing and coordinating courses and supervising research students. Lecturer B is the point at which most new academic staff are appointed in most universities. In others words most of the participants in my study were near the start of their academic careers

in hierarchical terms, and were seeking or experiencing mentoring as a vehicle for career advancement. 11 of the 17 had completed a doctoral qualification.

As I indicated in Chapter One, in this thesis I explore in detail the interviews with only six of these 17 women. At the outset I had intended to draw on all 17. However as my project developed I decided to look in depth at only a small number rather than to identify and discuss themes across the many interview transcripts. This approach means that in the thesis I can explore the richness of each woman's story in a more complete way, through an examination of 'this woman in this context'. The six I have chosen to discuss are not a representative sample of the 17 interviewed but were selected because they offer interesting and in many cases vexed accounts of what it is to be a woman academic. Their accounts illustrate a number of issues that I felt were germane to questions of identity formation.

In their responses to my first email invitation, the women identified themselves on the basis that they had experience of mentoring from the perspective of being a 'mentee'. Some also referred to their efforts in mentoring others, such as graduate students and new colleagues. Some of the participants were being mentored or had been mentored as a consequence of participating in a formal mentoring program for women at their university. Others had been or were being mentored more informally, for example when a more senior member of staff had taken an active interest in them and their career development, a relationship usually referred to as 'informal' mentoring. A few of my participants had experience of both these 'modes' of mentoring.

In this study I have not compared or contrasted formal and informal modes of mentoring and I do not make a judgment as to which is better. As indicated in Chapter One my interest lies more in the ways in which women academics come to understand themselves and to self-regulate through mentoring, than to assess the merits of specific models or programs. Having said that, I recognise that the fact that a woman decides to seek out and participate in a formal mentoring program is relevant to my reading of mentoring as a site of governmentality (see Chapters

Four and Five), and hence will refer to this as I take up the analysis in later chapters.

I interviewed each respondent in or near her workplace on the topic of her academic career and her experiences of mentoring. The exception to this was one woman who asked to be interviewed at her home. Each interview lasted for between an hour and an hour and a half, and was recorded using a table microphone and minidisk player according to a semi-structured interview methodology. 'Semi structured' interviews do not have fixed questions, but the researcher has an agenda she is investigating; she has topics through which she hopes to explore the agenda; she is to some extent 'in control', in the sense she chooses her participants, the broad topic areas and the purpose (see for example, Fontana & Frey, 1998). The difference between semi-structured and structured interviews is the interactive nature of semi-structured interviews, the acknowledgment of the personalities and interests of the two parties and the scope available to explore issues as they arise during the interview. Semi- and unstructured interviews have become a common feature of feminist research methodology as practiced over the last two decades, because they meet that requirement often associated with feminist methodology, for a "… more interpersonal and reciprocal relationship between researchers and those whose lives are the focus of the research" (Bloom, 1998, p. 1).

I canvassed three main areas at the interviews, namely, (1) how each woman came to be working in an academic position, her work history and academic career; (2) the woman's experience(s) of being mentored; (3) her reflections on mentoring, her current position and future career. The interview recordings were then transcribed in full, with attention given to including in the transcription many of the utterances made during the interviews – the hesitant speech, the 'ums' and 'ahs', laughter and sighs, and long pauses. In recording the interviews in this way I was conscious of the problematic nature of transcription, and the danger of viewing the resulting document as somehow a 'true and accurate record' of the interview event. The search for authenticity suggests there is a 'truth' of the interview situation that can be captured and 'held' through the use of recording technologies

and transcribed text (see for example Mishler, 2003). This obscures the acts of interpretation in which the researcher and the respondent are engaged during the interview, and in the act(s) of recording and transcription – 'was that a sigh or a hiccup? Was that a nervous laugh or a happy laugh? How do I *know* the difference? Did she pause because she found the question difficult or because she was digesting her lunch?' Interview transcripts are at best facsimiles or possible readings of what occurred. They are, I suggest, 'fresh texts', separate and different from the 'text' of the interview itself, capable of providing multiple readings of the interview event(s) and in turn able to be read and interpreted in multiple ways.

Two women emailed me after their interviews to clarify a point, and one of these sent me some information she had found on mentoring. Beyond the research interview, I made no further contact with any of the other women whom I interviewed other than to thank them for participating. This was in line with my commitment to make minimal demands on the women who participated in the project, at the time I recruited them. A few of the women expressed interest in seeing publications I might produce from the research, but none of my participants sought to participate in the construction of meanings from the interview data.

Where I'm coming from: on doing feminist research

In his discussion of the processes of 'reading research', Cherryholmes (1993) refers to the work of Scholes (1985) on the problem of fundamentalist reading. This is the belief that texts always say what they mean, and that "... any honest or decent person ought to be able to understand this perfectly clear meaning without making any fuss about it" (Scholes, 1985, p. 52). Cherryholmes (1993) argues against this approach, in favour of reading pragmatically. Reading pragmatically, he argues, "seeks to clarify meanings in light of our purposes with an eye towards consequences even though meanings may turn out to be exceedingly elusive" (p. 3). 'Critically pragmatic' readers, he asserts, "emphatically deny that facts or narrative plots or theories or metaphors or statistical explanations or formal models ever speak for themselves" (op. cit.). If we reject the notion that the text 'speaks for itself' or that there is a 'truth' of the situation to be 'uncovered' by the researcher,

then the texts produced through the research become subject to multiple possible readings and interpretations.

With reference specifically to educational research, Reid (1997) argues the data produced is always a discursive construction, "actively produced within the relationship and norms of … research practice" (p. 57). Data is both 'authored' by the researcher and 'authorised' by its context (p. 59). With reference to Bourdieu (1992) and Smith (1987), Reid introduces scepticism and 'radical doubt' on the nature of data, arguing it is both situated and constructed. She refers to Smith (1987) when she says, "… any claim to constitute an objective knowledge independent of the researcher's lived situation is discredited by the perspective of women" (Reid, 1997, p. 60). Women, Smith suggests, "… stand at the centre of a contradiction in the relation of our discipline to our experience of the world. Transcending that contradiction, means setting up a different kind of relation than that which we discover in the routine practice of our worlds" (1987, p. 90). Smith argues this different kind of research relationship involves placing the researcher "where she is actually situated, namely at the beginning of those acts by which she knows or will come to know" (p. 91).

These views represent an epistemological shift that has occurred within social science research generally and certainly within feminist and poststructuralist research, and have been influential in the shaping of my own position as a feminist researcher. Lather (2003) notes, "The overt ideological goal of feminist research is to correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position" (p. 192). This involves making gender a central category for understanding the social order, and in generating and refining research methods "which search for pattern and meaning rather than for prediction and control" (op. cit.). In other words, while gender remains a central category of analysis within feminist poststructuralist research, it loses it deterministic capacity.

Much of the significant feminist research of the 1970s and 1980s responded to the absence of women or their marginalisation in research accounts with research that

built on and from women's experiences (see for example Oakley, 1981). This approach to feminist research has been criticised on the grounds it reinforces an essentialist view that appeals to an unchanging, universal set of characteristics of women, which is outside of, or prior to social and historical factors (McLaren, 2002). Further it reifies the category 'women', neglecting other aspects of identity, and itself functions as a normative, and at times, colonising category. Differences between women, and the power relations that sustain them, are in this formulation subsumed under this central conceptual and organising category. Morley (1999) captures the main point when she questions the speaking position of those who make truth claims about women. This 'standpoint approach' has however been deeply influential over the last two decades, including in the area of feminist research into gender and organisations. If we reject the standpoint position of feminist research then how do feminists today do research?

Bloom (1998) set about responding to this problem in her study of feminist methodology and narrative interpretation. In formulating her own position as a feminist researcher, Bloom drafted a list of characteristics of feminist research practice based on her reading of the scholarship in the area. This list included: that feminist researchers should strive for interactive, dialogic interviews; be focused and non-judgemental; accept what is put to them as true; allow for identification to enhance interpretative ability; and strive towards equality in the research relationship (p. 17-18). These points would be familiar to most feminist researchers and have long since gained the status of a feminist research canon. But what does it mean if your research relationships don't fit this bill, if you find it hard to locate yourself within the discourses valorised in this list? While Morley (1999) argues feminists are no longer bound by the orthodoxies of some of the earlier prescriptions for feminist research practice (such as those made famous by Oakley, 1981) feminist researchers none the less feel compelled to position themselves in relation to this 'canon'. That is in order to claim to be a feminist researcher one must defend oneself in terms of this platform.

Bloom (1998) explains her struggle with the prescriptiveness of this list in her account of a research project in which neither she nor her respondent met the

other's expectations in the research relationship. These included expectations of being 'a good listener', being 'a good researcher', and being 'a good respondent', as these positions are constructed within the frame of a feminist methodology. She identified three important discourses within which she and her respondent struggled, namely, discourses of feminist methodology itself, of communication, and of the roles of power (p. 27-33). Bloom identified that she and her respondent were operating from differing models of feminist research that they were unable to reconcile. As a consequence they had different ways of understanding the interview as a communication event, with her respondent believing it should function as a conversation between 'fellow feminists' whereas Bloom understood it as subject to a different set of conventions. Also presumed in the discourse of feminist methodology is that researcher and respondent will get on and even like each other because they both identify as feminists.

Bloom argues that our understanding of the exploitative and colonising practices of anthropology have led to an oversimplified and totalising conception of power as always residing in the researcher. The problem of power is particularly vexed in feminist research practice because of its reification of egalitarianism. Many of my participants were women slightly more senior (in institutional terms) to me, and more senior in terms of having completed doctoral studies. We reflexively assumed positions that reflected our perceptions of each other in these terms, and along axes of sexuality, ethnicity, and socio-economic position. None of these positions were specifically 'outed' or debated in the interviews, although they at times assumed a material role in shaping the conduct of the interviews.

The women in my study volunteered to be interviewed for my study, and a number identified as feminists, and identified me as a feminist. With many I think we believed ourselves to have a loosely shared set of interests. As Bloom points out, our shared identification as feminists can cause blindness to difference in the power *held* by different women, but more importantly for the conduct of feminist research, blindness to the ways in which power is *exercised* between women. Taking up Bloom's critique then I argue the 'prescription for practice' of feminist research offers a source of inspiration *and* a set of conceptual and methodological

problems for my own study, mainly because of issues of intersubjectivity in the research relationship some of which I discuss in depth later in this chapter.

In addition to feminist writers, another key influence on my thinking as a researcher has been Foucault. Foucault does not 'lay out' an explicit guide to research practice; rather the reader is left to deduce a set of practices from his archaeological and genealogical studies and their interpreters. One feature of Foucault's work is a challenge to the notion that truth can be identified in a disinterested way, and relatedly, that knowledge is something that is independent of power. In practice his analyses are accomplished through a process of rendering the familiar strange, of analysing 'taken-for-granted' beliefs and practices and interrogating them in terms such as: How did this come to be? Under what conditions did this belief emerge? (see for example, Foucault, 1972).

Adopting this stance requires the researcher to assume a naïve position in regards to the research site. What were the implications of this for my own research as 'insider' in my research, that is as a woman academic investigating other women academics? I recognise there were differences between the women I interviewed and me but I also shared with many a sense of what it is to be a junior woman academic. With some I also shared feminist readings and intuitions of the 'origins' of our positions. I therefore felt uneasy with this need to 'render the familiar strange' given my subject position as woman academic. It sat uneasily alongside the exhortations of feminist research to foster familiarity and closeness with my research participants.

In formulating my problem in this way I was trying to locate myself simultaneously inside and outside the research site. I wanted to build rapport with the women and acknowledge their positions, yet sought to limit my identification with them as a 'fellow traveller'. In moving between distance and intimacy during the interviews I was not concerned with maintaining objectivity, nor was I anxious about 'corrupting the data'. I was concerned with de-familiarising the situation in an effort to see more clearly the assumptions and claims upon which our positions were based. I was not very successful in this project. The interview recordings show me finishing

sentences and humming in assent as my interview subjects discuss their experiences. In approaching the interviews in this way, I was attempting to deny my own position as insider, yet this was clearly implicit in the research relationship. My positioning of myself as both near and far, and as neither obscured the ways in which I was discursively constituted through the research process in ways that were both outside my control and inherent in the situation.

The feminist solidarity invoked explicitly or implicitly in feminist research may also be conservative in its effects. In humming assent literally and figuratively we naturalise assumptions that should instead be subject to scrutiny and critique. In our endorsement of one another on the basis of implied shared values we deny the chance to name and further promote those values. The effect of this naturalising may be conservative, in spite of the transformative claims of much feminist research. This naturalising has its parallels in women's mentoring itself, wherein taken for granted assumptions may go unchecked in a space of feminist solidarity in gendered organisations.

Acts of interpretation

The implications of a feminist poststructuralist position were also prominent in my analysis of the data I collected through the interviews. In a study of the learning and development of Canadian women entrepreneurs, Fenwick (2001; 2002) identified two phases of analysis of her research data. In the first phase, she analysed the transcripts to identify categories and themes *within* individual interview transcripts, and then *across* transcripts to identify shared themes and differences amongst narratives. In the second phase, Fenwick (2002) adopted what she refers to as a more explicitly poststructuralist approach, addressing her analysis to the question, "… How do women participate in enterprise discourses, taking up or resisting particular images and meanings, in the ongoing constitution of their subjectivity?" (p. 165) This framing, she argues "encourages discursive analysis of how subjectivities are regulated through positionality, knowledge construction, voice and authority and makes gender prominent in the analysis" (op. cit.).

Fenwick reminds us of Lather's insights (1991b) on the problems of foreclosing meaning in any study, and " … the politics of fashioning apparently thematic categories from living experience …" (Fenwick, 2002, p. 165). She refers to the "… idiosyncratic ways …" in which we see "… as researchers, which are invested with our particular social and political interests" (op. cit.). Lather argued: "What is sought is a reflexive process that focuses on our too easy use of taken-for-granted forms and a process that might lead us towards a science capable of continually demystifying the realities it serves to create …" (1991a, p. 15), what she refers to as "a more hesitant and partial scholarship …" (op. cit.).

In forming my own reading position, I have been influenced by Fenwick and Lather's approaches, reflected in Bloom's 'dual interpretive framework' (1998). Bloom draws on the work of Ferguson (1993) to derive a framework that combines, "both feminist hermeneutical practices and genealogical or feminist postmodern interpretive practices" (Bloom, 1998, p. 7). On the face of it the two sets of practices diverge considerably – "feminist interpretation is concerned with articulating and analysing women's experiences and voices while genealogy is the analytic deconstruction of the very category of women" (p. 7). The former framework "… entails immersion in a world divided between male and female experience in order to critique the power of the former and valorise the alternative residing in the latter" (p. 3). Yet from a poststructuralist perspective these practices uphold problematic binary structures that essentialise women. A poststructuralist approach on the other hand entails "… stepping back" from this binary structure "in order to loosen the hold of gender on life and meaning" (Ferguson, 1993, p. 4). Bloom (1998) notes however that some 'feminist interpretivists' criticise this approach as it undermines "… the feminist work of constituting women historically as empowered and having voice or being subjects of knowledge" (p. 7).

In defence of a framework combining these sets of practices, Bloom argues that interpretation and genealogy have complementary feminist political goals in that they both seek to disrupt power hierarchies. As Ferguson (1993) puts it, "{I}nterpretation subverts the status quo in the service of a different order while genealogy aims to shake up the orderedness of things" (p. 23). Genealogy like

interpretation can accept there is a subject that has agency, a central concept in feminist theorising. With reference to Foucault (1977b), Ferguson (1993) argues:

> Genealogy does not abandon the subject, but examines it as a function of discourse asking 'under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse: what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse? Genealogy takes the modern subject as data to be accounted for, rather than as a source of privileged accounts of the world (p. 15).

In my analysis of the interview texts in this study I have adopted Bloom's framework mindful of the centrality of gender in my account and of the problematic nature of that category. I am concerned with the constitution of the subjectivities of the women whom I interviewed and the conditions under which those subjectivities emerged. This includes their emergence within the context and discourses of the research interview, and more broadly within the discourses of academic work, career, gender and mentoring.

My intention is not to identify some truth about mentoring based on a universalising of their accounts ("this is what women think about mentoring"), or to privilege *some* of their accounts over others ("a few women thought *this* while most to the contrary think *that*"). It is also not my project to assess on the basis of the women's experiences as reported whether mentoring is 'a good thing' or 'a bad thing'. My purpose is to analyse the ways in which the women assemble their accounts, the discursive origins of their accounts, and the functions performed by those accounts. In other words, while as a study of 'women and mentoring' I am exclusively focused on women, I explore how the women understand themselves as women, amongst other things, and how this understanding shapes their accounts. The dilemma Bloom sets out then is addressed through a reflexive uptake of the category of 'woman' in the assembling and analysis of the women's accounts.

In this study I take up the concept of non-unitary subjectivity that is central to Bloom's theorisation (1998). This concept refutes the humanist assumption that humans have "an essence … which is unique, fixed and coherent and which makes her what she *is*" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Bloom (1998) argues the claim of an individual essence "denies the possibility of changes in subjectivity over time; masks the critical roles that language, social interaction and pivotal experiences play in the production of subjectivity; and ignores the multiple subject positions people occupy which influence the formation of subjectivity" (p. 3). She argues working with a non-unitary subjectivity is a highly valuable tool in feminist research, epistemology and politics because it has the potential to explore women's fragmented subjectivities and the ways in which patriarchal discourse is inscribed in women's bodies and emotions (op. cit.).

Within this approach subjectivity is situated in the world of experience, with subjectivities as "relational, produced through shifting yet enduring encounters and connections, never fully captured through them" (Ferguson, 1993, p. 154). I take up this approach through an examination of the discourse through which the women in my study construct their accounts of themselves and others around them. The purpose of this is to produce a view of the self as, "located historically in language, produced in everyday gendered, racialized, and cultural/social experiences, expressed in writing and speaking and employed as a feminist political strategy" (Bloom, 1998, p. 6).

This project is not without its pitfalls. As Smith (1987) has argued, the reason women find themselves reproducing patriarchal fictions is that women are unrepresentable in language, or in "the discourse of man" as Cixous ({1975} 1976) describes it. This unrepresentability has led women in recent years to experiment with new forms of autobiographical writing, opening up the possibility for a positive representation of subjectivity as non-unitary, conflicted and fluid (see for example, Elizabeth Adams St Pierre & Pillow, 2000).

Bloom (1998) points to the positive functions interpretation and genealogy perform in relation to one another. Interpretation, she suggests, provides the material for

deconstruction, while genealogy 'exerts pressure' on interpretation, "… challenging it to be self-critical and aware of its own potential hegemonic practices" (p. 8). This dual practice, Bloom asserts, "… affirms the importance of deep interpretations of personal narratives through which we may gain a greater understanding of women's lived experiences and the concrete realities of daily life, while simultaneously deconstructing those foundations on which daily life is constructed and experienced" (op. cit.). Bloom concludes that we should take up Ferguson's suggestion, and not "think of the tensions between the interpretive and genealogical impulses as contradictions that we must resolve," but rather, "approach them as riddles that we must engage, in which affirmations are always tied to ambiguity and resolutions to endless deferral" (Ferguson, 1993, p.35).

Hester and Francis (1994) point out that when questioned about such things as attitudes, feelings and values, people resort to 'ordering practices' such as narrative structures to present a coherent account, as I did in the opening chapter to this thesis. In an interview situation, these 'ordering practices' also produce the effect that the interviewee is talking about a coherent experience, event or practice. In other words the narrative constitutes not only the reporting, but also the experience being reported upon. Gudmundsdottir (1996) argues that in this narrativisation some people are more competent than others but goes on to suggest that in any case the listener is frequently able to 'fill in' the story because we are so familiar with particular narrative forms. Through their choice of narrative structures, my participants called into being desired subjectivities, desired by me and desired by themselves.

In their work on narratives of trauma in PhD supervision, Lee and Williams (1999) draw on a number of sources including Haug's memory work (1992) and Moffett's work on memory writing (1981) noting that a key theoretical assumption of these methodological approaches is that "subjectively significant events (remembered and subsequently (re) constructed) play an important part in the construction of self and identity" (Lee & Williams, 1999, p. 10). They go on to say:

Memory work investigation reveals how people construct their identities, change themselves, reinterpret themselves and see what benefits they derive from doing this. That is, through memory work, participants can explore how they 'inscribe themselves into the existing structures" (op. cit., citing Haug, 1999).

During the course of our interviews, the women reported – sometimes at length – on their educational and employment history particularly their start in academia as well as their experiences of mentoring over the years. I argue that we can understand significant reported events from the women's work and mentoring relationships as "critical moments of inscription into academic-disciplinary structures" (op. cit.). Through their accounts of their histories, the participants in my study were, as Haug (1992) coined, "inscribe{ing} themselves into existing structures" (p. 20).

Importantly for my later analysis of the women's relations to subject positions within the discourses of academic work, the memory work they did during the interviews also inscribed them *out* of existing structures; that is, in their efforts to define their 'belonging-ness' within the discourses, some of the women 'in'-scribed themselves through their accounts of their 'outside-ness' or exclusion.

In summary then, I have drawn on Bloom's dual interpretive strategy and other similarly influenced feminist writers to explore my key research questions as they evolved over the course of the project, namely, how do the women negotiate their subjectivities within the discourses of academic work and gender? How does mentoring mediate in this ongoing constitution of subjectivities? In practical terms my analysis has taken two main forms. In the first instance, I examined the discourses through which we structured our talk at interview, including discourses of academic work, career, gender, mentoring, and to a lesser extent, mothering, ethnicity and social class. In the second, I examined each interview transcript as a separate story in order to explore the ways in which each woman positioned herself in relation to the discourses and subject positions she (and I) speak through. In Chapters Four, Five and Six I report in depth on the outcome of this

analysis. In the following section, I elaborate on my approach to the analysis of discourse.

Reading discourse

The concept of 'discourse' has been widely adopted in the social sciences and in education and carries with it a variety of different meanings and associated research practices. My own understanding is informed principally by the work of Foucault. In his early work, Foucault (1972) identified a number of ways in which the term 'discourse' might be used:

> Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word 'discourse', I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements (p. 80).

In this study I draw mainly on the third sense of discourse referred to here as sets of practices that are regulated in some way and which have coherence and a force. Discourses " 'map out' what can be said and thought about what they define as their various domains" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 128). As MacLure notes (2003), they are also exclusionary in that they "*rule out* other ways of thinking, talking or acting" (p. 178).

Foucault was concerned with the ways in which discourses have been historically produced and the ways in which power is exercised through the operations of discourses. Taking this up, Bove (1990) argued the question is not so much 'what *is* discourse?' but as "*How* does discourse function? *Where* is it to be found? *How* does it get produced and regulated? What are its social *effects*? How does it exist?" (p. 54) (emphasis in original).

MacLure (2003) notes discourses are inextricably linked to institutions, such as the family, the law, police etc., and to "the *disciplines* that regularize and normalize the conduct of those who are brought within the ambit of those institutions" (p. 176). A discourse can be detected because of a "systematicity of ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular

context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving" (op. cit.).

sFoucault (1980b) was not concerned with whether a discourse accurately represents 'reality' but with the mechanics whereby one discourse might become produced as the dominant discourse. He argued each society has its "'general politics of truth': the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements…" (p. 31). The task is to identify the regimes of truth, the ways in which they have been assembled and are sustained in discourse and their power effects.

The relationship between discourse and power in Foucault's theorisation is highly complex, with power simultaneously exercised, produced and deflected in the operation of discourse.

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are …discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also a hindrance a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault, 1980a, p. 100-101).

In other words discourses are not merely repressive but productive in that they produce knowledge, power, and subjects. Discourses position subjects, casting them in roles according to the discursive formations in any site. Foucault (1972) states discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). Brewis (2001) explains:

> … discourses create subject positions, spaces for individuals to locate themselves within and to define themselves through. … we settle ourselves amongst the subject positions available to us, as produced by existing discourses, and therefore come to understand ourselves and to know how we should go about our lives (p. 287).

That is, we are incited to understand ourselves as particular sorts of subjects through the proliferation of discourse. As MacLure (2003) puts it, "the individual achieves agency as an active subject through being subject-ed to the disciplinary machineries of discourse" (p. 176).

Foucault's theory of discourse has been criticised by some feminists as it implies that discourses – for example discourses of femininity – are imposed on passive subjects, and that we merely 'settle ourselves amongst the positions' available to us in discourse (as Brewis' words above might imply). Smith (1990) challenged this understanding arguing for a view of discourse attentive to what individual subjects *do* within and through discursive structures. The emphasis in her formulation is on how subjects *negotiate* their positions and relationships through discourse, rather than how discourses make them behave. Similarly, Mills (1997) argues it is in the process of *engaging* with discursive structures that we are constituted as particular subjects (p. 97). These readings provide a more subtle and fluid process of subject formation in discourse and form the basis of my discussion and analysis in Chapter Six of this thesis. In that Chapter, I draw extensively on four of the interview transcripts to argue that individual subjects do not just adopt roles assigned them in discourse, but rather they may move between elements of these, finding pleasure in some, being openly critical about others, and maintaining a reflexive stance as they negotiate their position(s) in relation to many (see MacLure, 2003). There is no final point of arrival only a continuous and sometimes vexed journey.

In her theorisation of gender performativity, Butler (1993) takes up Foucault when she argues that a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names (p. 13), and further that this enactment is not a "single or deliberate 'act' but instead the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (op. cit. p. 2). This reiteration through discourse is necessary because "while 'governmentality' is eternally optimistic, 'government' is a congenitally failing operation" (Miller & Rose, 1990, p. 10). That is, repetition is necessary because the operation repeatedly fails in its effects.

Mills (1997) argues a similar point in her discussion of the discourses of femininity. She suggests the daily repetition of these discourses should not be seen as evidence of women's oppression, but rather as evidence of the failure of the discourse to once and for all constitute the subject it seeks to create, such that further repetitions are necessary (but also continuously fail in their effects). The daily repetition is also evidence of women's resistance to these discourses. As I explore in Chapter Six, the iterability of the discursive practices that discipline women as women and as particular sorts of academic subjects simultaneously produces and enables alternative discourses and subjectivities, as women (re) negotiate their engagement and positioning within the range of discursive formations.

Part 2: Discipline and power in research relationships

Setting up the research: Power/knowledge in research design

Earlier in this chapter I described how I recruited participants for this study. This was in fact my second attempt at recruitment following an earlier unsuccessful attempt based on a different research design. In this section I propose to elaborate on my first unsuccessful plan as my experiences are relevant to my argument concerning the institutional work of mentoring, its location within the discourses of neo-liberal university governance, and within the nexus of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1977a, 1980b).

In my first plan, I chose three universities as research sites in which I would recruit participants. Each of these universities ran a program for women, and in two of the sites I was acquainted with the program coordinator. Early in the process, I approached these two coordinators, explained my study and sought each woman's help. In particular I asked each coordinator to allow me to send an email to past participants in her program inviting women to contact me for an interview about their experiences of mentoring.

At one university the coordinator sought advice from the research office at her university. The research office was satisfied with the ethics clearance I had received from my 'home' university and the path was clear to proceed. At the

second university (University 2), I encountered a number of problems in setting up the research.

In our third or fourth telephone conversation, the coordinator at University 2 asked me, "what is University 2 going to get out of your research?" She suggested a few ways in which I might 'give something back' to the university in exchange for her help in accessing women. She suggested that I could present a seminar based on my analysis of the interviews within what I regarded as a short interval of the interviews taking place. This request was not on the face of it unreasonable, and could be viewed as part of a shift towards more collaborative research. However the request had a number of implications that concerned me. My main concern was that if I approached the research in this way, then it would take on the form of an evaluation of the mentoring program, and of participants' experiences of the program. This is not what I wanted to do in the study. I was also concerned that I would be under pressure to speak about my 'data' before I was ready; that I would need to specifically seek consent from my participants in order to provide such a 'report back'; and (related to my first concern) that this would materially change the focus of the research and the nature of the interviews. I explained it was important for me to appear to be independent from the University 2 in my dealings with my research participants.

It was my understanding the coordinator accepted this position but in our next conversation she argued that it was 'reasonable' for 'the University' to expect to get something more in exchange for her help. The implication was that I was being 'unreasonable' in the position I had taken. In a subsequent conversation she reasserted her position that 'the University' should 'get something out of the research', and that 'it would be collegial of me if I wanted to have ongoing good relationships with the coordinators at the universities involved to give something back'. I reiterated that it was not my intention to be 'uncollegial' but that I was worried about materially changing the focus of the research in order to meet her demands.

In this discussion the coordinator raised another hurdle for my research: "will University 2 be identified in your research?" We agreed that it would be difficult to disguise the University even if it was not specifically named in the thesis. In view of this, the coordinator wanted the right to read my thesis and change it prior to submission, as she argued she had a responsibility to consider how 'the University' might be portrayed. I indicated that I could not comply with this request because the PhD needed to be my own work and could not be subject to censorship in crucial aspects by others. After this conversation, I decided to take a different approach to recruiting participants and withdrew my request for her assistance.

How might I read this negotiation within the theoretical and discursive context of this feminist study of women academics and mentoring? What were the conditions that gave rise to this negotiation? In what ways were we positioned and positioned ourselves, within the discourses of academic work, gender and mentoring? According to my reading, in this negotiation the coordinator at University 2 initially assumed a subject position of colleague and of professional solidarity demonstrated by her initial willingness to help me. This subject position was reconstituted as she took up a more forceful position of institutional gatekeeper in the negotiation.

Mentoring, as I argued in Chapter Two, is now located within the knowledge economy of universities. In this instance, the coordinator at University 2 actively *placed* mentoring in that economy through her invocation of 'the University's' interests and her assertion of her accountabilities to the University in taking up her position in the negotiation. Her understanding of her role vis-a-vis the program was actively shaped by her positioning in relation to 'the University'. She was disciplining herself, and seeking to discipline me, within that economy. She was very forthright in her assertions, implying I was being 'unreasonable' and 'uncollegial', because disciplined bodies 'know' what they and others have to do. I on the other hand was 'undisciplined', or 'undiscipline-able' within the terms of the negotiation as she sought to frame it.

The negotiation also raises a question about the conduct of doctoral research, which while disciplined within the context of the host institution at which the student is enrolled, and within one's disciplinary framework, is arguably less subject to disciplining by others, except where it explicitly relies on the ongoing cooperation of another party or organisation. On purely practical grounds, I was not reliant on the coordinator's support as I had other ways of recruiting participants for my research. Her positioning of herself as gatekeeper carried more effect as a rhetorical device (to manipulate my conduct) than in any material terms. As a doctoral research student at another university, I was both outside her's, and her university's, disciplinary scope.

An alternative reading of the negotiation would see it as a shift in the way in which academic research is understood within the context of contemporary neo-liberal governance of universities and the commodification of education within the knowledge economy. Within this reading, information, or at least access to the knowing (interview) subject, is treated as a commodity and becomes a tradable item.

The coordinator was positioning herself as knowledge broker. She controlled whether I would get access and to whom and when I would get access. Within this conceptualisation, the coordinator stationed herself as broker of the women's intellectual property. The women's stories of academic work and mentoring were reframed as 'assets' to be protected within a discourse of institutional interests and accountabilities.

This recounting demonstrates a number of things. Firstly at its most basic it demonstrates the continuously evolving nature of methodology and the highly contingent and negotiated nature of research design and practice. I was concerned that the study might be significantly delayed if I were to approach other universities or program coordinators, who might also seek to introduce conditions on their support for my research. As a result I changed my approach and recruited participants directly as individuals through their trade union and professional association. The study has ultimately benefited from this change, as I have been

free from institutional constraints and sensitivities in formulating my analysis and critique.

Secondly, this experience demonstrates how my research methodology, and my approach to methodology are inseparable from the object of my research, namely, mentoring. My subject position as a researcher locates me inevitably in particular ways in relation to the object of my research. It may be stating the obvious to note that my uptake of a Foucauldian theoretical framework for this study shaped my positioning as a researcher and influenced the subject positions I was willing to occupy in the negotiation of the conduct of my research. In Chapter Two, I argued that mentoring is historically and institutionally contingent, located at the intersection of a number of different discourses including of neo-liberal governance of institutions. In my attempts to negotiate the conduct of my research, I confronted the material consequences of this positioning, with the program coordinator at University 2 positioning herself as gatekeeper in the institutional management of the intellectual property of the women I sought to interview.

The negotiation can best be understood I suggest within Foucault's conception of the power/knowledge nexus. He proposed a radically different conception of power as it relates to discipline, as tied to punishment, and as a body of skills and knowledges. Foucault

> … goes beyond the fairly conventional view that the development and acquisition of knowledge necessarily makes people more powerful, or is 'good for them'. Rather knowledge is something that makes us its subjects, because we make sense of ourselves by reference to various bodies of knowledge (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000, p. 50).

In this instance, the coordinator assumed power by taking up a particular position within contemporary discourses of neo-liberal governance of institutions. I drew my authority from a different and perhaps now outdated appreciation of what it means to do doctoral research, to be the independent academic researcher, 'free from fear or favour'. The power I exercised derived from my freedom to walk away from the negotiation.

The coordinator and I were peers and are acquainted through a professional network. We weren't 'friends' but we were 'friendly' (a distinction I explore later in this chapter). I may have identified overly strongly with her as a fellow traveller, assumed to some extent a shared feminism, and assumed an implicit agreement on the importance of doing feminist research on mentoring. These assumptions were fair under the circumstances but could not account for her positioning within other discursive contexts. In reflecting on her doctoral research project, Bloom (1998) asks the question to what extent her own and her respondent's identification as feminists "… contributed to the silence around issues of unequal power – as if our feminism had the magic to render impotent not only the power inequities but a few additional ones as well" (p. 38). In my negotiation with the coordinator, we never confronted issues of power or control directly; instead we worked the discourses of accountability and collegiality on the one hand, and academic freedom on the other, in order to wield influence. Our fledging research relationship floundered on issues of power and control over knowledge production and over my position as undisciplinable within the prevailing discourse of the negotiation.

'Asking the right questions': Power and the 'knowing subject' of research

If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely if power was able to take it as a target this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it (Foucault, 1980a, p. 98).

As indicated earlier, seven of my 17 participants were senior academics – ranked at senior lecturer, senior research fellow or associate professor level, and 11 of the 17 had completed a doctorate in the social sciences or humanities. Most of them were therefore experienced in conducting research and many were experienced in research interviewing. In my initial recruitment material I had identified myself as a doctoral candidate, from which my participants probably assumed that I was new to research interviewing.

How did my experience as 'doctoral researcher' interviewing 'knowing subjects' sit with the commonplace understanding in qualitative research of power residing with the researcher (see Cotterill, 1992)? How did my position as 'beginner researcher' (within the conventions of an academic career path) impact on the operation of power in the interview relationship? Most feminist texts were unhelpful on this point, focusing as they do on the more frequently encountered scenario in which the feminist educational researcher is seeking to address social inequities by looking at the position of 'those at the bottom', a relationship in which she is believed to hold more power (Harding, 1993).

As mentioned earlier, Bloom (1998) argues that the totalizing conceptions of power that see power consolidated in the researcher, "… while initially based on an understanding of the exploitative and colonizing practices of anthropology, have now become reified into an authoritative discourse" (p. 35). In their contribution to one of Denzin & Lincoln's authoritative books on conducting qualitative research, Fontana & Frey (1998) declare without qualification: "In typical interviews there exists a hierarchical relation, with the respondent being in the subordinate position" (p. 64).

Bloom (1998, p. 35) cites Reay who suggests that even when feminist researchers discuss power as "shifting, and at times contradictory", they may still accept that power lies with the researcher, mainly because researchers "'retain the power of redirection', and walk away with the interview data they wanted" (Reay, 1995, p. 211-213). The mode of discourse within which the researcher inherently has 'The Power' in the research relationship "suggests that having the authority to collect data, interpret it, and produce a text is *inherently* an act of exploitation or even violence done by the researcher to the almost victimized respondent" (Bloom, 1998, p. 36). Clearly some research may be problematic because it defines research participants as disempowered or repressed, regardless of how they may define themselves. Rather, the discourse oversimplifies the role of power, which should more productively be seen as "complex, contextual, fluctuating and above all relational" (op. cit. p. 35). Friedman (1995) asserts that this discourse may function to disguise the ways that "the flow of power in multiple systems of

domination is not always unidirectional" (p. 18), or as Cotterill (1992) puts it, "that issues of power and control fundamental to the research process shift and change and within the research interview, the researcher and the researched is vulnerable" (p. 605).

Within the interview situation, I occupied multiple subject positions – of interviewer, of 'mentoring expert', of woman academic, of feminist, someone who had flown across the country to hear *their* story, trade unionist; and also of 'beginner', of research student, and occasionally of heterosexual mother. What was the impact of the 'multiple roles of power' that existed within the interview relationship (Bloom, 1998)? The differing subject positions I occupied served a number of 'functions'. At times I intentionally took up a particular position – for example as fellow doctoral student – as a platform for establishing rapport with my respondent in an effort to 'draw out' her story. My interview subjects too were positioned in multiple ways, and took up multiple positions within the interview relationship – as respondent, someone who knows, someone with a story worth telling, as brilliant academic, working mother, experienced researcher, teacher, as cat lover and sometimes as lesbian, feminist, activist and colleague.

As well as providing the basis for a shared language and a developing dialogue, the multiple subject positions we occupied provided a platform for asserting difference and distance. This is to suggest the importance of the *processes* of identification (or dis-identification as the case may be) rather than the subject positions one ultimately does or doesn't take up. This was well illustrated in one interview in which my respondent actively resisted the ways in which I tried to position her, by asserting her position as the knowing subject. In a series of questions early in the interview, I tried to find out at what point in her life she had decided she wanted to be an academic:

> *Deirdre:*   *… I never like had a plan that I was going to be an academic.*
>
> *AD:*   *And so at what point did it become viable, or an option that you were excited about?*
>
> *Deirdre:*   *It's never been like that. I just, I just got this job and I've never left.*

I pursued the point further with her over a period of time, following which she replied, in an effort to once and for all discourage my line of questioning around academic identity,

> *Deirdre: Yeah, so … sorry about that. I haven't got any sense of self like that! (Laughs)*

Deirdre resisted my efforts as an interviewer by naming my intentions, namely my desire to explore questions of self-hood or academic identity with her. She did this by taking up the position of the knowing subject, the experienced research interviewer, when she named the intentions underlying my line of questioning. My response to her last comment is also insightful as it reveals certain preconceptions about knowledge production in the interview situation. To her comment above I replied:

> *AD: I'm sure you do! I just haven't asked the right questions! (Laughs)*

This response points to my own ambiguity regarding the role of the interview in the 'production' or 'exchange' of knowledge. In this quote I am suggesting that Deirdre had the knowledge I wanted but that I had simply been unable to 'mine' it; or that I might have been able to 'get' her to tell me a different story under different conditions. This is somewhat at odds with the beliefs I hold regarding interviews as a site in which knowledge is jointly produced between interviewer and respondent.

To my last remark, Deirdre replied:

> *Deirdre: Not that I can articulate! Not like talking to strangers.*

In this first phrase, she seems to suggest that identity is outside language or beyond description. In the next breath she speaks of strangers. Who are the 'strangers' to whom she refers? Was I the 'stranger', as we had only met half an hour earlier (and were unlikely to meet again)? Or was she referring to 'the strangers' I implied when I asked her earlier how she talks about her work to people she meets socially? Or were we all 'strangers' in the sense that in the processes of identification we take up a subject position *in the face of* the 'other', that is, that dis-identification with the other is as central to identity formation as identification (see Butler, 1993)? In taking up this position Deirdre was also

refusing to move into a confessional discourse (Mills, 1997, p. 80) in which she may be construed as a compliant subject of the interview.

This sequence of comments between Deirdre and I can be read as the movement of power back and forth. Deirdre resisted my attempts to position her by asserting her power as the knowing subject. She made explicit the intention behind my line of questioning. I in turn tried to assert myself as interviewer by dismissing her denial of identity. Deirdre's response at that point can be read as a retreat from her position of authority, by agreeing with me, 'yes, I have an identity', a 'self', but it is beyond language, or something that can only be communicated with those close.

Of interest here also is her desire *not* to identify, her professed *dis*-identification as an academic, which was in contrast with her very strong career orientation and academic ambitions. A few minutes after the exchange above I asked Deirdre whether she regarded herself as successful. She spoke about her desire to 'get to the top of the ladder' and referred to a 'plan':

> AD: *Do you have some plan now?*
>
> Deirdre: *Oh yes. It's all mapped out and planned out. I know how many publications I need, and I know what things I have to get, and I have a little checklist and I tick them off, and I have little lists of things that I cross off as I get what I want.*

She gestured towards a typed list on the side of her bookcase with some lines crossed off with a highlighter pen. This was a list of things she needed to do to get to be a professor. As she reached certain milestones, she explained, she would cross them off the list. (I discuss Deirdre's list further in Chapter Four).

These excerpts illustrate both the interplay of the different subject positions of both the researcher and the researched in the interview relationship and the various shifts in power relations as the parties move between positions. Taken together, they constitute a "complex web of conflicting authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses about power" (Bloom, 1998, p. 33) in the research relationship.

The relationship between Deirdre and I can be understood as a product of the 'local centre of power/knowledge' constituted through the interview situation (Foucault, 1980a). In his discussion of sexuality, Foucault identified a number of relationships – for example between confessor and penitent – within which both techniques of knowledge and strategies of power are connected. Foucault suggested within these 'local centres of power/knowledge',

> … different forms of discourses – self-examination, questionings, admissions, interpretations, interviews – were the vehicle of a kind of incessant back-and-forth movement of forms of subjugation and schemas of knowledge (op. cit., p. 98).

McCallum (1996) explains this further, saying "Clearly these 'centres' are not centers in the pre-structural sense: they are in fact boundaries demarcating differential power relations between subjects" (p. 92). She uses 'power relations' here as a set of relations present within all types of relationships (p. 94). Each research interview functions as a 'local centre'. Through the local centre of my interview with Deirdre we can see that movement back and forth of power and knowledge between me as researcher, and Deirdre as knowing subject within the constraints of a shared understanding of what a research interview is.

Must we be friends? Problematising friendship in feminist research

> One indicator of friendship is having someone to confide in and knowing that person will listen sympathetically to what you have to say. Another indication is reciprocity, in that confiding and listening are usually shared activities between close friends. … But close friends do not usually arrive with a tape-recorder, listen carefully and sympathetically to what you have to say and then disappear (Cotterill, 1992, p. 27).

One of the key contributions of feminist research to the field of qualitative research has been a shift "… allowing for the development of a closer relationship between interviewer and respondent, attempting to minimize status differences and doing away with the traditional hierarchical situation in interviewing" (Fontana & Frey, 1998, p. 65). The authors there refer to some of the ethical dilemmas identified by

feminist researchers in the early 1980s in the standard exhortations to qualitative researchers to be 'courteous, friendly and pleasant' in order to put interview participants at their ease. They cite Oakley (1981) who argued interviewing is "a masculine paradigm, embedded in a masculinist culture and stressing masculine traits while at the same time excluding … traits … that are culturally viewed as feminine" (Fontana & Frey, 1998, p.65). They go on to say, "interviewers can show their human side and answer questions and express feelings" (op. cit.). Much feminist attention since has been devoted to how feminists might enact these principles.

As I discussed earlier, Bloom (1998) is one of many feminist writers to draw up a list of propositions about feminist research methodology. Her first two propositions were:

> Feminist methodology should break down the one-way hierarchical framework of traditional interviewing techniques.

> Feminist interviews should be engaged, interactive and open-ended. Feminist interviews should strive for intimacy from which long-lasting relationships may develop. Feminist interviews are dialogic in that both the researcher and respondent reveal themselves and reflect on their disclosures

Point number 4 reads,

> In feminist methodology, the traditional "stranger-friend" continuum may be lengthened to be a "stranger-friend-surrogate family" continuum, which can allow the connection between women to be a source of both intellectual and personal knowledge (p. 17-18).

In wanting to break down the boundaries between researcher and researched in most qualitative research this prescription for feminist practice argues beyond a recognition of the intersubjective nature of the research relationship, to articulate a vision for friendship, indeed for the extension of 'familial-style' relations into the research relationship. Exactly what kind of 'family' is being invoked here? My

question goes to a concern with the problematic created in this prescription for practice, and the series of assumptions on which the script is based. These assumptions arise I argue from a failure to recognise the very *intersubjectivity* of the research relationship, the foundation stone of feminist research practice. The prescription implies a certainty or predictability about the design and conduct of research. It presupposes a code *for* practice that is immutable and transcends context. It presumes the very authority of the researcher to take responsibility for ensuring this scenario, while simultaneously seeking to problematise unequal power relations and build egalitarianism, even friendship. In doing so, it romanticises relationships between women and suggests feminists will necessarily have profound positive feelings towards one another, and shared interests.

This problematic is well illustrated in Bloom's account (1998) of the development of her relationships with her two research participants. Again with reference to Oakley (1981), Bloom (1998) notes that "This {the Oakley} model {of research practice} suggests that the interview become a site where women converse, reciprocate self-disclosure, and develop a relationship more akin to or resembling friendship or sisterhood than the conventional middle ground between stranger and friend" (p. 27). While feminist poststructuralist researchers have problematised some of these orthodoxies, the invocation of intimacy and friendship is still important in feminist research texts as is the requirement to account for one's intersubjectivity in the relationship.

Entering my doctoral work then, what did it mean to me to be a feminist researcher, to do feminist research? What did it mean for the way I conducted myself in my research relationships? My understanding of feminist research practice was shaped by my reading over the years and by my experience in conducting my master's research project ten years previously. At that time I was deeply committed to participatory research by involving my participants in an ongoing dialogue over the production of meaning from the research (interview) data. My efforts in this regard were almost completely unsuccessful because my participants (men and women) had no interest in my vision of how the relationship might be conducted, and declined to participate in the terms I desired.

In the case of this present project, my research design was also driven by a number of practical considerations, including cost. My participants were scattered around the country and I could travel to meet and interview them once. I was also concerned not to impose too heavily on busy women. When I arranged the interviews, I asked for only minimal contact in the form of one face-to-face interview and possible follow up by email. The nature of the contract was such that I was not seeking friendship and my participants were not offering it. I am not in a position to say whether or not my participants wanted something more or different from what I offered them or held different opinions about what constitutes feminist research. This was not something I canvassed with them. While I entered the interviews with expectations of "identification and sisterly rapport" (Bloom, 1998, p. 152), I made a distinction "between friendship and friendliness" and in hindsight do not feel that the research relationship 'failed' because only the latter was achieved (see Cotterill, 1992, p. 594).

I particularly got on with one of my participants and under different circumstances, for example as colleagues, I would have sought further contact with her. Under the present circumstances of a now-finished research interview between researcher and respondent, it is difficult to assess what relation or subject position we occupy. I am no longer the 'interviewer' and she is no longer a participant in any active sense. What are we in relation to each other? We are not – as feminist research might suggest or hope – friends. Cotterill suggests we replace the 'stranger-friend' continuum with a 'stranger-friendly stranger' continuum because the "stranger-friendly stranger continuum exists for the purposes of the research and is terminated when the interviews are complete" (p. 595). This configuration for feminist research allows for the partial, unpredictable and in this case, short-lived nature of some research relationships whilst none the less contributing to the wider feminist project of troubling conventions of objectivity and intersubjectivity within qualitative research

Calling (up) all women academics! The interview as confessional space
In the previous sections I analysed aspects of feminist research, in particular the intersubjective nature of research relationships and research interviews as a site of

friendship. Central to the notion of intersubjectivity, and to the development of research relationships as friendships, is the idea of reciprocal self-disclosure between researcher and research respondent. In this section I explore the concept of self-disclosure and reciprocity more closely from within the Foucauldian framework of the confessional (1980a).

In my role of researcher with the women in my study, I chose not to disclose much about myself, although I did answer questions, such as whether I have children, my work situation, and my experiences of doing a PhD. On the other hand, many of the women I interviewed shared very personal information with me, with one woman recounting her experience of consulting a university psychologist and taking sleeping tablets to cope with work-related stress, and another talking about her marriage breakdown.

The interview I suggest acted as a site of confession (in much the same ways I argue later that mentoring acts as a site of confession) for a number of the women I interviewed. This was not the case with everyone, and some women policed boundaries around their personal and domestic lives, and in some cases, in terms of the extent to which they spoke about critical or formative incidents in their lives. A few women asked for reassurance during the interviews that no-one else would be listening to the tape recordings or seeing the transcripts. One woman required my promise that I would not send her interview tapes for transcription by a third party. These requests may reflect a number of different motivations and cannot be explained by one single account. They may reflect a desire to maintain privacy, a separation of personal life from work life, and perhaps reasonable concerns with ensuring discretion and confidentiality in highly politicised workplaces. Most of my participants though felt prompted to disclose significant and highly personal aspects of their lives in their accounts of their work and careers. This is perhaps not surprising given that these women had taken up my invitation to be interviewed, indicating a willingness to talk about themselves in the first place.

However, theoretically the concept of 'self-disclosure' sits uncomfortably alongside a Foucauldian analysis of the interview as a site of data *production*. 'Self-

disclosure' implies there is a coherent stable self, waiting to be disclosed and collected as research data at interview. This was certainly what I inferred in the earlier reported exchange with Deirdre ('I just didn't ask the right questions!'). Or perhaps it just meant: 'my questions didn't invoke the required discourse!' A feminist Foucauldian reading argues to the contrary that subjectivities are *called into being* in interviews through the mobilization of a variety of discourses, in this case, discourses of careers, academic work, self-improvement, gender, mothering and so on.

In her analysis of the field of human resources management from within a Foucauldian framework, Townley (1993; 1994) argues confessional procedures operate in two ways. They require individuals to break the bounds of discretion, and they act as processes that confirm identity by constituting the subject in particular ways through tying them to appropriate (institutionally sanctioned) identities. Through the confessional, she argues, individuals are rendered more amenable to intervention and management. She argues that the value of confession is that it produces information – 'self-knowledge' – that becomes part of the individual's self-understanding. Individuals are rendered (self) knowable and better able to act on their own behaviours.

In the interviews many of the women shared information that would fall outside the bounds of normal workplace conversation. They felt compelled through the discursive structures of the interview to confess. In the interviews too, my participants and I participated in a process of constituting them as particular sorts of female academic subjects. This process both generated 'data' for my research purposes, and also produced knowledge that can become the material for the women's self-work as active subjects. In other words the interview produced a range of knowledges which might serve a variety of purposes, some related to the research itself and others not. My positioning as the confessor (with the women as penitent) within this confessional space also placed me in a mixed position as a consequence of the changed power relationships implied in this relationship, when compared to my power as PhD student and researcher. However this reading of the confessor as more powerful should not be presumed as each party is

construed within the same discursive regime and is both enabled and constrained by the limits of their positioning. During a couple of interviews too I felt that lengthy confessions were deployed by my interview participants as a means of assuming power, by for instance taking up all the conversational and emotional space in the interview.

My reading of the interviews as confessional spaces has many parallels with the nature of mentoring relationships, particularly mentoring relationships between women. I discuss this matter further in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

As a doctoral research project the women in my study participated on a voluntary basis and they were free to 'produce' or to 'reveal' as much about themselves as they chose. My research was not a part of any institutional disciplinary apparatus. In terms of externalized systems of power, nothing hinged on their participation or non-participation, self-disclosure or non-disclosure, or on the substantive content of their responses. However, I would argue that the nature of the qualitative research interview, particularly research conducted with knowing (researching) subjects who may believe themselves to share feminist intuitions with the researcher or who may desire to please the interviewer for these reasons, carries with it implicit internalised invocations of disciplinary power. In other words the participants 'self-regulated' as good and active interview subjects.

As a number of scholars have argued (see for example, Devos, 2004b; Gale & Kitto, 2003; Scheeres & Solomon, 2000), academics have adopted a range of self-regulatory practices within the context of the neo-liberal reforms taking place in higher education. In regulating themselves as good interview subjects, my participants were demonstrating the discipline required of the confessional by self-disclosing. I suggest that Deirdre apologized to me *because* she was aware she was not self-disclosing or self-disciplining in the terms I sought to impose in the interview. Deirdre was being a naughty subject!

The research interviews both called into being particular subjectivities and also provided opportunities for the participants to resist the subject positions made available through the discourses from which we drew and which govern their

workplaces and lives. During the interviews, the women were repeatedly 'assembled' and 'disassembled' – as academics, as women, as women academics – through procedures with which they were highly familiar. Their familiarity with the format of research interviews led many to discipline themselves in the terms required, as good interview subjects, demonstrated by their willingness to 'self-disclose' in the terms I desired, generating both my research data and their own 'self-knowledge'.

In this Chapter I have described both my research project – such as how I recruited my participants – and simultaneously set out to problematise aspects of my methodology. I positioned myself as a feminist researcher whilst also highlighting some vexed features of feminist research practice as these are discussed in the literature. My aim in doing this was to shed light on some questions of power, knowledge and intersubjectivity as these arose in the conduct of my study. The research interview, I argued, functions as a confessional space between women in which women are invoked to speak of themselves in particular sorts of ways and produced as particular sorts of subjects. This reading of interviews invites parallels with mentoring relationships themselves into which women also confess and are produced as particular sorts of academic subjects.

Chapter Four

Managing the self

It's time to do something! I'm running out of excuses now! (Karen)

In this Chapter, I begin my detailed analysis of the transcripts of interviews with the women in my study. This analysis carries on over Chapters Five and Six. In this Chapter Four, I want to focus on an analysis of the transcripts of interviews with two women in particular – Karen and Deirdre – exploring themes of self-regulation and governmentality. Through my readings of the transcripts I trace the ways in which the women both self-regulate as academic workers and the ways they are acted upon by another in mentoring. I begin the chapter with a discussion of governmentality as developed through the work of Foucault (1991) and others particularly as it relates to the constitution and governance of subjects in the workplace.

In their engagement with the discourses of academic work, careers and mentoring, many of the women I interviewed move back and forth between two subject positions. These are the position of the active subject, seeking to manage herself through mentoring as a suitable academic subject for the times. This engagement is sometimes referred to as 'a biographical project of the self' (Grey, 1994; Rose, 1999 {1989}). The second subject position is of one who is 'taken on board' in a mentoring relationship to be fashioned as a suitable academic subject. In this case the active subject gives herself over to be acted upon as the project of another, her mentor. Using a governmentality framework I argue these two positions are aspects of the same subject in that they work together to produce the active academic subject. Furthermore, these two elements are *necessarily* present in mentoring, in that mentoring *requires* an active subject whilst also *embodying* a desire to be acted upon by others (Devos, 2004a).

This theorisation of mentoring as relational is anticipated in Foucault's conceptualisation of governmentality. McLaren (2002, p. 147) points out the role of

others is made explicit in Foucault's later definition of the term 'technologies of the self', with his inclusion in the essay published posthumously, of reference to individuals effecting "by their own means *or with the help of others*" operations upon conduct, the body and so on (Foucault, 1988, p. 18) (emphasis added). In mentoring these abstract 'others' are personified in the mentor, who embodies the discourse of academic careers within which the woman participant seeks to position and understand herself.

A number of the women I interviewed spoke of the benefits they enjoyed from mentoring, including enhanced skills in research development, advice on specific problems they were facing, increased networks for developing research proposals, and friendship and personal support in some cases. In order to derive these benefits the women of necessity submit themselves to disciplining within the regimes of that relationship. In later chapters I explore the extent to which the mentoring relationship can sustain alternative dispositions for the women who participate, that is the extent to which mentoring may offer a set of 'feminist practices of the self' (McLaren, 2002, p. 146) focussed not on adjustment but on new ways of being, or of self-constitution, within the academy. In my discussion in this chapter, I focus on the women's positioning of themselves and by their mentors within the disciplining regimes of the mentoring relationship.

In setting out these two aspects of the active subject as self-managing and the project of another, I am not suggesting that there are not also other positions which the women simultaneously take up: as feminist, lesbian academic, 'wog' (an Australian term for a person of southern European background) in the academy, active campus citizen and good mother to name a few. My intention instead is to argue that this theorisation of the active subject establishes the complex terrain for contemplating the production of subjectivities in mentoring. This terrain is rendered more problematic, as I suggested earlier, when mentoring is understood from within a set of feminist discourses about gender equity and the position of women in universities. In this thesis I argue that the production of subjectivities within mentoring, and in particular the operation of disciplinary power within the

relationship must be better understood for mentoring as a set of feminist discursive practices within universities.

Assembling subjects through technologies of governing

In his 1978 lectures, Foucault developed a new project tracing the emergence of the modern conception and art of government, a genealogical history of governmental rationalities, or governmentality (1983; 1991; 1994). In this project he argued there had been a shift in the concern of governments in Europe since the seventeenth century, away from territory and its inhabitants as subjects of the sovereign, towards populations as the object of government (Patton, 2003).

> … in contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act
> of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement
> of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health and so on;
> and the means the government uses to attain these ends are
> themselves, all in some sense, immanent to the population; it is the
> population itself on which the government will act (Foucault, 1991, p.
> 100).

As Patton (2003) points out, the development of this new form of government was closely bound up with the emergence of new sciences and disciplines, including statistics, public health, and policing (p. 523). These disciplines have in common a concern with the welfare and well being of citizens, and reflect a more pastoral form of power, based on an earlier Judeo-Christian conception of the relationship of shepherd and flock. Foucault (1994) argued this 'strange technology of power treating the vast majority of men {sic} as a flock with a few shepherds' (p. 303) could still be identified in the contemporary state's responsibility for the welfare of individuals as well as for whole populations.

Patton (2003) asserts "Foucault's analyses of pastoral power, police science and liberalism amount to an archaeological analysis of the forms of rationality implicit in different arts of government. … They imply a displacement of the central role of the state, …" (p. 524). Patton argues the central political problem of the present is not

the state but the forms of power that have made the state what it is today. He cites Foucault:

> … it is the tactics of government that make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on. Thus the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality (Foucault, 1991, p. 103).

Governmentality, then, is essential to understanding the operation of the state and its institutions, including its educational institutions. To undertake a study of governmentality is,

> … to start by asking what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objectives, through what strategies and techniques (Rose, 1999, p. 22).

In this thesis I apply this 'template' to an analysis of the 'problem' of women academics and their careers, and the implementation of mentoring programs as the solution. Specifically in this chapter I set out a rearticulation of governmentality within a feminist project of analysing the formation of the female academic subject.

In his work on subjectivity, Foucault (1992) studied a number of prescriptive texts that elaborate rules and opinions about how one should behave. He suggested that these texts serve as devices that enable individuals to " … question their own conduct, to watch over and give shape to it and to shape themselves as ethical subjects" (p. 16). Foucault (1988) described as technologies of the self those technologies "… which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thought, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (p. 18). Elsewhere he described these techniques as 'the conduct of conduct', or the ways in which the individual is governed by both the state and by him or herself (1991). Technologies of the self are the practices by which individuals may situate and define themselves by becoming tied to a particular identity (Foucault, 1983).

'Government' in Foucault's sense refers to "... a way in which power is exercised over individuals ... as a synonym or preferred alternative for the use of power to identify a general field of analysis" (Burchell, 1996, p. 19). Foucault describes the disciplines as techniques of power because they importantly "... presuppose the activity, agency or freedom of those on whom they are exercised" (op. cit. p. 20).

Rose (1999 {1989}) explored this issue of freedom further. He argued that over the course of the nineteenth century, new visions of work developed which tried to refute the conflict between productivity, efficiency and competitiveness on the one hand, and the 'humanization' of work on the other. The subjectivity of the worker emerged as a complex territory to be understood and regulated. Rose argues the new forms of regulation created through these technologies create new forms of subjectivities. He further argues that these new forms of subjectivities have developed alongside a culture of liberal freedom, which celebrates values of autonomy and self-realisation. Human subjects according to this culture are 'obliged to be free', to pursue their autonomy and self-actualisation. It is incumbent on individuals to make their life meaningful "… as if it were the outcome of individual choices made in furtherance of a biographical project of self-realisation" (p. ix).

Rose argued that the development of human relations approaches to work and the psychologisation of work have led to the development of more subtle means of adjusting and regulating the worker as the work and the worker has become better known.

In her tracing of the discursive formation of human resource management (HRM) in contemporary organisations, Townley (1993; 1994) used Foucault's conception of disciplinary power to interrogate the construction of the field of HRM as a means of regulating work and the worker. Townley suggests the indeterminacy of the employment contract at the base of HRM provides the analytical space that needed to be rendered governable. The employment relationship is an analytical, conceptual space, which has geographic (at work) and temporal (time at work) dimensions. It also involves a subject – the worker. All these dimensions or spaces

must be rendered known and articulated before they can be managed. Employers need knowledge of two dimensions: of the nature of work, and of the nature of its operator (Townley, 1993, p. 521). Central then to the operation of HRM as disciplinary power is knowledge of the worker and the work (Townley, 1994, p. 5). HRM offers a technology that renders individuals and their behaviours predictable and calculable. It "… constructs and produces knowledge which renders visible the arena of work for the purposes of governance" (Townley, 1993, p. 524).

Citing Foucault Townley suggests: "The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information… the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely knowledge constantly induces effects of power … It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 52). This conception of power/knowledge asserts firstly that power and knowledge are not independent, and secondly that power is productive in that it creates subjects, in this case, workers and work.

Townley (1993) argued the focus of analysis becomes the process by which the individual becomes rendered knowable, or constructed or produced. The emphasis then is on the techniques (or technologies) through which subjects 'understand' themselves and others, and how disciplinary practices operate to create order, knowledge, and ultimately, power effects. Relating this to HRM, she argues, its role is to provide "… a nexus of disciplinary practices aimed at making employees' behaviour and performance predictable and calculable – in a word manageable" (p. 527).

While the empirical focus of Townley's work was mainly performance appraisal systems, I argue that similarly, mentoring is a technology through which subjects come to 'know', 'understand' and regulate themselves within the discursive formations of academic workplaces.

Townley's argument suggests a level of intentionality in the constitution of the field of HRM. It implies that the production of knowledge of the work and the worker through the creation of the field of HRM has been a deliberate process aimed at

better managing (controlling?) workers and work. This approach to a study of governmentality can be seen as at odds with other Foucauldian readings according to which the production of subjects (workers) is *an effect* of the operation of disciplinary practices rather than their intention. In this study I will argue that the production of certain forms of subjectivities is indeed a specific intention of mentoring, particularly mentoring when conceived through feminist discourse. This mentoring, I argue is designed explicitly to guide women towards the uptake of the attitudes and dispositions that will position them for career advancement. This does not mean that the women are *normalised* through mentoring, or rendered identical by any means, as the accounts that follow in this and subsequent chapters attest. Instead I argue that for many of the women, through their positioning within certain discursive formations they may be constituted as the productive subjects they strive to become AND that their universities would have them become. However, the effects of the production of such subjectivities are not even, universal or fixed.

Usher and Solomon (1999) take up the concept of the self-regulating worker in their analysis of the introduction of work-based degree programs ('awards') by some universities. They argue "…that in the contemporary workplace, the management of subjectivity {of workers} is an essential element of governmentality and the central task of organisations" (p. 155). The authors argue that disciplinary power in the Foucauldian sense is exercised through these programs: "…'discipline' in its broadest sense refers to those micro-practices of government where individuals are 'shaped' to serve the needs of power" (p. 156).

> The aim of disciplinary power is not however to crush, repress or inhibit but to create and develop the capacities, inclinations and dispositions – in other words to create 'active' subjects with an appropriate subjectivity who precisely because of this will be more efficient and productive. This is a 'disciplining' without coercion into a freely accepted particular form of life. The 'shaping' of subjectivity can here be seen as an 'educating' or 'teaching' of individuals who would otherwise remain unorganised, or inappropriately organised, and therefore economically unproductive (op. cit.).

Usher and Solomon argue that contemporary workplaces *need* workers who self-regulate – workers who "… see the realisation of their personal objectives as synonymous or congruent with the objectives of the organisation and who therefore regulate themselves accordingly in what could be described as self-surveillance" (op. cit.). This theme is discussed by a number of contemporary writers who refer variously to the 'reflexive project' of the self as a key marker of the times (Giddens, 1991), the 'shape shifting portfolio person' (Gee, 1999) and the 'entrepreneur of oneself' (du Gay, 1996). Within the context of the enterprising university (Marginson & Considine, 2000), this might also be 'the enterprising academic'.

According to Usher and Solomon (1999), discipline in the contemporary workplace is "… not absent but reconfigured and rendered less transparent but with more complex power relations and increased responsibility for the worker/learner" (p. 168). Governmentality infiltrates regulation into the interior of subjects, a process which involves subjects "'educating' themselves into accepting valuing and working to achieve an alliance of personal and organisational objectives – where subjective experiences are simultaneously shaped and uniquely one's own (Ransome, 1997)" (Usher & Solomon, 1999, p. 156).

Deetz (1998) took up this issue of self-surveillance in his case study of a knowledge intensive unit of a large multinational telecommunications corporation and its shift from a professional service delivery unit to an 'internal consulting group' within the larger organisation. Knowledge intensive organisations he argues are characterised by high levels of autonomy and self-management; and rely primarily on individual and collective forms of intellectual capital; rely more heavily on normative forms of control, exercised through self surveillance and self-control than by the exercise of sovereign power by management. The products of most work processes in such organisations are hard to measure and are based on intrinsic characteristics. Deetz (1998) summarises thus:

> The often hidden and mysterious work, plus the absence of a clear
> physical product with measurable characteristics, leaves identity to be

acquired from the projection of the subject rather than drawn from the product or work activity (p. 157).

The employees of these organisations, like university academics, have the potential for comparatively high degrees of personal autonomy and choice. Deetz however questions the nature of 'choice' and 'consent' in a context where employees' desires are actively shaped within the particular discursive environment of the workplace, and differences or contradictions are overlooked by the dominant arrangements (p. 160). As Rose (1999) also argues, notions of choice or freedom are not unconstrained but are actively shaped by the discursive and material conditions of the context. In relation to his research site, Deetz (1998) noted:

> Most {employees} seemed more than willing to learn new means of strategic self-manipulation … if a pay-off can be gained and if it is clear that they are manipulating themselves rather than others doing it. But the effect is that they control themselves on behalf of others. The consultancy formation's implied self-management and control of one's own economic fate continually reproduced a concept of freedom, though one actualised in the accomplishment of corporate control through self-control (p. 168).

Deetz takes up Buroway's (1985) concept of 'strategising one's own subordination' to describe the ways in which employees in his research site instrumentalise and strategise themselves:

> Through self-surveillance and control of their bodies, feelings, dress and behaviour, they use themselves for their own strategized employment and careers movement (Deetz, 1998, p. 164).

My analysis of the transcripts in this chapter and the next two illustrates the ways in which mentoring acts as a technology through which the women self-regulate within the discursive formations of academic work, gender and careers. I explore the ways in which as active subjects the women act upon themselves in mentoring relationships to manage their own conduct in accord with their career 'choices' and

in line with institutional priorities formulated within a performativity framework. In so doing the women arguably contribute to 'strategising their own subordination', both within the mentoring relationship itself and perhaps more broadly within the institution.

Yet this harsh reading fails to take account of the particular ways in which women are positioned within academic institutions and the complex negotiations of position that are necessary to sustain oneself as a woman within those institutions, let alone a woman with the prospect of a 'career'. It is of little satisfaction to women in organisations to abandon hopes for a career by writing the discourse off as 'a male construct'. Interestingly, only a couple of the women in my study refer to those wider institutional contexts and imperatives, perhaps pointing to, as Deetz (1998) argues, the success of those systems of governance as control processes, such that they become invisible to the subjects that they constitute.

Karen: "I'm running out of excuses"

> *She {her mentor, Susan} didn't really crack any whips over me or anything, but just being in that formal relationship with her made me feel like, you know, it's time to really get some stuff happening. So, I made myself a timetable for getting stuff done, and so I did.*

And later

> *… this {sending papers off} might have all happened even if it hadn't been for the mentoring relationship. (…) So, you know, maybe it would have happened anyway. But I really felt like just having the University allocate funds, basically, to set up this structure, really motivated me, and made me feel like, 'OK, it's time to do something. I'm running out of excuses now!'*

Here Karen speaks about an important mentor in her career, Susan, with whom she was 'matched' in a women's mentoring program at a previous university. Susan was one of a few mentors about whom Karen spoke during our interview. In the excerpt above Karen is quick to assure me that Susan did not exercise power

over her when she says, "she didn't crack any whips". However the exercise of disciplinary power as a function of the mentoring relationship is evident in Karen's own self-regulating *as an effect of* that relationship ('just being in that relationship …'; 'So I made myself a timetable for getting things done'). I suggest that in her disavowal of sovereign power by her mentor Karen effectively disavows the operation of power at all. Karen asserts it was 'just being in that formal relationship' that led her to 'get stuff done'. In doing this Karen disguises the operation of disciplinary power that operates through mentoring, disciplining her (self) within the discursive formations of academic work and careers. The disavowal allows Karen to reassert herself by implication as the active self-managing subject who might have achieved what she did *without* her mentor. Through this account Karen's investment as self-directed is preserved and indeed strengthened.

In this excerpt Karen reproaches herself as having been an insufficiently active subject particularly in regards to research, declaring 'I'm running out of excuses now!' It is worthwhile noting her material circumstances at the time to which she was referring. Karen was working full-time following her return from maternity leave after the birth of her second child. In the two years prior to her leave she was one of a small number of staff setting up a new degree program in a new school. As a mother of two young children engaged in setting up a new school in her university, it is difficult to accept Karen's claim of prior inactivity as expressed in: 'OK, it's time to do something'. Her comments reveal instead her active self-disciplining within the current discursive environment in which academic staff experience significant pressure to improve their research performance (see for example, Luke, 1997; Morley, 1999). Contemporary demands of performativity have both restructured the educational project and the work of academics in line with priorities expressed in socio-economic terms (Usher & Solomon, 1998). Karen actively took on her performance as a researcher *as her project*, and I suggest enlisted the assistance of her mentor in that task of (re) producing herself as the disciplined researcher.

Schneider (1998) comments the use of the term research 'active' or 'inactive' to indicate productivity is itself problematic: "Some people say these are objective measures. I don't think so. How do you say that someone who writes three articles

a year is more productive than someone teaching five classes? The word 'productivity' is used against people as if they're lying around doing nothing" (p. A20). Certainly this is the sense in which Karen, like many other academics, reflected in her comment "I'm running out of excuses!" comes to understand her own situation. Within the discursive contexts of performativity, the terms 'active' and 'inactive' communicate a set of values and make crude distinctions between the good and bad academic (Devos, 2004b). The range of systemic issues that militate against women's participation in the research lives and cultures of their institutions, and hinder women's ability to meet research performance indicators (see for example Harley, 2003; Luke, 1997) are disguised within a discursive formation which foregrounds the problem in terms of the shortcomings of individual academics.

On one hand, then, Karen feels guilty she is not more productive as a researcher. At other times, Karen identifies the problem in terms of those systemic issues. She suggests at one point,

> *That's a lot of what you get from mentoring, knowing it's not just you. Knowing that the experiences that you're having have some sort of basis in the outside world, and that it's part of a system and you can help to understand the system better.*

In this she shares her intuition that other women academics have similar experiences to her own and that the issues have a systemic basis. However, in spite of her awareness of the systemic issues facing women academics, and her explicit identification during the interview and in her workplace as a feminist, she none the less reproaches herself for what she regards as her 'inactivity'. In her account of her reasons for seeking out mentoring with Susan, Karen works the discourses of the enterprise university. In so doing she expresses her anxiety about her (unsatisfactory) performance as an academic researcher, reasserting herself as the active self-managing subject:

> *I sort of had two articles in two and a half years of being employed. So it was a fairly respectable thing, but I wasn't going to set the world on fire*

with that. And then I was away on maternity leave … came back and
taught … I had quite a difficult bunch of students …

Again she vacillates between multiple subjectivities, here capturing her position as (would-be productive) researcher, mother and teacher, revealing the complex interaction between those subjectivities for a number of the women I interviewed. Interestingly in this quote, Karen introduces the problems she had had with a group of students, taking up for the first time in our interview the position of teacher. Up until this point, she had presented her motivations for mentoring in terms of support in research. Yet the initial issue on which she sought help from her mentor Susan was in fact on how to deal with negative evaluations and feedback from this group of students. Her account of her circumstances and her foregrounding within this account of her status as a new mother and a feminist suggested these were relevant factors in how she was also positioned by students with at times detrimental consequences for her as a result of this positioning.

Karen spoke at some length about the challenges and distress the negative evaluations caused her over a long period. From this position though she would rapidly shift back to disciplined researcher mode, reporting emphatically that she had 'made a timetable for getting stuff done … those papers just sitting there, just waiting to be sent off', and 'so did it'. She describes her daily routine as a new mother back at work, visiting her baby at the university child-care centre twice during her working day to breastfeed. She reported on one particular incident where she was 'bailed up' by a male student on her way to the centre and criticised her for not being available when he wanted her, an issue I discuss further in Chapter Six. She then reverts back to the self-disciplining researcher.

The shifts that occur in Karen's accounts reflect I suggest a desire to represent herself to me (and probably within her institution and to her students) as active and self-managing – what might be described as a masculinist representation of the rational subject – rather than to be seen as upset and vulnerable – an archetypal representation of the feminine, an emotional (and irrational) woman. Karen's desire for self-representation in terms of the former qualities represents an assertion of

her 'productive' academic subjectivity over the 'reproductive' subject position that she also occupies. Within this binary, the productive academic subjectivity is measured in terms of research output, specifically publications and is gender-coded male. The reproductive subject position is represented through her fecund breastfeeding female body, and is firmly coded 'female'.

Sitting alongside Karen's account of herself as self-managing and self-directed, is the story that positions her as the 'project' of others, her career development the object of others' attention and efforts. This positioning of Karen as the project of others is more complex in Karen's case as one of her mentors is also her life partner and academic supervisor, Clive. This scenario is not unusual with recent research highlighting an increase in academic couples (Ferber & Loeb, 1997). In the following three quotes Karen refers to Clive and his impact on her career moves:

> *He's the one who pushes me to apply for promotion …*
>
> *{speaking of following Clive to another university…} … so he sat me down and dictated my application letter to me and I typed it up and applied and I got that job.*
>
> *{on her decision to apply to a particular university in the US to do her masters degree …} … {this} university didn't have an application fee so right at the end I just said 'OK! I'll bung {put} one in!' And then I got this fabulously generous offer from them … so I got to do this very cheap quite well-regarded masters as a result of Clive pushing me 'you must apply to {this} university!!'*

In these stories Karen reveals the at times directive role played by Clive in her career development. In playing out this role is Clive acting as her partner or her mentor? It would be easy to dismiss these stories as just part and parcel of the conversations that take place between the partners in many intimate relationships, to argue they convey nothing of the dynamics of mentoring. However, I argue that Karen's relation to her mentor also as a partner means the two roles are inseparable particularly when her partner is a senior academic in her discipline.

That is, mentoring, and the encouragement given by an intimate are indistinguishable in this case.

Karen's relation to that advice is also consistent between her various mentors. Her willingness to be influenced by others is expressed in her discussion of her other mentors. At various points during the interview she refers to 'being taken on board' and 'being taken in hand' by her mentors. This included her undergraduate thesis supervisor whom she described as her first mentor, by Susan and by Clive. These terms and her accounts of what they entailed, suggest a surrendering to others. When I asked Karen to define mentoring her reply included both these notions of mentoring – of being self-directed and purposeful on the one hand, and being taken in hand on the other. Mentoring she suggested –

> *It's about supporting people to do what they want to do. … it can be making alternative suggestions about: 'Maybe you don't want to do what you think you want to do!' So it can have, … like a paternalistic sort of role. Like Clive saying: 'You want to apply for {this US University}!' That was mentoring I think. …I think if you get too far out on that – on that limb of telling the mentee what he or she wants, then it's not mentoring any more. I think it really does have to be within a context where the mentee sets the agenda: 'here's what I want to do!' and the mentor's job is, 'OK. Here's how you achieve that!'*

In trying to make a distinction between these two ideas of mentoring, one of which is acceptable and the other which by implication is not, Karen in fact raises more questions than she solves. Her attempt at a definition blurs any boundaries between mentoring as a form of paternalism, and mentoring as, to coin a phrase, 'supported self-direction'. In her response Karen seems to take the position that there is an important distinction to be made but she is unable to satisfactorily make it even within her own terms. This I suggest is because of the fundamentally problematic nature of mentoring, as embodying both self-directed-ness and direction by others rather than a failure by Karen to adequately express herself. Her definition also implies a disjuncture between her opinion that mentoring must

ultimately be about self-direction, and her own engagement in mentoring as the sometimes-compliant subject of the attention of another.

Deirdre: "My career ladder thing"

Like Karen, Deirdre actively self-manages within the discursive regimes of academic work, exemplified in her highly instrumental approach to her own career advancement. Deirdre is a social scientist working as a senior lecturer in a physical sciences faculty. Speaking about her ambition to be promoted to the rank of professor she refers to her 'plan':

> *It's all mapped out and planned out. I know how many publications I need, and I know what things I have to get, and I have a little checklist and I tick them off and I have a list of things that I cross off as I get what I want.*

As she said this, Deirdre gestured to the typed list above her desk – not as 'little' as she suggested – with a number of items crossed off with a highlighter pen. Items listed included such things as "publish 100 papers" ("I'm almost half way there!") and "Do a stint in a overseas university". In these early stages of her account, Deirdre presents the path to 'professor-hood' uncritically and unproblematically. Her engagement in mentoring is one of a number of ways in which she acts upon herself, and seeks the help of others to achieve her goals.

As I discussed at length in Chapter Three, Deirdre's management and regulation of herself as a career-oriented woman academic is however, at odds with her denial of her subject position as an academic. At several points during our interview she resisted my attempts to draw her out on the question of her identification as an academic. In a series of questions early in the interview, I tried to find out at what point in her life she had decided she wanted to be an academic:

> *Deirdre:* *… I never like had a plan that I was going to be an academic.*
>
> *AD:* *And so at what point did it become viable, or an option that you were excited about?*

> *Deirdre: It's never been like that. I just, I just got this job and I've never left.*

I pursued the point further with her, to which she replied, in an effort to once and for all discourage my line of questioning around academic identity,

> *Deirdre: Yeah, so … sorry about that. I haven't got any sense of self like that! (Laughs)*

In Chapter Three, I considered this passage from the perspective of Deirdre as the knowing subject of my research, an experienced research interviewer. Here I want to consider the passage from a governmentality perspective. Deirdre's 'little list', her instrumental approach to her career advancement and her highly opportunistic relationship with her main mentor, Alexandra, all point to the highly conscious uptake by Deirdre of an active academic subjectivity. The interview left no room for doubt about her absolute intentions to achieve academic success in her institution. And so why did she feel the need to repeatedly disavow her subjectivity as an academic by claiming her lack of intentionality in her choice of profession? This example points again to the complex processes of subjectification as they are enacted for different women.

Much later in the interview Deirdre's account of her career trajectory shifts slightly as she factors into her account of her career progression, the relationship of her social class, disciplinary background (as a social scientist in a physical sciences faculty) and gender to her experiences of mentoring and career advancement more generally. These moments of insight into the relevance of social and cultural capital to academic career progression are fleeting, as she soon returns to her theme of her career trajectory. This subordination of an alternative reading of career suggests that Deirdre operates within the regimes of truth represented in the careers discourse in her faculty. In her account, Deirdre 'talks over the top' of those other positions, emphasising instead the instrumental nature of career progression as a series of hurdles clearly visible to her – she just needs to jump over them. This 'talking over the top' is consistent with the major investment she has made in seeing things in this way.

Later in our interview Deirdre tells me about her awards, pointing to her bookshelves and wall. I will quote here at length as it relates closely to the argument I am developing.

> AD: So what was the teaching award for? Outstanding teaching or was it a particular project that you did?
>
> Deidre: No. It was for generically being outstanding! (laughs) These are the things I need for my promotion! … I like go out and seek them.
>
> AD: So what about the research prize? …
>
> Deidre: Alex (her main female mentor) and Andrew (her head of department and also a mentor) nominated me. …
>
> That's an old one! (laughs) … Now I'm trying hard to get a big prize like an AM {Member in the General Division of the Queen's Honours List} or something like that … yes that's what I'm thinking I need. I'm not sure how I'm going to get one of those. …
>
> … if you've done something really great like fostered three hundred children or something – I'm thinking, uggh!
>
> AD: It doesn't sound like it's your bag!
>
> Deidre: No. … I'm trying to think of something that I've done now that I could twist around. …
>
> I want something big-time for my career ladder thing.

This passage is extraordinary for a number of reasons. In her statement "I like go out and seek them" she highlights the highly intentional nature of her efforts, suggesting the scope within a governmentality perspective for the exercise of agency. I argue that Deirdre and the other women discussed show high levels of personal agency in the ways in which they self-manage and self-regulate. Further I suggest that the active subject conceptualised through a governmentality

perspective, engaging technologies of the self to bring about desired change in concert with others, is, of necessity agentic. This understanding is central to feminist theories of subjectivity and more specifically for understanding mentoring as a set of feminist practices. Also highlighted in this passage are the direct and explicit roles played by her two mentors, Alex and her head of department, Andrew. From this excerpt we gain insight into the interrelatedness of actions by Deirdre and by others to produce the desired academic subject.

During this section, the interview itself was punctuated with Deirdre's laughter and exaggerated humour, encapsulated so beautifully in this passage with her reference to 'fostering three hundred babies' in order to make it on to the Queen's honours list. I could interpret her exaggerated humour as a sign that Deirdre was embarrassed about expressing her ambitions in such blatant terms. I am aware when I use terms like 'blatant' in this context that they convey distaste for, or dislike of, overt expressions of ambition. Even my use of the word 'distaste' has its class origins! Why is it 'distasteful' to be clear about your ambitions? This 'distaste' may be based upon class, cultural or gendered perspectives but, I would argue, runs deep in academic circles and more generally in Australian society. I take up this issue particularly in terms of gender performativity in my discussion of women's relations to discourses of careers in Chapter Six.

I propose instead that in her account here Deirdre offers a very candid commentary on 'how to build a successful academic career'. In this exercise, she (unwittingly?) deconstructs the regime of truth according to which successful academic careers are built on individual merit and achievement (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Burton, 1987). In speaking plainly about her own and others' agency in constructing her curriculum vitae, Deirdre foregrounds the usually masked role played by patronage, personal networks and the manipulation of achievement in constituting the successful academic (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001).

Deirdre's account, too, alternates between a story of the self-directed subject and the subject of another's attention. Deirdre had known Alexandra by sight in the corridors, but it was following a meeting of the committee on which they both sat

that their mentoring relationship developed. Deirdre and Alex were both disaffected with the workings of the committee and frustrated by the position assumed by certain influential members. Deirdre recounts their conversation:

> *… at the end of that meeting, Alex said to me, "Now, listen here, you!" I went, "What?" She took me aside, and she said, "You are so clever and I see people around you with higher qualifications than you, and it makes me really cross." She said, "Now, what you were talking about today is a Ph.D. Go and prove that! That they are wrong! Do a PhD!" And I went, "Ohh.." She goes, "In fact, I'm not even going to listen anymore about your arguing about it!" Like, "Let's go now!" And I said, "Well, who will my supervisor be?" And she said, "Oh, whenever you do your Ph.D., you go straight to the top!" So, she dragged me down to the Dean (laughs) and he said, "I'd love to be your supervisor!" I had nothing to do with it, but because she's very close with him, and so, he took me on, no questions asked! Didn't care what I was doing, because Alex said, "Say yes!" And really, with the Dean, you can't lose, really. In terms of, like, getting things that I might need and funding, and no one can say no to me, because I can go to the Dean! It was lovely! (Laughs)*

In this excerpt Deirdre is at pains to portray herself as a docile body, subject to the direction of a highly assertive other. Deirdre stresses how little she had to do with her mentoring and academic development throughout her PhD. A number of times during the interview with me she refers to herself in very passive terms, such as "I had nothing to do with it", suggesting perhaps her surrender in her dealings with her mentor, or her handing over of *authorship* of her career to her mentor. Her repeated comments to this effect could be construed as a lack of self-consciousness in that she was willing to present herself in a way that I might consider unfavourable. Deirdre's claims to lack of agency in our interview however may be disingenuous in that she otherwise presents herself as highly strategic and self-directed.

Deirdre's positioning of herself is, therefore strategic and acquiescent, perhaps reminiscent of Buroway's 'strategized subordination' (1985). In her reporting of her docility Deirdre seems pleased with herself – pleased at her positioning, pleased with her willingness to declare her positioning, and pleased with the benefits that have accrued to her as a consequence as she sees it of her mentoring, or more particularly I argue, *as a consequence of her positioning* in that mentoring. This excerpt also captures Deirdre's – and by implication her mentor's – remarkable instrumentality in relation to her career development: "And really, with the Dean you can't lose, really."

In this excerpt and elsewhere Deirdre also recounts her mentor's dedication to the project of mentoring and managing Deirdre's career. Deirdre reports,

> *Alex is always looking out for opportunities for me. She went to – a small group of people went out for lunch and she made two fairly prominent people promise that before she died that she'd see me as a professor! (Laughs) Isn't that sweet. So she's still looking out for me. Yes.*

The image of Deirdre's mentoring as patronage is most explicit in these excerpts but by Deirdre's own account not troublesome for her. Her only reflection on this dimension of her relationship emerges late in the interview when I ask if there have been any 'low' points in the relationship with Alex.

> *Deirdre:*   *I guess – I think sometimes its been a bit hard for Alex because – I think one of the attractions for her for me, was that I am from what she sees as a very different background to her. Like, her parents were very well educated and she's English. She lived at {up market London suburb} in some three million dollar mansion, or something. Her husband is the Head of {large organisation}. So, I think part of the appeal for being my mentor was to take under her wing someone so downtrodden, in her eyes.*

> *AD:*   *An Eliza Doolittle of her own?*

> *Deirdre:* *Yes. I think she quite likes the thought that my mother's a hairdresser, my father's a butcher, and we lived in public housing; my father used to always owe money, gambling, and I went to a really shitty school. I'm not married, and have no prospects so (laughs) I think she liked that.*

Interestingly here Deirdre narrates her subordinate social status, qualifying her comments however saying "…someone so downtrodden, *in her eyes*" (emphasis added). This qualification suggests that while Alex may see Deirdre in these terms this is not the way in which Deirdre sees herself. Yet the remark also reveals how deeply embedded the relationship is in a politics of class. While she may not subscribe to Alex's positioning of her, Deirdre's perception of her positioning by Alex is none the less the source of some sadness or regret, maybe not so pleased after all, her observation coming as it did in reply to my question about 'low points'.

The significance of their relative socio-economic status and the differential access to cultural capital of Deirdre and her mentor is an ongoing theme over the course of their relationship. The following excerpt followed immediately on from her comments above:

> *I think though, once I got to Level C {Senior Lecturer}, I'm now her same level {in institutional terms}. I think that some time, not so much now, but there was a bit of a tense time there, where I think it crossed her mind that I might overtake her. … Not that she doesn't want me to get far, but I think there were moments. For example, … she said she was coming {to my PhD graduation} and then she didn't turn up, which really upset me.*

In this excerpt, Deirdre accuses her mentor and withdraws her accusation in the one breath. She wants me to have no doubt that over all her mentor wants the best for her. Yet she is also aware of the operation of power within the mentoring relationship as she and her mentor occupy different positions in relation to one another over the course of time and at different points in time. Her mentor cannot fix Deirdre once and for all time as the working class girl with a bad family and bad

education but takes up different positions as Deirdre is in turn (re) positioned within her profession, as doctoral graduate, as senior lecturer and then as doctoral research supervisor. These external measures of status are clearly highly valued by both Deirdre and her mentor and within the context in which they both live and work. As Deirdre expressed it, her mentor's decision not to attend her graduation ceremony was also an exercise of power in the relationship. It was a means by which the mentor asserted her authority, in a situation where the differences between them in terms of external markers of academic success were narrowing. If the gesture was intended to discipline Deirdre by hurting her feelings it had the desired effect.

The complexity of the operation of power between the two women was further illustrated when Alex enrolled in a program of doctoral study in Deirdre's discipline, and asked Deirdre to be her supervisor. Deirdre referred to this new relationship between them as 'the circle closed', suggesting that she saw some symmetry in the process with Deirdre now filling the role of (discipline) expert and adviser, after Alex had mentored her through that stage of her own career (if not directly supervising her). I asked Deirdre if her new role as Alex's supervisor had affected the dynamics of their relationship. She replied emphatically,

> *No because I'm still the mentee, if you like even though I'm the PhD*
> *supervisor now, I'm still the mentee, and that even now, Alex's always*
> *looking out for opportunities for me.*

In her response Deirdre implies that I might have expected the dynamics to change as a consequence of their supervisory relationship. However, to the contrary, the power relations of superior-subordinate established in their mentoring relationship remain in tact in the face of their student-supervisor relationship. Deirdre's reiteration that "Alex's is always looking out for opportunities for me" suggests that Alex's active patronage of Deirdre is both a fundamental aspect of their relationship and further that the ongoing provision and acceptance of this patronage ensures that relations are sustained on their current basis; that is, that their relative subject positions are preserved and importantly *remembered* by Deirdre even in the face of

other structural shifts between them. Deirdre as she says can always see "what side her bread's buttered on" ensuring her compliance within the terms of the relationship as characterised in these excerpts.

Deirdre's account of issues of subjectivity within her mentoring relationship suggests she submits herself and her career to be constituted in the way she and her mentor desire in a relatively self-conscious way. However this reading is complicated by the contradictory aspects of her account, or to put it another way, by her incorporation of contradictory understandings of her positioning within her school and her mentoring relationship. On one hand Deirdre's account asserts her highly instrumental approach to her career; on the other, she emphasises her passivity in her dealings with her mentor. She presents unproblematically her subordination to her mentor ("I'm still the mentee") in the interests of her career goals, while simultaneously problematising the foundational terms of that relationship.

Her problematisation of these terms continues as she relates another reason why she thinks Alex has taken on the mentoring role:

> *… her daughter was my age and was killed in a car accident. I think in some ways I'm not the replacement daughter but I think there's a bit of transference … And I think maybe, deep down, sometimes she feels sad that she's invested lots of energy in someone who's not her – … some of that energy that I've received is for her daughter. So, I think, that's been a bit of a low. … Not a resentment, just a little bit of – (pause) yeah.*

This reference to the maternal (or the displaced maternal) in mentoring resonates with the use by Deirdre and others in this study of the language of the maternal when they describe the start of their mentoring relationship. Deirdre and Karen, like Michelle and Marian in the following chapter, each refer to being 'taken under the wing', or being 'taken in hand' by their mentors. These expressions were most often used to refer to a woman's relationship to a *woman* mentor, and are highly evocative of a sheltering embrace. Through the very physicality of this gesture is

conveyed a sense of protectiveness and nurturing. This may not always be the reality of mentoring of women by women, nor the reality of all mother/daughter relationships, but it is frequently used as a metaphoric device to characterise the experience. The frequent deployment of this metaphor in the literature also points to its function as a romantic (ised) *ideal* of women's mentoring (see also for example Bell, Golombisky, Singh, & Hirschmann, 2000) which has been the subject of some feminist critique (see Colley, 2001).

Deirdre relates in some detail her negative experiences as a tutor and postgraduate student at the hands of her first PhD supervisor and another woman academic, both of who were some years later dismissed from the faculty. Deirdre was privy to the sacking decision before they were:

> *… I did at the time feel guilt {that she had prior knowledge} … but I also see that as strategic ruthlessness and that if I kept my mouth shut as I was told I'd be paid handsomely for my quietness, which I was.*

In this example Deirdre demonstrates her uptake as what might be described as a strategic academic subject, strategising her subordination to achieve her end goal, to become professor (see Deetz, 1998). This was achieved she notes, with some discomfort through her submission to the disciplining power of a local conspiracy to remove these two staff.

Deirdre's submission within the regimes of mentoring is reinforced later in the following exchange:

> *AD:* *And what about you. Did you make an ideal mentee?*
>
> *Deirdre:* *I think so. I was very compliant! (Laughs). If she told me to go and do something I did. Usually.*
>
> *AD:* *Were there times when you didn't?*
>
> *Deirdre:* *No, no. Because I can see what side my bread is buttered.*

Here Deirdre characterises the ideal subject of mentoring as compliant and obedient, yet in her use of 'usually' suggests she *sometimes* did not do as she was told by her mentor. When I press her on whether she sometimes did not do as she

was told, she said firmly 'No, no' without further qualification. In this brief exchange then she hints at the possibility of 'disobedience', of resistance, while foreclosing on the possibility of it ever occurring within that relationship.

This excerpt also draws attention to Deirdre's highly instrumental reasons for taking up the position of compliant subject – she is deeply aware of the benefits that flow from that position. She reframes compliance as a strategic act rather than as it is usually characterised as evidence of intimidation. I suggest that in order to assume the mantle ultimately of senior autonomous academic, Deirdre submits herself to the role of compliant subject within the disciplining regimes of mentoring and of her workplace. Deirdre's use of the term 'old-fashioned apprentice-style of career path' to describe her situation is apt, implying as it does a sense of timeserving, an hierarchical master/servant relationship, and her submission within the terms of that relationship, a point reinforced in my later discussion of Deirdre's relationship with her first doctoral supervisor, Evelyn.

Lee & Williams (1999) take up the issue of submission to disciplining regimes in their discussion of postgraduate pedagogy and the emotions. They argue there is a paradox inherent in this submission to the regimes of doctoral research in that it is through the regimes of doctoral training that the candidate learns self-regulation and independent judgement:

> Through the practices of candidature and supervision the student must
> learn ultimately to overcome the dependence which is at first required of
> them and they, in some sense "need" (p. 17).

Deirdre knowingly positions herself as dependent and subordinate within the disciplining regimes of her mentoring relationship because this she believes is the position from within which she will achieve what she desires, namely her elevation to the rank of senior, independent academic. She is willing to continue to serve her apprenticeship on this basis.

Deirdre's experiences as a junior level employee on successive 12-month contracts earlier in her career reveal the extent of her exposure to the harsher disciplining power regimes of academic work more generally. Over the course of a

decade she was by her accounts badly brutalised by the exploitative practices of her doctoral and academic supervisor, Evelyn. She tells the story of how she got her first job at the university:

> *Evelyn {her first PhD supervisor} offered me a job here … as a tutor. And I thought that sounded rather good, partly because I was working in a nursing home to have money to get through my thesis, and I don't like cleaning up poo and stuff! … So, it was a real blessing so it seemed, to come and work here as a tutor. As a Level A tutor … it was the old-fashioned career path in that Evelyn was my supervisor for my Ph.D. and she brought me here as her – what would you call it – her underling. To do her shit work, I guess! As a Level A does. And so, I started here as her underling. And that's really what I meant by the apprenticeship model, that I was owned by her, if you like, and I did what she said, and the deal was that I would keep going and always be her underling. And there was another person here as well, … together sort of co-owned me, but primarily I was owned by Evelyn, because she was my supervisor, and I was to do the teaching and other duties as they saw fit.*

Her use in this passage and elsewhere of the term 'underling' and being 'owned' by Evelyn suggests the proprietorial and oppressive nature of Evelyn's behaviour towards her over this period. Her understanding of herself in this relationship at that time is the product of hindsight as, as Deirdre explains she was 'young, just 22', 'naïve' and 'grateful'. And while Deirdre uses the term 'a deal' to describe the terms of her relationship with Evelyn, it would not appear that she held much bargaining power within the relationship. She was more likely simply assigned to the position she occupied. To the contrary, as Deirdre now relates how she understands or rationalises her treatment over that time, it was just what happened to young level A contract staff ("As a level A does").

Paradoxically, while Deirdre was no longer 'cleaning up poo' in a nursing home she was still doing all the 'shit work' for her supervisor, suggesting her position at the bottom of the labour market hierarchy did not shift perceptibly with her move into

the academy. Her situation only changed when after ten years on one-year contracts, she was converted to a continuing appointment following successful representations by the academics' union on her behalf.

It is interesting to compare Deirdre's account of her experiences with her former supervisor Evelyn, to her current relationship to her mentor Alex. In her discussion of her former experiences and her uptake of the discourses of exploitation, Deirdre positions herself as a docile body, the powerless subject of the intentions and actions of another. In her later relationship to her mentor, Deirdre still presents herself as the passive subject of another. In this second relationship, as in her relationship to Evelyn her first supervisor, she was again the subject of another's actions, the project (or possession) of another. However the positions that Deirdre and her supervisor Alex occupied over the course of their relationship were not fixed and unchanging but experienced considerable ebb and flow, brought about as a consequence of the exercise of power by her mentor, and as a consequence of changes in their more formal relative status. These two things were closely related in that as Alex her mentor felt her formal position as superior to Deirdre weaken she sought to exercise her authority through other means. Ultimately it seems to me the relationship could only survive on the basis of Deirdre remembering and repeatedly enacting her subordinate role within the relationship. She is positioned in a permanent state of genuflection while actively pursing her career ambitions. She is simultaneously an active agent and submissive.

Perhaps where Deirdre's relationship to her mentor Alex differed from her relationship with her former doctoral supervisor Evelyn is that Deirdre's submission within her current mentoring relationship was premised on a clearer formulation of consent, on her capacity to choose her position within that relationship. In other words Deirdre was (and is) free to choose to have this relationship to Alex. She was in that sense exercising her agency as an active subject. Yet throughout her account Deirdre none the less disavows her agency. In spite of the many shifts between them, her subordination remains the condition of possibility of existence of that relationship.

In this chapter I drew on Foucault's theory of governmentality (1991) to develop the argument that mentoring is a form of identity work in which women academics assemble themselves as academic subjects. Through a close reading of sections of the transcripts of interviews with two of the women in my study, Karen and Deirdre, I traced the ways in which the women self-regulate as academic workers, and the ways in which they are acted upon by another in mentoring to produced their desired subjectivities. This identity work is never fully complete and is frequently fragmented and contested within the women's own accounts. The iterative nature of the project of assembling and re-assembling oneself also reflects the shifting demands of subjectivity in the performative university as I explored in Chapter Two. Importantly the well-governed subject of mentoring may be both agentic and submissive in that she acts both in her own interests and submits herself to the demands of positioning by another.

Chapter Five

Feminism, governmentality and the active subject

I think of myself as a teacher, but I do a lot of research as well. I publish, I do administration and I do public service. I do all the things you're supposed to do as an academic (Michelle).

In Chapter Four, I argued that mentoring is a site in which academic women self-regulate, and in turn may be governed by another in the constitution of their academic identities. As I discussed in that chapter, the process of identity formation is not finite with a clear start and finish date but is ongoing and iterative as the women assemble and re-assemble themselves in terms of the discourses of academic work, careers, and gender, amongst others.

In this chapter, I build on my analysis in Chapter Four to explore questions of self-regulation and subject formation specifically with reference to feminist theories of subjectivity. Following this, I analyse the transcripts of interviews with two more women, Michelle and Marian who, like Karen and Deirdre in the previous chapter, present themselves as self-managing self-regulating subjects. The purpose of my analysis in this chapter is to illustrate the value of Foucault's work, particularly his later work on subjectivity and governmentality, for this feminist project on mentoring.

Through this discussion I also intend to explore the ways in which mentoring functions as feminist practice – and is rendered problematic as feminist practice – when analysed from within a governmentality framework. The problem arises as a consequence of the positioning of mentoring at the confluence of discourses of gender equity and of neo-liberal governance of contemporary universities, as I discussed in Chapter Two. Mentoring for women I argue, although frequently couched in positive terms within a discourse of gender equity, assumes a more complex set of meanings for feminists when it is analysed as a technology for the constitution of 'the enterprising academic' within contemporary universities.

For Michelle and Marian, and many other women in my study, mentoring occupies an important place within the discourses of feminism from which they draw and in which they locate themselves. To develop my argument I propose to explore the problems that arise for some women as they navigate the relationships between mentoring as feminist practice and mentoring as neo-liberal practice. Analysing mentoring in this way illustrates the complexity of the production of subjectivity of academic women – and more particularly of women who identify as feminists – as we seek to engage in the life of our disciplines and institutions, and pursue success within the terms defined in the discourses of academic careers.

Being a Foucauldian and a feminist

How does governmentality as understood and developed by Foucault and others relate to feminist theories of the subject, and of the formation of subjectivity? While Foucault has been criticised for being gender-blind and androcentric (see for example, Grimshaw, 1993; Grosz, 1994), his work has none the less been analysed and taken up by many feminist scholars as useful for feminism. In my own work I take the position developed by McLaren (2002) that Foucault's conception of the processes by which the subject is produced (subjectification), particularly as it was developed in his later works on governmentality and technologies of the self, has much in common with feminist theories of the subject, and provides an ideal framework for this study of women and mentoring as a feminist project.

It is not my intention in this section (or in this thesis) to give a detailed exposition of feminist challenges to Foucault, nor to offer a vigorous defence of his work. I plan instead to summarise key perceived differences between feminist and Foucauldian theories of the subject, as they relate specifically to the argument advanced in this chapter. I am also aware that there is no one 'feminism' but many 'feminisms'. Taking my cue from McLaren again, I will endeavour to isolate central points of difference and commonality in order to highlight the most salient issues as they relate to my argument.

As I argued in Chapter Four, the active subject *enters* mentoring and *is in turn* produced by mentoring. The subject as conceived in my study is not an always-subjected docile body produced as an effect through the disciplines and practices of mentoring. She is instead active in her own self-constitution, and active in enlisting others to collaborate in the project of herself-constitution. Lois McNay (1991) argues however, that:

> The emphasis that Foucault places on the effects of power upon the body results in a reduction of social agents to passive bodies and cannot explain how individuals may act in an autonomous fashion. This lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project – to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women (p. 125).

McNay is one of a number of feminist scholars who have criticised Foucault's earlier works because of this rejection of a theory of subjectivity, sometimes referred to as 'the death of the subject' in Foucault's work. Many feminists have also rejected his middle genealogical works in which he explored the body as the object and target of power because, as they see it, of their overly deterministic conceptualisation of the subject. Within his genealogical work, Foucault analysed the methods and techniques used to subject the body, referring to these techniques as 'disciplines': "Disciplines operate on the body, affecting behaviour, movement, gestures, and attitudes" (McLaren, 2002, p. 57). Critics like McNay argue that the docile body produced through disciplining is predetermined and denies the presence of the agency so central to a feminist theory of subject formation.

In the excerpt above, McNay sets up a binary relationship between the 'social agent' and the 'passive body' – there are according to McNay either social agents or passive bodies. I make the argument instead that bodies are simultaneously active and passive. Bodies both act and are acted upon, as the accounts from Michelle and Marian analysed later in this chapter give evidence. As McLaren (2002) puts it, "… it is bodies that resist and increase their forces through

discipline, as well as being shaped by disciplinary practices" (p. 56), referring here to the productive effects of disciplinary power in producing power.

McLaren argues that Foucault's analysis of the relationship between subjectivity and power provides the basis for a feminist Foucauldian conception of the subject. Foucault uses confession as an example of the way the subject is produced through power rather than being outside or antecedent to power relations. As I explored in some depth in Chapter Three, the example of confession is particularly relevant to my work because of its parallels with the confessional nature of mentoring. McLaren (2002) suggests,

> For Foucault, confession is an example of the reversal of the traditional relationship between truth and power. Instead of being freed, the one who confesses contributes to her own subjection by articulating the truth about herself. Through the ritual of confession, one is constituted as a subject in both senses of the word {*assujettir*}, to be a subject and to be subjugated or subjected. Individuals participate in their own self-constitution through confession, but simultaneously they produce themselves with reference to the demands of power to speak the truth about themselves (p. 58).

Feminist and other critics who read this as evidence that Foucault's subject is passive and dominated by outside forces, ignore the tension between the two aspects of becoming subject (op. cit.), namely the productive aspect of subjection *and* the subject's active role in her own production:

> just as his notion of power has two aspects, domination which constrains, and the productive aspects which engenders, his idea of the subject who is constituted by power also has two aspects; subjects play a role in their own production (op. cit.).

McLaren (2002), referring to Foucault's final interview (1985), explains that Foucault refuses the subject as the condition for the possibility of experience, claiming instead that it is experience that results in a subject or subjects. In another key essay late in his life, Foucault (1984a) wrote:

> What I refused precisely that you first of all set up a theory of the subject. … What I wanted to know was how the subject constituted himself {sic}, in such and such a determined form. … I had to reject a certain *a priori* theory of the subject in order to make this analysis of the relationships which can exist between the constitution of the subject or different forms of the subject and games of truth, practices of power and so forth (p. 10).

While the subject herself is an effect of power, power is always subject to reversal, and freedom, as I pointed out in Chapter Four, is a condition of possibility for power's existence (see Burchell, 1996):

> Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual and collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole there is no relation of power (Foucault, 1983, p. 221).

In the last sentence of this passage Foucault also draws a distinction between relations of power and relations of domination. Without the possibility of resistance then there can be no power in Foucault's sense, only domination. Reading Foucault from a feminist perspective McLaren (2002) argues that, "The refusal to be what we are, to be a subject and hence subjected, opens up new possibilities for being" (p. 62), referring to the productive effects of power in creating opportunities for resistance.

McLaren's words here could be interpreted to mean that there is a place where the individual is somehow *outside* subjectivity, a 'non-subject position'. This idea is problematic as even where one refuses the demands of subjection and assumes an oppositional position one is always taking up this position *in regard to* the other position, and from within the discourse of that other position. Subjectivity is always relational and always in discourse. This point is illustrated in my later analysis of Marian's relationship to academic careers and her feminist commitments. However

I share McLaren's view that Foucault's later work on subjectivity provides the basis for developing a feminist theory of the subject that highlights political agency as a fundamental aspect of subjectification, and that further, recognises the relational nature of subjectification.

The practices of the self, discussed in Foucault's later work (1986; 1992), draw upon the conventions, rules and customs of the culture emphasising their social dimension whether performed individually or collectively. As McLaren (2002) explains, care of the self implies a relationship with others in at least two ways – it enables one to occupy one's proper social role, and it requires the help of a guide or close friend (p. 71). She argues the relational view of care ethics articulated by leading feminist scholars on this topic (see for example, Gilligan, 1982), like Foucault's arises through social relations: "Because the self emerges through social relations, moral agency and autonomy are not viewed as contrary to socialization but as arising from it" (McLaren, 2002, p. 77).

In summary, Foucault's theory of subjectivity developed in his later work meets a number of criteria essential to a feminist study of subjectivity. He locates the formation of subjectivity in specific social, historical and cultural practices and relationships, thereby addressing subject formation as relational and able to accommodate feminist concerns about diversity among women. His theory of subjectivity also shines light on how power shapes subjectivity and on the body as the site of subject formation. Importantly too the subject that emerges out of this reading of Foucault is capable of exercising the political and moral agency necessary for a feminist theory of the subject.

In my study, I locate the formation of subjectivities of the women academics I interviewed within the context of Australian universities at the start of the twenty first century, and specifically within the context of mentoring programs and mentoring relationships in those universities. The picture that emerges is of a complex process of subjectification in which the subject subjects herself but in so doing demonstrates her autonomy and her agency. She is the active self-constituting subject.

In their engagement in mentoring, many of the women express a desire for self-improvement or self-transformation in their lives and careers, "… to become other than what one is, to realize the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do or think" (Foucault, 1984b, p. 46). This desire was frequently couched in career terms, specifically in terms of managing themselves in order to achieve their ambition to advance up the academic hierarchy in their universities. On occasion this desire was also framed in terms of advancing the institutional position of women as a group.

A number of the women were also motivated by a need to care for themselves. I mean this both in the Foucauldian sense that we should concern ourselves with ourselves (see Foucault, 1984a), and in the more everyday sense of 'looking after oneself'. Some of the women sought out mentoring in response to traumatic events in their working lives. Participating in a mentoring program appeared to provide a framework for both taking care of themselves and for seeking out in institutionally acceptable ways the care of another. Again this aspect of governmentality and the operation of technologies of the self is inherently Foucauldian in that as McLaren (2002) points out, "… techniques of the self often require the assistance or guidance of others, and are always related to the social and political context"; these techniques are she suggests, "dependent on relations with others" (p. 164). My analysis in this chapter and the thesis over all builds on this line of enquiry in governmentality studies to articulate *how* those technologies are enacted within specific sites, in this case within workplace mentoring as a site of practice; and to examine the productive effects of mentoring in terms of its production of knowledges, subjects and power.

Michelle: "I do all the things that you're supposed to do as an academic"

In her account, Michelle, a senior lecturer in a humanities faculty, presents herself as the self-managing subject, stating near the start of our interview, "I think of myself as a teacher, but I do a lot of research as well. I publish, I do administration and I do public service. I do all the things that you're supposed to do as an academic". Here she recites to me her conception of what it is to be an academic

and declares her compliance as a *good* subject within the regimes of academic work and workplaces. Michelle constructs her identity as an academic in impersonal and uncritical terms demanded by the performative culture of contemporary universities.

In reply to my opening question about how she came to be an academic, Michelle relates her story of starting university studies in her mid twenties after several years spent working in different jobs and travelling. She excelled as a student from the very start, with a string of 'straight HDs' (high distinctions' – the top grade possible). The self she constructs in this story is of a brilliant young student and scholar destined for academic life. This sense of herself as pre-destined for academia is expressed even in accounting for her delay in going to uni: "I'd always known I'd go to uni, but I put it off and put it off because I wanted to earn money and live a life first".

As I read the situation at the time, Michelle made this remark as a throwaway comment, something to which no great significance should be attached. In saying this, Michelle may have been drawing on that public discourse according to which universities are ivory towers, removed from 'real life' and hence those who work in them are also removed from 'real life'. Through her comment Michelle implies that since she has been in academia – as student, postdoctoral fellow and academic – she has not had 'a life'. 'Life' for her is something that occurred prior to and outside academe. What is she living now then if not 'a life'? While I initially disregarded her remark as a throwaway comment it assumed different meanings as she painted her story of her workload and exploitation, and of conflicted subjectivities.

Michelle paints a glorious picture of her destiny to become a brilliant scholar. From time to time this story is interrupted however with glimpses of another story. One example of this other story was her reported decision to take 18 months off in the sequence of undergraduate honours degree, doctoral study, and postdoctoral work, "… because I just found the pressure to work for HDs really hard". Another is her experience of taking six years to complete her undergraduate degree. These brief mentions in her account give a glimpse into a parallel story of Michelle's

career trajectory, which is about struggle and stress in the face of performance pressures. These elements are in sharp contrast to the dominant story, which is about destiny and entitlement.

These references to another story are passed over in Michelle's account and portrayed as mere hiccups in her career trajectory – on a few occasions Michelle reports her certainty as to her eventual destination: "the career path was pretty well always there for me. There may have been times when it was more clearly there and times it was less clearly there, but I think I always knew I'd end up here – all I wanted was a little office of my own. Which is what I've got".

In this excerpt, I understand 'here' to mean both the immediate physical space Michelle and I occupied during the interview, bounded by walls, windows, bookshelves and a door. I also understand 'here' in a metaphorical sense to reflect her broader claim on the academy and on her discipline. In this reading her occupation of a physical space (her office) goes hand in hand with her occupation of a metaphorical space within the academy and within the processes of knowledge production within the academy. In Chapter Six, I explore Michelle's use of the metaphor of the 'little office' further.

Michelle tells me that on two occasions she was offered a position before she was ready to take it up. On the first occasion she was sought out to take up her postdoctoral fellowship a year before she finished her doctorate; later she was offered her first academic appointment well prior to the conclusion of her postdoctoral fellowship. In reporting on these to me, she draws attention to the recognition that others have of her cleverness. This reinforces her own self-belief as clever and deserving.

Another crack appears in her account of her successful passage from student, to postdoctoral fellow, to Fulbright scholar, to academic when Michelle soon after 'interrupts' the story to talk about her first couple of years in an academic position. Here again the parallel story of stress and struggle finds expression. During this time she suffered serious stress as a consequence of her exploitation as a new lecturer, and the only woman academic in her department. She related the terrible

impact this had on her, her partner and their child: "it was a very – truly a very terrible time".

Her experiences over this period led her to consult a psychologist at her university who advised her on ways to improve her situation. Importantly though throughout these stressful first few years her commitment to her career project did not falter but was in fact strengthened:

> *… I'm very dogged, and I continued to publish and I continued to run projects even though I was worked to death. … And when I'd publish something I'd say 'publication against the forces of oppression'! (laughs). So, and I just thought 'fuck it! You're not going to stop me publishing!' And, so, I'd be doing my publications with money from my grant, and I'd write a nice application, I'd get money for research projects, I had to run the bloody projects!*

This period was by her account a very painful time yet within her account of the self-managing academic subject it is accorded a subordinate status to her overall narrative of academic brilliance. Yet her commitment at this time was also countered with anxiety about sustaining her performance:

> *I was so overworked and there was the possibility that something would slip; and nothing slipped too awfully. Nothing slipped irrecoverably, anyway. But there's always that fear of that. So, I had to take sleeping pills for a long time. Somewhere after the end of the first year, I started taking sleeping pills.*

In his governmentality study of a large corporation, Deetz (1998) noted the shift that has occurred in the new discursive regimes of contemporary workplaces. Whereas previously work was designed for sustaining the body and supporting external relationships, now the reverse is the case: "The company is integrated into the self, leaving one's body and non-work relations as oppositional" (p. 166). As in Michelle's case, the primary expressed concerns are that the body, or social needs or families, do not let the employee do more work better. The response is to medicate the body to mask the symptoms of stress and fatigue.

Michelle submits herself to the regimes of her workplace and of academia more generally through her aggressive uptake of the position of successful academic on a career track. She speaks at a number of points about the importance of female networks generally and their role in sustaining her, noting the ways in which these networks and friendships can change the culture of the workplace or temper some of the adverse features of her working environment. But the pleasures of these feminist networks are activated *as a consequence of* the violence of the context in which she found herself, and of her positioning as the active academic subject within that context. As a new staff member and as the only woman academic in her school she was vulnerable to exploitation by her more senior colleagues:

> *You work so hard you don't notice that others aren't working as hard as*
> *you! I had a colleague who didn't teach for five semesters! (laughs) At*
> *the same time, … I taught five topics in one semester! Imagine teaching*
> *five topics in one semester! That's the semester I almost broke down.*
> *Bloody cruel and what a system!*

I am not suggesting that Michelle deliberately took up the role of the passive victim. Her decision in our interview to talk about her experiences in this way and to thereby paint herself as victim of exploitation was risky for her, in that it disrupted the subject position she was constructing in our interview – of confident, brilliant, successful. While not taking up the victim mantle, she does however refer indirectly to her complicity, and/or the complicity of women academics generally, when she states, " – well, in a sense, you self-exploit in the beginning because you want to do everything so well …". Her reference to self-exploitation exposes her actions upon herself as the active self-managing subject. Here again Michelle seeks to normalise or universalise her experiences of self-exploitation by her use of a tense other than the first person. That is, rather than saying '*I* self-exploited', she says 'well, *you* self-exploit … because you want to do everything so well'. In changing to this tense, Michelle was also trying to include me in the remark, to suggest that I too probably self exploit 'because I want to do everything so well'. Did she make this assumption because I am a woman academic or because she thought she recognised a fellow traveller?

Michelle's narrative of self-exploitation carries on over a lengthy passage. She talks about her (high) workload at the time of our interview – "I haven't had a day off of non-teaching for 9 days" – stopping from time to time to ask herself "why don't I feel exploited?" as if she recognises that by objective measures she should probably feel exploited. She doesn't answer her own question but presses on talking about her workload. She returns to the self-questioning in the subsequent paragraph when I ask her whether she could imagine doing any another job. After a pause she says yes, a fulltime research job, then quickly reverts to asking herself what she likes about this job: "And for me, what do I like about this job? I think I'm past the exploitative stage. I'll never be exploited like I was".

What identity work was performed in Michelle giving voice to her parallel story of stress and struggle? It seems to me that it was important to Michelle that this parallel story be given a place in her story and in our interview. In spite of this her investment in *not* seeing herself as exploited is strong. This investment is demonstrated in her struggle to accommodate the tensions in her account of her working life. In her monologue as spoken about in the previous paragraph, Michelle presents evidence of her extraordinarily high workload at the time of our interview. Yet to diffuse this tension she compares her present situation with her early years in the job.

The problems she experienced as a new academic raised serious questions regarding the structure of academic work, and power and gender relations in academic workplaces. However in her account of her academic life and career she relates the issues to a certain, *now past* time in her life ('the first year or two' in the job). Michelle both identifies them implicitly as systemic issues, yet suggests that the problems have been addressed, confined to the first couple of years. Her efforts to quarantine the problems and to quarantine their impact on her and those close to her in her account, highlights Michelle's need to construct a narrative identity that is coherent but importantly that is also flexible enough to incorporate conflicting and problematic 'sub-narratives'. That is, it is possible for Michelle to speak of these things now as they are *a thing of the past* in her construction of her academic career and identity.

In her account Michelle demonstrates her initiative in managing her own conduct, and self-regulating, like Deirdre, within the terms of the regimes of academic work and the careers discourse. This self-regulation occurred in the face of her at times profound unease with her positioning and the impacts on her health and well being. As Deetz (1998) noted in his study of the effects of the discourses of consulting and self-employment:

> The discourse structures the conflict as between the unity of self/employee … and a body and outside, thus these must be contained (p. 166).

A binary is created with the body and one's non-work relations on the one hand and work on the other. Fissures or cracks occur at the junctures between these points, as workers navigate the relationship between the two. This relationship is particularly vexed because of the integration between the self and the employee – as Deetz (1998) suggests: "The employee colonizes the home, community, educational institutions, state, and church" (p. 166). The identity of academic worker is for Michelle the primary subject position from which she understands and constructs her sense of self. It is or has become her 'authentic' self (see for example Raddon, 2002). While in our interview Deirdre who I introduced in Chapter Four explicitly denies her uptake of an academic identity, Michelle in her account articulates in clear terms her profound identification with her academic positioning: "I do all the things you're supposed to do as an academic". She is actively and self-consciously engaged in her own constitution as productive academic subject.

Michelle's account of her academic career trajectory from the years prior to even starting her university studies makes evident that her career project pre-dates by many years her experiences of mentoring. That is, Michelle *entered* mentoring as an active self-managing subject and that mentoring has been one of a number of processes of subjectification as an academic to which Michelle has applied herself and through which she has enlisted the aid of others.

Marian: "it's women who are actually doing something for women"

Marian is a lecturer in a social science faculty in a regional university in a large country town. At a previous university, she had helped to establish a pilot women's mentoring program, and was mentored in that program by a senior woman academic for 12 months. Prior to taking up her first academic position, Marian taught in the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector where she was mentored by two more experienced male staff as part of an orientation program for new teaching staff.

Like Karen and Michelle, Marian expressed positive views at our interview about mentoring. Like them too, she spoke to some extent about mentoring in terms that illustrate the role of mentoring in the ongoing processes in which the women are engaged of managing themselves as academics. Within Marian's account however other equally prominent discourses were given voice in particular the function of doctoral studies as a technology for the disciplining of newer academic workers, and a discourse of good campus citizenship.

Also prominent within Marian's account was a feminist discourse of community and political action that while alluded to in Karen and more so in Michelle's accounts, did not assume the same prominence as it did in Marian's story of academic identity. For Marian, mentoring for women was first and foremost a vehicle for improving the collective position of women through providing a systematic means for women to collaborate and support one another's goals. Marian made an express connection between individual change and development and institutional change.

Within Marian's account then, mentoring served less as a vehicle for her own self-regulation and self-advancement, however it played other functions within the feminist discourse she invoked, alongside other technologies of management of self and others that those regimes demanded. That is, while Marian did not discipline herself as an academic worker through mentoring to perhaps the same extent, she none the less disciplined herself as a woman academic worker, and

sought to see others disciplined, in the terms of the other regimes and disciplines she invoked.

The careers discourse that dominates some of the other women's narratives assumes a lesser place in Marian's, replaced by a discourse of mentoring as a feminist political practice. While the three other women referred to in this and the previous chapter to a greater or lesser extent expressed an appreciation of mentoring as a vehicle for supporting women in male dominated areas or universities, within Marian's narrative this understanding was central to Marian's subjectivity as a woman academic.

Unlike the three other women I have referred to in this discussion, Marian has a heightened awareness of the role of mentoring in the formation of professional identity. In the opening sentences of our interview she made an explicit connection between mentoring as a technology for fashioning appropriate professional subjectivities of her students. Marian teaches introductory subjects to trainee professionals, and spoke about her efforts to develop her students' identities through mentoring:

> *I'm to some extent sort of mentoring students along different sorts of*
> *levels of the program, and really see that as an important part of being*
> *able to shape what {these professionals} are going to be like in practice.*

Throughout the interview, Marian expressed an overarching interest in mentoring *as it applied to her students* as a process of identity formation for professional practice. This sense of mentoring was expanded to include her own experience of mentoring in the TAFE sector prior to becoming an academic:

> *I had to make that shift from being a professional in the field to actually*
> *being a teacher and teaching students to become professionals and it*
> *was quite a shift in how that actually happens …*

When speaking about her two mentors in TAFE she emphasized the orientation role they played in helping her acclimatize to the TAFE context and to her new role

as teacher. They were she explained, "… two people who could guide you through what you needed to do".

Interestingly, though, while Marian is explicit about the role mentoring plays in the subject formation of her students, and the role it played in relation to her previous teaching career in TAFE, she does not speak about her own experiences of mentoring in the university sector in terms of identity formation. She downplayed her personal experience of mentoring, preferring to focus instead on the institutional context for mentoring, and the features of her environment that were enabling or disabling for women's progress. In her brief replies to my questions about her own experience, she refers to her mentor's support in relation to her theoretical development and her doctoral studies. When I asked her about her work with her mentor, Marian replied with reference to her mentor,

> *She had a fair amount of status; very much into postmodernism, so I started to learn to learn different ways of viewing material etc. … I had some issues while I was working at {University 1} and she was actually really very helpful in trying to deal with those issues.*

Here also Marian introduces the role played by her mentor in dealing with issues in the workplace, the role of confidante and adviser. She goes on, …

> *Mostly it was about the sort of support, because I was in a team that was quite negative and there was quite a lot of fairly negative things happening with the students, so I really felt like I needed someone to kind of be able to test out things and so on. And I used her for that. … I did a few conference papers and she looked at those and I did a couple of practice runs with her. So it was really more about those sorts of ways of operating.*

In other words in Marian's account about her most recent personal experience of mentoring, the role of mentoring in the production of her own subjectivity as a woman academic – a feature of mentoring which Marian herself had introduced early on in the interview – is not discussed. It is when she talks about mentoring for *others* – her students, women *as a group* – that she is better able to articulate its

regimes. Yet even in the case of women's mentoring generally, she is silent on its role as a technology for the production of subjectivities.

Marian concentrates instead on a wider political function of mentoring for women within her institution, relating in detail the story of hers and others' efforts to secure ongoing support from the university for an ongoing women's mentoring program, and the frustrations and ultimate defeat they suffered. In telling this story Marian demonstrates over and above her desire for self-advancement, a concern with the advancement of women on campus as a group.

For Marian, mentoring is explicitly part of a feminist political agenda within the university. Her identification with this wider agenda moderates her uptake of the highly individualised discourses of success within her account of her own career. This is not to suggest she is unconcerned or outside the careers discourse, or that she is unconcerned with institutional hierarchy, as the following quote suggests:

> *Even someone like me {with extensive professional experience} is still a junior staff member because I'm not a senior lecturer. … I just found that absolutely amazing that you're appointed on the basis of your practice experience and your qualifications, and then you immediately become a junior staff member! (…) Where I'm located now, if I don't jump the hurdles to become a senior lecturer, I'll go into retirement being a junior lecturer and I think that's rather amusing! If nothing else it's kind of absurd!*

Her indignation at her formal status within the institution and her personal ambition is however offset against her commitment to working collaboratively with other women in her university to advance the position of women as a group.

> *One of the ways that senior women decided – there were only two of them – that we would try to make some difference, was perhaps to try to have some mentoring to see 'Well OK. What are the barriers to women being able to get on in this system? What are the things that perhaps we might be able to do differently?'*

The biographical project of the self is in Marian's case moderated or overlaid with another position that Marian assumes of a feminist committed to working collectively, and subject to the regimes of truth that permeate that discourse. The project hence becomes more complex, as Marian negotiates between what she perceives as the conflicting terms of the discourses, of what it means to be a feminist in practice, and what it takes to have a successful academic career. She uses the term 'conundrum' to describe the conflict she experiences as a consequence of her identification with feminist collectivist goals and her desire to be recognised and rewarded for her contribution to campus life. Her identification as a feminist also comes into conflict in her account with her wider concerns with bringing about institutional change within the university, in accord with a feminist political project of transformation. When speaking about the unsuccessful attempt to gain funding for a mentoring program to which I referred to earlier, she muses,

> *I wonder if it kind of back-fired in a sense, us having women as mentors and making it a women's program, because she {the DVC making the decision} was very anti that, but that was the strategy we took, and I mean I'm glad we did, because we were able to sort of use feminist processes in actually engaging in it. That was useful if nothing else.*

Here the feminist committed to collective ways of working struggles in her account with the strategic academic subject as she reflects on how they might have done things differently. Her cynicism grows during the interview as she increasingly locates these two positions at odds with each other. When I ask her whether it is possible for women to build an academic career based on the kind of collectivist principles she espoused, she replied, "No not really. It's a bit like we used to say in the union movement: 'Nice guys run last'. The world's full of them". Later she adds,

> *I'm constantly in this conundrum of wanting to work in ways that are collaborative and collectivising, so that you are actually able to advantage each other as a means of moving forward ….*

This is followed by a further expression of doubt about whether the exercise has been worth it.

it hasn't always worked in my favour, I have to acknowledge that, but it seems to me that unless you do that collectivising, then somehow or other, you end up being sort of outside of whatever it is. You might be striving for where you're going and not get there anyway and then what happens …?

The cynicism expressed in her account sits uneasily with her activism on campus and the thread of hope and optimism running through her account.

Her reticence in regard to her own experience and her lengthy remarks in regard to the experiences of others or of women as a group suggest a different set of disciplining regimes which shape Marian's conduct. Marian is concerned with the productive effects of mentoring *for the group*, namely women academics, and dealt fleetingly with the productive effects for her as an individual. She returns repeatedly to the collectivist discourse dispensing quickly with my questions about *her* experiences or the individual impacts.

In her engagement with these discourses, Marian also submits herself to the disciplinary regimes of the group. She therefore is governing her personal conduct as a *member of a group* with whose values she identifies. Further Marian seeks to govern others, *or see others governed*, within that same regime. An illustration of this is her account of a former female campus deputy director's career trajectory.

Marian: *Some of the ways in which she's gone about that haven't been very good, and she hasn't really wanted to have a group of women around her to give her any support, and that's been disappointing, because she's made a few blunders that she didn't need to make if she really – there were three or four of us who said to her, "Let us be your support mechanism. Let us kind of talk you through what was going on. We're not at that level, but we're on the outside looking in, we can see what's happening. You need an objective eye, because you know, there'll be plenty waiting to trip you! And there'll be plenty waiting for you to trip."*

AD: And why do you think she didn't want you to play that role?

*Marian: Because she felt that that would make her look weak, and so
           – yeah.*

*AD: What, in particular that you were four women? Or that she
           had a support group?*

*Marian: Yeah. As a support group, she thought that would make her
           look weak. And it may well have, in certain eyes, I don't know.
           I mean, it didn't need to be a very public thing, and we
           certainly weren't wanting it to be public. We weren't kind of
           wanting to do that to her.*

Is this a moral tale, the story of a woman who stepped outside the regime of the group and 'made blunders' as a result? In this example, Marian seeks to see the behaviour of others governed from within her disciplining framework of the regimes of truth of feminist collectivism. Importantly it is only women who are governed in this way, consistent with the terms of an essentialist discourse which states that, as Marian put it, women have "different ways of working. … in ways relating to one another …". This discourse when played out in organisations leads as it does in Marian's case to problematic expectations of women's behaviour as senior managers. These expectations are problematic in the sense that their only 'truth' derives from the regime of which they form a part. As feminists we expect women to behave better, or at least differently. This set of expectations ignores the structural, discursive and micropolitical contexts in which women in senior jobs are positioned and in which they are required to forge their roles and identities (for a discussion of 'micropolitics' see Morley, 1999).

A recurring theme in Marian's account of her academic life is her story of her progress towards completing doctoral studies. She introduces her PhD in her opening comments to the interview and returns to it on several occasions, drawing a picture of her doctoral work as a defining aspect of her academic career and subjectivity. I ask her about her current job and how she came to be working there, in reply to which she talks about her teaching then introduces her research:

And, of course, my research interests are around sexuality and identity. And in particular, my PhD research is around lesbian sexual identity and how women determine that, or find it, or form it. But identity, I guess is one of the key things that I'm really interested in …

It is at this point she makes the connection to the formation of students' professional identities as discussed earlier. She returns to the subject of her doctoral studies when I ask her a little later about her notions of career and success. In her story completing her PhD is central to her understanding of success. She relates the impact of changing universities on her doctoral work:

I came to {University 2} on a continuing contract but I had a three year probation which seemed like an enormously long probation, with the idea that I would complete my PhD in that time … I suppose one of the things that I hadn't really thought about was that, you know, coming to a new campus, changing my whole life around once again. (pause) I suppose I'm older this time and just found it a bit harder to do.

She had also enrolled at a third university in the nearest large city, and described the way she managed herself and her time in order to meet the varied demands of academic work at that time:

I was travelling up and down. It's a 570k round trip. I've always been involved in the professional organization … I'd get up at 5, leave at 6, spend all day at {centre in which she was undertaking doctoral work}, then do a meeting {of professional body}, and then drive back and sit in a truck stop for an hour or so and get home at one or two o'clock in the morning and then have a nine o'clock class. And I did that for two and a half years and I was just absolutely kind of wrecked.

Here Marian disciplines herself as an academic worker within a number of discursive formations. Prominent in this passage and in the pages that follow is the discursive role of doctoral studies defining her academic status. Also evident in these passages is the very practical consideration of continuing academic employment tied to completion of those studies. She relates in detail over the

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pages that follow her choice of topic, the problems that this presented her with, her commitment to do research on something she was 'passionate about', and finally her pleasure in finding a department and a supervisor who thought highly of her research. Within her home institution and faculty however, her work was marginalised creating problems for her within the contemporary regimes of many universities that seek to rationalise research support and maximise research outputs by directing staff into imposed research groupings and projects.

Within her account, Marian was expecting that completing her doctorate would be a turning point in her academic life. She clearly felt that the fact she did not yet have a doctorate meant she had little influence in the negotiation of priorities within the research groupings, and that with a completed doctorate she would be able to position herself differently within her faculty and university:

> *I have a very broad base of experience, but that sort of tends to get negated, because I'm seen as being 'The Lesbian who looks at sexuality'. … you kind of get put in a corner. Initially I found that hard. Now I'm sort of – I don't see that as being necessarily an issue. But of course, what it does is isolate you. And it makes it then much more difficult to find partnerships with people who want to do collegial work with you. So from that point, finishing the PhD will actually give me some opportunities to perhaps call the shots in a slightly different way …*

The PhD also plays a role for Marian in her account of her life:

> *For me completing my PhD will be success because, if you look at my background, I don't have a really strong academic – you know, from school days. Type of background. … in my family, I will be the first person with a PhD. That's very important to me.*

Over the course of her account of her journey with the doctorate, Marian replaced the word 'passionate' with 'pragmatic' to describe her attitude towards her studies. By the end of her story she relates that she had moved her enrolment to the university where she works, and had a new supervisor who she also described as 'pragmatic':

{She} doesn't really know a lot about sexuality but knows a lot of about
getting people to finish PhDs. … I just tend to be pragmatic about it.
There was no other way. I couldn't continue as I was. … So that feels
like it's actually going to happen. I wasn't quite so sure before.

Marian had also dropped a number of her outside community commitments, part of her more pragmatic approach to her academic and doctoral work. In spite of reduced commitments in these broader citizenship roles, Marian continued to derive considerable moral definition and personal satisfaction from her subscription to the discourse of good campus citizen:

I consider that to be an academic, you have to be part of the campus
life. That means going to occasional lectures doing things, and being,
you know, involved with whatever students are doing, that kind of thing.
… I guess that sort of gives me a forum within the rest of the campus to
be seen as sort of someone who's energetic and who does things and
all of that. So I think from that perspective, that's kind of an important
part of being able to be who I am, but also to have a profile within the
campus as well. Because I think that's what being an academic is
actually about. I don't think it's coming in, doing your work and closing
your door and then spending three days a week working off campus on
your own stuff.

She shows here her concern for her reputation within the university as a good campus citizen, as well as widening the notion of what it means to be an academic. Her sense of academic identity captures a wider range of meanings than expressed by many of the other women I interviewed, and articulates a different relationship to a wider community than say Deirdre, with her '100 foster babies' and Queens' Honours List (see Chapter Four).

The discourse of good citizenship then becomes the framework from within which Marian judges others. Following this excerpt above, she goes on to say: "And of course, no-one else in our – because they're all so busy with children – really wants to be involved in anything. So you know, I end up doing those things". In this

passage Marian articulates two distinct positions about the role of good campus citizen, about why you should do 'those things'. The first of these is that one should do them because 'this is what academics should do'. The second is 'I do these things because no-one else is willing to'. Evident in this juxtaposition is the effort Marian invests in managing her conduct to produce what she construes as the appropriate and active academic subject, and also her concern to see others also manage themselves accordingly from within that same discursive formation. Also evident in this excerpt is her annoyance as a woman with no children at the way in which other academics invoke their parenting responsibilities to evade their 'proper' obligations as Marian sees it.

In her managing of herself as a woman academic, I suggest Marian is an active but at times unruly subject, with shifting and unstable identifications – as feminist activist, good campus citizen, lesbian critic of the normative heterosexuality of campus life, and strategic academic subject. Over the course of our interview, she moves from a presentation of herself as a passionate outsider, to a portrayal of herself as a pragmatic and strategic academic subject. On the face of it Marian has effectively disciplined herself in terms of the performative demands of academic and institutional life. None the less her positioning of herself across the different discourses to which I refer is unsettled and continues to generate contradictions for her, as she endeavours to reconcile her multiple subject positions and identifications within a single seamless account of an academic career. Within her over all account she places little emphasis on her personal experiences of mentoring yet within her account mentoring for women assumes a prominent position. This is because Marian speaks about mentoring in terms of its political and institutional potential as a vehicle for change, rather than at a level of concern with the operation of the mentoring relationship itself or its immediate outcomes for the individuals concerned.

Marian actively self-regulates in terms of her understanding of what it means to be an academic in a country town and within the discourses of career advancement and status. However she is also actively governed within the regimes of feminist

discourse within which she both disciplines herself and seeks to see others governed.

With reference to the interview transcripts of two women in my study, Michelle and Marian, I have argued two main points in this Chapter. The first is that an active subject is central to an appreciation of governmentality. Relatedly, I argued that this concept of the active subject satisfies the need from a feminist perspective for a theory of the subject as active and agentic. Through my analysis of mentoring as a site of governmentality I also pointed to the problematic nature of mentoring as feminist practice within the dominant rationalities of contemporary universities as discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Chapter Six

Assembling the woman academic in discourse

My approach to analysing discourse

> The responsible {active, enterprising} individual produced by means of
> {techniques of responsibilisation} is both '… leverage for change as well
> as a closure on what it is possible to become' (McWilliam et al., 1999 p.
> 61).

Building on the previous two chapters in which I developed the argument that
mentoring functions as site of governmentality, in this chapter I examine the ways
in which the women assemble themselves within the rationalities of the discourses.
These include a number of discourses familiar to those in contemporary
universities, such as research, teaching, productivity and career. The women also
speak through a range of other discourses, such as gender; sexuality, reproduction
and mothering; community; ethnicity, and social class.

In this chapter I examine the dominant rationalities of academic work, as the
women in my study understand these. I take up McWilliam et al.'s (1999) use of the
term 'dominant rationalities' to mean the regimes of truth constructed in discourse
that determine what is allowed/not allowed and what it is possible/not possible to
be or to become within the terms of discourse (Foucault, 1980a).

In her genealogy of contemporary management in Australia, Hatcher (1998)
argues the identity of the 'enterprising manager' has been produced through the
'responsibilisation' of individuals. Within a governmentality framework,
'responsibilisation' is a process of making oneself responsible through careful and
painstaking work upon oneself. McWilliam et al. (1999) take up Hatcher's work to
argue that responsible academics are invited to see the role of "…
'leader/manager' as a positive way of bringing oneself into being as a different sort
of individual" (p. 61). They note, "The precise means of doing this is not an open

question, but is framed within the dominant rationality for constituting best practice"
(op. cit.).

The chapter is structured around my reading of excerpts from the interviews with
four women – Karen, Michelle, Barb and Angela – the first two of whom I
introduced in Chapters Four and Five respectively. In this discussion I work with
three questions:

1.   What discourses do the women draw upon to construct their subjectivity as
     academics?

2.   How do the women position themselves and how do others position them in
     relation to these discourses?

3.   What is produced through this positioning?

As I explored in Chapter Three, discourses do not arise in a vacuum nor do they
occur in isolation. The interview texts themselves are produced through the
confluence, and at times conflict between discourses. So too are the women's
accounts. A reading of a relatively small number of the women's accounts allows
for a close examination not only of the discourses through which the women form
their accounts, but also of the dynamic interaction between discourses. In my
analysis of the discourses I take up Butler's position in which she states that:

> … when the subject is said to be constituted through discourse that
> means simply that the subject is a consequence of certain rule-governed
> discourses that govern the intelligible invocation of identity. The subject
> is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because
> signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of
> repetition that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely
> through the production of substantializing effects (1999 {1990}, p. 185).

In the chapter I introduce the careers discourse as a framework for reading the
women's accounts. Mentoring has functioned as a form of career development for
all the women in my study, in that it has contributed to their development and
productivity as academic workers. The women's mentors have assisted them with

grant applications, preparing material for publication, enabled access to networks and so on, with the aim of clarifying and supporting the women's career goals. While for many of the women, mentoring has also functioned as a way of connecting with other women and alongside the support of a network of women peers, the careers discourse offers a useful analytic tool for understanding the women's self-regulation through mentoring. The ways in which the women position themselves within the careers discourse reflects their efforts to 'bring into being a different sort of individual' as they explore – and in some cases reject – 'what it is possible to become' (see McWilliam et al., 1999) within the dominant rationalities of academic work. Analysing these processes of assemblage reveals the very complex and vexed nature of the formation of subjectivity of the women concerned and highlights the ways in which women confront and contest the positions made available to them in discourse.

An important theme explored across the chapter is the different ways in which gender is viewed in relation to academic work. In their accounts Karen, Michelle and Barb characterise academic work in terms of its highly masculinist ways. This is particularly the case in their characterisation of successful academics. Each woman struggles to identify and position herself differently as a woman and a feminist within the limitations within which they see themselves working. While an analysis of gender and feminist principles also inform Angela's characterisation of academic work, her reading is also strongly informed through her active positioning of herself as a working class Greek Australian woman. Discourses of ethnicity, social class and gender together shape Angela's subjectivity as an academic.

From this analysis I conclude that the women are engaged in a 'biographical project of the self' that is iterative, ongoing yet different in each case. Mentoring focuses this project and in so doing throws into sharp relief the tensions and contradictions that arise in the constitution of the self in discourse.

Meaning making through a careers discourse

The elaboration of the 'career' can be seen as depending both on the construction of forms of inspection, examination and control to regulate job movements and to decide who should be promoted, but also the construction of particular forms of 'selfhood' as individual employees themselves come to recognise the 'career' as something which they should pursue (Savage, 1998, p. 69).

In his genealogy of careers in a large railway company in the United Kingdom in the 19th century, Savage argues the modern concept of 'career' developed when management thinking made the connection between careers and discipline. Prior to the 1870s, limited and loose career paths did exist in the railway company however these were separate from disciplinary regulations. That is, pay increments were paid automatically and progress to more senior and better-paid positions did not seem dependent on good behaviour or performance. At this time Savage (1998) suggests, job movement was not yet a moral project that workers should pursue (p. 73). This observation holds true of academic employment too, where progress through incremental pay scales within each level was formerly based on time served rather than on performance. Movement to a higher level of academic classification has always been based on formal application for promotion.

The centrepiece of the disciplinary system was instead 'The Rule Book' that specified in great detail how employees were to conduct themselves at all times. The dispersed nature of the workforce however meant there was no way of uncovering infringements of the rules or of enforcing them. For a time systems of visual inspections were introduced whereby inspectors would show up unannounced to supervise staff and observe their efficiency. Employees were hence subject – or potentially subject, as in the Panopticon – to surveillance, 'the gaze', as a means of ensuring discipline. This system Savage reports was considered a failure in that inspectors seldom went unannounced and by the 1870s management thinking shifted to the view that the best way to motivate staff was to pay them for good performance. New classification systems were introduced for

different groups of workers providing for increased pay for 'deserving' individuals. Savage (1998) notes:

> The inculcation of the promise of careers appears to solve a major problem facing employers, since it creates reasons for employees to monitor their own actions relieving the organization of the burden of supervision at least to some extent (pp. 84-85).

Through the mechanism of 'career' he argues railway employees came to manage themselves in accordance with company rules in order to secure for themselves the prospect of pay increases and promotion.

Grey (1994) examined the concept of 'career' in his study of the accountancy labour process in a large accounting firm. In this work he explored the relationship between the use of techniques of surveillance within the workplace and contemporary projects of self-management. He focused on the role that career projects could play in transforming subjects' experiences and understanding of workplace surveillance. Grey was concerned primarily with the self-discipline that is produced through the discourse of career amongst professional accountants:

> Work is a part of the entrepreneurial project of the self: a place where the self may become that which it truly is or desires to be. It is this sense of a process of the achievement of self through work which is offered within organizations as career and which is expressed by individuals through career (p. 482).

He argues that the discourse of career – together with the exercise of disciplinary techniques of workplace surveillance, such as annual performance appraisal interviews – contributes to the production of self-managing, self-disciplining subjects.

Grey (1994) uses the term 'project' of the self to denote what he describes as 'a distinctive modality of self-discipline'. The accountants whom he interviewed repeatedly refer to career, and whether or not one or other forms of behaviour would be 'good for your career'. Grey argued 'career' provides an organising

discursive framework to describe the range of practices of self-discipline he identified amongst accountants in this firm.

> The importance of the notion of a project of self-management, and the importance of careers within that project, is the ascription of unity to various processes of self-discipline (p. 481).

Grey argues self-discipline and the regulation of behaviour are activated through the discourse of career. Techniques of disciplinary power, such as the appraisal interviews, are constructed (and understood) as benevolent aids to career development.

Grey's and Savage's studies are important to my work as they make explicit the connection between career, and discipline and surveillance of workers, and specifically the ways in which 'career' activates self-regulation by workers. Savage's work argues that management introduced career paths with the express aim of leading employees to discipline themselves, in so doing bringing about a closer alignment of employee and organisational goals. That is, employees' self-regulation was not an unintended consequence of the introduction of careers but the intention of the management of the day when it developed and introduced (the prospect of) 'careers' amongst the organisation's workforce. Savage's reading therefore suggests a level of intentionality behind the processes of producing organisational subjects, rather than a reading of subject formation as an unintended outcome of the introduction of a policy.

I am not suggesting here that women (or for that matter, men) academics' self-regulation is the direct outcome of a specific policy enacted by university managements but instead suggest that this self-regulation is the product of the implementation of a suite of technologies associated with the enterprise university intended to act upon the academic through activating practices of self management (see also du Gay, Salaman, & Rees, 1996; Rose, 1999 {1989}).

The ways in which the women in my study manage themselves can be traced through an analysis of the women's engagement with different discourses, and how the women position themselves, or are positioned by others, within those

discourses. The concept of career offers an overarching discursive framework with which to 'read' the women's self-disciplining as academic workers and as subjects of mentoring. As Grey (1994) argues, though there are many examples of disciplinary power in workplaces – such as training courses – that lead to certain forms of subjectivity being encouraged and promoted, the concept of career transforms the nature and meaning of these exercises:

> In the new subjectivity of the managed self, career is of prime importance. In contrast to the unintelligibility, chaos and paradoxical nature of social relations in general, career offers at least the potential for the management of the self through 'steps on the ladder' or 'moves in the game' (p. 495).

Discourses of career and of upward mobility more generally (see Walkerdine, 2003) are implicated I argue in the project of producing academic women as particular sorts of subjects within their institutions. As the following analysis demonstrates, this project is uneven as women take up and discard the positions made available to them in discourse. In the readings that follow, I identify the discourses through which the women speak, and examine how each woman negotiates and renegotiates her relationship within those discourses, in constructing herself as an academic subject.

Subjectivity, space and desire: four women talk

Michelle: "a little office of my own"

I first introduced Michelle in Chapter Five. Michelle is a senior lecturer in a social science discipline. While she relates to her discipline internationally through her work on a professional body, success in Michelle's account is mainly conceptualised in terms of promotion through the institutional hierarchy to the rank of full professor, the most senior academic rank. But as I discussed in Chapter Five, her assured account of her career trajectory is disrupted from time to time as she relates her experiences of exploitation, overwork, sacrifice and ill-health. Her relationship to the position in discourse of successful academic is further unsettled as she draws on multiple concepts to characterise success.

On one hand, Michelle summarise her claims to success in terms that on the face of it are surprisingly modest (and already satisfied): "all I wanted was a little office of my own". In making this modest claim on the academy, though, Michelle hints at a much more significant claim through her invocation of Virginia Woolf's book *A Room of One's Own* based on two lectures Woolf delivered in 1928 at Girton College, Oxford University (1993 {1928}). In these lectures, Woolf articulated a treatise on the position of women as writers, at Oxford and in society more generally. Michelle's statement therefore operates at a number of levels, with her own claims for physical space a metaphor for a much more substantial feminist claim on a figurative space in the academy and in society. This space is characterised by belonging, recognition, entitlement, equality, independence and authority.

When I ask Michelle if she regards herself as successful she answers without hesitation or qualification, "Yes I am." I press her further on her ambitions in response to which she relates her desire to get promoted to professor as quickly as possible and then 'to stop'. Clearly Michelle perceives a career path as something over which she has control, and is able to turn on and off as she wants. Michelle tells me she plans to stop at professor because she is not certain she wants to go down the track of a career in university administration, even though she is sought out as an administrator because "{she is} good at it". Michelle's positioning of herself within academic and institutional hierarchies reveals how her understanding of her past, in particular her rapid and successful movements from doctoral student through to senior lecturer, motivates both how she understands her present and the ways in which she positions herself for the future. Further, the ways in which Michelle brings together her past and her future constitutes her as a subject in the present day and motivates her actions. This is not to suggest that her account of herself is fixed and unchanging, and at another time she may have provided a different account. I am instead pointing to the inter-relationship between the past and future and the present in the formulation of the narrator's account of her subjectivity.

I invited Michelle to characterise successful academics in her discipline. She asked whether I meant men or women and in reply I suggested she talk firstly about the women. She spoke about three senior women in her field in the country, whom I will refer to as A, B, and C.

> *... we had some prominent women like A. A has a reputation for being very argumentative and quite – kills you in arguments sometimes. And she's certainly – there's certainly lots of men that are frightened of her, so I quite like that part of her. But in all my interactions with her, and I've known her for ten years, I've only ever seen her as a very gentle woman. She will say "oh he's a fuckwit" and I like that. I like that directness. … I haven't seen the brutal side, but I'm sure it does appear, because lots of people have said it's there. The other ones – probably the other senior women are a little bit older than her – B and C. C is a lady – a very lady-like lady – you know, published but not as well-published as she should be. Very pedantic as an administrator. Too pedantic, I think.*

> *B was only senior lecturer until about six months before she left and then they made her a reader. And she wrote some really interesting and worthwhile things. She had a very successful husband, that I think until their marriage broke up, his career certainly subsumed hers. And she was an academic as well, but not as successful an academic. But the fact that they existed I suppose showed that there were women around.*

Perhaps the most significant thing about this extract is the way in which the three significant women role models are described directly or indirectly in relation to men or masculinity. This is done in A's case by describing how 'some men are frightened of her'. B is characterised as having a successful husband and subsuming her career to his until they divorced. C is characterised as a 'very ladylike lady – you know, published but not as well published as she should be'. The women are characterised through their demeanour ('brutal' or 'lady like') or

through their marital relationships (married and/or divorced). The use of the term 'lady-like' too implies a particular positioning in social class.

Michelle's reference to B and C as under-performing as academics ('not as well-published as she should be') alongside her reference to B & C's marital status also implies a causal relationship between their marital status and their limited academic output. In each case Michelle suggests they became more productive when their marriages finished. Michelle also invokes discourses of gender and femininity to describe the women's demeanour, with brutality and swearing most readily associated with men, and the use of the term 'ladylike' to describe C an invocation of a particular construction of the middle class feminine.

Interestingly too, in this passage Michelle identifies with A – her swearing and directness – an identification with a more masculine model of behaviour. For Michelle, I suggest this masculinity sits most demonstrably with academic success. Being ladylike is associated with under-achieving, suggested by her comment, 'a very lady-like lady – you know, published but not as well published as she should be'. Within Michelle's account then, success, captured in this passage in terms of research productivity, publishing, impact on your field, and harnessing the respect (fear?) of others, is masculinised whereas underachievement and reduced productivity is associated with constructions of the feminine and with deferential status to a man.

Immediately after this passage Michelle spoke about both her male mentors and of the significance of women role models and colleagues:

> But I think the men were my role models as well; probably D, … and E.
> E's wife was one of my Ph.D. supervisors. I had two women and one
> man as a supervisor. My Department started – when I first started at
> {alma mater} it was all male, and then they employed two women, Kerry
> and Davina … and they made an enormous difference. What was the
> difference? … They were kinder. You could talk to them more easily,
> although I could still talk to the men, my male supervisor; and they – the
> Department became kind of more people-friendly, more – they liked

each other. They were friends. They liked working together. And they
created a social environment. And we've got a very strong women's
group there. … We had a really strong mutually supportive group of
female post-graduate students. …. And, we were lucky. Like, we were a
powerful group. And there's still some there, but most of us have gone
off and we've got good jobs. The person in the office next door is one of
that group. She's got a job here now and when (she) came it was like
we both thought it was wonderful, because we can hope to emulate
what Kerry and Davina did for us, for our students.

In this passage Michelle shifted from a focus I had introduced on the significance of *senior women* to an outline of the importance of male role models in her own life; then quickly into a statement on the importance of having a critical mass of women in the department, the shift in culture this produced and the power generated for the women involved. In taking this direction Michelle re-conceptualises 'success' as something which may or may not be *possessed* by individual women ('lots of men are frightened of her') towards 'success' as *potentiality* amongst a group of women to bring about change, in this case change in the climate and culture of her department: 'They were kinder. … the department became more kind of people-friendly'.

'Success-as-potentiality' is reproduced in the next generation as Michelle and her peers set out to recreate that culture as they in turn take up jobs in universities. Michelle positions herself within a feminist discourse of gender-oriented organisational transformation, in the process invoking alternative conceptions of what it means to be successful. Within her overall account of success then there is movement between her more conventional ambitions for promotion, and her identification with the concept and practices of a community of women scholars in academia.

Yet a prominent and recurring feature of Michelle's account is her association of academic success with ill-health and trauma:

*AD: What do you think are some of the qualities it takes to be a
           successful academic these days? You've talked about some
           of the things we need to do, you know, the books, the grants,
           so on. What are some of the attributes?*

*Michelle: OK. Um … (pause) … it's hard, isn't it? I mean, the obvious
           things, to me, are perseverance and an ability to be tough,
           because you will get knocked about sometimes, and you've
           got to just live it through and not let it hurt you too much. An
           enormous – for the first few years here I was exploited to
           death, and I needed to have a enormous mental and physical
           endurance to survive it, because it was just … there was no –
           there was no … no quarter given new staff, really.*

Here Michelle speaks of the 'ability to be tough', of exploitation 'to death', of
'mental and physical endurance (needed) to survive' and of not 'let (ting) it hurt you
too much'. Her use of such strong words to convey her experience in this excerpt
and over the next few pages of transcript reveals the pain she has experienced in
establishing herself as an academic. She talks at length about her first few years in
the lecturer's job and the serious problems she suffered. Her revelations of her
experiences speak both of the demands of academic work and also generate
interesting tensions with the image she has established in our interview of brilliant
scholar. Her account of stress and ill-health risks disrupting the subjectivity she has
worked hard to project. Can she be simultaneously brilliant scholar *and* victim of
exploitation? The attributes required for success are most apparent to her as a
consequence of her exploitation, that is, she understands success through the lens
of her understanding of her own past. Michelle also critiques the institutional
strategy for 'supporting' new staff:

*So, the way the University supported its staff was to give us training
programs. So, you've got to go and do all these new training things on
top of writing all the new lectures you write, and supervising people
you've never supervised before. When I started here, on the day I*

*started I was – that first semester, I taught two new topics entirely. … I
was given five Honours and five post-graduate students, and I was Post-
Graduate and Honours Co-coordinator. That was on Day One. And I
had not taught at a university before, except a guest lecture.*

In this excerpt Michelle relates her personal experience of exploitation to wider
institutional responses to inducting new staff. She draws attention on one hand to
the multiple and conflicting injunctions of academic work, and to the impact of the
introduction of training programs ostensibly put in place to support new staff. Within
a governmentality framework such programs are another technology for managing
the subjectivities of academic staff, part of what McWilliam et al. (1999) refer to as
the 'new curriculum' being applied to professional identity formation in the
enterprise university.

In her account of the impact of her work on her well being, Michelle again draws on
a feminist discourse of solidarity with other women. She tells me about her visits to
the university psychologist, and what she and the psychologist discussed. In
making this confession to me, she presents herself as one of many (or most)
women who seek counselling, noting: 'What you'll find if you ask other women
academics – all of the new staff have to get psychological help in their first couple
of years. Nearly everyone that I know.' The vulnerability these confessional
comments expose within her account are moderated by her assertion that every
women academic has the same problem when they first start. Her strategy of
identifying herself as one of many women, goes some way to reinstating her
positioning as highly focused and successful, rather than as the isolated user of
counselling services. The effect of her observation is to normalise crisis amongst
women academics, particularly those starting out, and further to normalise therapy
as a way of dealing with it. In particular her comments normalise counselling as a
practice of *women* academics. This identifies women academics as most exploited,
overworked and in need of help whilst also drawing attention to the gendered
nature of the practice. Michelle's decision to present her situation in this way may
reflect her investment in knowing she is not alone, that other women are having

similar experiences. This echoes Karen's comment,"… just knowing other women are going through it".

Shortly thereafter Michelle introduces a story about 'coping' when she talks about her decision to put student consultation hours on her door on the advice of the psychologist. Interestingly in the semester in which I interviewed her, Michelle noted she had not done that because '… I've sort of been coping anyway'. This comment does two things. Firstly, it is an equivocal statement of Michelle's position in that she's not *certain* she's coping. Secondly, it characterises the issue of exploitation of new academic staff as an individual issue of 'coping'.

Michelle not only discussed her conditions of work with the psychologist but also with her mentor. On my reading, out of these sets of discussions came two very different forms of problematisations, both of which Michelle spoke about at our interview. One of these presented the issues as a medical problem for which individualised responses were recommended. The other located Michelle's problem in an institutional framework and suggested institutional responses. Her psychologist taught her coping strategies including advertising student consultation hours, while her mentor encouraged her to document workloads then take the matter to the Presiding Member of her faculty. As a consequence of this latter initiative a 'workload equalisation' process was undertaken and the situation improved. Within Michelle's account these problematisations sit alongside one another unproblematically reflecting her reliance on both psychologised and individualised discourses of 'coping', and industrial discourses in which she exercises power and acts as an institutional player.

With reference still to her first few years in the job, she continues her account of stress and distress. Reflecting on a period where 'maybe I had one day off in three months', she draws on discourses of work and family, and gender to describe what was happening to her:

> *… and that would be just a day where I was exhausted and I just, you know – and then you feel like, you have a family, and you feel like a total failure for your family. You think: 'Oh my god! I don't want to be this …*

person who has to pay this terrible price. A male academic.' It's a male

model, you know, and I could see myself living this male model.

In this excerpt, Michelle articulates her unhappiness about her relationship with her family at a time when she was working long hours for unbroken periods. She identifies her pattern at this time as a 'male model', which she characterises in terms of absence, tiredness and sacrifice with regard to family commitments. She both identifies and dis-identifies with this model, clearly hoping to enact something other in her own practices.

Later in the interview I ask her whether she can imagine doing any other job. She speaks about the positive aspects of the job, and finishes by saying:

I like being part of a system. (…) I like the fact that there's a structure

where somebody has to care for me too. I have a supervisor, a mentor,

friends; that people have a responsibility to care for me and I like that,

and I have a responsibility for other people too.

This account of having a place in the system ('a room of her own') and networks of care seems at odds with her detailed account of exploitation, and her experience of unsafety as discussed here and in Chapter Five. Within her account there can be read a series of disjunctures – between her positive account of being part of a system and having people care for her, the return to the theme of how negative the system is in its exploitation of her and other women, particularly when first appointed, the caring role played by her mentors and her friends in her 'girlie networks' and the importance of these supports in sustaining her in that system.

At different stages in her account Michelle refers to the difficulties of not having women colleagues and of wanting women colleagues. At one stage she reports the following exchange with the psychologist, who had asked her:

"What about the other women in the department? Can you talk to

them?" And I cried! I said, "There are no other women!" And I didn't

realise until that point how important it was for me to have girlfriends.

(Emphasis in original interview)

Here Michelle echoes a theme in the feminist literature on women in academia of women academics' feelings of isolation and alienation, particularly in areas where there is not a critical mass of women. She talks about the importance of friendships with women colleagues and the affirming nature of women's friendships, suggesting again the significance of her positioning of herself within a feminist discourse of community and solidarity in the constitution of her subjectivity.

It was now quite late in the interview and Michelle had made only one fleeting reference to her family and her role in it ('a total failure'). I was interested in this silence because on her university web page she referred explicitly to her partner, her son and her dog. Why did she choose to reveal this personal information on her web page to anyone who might visit the site but not during our interview? Did my invitation to be interviewed about 'your work as an academic and your experiences of mentoring' foreclose in her mind on any discussion of 'family'? I asked her about the reference to her family on her web page.

> Michelle: Oh, yes … that personal stuff at the end? Yes. Oh, we've got two Labrador puppies now!
>
> AD: Can you tell me a little bit about your choice to include that? Was that your choice?
>
> Michelle: Yes, I always include a little about family life. I do it for two reasons. One is because I don't always make – I'll give you this. It's just an edited book and it's got a photograph of my son in it, and whenever I publish anything, I usually have a photo of my son in it. And partly I do that because – and I notice other young women do it too – as a way of sort of making up for not being there, which is kind of sad, but a way of integrating your personal and private life.
>
> AD: Is that important to you?
>
> Michelle: Yes. Of course it is! I'm doing a lot more now than I ever was. But there was certainly a year, or eighteen months, where I

didn't see him. There he is! That's my son! (showing me a
photograph in a book she took off her shelf)

In this Michelle draws on the concept of an integrated self that dominates
contemporary debates about work and family life. Within these debates an ideal is
promoted according to which the self is 'in balance' between the demands of work
and family. Michelle, like Karen a little later, subscribes to this position of the
integrated or balanced self, but finds herself facing contradictions as she
negotiates her positioning within the discourses of good mothering and of
academic careers (see Raddon, 2002). Her partial solution to this tension is to de-
centre good mothering within her account by allowing her male partner to assume
the role of good mother.

Michelle identifies herself as 'a lucky woman' because her partner gave up his
career for hers. She describes herself as the absent parent while he plays primary
carer of their young child:

> *We decided we could have one career and a child. We couldn't run two*
> *careers and a child.*

In this account then Michelle occupies the position that countless men occupy, of
parent with a career with spouse full-time or near full-time engaged in child rearing
and home duties. But for Michelle as a woman to occupy this position is regarded
by her and reportedly by her friends, as being the object of 'good luck'. Within her
account a successful academic career and children are juxtaposed in conflict with
one another. There is no compromise position to this dilemma, with the choice
made for either a child or a second career. Michelle's blunt reporting of her's and
her partner's choices was however problematic for her as the following section
indicates. Referring to her partner she chokes back tears saying,

> Michelle: *I mean, say what they like now, but I think … he's happy in*
> *his day-to-day life now. But he certainly hasn't achieved the*
> *things in his life that he could have achieved if he had had a*
> *wife who was going to support him, rather than him having to*

> *support the wife. And I am always extended to the edges so*
> *that people have to support me all round …*

AD: *Is that what you see around you in terms of successful*
        academics, that kind of model?

Michelle: *Where people exploit their partners?*

Here Michelle introduces the idea of exploitation but on this occasion within the context of a discussion of her relationship with her husband. Her brittle response to my last question above reflects the conflict generated by her active engagement with discourses of academic careers, while she continues to invest and identify with a position for herself in a conventional discourse of good mothering and the norms of heterosexual family life.

Interestingly after her strong identifications as an academic in her discipline throughout our interview, Michelle now refers to 'the personal stuff' as important because:

> *… academia is so boring, you know? The most boring people in the*
> *world! So if you put a little bit of personal stuff … I want people to have a*
> *sense of me.*

What is 'me'?! Is it the ambitious and successful academic subject Michelle is working so hard to construct? The feminist with a commitment to achieving things for others in society through her work and not just focused her own career track? In this excerpt Michelle draws on an essentialised self, that is, interestingly, the mother, partner and labrador owner, suggesting the power of the discourse of mothering and family in contemporary society. Within my framework of a non-unitary subjectivity, Michelle is of course all these things, moving at any one time amongst multiple and at times conflicting subjectivities.

Karen: "the way I'd like to be living my life"

AD: So, why did you choose Susan {as your mentor}?

Karen: She struck me as someone really solid and centred and caring. Like, a really serene sort of person.

AD: What context did you see her in?

Karen: … I'd just met her a couple of times, and I just thought, you know, if she has gotten where she is – because she was an Associate Professor – if she's gotten where she is while being this sort of, you know, very stable, gentle-seeming sort of person, she must really have some clues! About the way that I'd like to be living my life, too. … That I would like to be that kind of person. I'd like to get ahead and not be, sort of, a maniac, which a lot of people are! Let's face it, a lot of women are, who get ahead. They get ahead by being perfectionists and difficult and all those things. A lot of men are, too, obviously, but, … you need to be that little bit more difficult to break through as a woman. Yeah, so, I didn't want to be that kind of person. I saw myself as someone more like Susan. I wanted to be more, sort of, calm and serene and centred, and just – (pause) quietly achieving.

Here Karen explains why she chose Susan as her mentor in a formal women's mentoring program at a university at which she worked. In her response Karen constructs the successful academic subject in terms of institutional rank as the one who has achieved promotion to Associate Professor, the second most senior academic rank below full professor. Interestingly, success for Karen (and for most of the women in my study) is represented in institutional terms rather than for example, in terms of one's location or status within a discipline internationally. That is to say, the focus or arena in which success is played out is institutional. This is perhaps not surprising as many women are limited in their mobility across a working life because of their commitments to their children, partners and parents.

In Karen's terms, the successful (woman) academic subject is 'difficult', 'perfectionist', 'maniacal' in contrast to the 'serene' 'solid', 'caring' subject represented by her mentor. The binary Karen sets up through these remarks is of course highly gendered with the feminised and maternal values of caring in sharp relief to the masculinised values of 'the successful academic'. Karen articulates this contradiction when she recognises her mentor as both successful *and* not masculinised. This is not to suggest that the successful academic has an *a priori* gender identity but to draw attention to the ways in which the successful academic subject for Karen is coded 'male' according to common constructions of gender performativity (Butler, 1999 {1990}). Karen in taking up these characterisations further invokes those identities for women and men academics.

Drawing on a review of the literature, Raddon (2002) formulates the following checklist of the characteristics of a 'successful academic':

> The 'Successful Academic' devotes all their time and energy to the university … networks both in and out of work hours … is guided into and through their career by a mentor … builds a reputation through research … is 'career-oriented', 'productive', 'hard-working' and 'enthusiastic', and publishes in the *right* publications … has a linear career path … gains the majority of their experience within the university environment, particularly within a prestigious faculty or field … focuses on research rather than teaching, administration or the caring, pastoral role … and has a particularly high research output in the early years of their career … (p. 390-391).

Note that in this checklist the 'Successful Academic' has no gender. Yet as Raddon points out, while there is nothing explicit which says the 'Successful Academic' is a man, 'or indeed a child free woman', a number of aspects stand in the way of women and in particular mothers being able to succeed. These include women's primary responsibility for caring and domestic work across cultures and countries, the fact that women take time out of their careers to have children, and that they dominate lower level and part-time jobs in universities (p. 391). These features of

women's labour market participation are reinforced in discourse that specifies women's primary roles in society generally and more particularly in academic work.

Raddon's summary builds on a well-established critique of the academy as gendered (see Chapter Two) and in particular draws attention to the masculinist bias inherent within the discourse of academic careers. My use of the term 'woman' as an adjective in front of 'academic' in this thesis is intended both to signify the identity I am invoking as 'other than man' and also to problematise the gendering of 'academic' as male. This gendering has profound implications for women seeking success in academic work, as they endeavour to position themselves within a discourse in which they are repeatedly constituted as outsiders (Devos, 2004a).

Within the binary of 'caring/difficult' referred to by Karen, the qualities of caring and serenity are posited as exterior to a state of success. These qualities are also coded female within the expectations of gender performativity. However, constituting these qualities as feminine runs the risk of essentialising women, of entrapping women within a discourse within which caring behaviour is considered appropriate for women, and women who do not readily and always show they care are defined as 'difficult'. In this respect too, Karen's words echoes Michelle's characterisations of success as expressed in her discussion of the three women role models in her discipline. To put it another way, part of the gender performance required of women institutionally (as in society generally) is to be caring. Both Karen and Michelle regard being difficult as a more male way to behave, but one which both articulate as necessary for academic success.

> *AD: Do you regard yourself as successful?*
>
> *Karen: (laughs) … yeah. I mean there are people who are more*
> *successful but I think, I'm certainly not a failure. And when I*
> *think of – you know, I do have little demons about people*
> *who are younger than me and senior to me, that sort of thing,*
> *if I let myself. I'm letting go of that. But when I look at the*
> *people who are in that position, who I would consider more*

successful than me, they don't have kids. They probably don't
have as rounded a life as I have. I think in the context of
being a reasonably hands-on mother, for one who's also got
a full-time job, I think I've done quite well.

Here Karen draws on discourses of mothering in her construction of her subjectivity as a 'hands-on mother' (or one actively engaged in mothering). This discourse of mothering is posited in her account as being in opposition to or outside a state of success. She also refers to a 'rounded' life drawing like Michelle on the construction of an integrated or balanced self as a virtue. Karen later qualifies her opinion of herself as successful, saying

… I said that thing about people younger than me getting promoted
above me, makes me grind my teeth a bit! But in principle I know that
the level you're at is not necessarily a measure of – well, it's not a
measure of what I want to achieve, you know, and if I were at a place
where I had to do a whole lot of stuff that I simply wasn't interested in
and didn't regard as worthwhile in order to get promoted, then I would
not do that stuff. And I think that's the beauty of being an academic, that
you can set your own agenda. And OK, there might be a price sometime
in setting one agenda rather than another but you do still have that
choice. And if the price is only in terms of career advancement rather
than in terms of you know, your pay or whatever, then fine.

Karen participates in a discourse of academic success in terms of institutional rankings, but also endeavours to develop alternative understandings of what it is to be successful. These alternative understandings need to pay attention to the material features of her life – mainly her construction of herself as a 'hands-on' mother – and also stress the importance of autonomy and self-direction in her work. She experiences a tension between her desire to be a 'hands-on mother' and success in an academic career as it is traditionally defined. A little later she adds:

… You heard the long pause when you asked me if I was successful,
now I think I am, but I'm successful given that I've got kids. And I am

quite happy adjusting my notion of success based on that fact. You
know. I would really love to still be around come the day when men say,
"Yes, I think I'm successful given that I've got kids!" I might be, or I might
not be.

Here Karen articulates an alternative definition of success, qualified by her status as a 'hands-on mother'. In order to manage those tensions, she critiques the model of success, whilst also working with and through a modified concept of success. In this engagement the discourses of academic success as reflecting a male model are unsettled, yet remain intact, and Karen assembles and disassembles herself. A couple of weeks after our interview, Karen was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor, the second most senior academic level below professor. Karen *is* successful then both in institutional terms and according to her own qualified conceptions of success.

Discourses of mothering informed our interview in a number of different ways. Earlier in the interview Karen related the events leading up to her decision to join a newly established mentoring program for women at the university at which she worked at the time. She had just returned from study leave overseas, and was feeling depressed that she had not achieved much during her leave: 'It was cold, the baby was always sick and we just – oh, it just wasn't a very good time. I mean, I got some work done, but it's still sitting in a drawer'. Her capacity to work was clearly moderated by her role as primary carer for a young baby. Yet Karen was none the less concerned to ensure I didn't think she did nothing ("I mean I got some work done"). Her low mood was compounded, she reports, by some poor teaching evaluations:

And, you know, I had always had that feeling – I'm sure you've heard
this from a lot of women, like you're an impostor. Like, you're going to
get found out, you know? Like, no matter what. And it was really
interesting, because I'd never felt this at (her first university), but at (her
second university), you know, I had this underlying feeling of – lack of

entitlement. So, like, you have to just watch yourself so carefully

because – you know – you're going to be defrocked at any moment!

In this excerpt Karen makes explicit reference to her constitution as outsider within the academy, or more specifically at one university at which she worked. In other words her experience of playing an impostor has not been universal but felt at one university and not others. When I ask her to elaborate on the reasons for this she referred to the concept of a 'climate of entitlement', which was present at her first but not her second university. This climate is characterised in her account by a strong feeling of collegiality and sharing amongst colleagues who behave as peers rather than in hierarchical terms. It is also characterised by the presence of a number of senior women, although Karen makes no explicit connection between a climate of sharing and the presence of women, as Michelle did in her account.

In response to my questioning, Karen goes on to suggest that a 'climate of entitlement' is achieved with the presence of a number of competent women 'doing responsible jobs and getting on with it and not dropping the ball!' By this account then women become responsible for creating this climate of entitlement through their sustained good performance. That is Karen places the responsibility for effecting cultural change at the door of individual women and women as a group in local sites. It also highlights the fragility of the 'entitlement' that it can be lost when a woman drops the ball. Following this remark she then gives a different account for the origins of this feeling of entitlement:

But, that's the interesting thing, because it comes from inside, that

feeling of lack of entitlement, you know? Well, it comes from your

environment, I suppose, but a lot of it is about how you feel, you know?

It's a very hard thing to talk about, because people can just say to you,

"Well, just change the way you think! You're entitled! I'm telling you!" So

– "Shut up!" sort of thing. It's a very, very tricky thing, isn't it, because

you need to sort out how much of it is empowerment from within, sort of

thing, and how much is about the environment. And to the extent that it

is about the environment, it's very, very subtle.

When I sat down to analyse this transcript, I calculated that at university 1 Karen was a single woman with no dependents while at her second university she had a partner, her first then her second child. As Raddon (2002) discussed, the experience of bearing and raising children marks a material shift in one's experience of the world of work, and a shift in how one is received in the workplace. The 'climate' to which Karen refers then may in fact be a more complex climate of entitlement *for mothers* rather than *for women*. That is to say, Karen and others are positioned as mothers and not just as women.

Across these excerpts Karen assumes individual responsibility for her situation whilst also referring to issues of systemic discrimination against women as a group in an effort to account for her positioning of herself within her institution at that time, finding neither one nor the other set of accounts fully satisfactory in and of themselves. Importantly the sense of lack of entitlement about which she spoke originated not in regard to her relations with her colleagues but in her role as teacher, referring again to a batch of poor student evaluations.

Karen again draws on discourses of mothering when she speaks about these evaluations, but in a very different way: "I actually had comments on those evaluations saying things like, 'She's not there for us. It's always for Emma, which is the baby, right?" In this Karen is positioned by her students as the neglectful mother by the jealous older siblings as they deal with the arrival of a new baby. Her uptake of this position as teacher/mother is characterised in complex ways when she reports on one student's resentment towards her:

> *I was just walking down the path, and he just collared me on the path*
> *and said, "Oh, I need to talk to you about such-and-such," and I think I*
> *just said, "Oh, well – " and he said, "Oh, are you going off to feed Ella?"*
> *And I said, "Yeah. Can we do it another time?" And he said, "Oh, yeah,*
> *yeah. That's fine." You know…and I just sort of wonder if exchanges like*
> *that made him think, "Oh, how dare she go off and feed her baby*
> *instead of talking to me!" When, you know, I've always had a thing about*

students collaring you in the library or something, trying to talk to you,
rather than using consultation times, you know?

Karen views the student's behaviour as aggressive ("he just collared me") and interprets his reactions as evidence of his annoyance that she is not paying him sufficient attention when he demands it. In this excerpt she juxtaposes teaching and mothering, and in particular teaching and breastfeeding. Karen's rejection of the student's approach becomes a refusal to 'feed on demand'. In this representation, the student's resentment is aroused as he experiences himself being usurped at the teacher's breasts by the new baby (see Gallop, 1995).

At the interview Karen did not seem aware of the effects of the metaphor she had used in discussing this experience. Without pausing she went on in a highly practical tone to speak of the importance of sticking to her advertised student consultation hours. Alternatively perhaps in doing this Karen deliberately rejects the place in discourse in which she understands herself to have been positioned by the student as teacher/mother. She may also be rejecting the construction of teaching as breastfeeding on demand as characterised in the student's response. In any event Karen's construction of herself as a woman academic is profoundly shaped, I suggest, through discourses of mothering.

Barb: "… all that stuff people want. I want to be loved!"
Barb is a lecturer in a central support unit in a university. She completed her doctoral work in the social sciences about three years before our interview. Following one or two short-term appointments, she took up her current continuing (tenured) position, even though it was not in her field, as a way of breaking in to the academic labour market. She spoke to me about her efforts to maintain contact with her original discipline and her hopes for securing a job in her field in the coming years.

Barb: *I got the certificate {in higher education} this year, so – I did*
that after the Ph.D. Because I was aware that I didn't have –
my teaching background wasn't a strength. I hadn't convened
many courses. So, when you look at my CV, I've done

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tutoring … And I did have one course that I was given the
opportunity to convene after I finished my Ph.D. But it was
still fairly weak, when you think … there were people –
Lecturer B-level casuals, who've convened, co-coordinated,
taught, tutored, you know, done the whole slap-bang thing for
a six month contract for five years at a time, and I'm
competing against those people if I'm going for a three-year
contract, or five-year contract. So, I was aware of some of the
weaknesses.

AD: *So at that stage you were pretty set on an academic career*
    direction?

Barb: *Yeah. I couldn't see any other possibility ….*

In this excerpt Barb displays the strategic academic subject as she seeks to
position herself within the national academic labour market as she sees it,
assessing her strengths and weaknesses within that market. Within that
construction, the curriculum vita becomes the measure of the person. In spite of
her strategic approach to her career her answer to my question here denies her
agency in constructing her career. A little later she speaks about a couple of recent
job applications again displaying the strategic subject, but this time in danger of
confronting problems of the passage of time:

… if I don't get a position – they've got two jobs there – if I don't get a
position there now, it will be another three years before another one
comes up. So, unless someone dies or something; but as far as
planning goes, it will be another two to three years, so it would mean
going interstate. The job options here are just so limited for an
academic.

In constituting herself in this way Barb draws on discourses of career and a
construct of the academic labour market, in so doing positioning herself as a
strategic subject actively shaping herself within the rationalities imposed by these
constructs. Her strategic intent is offset by a sense of guilt that she doesn't

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appreciate her situation as much as she should, on a few occasions describing her position as privileged compared to 'normal' academics (in terms of hours etc.) but as having no career path.

> *I just think, you know, I've probably got fifteen years left, and I just want to travel and enjoy a career. I'm not heading for Professorship, you know? Like, I'd like to get to Lecturer C, maybe Associate Professor, but Lecturer C, top of Lecturer C, I'd be happy. And just do what I want to do. I'm much more interested in doing the kind of research I want to do, and teach in the areas I want to teach.*

One of her motivations for getting to the 'top of Lecturer C' (Senior Lecturer) may well be financial at a time when academic salaries have fallen well behind comparable professions in Australia. But it is none the less worth noting the way in which she frames the academic levels in her construction of success and an academic career.

Her concern with time is further reflected in her sense of the imperative to move while time permits:

> *… in terms of getting an academic career in the areas that I want to, the job hinders that because I'm no longer teaching in the normal framework of what academics think of as teaching. And so, I reckon it's got another twelve months' use-by date, and by that time I'll be totally out of the loop.*

The rationality of the careers discourse demands that job movements always take place in a clear and timely upward progression. The pressure to manage herself according to the timetable imposed creates anxiety but also provides an overarching rationale to motivate Barb's actions and a basis for deriving meaning from them. In her account her career ambition is moderated by her desire, like Karen, 'to do what she wants', suggesting that career progression beyond Level C (Senior Lecturer), and personal satisfaction may be incompatible. When I ask her about success, she described it in comparative terms, in terms of how other people see her; for example "For someone who's been out three years, I guess you know,

I'm perceived as reasonably successful by my peers, I guess by people who've been out three years!" 'Out' refers to years since she completed her doctorate; her use of this term reflecting a conventional academic career structure wherein academic work starts once doctoral work finishes.

In her response Barb defines success both by comparing herself with her peers, and in terms of how her peers see her. By this measure she admits somewhat reluctantly that she is successful. I suggest 'reluctantly' because according to the discursive framework she employs of career *in her discipline,* she does not regard herself as successful. This suggests that academic subjectivities are not universal but differ by disciplinary context, or alternatively, that people want disciplinary success rather than institutional success (or both). In the closing stages of our interview I asked her what she would like to be doing in three years' time:

> *I'd like to be in a {her discipline} Department. Probably going for a Lecturer C! Yeah. That would be my ideal. Teaching, doing research, respected amongst my professional associates, liked by my students, all that stuff people want. Want to be loved! (laughs)*

In her envisioning of her future Barb draws both on the careers discourse and, importantly, on success as embodied in her capacity to attract the love and respect of others. Barb's evocation of love introduces a very different construction of success than I have discussed so far. It hints at the complex identity work performed by careers and success in constructing the subject.

In her account of her work and her career, Barb's positioning of herself is shaped through her feminist analysis of higher education. Gender emerges as a highly influential frame of reference in her understanding of herself and her career. I ask her why she has referred only to women role models:

> *Barb:*   *Yes. Well, that probably comes from the fact that I kind of have a feminist bias, so I look to women for my success stories. I wouldn't look to a male as a role model, necessarily, because they have different lives, different priorities. And there aren't too many men that I would like to emulate.*

AD: *Why is that?*

Barb: *They play the game, they play the game and they're quite*
            cynical about the game. They're cynical about it but play it in
            any case, whereas I think women have much more integrity in
            playing the game. And they are not as supportive I find.

Here Barb draws on the metaphor of the game to characterise the nature of
academic work, and men and women within academia (see Grey, 1994). Within the
game men and women play different roles, according to Barb. Her references to
'the game' imply that the game is somehow fixed, not in the sense of rigged
necessarily although this may be the case. The game is fixed in that it cannot be
changed. The game is also separate from the people who play it. In this reading,
power resides inside the game as opposed to viewing the game as contingent and
constructed, with power only present when exercised by its players. In setting up
the game in this way Barb precludes the possibility that the game can be changed
by the players, in other words that active subjects might exercise power
(differently) in order to change the way the game is played.

In Barb's reading there is a game you need to play in order to be a successful
academic and the difference between women and men as she sees it is that
women play it with more 'integrity'. What precisely does this 'integrity' mean? In the
next passages, Barb contradicts her previous comments and sheds some light on
this question as she relates a story about her doctoral assessment seminar. Barb
was concerned that her seminar not be reduced to an adversarial contest between
senior men in her department and herself. To avoid this she took active steps to
construct the scene differently:

what I did was, I went in early and I set up all the seats in a circle, and I
had wine and orange juice and nibbles (laughs) (…) So, it was kind of –
you know, "Welcome! Have something to drink! We're just going to have
a discussion!" And I gave my seminar, and they were all really
impressed, but they didn't – they didn't enter the game. They didn't
become adversarial! And, you know, so, in some ways I kind of laid the

groundwork for not being subjected to that horribleness that men can do to students especially, Ph.D. students, but I've seen (them) attack some people that I do know. It's not pretty.

In these excerpts we witness Barb's movement between a position of disempowerment and cynicism – as outsider by definition excluded from the game – to active subject redefining the terms of the game by consciously setting out to destabilise power relations as previously constituted in that game. Through her exercise of power in this scenario Barb constituted a different set of subjectivities for those people who attended. This scene illustrates well the potential for redefining the micro-politics of academic workplaces (see Morley, 1999) through a re-conceptualisation and re-configuration of relations of power within the workplace by one or more of its members.

In spite of her micropolitical work in that context, Barb's reference to 'what it takes to be successful' reflects her doubt about the potential for further destabilisation within academic contexts. Her use of 'just shrug your shoulders' in the following excerpt suggests her own, and a more collectively held, resignation by women to the status quo:

Barb: *... So, whether they have what it takes to become successful*
              ...

AD: *What does it take to become successful?*

Barb: *Well, I'm not quite sure, but judging by the men that have*
              become successful, it takes a certain amount of competitive,
              antagonistic, adversarial processing about who's on top and
              who knows more, and who can spout the most number of
              references and, you know, make those contacts, you know, "I
              saw such-and-such last week", or, "I was reading such-and-
              such's work". Most women don't talk like that, you know, so I
              find that – I find that quite daunting sometimes, when I go into
              a seminar and I know that, if the audience is mainly male, that
              if I don't spout those things and say those things they'll see

me as somehow lacking, you know? So, there's all of that
dynamic. But I've been lucky in that I've had women around
me who've been able to name some of that stuff and say that
that's what's going on, and just shrug your shoulders and say,
"Well, if you want to play the game, that's fine."

This section points to the way Barb and others assume power through the process of 'naming' behaviour – of describing it and examining its productive effects in the workplace. Through this process Barb and her women colleagues reframe their experiences, dispensing with readings that implicitly endorse existing adversarial and hierarchical relations of power in which the women are positioned as inferior and in which they may be at risk of taking on self-doubt – "they'll see me as somehow lacking". Yet the uptake of new reconfigured readings of power in the scenario described does not necessarily lead to a renewed sense of the potentialities for reorganising the terms of the game, but in this case to a shrug of the shoulders. Yet when read as a whole Barb distances herself from this way of doing things, constituting herself instead as the active subject capable and interested in bringing about change.

Barb constitutes herself within a feminist discourse of disrupting power relations within her environment but this reading too is disrupted by her understandings of what it takes to be successful. A little later in our interview she refers to successful women academics:

Barb: *I look around myself and in my work area and I see women*
          who are highly successful professors and who are motivated,
          and who have mentored me really well, and I just look at their
          lifestyle and I think, I'm not sure that I want that. You know?
          Like, they have mentored me really well in terms of my career
          and everything else, but as a role model as to what a
          successful academic's life is like, it kind of tears me both
          ways. I'm not quite sure whether I want that.

AD: *What are their lives like?*

> *Barb:*   *Um, work, basically. Like, it's a seventy-hour week of work.*
>   *And their social circle is work! You know? (Laughs) It's work!*

The working patterns of these women would seem to embody 'the male model' to which Deb referred earlier, and to which Michelle also alluded. Implicitly here working a 70-hour working week and socialising only with work colleagues is construed in Barb's mind as unhealthy, or at least not what she personally aspires to. In saying this she invokes the theme of the integrated self in which well being is equated with 'balance', and long working hours are regarded as unhealthy or at least as 'unbalanced'. Being 'unbalanced' is regarded as a bad thing within this framework. She talks further about her two main women mentors, Tina and Jennifer:

> *And Tina just one of those very career-oriented, like: Jennifer's a*
> *Professor and a Director of a quite serious centre, but she's not – you*
> *wouldn't think that she's kind of career-oriented. It's like she kind of got*
> *there – she was in the right place at the right time, and made the right*
> *moves. Whereas Tina is, kind of, very strategic. OK? So, she makes the*
> *political decisions and understands the politics around things, and*
> *makes the strategic choices and goes for them, in ways that I think just*
> *pass Jennifer by sometimes! (laughs) Like, I don't think it's a horrible*
> *thing to say. But they are quite different personalities.*

These two women seem to encapsulate for Barb the two possible ways of being a successful woman academic – what Barb characterises as a serendipitous route of being in the right place at the right time (Jennifer), contrasted with the very 'strategic' and 'political' approach employed by Tina. Later she refers to them as "… two different types of mentors. I have the really strategic ones and the really intellectual capital ones. And sometime they overlap but not a lot." Being strategic in career development, and providing appropriate intellectual guidance are regarded in her account as discrete qualities not commonly possessed by the one person.

Barb quickly moves to qualify her earlier comment about Jennifer – "… in ways that I think pass Jennifer by sometimes!" – adding "Like, I don't think it's a horrible thing to say", in so doing suggesting it can be construed as a negative within a careers discourse to say that her mentor is not focused at all times on career opportunities. Yet when Barb refers to her own mentoring of research students she claims the importance of bringing both intellectual and strategic dimensions to the role. She gives her reason as:

> *… you're not going to survive the intellectual stuff unless you're strategic*
> *and you think about things practically. You know? Otherwise you'll get*
> *overwhelmed and drowned. And get sick.*

Barb's account, like Michelle's, is threaded through with issues of well being and ill health. In Barb's case ill health has an acute bearing on her understanding of what it is to be a successful woman academic. With reference to her honours supervisor, Denise, whom she regards as her first mentor:

> *And then she got sick. And part of what made her sick was her*
> *workload, and also the stresses up there {in her department}, … she*
> *said to me that she could no longer supervise me in my Honours and –*
> *this was six weeks out from submitting … {She} was on stress leave.*
> *She later learned she had breast cancer. … She got really sick. She had*
> *a double mastectomy… was off work for three years.*

The impact of Barb's identification with Denise, beyond the more immediate impact on her honours thesis, are made explicit later in our interview:

> *{Denise} was my first, kind of model of what being an academic woman*
> *could be. And then when she got sick and withdrew – … I approached*
> *her about 12 months after she returned to work to see if she would help*
> *me … I knew she was the only person in the department who could*
> *actually read my work and be critically aware at the level … and she*
> *said no, she couldn't do that because just working with me re-stimulated*
> *all this stuff that actually made her sick in the first place! … Part of what*
> *made her sick was that she couldn't set boundaries. And so she was*

going through that process of setting boundaries, but she did it on me
and I didn't want it done to me!

Barb draws a direct line here between being a successful woman academic and serious ill health. Also evident in this excerpt is the sense of rejection that Barb felt after this experience, in that the process of setting boundaries was done *to* her. Her two later mentors, Tina and Jennifer also develop serious illnesses. Amanda, a mentor in a 12-month formal women's mentoring program also became ill …

And then she got sick – Jennifer has had skin cancer. Tina has been on
stress leave – not life-threatening. And Amanda has had breast cancer.
And it's not just since they've been mentoring me! Some of these pre-
dated my mentoring!

(…) that's part of that hesitation to look at these successful women and
say, "That's what I want to be," like, I don't want to be sick! You know? I
just want to enjoy my life when I'm getting near retirement, I want to –
I've still got twenty years to live, and I want to enjoy that time! So, it is
very much about – yeah – respecting what they've done and who they
are, and that type of stuff, but not necessarily emulating them.

Across Barb's account it is interesting to compare the way in which she refers to successful male academics and successful female academics. In earlier passages I quoted, Barb describes successful male academics as 'competitive', 'antagonistic' and 'adversarial' in seminar situations. Women in the same passages were described in general as acting with 'integrity'. The four particular women who mentored Barb at some time each got seriously sick. Barb, I'd suggest sets up a causal relationship between conducting yourself with integrity as a woman academic and becoming ill. Barb seems to believe that it is possible for women to behave differently to men in the workplace, to resist taking up the masculinised forms of behaviour that characterise the performance of academic identity – the competitiveness, the long hours and so on. Yet this sustained performance by women may also, according to Barb, be life threatening.

While both Barb and Michelle take up the theme of sickness, in Michelle's case sickness is quarantined, as it is only taken up in her discussion of women academics at the *start* of their academic careers. While at pains to be candid with me about her own stress-related health problems, Michelle avoids making any connection between her ill health and her own or other's status as successful.

Like Michelle, Barb is influenced by the rationalities of governance within universities, particularly in Barb's case in terms of the surveillance of academic work. I ask her if she likes her work:

> *Barb:*   *Do I like the work? Yes. I like the work. I like the work with the students. It's got a – it's a very managed position. I'm managed by three managers! So, it's kind of – it's a very managed … it's very managed and administrative. On the other hand – … I have a lot of autonomy to do what I like, because nobody knows what I do!*
>
> *AD:*   *And so, how does managing manifest itself to you if you nonetheless have a lot of autonomy?*
>
> *Barb:*   *Ah, it means I go to a lot of meetings, basically. And there's a lot of administrative reporting. So, all of our student records – we have to keep records of everything we do, every student we see, every workshop I give, I have to give records of every student that's attended – so, there's kind of a lot of that stuff! Which is fine at one level, and I can understand why they do it, but it just takes up so much time – and I don't get time to do my own research.*

Barb manages herself within the rationalities of governance, saying "Which is fine at one level, and I can understand why they do it …" Interestingly however, her managing of herself within a highly (externally) managed environment is couched alongside her claims of autonomy. Barb goes on to explain to me the processes she is required to follow to develop a curriculum, including the raft of people with whom she has to negotiate curriculum priorities. She referred to the ensuing

formalised agreement as a 'skeleton' within which she then develops the curricula. In other words in Barb's story the public nature of her work, the multiple points of accountability and the surveillance to which she is subject are managed by her within an account of personal autonomy and control. This demonstrates the success of the rationalities of management in educating subjects to constitute their subjectivities within the terms of those rationalities.

Also present in Barb's and some of the other accounts is the impact of hierarchical relations of academic work, institutions and of mentoring. The women in my study display an acute awareness of the hierarchical relations of their workplaces and of their own position – as women, as junior staff – within that. Their mentoring relationships were for the most part I suggest, sustained through the endurance of an unequal and hierarchical power relationship between mentor and mentee. Depending on how they understood the mentoring relationship as a hierarchical relationship they differed on whether mentors could also be friends. Friendship for Barb for instance entailed a relationship outside regular working hours:

> Barb: They {Jennifer and Tina} were kind of definitely "up here" and I was learning from them.
>
> AD: And so, why do you think there is that distance, if you like?
>
> Barb: I think it's just the social networks. I don't think we have the same social networks, or whatever, it's kind of – they associate with other Professors and other Heads of Departments and having a Lecturer A or a Lecturer B Casual come along to their functions probably wouldn't be the right thing to do! You know? I would be uncomfortable and probably other people would wonder why the hell I was there. So, while I've had lunches with them, and breakfasts, even, you know, dinners and socialising is –
>
> AD: Something else again.
>
> Barb: Yes. …

In Barb's account, her presence as a junior staff member at such a gathering would disrupt conventions surrounding the conduct of interpersonal relationships where those relationships derive explicitly from one's position in the formal structures of the workplace. Barb occupies the position, in her eyes and theirs', of a lecturer level B, a junior staff member, a status fixed in the hierarchical terms of their workplace.

Barb's awareness of her position in the class structures of her workplaces should not be construed to mean that she is any more or less status conscious than any other person. Instead I suggest that her awareness of her relative status reflects the rigid and hierarchical relations that shape academia and that promote a subjectivity of oneself in terms of one's position in the pecking order. When everyone knows their place, and is reminded of it in multiple ways, the status quo is preserved. This pecking order is most clearly illustrated in Deirdre's story in Chapter Four.

Social class conceived more broadly is important in Barb's construction of herself. She, like Karen, anchors her account of her plans for an academic career with reference to her working class origins: 'Like I'm the first person in my family to go to university and all that stuff". With her reference to "all that stuff" Barb draws, and invites me to draw, on an assumed shared understanding of the implications of social class on educational attainment. Notably it was those women who identified as working class who spoke about their socio-economic origins – none of the women whom I interviewed identified themselves in terms of their *middle class-ness*. Also like Karen, Barb referred to her working class origins as part of a construction of herself as outsider in the academy, that is her social class marked her as different, implicitly marking out the academy as the terrain of the middle and upper classes.

For some women class was portrayed as something to be overcome or got beyond, as Karen explains:

> *I think it's probably worthwhile going a fair way back, to the fact that I went to a fairly low rent public secondary school (…) from which very*

few people went to university. It was a combination of the sort of socio-economic factors and also the fact that in that area there's no university nearby, and so you've got to really want to go to, like, have a sense of "Oh, I might go to university." (…) And when I got to university, I realised there were a lot of other schools where it's not at all unusual for people to end up going to university …

A moment later she talks about her career ambition as a young girl…

… coming back to my background, and not having gone to a private school, and not having had an Eastern Suburbs or North Shore {up market Sydney suburbs} upbringing, that sort of thing.

To the contrary, Angela, whom I discuss in the next section, wore her social class as a badge of pride. She actively asserts her class identification into the present compared say to Karen and Barb for who class forms more of a point of reference in the past. However like Karen and Barb, Angela sees her class background as positioning her as outsider within academia. Her active identification also reflects her positioning of herself as outsider:

I went straight from high school into a (…) degree, coming from a working-class migrant background. I was the only student in my school to go to university, so I didn't have the kind of mentoring and kind of, sort of, assistance, with getting into the system…

Emerging in many of these excerpts from different women's accounts is a sense that their working class origins meant there were not the expectations on them to go to university, let alone pursue an academic career, and further that they did not have the social capital or 'leg-up' which would support their choice of career.

Reproduction, sexuality and mothering too play different functions within the accounts of each of the women I interviewed. This was the case for the women who had children, those who did not have children and were not planning them, and others who planned children in the future. My argument is that discourses of reproduction, sexuality and mothering infuse women's self-understandings either

through the women's uptake of cultural conventions in their positioning as heterosexual mothers, through their rejection of this position, or their renegotiation of the terms of this position. This is because of the pervasiveness and power of these discourses in society but also I suggest because our identities as women in western societies are likewise infused with the enactment of heterosexuality (see Butler, 1999 {1990}). That is our gender identity as women also constitutes as us heterosexuals and as (potential) mothers.

The discourse of mothering was most evident in the context of our discussions of career, suggesting a slippage from career to care(e)r. I ask Barb about successful women …

> AD: *Do they have children?*
>
> Barb: *Some have. No, that's not fair. Most of them did have. Some*
>   *of the children – you wonder whether they did a very good job*
>   *of it (laughs) the parenting role! And one important person*
>   *didn't have children, and she said she'd made that decision.*
>   *And the other one was a mature-age student like myself, so*
>   *her children were, kind of, a little bit older.*
>
> AD: *Older by the time her career kicked in.*
>
> Barb: *That's right. So, a bit like mine. I've got kids, but they haven't*
>   *been part of my career, really. Because my youngest was 13*
>   *by the time I got a career. So, yes –*

Within this narrative, both Barb and I, like Michelle, make a distinction between children and career, especially younger children and career. We both engage in a discursive formation in which parenting and careers are rendered incompatible, with Barb providing or inferring evidence of their incompatibility. She suggests those who had kids didn't do a very good job of it; another 'important person' decided not to have kids at all; and another like Deb whose children were older 'by the time (she)/I got a career', thereby within the terms of the discourse making a career a possibility.

Angela: "claiming a bit more space"

Issues of social class and ethnicity were prominent in Angela's account of her academic work and mentoring. Angela works as a Lecturer in the arts faculty of an outer suburban university in a large city. She job-shares the position with her male partner, each working 0.5 of the position. Angela's account of her academic subjectivity differs markedly from the other women's' through her active *dis*-identification as an academic, and her active identification and performativity as a Greek working class woman. In her account she builds a story of herself as a 'foreigner' in academia, because of her background. But unlike other academics of migrant background many of who don't, as she sees it, perform their ethnicity in any appreciable way, what marks Angela out as 'foreign' is that she embodies and performs this identity as a conscious political act.

Angela characterises academia as Anglo, middle-class and conservative. On several occasions during the interview she acts the ingénue as she draws attention to her different-ness and naïveté in the academic world. For example,

> *I'm only speaking from my experience now, not really speaking from a kind of research background – the first really obvious thing is that I didn't start studying {in my discipline} in order to become an academic. I thought, very naively, that what you do is, you do the very best you can possibly do at what you value, and then that will eventually be recognised. I didn't realise that you actually have to plan and manipulate career moves (laughs) so that the right people think the right things at the right time! And, you know, I've sort of gradually realised that this is a class thing! (Laughs) You know, it's actually a working-class value to, you know, do your best, thinking that you will be recognised for doing your best, and that should be enough!*

This and other similar remarks valorise 'the working class' and construct an identity for Angela of 'an innocent abroad'. This is not to suggest that Angela is acting in bad faith or disassembling but more to highlight the great care and effort she takes to dissociate herself from academia and to actively constitute herself as an

outsider. Later in the interview she explicitly uses 'foreigner' to refer to herself and to her partner: "the concept (…) that we think defines the position that we represent in academia today". This foreign-ness may be a result of her classed ethnicity. She builds on this idea of the wider significance or symbolism of she and her partner's presence in academia saying: "It's a statement about achievement for migrants more generally (…) It's claiming a bit more space".

Throughout the interview she uses the term 'we' to refer to herself and her partner who shares the same background. Angela presents theirs as a shared history with only one or two divergences. On the issue of planning 'careers moves' (see excerpt above), I question her:

> AD: *Is it just a working-class thing, or is it also a gender thing?*
>
> Angela: *I think that element is primarily a working-class thing, and then there's a gender overlay. And everything that {partner} and I have both done, it always seems to be easier for {him}. (…) I think that gender issues are kind of like a subtle overlay on top of the class issue, as far as career issues. As they've worked out for me personally, that is, yeah. Class seems to have been more important. Perhaps because it's more important to me that I maintain my class integrity! (Laughs)*

Here she recognises gender as noteworthy but not central in how she understands and positions herself in academia (or in society more widely). For Angela, the lived experience of being a *working class Greek* woman is central. I am quoting this long section in full as it raises a number of interesting questions of ethnicity, subjectivity and representation:

> *You know, I was born in Australia, never really thought that I wasn't Australian until it was pointed out to me that I'm, sort of, one of the foreigners in a department that I worked! (Laughs) Like, I mean, innocently. Very innocently. But somebody was just sort of thinking – 'oh! Gee! We've got a lot of foreigners in this department!' And she counted everybody that was kind of, like, from a Southern European or –*

overseas students, fair enough, postgraduate students that are studying as overseas students – and she counted me, but she didn't count the North American migrants who everybody knew had been here, of course for twenty years – I'm not saying they're not Australian – but, you know! And then I raised this in a discussion with another colleague. Again, not someone that I'd worked with, but someone who I'd come into contact with socially, a fellow academic. And I was sort of giving this example as an example, like I'm giving to you, and she sort of said, "I don't understand," – and she was very serious – "I don't understand what you mean! I mean, you are really dark!" (Laughs) I thought, how do I, kind of, continue here? And this was, like – she was really well meaning. She was trying to explain to me that, you know, it's sort of like – 'I mean, you know, you're a wog! What's your problem!' You know? So – and this is with people who obviously feel comfortable with me, otherwise I wouldn't…another example: We were at a (laughs) – do you want another example or is this too much? I don't know how useful this stuff is! – for example, we were at a Christmas lunch, and of course, it's now popular to eat ethnic foods. A colleague commented to me that she doesn't eat dips because she'll get multicultural germs. And then she goes: "Oh, of course, not yours!" (Laughs) "I don't mean yours!" Another comment: I live in {suburb name}, and {suburb name} is a very multicultural kind of area. The council, some years ago, accepted a proposal by a group of Arabic women to have set times where the pool – one of the pools – is available for women to bathe. So, I mean – I thought everybody thought 'fine'. A colleague comments on this, she's no longer going to {suburb name}. She lives in the area. She's no longer going to {suburb name} either because she doesn't want to pick up those germs, "Because they might (laughs) use the pool at alternate times, but, well, it's the same water, isn't it!" And then she looked at me and sort of said, "But of course, you're different." I mean, you know – what do you say? (Laughs)

In the opening to this excerpt Angela identifies herself as 'born in Australia', anchoring her position within a statement or claim as to her own national identity. The effect of the remarks made by colleagues is to repeatedly position her in discourse as a foreigner. This is done through a number of devices, firstly through the making of the remark itself "gee, we've got a lot of foreigners!" then further reinforced through exempting her from their 'casual' observations: "Oh of course not yours! I don't mean yours!" and "But of course you're different!" This second set of comments is intended to exempt her from their remarks, but in fact has the opposite effect of positioning her precisely at the centre of those remarks in that it reinforces her position as the 'other'.

Several times during our interview, Angela uses the terms 'wog' and 'foreigner' to refer to herself. Indeed as mentioned earlier in her intellectual work she theorises her presence in academia explicitly as a 'foreigner'. In taking up the term 'wog', Angela takes up a different meaning to a term considered by many to be pejorative. Her use of 'wog' to self-describe is both an affirmation of her identity, and politically enabling. She appropriates the term in such a way that it takes on new signification. As Butler (1997) puts it with reference to Nietzsche, the "uses to which a sign is put are 'worlds apart' from the uses to which it then becomes available. This temporal gap between usages produces the possibility of reversal of signification" (Butler, 1997, p. 94). In other words Angela exploits the gap between usages to reverse it's meaning and ascribe new significations to the term 'wog'.

To be hailed 'wog' or by some other social category, may be an affirmation or an insult depending on the context in which the hailing occurs (Butler, 1997). In her discussion of Althusser (1969), Butler suggests there may be some hesitation on the part of the one being hailed about how to respond:

> what is at stake is whether the temporary totalization performed by the
> name is politically enabling or paralysing, whether the foreclosure,
> indeed the violence, of the totalizing reduction of identity performed by
> that particular hailing is politically strategic or regressive or if paralyzing
> and regressive is also enabling in some way (Butler, 1997, p. 96).

In her response to being categorised as 'foreigner', Angela initially 'defends' her status on factual grounds ("you know, I was born in Australia") and in making her defence, points to others who *really are* 'foreigners' as she sees it, namely overseas students. In this way Angela in her resistance to her own 'other-ing', 'others' others, in an effort to distinguish herself from the *real* foreigners. Angela in so doing becomes a party to a form of racialised other-ing in discourse.

To take up the term 'wog' is empowering for her but to be called (or implicitly called) 'wog' or 'foreigner' by others is paralysing: "I mean you know, what can you say?!". Angela experiences this interpellation as a form of violence in the face of which she is speechless. When others name her this way, Angela reads a different intent into their use to when she chooses the term. Her identity is reduced through other's use of the term ('I don't understand what you mean! I mean you are really dark") so that whatever she says in reply will be read back as an overt or subtle manifestation of this identity ("I mean, you know, you're a wog. What's your problem?").

None of the usages of 'wog' or 'foreigner' is neutral in that both terms serve a function of constituting an identity. Yet when Angela uses the term 'foreigner' to refer to overseas students in an effort to be accurate, she implies there is a politically neutral usage of the term that does not constitute the 'other'. Angela constructs 'wog' as a privileging of difference and the 'other', whereas when others use it to define her Angela reads it as meaning ugly, exotic, alien, and infectious.

Through the repeated calling into being of her identity as foreigner, Angela is produced as this subject not once and fully, but repeatedly:

> The Foucaultian subject never fully constituted in subjection, then; it is repeatedly constituted in subjection, and it is in the possibility of a repetition that repeats against its origin that subjection might be understood to draw its inadvertently enabling power (Butler, 1997, p. 94).

Here Butler takes up Foucault to argue the productive effects of discourse to produce a counter or 'reverse-discourse', or opposing strategy. Yet Angela's

capacity to take up the productive potential of her positioning in racist discourse by others at the interpersonal level is both repeatedly undermined *and* made possible by her subjectification in discourse. Although appalled by her positioning by others, Angela is determined to make herself visible within racist discourse in order to contest it.

What are the effects of Angela's telling of these stories in our interview? Angela seems concerned in her relating of these remarks not to portray the speakers of these comments as bad people, describing them as acting " Innocently, very innocently", and as "well-meaning". In doing this Angela casts herself as both reporter and apologist, expressing outrage, consideration and dismay: "I mean, you know, what do you say?" Through her positioning by colleagues in her department she is cast as 'resident ethnic'. Her very presence in her department embodies ethnicity to her colleagues, 'ethnicity' used here to describe a state of being other than white and Anglo. The effect of these stories too is to illustrate the ways in which Angela is repeatedly discursively constituted as 'ethnic' in her subjectification in her workplace, and in her constitution of her account at our interview. They demonstrate well the iterative and citational practices through which discourse produces the effects that it names (Butler, 1993).

The stories that Angela relates are not unfamiliar to those of us who may have experienced or theorised 'other-ing' in the academy (or in society more generally). It is notable that Angela has selected truly outrageous examples of racism to tell me, spoken in a tone of shock and amazement. It is as if Angela is speaking about these things for the first time. The effect of this is to amplify the intensity of the violence perpetrated, and the impact of these acts upon her. If Angela were to take up the position of the knowing subject of racism, paradoxically this would be to assume power. Angela I suggest wants to be located outside power as she sees it, hence actively constitutes her own marginalisation both as protection in the context of a racist discourse, but also for strategic purposes in her project to destabilise discourses of normalisation and other-ing.

Ethnicity as Angela understands it is not simply about being but about doing. It is embodied and performed rather than simply a matter of origin or background. She refers to a couple of colleagues of similar migrant background:

> *… and when I first met them I didn't think that they could possibly have come from {that} background because they were very, very different from myself say, or Michael {her partner} in their behaviour. (…) I'm not saying that these people are pretending, or anything, but they feel comfortable in that sort of environment. So, it's kind of like, the "ethnics" are a very small minority.*

Angela uses the term 'ethnics' not to refer to a country of origin or family cultural background but to indicate the performance of that ethnicity in the world – 'ethnics' by this definition are people who *do* their ethnicity. When speaking about attending job interviews:

> *I felt, on a number of occasions that, you know, it didn't really matter what I said. It mattered – I was once advised not to speak quickly when I'm interviewed. And I thought that that was, you know, because people want to pick up all the points you're making! Then I realised that it's actually because it sounds woggy. So, now I concentrate on speaking quickly! (Laughs) And, "Don't move your hands! Keep your hands still and speak slowly!" So that you don't look woggy! But I like looking woggy, because it makes a lot of people uncomfortable, and it makes a lot of students* very *comfortable, especially in an environment like {her university}.*

Here again Angela is marked out as different because of her ethnicity. When made aware of this she reports that she takes up her ethnicity as performance more actively, playing up to ethnic stereotypes held by others, and in so doing unsettling or disrupting the normalising conventions of academic contexts: "I like making people uncomfortable". The people she refers to here are colleagues. She distinguishes between how she makes colleagues feel ('uncomfortable') and students ('*very* comfortable').

Similarly with social class which Angela sees as both embodied and expressed in every day life. This point is most clearly drawn in her comments about Kerry, the woman who acted as her mentor for the purpose of preparing a research grant application:

> *Um, she comes from a working-class background, but, you know, her working-class/American, I'm not quite sure which – whether they go together – roots, are different for her than, you know…Who I am is something I want to brag about, as far as that part of my history goes. For her, I don't think it was a sort of important thing. So, I'm trying to figure out, even though she'd say things to me about her background to put in context decisions, the issues, or whatever, I didn't see it as a visible part of how she related to people. So, I was forever trying to figure out what's happening here.*

Importantly, as I mentioned earlier, working class-ness is not for Angela a matter of origin but 'a visible part of how (one) relates to people'. Angela's own subjectivity is governed by her identification as a Greek working class woman. She is puzzled in that her mentor was not similarly governed by *her* own origins and self-regulating within the terms of those origins. It is Kerry's (in Angela's terms) dis-identification with her class origins that puzzles Angela. This puzzles Angela about many working class academics:

> *I think that a lot of working-class academics don't – they've kind of suppressed their working-class backgrounds as inappropriate, or something that they've conveniently grown out of. I went to a (…) conference very recently, and working-class values were repeatedly referred to because of the {conference themes}, but people tended to talk as if it was something that they'd grown out of as they grew into academic life.*

In their move into academia then, these academics shed their working class-ness and take on new and implicitly middle and upper middle class subjectivities. In her representation of the process here, Angela creates a conundrum in that it is not

possible both to sustain working class values *and* 'grow' into academic life. Later in her account she moves away from this fixed and uncompromising stance as she recounts some of the challenges of raising a young child. She initially refers to these challenges as making 'theoretical issues very, very concrete':

> *So, we've kind of, like, now have this decision: What's the best thing for our child? Do we teach this child that this is the way the game works if you want a career in this area? Or, do we teach them to be what we think is most valuable – in our parents, in our families – and kind of disadvantage them in that sense. So, because we've got a real-life little person there to worry about, …*

Here she, like Barb, uses the metaphor of the game to refer to academia, and again the problematic is constructed in terms of family and cultural values, or career and success. She emphasises the utter irreconcilability of her position even though she and her partner have in fact formulated a *modus operandi* that preserves her integrity within the system. Her framing of the problematic in these dichotomous terms does not give her any room to move. However, having constructed the problem in those terms she answers it, saying

> *… the best you can do for a child is to be honest. And to be honest, in our case, is to be a bundle of contradictions. So, if that comes across, this is reality, then you give them the opportunity as they grow to make their own choices. (…) that's what the child's presence does for you. It kind of tests you on the degree to which you can make contradictions a visible part of everyday life.*

These comments mark a turn in the interview and a turn in Angela's representation of herself-understanding. Up to this point Angela has been rigorous and unambiguous in her positioning of herself, and her construction of her subjectivity, as a foreigner in academia, and of her own values as utterly irreconcilable with dominant academic values. In the excerpt above it seems to me she is saying, 'well, it's actually not all that clear-cut'. She suggests you may find yourself occupying several seemingly contradictory subject positions simultaneously. She

assumes a more Foucauldian and feminist view of discourse as something that she can move in and out of, without compromising herself, that she need not be captured or governed exclusively by the terms of one or other discursive formation.

This insight late in the interview suggests a more nuanced sense of discursive options for Angela and her future as an academic. At the time her strong identifications as outsider militate against – or even prohibit – her uptake of any position within the discourses of academic careers. She resists subscribing to a career insisting:

> *… for me, promoting my career today means kind of anticipating two or three years' employment at a time. Because I don't want to, sort of – I don't want to drop my fundamental values or, kind of, like, put them on hold when I relate to people, no matter who they are. So, if that's going to kind of jeopardise my career, so be it.*

This is partly because to subscribe to a career within the dichotomy she has created risks compromising herself. She laughs: "If we had this job for three years we'd think we're lucky!" yet when I ask her directly she expresses a desire to pursue an academic career, "because I've got a three-year old (…) You need a little bit more stability, continuity, that sort of thing". Angela too draws on the discourse of mothering yet in her case her status as mother of a young child is presented as a *reason* to pursue a career rather than *precluded* by career, as for example was the case for Michelle; or something that happened *prior* to a career as in Barb's case.

Angela's understanding of her position and her career prospects are also shaped within the discourses of contemporary universities. She expressed concern over retrenchments in the humanities and presented the general downturn in those disciplines as the reason why she may not have a future rather than her ethnicity or social class. Angela positions her work in terms of an interdisciplinary intellectual movement in Australian universities 'towards an appreciation of the impact of whiteness'. This movement is in her view making a difference to the institutional climate for her work. She attributes the fact she got her job to a prior successful

grant she held and to the strong community links she enjoys, links now increasingly valued within higher education. Through this account Angela then does identify an intellectual space that she can occupy within higher education and within which she is able to reconcile her values, a new academic sensibility shared by other similarly positioned migrant and indigenous scholars as she sees it. This space is however routinely challenged in her daily experience as a working class migrant scholar:

> *I sort of walk out the door and I kind of have to put on a persona to have my coffee in the common room with a colleague, who are all really lovely (…) Like, from an interpersonal point of view, there's absolutely no problem. But there is always that kind of – … if you don't remember that you're the foreigner, you will be reminded, you know? One way or another, it kind of works into a conversation that you – you're here by our good grace. So, you know, you have to kind of play the role if you want to maintain the position.*

Angela too like some other women in this study manages her performance as an academic subject, moving between subject positions during the course of the day in response to the conflicting injunctions to take up particular subjectivities and behaviours. For Angela these injunctions are characterised in terms of her classed and gendered ethnicity. Angela both enacts this subjectivity as a means of protection but also seeks through this performance to confront and destabilise the normative conceptions of academic work and career.

In this chapter I have examined some of the discursive resources through which the women speak, and the ways in which each woman assembles and disassembles herself within those discourses. This analysis demonstrates the complex processes of subject formation for these women. The women do not simply settle themselves into pre-determined positions within discourse, be it of 'good mother', 'resident ethnic' or 'successful academic'. Instead they repeatedly confront and deconstruct the terms of the discourses through which they construct

their accounts. The tensions that develop in this process give rise to new positions and ways of understanding themselves.

The role of mentoring in this is to carve out the positions available to the women either through a process of (dis) identification with role models or through the space mentoring creates within which the careers discourse is operationalised. Mentoring for women gives permission for women to be 'career-minded'. As I argued in previous chapters, mentoring in fact requires an active subject as its starting point, one engaged in discourse as 'career-minded'.

Mentoring also exposes those positions in discourse that are *not* readily available to women, in which they are constituted as other and outsider. The privileging of same-ness and the pressures of normalisation that the women relate (and resist) in their everyday lives actively positions the women as different. Some women theorise or experience this in terms of their gender while others more particularly in terms of their ethnicity, social class and sexuality. An analysis of the gendering of academic work then is not complete without an acknowledgement of the activation of normalising practices within discourses of gender itself.

Chapter Seven

Subjectivity, power and, desire: fashioning the woman academic through mentoring

This study contributes towards our understanding of the formation of subjectivities of women as academic workers within the discursive formations of contemporary higher education in Australia. In the study I drew on a close reading of interviews with six women academics in Australian universities to develop the claim that mentoring functions as a site of governmentality (Foucault, 1991) in which women academics self-regulate and in turn are regulated by another in the context of mentoring relationships.

Mentoring, I have argued, activates the operation of technologies of the self, which the women in the study take up to manage themselves as women academic workers. This activation does not apply equally or in the same ways to all the women I discuss. Angela for example explicitly resists the project of self-regulation implied in her mentoring and in the normative discourses of academic work. But Angela's active resistance should be understood as demonstrating the productive effects of discourse. Her resistance was produced *as a consequence* of the power of the discourse.

The study then makes an important contribution to the field of governmentality studies through its original investigation of mentoring as a device for activating the operation of technologies of the self among women academics.

Significantly, while mentoring was the framework for the study and for the research interviews, mentoring is only one of a number of technologies that the women in my study employed in order to manage themselves as women academics. Other 'technologies' employed from time to time by the women included professional development programs, psychotherapy and medication. Notably though, the pervasive influence of mentoring in shaping self-regulation was visible in the absence of any active mentoring. That is, the women acted upon themselves as

subjects in the terms made available in the discourses of mentoring, irrespective of whether they were at the time engaged in mentoring or not, suggesting the productive effects of the discourse of mentoring in producing certain sorts of self-regulating subjects.

This study also makes an original contribution to the research and growing literature on mentoring in contemporary workplaces through its investigation of the role of mentoring in the formation of the professional identities of women academics. In doing this the study takes up concepts and debates within the field of workplace learning on the question of the relationship between work, learning and learner identity, and the centrality of identity work to all forms of education, be it schooling, community education or professional development (see Chappell, 2003 for example). Work and its subjectivity demands forms both the context and curriculum for mentoring.

While there has been significant academic interest in mentoring over the last twenty years across a number of different disciplinary fields, there has been relatively little written which expands or develops theoretical concepts or models of mentoring. In this study I sought to address this gap through my application of a feminist poststructuralist framework to analyse mentoring for women in universities. I argued that the research on mentoring is flawed in that it does not deal with the social, political, and organisational contexts of mentoring. In this study I address this problem by locating the women's stories of mentoring in the discursive context of Australian higher education at the start of the twenty-first century. I further developed the argument that mentoring for women can be construed as a product of this environment. In doing this I foregrounded the orders of discourse, or regimes of truth, into which the women are produced as subjects through mentoring, and considered the implications of this order for a feminist project of gender equity in universities.

As indicated earlier, the analysis in the thesis is based on a close reading of the accounts of six of the 17 women I interviewed. This approach offered a number of benefits. It allowed me to pay attention to the discourses which individual subjects

called on, and the particular ways in which each woman constructed her account of her life and career in the interview situation. In this way I was able to produce a rich and highly personal set of accounts from the interview data. This approach also meant that the women are embodied in a way that a discussion of the themes across all the subjects could not achieve. It allows the reader to hear the women's voices, even allowing for our reflexivity about the conditions of emergence and production of those voices.

Importantly too, the approach I have taken allows for the specificity of each of the women's voices. The women in my study have not been collapsed into a single universal 'woman' or 'woman academic', or an archetype of this or that sort of woman. There is no such universal subject. The women's struggles over positionings, meanings and identities are given plenty of room in the text, enabling the reader to come to know the women and their issues.

A number of recurring themes bind the thesis together. One of these is confession. According to Foucault, the subject is produced through confession into a particular order of discourse. The research interviews in my study acted as a confessional space into which women 'confessed' about themselves. This space was not empty or 'neutral', however, but was shaped by various discourses – of research interviews, feminist solidarity, gender, careers and academic work to name a few – and in turn shaped the nature of the confessional accounts. In this process particular sorts of subjects were produced.

This has parallels with mentoring relationships, which too are shaped by many of these same discursive formations. In mentoring, the mentee confesses her shortcomings to her mentor, which then becomes the 'curriculum' or pedagogical focus of the relationship. From this too a particular sort of subject may be produced. This process of subject formation is never complete, nor completely effective. As I discussed with reference to Angela above, the discourse may produce unintended consequences such as resistance to positioning in discourse and the formation of alternative discursive positions.

Another recurring theme is of feminist solidarity or of solidarity between women. The women in my study nominated to be interviewed for the study and many of them (correctly) identified me as a feminist from the research topic and outline I had circulated. A shared concern with the interests of women, while not expressly a topic for discussion at the interviews, formed part of the discursive context of the interviews and as such had a role to play in shaping women's accounts in the interviews. It may for instance have influenced some women to limit their criticism of women's mentoring and to speak of it in highly positive terms. A few of the women prefaced a negative remark about mentoring, saying to me 'you might not want to hear this …'.

As I discussed in Chapter Three, issues of solidarity between women were also at work in my attempt to negotiate entry to one institution to carry out my research. This included my own expectations of the women with whom I was seeking to negotiate access to possible interview subjects, and in the conduct of those negotiations. Many women I interviewed also approached their women mentors with expectations of experiencing a feeling of solidarity on account of a shared gender. This was particularly the case for those women who had been mentored as part of a women's program, like Karen and Michelle, but also shaped experiences for those like Deirdre who were mentored by women outside a formal program.

These observations point to the centrality of an understanding of intersubjectivity as a foundational feature of feminist research, and central to any exploration involving women. Intersubjectivity is manifest here in a set of expectations of conduct of the other but the other who is also in the image of oneself. This concept of sisterhood is both reinforced and confronted in the thesis. It comes unstuck at different points where I explain my struggle setting up the research, and where the women report disappointments and betrayals. It is also problematised in accounts like Angela's, wherein she is positioned by herself and by others primarily in terms of her ethnicity and social class rather than her gender.

A third recurring theme in the thesis is that of recurrence itself, or the idea of iteration. The methodology I have employed to undertake this work, which draws on poststructuralist and feminist theories, rests on the researcher sustaining a high level of reflexivity in regard to her role as researcher and the conduct of the research. My own production and subjectivity as a researching subject is repeatedly confronted and reinforced throughout the project. Mentoring too, like confession, sustains its effects through its repeated invocations to become something other through the uptake of technologies for self-examination. In their engagement in mentoring, the women take up this project of ongoing review and self-regulation. The project is never ending, and indeed functions irrespective of the subject's actual participation in mentoring, suggesting the enduring nature of mentoring's productive effects. The project is also never ending, because, as Butler (1993) suggests, it never really works properly.

Positioning the thesis in a feminist discourse

The study is significant because of my use of a feminist perspective to analyse mentoring as a feminist strategy within Australian universities. As indicated earlier, mentoring for women has been promoted by many feminist academics over recent years (including by my colleague and I at UNSW) as a vehicle to support women's career development. My aim in this study has been to unpack some of the assumptions and contradictions of women's mentoring as it has been taken up as a feminist strategy, with a view to disrupting or interrupting (MacLure, 2003) common sense views about the inherent worthiness of mentoring.

This has at times felt like a risky undertaking. In recent years Australia has shifted politically towards the right, reflected in the re-election in 2004 for a third term of a conservative national government. Questions of 'equity' in education have been re-couched in terms of 'choice' and as Blackmore notes, it has been difficult to sustain policy interest on gender equity at all levels of education. At times like this it feels dangerous as a feminist to critique the practices that we hold dear.

Yet it is this very climate that has led me to do this project. The perception on the part of many in government, in university administrations and senior academic

ranks, that 'we have done gender equity' suggests to me the ongoing need to explore the ways in which contemporary discourses operate to constrain and subjectify women, with a view to developing fresh theoretical and conceptual insights. Such insights might drive new forms of politics and practices over the coming years in the struggle over organisational meanings and identities. The project becomes one of analysing institutions at the level of the micropolitics, or the everyday conduct of organisational life as it is experienced by many women, and in particular the ways in which gendered rationalities construct those meanings and identities and the ways in which those rationalities may be enacted in mentoring.

In addition to those technologies of self-management to which I referred earlier, women draw on their personal relationships with other women to support them in their academic work. A number of the women in my study spoke of the sustaining role of close personal friendships with other women and of the importance of women's groups and networks in addition to their individual mentoring. Women's mentoring is sometimes seen as offering a counter to the individualism and competitiveness associated with managerialism. The problematic nature of this assumption is a driving force in this thesis.

A number of the women in my study identified themselves to me as feminists and indirectly referred to the collective potential of mentoring, that is, its potential to mobilise women because it articulates a concern with the position of women *as a group*. One or two women referred to the seminars and group activities that took place as part of the program in which they participated to illustrate the point. A few also spoke of the legitimacy that being part of a formal mentoring program afforded their relationships with other women.

Clearly the women in my study are of different ages, come from very different backgrounds and hold different things dear. It was not the work of this thesis to judge them as feminists or to categorise them as one or other variety of feminist. My analysis however begs the question of when women identify as feminists what exactly do they identify with? My analysis points to the plurality of feminisms and the complex forms of identification that occur amongst women.

How then to position mentoring within a feminist discourse? Mentoring is I suggest located culturally within an individualistic discourse of career development and is concerned, as the alternative reading of Homer's myth I outlined in Chapter Two proposes, with the achievements of the individual and the maintenance of the status quo. There is I suggest little evidence to suggest that it is inherently collectivising or subversive in its effects *from within this discursive framework*. Forging synergy between the individual's and the organisation's priorities is 'the proper work' of mentoring.

But to locate mentoring for women within an expressly feminist and transformative discursive framework gives it a different set of meanings. As MacLure (2003) observes,

> … words accumulate different resonances according to the institutions and discourses from which they emanate, and the institutional or social location of those who are making them (p. 16).

The women in my study who participated in women's mentoring initiatives report on the *politicising* effects of their involvement, with one woman, Karen, commenting: "… knowing its not just you. Knowing that the experiences you're having have some sort of basis in the outside world, and that it's part of a system and you can help to understand the system better". Another woman, Marian, spoke about the importance of the group of women meeting regularly. Engagement in mentoring can build awareness of the systemic issues facing women and lead to a greater sense of community with other women, and perhaps a desire to seek out other women for support and to discuss and critique the institutional context (Devos, 2004b). Within an explicitly feminist and political discursive framework then, mentoring for women *means* something different, and offers different sorts of 'identity options' or subject positions to the women involved.

I comply therefore I can't resist: Setting aside unhelpful binaries

One of the functions performed by the analysis of discourse in this thesis is to draw attention to and disassemble the binary oppositions that stitch each of the

discourses, or texts, together (MacLure, 2003). MacLure draws attention to the ways in which these binaries provide the meaning options available at any time. With reference to Derrida, she explains how "... one 'side' achieves definition {…} through its *difference* with respect to a (constructed) 'other' which is always lacking, lesser or derivative in some respect" (p. 10). Recurring binary oppositions that structure the women's accounts in this thesis include good mother/(and by implication) bad mother, active/inactive researcher, Australian/ethnic, heterosexual/lesbian, establishment/working class, and ladylike/difficult. These binaries construct possible meanings and positions available from which women draw in their constitution of themselves in our interviews. Another prominent binary in the accounts is that of a self in control compared to a disorganised self. Mentoring it seems has a crucial role in propelling the mentee from the latter undesirable self to the former desired state of being.

The propensity to define according to well-worn binary oppositions is culturally ingrained but limits the scope for realising alternative discourses and possibilities for subjectivity. Rather, what is required is a critical and detailed examination of the productive potential of the binaries offered through the analysis of discourse. This form of analysis may help constitute a space in which the ambivalence and uncertainty produced when discourses collide is accepted. The focus of attention shifts from getting rid of contradictions and tensions to exploring the productive potential of such tensions (see also Scheeres & Solomon, 2000). Mentoring for women may offer such a metaphorical space within organisations. In this scenario, the complex processes of subjectification and subject formation become the focus of discussion and critical attention, and a potential site for disrupting the gendered work order of organisations.

The binary 'compliance/resistance' is also startlingly unhelpful for analysing how women might manage their lives in the context of gendered organisations. This study has helped shed some light on the complex processes of positioning and being positioned within discursive formations of work, gender and so on and the transgressive ways in which women counteract or subvert positioning by others. More attention should be paid to questioning and challenging norms constructed

through the binaries than to pigeonholing our selves or others in accord with their terms.

A further binary that has influenced the thesis has been my struggle with contemporary claims of the inherent worthiness of mentoring. This question derives from my work running a women's research development program, which includes a mentoring component, and my ongoing discomfort with mentoring in that context. The question also reflects my cultural origins in a modernist intellectual tradition and its overarching concern with truth and certainty, reflected in the binary good/bad. In the way in which I couch the research questions I put aside that concern, reminding myself there are no qualitative judgements to be made here about mentoring *in the abstract*. And in a sense this thesis is about mentoring in the abstract, in that we have come to the end and we know little about the programs or the processes that the women in my study went through – we have only little clues about what actually *happened* to the women. Mentoring is a defining yet elusive dimension of the thesis. What I think we do know a lot about is how the women I interviewed *felt* about mentoring, how they understood *themselves* and others in and through mentoring, and what actions these understandings led them to take, particularly actions upon themselves.

Gender, enterprise and the emergence of mentoring in Australia universities

In Chapter Two I set out the conditions under which mentoring programs for women have emerged in Australian universities over the 10-15 years. My aim was to set out the orders of discourse into which I argue women in mentoring are produced as academic subjects. While mentoring has been practised in universities for many years, particularly through postgraduate research supervision, the popularity and support that mentoring initiatives for women have enjoyed from both feminists and some university administrations over this period, reflects the convergence of two discursive formations in the higher education sector.

Neo-liberal reforms of universities have accompanied changes to university governance in the context of an increasingly globalised higher eduction

marketplace. Universities have to varying degrees taken steps to (re) position themselves within this marketplace. This reflects the dominance of the performative principle according to which the goals and practices of education are linked in discourse to economic imperatives. Mentoring is viewed as a means of lifting organisational performance by lifting the performance of individuals.

The uptake of some new forms of governance within institutions as a consequence of this positioning has unsettled notions of academic identity as these have prevailed within disciplines and within institutions. These new forms of governance demand new forms of regulation and self-regulation by academics as we endeavour to expand and enhance our 'performance repertoire' in the face of increasingly varied and growing expectations.

These developments have occurred alongside similar changes occurring across industry sectors, including the increased vocationalism of education, the reframing of the workplace as a site of learning, shifting notions of professional identity, and an escalated interest in the domain of worker subjectivities as the new terrain of management. The role of learning (and the education system) is now perceived as being to serve the interests articulated through the discourse of 'the knowledge economy', or that knowledge with immediate transaction value. Managing and shaping worker subjectivity is the means through which these goals will be achieved. Universities are implicated in this project in two ways – as organisations striving to compete in market conditions, and as the training ground for knowledge workers for other industry sectors. These developments have driven an increased emphasis on staff development as universities look for ways to improve the performance and productivity of their staff.

I argued that mentoring for women has emerged over this time because of the confluence of these developments with the sustained discourse of gender equity in universities. While I agree with Blackmore that this discourse has been superseded to a large extent by the discursive imperatives of 'effectiveness', 'efficiency', and more recently 'quality' and 'performance', I maintain that the continued low numerical representation of women in senior positions in universities has not only

served as an indictment of the lack of meaningful action on gender equity, but has also ensured that the discourse of gender equity has not been completely silenced. From time to time it has found expression – through successful applications for funds to establish women's programs through the 1990s, through sector-wide and institution-based research, and through initiatives taken by women and some men in their institutions, and their professional and industrial organisations.

The 'focus on numbers' however should not limit gender equity work to 'strategies for transforming quantitative representation and participation', but must also include attention to questions of 'process, power and dominant values' in universities (Morley, Unterhalter, & Gold, 2001, p. 14). None the less, the poor numerical representation of women continues to be a source of concern to many senior male university managers, and provides opportunities for feminist managers and academics and men of good will to take action to address the issues.

In recent years this action has frequently taken the form of mentoring initiatives sometimes as a part of broader 'leadership for women' programs. These programs provide the mentoring that it is argued women do not otherwise receive, and positions them for career advancement. The empirical evidence on the precise relationship between mentoring and career success is mixed, yet commentators still cite mentoring as crucial. In the imagination, in any case, mentoring holds a central place. Within a feminist reading of mentoring, women's mentoring is frequently romanticised in line with contemporary readings of Homer's myth as I discussed in Chapter Two. Consistent with this reading, the exercise of power *between* women in mentoring, and the role of the institutional context in framing women's mentoring, are not spoken about.

In outlining the conditions as I have, I recognise as a theorist and as a practitioner in this field that women's programs are often contested by some men and women, who argue they are a form of 'special treatment', or occasionally, it is argued they stigmatise women. I do not propose to discuss here the multiple ways in which these responses can be read. My argument instead is that the discursive

formations to which I have referred have created the conditions under which it has been possible for mentoring for women to find support.

In addition to providing a site for feminist community and the development of feminist critique of the academy (see for example Devos, 2004b), mentoring for women also contributes to the production of the female academic subject in line with contemporary demands of performativity in academic work. In so doing it addresses both institutional concerns with performance, *and* feminist concerns with the position of women. For these reasons I argued that institutionally sanctioned mentoring programs for women have been taken up as feminist praxis, *and* become possible, as a result of the confluence of these two discursive formations.

The enterprise university has brought with it changed demands and expectations of academic and general staff. Women trying to develop their careers find themselves subject to unstable notions of academic identity. The older notion of the academy as a community of scholars was only ever true for some institutions at some times, and was founded on white, Western, male privilege and practices of exclusion. This model did not serve women or members of other minorities well. Yet none the less it represented an ideal of intellectual work to which many women aspired (and continue to aspire).

Many women also approach the new enterprise university with ambivalence. Some commentators have suggested that the new times offer more opportunities for women to progress, in that new technologies of surveillance such as quality audits may cast light on and attach value to, women's work in the academy which has hitherto been invisible. I have not attempted in this study to explore that proposition but I do note the diverse range of expectations to which the women in my study endeavour to respond. I also note the technologies used to support the formation of new skills and identities, such as training and professional development programs for academic staff. I suggest the dilemma cannot be defined as a case of women forming new identities for new times as this locates the project within a discourse of simply 'moving with the times', a position in which male academics also find themselves. It also suggests a homogeneity or evenness in the ways in

which universities and academics across disciplines are experiencing change, when the empirical evidence instead points to a variety of experience along a continuum of change (Marginson & Considine, 2000).

The project is more complex as women seek to position themselves within traditional discourses of academic merit and success, and simultaneously within the newer discourses of enterprise and flexibility. This twin project is reflected in my study as the women pursue academic promotion based on traditional markers of achievement in traditional faculty structures; yet also take on the new curriculum of academic work such as grant-getting, teaching awards and consultancies. This study is more concerned then with the production of the woman academic subject, taking this subject as fluid and constantly under review. In these unsettled times then, mentoring for women offers both promise of community, and an 'anchoring point for identity' (see Chappell et al., 2003, p. 5).

Assembling women academics in and out of mentoring

In Chapters Four and Five, I used Foucault's concept of governmentality to investigate the ways in which four of the women in my study – Karen, Deirdre, Michelle and Marian – manage themselves in accord with the regimes of truth that characterise their work environments. Karen and Deirdre are engaged in ongoing identity work, of assembling and reassembling themselves as the demands of subjectivity shift in the performative university. The women's participation in mentoring has formed an important part of this identity work.

Drawing on Foucault's work on governmentality and its interpreters I argued it is the women's agency as active, enterprising subjects that lead them to engage in mentoring. In this engagement they mark themselves out as enterprising academics, yet possibly and paradoxically also as requiring help and therefore as 'weak' (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001) and in need of care.

The women's engagement in mentoring may be ongoing as in Deirdre's case, or more sporadic, taken up as the need and opportunity arises. The women's ongoing self-management, both inside and outside mentoring, reflects the iterative and

continuous nature of the project of the care of the self, where "each day we make ourselves anew in fresh formulations" (Hutton, 1888, p. 134). Lee & Williams (1999) observe, with reference to postgraduate pedagogy:

> The identity produced {through postgraduate supervision} is not achieved once and for all but is an unstable constellation of constitutive elements which are multiple and contradictory. These constitutive elements have to be rearticulated in every instance of the professional practice of academic work, … there is the constant risk of breakdown and also transformation (Butler). Further the apparent stability, seamlessness and coherence of identity is achieved through psychodynamic processes of disavowal and forgetting of contradictions and tensions within the self (p. 11).

The symptoms of 'contradictions and tensions' may be talked over the top of or disavowed in the women's accounts, or masked through the use of medication as in Michelle's case which I discussed in Chapter Five (see also Deetz, 1998). These contradictions may also become the subject of critical engagement with others through such forums as women's networks as Marian explained in Chapter Five, or women's development programs (see Devos, 2004b).

The subject is both constituted in and through the confessional space of mentoring, and participates in her own self-constitution, in assembling her account of herself. Mentoring then meets the implicit criteria within a governmentality reading that requires the subject to be free and in a position to exercise choice as a necessary condition for acting upon herself (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Foucault, 1991; Rose, 1999 {1989}).

The account produced in mentoring and the subjectivities it constitutes – of procrastinator, brilliant writer etc. – becomes the 'curriculum' for the conduct of the mentoring relationship. That is, it is the material with which mentor and mentee work in order to bring about new subjectivities and new skills. Mentoring functions as a vehicle for the production and realisation of women's desired subjectivities,

and also as a vehicle of disciplinary power, because within mentoring women are disciplined within the regimes of truth that define academic work.

In my analysis of Karen and Deirdre's accounts I drew attention to the movement back and forth between the positions of the self-managing subject taking herself in hand to produce the suitable – and successful – academic subject; and of the woman taken up as a project of another to be fashioned as that subject. My analysis indicates that these two subject positions are *necessarily* present in mentoring and that they operate in tandem. Mentoring both requires an active subject as its starting point, whilst also by definition embodying a desire by the active subject to be acted upon by another. Mentoring is a site where we both act upon our own subjectivity and invite and allow another to act upon us. It is a site where we simultaneously assume subject positions of she who is in control and career oriented, and she who is to be taken in hand, she who may be needy at times.

Mentoring is also a site in which women may strategise their own subordination, subordinating themselves, as arguably Deirdre did, to obtain meaning and identity. Deetz (1998) suggests however that the outcome of subordination is often different than expected: "The employee strategizes the self towards increases in power or money but since they are themselves simply more instrumental means and not the end, the quest is never complete. The future is deferred and the quest is endless" (p. 164). Power or money *per se* are not necessarily the rewards towards which women (or men) academics are working, but as with Deetz' employees, for the women in my study the quest is never complete.

The process of constituting herself as the subject she desires herself to be is for Karen and Deirdre iterative and ongoing. The discursive contexts in which Karen and Deirdre are produced as subjects continue to shift, leading to endless cycles of 'self-improvement' and re-assembling. The iterative nature also highlights the failure of the operations of subjectification to once and for all achieve their goals. None the less, it is crucial to Deirdre's account in Chapter Four and Michelle's in Chapter Five, that there is an end point toward which the women are striving (in

both cases becoming a full professor). Each women projects onto that time a story of self which is fixed, stable, can be measured in line with the demands of performativity, and beyond which she stops becoming something other or indeed, desiring.

Theorising self-regulation within a feminist project

In Chapter Five I argued that Foucault's concept of governmentality, rather than stripping the subject of agency or autonomy as suggested by some feminist theorists, in fact requires a theory of an active subject as its corner stone. That is to say, it is only because the subject is active that she is able to exercise choice and agency in taking up the project of her own self-management. As my analysis of the transcripts of interviews in Chapters Five and Six suggested, the subject of mentoring is not a docile body simply acted upon or disciplined within discourse but is instead active in her own self-constitution. But as an active subject she is none the less shaped by the discourses through which she speaks.

My analysis also pointed to the complex processes of subjectification that are activated in the subjects' engagement with mentoring. There is no straight line between mentoring and a desired identity. There is instead a sometimes-harrowing journey of identification, dis-identification, rejection, celebration and denial as the subjects seek to reconcile the various subject positions they might occupy at any one time within a single coherent account of academic career and identity formation. Within the formulation of this account the processes of the production of the self are frequently presented unproblematically, or if once problematic, as now resolved. As Deetz (1998) noted, in this process, "… conflicts which could produce contestation and display construction processes are suppressed, and a false sense of autonomy exists which leads to the mistaken presumption of an open construction process" (p. 164).

I suggest that narrative devices such as parallel life stories take shape alongside the primary account of a life, appearing like 'break-out boxes' on the pages of the 'text'. These parallel stories give expression to the contradictions and conflicts the subject identifies in articulating her account and without these breakout

opportunities the primary story can't be sustained. Once spoken of, though, the parallel stories make transparent the tensions that must then be resolved in the ongoing production of the account, so the subject must re-double her efforts to produce a coherent account. This task is necessary because the account is not merely a facsimile of the subject at that time and place and in that interview, but because the account *is* the person. This is also the good and active subject's obligation in the confessional space of the research interview.

The women's subscription to a feminist discourse within universities generates a further set of regimes of truth regarding what it means specifically to be a *woman* academic. These regimes were experienced and enacted most actively by Marian as she set about disciplining herself and others in terms of an essentialist discourse about how women behave or should behave in organisations. Her essentialising of 'woman' in this way sits awkwardly alongside her resentment of the normative operations of heterosexuality that defined her workplace, and in which she was positioned as outsider because of her sexuality. While in our interview Marian did theorise her doctoral work on lesbian identity and its implications in her workplace in terms of her sexuality, she claimed she would no longer be an 'outsider' when she finished her doctoral studies. That is, she attributed her outsider status to her lack of a doctoral qualification. This too indicates the disciplining work performed through the technology of the doctorate, and specifically its function in sorting people in academic workplaces.

The women's accounts reveal the role mentoring for women plays as a site of governmentality in which women academics are disciplined and self-discipline in the terms of their disciplinary areas and institutions. This disciplining is never complete but is iterative and also confronting particularly for those women like Marian who subscribe to feminist politics. The repeated invocations to perform as an academic articulated through a range of technologies and discourses, and the demands of subjectivity imposed through these devices, create openings through which women might articulate alternative ways of being an academic as expressed by Michelle and Marian for example in their talk of women's networks and support.

Mentoring for women programs create one such opening given their position at the confluence of these discourses.

Never a dull moment: The role of mentoring in the discursive production of subjectivity

In Chapter Six – Michelle, Karen, Barb and Angela – I mapped out some of the discourses through which each woman spoke in building her account of herself at interview. These included discourses of career, gender, mothering, sexuality, social class and ethnicity to name a few. The purpose of this analysis was to explore how each woman *assembled* herself, with reference to which discourses and subject positions. This investigation showed that the women do not simply settle themselves into pre-determined positions within discourse but repeatedly confront and deconstruct the terms of the discourses through which they speak.

Within each of their accounts, the discourses interact and collide, leading the women in an iterative process of assembling, questioning, and re-examination of the terms of their constitution of themselves and of others' constitution of them. There is never a still place but instead a jostling for space and for recognition of competing subject positions. The women's relations to the positions they occupy at any one time are vexed and fluid as they endeavour to manage themselves within the dominant rationalities of academic life.

This jostling is also reflected in my own attempts to pin the women down in this text, to assign them one or other identity once and for all, by describing this one as 'like this' or that one as 'like that'. I have reflected on my rush to such statements in various drafts of this text, as some sort of desire for 'presence' (MacLure, 2003) or as I interpret it, my desire to say something definitive about something or someone. But just as soon as the statement is made, it is made false as other aspects of identity come into play. As MacLure puts it, "… people are not passive recipients of their 'identity papers'. (…) identity is a constant process of becoming – an endlessly revised accomplishment …" (p. 19). Scheeres (2004) captures the feeling of oscillation in this process, when she suggests with reference to one of the workers in her study, "The real movement is not from job to job but a

movement that is happening within himself. (…) a process of continually redefining himself …" (p. 314).

The function of mentoring within this tussle is to carve out in sharper relief the positions and meanings available to the women as these are made available to them in discourse. This can occur through a process of 'role modelling' according to which the women either identify with (as in Deirdre's case) or dis-identify with (as in Barb's) their mentors. Each of the women in the study made active decisions about whether she wanted to *be like* her mentor. Her mentor(s) represents what it is to be a successful woman academic. Sometimes this model was positive, as in Karen's 'caring and serene' mentor, and sometimes less so, as was the case with Barb's mentors, all of whom she reported suffered from life threatening or debilitating illnesses. Barb's ambitions were moderated by her desire to live a long and healthy life.

Mentoring also throws into relief those positions in discourse that are *not* readily available to women, the discourses in which they are constituted as other and outsider or the positions in which if taken up, women are likely to founder. The privileging of same-ness and the processes of normalisation that the women relate in their everyday lives actively positions and repositions the women as different. Some women theorise or experience this in terms of their gender – in other words, as women – while others report it in terms of their ethnicity, social class and sexuality.

Desire, ambition and identity work: managing oneself within a careers discourse

Another way in which mentoring offers meanings and positions is through the space it creates within which a careers discourse is operationalised. Mentoring for women is premised on the view that it's OK for women to be careerist and in fact makes a virtue of being career-oriented. It gives permission for women to prioritise their careers within their constitution of their subjectivity. As I argued in Chapters Four and Five, mentoring in fact requires an active subject as its starting point, one engaged in discourse as 'career-minded'.

In each case the women I interviewed had received support from their mentor that had contributed (or continued to contribute) to their career development. The careers discourse is, however, still constructed on the traditional heterosexual family model, with a man working full-time at his career with a partner not working full-time outside the home but focused on caring for him, his home and children. As many researchers have noted, this model is not applicable for many women and some men. The careers discourse is still also premised, Bagilhole (2001) argues, on the myth of individual career. This myth is perpetuated contrary to the evidence of extensive patriarchal support systems that underpin the careers of successful male academics. Women's programs she notes help women to build the networks necessary because women are outside existing male networks.

Women's position as outside the careers discourse means for the women to speak of careers is to leverage themselves into discourse from the position of outsider, to speak of oneself as belonging. As the accounts in Chapter Six suggest, different women manage their status as outsider in different ways, with some women embracing their marginalisation both as protection in the face of their other-ing but also in order to use it in a strategic project of destabilising relations of power and processes of normalisation. Through their repeated other-ing, and their uptake of a 'reverse discourse' the women articulate alternative positions for themselves and others.

In producing themselves as academic subjects, the women continually redefine themselves within the frame of a discourse of careers. It is perhaps ironic that there is a very limited career path in academic work, with very little to distinguish one academic job from another – depending on the institution, discipline and the context. Promotion then does not so much offer you a new job, so much as it may position you to negotiate greater advantages within your workplace, such as preferred teaching and administrative duties in workload allocations. Some additional responsibilities normally accrue, bringing one more into policy making roles within one's faculty and institution, but the main benefit to flow is from increased status in institutional and disciplinary terms, and with that the potential for greater influence on matters. With reference again to Scheeres (2004), the

movement is not between different jobs but within oneself in the processes of forming and enacting desires. Within the discourse of careers, the woman academic is in a continual state of 'becoming'.

The productive effects of mentoring

The intention of this thesis was to explore what work mentoring for women actually *does,* both to/for women *and* institutionally. These aims might be characterised in Foucauldian terms as my intention to explore the productive effects of mentoring. This aim was reflected in the research questions set out in Chapter One of this thesis, namely,

1.   What are the discourses and practices of mentoring at Australian universities?

2.   How are women's identities shaped through mentoring?

3.   What 'technologies' of power and of self are at work in mentoring?

4.   How do mentoring practices and discourses relate to wider feminist debates about institutional change in higher education?

These questions are addressed in the thesis in the following ways. In Chapter Two, I described mentoring as lying at the confluence of discourses of neo-liberal governance of universities and of gender equity. It is from its location within this discursive formation that mentoring for women takes its present forms. In Chapters Four and Five I drew on interviews with four of the women in my study to explore the ways in which the women self-manage and self-regulate as academic workers through their engagement in mentoring. I built on Foucault's theory of governmentality to take account of feminist concerns with the role of agency in the formation of subjects. In Chapter Six I explored the discourses through which the women spoke in their accounts of themselves, and the ways in which the women interpret and re-interpret their positions within those discourses.

I referred to the role of mentoring in the production of subjects and subjectivities. In addition to subjects, mentoring also produces knowledges, power and discourses. Some of these knowledges relate to the performance of academic work and may

include knowledge on such matters as how to undertake research, deal with difficult students, handle workplace problems more effectively. At the core of these subject knowledges though is the production of new forms of self-knowledge. That is, mentoring is part of a biographical project of the self in which new understandings of oneself – new subjectivities – are formed.

Some of the knowledges produced may also be transgressive in that they invite the mentee to transgress accepted conventions of gender-appropriate conduct, or to form new and critical understandings of herself, of the processes of her own subjectification, the discursive construction of her environment and of her positioning within that. Herein lies the politicising potential of women's mentoring. It is important then that mentoring is not construed in negative terms as a hegemonic process of subjectification that merely turns out docile bodies. The subjects and knowledges produced are, as I have argued earlier, active in their own self-constitution, and may also be constituted as politicised and unruly subjects through their participation.

As the women's accounts over Chapters Four, Five and Six indicate, mentoring is a forum in which power is produced, and exercised. In my thesis I have drawn attention to the fact that this dimension of women's mentoring (as with the conduct of feminist research itself) is not always acknowledged and may in fact be glossed over. Yet a number of the women's accounts of their experiences of mentoring are dotted with disappointments and betrayals. To again draw a parallel with feminist research, I have argued we should not assume accepted wisdom on where the power resides in relations between women. In feminist research, the power does not necessarily reside with the researcher, who may be interviewing (as in this study) knowing research subjects. In mentoring it should not be assumed that the mentee is always the less powerful in the pair. My research however, has pointed to many of the women's vulnerabilities within their mentoring relationships. I suggest a more productive reading of power within mentoring, according to which power is produced in and through the relationship and is exercised back and forth between the parties. Deirdre's relationship to her mentor Alex illustrates the dynamic and fluid operation of power most vividly.

What is it possible for women to be (-come)?

Mentoring may form part of the apparatus that supports normative constructions of women's behaviour in workplaces, that is to say, behaviour that is considered gender-appropriate for women by both men and women. Mentees may be guided into behaviours that are least likely to offend or disrupt conventions, in the interests of a goal of ensuring harmonious relations with others or more strategically of securing support for their career development – for instance, by learning to 'laugh within reason' within the academy (McWilliam, 2000). Mentoring for women may of course have the reverse effect, supporting women to speak out in commanding terms in their own interests, behaviour not always countenanced as appropriate for women.

At all times though women's behaviour is (self) policed in terms of accepted standards of gender performance. Whether it's Angela reappropriating her 'woggy' hand gestures as subversive political act, or Michelle's reference to another woman academic as 'ladylike but not so successful', women's behaviour and bodies are the subject of ongoing surveillance and of disciplining, by ourselves and by others, a process in which mentoring, as a technology for the production of subjectivities, is clearly implicated.

For a number of the women in my study, their mentor represented a model of what it is to perform as a successful woman academic institutionally or within a disciplinary field. Michelle's account of notable women in her field in terms of their marital status, and Karen's model of her 'serene and caring' mentor, each provides a different take on the problem of women and academic success. When women don't perform their gender institutionally – when they are not always polite, thoughtful, caring and selfless in their conduct with others – they risk being positioned as a 'difficult' woman'. I note the adjective 'difficult' is rarely if ever used in organisations to describe a man, but is used by women and men to characterise some women who exercise power.

In closing, what I have tried to do in this thesis is to foreground subject formation, specifically the formation of women academic subjects, and mentoring has been

the vehicle for doing this. This was not my express intention at the start – back then I thought the thesis would be *about* mentoring and would say a lot *about* mentoring. But the conclusion I have reached is that mentoring is first and foremost a set of investments in a desired life-world and that mentoring has little in the way of material qualities about which we might speak, particularly as I said, when talking in the abstract about no mentoring program in particular.

The focus of this study has been on mentoring as experienced by *mentees* while the role of mentor is not explored. Colley (2001) notes that very little has been written on the experiences of *mentors*. The present study begs a number of questions regarding mentors in universities. Who does the mentoring in universities? What are the gendered relations of mentoring as experienced by the mentors? How does mentoring produce mentors' subjectivities? How do mentors understand their positioning in discourses of career and academic success? An examination of these questions would provide a useful study of relations of power as experienced (and enacted) from the perspective of mentors.

There is a wealth of material in the public domain on how to set up and run a good mentoring program and clearly, it has not been my primary aim in this thesis to add to that literature. One comment I might make in regard to practice would be to emphasise the importance of people working in the field of professional development or in education generally, drawing out the demands on identity produced within discourses that both shape the programs that they run and that shape the context in which those programs are formed. This is important because it exposes for critique the sources of conflict or tensions with which women struggle in the processes of assembling themselves as academic workers.

One of the implications of not exposing the discursive construction of identity to critical gaze is that women may identify the problem in terms of an individualised discourse of 'not coping'. In other words, mentoring initiatives need to be located within a broader and ongoing analysis of the context and its implications. In our practice we should also avoid the desire to try and resolve the contradictions that arise in this analysis but instead work to realise the transgressive potential of

professional development programs by using as the basis for curricula those very tensions and contradictions.

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