

Original Paper

Analysis of the Discourse of Disrespect of Women in Politics: Hating Hillary and Getting Gillard

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Abstract

From June 2010 until June 24th 2013, and at times into 2014 the then Prime Minister of Australia The Honourable Ms Julia Gillard was subjected to the most intense and ruthless political rhetoric ever seen in Australian media. Personal attacks and talk back callers openly admitting they “hated her” and calling into question her mental state and hormonal status was just part of a brutal media campaign aided and abetted by Opposition Leader in Tony Abbott. He linguistically derailed a reforming and intelligent woman who held together a minority parliament which delivered significant legislation. In addition, a selection of media articles and a review of media analysis of the candidacy of Hillary Clinton in preparing a run for the White House in the USA during the years 2015-2016 echoes eerie parallels to a sub textual cultural discourse of misogyny especially in politics. This discourse analysis and media study questions whether the core of the Real Matilda misogyny reported by Miriam Dixon in Australia since 1976 is alive and well and lingers on in our linguistic heritage. The polarisation of political debate and concomitant bias some media quarters is analysed and shown to have a significant pattern beginning with disapproval and ending in directional linguistic commands from media. The end result was that the Politicians listened to the unrelenting chorus of demands to “end leadership speculation “and complete chaos and to go to an election.

Keywords

women, misogyny, disrespect, politics, discourse

Introduction: Women and Politics

In ancient times there was indeed a celebration of women who could argue their case and be seen as shining examples in discourse between armies and ideologies. Indeed, as Plutarch (translated by Goodwin 1684) noted:

“The women placing themselves between the armies, took up the controversies, argued them so accurately, and determined them so impartially, that an admirable friendly correspondence and general amity ensued, both civil and domestic. Hence the Celts made it their practice to take women into consultation about peace or war, and to use them as mediators in any controversies that arose between them and their allies”

There is scant literature on the discourse of politics and women, but it is replete with actual representations of misogyny and gender inequality in general media and society. For example, the early work of Miriam Dixson in the book *The Real Matilda* which was first published in 1976 to a hostile reception showed a highly segmented work force and a discourse of sexism directed at women who were often known as *Sheilas*. The notion that women were not equal was anathema at this time. This is despite Australia having been one of the first places in the western world to give women the right to stand and vote in elections (including Aboriginal women) as early as 1896. New Zealand often seen as a cousin to Australia “*across the ditch*” (Note 1) gave women the vote in 1894 two decades ahead of Britain and of course the USA.

Dixson has since been well and truly proved correct despite the 40 years that has transpired since it rings true. A more recent edition echoes these views (1994; 1999, p. 84) which outlines the strong and continual mistrust of women in Australian history. She noted this when she suggested:

“Some might argue that the greater the social weight of aristocrat and bourgeois the less democratic by definition, the moral economy of a community. So if historians, political philosophers and political scientists were to begin to consider the situation of women with any intellectual seriousness, they might then have to recast some basic conceptual structures. If they were to include women as a first approximation, one might have to begin with an apparently paradoxical formulation: the greater the degree of democracy, the greater the misogyny,... ‘Demos’ means people. A more accurate term would clearly be ‘Andocracy’”.

She adds that the key standards on which modern democracy are based are masculine and that the fundamental political discourses may need to be reconfigured in some way. This is echoed in the work of other political and discourse analysts where examples of gender bias are overtly noted and discussed (Delahunty, 2014; Goldsworthy, 2013; Campbell, 2012). There is a consistent avenue of discourse which highlights the notion of *gender wars* or when women themselves raise the issues related to misogynistic issues, they are often accused of playing the “gender card”. For example, in Britain research has shown a similar focus on women in political battles and are highlighted for entertainment in media (Coole, 1993; Fairclough, 1995). Coole highlights the historical evidence which is cited by

her of Rousseau and Aristotle both of whom ascribe to women “natural characteristics” as evidence of their womanly roles. Indeed, she states: “the Characteristics ascribed to women rob them of their credentials for citizenship: they lack the right sort of reason, autonomy, judgement, sense of justice and the ability to consent”.

This view was brought into sharp relief when Mr Donald Trump suggested he could sexually push himself onto a woman because he was “famous...And they let you do it”. This notion that a woman lacks this ability to consent when faced with fame and fortune was strongly evident throughout the campaign. Fairclough (1995, p. 44) echoes this view by suggesting that the mass media has in the last decades become a form of entertainment and that audiences are manipulated so that they are “spectators” rather than citizen participants. The visual and active process of debate and discussion of issues is left to media to shape and in some instances set the ideological agenda. What Trump managed to do is shift the agenda to uncertainty which in itself became the news.

In recent times and especially during his candidacy for the US Presidency Donald Trump the nominee for the Republican Party USA Presidential election has himself incurred the wrath of political feminist researchers and media alike by referring to women in pejorative language. Some examples have been significantly vitriolic and would in any other context other than the political sphere be considered as clearly inappropriate. It also suggests a latent hatred of women. A list of them has been identified by Nadia Bahadur (2015) which emphasise a notion that perhaps women have no place in holding political or public office. His constant attacks on women in general appear to have any place in modern democracy but nevertheless the frequency of his comments are now legendary website and active on social media. One example a tweet which suggested that Presidential Candidate for the Democratic Party in the US Presidential race Hillary Rodham Clinton “Cannot satisfy her husband” appears on the Bahadur (2015) webpage.

Method

The entire study took over three years and has been in a draft format seeking feedback and comments since then on collegial terms with other discourse scholars the results of which are this current political and discourse analysis modified and corrected over the last few years. From 2010-2014 a series of headlines, stories and media platforms totalling more than 175 news sites, television news channels, printed newspapers, and social media sites were examined and subjected to a media discourse analysis. Areas that were examined in detail included the following:

- **Themes and topics** which occurred on a significant basis
- **Descriptors** and adjectival clauses used to report on women in political life as they were seen at press conferences and on television programs reporting on the political day to day drama as chosen by television reporters and political commentators on various media platforms

- **Frequency Anaphora** or repetition: this type of study first identified by Altheide (2003) and Aronson (1994) in which the frequency of themes and topics are seen as a measure of author mindset
- **Metaphor:** often used in political discourse to describe culturally appropriate information so that a collective understanding is delivered to the audience. This has been described in detailed by Lakoff and Johnston (2003) as a way of defining a set of beliefs such as conflict (factional fighting) and chaos marking a style of politics. Indeed, the notion of political debate being full of fire and discord is also characterised by elections as a type of horse race or race to the finish a style of metaphor which shows people “running for office” and being able to defeat an opponent. Some media platforms considered for this discourse analysis were in fact called *InfoWars*.
- **Topoi or collective belief** systems delivered via media or language. Within society the notion of a collective belief in democracy is often used by politicians to promote their view in fact history as a foundation of political democratic development has been seen by many theorists as a way of determining the mindset of media and reportage according to Shenhav (2006) and that this can lead to a point of view being considered as true or representative.

Media Stories and Media Sensationalism

For anyone with red hair in the world there is an apparent discriminatory situation which is known and reported as “Gingerism”. Since 1652 and even earlier the problem with red heads has been documented as in this advice given by Gillemieu in 1612 for choosing a wet nurse to feed a baby: (note the archaic spelling of this extract)

“she must not be deformed, neither squint-ey’d, lame, nor crump shouldred: she must be one that is healthfull, and not subject to any disease: the complexion and colour of her bodie, must be lively, and rosie; she must not be spotted with rednesse, and especially **she should not have red hair (bold my input)**: and therefore, such as are of a browne complexion, are held to be best, whose haire is of a chest-nut colour, betweene yellow and blacke”.

Excerpt from *Childbirth or The Happy Deliverie of Women* by James Guillemeau, London 1612. Reproduced by DaCapo Press, The English Experience series, no. 464, 1972. Transcribed from the original by Jacquelyn J. Smith

Clearly being a red head and female (Note 2) has been a problem for sections of the media and community...Julia Gillard, the red headed politician, lawyer, first female prime Minister of Australia has been signally brutalised by media and community. This paper seeks to explain what happened and whether it could happen again. Again, in many articles there have been references to her red hair or supposed red headed temperament. Indeed, from the first few days of her elevation by the Australian Labor Party Caucus (unopposed) to the position of leader and therefore Prime Minister she was

subjected to advice about being a red-haired leader (Wilson, 2010). This article begins with comparisons between a former Queen of England Elizabeth 1 and how she rose to power as the result of bloody factional fighting which had been “ripping the country apart” and this was seen as an “echo of the day 452 years ago” when a subject exclaimed “Oh Lord the Queen is a woman!”.

Other articles from *Business Chic* related to her style and dress sense right from the very beginning and suggested ways in which to attain style for the “top job”. It would appear that from the very beginning Ms Gillard was a marked woman. Other commentary noted that she was indeed a “ranga” Australian slang for a red headed person. This refers to the colour of *orang outangs* (the colour of jungle people as the words translates from Bahasa Malay and Indonesian) This was often used to suggest by hard line radio talk show hosts that she somehow used the “rule of the jungle” to attain power. She was marked for being female, for being a red head, for being smart, for being unmarried, and for being childless and more of that can be considered later in this paper.

Hillary Clinton is also marked for her style and lack of glamour and indeed her age is also is question. In addition shock jock style magazines are questioning her health and ability. For example, the “New Dawn” magazine suggests that she has a significant oral cancer and that her strange speaking style is due to this anomaly.

Are the Media to Blame?

Media analysts talk about and research the main frameworks which outline stories that are considered suitable to print and publish in any media platform. The fit within this summarised form that I have identified using the work of the Glasgow School as a guide “*Emotion; Sensation; Conflict; Division and Celebrity*” the old adage if it bleeds it leads only now works with a sensational addition. This happened when Megyn Kelly Fox News host interviewed Donald Trump in August 2015 and he retaliated with his reply to probing questions that she must be “bleeding from I don’t know where” and casting aspersions on female menstrual cycles. She had probed him about a range of matters on the campaign trail and Kelly also pressed Trump about misogynistic and sexist comments that he made in the past, such as calling some women “fat pigs, dogs, slobs, and disgusting animals (Yan, 2015)”. The media according to Tanner (2011) see politics as a form of entertainment and that politicians are fair game and are seen as performance artists.

The Sheila “Who Asked for it”

In Australia the term “Sheila” while also being a female name is often used for a collective term for women. In Australian folklore the term is often used a pejorative term for women of a lower class by men (often called blokes in Australia) who consider all women who stand out from the crowd as fair game. For anyone accessing media of any kind in the period 2010 to the end of June 2013 when Prime Minister Julia Gillard lost a caucus ballot of the Parliamentary Australian Labor Party, they would have

expected this outcome. An unrelenting and brutal linguistic attack on the person of this Prime Minister (PM) is unheralded in Australian politics. Traditionally politics is played fairly and squarely and attacks on policy and their implementation are fair game. But for Australia in the period of minority Government 2010-2013 a campaign of destabilisation attributed to the former deposed PM Kevin Rudd found...This campaign was aided and abetted by a ruthless mainstream media still in thrall to the notion of politics as a contest; a horse race or football match with winners and losers identified. The minority Parliament which required constant negotiation and working with traditional political foes did not sit well with the business community, the press gallery who prefer the notion of contest between two parties. Eventually the general public were persuaded by this and grew to dislike this style of politics.

During the election campaign called by Ms Gillard following the deposing of Kevin Rudd in 2010 the media were treated to ongoing “leaks” about her lack of commitment to national security, her betrayal of pensioners, and her obvious power-hungry behaviours. This is carefully documented by Kerry Ann Walsh (2013) in her seminal analysis of the media in her book where she documents these continued attacks reported faithfully by the mainstream media and in turn the talk back radio hosts who took to criticising her via the shock jocks approach. Terminology such as “menopausal monster” “Bob Brown’s Bitch” “hate her” and “she should be taken to sea in a chaff bag and drowned” and even questioning her parents as too “ugly to conceive her” and should have “taken precautions” were not uncommon.

During this period, she was subjected to what many people have suggested was the fiercest and most prolonged *hate campaign* ever seen in Australian politics (see for example the *Mama Mia* (2013) website for a brief summary of this). In addition, there is strong evidence cited by many authors that there is a streak of misogyny that runs throughout Australian political history and in some other cultures such as America where the notion of women as equals has been at the forefront of community pride. This is not borne out in my research. For example, Anna Goldsworthy calls this “Unfinished Business: Sex Freedom and Misogyny” in her essay which details a long and unhappy history of sexism in Australia.

Citing former Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Howard Government as an example where he is quoted as saying “I think it is disgraceful to go around calling people sexist and misogynist” on *Sky News* (Goldsworthy, 2013, p. 14). In the Quarterly Essay she notes that:

“His objection is not that it was disgraceful to be sexist or misogynist; nor that it is disgraceful to call people sexist and misogynist *inaccurately*; simply that it’s disgraceful to use these words at all”. (Goldsworthy, 2013, p. 14)

In response to the now famous *misogyny speech* delivered in the national Australian Parliament in October 2012 it became obvious that Ms Gillard as PM had struck a chord with a community not just in Australia but around the world. The speech was widely reported both in Australia and abroad. Nevertheless, it sparked a series of media commentary in which she was accused of “playing the

gender card” and where Paul Sheehan columnist in the *Sydney Morning Herald* suggested that this had become a driver of the politics of hate in Australia. Later he also wrote:

“When her standing sank and her government was in real trouble, and several cynical deals were unravelling, the first woman prime minister played the gender card. She threw mud and called it misogyny. For her passion and her eloquence on that day she has been roundly praised but it was a desperate act and it helped create an astounding gender gap”.

(Sheehan 2013 web page 1)

In fact it has been widely reported that despite the adversarial nature of politics where opposing sides determine and debate policy that Ms Gillard had more than one opposition to her term of office.

Erik Jensen (2013) argues that Kevin Rudd the former PM waged a continuous campaign to regain office by co-opting the media to great effect. This campaign was waged with the help of social media platforms, *twitter and Facebook* as well as significantly placed commentary and media releases each time Ms Gillard made announcements designed to highlight the positive aspects of new legislation or policy developments. These were clearly highlighted by Walsh (2013) showing instances of competing media interest whenever Rudd (former Prime Minister) made appearances clearly in contest with her and her team.

Hillary hated by media shows a similar trait

Mrs Clinton is often shown as lacking in integrity and a liar. Thus in media analysis some lexical choices clearly identify of whom the constituency should be afraid.

Some media have reported the strange and often disgraceful comments made not only about Mrs Clinton but direct to reporters who dare to ask him to probe questions and despite the shortcomings identified of Mr Trump and his rhetoric it is Mrs Clinton who is consistently reported as having difficulty in relating with the community. The media have consistently suggested that somehow the racist and bigoted comments attributed to Mr Trump (see for example his comments on Muslims and Mexican immigrants) are connecting with people who are afraid and left behind. Commentators even while visiting Australia have suggested that Mrs Clinton is the embodiment of what to “hate” in a politician standing for office. This view has been aired on programs such as the popular comedic review of American politics here on Australian ABC television known as *Planet America*. Mrs Clinton is often referred to as elite and part of the “Washington Elite”.

Further research of websites related to the so called unpopularity of Mrs Clinton described in a recent Google search showed no less than 23,000 sites devoted to this topic alone. One example included an article by Matthew Continetti from the *National Review* dated November 7th 2015 which gave a listing of her failures and how she could be beaten at the polls. Within this article was a report of a CBS poll which reported that 64% of the respondents concluded that Mrs Clinton was “not honest” and considered as “**untrustworthy**”. Richter (2016) also considers that she will be an abject failure and

several stories of this ilk are to be found on line.

A recent content analysis showed that in identifying Ms Clinton in media reports Mr Donald Trump the Republican nominee for the Presidential election has referred to her as being “**crooked**” and a criminal on more than 70 occasions. This of course is amplified by the number of media stories and social media platforms that echo these sentiments. In recent times Mr Trump has been referring to Hillary Clinton as *Hilery [sic]* Clinton and this has been echoed by website and social media ad infinitum.

Military and Conflict Metaphor a feature of Gillard being instated by the Labor party caucus and her coming to power reportage of her time as Prime Minister

Most of the reportage of the deposition of June 2010 clearly used conflict and military metaphor to highlight the seriousness of the situation. A selection of articles considered for this article shows a strong preference for suggesting that Ms Gillard had overthrown the former PM in some sort of *coup d’etat*. A striking number of lexical choices indicate this view. Some examples of this genre echo the work of Schulz (2010) and Teo (2008) who indicate that marginalising unwanted members of society or a group is often done by describing them as aggressive, ruthless and cold. This is clearly identified in various headlines just following the deposition via the party room, and later after Kevin Rudd was reinstated.

It should be noted for international readers that the leadership of the party in power in Australia is the gift of party room by ballot and negotiation of numbers and not through voting via the ballot box.

- Gillard takes top job in **bloodless coup** “The 7-30 Report” ABC and on line at <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2010/s2936441.htm>
- Gillard Knifes Rudd in Bloodless Coup ABC Report 24th June 2010
- Prime Minister Julia Gillard reveals - **why I knifed Kevin Rudd** *News.com.au* June 18th 2011
- **Rudd knifed**
- **Rudd decapitated**
- **Gillard knifes Rudd in overnight coup**
- Kevin Rudd calls Julia Gillard a **coup plotter and backstabber** “*the Australian*” Sept 24th 2014
- **Bloodied but unbowed** Rudd returns
- Where Gillard went wrong “Catallaxy Files” June 23d 2013
- The battle for supremacy Gillard... Gillard prevails in Leadership Battle *Sydney Morning Herald* <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/gillard-prevails-in-leadership-battle-20120226-1txbz.html>
- Gillard attacks Abbott the famous misogyny speech in which Prime Minister Julia Gillard responds to what she believes is overt sexism in the Australian Parliament...<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeGeooZOUdE> and seen millions of times on *YouTube*.

The above selection is reflected in thousands of blogs, on line reports and news stories which shows Ms

Gillard as antagonistic and belligerent in her approach to Parliamentary debate. Several theorists have described the traditional methods of debate in modern democracy as significant in how it responds to protagonists...Recent media reports highlight conflict as a significant factor in stories contesting policy and ideas. For example “war breaks out” is often a precursor of headlines and echoes the work of Teo (2001) who identified conflict as way of “othering”.

Dumbing down Democracy and the failure to report nuance and complexity

Lindsay Tanner (2011, p. 36) a former Minister in the Rudd- Gillard Australian Federal governments has suggested in his book *Sideshow: Dumbing Down Democracy* has suggested that the focus on trivia, titillation and distortion has allowed the news media to see politics as a sideshow worthy of entertainment where and when serious issues are set to one side and ignored. This is to the detriment of modern democracy where what is said and how it is said is constantly in the news, but the major issues ignored.

For example, in Australia the Race Discrimination Act section 18C allows people who are offended or insulted to lodge a claim. This issue is under constant debate and review and subject to a myriad of controversial commentary. However, during the insulting of Julia Gillard PM in her time in office not once did the commentariat suggest that she too could have lodged her own claim of being offended?

For example some insulting lexical choices have included the following in headlines for both women who it seemed could not turn the tide of unpopularity. These can be easily accessed through on line posts and archived news stories.

Table 1. Topoi in Discourse as a Reporting Genre

JULIA GILLARD LEXIS JUXTAPOSED IN HEADLINES AND STORIES	HILLARY CLINTON LEXIS JUXTAPOSED IN HEADLINES AND STORIES
Road Kill	Liar
Anger	Crooked
Power hungry	Improper practices
Toppled	Unpopular
Juliar (Julia Liar implicit)	Liar
Red headed, ranga (taken from red coloured orang-utang)	Blonde haired (fake) grandmother
Witch /bitch	Bitch
Dominant power	Domineering
Deliberately Barren by choice	Absent mother
Unmarried (living with partner)	Married to lying cheating former president
Execution of PM in office	Back stabber
Big arse (large bottom hips)	Dress sense questioned

Fierce

domineering

Lemke's (1998) view is that discourse analysis should always include a number of resources and strategies, such as lexis and grammar, rhetorical formations, and the construction of thematic formations and cohesion chains; the whole set building upwards, as broader formations are detected with the same "patterning" of responses. Such elements are used in assembly of any discourse describing and surrounding a reality, to reveal the particular characteristics of a community and its public perceptions. This is echoed in the work of Fairclough (1995), who indicates that powerful participants within a given communication format can control and constrain what is said or done within a particular discourse. Nowhere is this more evident than in the constraints imposed on the political female candidates by the commentators and reporters, within their own professional "*habitus*" (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 101). The reporters and political commentariat, by their very situation, are architects of a punctiliously observed set of ideas on how and what to say when writing about politics. Echoed in the work of Tanner (2015) there is a view that the entertainment value takes precedence followed by what Mc Combs and Shaw indicate is the framing sequences. My own view (Schulz & Cannon, 2013) is seen as connecting with *emotion sensation division conflict and celebrity* where those in the spotlight are often placed on trial by the media for trivial "gotcha moments" or what they were wearing on the day of the report. For example Ms Gillard's jackets were so often remarked upon that they literally had their own *Twitter* hashtag. In fact many stories devoted to Ms Gillard fashion sense or "dressing for power" moments were faithfully recorded.

When celebrities or others are persuaded to comment, either within their own professional circles or in response to some of the issues raised about the reportage a, their *topoi* are strongly connected to community understanding of politics current public opinion, media reporting, and those outcomes which relate directly to community concerns and issues of public confidence. It is surprising then to note that Germaine Greer a known feminist provocateur had a derogatory attack about the way Ms Gillard was dressed (August 27th 2012).

She could only muster comment about the size of Ms Gillard's bottom in her preferred jackets which left a highly acclaimed ABC Australia program *QandA* audience laughing but serious political scholars amazed that a feminist scholar of some note could be so negative about a woman in power. It is thus where the discourse community of media in all its forms show a consistency of effort in *topoi or themed topics* which reappear time and time again in discussion within a discourse community that is in charge over what is to be considered and to be reported. When it is political debate over two high profile women at different ends of the earth who attain power it is clear that the media set the tone and tenor of reportage which is then echoed in the new public square of cyberspace.

The topoi of appearance

The topoi of appearance was a constant theme in Mrs Clinton's candidacy for the presidency and many websites attested to this theme. This was a common one held by media commentary within the confines of celebrity and how they deem those in the news are supposed to be presented. This is echoed strongly by media scholars who suggest that the cult of celebrity is a known two way approach to relationships with media (Bennett Hall & Holmes, 2008). In a way the notion of Schadenfreude as outlined by Cross and Littler (2010 cited in Harvey et al below) indicates a type of attack against privileged people such as politicians who are constantly in the limelight and evaluated via public opinion. For example one website the *Daily Wire* suggested that Hillary had worn the "ugliest outfit in human history". In a similar vein the topoi of appearance was credited in the discourse related to Hillary Clinton's underperforming in engaging young female voters by suggesting that she had made several fashion failures which led to her poor polling with this demographic by the Federalist websites in April 2016.

"Cross and Littler (2010) locate Schadenfreude as a 'trans-individual affective pro-cess of resentment' and response to the contemporary political conjecture of neoliberal capitalism, where individuals have a 'desire for equality but [are] unable to think of anything other than levelling through humiliation' (p. 397)" cited in Harvey Allen and Mendinck, 2015)

Some examples of this appear in a myriad of websites from traditional mainstream media to off grid conspiratorial websites which heralded negative commentary about the candidate and her appearance throughout the campaign. Several media stories about Mrs Clinton's appearance showed her with an open mouth and evidence of a supposed tongue biopsy as proof of her inability to lead the nation. The Conservative Tree House website (July 31, 2016) condemned her for a number of ailments which had not been publicly mentioned in mainstream media and which was affecting her appearance with the American public. Criticism of Mrs Clinton was unrelenting and constantly upbraided her fashion style, weight and health profiles.

Similarly Ms Gillard was also subjected to the discourse topoi of appearance and one example of the Blue Shoe lost in a secret service removal of Ms Gillard from turmoil and a significant scuffle was a prime example of this genre. The media were busy reminding the community that Gillard lost her blue shoe in the active strong armed escort, and that she had *stumbled* once too often, *lost her footing* politically, and avoiding framing her in a narrative of the victim of protesters (generated by remarks reportedly made by the then Opposition Leader Mr Tony Abbott) but rather as a metaphor for how her prime ministership was also stumbling and tripping over. Such lexical choices were indeed pejorative and according to some researchers set the tone for public opinion. For example Hallahan (1999) suggests that knowledge of political issues and candidates can be set in media frames that encourages a point of view and sets the tone for reporting and commentary:

"McCombs (2004) labelled the media's ability also to frame attributes as second-order agenda setting or frame setting. The extension of the familiar description of

agenda-setting thus suggests, although media are not necessarily effective in telling people what to think, media can be strikingly effective in telling people what to think about—and how to think about it”. (Hallahan, 1999, p. 213)

The tone of commentary was thereafter very pejorative and focussed on the Federal Government’s inability to get anything right and that Ms Gillard stumbled and tripped from one disaster to another on a regular basis. Such reporting is according to Mc Combs and form of agenda-setting and framing the narrative in order to glean a particular point of view.

The topoi of trust/integrity as an evaluative tool to disparage

Throughout the entire campaign for the election of the US President (won by Donald Trump on November 8th 2016) the topoi of distrust and integrity was raised consistently. Mr Trump and some of his colleagues asked the question whether the community of electors could or should trust Hillary Clinton as she had allegedly committed crimes by using a private email service during her term of office as Secretary of State for the USA. The refrain was used often at debates and rallies by Donald Trump and was effective in that in the latter part of the campaign his collocations or relational word contexts with Mrs Clinton often included the chant or phrase “She should be locked up” and calls for a special prosecutor to ensure that she is thoroughly investigated. Since the end of the election campaign Mr Trump’s office and he himself have remained remarkably silent on this issue.

Collocation as a form of control information.

Some extreme examples of this form of *anaphora* (repetition) are readily available on line and can be seen to echo the theoretical principles outlined in Discourse Analysis by Fairclough (2001, p. 95) in which he suggests that **collocation of assumed behaviour** gives an ideological scheme for classifying someone or their behaviour and thus metaphorically represents a form of imprisonment via discourse.

The main examples of collocation that are evident include the following words used in juxtaposition most often in the more than 175 sites examined include:

- Crooked [Hillary]
- Criminal
- Untrustworthy
- Corrupt [includes terms such as most corrupt]
- Member of the Elite
- Hopeless
- Lock her up (three word slogan)
- Liar
- Elite
- Left leaning
- Too liberal (progressively left wing)

The pejorative nature of the above collocations with the term Hillary or Clinton appeared constantly and indeed in recent times have been reiterated by Trump and his team.

The topoi of popularity and celebrity qualities

The topoi of popularity and celebrity qualities were significant in the election to the White House and clearly showed that the cult of celebrity has enormous influence in community decision making. For example Bennett et al (2008) and the work of Yi (2012, p. 2) indicates that: “In the celebrity world, then, there are far fewer standardised methods of predicting and measuring celebrity success, as celebrities are not confined to any one set of designated rules. But the answer actually lies in the way fans and news follow every little detail of celebrities’ personal lives and appearances”.

This was indeed the issue as Trump’s Tweets dominated the news media at all hours in the 24 hour news cycle. Trump was known to have tweeted in the early hours of the morning and often news looking to break with an item of interest would headline anything that seemed controversial or significantly anti his opponents. One example in late 2016 is typical of this genre in which Trump attacked Hillary and her supposed connections with “rigging the election”.

“This election is being rigged by the media pushing false and unsubstantiated charges, and outright lies, in order to elect Crooked Hillary!” Donald J Trump 15th October 2016 on Twitter feed.

Earlier in September 2015 when it became clear that Ms Clinton would be a major presidential candidate he had also called attention to Ms Clinton’s fainting (according to some news outlets due to heat exhaustion) and her lack of stamina and health status. This became a news phenomenon when pictures emerged of her shoe left on the kerb following a stumble and other stories featured a possible brain tumour or haemorrhage. A twitter storm can still be found online through most search engines.

Stories written by newspapers and on line media platforms (see for example Revesz, 2015) highlighted the fainting episode but continued to discuss the issue and this made it possible for Trump to insist that she was unfit for office.

The topoi of feminine traits and attributes

Trump often used the issues raised by allowing the country to fall into the hands of someone without the significant attributes to run the White House and the world’s most powerful nation. Some examples include suggestions that former President Clinton had been unfaithful due to Ms Clinton’s inability to please her man. Other collocated terms with Ms Clinton questioning her feminine qualities ranged from wearing pantsuits to other more derogatory comments.

- **Lacks** the authenticity and the kind of charisma required to unite a nation. ... model, that inspiring leadership traits
- embodying masculine leadership **traits**
- she embodies **too few** of the traditional **feminine traits** we like to see in women (likeability)
- She **lacks** in charisma and excitement that many look for when choosing leaders

- Too much **like a man**
- **Characteristics** we tend to associate with women—such as being facilitative or caring—are not at all what we think of as leadership **traits**. McLean Parks has studied the differences in perceptions of male and **female** leaders, and says that Clinton faces an uphill battle trying to overcome voter bias

All this discourse echoes the notion that while women are gaining in being seen in political and public life the community can be easily persuade of the shortcomings of female candidates in political life. See for example Holtz Bacha (2013) in which she describes the significant hurdles faced by women entering politics. The collocations listed alongside and juxtaposed near the descriptors clearly indicate a mindset that is anti the female leaders and finds fault with a large variety of things such as their failings in dress, femininity, ability to placate voters and deride falsity.

She describes voter bias as media becomes obsessed with a range of issues related to the private lives of female candidates:

“Women politicians know that the media act as a significant hurdle for their career. The media report differently on women and men. Since decades (*sic*) we have been hearing from women all over the world complaining that the media only seem to be interested in their looks and in their private life but not so much in their political aims and concerns: How she dresses, how is her hairdo, does her husband have to prepare his own meals and who takes care of the children while she is doing politics? Her male colleagues are rarely confronted with these sorts of questions. That means female politicians are confronted with evaluation criteria that do not come from the political field and that do not play a role for the evaluation of male politicians”. (Holtz-Bacha ,2013, p. 64)

The topoi of power in female hands

Many male politicians describe power in female hands as somewhat dangerous. Since the early days of Margaret Thatcher being dubbed the *iron lady* **other titles have been used to discredit powerful women**. The following collocations alongside Hillary Clinton and also former Prime Minister of Australia Ms Gillard clearly identify the issues of concern raised by their opponents.

- Machiavellian
- Mendacious
- Thirsts for power
- Unlikeable aggression
- A sea of men will pay no heed
- Not really in charge
- Witch using hexes to get ahead
- Wearing a mask
- Who knows what they are thinking?

- Expertly tailored
- Coiffed
- Dressed for power
- Problem with women seeking power

It appears then that when a woman strives for power, she loses likeability. This is consistently hammered by the press and the echo chamber of Trump followers or those that opposed Julie Gillard when she attained the role of the first PM of Australia

The Discourse of Direction by media

It could now be a problem created by media which hungry for news in a competitive online world greedily and actively reported the Twitter storms and the stumbles both literal and metaphorical by both women. Is it the problem with American or Australian culture? Do we have a more conservative community than we like to think? The decision is open. However, as Schulz (2010, pp. 51-52) in her study in *Courts and Judges on Trial* that often the Discourse of Direction is indeed media driven by the frames that continue to attract and court viewers and media users. Hallahan (1999) argues strongly that emotions are a quick and easy route to engender responses from readers (and *Twitter*) participants in media consumption. There is a lot of emotion and back stories in feisty women demanding to be heard (red headed or coiffed expensively and aggressive) or those that leave the home and hearth for a political stage. The questions from community must now be if not How Dare They? But How come it has taken so long to be heard?

How were the media persuaded by Trump and his team?

It would appear that in general the media have been mesmerised by the Trump phenomenon as he appears to be so unpredictable and use the social media platform *Twitter* as a public forum in which to express his often-controversial views and beliefs. To some extent he has embodied the idea of *infotainment* to a large degree in which the media cannot wait to see what he is going to say or do next!

Postscript 2017 issues for consideration by future discourse analysis

Since the election of November 2016 there is much to consider if women are to gain their proper position in public life.

- **Mr Trump has backed away from elements of the investigation of Mrs Clinton for her “crooked behaviour”**
- **He has made overtures that the CIA after first declaring that their intelligence was wrong in suggesting that the notion of hacking into the US networks by Russian agencies was completely false**
- **A young and charismatic new Prime Minister of New Zealand has been elected and in recent times has announced she is pregnant and expecting a child later in 2018. Since then has been actively a working mothers and is highly respected both here and abroad in western democracies as a socially progressive woman. Already questions are being**

raised about her having a “stay at home husband” and juggling baby formula and world politics”

In light of the Trump phenomenon in winning the USA Presidential Election there has been much speculation as to why a certain University and its students appeared to feature prominently in an article entitled “*PC Monsters*” in which the difficult and strained relations between ethnic and minority groups students has escalated to the point where a bulk of some of the students at Oberlin University in Ohio apparently voted for Mr Trump.

The article went on to claim that many students literally only will consider information and social media input from *their own echo chamber* where their view and only their views are passed on and discussed. In a school where students have asked for “trigger warnings” for such classical theatrical and literary works such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Antigone* there is a chance that the notion of *Trumpist Discourse* will prevail as the community becomes scared to offend and distress minority groups. This was in response to perceived traumatising content.

“The relationship my students have with the world is constantly mediated. They only have access to it through their I Phone screens and through their social networks. They have joined what we would call the ‘virtual reality’ what is the real world for them. What occurs is that a filtered reality is suddenly finding a discourse of grievance [a reality suspended]”. It could be said that it may allow the *Trumpisms* of recent memory to flourish in a world of language gone awry. Professor Roger Copeland cited by Phillip Oehmke in the *Australian Financial Review Weekly* p 36

Postscript October 2022:

In recent weeks the turnaround of Prime Ministers in Britain has been punctuated with the appearance of yet another female leader after Teresa May was ousted by Boris Johnston over the failures of the Brexit implementations. Ms Liz Truss has also been subjected to humiliating descriptors and to regular input of the topoi of a power-hungry woman. For example the website which clearly identifies her as *incapable and dangerous* to Britain outlines the problems that need fixing by a proper leader who knows how to placate the community and the stock market... in fact in one media outlet *The Toronto Star* she was described as the “human hand grenade” and as bringing about “popular discontent”. In another outlet she is described as *defeated and gutted* by the bond market’s disapproval of her. She is also accused of putting the market on edge and failing to bring about stability. Latterly some other descriptions refer to her mode of dress and has in fact made headlines and several forum sites on her choice of hosiery and her supposed love affairs. Meanwhile Mr Sunak the new Prime Minister of the UK has been spared such scrutiny.

In contrast the newly selected PM Rishi Sunak a billionaire is said to provide a safe pair of hands and that the UK can now “deliver on the promises made by others” and that indeed he was” anointed” for

the position by his colleagues. This clearly identifies a male preference for political leadership, and I will leave it to others to analyse his future and political prowess.

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Notes

Note 1. Across the ditch is an affectionate term used by Australians to denote a trip across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand.

Note 2. Another red headed politician (Senator Pauline Hanson) in Australia who is seen as a far right (at times extremist) also received a great deal of attention and often her red hair was considered in stories and media commentary.