

**THE GAP BETWEEN HOPE AND HAPPENING:
FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS MEETS
PNALLOCENTRIC SMOG IN A REGIONAL
AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY**

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ABSTRACT

The gap between hope and happening refers to the experiences of four academic women who work at Milton University (MU), the pseudonym for a regional Australian university. This thesis is concerned with the ways in which discourses circulating within MU shape the performances and discursive positionings of the four women — Alice, Madonna, Veronica and Tamaly (all pseudonyms) — and how, in turn, these women negotiate these discourses. Data are drawn from the women's narratives, university policy documents and selected institutional texts. A feminist poststructuralist lens interrogates both policies, reflecting different approaches towards gender equity at MU, and discursive practices, constructing the 'good academic' at MU.

Instead of acts of resistance, what is revealed in this workplace is the continuing covert strategies of marginalization that reproduce women's positioning on the margins of mainstream academia, indicating the presence of a kind of 'phallocentric smog' emerging from a dominant masculine culture. This thesis finds a gap between the transformative potential of the four women at the micro-social (subjectivity) level and the lack of transformation at the macro-social (workplace) level. This suggests that the women's abilities to resist and transform phallocentric discourses at the personal/private level are not sustainable at the public level because of the enduring power of normative institutional discourses or the 'phallocentric smog'. This thesis signals the need for ongoing interrogation of the gap between the hope that feminists have (theory) and the happening for women (practice) in the quest for sustainable equity.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the main text of this thesis is entirely my own work and that such work has not been previously submitted as a requirement for the award of a degree at Central Queensland University or any other institution of higher education.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'T Moore', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Teresa Moore

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