

## Title: **Revolutionary Leadership Praxis: I am talking; is anyone listening?**

When Telemachus informs his mother, Penelope, that “speech be the business of men” (Beard, 2014, p4), I am reflecting on the impact of Homer’s *Odyssey*, written almost 3000 years ago, and its enduring influence on the unnaturalness of women voices, to be heard, listened to, to speak out.

Living and working a world in which less than 13% of leadership roles are occupied by women (Gender-NET, 2015), where powerful men use gendered pejoratives to dismiss alternative views “a great big girl’s blouse” and “girly swot” (Guardian, 2019), my feminist narrative inquiry doctoral thesis seeks to examine women’s stories and their act of speaking out in a masculine leadership world. This paper draws upon a review of literature, of stories women have tried to tell, about marginalisation, and being silenced.

Our “cultural template”, it has been argued, is “that a powerful person remains resolutely male” (Beard, 2014, p53). In this paper I will seek to explore and examine my own lived experience. How does researching my life history help me make sense of this troubled world? Could it be said that “I did not paint my half of the world” (Cixous, 1976, p876), or am I talking, but no one is listening? Indeed, the silencing of women is normalised, Ahmed argues, (2017), but further, if you raise the problem, you become the problem.

These are difficult and painful questions that need to be asked as I seek to seek to be authentic, but also as I search for the activist within me. Who am I? What have I got to say? What difference can I make? Is being silent an option?

Using the metaphor of tangled threads or yarn, I will seek to knit together my thinking, “Daughter, I have a story to tell you” (Hood 2007, p8) and like the knitting grows with each stitch, I become more with each word. In this paper I seek to make some sense of how I can enact my values, *daring* to be true unto myself. Can I be a revolutionary in my leadership praxis (Freire, 1993)?

### **References**

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