

## Task for *The Natural Way of Things*

Extract from *On The Road With Julia Gillard* by Chloe Hooper in *The Monthly*, August, 2013

The author accompanied then Prime Minister Julia Gillard to various political events leading up to the 2013 Australian federal election. The following extract details some of the misogynistic abuse heaped on Gillard during her time as Prime Minister.

I am starting to realise that every aspect of this woman's being has been publicly demeaned. Her body: 'You've got a big arse, Julia,' brayed Germaine Greer in 2012. (Not something she said about Kim Beazley, but then no one did.) Her sex: jokes about her genitals are OK at Liberal Party fundraisers. Her clothes are dowdy and, according again to Greer, ill-fitting. Her voice is a fishwife's. Her home is unhomely, or lacks class. ('Boganville', Rudd allegedly called the Lodge until it was his again.) Her choice to concentrate on her career is emblematic of her lack of 'empathy', 'compassion' and 'basic human understanding'. ('Anyone who chooses a life without children, as Gillard has, cannot have much love in them,' claimed Mark Latham in 2011.) And earlier this year Joe Hockey felt free to tweet, 'She has never deserved our respect and will never receive it.' That's because, as Tony Abbott's fellow rally-goers once branded her, she is 'Bob Brown's Bitch', a 'witch' and 'Juliar', who, according to the radio host Alan Jones, should be put in a chaff bag and drowned at sea.

Who can credibly argue this vitriol isn't intensified by her sex? Yet talking openly about this abuse and calling it misogyny seems to feed the hatred. The more people are reminded of her gender, the more they resent it, and the denial of their own prejudice drives it in deeper.

Though someone who has long been critical of the women's movement, she's accused of inciting gender warfare. Politics is terrain where complexity or ambiguity don't play well. If she mentions sexism, she is playing the victim card, but not to say anything is to collaborate in its denial. In Gillard's words: 'You wake up and you're [right-wing columnist] Janet Albrechtsen, and no one wants to end up there.'