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Remaking a Scholarly Elite? Insiders, Transnationalism, Outsiders and Australian Women Historians

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ABSTRACT

This article considers a group of Australian women historians trying to break through the employment "glass ceiling" (a colloquial term for invisible social barriers based on gender) before the 1970s. The experiences of this group provide a case study of the ways they entered, and thereby remade, a scholarly elite in the period before second-wave feminism. These academic women built transnational careers that took them to universities elsewhere in the Anglophone world, which served to improve their employment prospects back home. I argue that this transnational employment strategy relied on an insider-outsider divide, whereby Australian women historians accrued qualifications and experience outside Australia to try to leverage entry into a local elite formerly closed to them.

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In 2018 Yves Rees argued that the discipline of history as a profession in Australia had become increasingly feminised since the 1970s with the rise of women in its ranks, who also went on to attain the most prestigious positions in the discipline, and the simultaneous widespread acceptance of feminist scholarship.[1] She emphasised the reasons for the change in women historians' employment lay in the wider context of the second-wave feminist movement and the feminist historiography that accompanied it. Elsewhere I have considered workforce feminisation of Australian women in shops and offices before the 1970s, which was also characterised by a force of numbers of women using a range of justifications for entry into particular occupations.[2] While this article follows Wright's research in its focus on Australian women whose ambition was to be university-employed historians, it examines the period *before* significant numbers of women became academics after the emergence of second-wave feminism. I thereby extend our understanding of the range of employment strategies women historians adopted when they were few in number and aspired to be accepted

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[1]Yves Rees, "How Women Historians Smashed the Glass Ceiling", *The Conversation*, 19 October 2016, https://theconversation.com/how-women-historians-smashed-the-glass-ceiling-66778.

[2]Melanie Nolan, "The White Blouse Revolution: Heroic and Anti-Heroic Interpretations of the Feminization of Work", *Journal of Australian Studies* 21, no. 52 (1997): 54–66, https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059709387297.

into the academic elite, which Tamson Pietsch has characterised as the "empire of scholars".[3]

Pietsch's work on scholars in the British Empire at the turn of the 20th century situates university academics in this period as a scholarly elite, a small minority who were the best educated, qualified, networked and therefore influential researchers and teachers. This empire of "wandering scholars" circulated through colloquia and other intellectual exchanges and networks in the Anglophone world.[4] The scholarly empire was "gendered and gentlemanly, racial and familial"; women academics had to await second-wave feminism for any significant change. Pietsch does not linger on women's experience, for their othering "systematically excluded [them] from the spaces of academic connection and its attendant opportunities, even as their work enabled the attainments of their senior male colleagues".[5]

Her latter point refers to university-educated women adopting helpmeet roles that allowed them to be involved in academic networks and research by association. They also exerted influence through marriage, as outlined in scholarship on the wives, women lovers and female associates of the male leaders of the French Annales School, who had been awarded doctorates but supported "sodality of brothers" history-writing.[6] Natalie Zemon Davis's work, for instance, follows the well-educated leading Annales wives, including Suzanne Febvre, Simonne Vidal Bloch and Paule Braudel. In her biographical study, she also considers women—such as Lucie Varga, Rose Brua Celli, Thérèse Sclafert, Yvonne Bézard, Eugénie Droz and Marie-Louise Sjoestedt-Jonval—who provided private or paid assistance for the male Annales historians but rarely won for themselves university positions that would have allowed them to do advanced teaching and "stimulate research projects".[7]

Davis notes that most female history graduates in France became school teachers.[8] Indeed, this was general in the Western world, including Australia, and it has been attributed to occupational sex typing and separate-spheres ideology, which decreed that women occupied a separate and different sphere of influence to that of men; they were appropriately concentrated in "women's occupations" or at the bottom of professional hierarchies.[9] Not surprisingly, a survey of Sydney University's Women's College reveals 214 out of 730, or 29.2 per cent of its women graduates became school teachers between 1892 and 1939.[10] We can see that groups of women entering professions,

[3]Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World 1850–1939* (Manchester University Press, 2013).

[4]Tamson Pietsch, "Wandering Scholars? Academic Mobility and the British World, 1850–1940", *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010): 377–87, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2010.03.002.

[5]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 2, 6, see also 200.

[6]Hannah Gay, "Invisible Resource: William Crookes and His Circle of Support, 1871–81", *British Journal for the History of Science* 29, no. 3 (1996): 311–36, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007087400034488; Alison Prentice, "Boosting Husbands and Building Community: The Work of Twentieth-Century Faculty Wives", in *Historical Identities: The Professoriate in Canada*, ed. Paul Stortz and E. Lisa Panayotidis (University of Toronto Press), 271–96.

[7]Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women and the World of the Annales", *History Workshop Journal* 33, no. 1 (1992): 121–37, https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/33.1.121.

[8]Davis noted that 13 other women who graduated in letters or sciences in Suzanne Dognon Febvre's class in 1919 were teaching in lycees or colleges for girls in 1931. Davis, "Women and the World of Annales", 131.

[9]Tamson Pietsch and Gabrielle Kemmis found 53 per cent of male arts graduates who had served in the First World War were employed as school teachers. Tamson Pietsch and Gabrielle Kemmis, "The Careers of Humanities Students in Interwar Australia", *History of Humanities* 6, no. 2 (2021): 617, https://doi.org/10.1086/715943.

[10]Rosemary Annable, ed., *Biographical Register: The Women's College Within the University of Sydney, vol. 1, 1892–1939* (Council of the Women's College, 1995), 261–63.

including academic ones, around the turn of the 20th century sometimes adopted strategies based on separate-spheres ideology: women were experts in matters to do with their own sex, thereby justifying their paid employment. For instance, some White women anthropologists were encouraged professionally because it was considered appropriate for women scholars to study women ethnographically from a woman's vantage point, in part because Indigenous women were thought to be more comfortable revealing cultural knowledge to other women.[11] Other groups of academic women were concentrated in social work and home economics or domestic science.[12]

Pietsch notes that, despite geopolitical hierarchies and the privileging of White men in universities, "the British academic world was not impermeable".[13] A trickle of university-educated women historians began to teach at universities and publish history, although few successfully joined the ranks of the professional elite between the two feminist waves. This article shows that it was not for lack of ambition or trying. In addition to feminism, supportive roles and separatist approaches, professional women also attempted a transnational strategy born of the times. It must be remembered, however, that academic women's focus on subverting and changing their own place within universities meant that they did not critique colonial knowledges or reflect on their own class and racial biases.[14] Feminist historian Marjorie Theobald has emphasised that many of those advocating education and employment revolutions from the 1870s, including the women themselves, were not feminists, or not only feminist.[15] Hers is a more complex story. While feminism was an important driver, it was not the only motivating factor; women's education and employment ambitions were mediated by other motivations and contexts.

Three wider significant contexts framed women historians' agency and struggle to enter the scholarly elite: the national context in which they lived, their capacity for overseas travel, and the use of transnational mobility to their employment benefit. Women historians' attempt to remake the scholarly elite was coloured, above all, by the national context of gender segregation imposed by the unique Australasian centralised compulsory arbitration system. While they were early beneficiaries of women's suffrage and higher education, scholarly Australian women were constrained in certain disciplines and at the bottom of the higher-education occupational structures by sex typing, marriage bars—real and informal—and lack of support. Australian women were subject to a high degree of gender-based occupational segregation under the compulsory arbitrated labour market, which had only begun to be dismantled from 1972.[16]

[11]Geoffrey Gray, Doug Munro and Christine Winter, *Chicanery: Senior Academic Appointments in Antipodean Anthropology, 1920–1960* (Berghahn, 2023), 87–88.

[12]Tanya Fitzgerald, "Networks of Influence: Home Scientists at the University of New Zealand 1911–1941", in *Women Educators, Leaders and Activists*, ed. Tanya Fitzgerald and E. M. Smyth (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 17–40; Elaine Martin, "Social Work, the Family and Women's Equality in Postwar Australia", *Women's History Review* 12, no. 3 (2003): 445–68, https://doi.org/10.1080/09612020300200368.

[13]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 7.

[14]Katie Pickles, "Colonial Counterparts: The First Academic Women in Anglo-Canada, New Zealand and Australia", *Women's History Review* 10, no. 2 (2001): 273–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/09612020100200288.

[15]Marjorie Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5–6, 192.

[16]Donald E. Lewis, "The Sources of Changes in the Occupational Segregation of Australian Women", *Economic Record* 61, no. 4 (1985): 719–36, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4932.1985.tb02028.x; Margaret Power, "Women's Work Is Never Done—By Men: A Socio-Economic Model of Sex Typing in Occupations", *Journal of Industrial Relations* 1, no. 7 (1975): 225–39, https://doi.org/10.1177/002218567501700301.

More generally, young single professional women's transnational mobility in the British world after 1870 was remarkable. Joyce Goodman and others have explored the overseas migration patterns of women who attended the United Kingdom's Girton and Newnham colleges before 1939.[17] Antipodean women travelled the furthest, and there was a range of formal conduits available to those seeking professional advancement abroad. For instance, Australia's New South Wales Department of Education, in cooperation with the League of Empire, arranged one-year exchanges for teachers to countries throughout the British Commonwealth. Between 1919 and 1934 more than 2,000, mostly female, teachers in White settled dominions were part of this exchange.[18] However, most university-educated women teachers, as for other professionals, sojourned independently, making them a difficult group to research. Theobald's point is particularly applicable in this case: the "stuff of women's history remains the rich ethnographic detail of women's lives which must be retrieved with infinite patience from widely scattered sources".[19]

Women teachers and scholars' transnational agency was possible, as Hannah Forsyth has shown, because a "networked Anglophone economy" sustained a rising professional middle class across the Anglophone world from about 1870.[20] Angela Woollacott's 2001 study *To Try Her Fortune in London* looked at Australian women who were drawn to the London metropolis between 1870 and 1940 when the British Empire was at its greatest physical range and power. Over 10,000 women annually were lured to the metropolis, the centre of the publishing, art, musical, theatrical and educational worlds, like "colonial moths to the imperial flame". Among the artists and actors were scholars, and Woollacott singled out the London School of Economics (LSE) and University College London (UCL) as significant facilitators of women's educational modernity.[21] She also noted that while there were social and familial reasons for Australians to sojourn in London, after 1900, "women made incursions into more and more areas of education, the arts, and the professions, insistently encroaching on the masculine public world from which they had been excluded by tenets of respectability".[22] Of course, London was not the only destination for professional and modern single women on the move across the Anglophone world. As Yves Rees documents, some Australian women went to the United States of America. The number of Australian women going to the United Kingdom was at least four times greater, however, before second-wave feminism.[23]

[17]Joyce Goodman et al., "Travelling Careers: Overseas Migration Patterns in the Professional Lives of Women Attending Girton and Newnham Before 1939", *History of Education* 40, no. 2 (2011): 179–96, https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2010.518163.

[18]Kay Whitehead, "Exchange Teachers as 'Another Link in Binding the [British] Empire' in the Interwar Years", *Social and Education History* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.4471/hse.2014.01. See also Jody Crutchley, "Teacher Mobility and Transnational, 'British World' Space: The League of the Empire's Interchange of Home and Dominion Teachers, 1907–1931", *History of Education* 44, no. 6 (2015): 729–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2015.1092054; *Report of the Interchange of Teachers Scheme, 1907–1923* (League of the Empire, 1923).

[19]Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 4.

[20]Hannah Forsyth, *Virtue Capitalists: The Rise and Fall of the Professional Class in the Anglophone World, 1870–2008* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), i, 73.

[21]Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 48–49.

[22]Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 48.

[23]Yves [Anne] Rees, "Travelling to Tomorrow: Australian Women in the United States, 1910–1960" (PhD diss., Australian National University, 2016), 4. Rees's PhD was reworked as a biographical analysis of 10 women trailblazers: Yves Rees, *Travelling to Tomorrow. The Modern Women Who Sparked Australia's Romance with America* (NewSouth Books, 2024).

Given the national and transnational contexts that established female professional mobility, we may then ask, Was transnationalism itself an employment strategy for women historians? Can we relate university educated women's mobility to their ability to make chinks in the glass ceiling? These questions prompt consideration of an employment strategy actively developed through an inside-outside divide, which refers to labour market segmentation, whereby some participants (insiders) have more privileged positions than others (who are outsiders). In a labour market that was segmented transnationally, women "outsiders" could play one labour market off against another to leverage "insider" privileges.[24] Further, those outsiders who acquired the necessary qualifications for the more privileged positions complicated and challenged the status quo:[25] women wishing to upskill to improve their employability and to develop professionally could use the differentials in the empire's transnational labour market to their advantage.[26] As Goodman noted of women headmistresses taking employment opportunities within the empire, "Their market value must be greater for the experience they had gained".[27] If it worked for school teaching, did it work for university positions too? Unfortunately, most of the research on Australian women is on their one-way transnationalism to explain why women first crossed national borders. Most of these Australian women, however, returned home after a professional or personal sojourn, which is suggestive of an inside-outside strategy.

While there is rich research on professional feminisation in a range of occupations, there is little on women historians or professional elites between the feminist waves. Their strategies are tied to the feminist movement and their feminism is assumed. In order to extrapolate the range of Australian women historians' employment strategies, I draw upon the biographies of a cohort of women studying at Australian universities who spent time overseas and later returned.

Women Historians' Slow Entry into the Empire of Scholars Until Second-Wave Feminism

In Australia, second-wave feminism was a critical turning point for change and women historians' ability to pick away at the glass ceiling. Patricia Grimshaw, Sharon M. Harrison and Shurlee Swain are among the few who have considered Australian women historians as a group. They show that a critical mass of academic women historians developed in the academy from the 1960s and 1970s and, before that, they were few and isolated.[28] Before the 1960s, university education was the preserve of a small

[24]Assar Lindbeck and Dennis J. Snower, "Insiders versus Outsiders", *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 165–88, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2696546.

[25]Thomas Biegert, "Labor Market Institutions, the Insider/Outsider Divide and Social Inequalities in Employment in Affluent Countries", *Socio-Economic Review* 17, no. 2 (2019): 255–81, https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwx025.

[26]Laurence Ball, "Insiders and Outsiders: A Review Essay", *Journal of Monetary Economics* 26, no. 3 (1990): 459–69, https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-3932(90)90008-R; Silja Häusermann and Hanna Schwander, "Varieties of Dualization? Labor Market Segmentation and Insider-Outsider Divides Across Regimes", in *The Age of Dualization: The Changing Face of Inequality in Deindustrializing Societies*, ed. Patrick Emmenegger et al. (Oxford Academic Books, 2012), 27–51.

[27]Joyce Goodman, "'Their Market Value Must Be Greater for the Experience They Had Gained': Secondary School Headmistresses and Empire, 1897–1914", in *Gender, Colonialism and Education*, ed. Joyce Goodman and Jane Martin (Frank Cass, 2002), 175–76.

[28]Patricia Grimshaw, Sharon M. Harrison and Shurlee Swain, "History", *The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*, 12 November 2012, https://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0452b.htm. See also

minority, and women were a minority of a minority, and academic women historians were relatively rare.[29] According to the 1911 Australian census, the proportion of those receiving university education who were women was around 22 per cent, growing to 29 per cent in 1921. But in 1921, only 1.4 per cent of all Australians aged 17 to 22 were university students, and up until the mid-1950s student numbers grew slowly. As elsewhere in the Anglophone world, the proportion of women at university dropped in the immediate postwar period. Female enrolments in bachelor's degrees in Australia was 31 per cent in 1945, falling to 18.3 per cent in 1950, rising to 43.9 per cent by 1980 and continuing to rise thereafter.[30] "Female bachelor enrolments doubled in the decade 1950–1960 (to 8,984) and doubled again in the next five years, to 17,989 in 1965". Furthermore, in 1981, R. Over noted that "of all master's degrees and doctorates awarded in Australia since the 1940s, men have gained more than 80 per cent and 90 per cent respectively".[31]

However, the number of women obtaining PhDs in history in the United States and Europe enlarged in the 1970s, resulting in an increase in women's academic employment. For instance, in the United States: "From the 1930s to 1973, women constituted 13 per cent of history PhDs; between 1974 and 1980, the pool of available female history PhDs doubled to 26 per cent. In 1969, women formed scarcely 10 per cent of all historians hired; during the 1970s that figure rose to 25 per cent (where it remained in 1980)".[32] The Australian pattern was similar, although a survey of the 575 honours graduates of the University of Melbourne's School of History from 1937 to 1966 showed that women made up 41 per cent. The interesting result was that while 43 per cent of the men went on to work in tertiary education, women had a higher rate of 46 per cent.[33]

Over time, from the 19th century, a trickle of women began to be appointed to permanent university lectureship positions. The University of Melbourne serially employed Jessie Webb, Margaret Kiddle and Alison Patrick. Webb trained at the University of Melbourne (BA Hons, 1902; MA, 1904), attaining a first class honours and winning the J. D. Wyselaskie scholarship in English constitutional history and the Cobden Club medal. She taught ancient history at Melbourne from 1908 to 1944, with periods as "acting professor" but was never appointed a professor.[34] Margaret Kiddle (BA, 1937; DipEd, 1938; MA, 1947) was a history tutor from 1947 to 1958.[35] Alison Patrick (BA,

Ann Moyal, "The Female Gaze: Australian Women Historians' Autobiographies", in *Clio's Lives: Biographies and Autobiographies of Historians*, ed. Doug Munro and John G. Reid (ANU Press, 2017), 65–78.

[29]Don Anderson, "Access to University Education in Australia 1852–1990: Changes in the Undergraduate Social Mix", *Australian Universities' Review* 33, nos. 1–2 (1990): 37, https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/ielapa.910808828.

[30]Australian Bureau of Statistics, Staff and Students, 1945–1980, quoted in Jennifer M. Jones and Josie Castle, "Women in Australian Universities 1945–80", *Vestes* 26, no. 2 (1983): 16, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ291805.

[31]R. Over, "Women Academics in Australian Universities", *Australian Journal of Education* 25, no. 2 (1981): 170, https://doi.org/10.1177/000494418102500206.

[32]Joan W. Scott, "Politics and Professionalism: Women Historians in the 1980s", *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1981): 25, https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40000233.

[33]Geoffrey Serle, "A Survey of Honours Graduates of the University of Melbourne School of History, 1937–1966", *Historical Studies* 15, no. 57 (1971): 43–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314617108595456.

[34]R. M. Crawford, "Acting-Professor Jessie Strobo Watson Webb", *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 3, no. 9 (1944): 73, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314614408594845; Susan Janson, "Jessie Webb and the Predicament of the Female Historian", in *The Discovery of Australian History: 1890–1939*, ed. Stuart Mcintyre and Julian Thomas (Melbourne University Press, 1995), 91–110.

[35]Patricia Grimshaw and Jane Carey, "Foremothers VI: Kathleen Fitzpatrick (1905–1990), Margaret Kiddle (1914–1958) and Australian History After the Second World War", *Gender and History* 13, no. 2 (2001): 349–73, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.00232.

1942; PhD, 1971) was awarded the Dwight Prize. After appointments as a tutor from 1946, she was appointed to a continuing position in 1963, allowing her to work on her PhD, which was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1972.[36] The pattern was similar at the University of Sydney. Marjorie Jacobs majored in history and anthropology (BA, 1936; MA, 1941), winning the George Arnold Wood Memorial Prize in history, the Frank Albert Prize in anthropology and the University Medal twice for both her BA and MA. An assistant lecturer from 1938 to 1943, after war work, she was appointed to a tenured position in 1945, becoming the University of Sydney's—and Australia's—first woman professor in history in 1969 and retiring in 1980.[37] Concentrating on a national story raises the question, Did any of them try to improve the odds of their success?

Most Australian women university graduates in history were academic helpmeets who worked as research assistants. Reflecting on her career in 2022, Australian historian Beverley Kingston emphasised that it had been the general practice until the 1950s for bright young Australian male honours graduates in history to win scholarships to study overseas, while bright young Australian female honours graduates like herself were more often offered jobs as research assistants to established Australian historians, which they hoped would be a prelude to enrolment in an Australian PhD program.[38] Kingston was a researcher for Professor Gordon Greenwood at the University of Queensland. Greenwood's mother, Lizzie A. Hales (BA, 1908, University of Adelaide), had been involved in the equal-pay for women teachers' movement before her marriage in 1912.[39] Greenwood had himself studied at the University of Sydney (BA, 1935; MA, 1937), attaining first class honours in history and the University Medal. He had been awarded a Woolley travelling scholarship to investigate Australian federalism at the LSE (PhD, 1939).[40]

Marion Diamond has been more forthright about the restriction of Australian women historians to the role of academic helpmeet. She noted of Heather Radi,

> After graduating, she went teaching briefly, and hated it. So did I. Then she worked as a research assistant for Professor Gordon Greenwood. So did I. Those were the days of the God-Professor, whose power within his … department was absolute. Professors like Greenwood kept a stable – I use the term advisedly – of female research assistants who prepared the raw materials for his work. (Greenwood was not the only one – I've always wanted to know more about the near-invisible research assistants who helped shape Manning Clark's multi-volume history.) In 1984, Heather wrote, "The professor exploited me of course as it was my work which enabled him to publish as much as he did, with a few words of acknowledgement in the final paragraph of the preface". When I joined the history department it was common knowledge that Heather had written most of the

[36]Alison Patrick, "Born Lucky", in *The Half Open Door: Sixteen Modern Australian Women Look at Professional Life and Achievements*, ed. Patricia Grimshaw and Lynne Strahan (Hale and Iremonger, 1982), 195–217.

[37]Brian H. Fletcher, "A Distinguished and Influential Historian: Emeritus Professor Marjorie G. Jacobs, AO (1915–2013)", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 99, no. 2 (2013): 109–13, https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.747017006261711.

[38]Beverley Kingston, "Brian Fitzpatrick's Graduate Student: A Memoir", in *Against the Grain: Britain Fitzpatrick and Manning Clark in Australian History and Politics*, ed. Stuart Macintyre and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Melbourne University Press, 2007), 88–96.

[39]Lynne Trethewey and Kay Whitehead, "The City as a Site of Women Teachers' Post-Suffrage Political Activism: Adelaide, South Australia", *Paedagogica Historica* 39, no. 1 (2003): 107–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230307451.

[40]Helen Derrick, ed., *Gordon Greenwood: The Early Years (1913 to 1931): An Autobiography of the Early Life of Gordon Greenwood* (pub. by author, 2013).

> chapter on the 1920s that appeared under Greenwood's name in *Australia: A Social and Political History* … *Australia* was a text book that sold widely, went into a second edition, and no doubt earned Greenwood a good deal of money.[41]

The story of the changing position of women historians with the advent of second-wave feminism seems cut and dried. Brian Fitzpatrick arranged for Kingston (BA Hons, 1963) to begin a doctoral scholarship by way of a Commonwealth postgraduate award in 1965 at one of Australia's newest universities, Monash University (PhD, 1968). Involved in the women's movement, Kingston went on to join the cohort of women historians who feminised higher education as well as its historiography, writing *My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia* (1975), which was a seminal account of Australian women's history in the 1970s wave of historiography.[42]

A number of women, including Radi, forged a different pathway from local escape to international escape. Radi won a postdoctoral scholarship to the LSE in 1955, attaining a position at the University of New South Wales in the 1960s before taking up a position in 1971 at the University of Sydney, where she taught its first women's history course. She was a foundation member of the editorial board of *Refractory Girl* in 1973, was the first woman appointed to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*'s board in 1975, and edited *200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology* in 1988. Her transnational mobility allowed her to break away from being a research assistant.[43] Graduates who pursued transnationalism as a professional strategy complicate a simple story of the second-wave feminist movement being the central turning point for their career success.

Sydney University Women's College and Transnational Women Historians

Pietsch's *Empire of Scholars* is critical of both comparative and transnational approaches whereby the "particular character of social and cultural hierarchies" of national institutions have been put side by side and weighed up. Her research is a response to what she describes as "disconnected national histories" of a common world. Instead, she writes about a vast intellectual region that was intertwined, mobile and networked, especially in intimate personal groupings. Her study begins with the first Congress of the Universities of the British Empire, at the University of London, in July 1912. Pietsch focuses on the "fluidity between 'British' and 'colonial' or 'settler' academia" from 1850 to 1939 and the academics who moved between the "local and global", a movement and network that was highly gendered—that is, male.[44]

Pietsch's work is part of a historiography that has developed since the 1990s, which focuses on networks in empires as a way of "understanding the relationships between specific sites, imperial rule and the production of knowledge and culture".[45] More specifically, her account is about the "constructed character" and nature of academic networks. Pietsch's point in *Empire of Scholars* is that "by nurturing their personal ties with

[41]Marion Elizabeth Diamond, "Heather Radi (1929–2016)", *Historians Are Past Caring* (blog), 29 July 2016, https://learnearnandreturn.wordpress.com/2016/07/29/heather-radi-1929-2016/.
[42]Beverley Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia* (Thomas Nelson, 1975).
[43]Heather Radi, "Thanks Mum", in *Against the Odds: 15 Professional Women Reflect on Their Lives and Careers*, ed. Madge Dawson and Heather Radi (Hale and Iremonger, 1984), 177.
[44]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 2–3.
[45]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 4.

colleagues in Britain, academics working in the colonies softened the tyranny of distance, creating social forms of proximity that reshaped and realigned it".[46] Academics assiduously cultivated personal ties that reconstructed the intertwined spaces.[47] Their networks powered "a limited, exclusionary and irregular scholarly community that was made by very specific forms of long-distance social and institutional relations" facilitated by travelling scholarships, fellowships, appointments, sabbaticals, conferences, congresses and collaborations, which "de-territorialised key aspects of academic life, enabling scholars to sustain connections and build careers that straddled the distances of empire".[48]

Studies on early women graduates emphasise their limited options as well as the importance of their university experience, their "strong sense of privilege" and the subsequent flourishing of clubs and federations for women graduates that furthered their networks.[49] They created their own transnational networks.[50] For instance, Geoffrey Bolton emphasises that Australian women historians had different intellectual and cultural networks to male historians, citing the Catalyst Club, a monthly discussion group bringing together professional women, writers, artists and academics, which merged into the wider Lyceum Club.[51]

A number of academic women, including historians, found positions in Australian universities on the basis of their transnational credentials and experience. Take, for instance, the Women's College at the University of Sydney, which attracted principals from London and through whose portal passed many of the university's educated female elite, destined for London. It was a transnational conduit. Its biographical register of 1892–1939 reveals its principals were a succession of educated Australian and British women who travelled between the two countries for jobs in the Anglophone labour market.[52] Overseas qualifications were held in highest esteem. Louisa Macdonald was one of the first women residents in College Hall as a student of UCL (BA Hons, 1884; MA, 1886). Millicent Fawcett persuaded her to apply for the new position of principal of the Women's College, which opened in 1892.[53] Macdonald stood out in the field of 65 applicants; a fellow of UCL, "she was the only applicant with experience of university teaching; [and] she had travelled abroad".[54] She was said to be the highest paid woman in the colony and paid the same as her male counterparts. She founded the Sydney University Women's Association (SUWA), which was the first association of women graduates in Australia. Her successor, Susannah (Susie) Williams, had trained at the University of Melbourne (BA, 1897), where she was Annie Grice Scholar (1894–1895), then attended Newnham College, Cambridge (MA, 1900), where she won the classical scholarship on entrance. She stayed at Newnham a fourth year to read archaeology at UCL, before

[46]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 6.
[47]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 199.
[48]Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, introduction.
[49]Megan McCarthy, "'We Were at the Beginning of Everything': The First Woman Students and Graduates of the University of Queensland", *Crossroads* 5, no. 2 (2011): 35–44, https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:730028.
[50]Heather Nash, *By Degrees: A History of the Australian Federation of University Women 1922–1985* (Australian Federation of University Women, 1985).
[51]Geoffrey Bolton, "Australian Historians Networking, 1914–1973", in Munro and Reid, *Clio's Lives*, 233–34.
[52]Annable, *Biographical Register*.
[53]Charlotte Mitchell, "Women Students at UCL in the Early 1880s", UCL Bloomsbury Project, University College London, accessed 30 February 2024, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/articles/events/conference2008/mitchell.pdf.
[54]Ursula M. L. Bugott and Kenneth J. Cable, *Pioneer Women Graduates of the University of Sydney, 1881–1921* (University of Sydney, 1985).

being appointed principal from a field comprising 25 British and 10 Australasian applicants.[55] While the third principal of the Women's College (1933–1934), Janet Mitchell, was part of Melbourne's intellectual aristocracy, LSE alumnus anthropologist Camilla Wedgwood served as the fourth Women's College principal (1935 to 1943).[56] Wedgwood was part of the British intellectual aristocracy; one of her cousins was renown historian Veronica Wedgwood. Among her previous positions, Wedgwood had held a tutorship at Bedford and temporary lectureships at the University of Sydney and at LSE (1931–1932). While her mentors Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth were disappointed by her decision to join the Women's College, she explained to her sympathetic father that after a series of "temporary posts … she appreciated being offered a permanent appointment". Indeed, having taught, published and administered well, she was "acutely conscious that no permanent appointment had been offered to her when so many of her [male] colleagues had achieved tenure".[57] She was attracted to the £500 salary but, more importantly, the Sydney professor A. P. Elkin had asked her to continue as an "honorary lecturer" in his department.

A fine-grained consideration of the Women's College Register reveals the extent to which women graduates, including women historians, chose a transnational graduate path. Phyllis Kaberry (BA, 1933; MA, 1935), Ann Moyal (BA, 1947) and Marie Reay (BA, 1944; MA, 1948) all went to London for postgraduate work. Kaberry became a temporary lecturer at the LSE.[58] They thanked their Women's College principals for mentoring their transnational careers. Winifred Vere Hole, the Women's College historian (MA Hons, 1944) from the University of Sydney, also sailed to England in 1953 where she stayed for three decades, completing her PhD in 1965 from the LSE on the history of working-class housing.[59] Kaberry and Reay were awarded PhDs, with Moyal being given an honorary one; each managed, albeit with difficulty, in the gendered transnational labour market to have academic careers, eventually finding different pathways to the Australian National University in Canberra.

In 1936, the year that Marjorie Jacobs won the University Medal in history, the University of Sydney boasted in a headline titled "Women's University Achievements: Notable Year" that women had won three of the five travelling scholarships. Kaberry joined the celebration before heading off to the LSE.[60] The Women's College's biographical register provides empirical evidence for 730 of its students between 1892 and 1939. It reveals that 138 or 18.9 per cent—close to a fifth—intentionally went to England to study and for experience.[61] Similarly, a study of 514 Girton women graduates (1869–1939) showed that 16 per cent of students had international careers, while 840 Newnham

[55] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 June 1919.
[56] Nancy Lutkehaus, "'She Was "Very" Cambridge': Camilla Wedgwood and the History of Women in British Social Anthropology", *American Ethnologist* 13, no. 4 (1986): 776–98, https://www.jstor.org/stable/644466.
[57] D. Wetherell and C. Carr-Gregg, *Camilla C. H. Wedgwood 1901–1955, A Life* (New South Wales University Press, 1990), 84.
[58] Ann Moyal, Breakfast with Beaverbrook: *Memoirs of an Independent Woman* (Hale and Iremonger, 1995); Ann Moyal, *A Woman of Influence: Science, Men and History* (UWA Publishing, 2014); Marie Reay, "An Innocent in the Garden of Eden", in *Ethnographic Presents: Pioneering Anthropologists in the Papua New Guinea Highlands*, ed. Terence Hays (University of California Press, 1992), 137–166; N. M. Williams, "'She Was the First One': Phyllis Kaberry in the East Kimberley", *Aboriginal History* 12 (1988): 84–102.
[59] W. Vere Hole, "The Housing of the Working Classes in Britain, 1850–1914: A Study of the Development of Standards and Methods of Provision" (PhD diss., LSE, 1965).
[60] "Women's University Achievements: Notable Year", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 1936.
[61] Annable, *Biographical Register*.

College women students had overseas career experience after attending Cambridge University.[62] When surveying the Women's College's biographical register, I did not add those who went for a holiday with no record of employment or study—hence, Jessie Lillingston (later Street), who had at one point gone to a conference of the International Council of Women in Rome, was not included in the count. Many simply "travelled", while some others achieved British qualifications while living and staying in Australia.

Those who served during war in the armed forces as nurses and almoners or Red Cross staff did not seem intentionally to adopt transnational upskilling.[63] In 1939 Elma Rial had "expected to sail for London to undertake [a] course in dietetics but [her] ship [was] commandeered for war purposes and forced to return to Sydney". Some women took up postgraduate work and employment elsewhere: to New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, America, Europe or America, but that was not many: a group went to India as missionaries for the London Missionary Society. England was the chief destination of the vast majority of those going overseas with employment on their minds. Rosemary Nosworthy went to England in 1924 and she is typically indicated in the register as having set out to "England for further experience".

A fifth of the student body of the Women's College sought professional advancement in the transnational world of training and employment, including women historians. This might seem a high proportion, but educated women travelling to England from the Antipodes were in general a privileged elite in the period before the 1960s and 1970s, a point Alison Mackinnon has made.[64]

LSE and Two-Way Transnationalism: Inside-Outside Employment Strategising

In terms of their research, there was never a critical research cluster of women historians in Australia before the second-wave feminist period. Transnationalism as an employment strategy for some Australian women historians, however, also linked them into an important network in the empire of scholars. The LSE hosted a critical cluster of feminist and women's historical research before second-wave feminism. The LSE had the greatest concentration of women historians as staff and postgraduate students in the British Empire. Established in 1895, the LSE was reconstituted as the Faculty of Economics of the UCL in 1900. UCL had admitted women not only to degrees but to all other privileges including the eligibility to hold teaching positions under its new 1878 charter. The LSE already had a strong history of female inclusion before its reconstitution; its 1896–1897 calendar recorded 75 women out of 300 students, or a quarter, but most of them did not graduate and there is no record of who they were or what they studied. The LSE also had a relatively large proportion of overseas students.

The LSE aimed to attract professionals who "wanted to acquire a sound training in economics and political science and the methods of investigation appropriate to those subjects", business and commercial professionals and those engaged in public

[62]Goodman et al., "Travelling Careers", 182.
[63]Almoners organised charitable after-care for patients who could not afford it and were the forerunners of social workers.
[64]Alison Mackinnon, *The New Women: Adelaide's Early Women Graduates* (Wakefield Press, 1986), 20.

administration.[65] It studied its own students and staff too, keeping a register of "regular students" enrolled in courses from 1895 to 1932, which led to degrees diplomas and certificates.[66] Its register was augmented with responses from a survey in the early 1930s of all its past and present students and staff; 60 per cent surveyed responded.[67] The first woman graduate recorded in the register is "Miss A. E. Murray [that is Alice Effie Murray, later] Mrs. C. A. Radice" who received a doctorate in economics (PhD, 1902–1903) for a thesis on the commercial and financial relations between England and Ireland.[68] Indeed, the register records 2,428 graduates of which 1,095, or 45 per cent, were women.[69] The register noted that women tended to complete two years' study and were attracted to "Sociology, Social Science and Geography", while "nearly all the men" did three-year courses, so that women made up less of the student body than the register indicated. Women tended to graduate in the Social Science Certificate (from 1912 to 1913) and men the BSc (Econ.) degree. The number of women taking higher degrees was about a fifth of the total. The LSE was able to say, for instance, that "among BSc (Econ.) graduates other teaching or paid research work claim[ed] 28%, Government Service 21%, business 16%, University Teaching 13%, other professionals 7%, and social work 2%, while 13% … proceed[ed] to further study on graduation".[70] The LSE Register also reveals that, after study, about 84 per cent of graduates remained in the United Kingdom or the Irish Free State, 10 per cent resided in the "British Empire Overseas" and 6 per cent in other "foreign countries". The register also indicates that 28 students (male and female) came from Australasia in addition to three Australasians on the teaching staff and the LSE director 1909–1919, William Pember Reeves. This does not include Christian Scipio Mactaggart, who, having spent three years in Australia in the 1890s, became an LSE student in 1895 and was its long-serving female administrator for more than two decades, later retiring to Brisbane.[71] A close examination of the LSE cohort of women students reveals a group who stayed in the United Kingdom after gaining qualifications and experience and a group who returned to Australia to write history.

A critical LSE cluster contributed to the reshaping of the professional identity of "historian" simultaneously with the production of history. Australian-born Maud Pember Reeves, Marion Phillips and Emily Dorothea Proud contributed to the feminisation of the writing of the history of the industrial revolution, as well as to the debates over contemporary policy. In 1908 Reeves, Charlotte Wilson, Elizabeth Leigh (Bessie) Hutchins and Charlotte Shaw formed the Fabian Women's Group, which had 211 members by 1910, including Beatrice Webb.[72] Sally Alexander has noted that these women set out to "study women's economic independence in relation to socialism" as part of the pathway to equal citizenship; they were concerned that it was the "'sex-relation' that

[65]London School of Economics and Political Science, *LSE Calendar 1900–1901* (LSE, 1900–1901).
[66]London School of Economics and Political Science, *LSE Register 1895–1932* (LSE, 1934), v.
[67]*LSE Register 1895–1932*, xiii; Charlotte Mitchell, "Women Students at UCL".
[68]*LSE Register 1895–1932*, x.
[69]*LSE Register 1895–1932*, xii.
[70]*LSE Register 1895–1932*, xiv.
[71]Sue Donnelly, "LSE's 'Deputy Director, Hostess, Accountant, and Lady of All Work'—Christian Scipio Mactaggart, 1861–1943", LSE, 1 March 2016, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsehistory/2016/03/01/lses-deputy-director-hostess-accountant-and-lady-of-all-work-christian-scipio-mactaggart-1861-1943/.
[72]Ruth Fry, *Maud and Amber: A New Zealand Mother and Daughter and the Women's Cause, 1865–1981* (Canterbury University Press, 1992).

was more difficult to reconcile with socialism in thought or practice" than anything else.[73] Ann Oakley and others have considered how these women developed research methods with regard to women and work and publicised the results.[74] Reeves authored the most famous of the Lambert studies, *Round About a Pound a Week*, and she was occasional LSE lecturer in "Economics and Social Science" (1912–1914, 1915–1916). Sheila Blackburn has shown the importance of Australasia's compulsory arbitration systems ideas in achieving minimum wage legislation in Britain, to which these women contributed.[75]

Australian Emily Dorothea Proud was one of the LSE women historians who contributed to the feminisation of the study of the history of industrialisation. After graduating from the University of Adelaide (BA, 1906), she taught at the university's Kyre (now Scotch) College for over five years before becoming the first Catherine Helen Spence Scholar in 1912. This endowed scholarship was established to promote the study of sociology by women in South Australia. In 1913 Proud had enrolled at the ULC (DSc, 1915) and then the LSE (DipSocSc, 1916), publishing her study *Welfare Work: Employers' Experiments for Improving Working Conditions in Factories*, which contrasted welfare work in Australia and Britain. She noted that "nothing appeals more strongly to the Australian people than a high standard of living, and a general improvement in factory conditions cannot but help in the desired direction … [She hoped] this book may prove of service to those who sent me to this country".[76] David Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions, having asked her to assist him in organising the welfare section of the Ministry of Munitions in 1915, wrote the preface for the book. As Allan Pred has noted, "The production of history, the becoming of places and the formation of biographies are enwrapped in one another and inseparable from the dialectical intertwinings of human practice, power relations and knowledge".[77] Taken together, the growing professional identity of women historians in the empire of scholars and their attempts to reshape the kind of history written shows that attempts to remake a scholarly elite from the margins takes considerable time and work. Isolated in Australia, there were critical nodes of work internationally, particularly the LSE, which promoted women's history.

Australian-born LSE and UCL alumni such as Caroline Webb-Watson, Persia Campbell and Helen Hughes, who returned to Australia after training abroad, are examples of women historians who used scholarships, degrees and appointments to gain and pursue scholarly careers. They provide an Antipodean twist on the insider-outsider theory of employment in having trained "outside" in order to get a position "back inside" the profession. In the case of Australian women or women historians in Australia, a number

[73]Sally Alexander, ed., *Women's Fabian Tracts* (Routledge, 1988), 5.
[74]Ann Oakley, "Women, the Early Development of Sociological Research Methods in Britain and the London School of Economics: A (Partially) Retrieved History", *Sociology* 54, no. 2 (2020): 292–311, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038519868631.
[75]Sheila Blackburn, *A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work?: Sweated Labour and the Origins of Minimum Wage Legislation in Britain* (Aldershot, 2007), 80.
[76]Dorothea Proud (Mrs Gordon Pavy), *Welfare Work: Employers' Experiments for Improving Working Conditions in Factories* (C. Bell and Sons, 1918), xvi.
[77]Allan Pred, quoted in John J. Bukowczyk et al., *Permeable Border: The Great Lakes Basin as Transnational Region 1650–1990* (University of Pittsburgh, 2005), 1.

trained at the LSE and UCL, undermining some of the most obvious impediments to their gaining academic careers and, slowly over time, gaining purchase.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick, born Pitt, studied English and history at the University of Melbourne (BA Hons, 1926) and at the University of Oxford (BA, 1928; MA, 1934). She resigned a tutorship to marry, but after her divorce she took up a lectureship in history from 1938 to 1962, specialising in 17th-century history; she became an associate professor but decided not to apply for a professorship in the 1950s.[78] Dorothy Shineberg was the first Australian woman to win a prestigious Fulbright travelling scholarship with a teaching fellowship at Smith College, Massachusetts, in 1950. She had no choice but to leave academia in 1956 when she was pregnant. The professor and head of department of Melbourne's history department, John La Nauze, was opposed to employing married women in his department, but he was prepared to supervise her research fellowship (PhD, 1965).[79] Later she took up a position at the Australian National University, was highly productive and became a Reader but was never appointed to a research-only position.

As Joyce Goodman has argued, geographical mobility began to characterise the careers of a growing number of highly educated women teachers by the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was a deliberate strategy, among a range of employment strategies women seeking university positions used. Women sought connections to build careers that straddled the distances of empire.

Conclusion

It is particularly pertinent to examine Australian women professionals before second-wave feminism because the male breadwinner wage under compulsory arbitration formalised a more restrictive degree of employment segregation than elsewhere in the Anglophone world. Women historians such as Jill Ker Conway and Coral Lansbury claimed they had to leave Australia to complete higher studies, believing that they would never have reached the positions that they did if they had remained in Australia, where they would have been "regularly overlooked for significant jobs—or any job—in favour of men" amid a stultifying intellectual life.[80] Conway, with her BA Hons in History and English from the University of Sydney (1958) and her PhD from Harvard University (1969), became Smith College's first woman president and wrote on gender and autobiography. After graduating from her doctoral studies at the University of Auckland in history, Coral Lansbury (MA, 1967; PhD 1969), who wrote on Victorian history, became Distinguished Professor and Dean of Graduate Studies at Rutgers University. In order to understand more fully how women historians remade the Australian scholarly elite, it is important to consider the women who not only emigrated from Australia, like Conway and Lansbury, but also those who went away and came back, who sought positions and promotion based on their engagement in the empire of scholars.

Many Australian professional women used international disparities and variances in training and employment opportunities to their advantage. They undertook overseas

[78]Elizabeth Kleinhenz, *A Brimming Cup: The Life of Kathleen Fitzpatrick* (Melbourne University Press, 2013).
[79]Dorothy Shineberg, "Reflections: The Early Years of Pacific History", *The Journal of Pacific Studies* 20 (1996): 8.
[80]Melanie Nolan, "The 'Playful Pluralist': The Pioneer Genre-Roaming of 'Crypto-Feminist' Coral Lansbury", *Literature and History* 28, no. 2 (2019): 175–93, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306197319870370.

education and engagements abroad in order to upskill and embellish their professional prospects and standing upon returning to Australia. Australian women historians' biographies reveal their use of a range of strategies—making feminist demands for equality, taking on helpmeet roles, pursuing separatist concentrations, as well as using transnational differentials—in their pursuit of elite university positions. Their developing expertise and experience through transnationalism was significant to the progression of their careers. The particular role of transnationalism as an inside-out opportunity has been underweighted, however, when in fact it showed returns—increasing returns—prior to second-wave feminism. The transnational pathway helped to ensure that women scholars were well-placed to take advantage of opportunities when discrimination based on sex abated.

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