Australian broadcasting's female 'pilgrims': Women and work in the post-war ABC.

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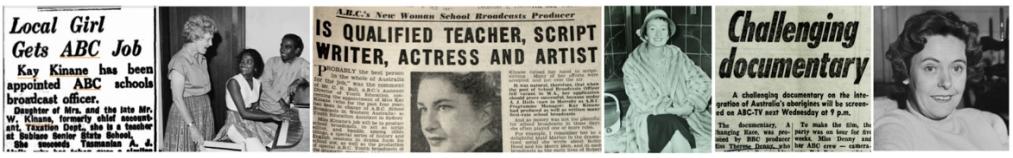

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This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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This thesis is dedicated to the determined women of the ABC who battled to forge careers in broadcasting.

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This thesis has not been copyedited but has been checked by a proof reader:
Jess Cox, from Quick Fox Editing.

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This thesis follows a conventional format.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the
following research contains names and images of people who have died.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the careers of women who attained positions of authority in the privileged environment of Australian public broadcasting between the 1940s and 1970s, and reimagines the nature of women's work at the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). It counteracts the widespread assumption that women were largely absent in post-war broadcasting, and reveals how and why a group of women, each with their own issues and ideologies to contribute to national debates, used the ABC as a vehicle for their activism.

Framed primarily through group biography, this history details how certain ABC women manifested their own agency within the limitations of the time and place, in both the messages they produced as radio and television producers, and through their positions within the gendered post-war workplace. It details the industrial strategies that female broadcasters activated in order to succeed – their transmedial methods, transformative departures, transnational exchanges and technical training – and the key industrial alliances they utilised to traverse previously inaccessible avenues of opportunity.

Taking an intersectional approach, this thesis also juxtaposes the careers of elite female producers against the majority of women workers at the ABC, contextualising the barriers, both official and unofficial, that prevented most women from sharing the same authority, opportunity and privilege that their male counterparts experienced. Challenging the male-centric narratives that dominate broadcasting historiography, this thesis examines the systems of exclusion and discrimination in the ABC workplace and highlights the nature of women's work in public broadcasting; it enriches the historical landscape of women's experiences and contributions within Australian broadcasting.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In 1965, ABC producer and programme officer Mungo MacCallum wrote an article in *Nation* magazine, in which he lamented the extent to which the Australian post-war broadcasting industry, and society in general, manifested an aversion to women speaking with authority. He argued that female broadcasters who wanted to take part in public debate within the privileged arena of a nationally networked cultural institution were seen as unnatural and unwelcome, particularly those who wanted to contribute to social and political discourse. MacCallum described his female peers as mission-oriented 'pilgrims' who worked hard to overcome the social, cultural and industrial obstacles put in their path. Their 'Mecca' was a broadcasting culture where gender was not an issue:

> *In and out of television, consciously or not, the Australian male tends to regard the woman of authority as some sort of mutant … Less, far less than other countries do we put sex aside when we hear the voice of authority … Miss Denny would be the first to agree that had she been Mr Denny ABC officials would have breathed less deeply … The fact is that, though they may love or need them, Australian men don't like women.*[1]

MacCallum commended his female peers for their professional ambitions and pointed to the lengths they went to in order to sustain their careers:

> *The little band of female pilgrims is strung out on the road to Mecca, scattered by differing talents, preferences and opportunities … Some of the band work both behind and in front of the camera; more, like Miss Denny, behind it. But even female producers are few. A significant fact is the high proportion of women in serious (not solemn) television who started with the ABC and left it, to realise their potential elsewhere.*[2]

MacCallum's commentary touches upon the key issues that faced women working in Australia's post-war media landscape. He recognised that there were cohorts of female broadcasters ambitious to contribute to public debate, despite the pressure placed on them to submit to traditional gender constructs and remain within the private, domestic

[1] MacCallum, M. 1965, 'This band of sisters', *Nation*, 26 June, p. 15.
[2] Ibid, p. 15.

sphere. He witnessed how gender norms justified the marginalisation of women in public roles and sustained the sexual division of labour at the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). MacCallum also recognised that ambitious female broadcasters had to instigate certain industrial strategies to survive and advance, and that many had to move beyond the local sphere to improve their status and knowledge by engaging with transnational broadcasting cultures and networks. MacCallum's *Nation* article also reflects the paradoxical nature of the ABC. It sought to be a democratic, enlightened organisation (with some supportive male executives such as MacCallum); however, it was encumbered by a culture that privileged male identity and justified male authority.[3] This thesis discusses each of these factors of Australian media history as it historicises the careers of a particular cohort of mission-oriented female broadcasters.

I came to this research project driven by the belief that feminist historiography has more to do in Australian media history; I am one of a body of scholars writing new histories of the too-often invisible women workers in Australian broadcasting. My work centres on the careers of four public-affairs producers: Therése Denny, Kay Kinane, Catherine King and Joyce Belfrage. At the time, the title of 'producer' covered both producing and directing roles. Women with authority were positioned as exceptions when most ABC women were relegated to more menial, 'female' positions. Through their eyes, I was able to reimagine the ABC workplace and identify the ways in which the organisation was gendered. Jobs and content divisions were consistently determined through the firmly entrenched sexual division of labour.

I have written a feminist media history that uses group biography to locate women in broadcasting, drawing out their experiences in the post-war media landscape. It historicises the personal and professional goals, outlines the resistance they faced and details the range of strategies they enacted in order to respond to the gendered workplace. This project subsequently examines the social and industrial dynamics; the political economies of cultural production; and the local, transmedial and transnational factors of broadcasting that were effectively utilised by certain ABC women.

In this first chapter, I discuss the framework for this thesis and outline where my research sits in the historiographical landscape. I also detail my approach to historical sources,

[3] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 29.

discussing the methods used to contextualise and interrogate the source material from which I have written this history.

Figure 1: Therése Denny, directing scenes for an ABC documentary in 1963.
National Archives of Australia: SP1011/1, 797.

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I have chosen to focus on the ABC in the post-war era because of its national importance as a cultural institution and its role in constructing and reflecting national identities. It was a site where authority over the message was constantly evaluated and contested.[4] In the post-war decades, Australia's radio and television networks were injected with a new momentum, each medium extending its reach, experimenting with new formats and techniques. Historian Brian Shoesmith argued that the ABC of the 1950s and 1960s was 'an oasis in a cultural desert', a locus of privilege at a time of great social, cultural and technological change.[5] It hosted a community of producers and programmers who imagined themselves as Australia's cultural custodians, the type of people historian Richard White described as a community of 'intelligentsia', who saw broadcasting as a powerful mechanism to shape national identity.[6] This thesis centres on the few women

[4] Shoesmith, B. 1986, 'Ken Inglis' This is the ABC', *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 130.
[5] Ibid, p. 129.
[6] Memo from ABC Senior Officer's Association Executive Subcommittee to Staff Members, 1972, titled *Paper for Presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts by the Senior Officers Association of the Australian Broadcasting Commission*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NLA: 2707416, 26 May.

who managed to negotiate positions of authority within that 'oasis' of post-war public broadcasting. As I have previously written, there was a cohort of mission-oriented women who wanted to play a role in shaping cultural and social discourse within the fora provided by the ABC. They saw themselves 'as capable and culturally superior and felt confident to speak for others and make judgments about what was best for society. The ABC, with its remit to inform, educate and entertain, inevitably became a preferred venue for their activism.'[7]

Another reason why the post-war decades are important for historical analysis is because the 1950s and 1960s hosted a new era in the women's movement. According to historian Marilyn Lake, the phenomenon of women replacing men in the wartime workforce during World War II triggered 'permanent changes in the gender order'.[8] As large percentages of women began doing 'men's work', traditional notions of masculinity and femininity were disrupted.[9] Women's wartime work triggered a shift in the way women imagined their public, working lives. When the war was over, however, many women found it difficult to relinquish their new freedoms and benefits. Lake stated,

> *Women had savoured the sweets of economic independence, public responsibility, some measure of equality with men in the workaday world, and the refreshing wider contact that came with employment outside the home. They would not lightly renounce these things and be slotted back into the old order as home-makers and child-carers.*[10]

Despite their wartime advances, women's primary identity was still structured around their domestic responsibilities; their 'duty' to society. Holmes and Pinto argued that 'the everyday life of the Australian woman was to be framed around her husband and children, who were to be prioritised in all but the most unusual of circumstances'.[11] Australian women faced numerous social, cultural and legal barriers to their ability to earn a living (including unequal pay rates and marriage bars). Increasingly in the post-war decades there was a growing, shared desire among women to push back and re-infiltrate those

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[7] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 31.
[8] Lake, M. 1988, 'The war over women's work', in V. Burgmann & J. Lee (eds.), *A Most Valuable Acquisition*, McPhee Gribble Penguin Books, Melbourne, p. 210.
[9] Ibid, p. 210.
[10] Ibid, p. 211.
[11] Holmes, K & Pinto, S. 2013, 'Gender and sexuality', in A. Bashford & S. Macintyre (eds), *The Cambridge History of Australia*, *Volume 2: The Commonwealth of Australia*, Port Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 321.

now-forbidden male workplaces; workplaces that, thanks to their wartime experiences, had been 'demystified' and made possible.[12] Lake argued that it was the subsequent resistance of women being forced to relinquish their new rights and freedoms that contributed to foster 'a new women's movement'.[13]

It is also important to historicise women's activism and agency in the post-war decades because this era is too often depicted as a period of domesticity and feminist inactivity. Media historian Maria DiCenzo called for more histories that challenge the notion that women were apolitical and 'retreated' from feminist thoughts and action.[14] With this in mind, I constructed a gender map of the ABC workplace in the 1950s and 1960s, and examined the nature of women's work at the time. I looked for women who held positions of authority and who manifested a creative activism. A group of women subsequently stood out in the historical landscape. They were women who challenged the status quo in some way. Some attained positions of seniority within the male arena of public-affairs programming; others fought to expand the domain of women's programming and challenged the marginalisation of women's issues. I designed this thesis to locate and historicise the careers of Australia's female broadcasters who produced public commentary, to examine the lives of women who gained the authority to make decisions about the issues being presented to the nation.

The women featured in this historical study actively sought out positions at the ABC so they could enact their own types of feminism: a social and cultural advocacy framed through active citizenship. They used their positions to challenge the status quo; producing radio and television programming that manifested their dissatisfaction with the inadequacies and complacencies of Australia's social, political and cultural mores. They produced content (when possible) that critiqued issues on gender and race, and questioned those in power, advocating for the marginalised and minorities of Australian society. One of these women became the first female to be an ABC Federal Supervisor and consulted for the European Broadcasting Union and UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation); another capped off her 24-year career as a presenter and producer when she was awarded an MBE for her services to the

[12] Lake, M. 1988, 'The war over women's work', in V. Burgmann & J. Lee (eds.), *A Most Valuable Acquisition*, McPhee Gribble Penguin Books, Melbourne, p. 210.
[13] Ibid, p. 213.
[14] Skoog, K. & DiCenzo, M. 2011, 'An interview with Maria DiCenzo, London April 2011', *Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 20.

community; one producer, renowned for her documentaries about social reform and cultural history, died tragically at the peak of her career; another, despite finding herself in court after throwing a typewriter out of an ABC office window, became one of Australia's first media studies scholars at Macquarie University in the early 1970s.

I was particularly drawn to studying the working lives of women broadcasters because I had been a producer and production manager for more than a decade before turning to scholarship and a doctorate. Looking back on my career from the early 1990s (working on radio and television productions, commercials and corporate training projects, short films and animated feature film), I am reminded of how little historical knowledge I had of other women in the industry. I was not alone; film scholar Annette Blonski pointed out it that was not uncommon for young women filmmakers starting out in the 1970s to have 'had little or no knowledge of the history of women's filmmaking in Australia – of what went before.'[15] My eagerness to discover more about my predecessors became a key motivator for this research. I wanted to learn about the careers of female broadcasters and was curious to discover if, in fact, the lack of historical texts was representative of women's actual contribution to Australian production over the decades. Blonski hinted at what I would discover: the histories of women filmmakers had for too long 'gone unrecorded and unmarked'; she stated that 'so much of our history exists merely as footnotes to accounts of the exploits of famous men.'[16] Because of the ABC's important role as a national cultural institution, much has been written about the organisation, by both scholars and ex-staffers, many of whom were journalists. However, of the histories and memoirs of media practitioners, I found there were far too few written about women, and of those few, most were about filmmakers and performers.

After reading ABC commentator Ellis Blain's 1977 memoir, *Life with Aunty: Forty Years with the ABC*, it became very clear that more needed to be done to recognise the role of women in public broadcasting. In his opening paragraphs, Blain wrote:

> *Talking to some of the men who have shaped the ABC of today soon convinced me that I had been wise to avoid a commitment to a history in depth. Many of those who should have contributed to such an enterprise are*

[15] Blonski, A., Creed, B. & Freiberg, F. 1987, *Don't Shoot Darling! Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia*, Greenhouse, Richmond, Victoria, p. 2.
[16] Ibid, p. iv.

> *already dead, and some of those who are alive make no secret of their determination that the mistakes, politics and intrigues will continue to rest in peace.*[17]

I was immediately struck by Blain's determination that men were the shapers of the ABC and was sceptical about the apparent lack of women as key players of the organisation. I also sought to challenge the second aspect of his statement, which highlighted the preferred culture of 'forgetting' uncomfortable historical narratives. I therefore wanted to challenge those limited historical narratives which only celebrated the good of the ABC and ignored the more complex and negative aspects of the organisation's history, such as the way gender constructs permeated the workplace and normalised the discrimination of women. Thanks to the public broadcaster's remit to serve the public and sustain a policy of transparency, the ABC archives are extensive and relatively accessible to researchers: I had a large cache of archives to work with. I was, however, careful to contextualise the nature of the archive and be mindful of its compromises, as Blain's admission illustrates.

* * * *

I adopted a twofold approach to writing this feminist media history. Firstly, to historicise the media workplace as a gendered site where authority was contested, and secondly, to illustrate how women in the post-war decades used the media to enact their political and professional ambitions. After re-imagining the post-war ABC workplace from a female perspective, it has been possible to discover the extent to which gender was embedded into the everyday practices and processes of radio and television production. This thesis illustrates how women became public broadcasters in order to be active in the public sphere, to play a part in framing the debate. In doing so, this research adds to the growing body of work that counteracts the myths that women in the 'between-the-waves' post-war decades were domesticated and apolitical.

My historical framework centres on the production environment and interrogates the systems and cultures of media production. It examines the social, economic and industrial factors that determined the nature of the production process: the factors that affected the

[17] Blain, E. 1977, *Life with Aunty: Forty Years with the ABC*, Methuen of Australia, pp. vii–viii.

behaviour of media practitioners and determined their ability to participate effectively as public-affairs broadcasters. While this group biography centres on four protagonists, it also incorporates historical information about their peers, women who worked in different divisions and in different roles, yet shared the same workplace and experienced the same workplace cultures. This research adopts an integrated, transnational methodology. Looking beyond a single nation and a single medium, it is possible to trace the complex transmedial and transnational engagements enacted by women broadcasters. I would argue that it is an essential approach for feminist historians of mid-20th century media to adopt, considering the inherent transnationality of broadcasting and the opportunities it offered to female practitioners constrained by their own national media cultures, particularly for broadcasters from more regional domains. I have found that there is a great deal more information to be garnered about broadcasting history if one recognises the necessary mobility, diversity and ingenuity that women activated in order to bypass gendered production cultures; such as those Australian women who, as Mungo MacCallum argued, had to 'realise their potential' overseas.[18]

Women's and feminist history

This thesis functions as a women's history as well as a feminist history. As a women's history, it performs an act of recovery, working to remedy the deficit of histories featuring Australian women broadcasters. As a feminist history, it reimagines the nature of women's work at the ABC, revising traditional histories of media that privilege androcentric narratives that too often rely on anachronistic gender constructs of the post-war era and contextualising the workplace from a woman's perspective. It historicises what Maria DiCenzo categorised as 'the gender-based forms of inequality and exclusion at social, political and economic levels.'[19] Susan Pedersen's view of this composite approach to writing women's history was similarly instructive for my work:

> *feminist history has always had a dual mission – on the one hand to recover the lives, experiences and mentalities of women from the condescension and obscurity in which they have been so unnaturally placed, and on the other to*

[18] MacCallum, M. 1965, 'This band of sisters', *Nation*, 26 June, p. 15.
[19] Skoog, K. & DiCenzo, M. 2011, 'An interview with Maria DiCenzo, London April 2011', *Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 13.

> *re-examine and rewrite the entire historical narrative to reveal the construction and workings of gender.*[20]

As I examined the contributions of producers, it was evident that these women were also actors in historical events that spoke to issues beyond gender. Even though particular experiences and events were not distinct manifestations of gendered behaviour, they related to key events and processes in Australian broadcasting history that were nevertheless relevant. For example, Joyce Belfrage's difficult time working in the producer's pool provided a unique insight into the ABC's mismanaged transition to television.

As I sought to locate and recover the women missing from Australian broadcasting history, I was aided by Finnish cultural historian Hannu Salmi's 'notion of the "the possible"'; a methodology that seeks to interrogate historical inconsistencies and recognise indicators of other historical possibilities.[21] It is a way of writing history that looks for the invisible and the intangible, rather than just relying on 'observable actions' and events and protagonists, which often privilege male histories. I was able to apply this in one of two ways. Firstly, identifying the gaps in historical narratives led to discoveries of women's contributions. Secondly, by recognising that the things left unsaid in memory texts could be contextualised for meaning. Salmi's approach was useful because it led me to question why so many women were invisible in histories of broadcasting. Were women really that rare in post-war broadcasting? I reasoned to myself that, surely, women workers must have made key contributions, because broadcasting was a complex, diverse *industry*, requiring a variety of workers and specialists. Salmi argued that, 'there is always an interaction between text and context, object and environment, the individual and the community.'[22] With that in mind, I worked to find invisible historical figures, by 'imagining the possible'; I looked into 'empty' historical spaces and revisualised the social and cultural spaces around them. Salmi suggested that we look to the gaps to gain further context and meaning: 'That which is at the core of the black hole shapes its surroundings and is in turn shaped by them. The *invisible* influences what historians take as possible pasts and at the same time is situated within past possibilities.'[23] This thinking allowed me

[20] Pedersen, S. 2000, *The Future of Feminist History*, paper presented to the Committee on Women Historians of the AHA, January 8, viewed 9 July 2018, <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2000/0010/0010vie1.cfm>.
[21] Salmi, H. 2011, 'Cultural history, the possible, and the principle of plenitude', *History and Theory*, vol. 50, no. May 2011, p. 171.
[22] Ibid, p. 185.
[23] Ibid, p. 185.

to understand why gender was such a substantial dynamic at the ABC: with the sexual division of labour came a determined effort to keep the substantial cohort of female staff contained in particular domains, with their official status sidelined. Alternatively, part of this way of looking for 'the possible' in history allows us to look for the reasons and context for the removal of certain figures from historical narratives.

As a feminist history, this research challenges existing historical narratives of Australian broadcasting, histories that determine achievement through a male lens, bringing evidence of women's work back into the historiographical landscape. Like Michele Hilmes, Susan Pedersen and Joan Scott, I believe it is necessary to counteract the androcentric histories that complacently accepted the gender narratives assigned to particular historical eras as factually 'natural'; histories that fold gendered assumptions into their historical perspectives, rather than identifying and interrogating the gender constructs that were at work at the time.[24] Joan Scott warned that, when historical gender constructs are ignored by historians, those inaccurate tropes take on more validity. The consequence being, Scott said, that if women were continually excluded from historical narratives, 'the obvious conclusion for students – male and female – was that women were insignificant as objects of study because they were somehow lesser in ability, achievement, and potential than were men.'[25] Similarly, Lana Rakow argued that it is particularly beneficial for feminist history when scholars 'question the assumptions of the questioners.'[26] It is therefore important to interrogate the traditional historical assumptions that sustain certain narratives of media history.

I found one example of the susceptibility to misrepresent ABC women in an article written by Australian writer and film critic Neil McDonald in 2001.[27] McDonald had been developing biographies of the war correspondents Damien Parer and Chester Wilmot; during his research, he became interested in Therése Denny's time at the ABC in the mid-1960s. While his *Quadrant* article was valuable for its recognition of Therése and her work, he made some discordant assumptions about Therése's climb to seniority as a producer. McDonald suggested that her ABC assignment was due to her decade-earlier relationship with broadcaster Chester Wilmot, that she was rewarded for being a 'girl'

[24] Hilmes, M. 1997, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, p. 131.
[25] Tilly, L. & Scott, J.W. 1987, *Women, work, and family*, Methuen, New York, p. 1.
[26] Rakow, L. 2001, 'Feminists, media, freed speech', *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 41.
[27] McDonald, N. 2001, 'Therése Denny's *A Changing Race*', *Quadrant*, vol. 45, no. 10, p. 69.

who 'behaved well' during a delicate affair. McDonald had underestimated the competitive nature of the production environment and the level of proficiency one needed to be entrusted to write, produce and direct four major, nationally broadcast documentaries. At the time of her ABC sojourn, Therése was, in fact, a highly respected 40-year-old producer with an extensive cache of major international productions under her belt. Reminded again of the continual misrepresentation and omission of women in media history, I was further motivated to explore women's contributions to Australian broadcasting.

Writing about Therése Denny's career two decades after her death, McDonald interviewed camera operator Bob Feeney to discuss *A Changing Race* (1964) and Denny's directorial approach.[28] McDonald's article is a good insight and captures key issues of Therése's creative and thematic goals; however, his reliance on Feeney as a source and his failure to contextualise Feeney's agendas when recounting his memories, mean that Feeney's own perspective was privileged more than it should have been, (a common problem when few survivors remain). There are two ambiguous phrases that might have been challenged. In the first instance, McDonald wrote: 'Feeney recalls taking his camera off the tripod and quietly filming some close-ups of the children – there were to be no phony re-enactments in this film, they had decided.'[29] Later, when discussing why the camera was set further back from nervous interviewees, Feeney said, 'we'd agreed to be as quiet as possible.'[30] In his use of 'they' and 'we', Feeney was given (or taken) credit for some of Therése's directorial decisions. Her authority was reduced and his was heightened. Despite the fact that Feeney confessed to have had great difficulty coming to terms with Therése's authoritative and independent directing style, he was nevertheless given credit for making determinations not within the purview of a camera operator. (The decision about whether to stage re-enactments, for example, was unquestionably the director's.) Furthermore, the shooting style that McDonald assumed was first formulated with Feeney's input on *A Changing Race* was, in fact, clearly evident in Therése's earlier documentary work for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and particularly evident on her project, *South of the River* (1964).[31]

[28] *A Changing Race*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.
[29] McDonald, N. 2001, 'Therese Denny's *A Changing Race*', *Quadrant*, vol. 45, no. 10, p. 67.
[30] Ibid, p. 67.
[31] *South of the River*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, BBC Television.

Further compounding the problem of women having their authority historically undermined, in 2010, filmmaker and scholar Pat Laughren wrote an article about Australian television production in the 1960s and adapted McDonald's inaccurate description of Feeney's role into an even more explicit assignment of authority. Feeney again received credit for making directorial decisions, Laughren stating: 'She and her cameraman, Bob Feeney, agreed that there were to be no re-enactments in the film.'[32] Although this is a relatively minor example, it illustrates what Maria DiCenzo asserted, that media histories can be compromised if historians and media scholars continue to rely on traditional narratives and fail to interrogate and rethink the constructs that influenced them. DiCenzo herself was compelled to criticise leading media scholar James Curran for ignoring histories that recognised women's use of media as a vehicle for their activism.[33]

In her study of early American broadcasting, media historian Michele Hilmes also recognised the tendency for conventional histories to reinforce historical gender tropes. Hilmes explained that, in doing so, they disregard women's achievements while deeming male performance relevant, perpetuating the narrative that the 'ranks of writers, producers, directors, actors, executives, critics, and regulators remain predominantly and resolutely male.'[34] I saw the lack of historical inclusion of women broadcasters as particularly disadvantageous for contemporary female media practitioners. They were denied their own historical narratives that could offer guidance and inspiration. I recently spoke to one of Australia's leading film producers, who had started her career at the ABC in the 1970s. When I asked her if her career had been informed by the histories of the previous generation of senior ABC women before her, she confessed that she had never heard of any. In this way, the lack of women's perspectives in media history fuels the continuing disenfranchisement of women in media.

With the rise in feminist media historiography, more historians are remedying what Hilmes called the 'blind spot of gender in broadcasting' by recognising forced constructs in historical thinking.[35] We can identify how women were, in fact, active participants in media production and how they were 'competing for control over their own voices and

[32] Laughren, P.G. 2010, 'The 1960s down under: Television, documentary and the "new nationalism"', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 24, no. 3, p. 381.
[33] DiCenzo, M. 2004, 'Feminist media and history: A response to James Curran', *Media History*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp.43–49.
[34] Hilmes, M. 1997, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, p. 131.
[35] Ibid, p. 131.

venues, vying for the right to speak and be heard by the public at large.'[36] With this in mind, I wanted to construct a history of the ABC that recognises the presence, participation and activism of female broadcasters. My research thus embodies the political imperative of feminist history as a form of political action.

Another factor to consider when interrogating the historiographical factors that affect the ability of women to be recognised historically is the masculinist perspective that traditionally dominate 'national' narratives. Because of the ABC's identity as a national broadcaster, its historical identity tends to perpetuate nation-building as a male pursuit, where women and cultural minorities were too often invisible. This research responds to the demands of feminist historians from the 1980s and 1990s, who declared that national narratives should be more diverse.[37] As we saw in their ground-breaking feminist history *Creating a Nation* (1994), second-wave historians Patricia Grimshaw, Ann McGrath, Marilyn Lake and Marian Quartly proved that historians can challenge monocultural male narratives and reframe the histories of nationhood to incorporate female involvement, effort and achievement. They inspired us to rethink the gendered constructs of conventional national histories and shine a light on how male achievements are so often selected as core nation-building narratives, normalising the male experience as if it was a standard, gender-neutral history.[38] Furthermore, recognising what Marilyn Lake called the 'inadequacy of a national frame of analysis,' I followed my female subjects overseas, seeking alternatives to the prevailing achievement-based, national, mono-medial historical frameworks.[39]

In *Radio Voices* (1997) and *Network Nations* (2012), Michele Hilmes argued for more integrated, transnational perspectives of media history, an alternative to the 'traditional studies of broadcasting institutions, economics, and policy … in which women, as individuals and as a group, barely seem to exist and in which it is only the discourses and actions of men that have relevance.'[40] The 'official histories' of British broadcasting, such as those by Briggs, Scannell and Cardiff, demonstrate a propensity to ignore the workings

[36] Hilmes, M. 1997, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, pp. 131–132.
[37] Damousi, J. 2014, 'Does feminist history have a future?', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 29, no. 80, p. 191.
[38] McGrath, A., Grimshaw, P., Lake, M. & Quartly, M. 1994, *Creating a Nation*, Penguin Books, Ringwood.
[39] Lake, M. 2007, 'Nationalist historiography, feminist scholarship, and the promise and problems of new transnational histories: The Australian case', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 185.
[40] Hilmes, M. 1997, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, p. 131.

of gender and the contributions of women.[41] I would argue that Ken Inglis' foundational history of Australian public broadcasting, *This is the ABC* (1983) falls into the same category.[42] Inglis focused on chronological milestones – the organisation's conception and development over the decades – discussing the achievements of senior programmers and policy-makers, and programming milestones over the years. He formulated a detailed social history of the ABC framed through achievement-based, 'great men' perspectives. Very occasionally, Inglis incorporated some 'great-women' perspectives, mentioning the work of exceptional ABC women such as Ida Elizabeth Osborne, Kay Kinane, Catherine King, Ruth Stirling and Mary Rossi; however, their reference in the organisation's history are overshadowed by a litany of male names. Inglis outlined the missions, battles and challenges of the senior staff and elite programmers over the years; occasionally referring to the workers in mid-level production positions and only briefly discussed the role of women.[43] Inglis devoted a few pages to the nature of women's work in the post-war years and provided more detail as he discussed the 1970s push of feminist programming, particularly *Coming Out Show*.

When writing *A Social History of British Broadcasting* (1991), Paddy Scannell confessed that he had wanted to add another layer of critical analysis, but the scope of the project was already extensive.[44] Inglis similarly adopted a balanced, centre line in his approach to the ABC's history. He constructed a broad, 'official' history of the organisation and chose not to incorporate critical analysis or cultural theories about media, and the deeper social and cultural forces that determined its behaviour and identity.

Some historians argue that these types of 'official' histories, sponsored by a host organisation, should not be positioned in media history taxonomy as 'academic' but rather as a category of 'trade' history, because they tend to mirror the agendas and ideologies of the host.[45] Inglis' work has been criticised for being too 'romantic' and for portraying the production workplace as dynamic and autonomous.[46] Dame Leonie Kramer, (ABC

[41] Mitchell, C. 2000, *Women and Radio: Airing Differences*, Routledge, London, p. 11.
[42] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne.
[43] Inglis, K. 1983, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne.
[44] Scannell, P. 1996, *Radio, Television and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach*, quoted in E. Jacka, 'Doing the history of television in Australia: Problems and challenges', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies,* Vol. 18, No. 1, March 2004, p. 27.
[45] Hartley, J., Green, J.B. & Burgess, J.E. 2005, '"Laughs and Legends", or the furniture that glows? Television as history', paper presented to the *Australian Television History Conference, 8–9 December 2005*, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, pp. 10–11.
[46] Shoesmith, B. 1986, 'Ken Inglis' This is the ABC', *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 131.

commissioner and chairperson), argued that Inglis' history should have incorporated a greater political and cultural analysis of the organisation.[47] Alternatively, recognising that the nature of these official histories mean that they must limit their focus and scope to a more general view, media historians such as Jean Seaton still see a value in their function as a foundational base from which further historical analysis can be advanced. Seaton, for example, praised Asa Brigg's multi-volumed history of British Broadcasting for 'opening up the material for later historians.'[48] Inglis' work does the same for Australian media historians.

Another blind spot that this feminist media history aims to remedy is the predominance of histories that rely on the waves model of feminism, an approach that, according to feminist historian Zora Simic, allows for 'the erasure of between-the-waves feminism.'[49] In her ground-breaking 1999 work, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism*, Marilyn Lake stated that new feminist histories could work to discover evidence of women's activism and agency in the between-the-waves decades.[50] Similarly, in her 2011 interview with Kristen Skoog, Maria DiCenzo argued that examinations of media produced during times of women's supposed inactivity can, in fact, reveal the alternative.[51] DiCenzo declared that 'the greatest challenges to standard narratives about women's confinement to the domestic sphere (be it in the early nineteenth century, interwar years, or the 1950s) have come from examinations of women's media in those periods.'[52] It was an approach that DiCenzo, Delap and Ryan took in their work on suffragette-era women, revealing how they used the press to convey their messages and mobilise their resistance.[53] This history examines how women such as Kay Kinane, Joyce Belfrage, Therése Denny and Catherine King used radio and television (in this case, public broadcasting), as a vehicle for their activism, to participate in public discourse and pursue their professional, political and cultural agendas. It disproves those myths of post-war invisibility and inactivity, and highlights how women worked to control their lives and

[47] Kramer, L. 2007, 'Whose ABC? The Australian Broadcasting Corporation 1983–2006 – by K.S. Inglis', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 121–123.
[48] Seaton, J. 2004, 'Writing the history of broadcasting', in D. Cannadine (ed.), *History and the Media*, Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire UK, p. 151.
[49] Simic, Z. 2003, 'A hall of selective mirrors: Feminism, history and identity 1919–1969', PhD thesis, University of Sydney, Sydney, p. ii.
[50] Lake, M. 1999, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.
[51] Skoog, K. & DiCenzo, M. 2011, 'An interview with Maria DiCenzo, London April 2011', *Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 11–24.
[52] DiCenzo, M., Delap, L. & Ryan, L. 2011, *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, p. 10.
[53] Ibid.

environment, doing what historian Susan Magarey suggested: 'refocusing the historical lens … from absence to agency'.[54]

Nonetheless, I was careful to avoid imposing a modern feminist identity upon my historical protagonists. Zora Simic warned that, while women's past actions and activism might fit our present-day notions of feminism, we should be aware that 'definitions of feminism had shifted considerably' over the decades; we should be mindful that 'feminism' has been a fluid, 'multiple, transhistorical and historically specific term.'[55] For most of their lives, the women in this study chose not to identify as feminists. Although they manifested the characteristics and philosophies that feminism espoused, Catherine King, Kay Kinane, Therése Denny and Joyce Belfrage instead saw citizenship as a sensible ideology to justify their social service agendas, their public presence and their privileged status as authoritative professionals.

Some ABC women were confused about what exactly a feminist was; they were also possibly wary of adopting a persona that was imaged by ABC management as one hostile to the institution's 'balanced' agenda. When listening to interviews with female producers following their retirement in the 1980s, it is apparent that they saw 'feminism' as not particularly applicable to them during their careers. The 1980s interviews posed questions to the female producers, asking them how they enacted their work as feminists. In Catherine King and Kay Kinane's cases, for example, they suggested that their activism was a means to an end to serve their social agendas, rather than political statements assigned to a feminist cause. Nevertheless, their activism, in both the workplace and in the content of their shows, advocated for women's rights. Their concept of feminism changed over the decades, becoming more relatable in their later lives when asked to reimagine their careers through a retrospective filter.

I was also mindful to complicate my feminist approach by incorporating intersectional perspectives. It became clear that there was an absence of cultural diversity in histories of women at the ABC. The senior women at the ABC conformed to a set of characteristics deemed acceptable to post-war public broadcasting's construction of itself, imagining a

[54] Magarey, S. 2007, 'What is happening to women's history in Australia at the beginning of the third millennium?', *Women's History Review*, vol. 16, no. 1, p. 2.
[55] Simic, Z. 1999, 'Notes in search of a location for between the waves of feminism', *Outskirts: Feminisms along the Edge*, vol. 5, November 1999, viewed September 15, 2017, <http://www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-5/simic>.

specific race, class, sexuality, and cultural and intellectual orientation. As I will illustrate in later chapters, the post-war ABC production departments were predominantly staffed by white, educated, middle-class workers. One aspect of intersectionality that I incorporated into this research was the different views of 'success' adopted by the variety of women who worked at the ABC. Their ambitions and aspirations were diverse and often determined by their familial, cultural and socioeconomic situations. I also adopted Marilyn Lake's suggestion to view historical protagonists through a postcolonial lens.[56] For example, even though the women in this study advocated for victims of colonialism, producing progressive content that spoke for Indigenous Australians and displaced persons, they also benefitted by traversing industrial networks forged and sustained by imperialism, particularly, as we will see, through an imperial broadcasting community.

As the field of feminist media history became more diverse, it also became more interdisciplinary and intersectional. I surveyed the landscape and identified three general approaches to feminist media history: the first studies the female audience, the second considers the construction and representation of women within media texts, and the third historicises the female media practitioner. My research takes the latter approach.

The hidden labour of production and media history

Rather than focusing on the sociological impact of media on society, I historicise the ABC workplace itself, studying the factors of impact at play *within* broadcasting's production networks and communities. Media historians are increasingly turning their attention to the production workplace – the cultures and political economies of media production that affect the nature, focus and quality of radio and television programming for national consumption. Asa Briggs laid down the foundation for the labour of production approach in his five-volumed work, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (1961).[57] Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff followed with *A Social History of British Broadcasting* (1991), incorporating insights into what broadcasters were thinking and what they had to deal with as they strove to produce relevant, proactive programming.[58] Referencing Scannell's work, media historian David Hendy suggested that media historians recognise

[56] Lake, M. 2007, 'Nationalist historiography, feminist scholarship, and the promise and problems of new transnational histories: The Australian case', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 183.
[57] Briggs, A. 1961, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: The Birth of Broadcasting*, Oxford University Press, London, New York.
[58] Scannell, P. & Cardiff, D. 1991, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, Vol 1, 1922–1939, Serving the Nation*, Academic, vol. 1, Blackwell, Oxford.

'one of the central tasks of broadcasting history is making visible the "hidden labour" of production; to consider the actions of broadcasters as 'thinking, feeling individuals.'[59] This thesis contextualises the conventions, customs and industrial dynamics at play in the post-war ABC; the behind-the-scenes factors that affected the nature of the messages broadcast to the nation. In doing so, it focuses on the role that gender played within the ABC's production processes, examining how gender was applied in the determination of both 'women's work' and 'women's content'.

Briggs, Scannell and Cardiff, Seaton and Hendy have all pointed to the importance of historicising the methods and motivations of media practitioners; they do, after all, create radio and television content that infiltrates and shapes social discourse. Cultural historians Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner described the media as a 'consciousness industry', one that manifests 'ways of thinking, ways of seeing, ways of talking about the world.'[60] By studying the media of the past, we can determine what was happening in society at the time or, more accurately, how media producers were responding to society at the time. As historians, we should 'see media as speech, not just text', as Lana Rakow suggested.[61]

Rather than framing a particular media history through narrow perspectives that only focus on media texts, it is important to incorporate the context of the media production process in relationship to its surrounding environments. Media historian James Curran argued that history would suffer if we apply 'too much attention to the technology of communications, and too little to their content and processes.'[62] As I examined the work of my cohort of ABC women, it was evident that they used their radio and television projects as a response to their environment, challenging contemporary social issues and conventions. For example, Therése Denny used her 1964 documentary *Weekend in Australia* (1964) to actively attack post-war Australia's sexism and cultural complacency.[63] Therefore, rather than solely basing my historical analysis on the texts themselves, I examine the way that meaning was embodied within the production process itself.

[59] Hendy, D. 2012, 'Biography and the emotions as a missing "narrative" in media history', *Media History*, vol. 18, no. 3–4, p. 363.
[60] Cunningham, S. & Turner, G. 1997, 'The media in Australia today', *The Media in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. 6.
[61] Rakow, L. 2001, 'Feminists, media, freed speech', *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 44.
[62] Curran, J. 2002, 'Media and the making of British society, c. 1700–2000', *Media History*, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 135.
[63] *Weekend in Australia*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.

The 'hidden labour of production' approach also provides an alternative to the histories that limit themselves to the top echelon of broadcasters. It is an approach that gives voice to everyday workers and allows historians to revise those narratives that disregard the inherently communal nature of radio and television production. One of the criticisms of Asa Brigg's histories of British broadcasting was the narrow view of his 'great man' focus. Critics argued Briggs did not incorporate the contributions of middle- and low-level broadcasters; he did not critique the workplace cultures and industrial factors that confronted BBC staff in everyday life.[64] Alternatively, my research has been guided by the comprehensive social-history approach suggested by E.P. Thompson, who proposed that we write histories of people working towards something, rather than exclusively focusing on the few who had reached exalted positions in society. He stated,

> *(the questions traditionally asked) when we examine a customary culture, may often be concerned less with the processes and logic of change than with the recovery of past states of consciousness and the texturing of social and domestic relationships. They are concerned less with becoming than with being. As some of the leading actors of history recede from our attention – the politicians, the thinkers, the entrepreneurs, the generals – so an immense supporting cast, whom we had supposed to be mere attendants upon this process, press themselves forward. If we are concerned only with becoming, then there are whole periods in history in which an entire sex has been neglected by historians, because women are rarely seen as prime agents in political, military or even economic life. If we are concerned with being, then the exclusion of women would reduce history to futility.*[65]

This approach resonates when historicising women's work and women's attempts to *become*, in an environment where most people successfully *being* were men.

Furthermore, rather than imagining senior policy-makers and managers as faceless bureaucrats, it is important to see the ABC as a complex production community comprised of individual agents with their own agendas and idiosyncrasies. For example, the sense of purpose and privilege felt by public broadcasters meant that gaining control of the

[64] Hendy, D. 2012, 'Biography and the emotions as a missing "narrative" in media history', *Media History*, vol. 18, no. 3–4, p. 374.
[65] Thompson, E. 1994, *Making History: Writings on History and Culture*, The New Press, New York, pp. 204–205.

message was a highly contested process. Factional disputes and power struggles between programme controllers and producers frequently affected the ability of producers to put forward their agendas and ideas. This can be evidenced in Allan Ashbolt's histories of his time at the ABC. A long-time ABC Talks producer and programmer, Ashbolt believed the organisation should not be imagined as a 'thoroughly unified formation'; he argued that it was in fact, an 'amalgam[ation] of contending, though sometimes complementary forces and of expedient, though sometimes ideological, alliances.'[66] Programming bureaucrats often battled with each other over which producer to hire and what type of content to produce; competing priorities caused much debate and factional manoeuvrings. British media historian Jean Seaton recognised the importance of examining workplace dynamics as she historicised the behaviour of staff and their various positions of influence in production at the BBC, stating:

> *In a different way, the creation of a ground breaking documentary series [is] … usually seen as a consequence of the creative decisions that the writers and producers made and this is, of course, essential. But who chose the writer and the producer? Who identified the need in the schedules or the place that would allow them to flourish? Who found the considerable resources for setting up a long running show? Who gave the writers and directors and producers the space to do what they wanted? These decisions are often taken by people far higher up in broadcasting organisations and are in part a product of the organisation's sense of what its priorities should be.*[67]

When identifying the contributions of a wide range of production staff, it is important to recognise the impact that programme bureaucrats had on determining how effectively producers could work. In this case, I also wanted to historicise how the ABC senior staff's views on gender affected the nature of ABC production cultures.

In 2012 David Hendy encouraged media historians to identify the subcultures and 'emotional communities' at play during particular eras in broadcasting history.[68] He suggested that we incorporate the 'systems of feeling' that Barbara Rosenwein identified

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[66] Ashbolt, A. 1987, 'The ABC in political society', in T. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds.), *Communications and the Media in Australia* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. 91.
[67] Seaton, J. 2004, 'Writing the history of broadcasting', in D. Cannadine (ed.), *History and the Media*, Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire UK, pp. 153–154.
[68] Hendy, D. 2012, 'Biography and the emotions as a missing "narrative" in media history', *Media History*, vol. 18, no. 3–4, p. 374.

in her construction of 'emotional communities'. Rosenwein suggested that groups of people express common 'norms, codes, and modes of expression'; their collective behaviours and ways of speaking manifest their positions and opinions.[69] This can be seen, for example, in the way that BBC and ABC staff embodied their public-broadcasting philosophies. Their shared mission informed the way they acted, spoke, and judged each other and those outside their elite workplace. I found Rosenwein's approach resonated strongly when I applied it to Raymond Williams' historical concept of 'structures of feeling.'[70] Historians can gain more complex understandings of a particular historical environment by identifying people's responses to the conventional, fixed status quo; they are able to recognise that historical actors could experience life differently to what was promoted as official, mainstream narratives. Williams believed that 'practical consciousness,' could be different to 'official consciousness' – that lived experiences were different to those promoted.[71]

This perspective illustrates the paradoxical nature of the ABC as an enlightened, democratic institution, which was nevertheless discriminatory in its treatment of women. Many women experienced a disparity between their actual experiences to the way things were portrayed officially. The 'structures of feeling' manifested by women workers at the ABC in the 1950s and 1960s reveal women as marginalised figures who were increasingly responding to the dominant androcentric culture. Coming to a head in the early 1970s, those 'structures of feeling' were manifested in the spate of industry studies and reports that national broadcasters were pressured to initiate leading up to the International Women's Year in 1975. Although it sits on the periphery of the post-war era framework of this thesis, the formation of the Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative (and the report it produced in 1977) is a prime example of the response of women to force change upon a resistant bureaucracy, to challenge the conventions that had been accepted as traditional.

Texts that discuss women and the hidden labour of production

There are very few histories of Australian women as production workers and producers in radio and television, and histories of women in Australian broadcasting in the post-war

[69] Rosenwein, B. 2006, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, p. 193.
[70] Williams, R. 1977, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[71] Williams, R. 1977, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 131.

era are even more scarce. The studies that do focus on female broadcasters tend to discuss the women who built their careers as part of feminism's second wave. I have listed some relevant texts below. After studying these histories, I was able to better situate my own research in the historiographical landscape.

Bronwyn Ryan's 2002 honours thesis, 'Women and ABC radio in the 1950s', provides an introduction to the work of regional producers of women's programming, the contribution of ABC's female advisory committees, and the nature of listenership in the early decades of ABC radio.[72] Jeannine Baker's 2017 article 'Woman to woman: Australian feminists' embrace of radio broadcasting, 1930s–1950s' presents insights into the way that Irene Greenwood, Jessie Street and Linda Littlejohn used radio to advocate for their political agendas.[73] Julie Lewis' biography of broadcaster Catherine King, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session* (1979), is not an academic work; however, it does provide an extensive insight into a woman's experience as a successful public broadcaster.[74] Julie Lewis was a writer and broadcaster who worked with King in Perth and gained King's support to write the biography. Although Susan Bye's 2010 article 'A cruel medium for a woman' focuses on women in front of the camera, I acknowledged her argument that women broadcasters, even the onscreen performers Bye featured, had 'all but disappeared from official histories of Australian television,' and appreciated her call for more histories on Australian broadcasters and the 'public discourses that circulated around [them].'[75]

I found the feminist media histories of British and American broadcasters more prevalent, with their concerns more in line with my own historical focus. In addition to Hilmes' work on women in early American radio, Kate Murphy, Kristen Skoog, Janet Thumim, Mary Irwin and Jean Seaton have written insightful histories of British women broadcasters and their work behind the scenes. Vicky Ball and Melanie Bell's editorial for the *Journal of British Cinema and Television* in 2013 outlined the emerging field of work that historicises 'women as producers of culture'.[76] I found that my approach aligned with their own threefold perspective to feminist media history. They asked, 'How did gendered pathways

[72] Ryan, B. 2002, 'Women and ABC radio in the 1950s', Honours thesis, Charles Sturt University.
[73] Baker, J. 2017, 'Woman to woman: Australian feminists' embrace of radio broadcasting, 1930s–1950s', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 32, no. 93, pp. 292–308.
[74] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA.
[75] Bye, S. 2010, 'A cruel medium for a woman', *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, p.161.
[76] Ball, V. & Bell, M. 2013, 'Working women, women's work: Production, history, gender', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 547–562.

emerge and consolidate?'; 'What were the production cultures in which women's work took place?'; and 'Where were the gaps and interstices through which women could progress?'[77] Ball and Bell also coordinated a major research project, titled *Women's Work and Working Women: A Longitudinal Study of Women Working in the British Film and Television Industries (1933–1989)*, in which they historicise women's agency and contributions in a variety of below-the-line production roles, from continuity girls to floor managers. Along similar lines, Jeannine Baker has recently initiated a postdoctoral oral history research project, titled *Making Airwaves: A History of Women in Australian Broadcasting,* that seeks to collect the experiences of women broadcasters from the 1920s to the 1980s.

Kate Murphy's work on women at the BBC provided me with a range of insights about the BBC's interwar women broadcasters, histories that I could use to contextualise against the careers of their ABC peers. Three texts were particularly relevant: her 2016 book, *Behind the Wireless: A History of Early Women at the BBC*,[78] and two articles from 2014, 'From women's hour to other women's lives: The BBC talks for women and the women who made them, 1923–1939'[79] and 'A marriage bar of convenience? The BBC and married women's work 1923–39'.[80] Murphy's research allowed me to identify patterns and shared experiences between BBC and ABC women, and to recognise the common public broadcasting cultures and bureaucracies that sponsored them. Kristen Skoog has also written about the BBC's women producers, particularly their battles in creating progressive content within the *Woman's Hour* radio sessions.[81,82] Like Murphy, Skoog's research allowed me to see how British producers of 'women's programming' had similar experiences to women at the ABC. Extending her study into the post-war decades, Skoog added to the chorus of voices that call for media historians to consider the effect that broadcasting bureaucracy has had on the nature of women's programming. Both Skoog and Murphy also discussed the intersectional agendas of the interwar BBC's female

[77] Ball, V. & Bell, M. 2013, 'Working women, women's work: Production, history, gender', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 10, no. 3, p. 555.
[78] Murphy, K. 2016, *Behind the Wireless: A History of Early Women at the BBC*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
[79] Murphy, K. 2014, 'From Women's Hour to other women's lives: The BBC talks for women and the women who made them, 1923–1939', in M. Andrews & S. McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York.
[80] Murphy, K. 2014, 'A marriage bar of convenience? The BBC and married women's work 1923–39', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 533–561.
[81] Skoog, K. 2014, 'Striving for editorial autonomy and internal recognition: BBC Woman's Hour', in M. Andrews & S. McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York, pp. 99–112.
[82] Skoog, K. 2017, 'Neither worker nor housewife but citizen: BBC's *Woman's Hour* 1946–1955', *Women's History Review*, vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 953–974.

producers. They identified the traditionalists as well as progressives in the women's genre, a situation that also occurred with the later generation of women at the ABC.

Janet Thumim's 2004 cultural history of British television *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box* was informative for its feminist interrogation of the post-war television industry in Britain. Thumim interrogated the 'hegemony, collusion or contestation' of gender in television, onscreen and in production, and in television's reception.[83] I was reassured to see that my focus aligned with Thumim's; she discussed the marginalisation of women's work behind the scenes and identified the tension facing women whose professional ambitions were seen as unnatural. I also found parallels between ABC producers and their international peers in their desire to use their positions as broadcasters to push their own agendas. Carolyn Byerly and Karen Ross wrote about female media practitioners in western media and European locales such as Finland from the 1990s;[84] along with Thumim and DiCenzo, their histories discuss how female media practitioners used the media to press their feminist agendas.

In *Pinkoes and Traitors: The BBC and the Nation, 1974–1987*, Jean Seaton reflected on the BBC, its policies and practices, and its internal turmoils during key moments of change in the 1970s and 1980s. [85] Although it studies a later historical period, Seaton's chapter 'Women in the BBC: The triumph of the trouser suit' continues Murphy and Skoog's narrative of women's work at the BBC, with some fascinating insights into a new cadre of female public broadcasters and how they were treated. I was also attentive to Seaton's argument about the regression of women's participation in the 1960s. She argued that when female pioneers such as Grace Wyndham Goldie retired in the 1960s, they were replaced by men, revealing a re-generation of discriminatory practices. As I continued my research into the ABC workplace in later decades, it became apparent that, to some degree, the ABC's expansion of bureaucracy allowed for systems of discrimination to be sustained and expanded.

Historian Mary Irwin's writing on BBC Women's TV producer, Doreen Stephens, introduced me to another women's session producer who refused to limit her

[83] Thumim, J. 2004, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 191.
[84] Byerly, C. & Ross, K. 2006, *Women & Media: A Critical Introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford.
[85] Seaton, J. 2015, *Pinkoes and Traitors: The BBC and the Nation, 1974–1987*, Profile Books, London.

programming to domestic superficialities.[86] Like the ABC's Kay Kinane and Catherine King, Stephens aimed to produce a show that, in addition to familial and domestic subjects, incorporated politics and culture, as well as 'controversial' information about women's health.[87]

Finally, British writer Charlotte Higgins discussed the shared missions of public broadcasters, including some of its female pioneers, in her study of the BBC, *This New Noise* (2015). Higgins outlines public broadcasting philosophies and discussing recent debates about the relevance of public broadcasting and its impact on society in Britain. Higgins mentioned Hilda Matheson and Grace Wyndham Goldie, and pointed to their contributions as some of public broadcasting's key 'architects'.[88] With this in mind, I examined the extent to which ABC women did the same (with Kay Kinane being the only viable 'architect' of production practices).

Among the range of histories written by ABC staff, few are academic studies and even fewer take gender into consideration. Neville Petersen wrote a series of articles as well as a history of ABC news programming. He takes a more critical approach, considering the political and commercial influences and tensions, and the official objectives of the ABC news division over its formative 15 years.[89] Petersen's work historicises the invisible labour of production and considers the factors that influenced how news was produced on a daily basis; however, his history does not adopt feminist perspectives. There was only one female broadcaster recognised in this history, Dorothy Green, and of the other few lines of reference about women workers, Petersen mentioned a nameless three women who staffed the newsroom during wartime.[90] Retired ABC engineer Doug Grant's *Alright Leaving Here: 50 years of ABC Technical Services* (2007) was a long-awaited

[86] Irwin, M. 2013, 'Doreen Stephens: Producing and managing British television in the 1950s and 1960s', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 618–634.
[87] Although outside the scope of my research, it was inspiring to learn about women in other fields, such as filmmakers, dramatists and journalists; women who similarly used the media and creative industries to pursue their political and cultural agendas. They were creative and inventive and, like my ABC producers, used their own communication formats to convey their message. The historians in this category recovered women's contributions and also contextualised the difficulties and environments they faced. Mary Tomsic's recently published work *Beyond the Silver Screen: A History of Women, Filmmaking and Film Culture in Australia 1920–1990* (2017) is a key contribution to histories of women who used film and film cultures as a means to embody their political and creative agendas. In Michelle Arrow's *Upstaged: Australian Women Dramatists in the Limelight at Last* (2002), Arrow sought to 'destabilise' the narratives that tended to ignore the work of post-war dramatists. Focusing on Australia's female writers in radio and theatre, Arrow considered the important social impact of their work, the conditions they faced and how they confronted gender conventions of the day. In *Australian Women War Reporters: Boer War to Vietnam* (2015), Jeannine Baker similarly historicises the careers of female journalists and describes how they 'fought for equality with their male colleagues'.
[88] Higgins, C. 2015, *This New Noise: The Extraordinary Birth and Troubled Life of the BBC*, Guardian Books / Faber & Faber, London.
[89] Petersen, N.H. 1993, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press & Politics, 1932–1947*, Hale & Iremonger Sydney.
[90] Ibid, p. 203.

history that was appreciated by technical staff and below-the-line workers, who felt that their contributions were underappreciated in official ABC narratives. Reflecting the extent to which technical roles were gendered in ABC history, Grant's book does not feature women. He does, however, portray the organisation behind the scenes, detailing its complex infrastructures and technical advances, and describing the strong transnational aspect of technical services.[91] Producer and programme officer Allan Ashbolt wrote several journal articles and book chapters, which are cultural histories of broadcasting: 'The role of the ABC' (1981),[92] 'Bagging the town-criers: Dix and the ABC' (1981),[93] 'The ABC in civil society (1987)[94] and 'The ABC in political society' (1987).[95] In these texts, Ashbolt discusses the ABC's role in society, its ideological framework and its ability to influence to Australian life. Ashbolt's writing provides useful insights into public broadcasting ideologies and the competition among policy-makers and practitioners in the post-war era; however, his focus was clearly not on women at the ABC.

Located on the periphery of the ABC historiographical landscape are the memoirs written by senior ABC programmers and commissioners. They are useful sources, which I have plumbed for context, particularly for the way that senior male officers imagined the nature, and gender, of the ABC's achievements. Key memoirs include Alan Thomas' *Broadcast and Be Damned: The ABC's First Two Decades* (1980),[96] Charles Moses' *The First 25 Years* (1957),[97] Ellis Blain's *Life with Aunty: Forty Years with the ABC* (1977)[98] and Clem Semmler's *The ABC – Aunt Sally and the Sacred Cow* (1981).[99] These memoirs memorialise their author's careers, valorising their mission-driven conflicts and political battles. The men wrote memoirs because they believed that the ABC's role – and their work for the ABC – was of national importance. As they formulated their own versions of what they deemed relevant, they provided useful insights into the minds of men running the organisation and their ideological stances towards broadcasting to the nation.

[91] Grant, D. 2007, *Alright Leaving Here: 50 Years of ABC Technical Services*, Douglas H Grant, Artarmon.
[92] Ashbolt, A. 1981, 'The role of the ABC', in B. O'Dwyer (ed.), *Broadcasting in Australia: Today's Issues and the Future*, Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University Canberra.
[93] Ashbolt, A. 1981, 'Bagging the town-criers: Dix and the ABC', *Meanjin*, vol. 40, no. 3, p. 299.
[94] Ashbolt, A. 1987, 'The ABC in civil society', in T. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds.), *Communications and the Media in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
[95] Ashbolt, A. 1987, 'The ABC in political society', in T. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds.), *Communications and the Media in Australia* Allen & Unwin, Sydney. pp. 78–96.
[96] Thomas, A. 1980, *Broadcast and Be Damned: The ABC's First Two Decades*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton.
[97] Moses, C. 1957, *The First 25 Years*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.
[98] Blain, E. 1977, *Life with Aunty: Forty Years with the ABC*, Methuen of Australia.
[99] Semmler, C. 1981, *The ABC – Aunt Sally and the Sacred Cow*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria.

The studies that historicise women as audiences and the relationship between gender and broadcasting are also more prominent than feminist studies of women as media practitioners. For example, Lesley Johnson's work, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural Study of Early Australian Radio* (1988),[100] has been a foundation from which we can consider the gendering of early Australian radio. Johnson's work helped me visualise how early radio audiences engaged with the medium. Beyond the sphere of public broadcasting, Bridget Griffen-Foley's history of commercial radio broadcasting, *Changing Stations: The Story of Australian Commercial Radio* (2009), provides a detailed study of the chronology and development of our commercial radio networks. It outlines the development of various women's radio sessions from the 1930s and notes the contributions of certain elite women broadcasters, such as producer Grace Gibson and presenters such as Irene Greenwood, Myra Dempsey, Dorothy Gordon Jenner and Carolyn Bernsten.

Feminist perspectives of women as media practitioners are not common within cultural histories of Australian broadcasting. For example, in their studies of Australian media, *The Media in Australia* (1997),[101] *Media and Communications in Australia* (2010)[102] and *The Australian TV Book* (2000),[103] cultural historians Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner analyse the development of the media in Australia and interrogate its impact on national culture. Similarly, Liz Jacka, Albert Moran and Tom O'Regan have all written extensively on Australian mass-media cultures, memory and nation, broadcasting's political and social engagements, and the media's powerful relationship with Australia audiences; however, they are not feminist histories.

Contextualising the historiographical landscape, Australian media historian Liz Jacka explained that cultural histories of broadcasting generally steer away from traditional historical perspectives and, instead, focus on theoretical approaches; they feature 'textual analysis and the aesthetics of television' and focus on 'the study of television programmes and their audiences … [on] television as part of communications policy … and [on] studies of the television industry or television production.'[104] These cultural histories and sociological studies, which examine broadcasting as a social phenomenon and

[100] Johnson, L. 1988, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural Study of Early Australian Radio*, Routledge, London.
[101] Cunningham, S. & Turner, G. 1997, 'The media in Australia today', *The Media in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 5–6.
[102] Cunningham, S. & Turner, G. 2010, *The Media and Communications in Australia*, 3rd edn, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest.
[103] Turner, G. & Cunningham, S. 2000, *The Australian TV Book*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.
[104] Jacka, L. 2004, 'Doing the history of television in Australia: Problems and challenges', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, p. 36.

interrogate the policies and polities of the institutions that produce radio and television content, take a different approach to my own focus. My approach follows that of David Hendy, who stated that his 'interest is less with the media's influence on the emotional life of a community, than the reverse: how one part of the media can be seen as an entity strongly shaped by the individuals who created it.'[105]

Sitting beyond the parameters of my research landscape are a range of non-academic texts, which discuss the work of women in the media industry. These do not make any substantive historical analysis of the nature and context of women's work in broadcasting, but they do nonetheless present examples of the female experience and provide insights into feminist thinking about media production. Predominantly written by media practitioners, journalists, writers and the occasional producer, they include texts such as: Liz Fell's *The Coming Out Show: Twenty Years of Feminist ABC Radio* (1995),[106] Blonski, Creed and Freiberg's *Don't Shoot Darling! Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia* (1987)[107] and the industry study *Shared Visions: Women in Television* (1999).[108] The Australian Film Commission and other industry bodies encouraged the publication of a few 'light' biographies of women in television and the media, which provided useful source material. These include Christine Hogan's *Look at Me* (2006),[109] Leonie Morgan's *Tuned into Leadership* (2004),[110] Christine Hanger's *Switched On: Conversations with Influential Women in the Australian Media* (2006)[111] and Julie James Bailey's *Reel Women* (1999).[112]

An integrated and transnational approach

The third methodological strategy I have used to frame my thesis is the incorporation of an integrated, transnational approach. There were two reasons for this. The first was the inherent transnationalism of broadcasting, its networks, exchanges and relationships

[105] Hendy, D. 2012, 'Biography and the emotions as a missing "narrative" in media history', *Media History*, vol. 18, no. 3–4, p. 364.
[106] Fell, L. & Wenzel, C. 1995, *The Coming Out Show: Twenty Years of Feminist ABC Radio*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.
[107] Blonski, A., Creed, B. & Freiberg, F. 1987, *Don't Shoot Darling! Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia*, Greenhouse, Richmond, Victoria.
[108] Blonski, A. & Australian Film Commission 1999, *Shared Visions: Women in Television*, Australian Film Commission, Sydney.
[109] Hogan, C. 2006, *Look at Me! Behind the Scenes of Australian TV with the Women Who Made It: 50 Years,* ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.
[110] Morgan, L. 2004, *Tuned into Leadership: Women and Television*, Australian Film Commission, Woolloomooloo.
[111] Hanger, C. 2006, *Switched On: Conversations with Influential Women in the Australian Media*, John Wiley & Sons.
[112] James Bailey, J. *Reel Women*, AFTRS, North Ryde, 1999.

between national broadcasters. The second was the industrial mobility required of Australia's female producers in order to advance and be successful. Just as Hilmes identified 'blind-spots' in feminist media scholarship, historians applying an integrated, entangled approach recognise how blind-spots of media history are created when the focus remains solely on one nation or one medium.[113] Feminist histories recognise that women utilised avenues of opportunity outside of conventional, national structures.[114] I have therefore extended my view of the local media landscape to incorporate the wider, integrated and interconnected networks and communities of broadcasting – moving beyond mono-medial technologies, texts and institutional achievements. I adopted a more inclusive perspective of the ABC. Rather than examining the ABC as a stand-alone historical entity, contained within one nation, I saw it as a dynamic and interconnected transnational organisation. Focusing, as Dahl and Curran suggested, on media systems and their interrelations, it has been possible to gain greater insights into the cultures and networks of media production within broader social, political and cultural movements.[115] With this in mind, I discuss how the ABC's women producers strategically engaged these wider industrial cultures and power relations within broadcasting's transnational landscapes to their advantage.

Marilyn Lake suggested that, if we are to effectively historicise our female subjects, we must recognise the benefits that transnational engagements offered women. Both the early feminist politicians of Lake's study, and the post-war women broadcasters in this research, demonstrate how women found alternative means of support, advice and authority after moving into international domains. Lake believed that transnational feminist scholarship could help remedy the androcentrism that dominates national historiography. Explaining her focus, she said,

> *if I were to understand feminists' ideas and strategies, their aspirations and victories, as well as the ambiguities of their achievements and the tensions in their thinking, then I must locate them in the transnational community of which they were a part.*[116]

[113] Cronqvist, M. & Hilgert, C. 2017, 'Entangled media histories: The value of transnational and transmedial approaches in media historiography', *Media History*, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 131.
[114] Lake, M. & Curthoys, A. 2005, *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, ANU E Press, viewed 5 June, 2017, <http://www.oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=458894>, p. 15.
[115] Dahl, H.F. 1994, 'The pursuit of media history', *Media Culture & Society*, vol. 16, no. 4, p. 552, 561.
[116] Lake, M. 2007, 'Nationalist historiography, feminist scholarship, and the promise and problems of new transnational histories: The Australian case', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 181.

As marginalised workers, ABC women engaged with transnational networks as a means of escaping the constraints of a local site, where limiting gender norms were pervasive and systematic. By becoming active members of broadcasting's transnational communities, they found alternative ways to advance their professional agendas; they developed their industrial mobility, adapted and developed creative solutions, and used a variety of media and methods to continue their way forward. By extending my historical framework to the international sphere, it was possible to identify achievements that would have been lost if I had based my analysis of ABC women's careers solely within the national framework.[117]

Broadcasting is inherently transnational. Cultural institutions like the ABC do not solely exist as insular national entities; they have fibrous and fluid relationships that are shaped and reshaped by a variety of social, political and industrial dynamics, from the micro to the macro. In his 1994 article, 'The pursuit of media history', Hans Fredrik Dahl stressed the importance of seeing media organisations and agencies as more than isolated entities, arguing that historians should consider their cross-national and cross-institutional contexts.[118] According to Michele Hilmes, national broadcasting networks function as a 'conduit to speak to other nations.'[119] In the international landscape, there is a constant, dynamic exchange between national broadcasters; interactions where ideas and issues are shared and contested, where personnel, content and show formats are exchanged and transformed.

One aspect of the transnational approach adopted in this thesis is an examination of the influential dynamics that determined the shape and nature of the exchanges between national broadcasting communities; dynamics that affected the industrial mobility of the women in this study; dynamics that could be manipulated by those women, once they learned to recognise them. My research was guided by transnational historian Pierre-Yves Saunier's suggestion that, when writing transnational histories, we identify the 'polities, societies and communities' as well as 'connections, circulations, relations and formations.'[120] In his study of Australian broadcasters who worked overseas, media

[117] Deacon, D., Russell, P. & Woollacott, A. 2010, 'Introduction', in D. Deacon, P. Russell & A. Woollacott (eds.), *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–present*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, New York, p. 2.
[118] Dahl, H.F. 1994, 'The pursuit of media history', *Media Culture & Society*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 551–563.
[119] Hilmes, M. 2012, *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting*, Routledge, New York and London, p. 2.
[120] Saunier, P.Y. 2013, *Transnational History*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire New York, p. 12.

historian John Tebbutt proposed that we should examine the ways that expatriates connected with the international 'flow of ideas' and 'practices', that historians consider how their exchanges related to Australian broadcasting cultures.[121] My examination of the transnational experiences of Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce , therefore, considered the larger cultural and industrial dynamics within and upon which they worked.

The cohort adapted and changed through their transnational mobilities, confirming Tebbutt's assertion that broadcasters are 'formed and reformed through encounters offered by their practice.'[122] These 'encounters' included the political and economic partnerships between national broadcasters, and the loyalties, trusts and anxieties that determined the nature of each broadcasting culture. For example, media historian Simon Potter historicised the BBC's dominion dynamic, a transnational broadcasting culture that manifested aspects of colonial deference from dominion organisations.[123] Michele Hilmes extensively studied the relational dynamic between British public broadcasting and the commercial networks of the American industry.[124] Potter's research provided me with key insights into transnational broadcasting cultures; partnered with Hilmes' research, this was a good foundation from which to identify the deeper undercurrents and contexts of global broadcasting that my cohort of women worked with. Some of these cultures and conventions included: the privileged networks and conventions of post-war public broadcasting, the ABC's deference to the BBC within the 'dominion dynamic', and the growing influence of commercial broadcasting on public networks. While this thesis is primarily based on the ABC, it also studies the relationships between broadcasting institutions; in doing so it provides comparative examples from public broadcasting organisations in Britain and America, highlighting how gender constructs affected women's work in western broadcasting communities.

Similarly, historian Bridget Griffen-Foley called for a greater 'multiplicity of histories' of Australian mass media, to incorporate into our histories the 'outlets, genres, practitioners, audiences, technologies and policies'; in this way entangled, transnational perspectives are opening up the field of media history.[125] I was also mindful of Griffen-Foley's advice

[121] Tebbutt, J. 2007, 'The ABC of transnational radio', *Southern Review: Communication, Politics & Culture*, vol. 39, no. 3, p. 8.
[122] Ibid, p. 8.
[123] Potter, S.J. 2012, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922–1970*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[124] Hilmes, M. 2012, *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting*, Routledge, New York and London.
[125] Griffen-Foley, B. 2017, 'Entangled media histories: A response', *Media History*, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 145.

to remember to consider Australian's work in the Asia Pacific region, rather than only focusing on British and American networks.[126] As a result, I was better able to visualise Kay Kinane's work within the Colombo Initiative in Asia and Africa – her role with UNESCO was brought more clearly into focus.

As a creative industry, broadcasting has an inherent capacity to cross over and interconnect with other creative formats and spheres.[127] With that in mind, this thesis, in addition to widening the scope to the international sphere, also focuses on more than one medium. Female broadcasters benefitted from crossing media as well as borders. Successful producers adapted and moved across to other media and creative formats to improve their ability to express their creative and social ideologies, and to continue their professional agendas. They moved between radio and television divisions in order to maximise their autonomy. To more fully visualise the careers of this cohort of ABC women, it was therefore crucial to ensure my historical scope included their transnational and transmedial mobilities.

Methodologies

Because this thesis is an interdisciplinary study incorporating feminist history and media studies, I have found it useful to draw from a range of methodologies. The most important has been group biography. Central to the articulation of my ideas, biography has been an effective method in both reconstructing the lives of exceptional ABC women and revisualising the historical landscape in order to discover the conditions that necessitated their exceptionalism. In writing a feminist history, it was necessary to move beyond the official, achievement-based narratives and imagine the post-war ABC workplace from within and from below. With this approach, one can easily see a disparity between official ABC histories and the lived, everyday experiences of ABC women. Biography has a useful ability to connect individual experiences with larger issues and dynamics. Barbara Caine attested to biography's ability to reveal larger forces and cultures through the experiences of historical protagonists, stating that it 'offers extraordinary insights into the ways in which particular institutions and events and larger-scale social, economic and political developments were felt, experienced and understood by those who lived through

[126] Griffen-Foley, B. 2017, 'Entangled media histories: A response', *Media History*, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 146.
[127] Hilmes, M. 2012, *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting*, Routledge, New York and London, p. 8.

them.'[128] By historicising the working lives of producers such as Kay Kinane, Catherine King, Therése Denny and Joyce Belfrage, it has been possible to gain new insights into post-war broadcasting in Australia. Because the cohort's industrial behaviours were responses to gendered cultures and structures, the 'strategic engagement' case studies detailed in this thesis provide another layer of evidence that contextualises the ways that the Australian production workplace propagated gender constructs. These new insights include the extensive industrial, social and cultural factors that kept the majority of ABC women harnessed into supportive, clerical positions, while authoritative positions were reserved for men.

Mirroring Caine's approach, David Hendy saw the value in using biography to identify the cultures and communities of past broadcast environments; he stated that biography was 'a discipline now less about isolated individuals and more about networks and shared experiences.'[129] Hendy declared that biographical approaches can 'advance our understanding of bodies such as the BBC; historians can see them as complex "emotional communities" rather than as "total" institutions.'[130] Hendy stressed the fact that the BBC was not a unified, 'monolithic' entity; instead, a 'pluralist' site, inhabited by subcultures of people with different characteristics, goals and abilities.[131] In the same way that Hendy, Murphy and Seaton used biography to deconstruct monolithic media history narratives about the BBC, this thesis uses biography to present a perspective of diversity and difference within the ABC's historical narrative. The historical subcultures of the ABC require their own historical revisualisations. When brought to light, they facilitate a richer, more inclusive historiography of the ABC.

Biography is effective when it contextualises experience. Barbara Caine referred to 'contingent narratives', the social, political, cultural and economic conditions that affect the lived experience of historical protagonists.[132] Caine contended that, as biographies provide alternative histories to grand narratives, great value lies in the specificities of experience:

[128] Caine, B. 2010, *History and Biography*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p. 1.
[129] Hendy, D. 2012, 'Biography and the emotions as a missing "narrative" in media history', *Media History*, vol. 18, no. 3-4, p. 374.
[130] Ibid, p. 361.
[131] Ibid, p. 373.
[132] Caine, B. 2010, *History and Biography*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p. 2.

> *it is precisely the small scale of biography, or the stories of individual lives, which gives them value … for while the claims made for the illustrative or reflective capacity of an individual life often extend considerably beyond the individual, they are always made within a particular framework and closely linked to issues of place and time, of gender and class, of ethnicity and religion, of family and individual personality and capacities. Biography is thus always a form of contingent narrative, and it is one which has a particular appeal at a time when historical interest is extending beyond the national and even the imperial to the transnational and the global.*[133]

This history therefore harvests information about each woman's experience of a particular time and place, and contextualises them within the larger forces and dynamics at play – the nature of relationships, the networks and 'tribes', behaviours and attitudes, the impact of personalities and everyday conventions of the ABC workplace – all insightful elements that enable a feminist revisioning of the historical broadcasting landscape.

Rather than be limited by the 'artificial isolation' that a single biography might offer, a risk Caine identified, I adopted a group biographical approach.[134] In the initial stages of my research, I constructed a rough gender map of the ABC workplace and began to identify women within the organisation's landscape. I located a particular cohort of women who attained positions of authority and challenged the gender conventions of the day. Although they did not form a collective, they shared common characteristics, intentions and experiences. Krista Cowman maintained that group biography could be based on lives 'linked by a theme rather than intertwined through deep personal connections.'[135] Mindful of the gaps in women's historical narratives, group biography was effective because it allowed me to layer sporadic pieces of evidence into a cohesive historical landscape. By applying group biography, I could discover the shared experiences of women at the ABC and identify patterns of discrimination and, through their responses, discover patterns of activism.

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[133] Caine, B. 2010, *History and Biography*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p. 124.
[134] ibid, p. 3.
[135] Cowman, K. 2012, 'Collective biography', in S. Gunn & L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, p. 91.

Sources

Beyond group biography, primary materials I consulted include industrial archives such as confidential workplace memos, creative briefs, performance reviews, policy papers and strategic reports, as well as press stories and publicity, public lectures, and radio and television programmes. Memory sources have also proved crucial in the process of constructing alternative histories. I needed to engage proactively with a range of alternative sources in order to compensate for the lack of data on women in conventional archive formats. Memories of the ABC workplace have been resourced primarily from personal correspondence and a collection of oral histories and interviews accumulated over the last four decades, some produced by the ABC, others produced externally. As I will discuss in more detail, in order to buttress the at-times idiosyncratic nature of information conveyed through memory, I compared data from oral histories and personal correspondence against a variety of other sources, triangulating sources in order to compare different perspectives. One shared characteristic of both oral history and biography is an ability to look beyond the official monolithic narratives to identify alternative stories; in my case, to hear from former production workers, usually invisible in broadcasting history. In this way, oral histories can help explore women's subjective experiences and allow a more pluralistic view of ABC history to emerge.

As a history of media, this thesis also incorporates analysis of the radio and audio texts themselves. Although the focus of this research is on the processes and cultures of production behind the scenes, it was nevertheless important to discuss the projects produced by Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce. However, because so many radio and television programmes of the post-war years no longer existed, it was necessary to incorporate material such as scripts, creative briefs and critical reviews. Media historians Vicky Ball and Melanie Bell pointed to the benefits of utilising a range of alternative sources in order to discover hard-to-find evidence, suggesting that these methods are useful when seeking to resurrect information on broadcasting's 'supplementary' women workers.[136]

Historians of public broadcasting often express their gratitude for the scale and scope of each organisation's official archive; their public-service responsibilities fuelling their own

[136] Ball, V. & Bell, M. 2013, 'Working women, women's work: Production, history, gender', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 547–62.

memorialisation, with extensive archives available to media historians. Jean Seaton believed a 'self-consciousness' was at work with a public-service institution like the BBC. Fostered by their obligation to transparency and reflexivity, public broadcasters, both on an individual and organisational level, were expected to be mindful of their agenda and 'worry about why they are doing what they are doing.'[137] The evidence suggests the same is true in the way the ABC archives have been built. There is a generosity to the archive in its attempt to be transparent, providing those behind-the-scenes materials for future interrogation. However, despite the democratic, transparent agenda of public broadcasters' archives, their collections still contained piecemeal, dislocated pieces of information. John Grist, ex-BBC producer and biographer of Grace Wyndham Goldie, identified one problem with 'official' archives:

> *BBC files are like memories: patchy, infuriating, misleading, like life full of lost sentences, conversations left in mid-air. Consulting them is like using a telephone directory with pages torn out at random. In real life, office files depended on the professional interest of the secretary who kept them, but more important was her order of priorities.*[138]

As I accessed the ABC archives held by the National Archives of Australia (NAA), I was careful about the subjective nature of the sources and the *intention* of the collection. As recent research demonstrates, the archive is not a passive repository but a site of knowledge production. After examining the ABC archive, I agreed with Janet Thumim's assertation that there were active decisions made to preserve particular material, according to their perceived value to a broadcaster's archive.[139] The ABC's official archive was formulated in a way to represent the broad identity and ideologies of the ABC. Over the years, certain staff made choices about which archives were to be retained and which were unnecessary. I lamented the absence of material that was omitted from the collection if it showed the ABC in an unfavourable light; as was the case with records of Joyce Belfrage's sensational departure from the ABC in 1963 and her subsequent court case. (Thankfully, the National Film and Sound Archive [NFSA] initiated its own series of interviews with media practitioners and Joyce's views were recorded for posterity.) As the

[137] Seaton, J. 2004, 'Writing the history of broadcasting', in D. Cannadine (ed.), *History and the Media*, Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire UK, p. 150.
[138] Grist, J. 2006, *Grace Wyndham Goldie: First Lady of Television*, Authors OnLine, Sandy, Bedfordshire, p. 169.
[139] Thumim, J. 2004, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 2.

ABC progressively constructed the archive over the years, it manifested a type of institutional composure of its own memory-making. Just as one can gather new historical information and meaning by interrogating the nature of oral history remembering and production, one can gain meaning by examining the nature of the archive.

Historians Paula Hamilton and Mary Spongberg similarly suggest that we consider how various modes of archiving can also convey meaning, arguing that historians can 'explore the politics of the archiving and later the digitising process, analysing both its gendered and racially determined nature,' as each progressive 'turn' of feminist historiography has its own focus, reflected in technologies and methods.[140] In this case, the recent introduction of digital technologies has meant that not only are new archives able to be unearthed and shared, but the original intention of a more traditional archive can be repurposed or, at least, challenged. For example, a new collection of unofficial ABC memories have been generated by a collective of retired staffers and shared with the public through a new digital archive via the website: ABCTVGoreHill.com.au.[141]

As I accessed the official ABC archive, I classified my sources within the following archival categories. The first was the material that represented the public face of the organisation: the policy statements, annual reports, press releases, the publicity releases and photographs, and copies of the programmes themselves. The next category contained the by-products of the hidden, internal processes of production: the confidential memos, policy discussion papers, employment contracts, performance reviews, creative proposals, and budget and financial analyses. Finally, there were the collections of oral histories produced by the organisation to capture the experiences of particular contributors over the years. Each category had its own context, which I was mindful to include when contextualising data. For example, 'confidential' memos should be contextualised for their mode of addressing an exclusive, private audience of managers.

The ABC memorialised itself through progressive oral history sessions and on-air interviews from the 1970s to the 1990s. Its archive of interviews is an example of what Linda Shopes described as the 'interviewer and narrator collud[ing] to present the

[140] Hamilton, P. & Spongberg, M. 2016, 'Twenty years on: Feminist histories and digital media', *Women's History Review*, vol. 26, no. 5, p. 671.
[141] Sitsky, B. & McPherson, C. 2014, *ABC TV at Gore Hill in the Fifties*, website, viewed 22 April 2014, <http://www.abctvgorehill.com.au/>,

community's best face.'[142] Participants appear to have been people that the ABC was proud to have had work for them, broadcasters who achieved a great deal and whose careers were in line with ABC philosophies. They were reputable professionals, deemed worthy and trusted with their criticisms. They told stories of their achievements, their personal journeys and the nature of their work in public broadcasting. In line with the public broadcasting agenda of transparency, criticisms were offered but contextualised as problems typical for their time (such as retrospective discussions about the sexism of the 1950s workplace). Faults were more forgivable if they were underpinned by a desire to serve the public. For example, in a 1982 radio interview, retired programmers Clem Semmler and Alan Ashbolt criticised the ABC's approach to controversial programming in the post-war decades. However, faults of the past were deemed forgivable because the intention was good. The name of the 1982 collection of interviews gives an indication of its desire to celebrate the past; it was titled *The Pursuit of Excellence*.[143]

Alternative archives, such as those held by the National Library of Australia (NLA) and the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) provided valuable counterpoints to the official ABC collection. For example, the oral history collection produced by Graham Shirley within the *Film & Broadcast Industry Oral History Group*, which began in 1991, contains interviews that were framed with a more open focus and agenda. It was a collection where media practitioners were able to share their memories away from the watchful, official gaze of the ABC. Graham Shirley's interview with Joyce Belfrage was particularly relevant for revealing her more negative view of the ABC.[144] The NFSA's *Once Upon a Wireless* collection, recorded from the 1980s to late 1990s, includes interviews with ABC staff, although it predominantly features commercial broadcasters.[145] The NFSA also holds the Australian Film Commission's *Women Working in Television* Project undertaken by journalist Christine Hogan in 2006, featuring women both in front and behind the camera.[146]

[142] Shopes, L. 'Making sense of oral history', *History Matters: The US Survey on the Web*, viewed 20 February 2016, Available: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/> p. 11.
[143] Semmler, C. & Ashbolt, A. 1982, *The Pursuit of Excellence, ABC Radio 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 2FC, Sydney, NAA, S:C100 CS:1378666 BC:13360990, 4 July.
[144] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[145] *Once Upon a Wireless* Collection, NFSA website, viewed 6 June 2016, <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/once-upon-wireless-promo-excerpt>.
[146] Rossi, M. 2005, *Interview with Mary Rossi*, oral history, interviewed by C. Hogan, Women Working in Television Project, NFSA, Screen Australia, 738802.

The various oral histories of ABC staff have detailed behind-the-scenes life in production: the creative process, the everyday power struggles, the conventionalised behaviours and customs that illustrate the unofficial mechanisms of discrimination in the ABC workplace. As memory sources, they have been helpful in revealing *why* my cohort of senior ABC women put themselves in such challenging positions and how they reflected on their motivations at a later date. After listening to the memories of ABC women, it has become possible to discern a range of concerns that were commonly shared: their battles to overcome constraints to their work because of their gender; the bureaucratic failings they felt insulted their professionalism; and their desire to be recognised for the meaningful work they produced under difficult circumstances. There was information in their oral testimonies that I could not have found elsewhere, such as Therése Denny's compulsion to challenge racism and the way that the self-serving and unfair behaviour of Talks programmers triggered Joyce Belfrage's frustrated rebellion.

Oral histories provide information in two ways. The first, as I have outlined above, is the ability to gather alternative, unofficial information, historically obscure material that, when collated with other data, contributes to alternative historical landscapes. The second way that oral history informed my research is its ability to offer evidence of the intentions and experiences of participants as they undergo the memory-making process. They may offer unreliable evidence at times, but the intention and meaning that shapes the way people remember the past is a useful historical source. As Lynn Abrams suggests, contextualising the purpose of each interview and analysing the deeper motivations and mechanisms at play allows us to 'decode the process of remembering'.[147] Abrams stated that 'we can begin to understand the significance of an event or experience to the interviewee from the way in which he or she positions memories within a web of meaning.'[148] With that in mind, after reviewing the oral history testimonies of ABC women, it was evident that they saw their interviews as opportunities to reinforce their professional and personal missions, and to highlight the legacies they strove to leave behind. They demonstrated their drive and ambition, and wanted their work to be valued and respected. They also offered up explanations to contextualise the difficulties they faced as women at work, as pilgrims in an unwelcoming environment. They wanted to

[147] Abrams, L. 2014, 'Memory as both source and subject of study: The transformations of oral history', *Writing the History of Memory,* Berger, S & Niven B. (eds.), Bloomsbury, London, p. 89.
[148] Ibid, p. 90.

leave evidence of their legacy and demonstrated an awareness that their oral history interviews were one of the rare opportunities for them to gain recognition for their efforts.

Another aspect of memory analysis I applied to oral history was to also consider the ways that intersubjectivity influences the nature of interviews. I was mindful of how the oral historian plays a part in determining the nature of this process, to consider how the interviewee's accounts were modified to suit the agendas of the interviewer and the commissioning organisation.[149] Taking a critical approach to each interview, I contextualised the motivations of each commissioner, interviewer and narrator to extrapolate meaning. I took up Alistair Thomson and Lynn Abrams' suggestion to identify the process of 'composure' in oral history remembering; this is the process of reshaping memories in a way that makes sense of a historical event, and makes the past more palatable to those remembering it.[150] This was apparent in the way that ABC women used their interviews to justify their failures and contextualise their successes. They re-constructed the past to present more heroic, comfortable interpretations of events that were often *uncomfortable* experiences. For example, in Joyce Belfrage's interview with Graham Shirley, Joyce demonstrated a desire to explain how and why she was often prevented from doing good work; she made a point to convey that she was a professional forced to succumb to the inadequacies of a pedantic bureaucracy. This further illustrates how oral history interviews provided an opportunity for women to explain and promote their legacies.

It was also important, when interrogating memory sources for meaning, to recognise that narrators often adapt memories to align with popular story-telling narratives. Louise Passerini declared that communities have common pathways of framing memories. I would argue that the same was true for many ABC oral history participants.[151] One dominant narrative was the sense of higher purpose they shared as public broadcasters, an identity that permeated their professional narratives, revealing a sense of pride in their membership to the exclusive ABC community. They often quoted official catchphrases and referred to public broadcasting philosophies when remembering their work, such as 'inform, educate and entertain', and 'window to the world.'

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[149] Abrams, L. 2014, 'Memory as both source and subject of study: The transformations of oral history', *Writing the History of Memory,* Berger, S & Niven B. (eds.), Bloomsbury, London, p. 89.
[150] Ibid, p. 99.
[151] Passerini, L. 1987, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class*, quoted in R.C. Smith, 'Analytic strategies for oral history interviews', in J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Horstein (eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*, Thousand Oaks California, Sage Publications, 2002, p. 711.

When I consider the impact that oral histories have had on this research, firstly, on a superficial level, it has provided a great deal of information that fills gaps in knowledge, remedying the absence of data on women's historical role in broadcasting. However, testimonies must be interrogated for meaning and context. As Robert Smith argued, we must question each memory source, for they 'contain a mix of true and false, reliable and unreliable, verifiable and unverifiable information' – mistakes and subjectivities can complicate effective evidence gathering.[152] Smith suggests that we follow Paul Thompson's approach – to interrogate each memory source and 'cross-check' information that arises in interviews with other historical sources.[153] The data I gleaned from the oral histories was not simply taken at face value, rather, it was taken as subjective memories that raised issues and information that could be pursued and verified elsewhere. Names and dates mentioned in testimonies could be used to locate other sources evidence within the archives. I was able to connect women to particular projects or workplace conflicts and revisualise lines of connectivity.

The importance of triangulating different testimonies of particular ABC events and cultures was made clear when I considered Joyce Belfrage's testimony about her Talks supervisor, Alan Carmichael. In her oral history with Graham Shirley, Joyce vociferously criticised Carmichael for being ignorant of the skills required of television; this I was able to confirm with other sources, including industrial documents. She also believed him to be a traitor to the producer's cause, someone who was uninterested in supporting her work. This proved to be less accurate; I found evidence that Carmichael had, in fact, made a series of positive reports admiring Joyce's ideas and recommending her documentaries for funding. As I examined Joyce's interviews and correspondence, and the ABC memos, it became easier to contextualise her philosophies and her troubled experiences within the production environment. (I was careful not to make generalisations about gender when other factors may have been the cause of conflict in the workplace.) This approach allowed me to discover the factors that led to Joyce's demotion: Joyce's work was compromised primarily because she was caught up in the mismanaged transition to television.

[152] Smith, R.C. 2002, 'Analytic strategies for oral history interviews', in J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Horstein (eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, p. 712.
[153] Ibid, pp. 711–731.

The nature of memories can also change when recalled through different stages of an interviewee's life. Lynn Abrams described them as progressions on a narrator's 'roadmap', memories changing perspective as time and place pass.[154] I saw this occur in the diversity of Kay Kinane's testimonies, each undertaken with a different agenda and each framing her 40-year career with a different perspective. I found each testimony served a different purpose both for the ABC and for Kay. The first three were official recollections for the ABC archive. The final oral history was a private interview undertaken by a family friend, Emma Rossi, in 1995. Emma Rossi is the daughter of *Woman's World* presenter Mary Rossi. She wanted Kay to share her memories about her working partnership with her mother and to outline the philosophies that motivated them on their professional mission.[155] The interview presents an aspect of Kay's personality not found in other oral histories; she explains the motivations for her career, provides revealing insights into her spirituality and discusses her 'whole world' approach to broadcasting. It was therefore important to contextualise each testimony and consider the subjective process in which it was collected, with time and purpose important factors to incorporate.

One final category of source that played a key role in my historical analysis was the range of industry reports that arose in the 1970s. In anticipation of the International Women's Year in 1975, a spate of research was commissioned by a variety of national broadcasters on gender in the workplace. In addition, organisations such as UNESCO commissioned reports from broadcasting scholars around the world, asking for data and recommendations. I consolidated comparative data from some of these affiliated broadcasters with a key report by the Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative (AWBC) about ABC women, the 'Women in the ABC' report, produced in 1977.[156] It provides quantitative and qualitative information on the status of women at the ABC in the early 1970s.

Outline of chapters

As I have argued, this thesis illustrates how a cohort of Australian female broadcasters, who saw themselves as active citizens and cultural commentators, used the ABC as a site

[154] Abrams, L. 2014, 'Memory as both source and subject of study: The transformations of oral history', *Writing the History of Memory*, Berger, S & Niven B. (eds.), Bloomsbury, London, p. 90.
[155] Kinane, K. 1995, *Interview with Kay Kinane*, oral history, interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.
[156] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.

for their activism in the post-war decades. Each with vocational ambitions, they were drawn to public broadcasting. The reach and resonance of the ABC's national radio and television networks, combined with its public-service agenda and remit to inform, educate and entertain, established the ABC as a powerful cultural institution.

In the next chapter, 'Discovering ABC women', I introduce a group of women who worked as senior producers in radio and television; they held privileged positions that enabled them to construct social, cultural and political discourse for national consumption. I describe how they were raised in such a way that their social and professional missions closely aligned with the ABC's social purpose. I describe the gender map of the post-war ABC and discuss the methodological parameters that allowed me to locate a particular cohort of female producers.

In Chapter 3, 'The ABC and gender', I discuss the obstacles that faced female broadcasters as workers in a gendered environment. I also outline the extent to which the sexual division of labour was simultaneously entrenched in the workplace and projected to the public within its productions.

The second section of this thesis considers the range of strategic behaviours enacted by these women in order to survive and advance in such a privileged and contested workplace. It details what these women did with the opportunities available to them. By enacting a range of strategic actions, they enhanced their knowledge and power, and expanded the options available to them. In Chapter 4, 'Strategies at the local level', I consider the preliminary, local behaviours and diplomacies enacted by the cohort. The chapter describes how Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce joined industry networks and forged highly beneficial professional relationships with senior ABC staff, who advocated on their behalf. The cohort used their professional assets in such a way to maximise their negotiating power and status in the eyes of normally reticent bureaucrats. They took risks and infiltrated and advanced during times of disruption and distraction.

In Chapter 5, 'Transmediality', I discuss how female broadcasters benefitted by moving between media and formats. They took advantage of a confusing time for ABC management, who had not handled the transition to television well. They also recognised that different media served their agendas differently at times; some women enacted a

transmedial mobility in order to sustain their autonomy and allow them to continue sharing their ideas and opinions with the public.

The final chapter focuses specifically on the transnational dynamics and strategies that this cohort of women displayed. It discusses how many mid-century women travelled as a way of escaping Australia's cultural and provincial narrowness, and to find some respite from the gendered responsibilities facing them at home. The cohort used their departures to recalibrate their identities and act more independently – to realise their ambitions to become enlightened, educated, intellectually curious citizens of the world. As they moved beyond their own nation, their travels offered them valuable new perspectives about the world and their place in it. This chapter also examines the ways that this cohort of ABC women benefitted by engaging with the jobs and training on offer within transnational communities, taking advantage of the channels, flows and networks of exchange between broadcasting nations. It describes how female producers were able to take advantage of the transnational exchange networks for training and employment, and explains how their membership endowed them with an institutional authority that increased the opportunities available to them. The fibrous networks of transnational broadcasting also offered ABC women communities and support networks, where they could connect as members of shared communities. It outlines the relationship between the ABC and other broadcasting nations, and discusses how the cohort used broadcasting's various transnational dynamics to their advantage. It also discusses how these industrially mobile women functioned as cultural translators and conduits between broadcasting nations. The cohort positioned themselves as members of a global community of broadcasters and subsequently benefitted from its support networks.

Chapter 2 – Discovering ABC women

This chapter discusses the factors that induced a specific cohort of women to produce public-affairs programming at the ABC, and explains why and how they used the broadcaster as a site for their activism. Unlike most women at the ABC, who were corralled into secretarial and assistant roles in line with contemporary gender constructs that restricted women from positions of authority, Kay Kinane, Catherine King, Therése Denny and Joyce Belfrage wielded a degree of influence; they marshalled staff and resources as creators of challenging content for Talks programming. The chapter begins with an explanation of the parameters that were applied in order to define and locate this particular cohort. It describes how a certain type of ABC woman arose from the historical landscape to become the basis for my group biography. After introducing each woman, I contextualise the circumstances that led them to pursue challenging professional lives and discuss how they were essentially 'built' for their roles as senior public broadcasters. It became apparent that these women shared certain beliefs and characteristics that fuelled their vocations as broadcasters and cultural custodians. They also shared a particular range of skills and assets, which appealed to the ABC. In the final part of this chapter, I present a range of case studies to illustrate how these women used the ABC as a site for their activism.

To be able to discover and place ABC women in the post-war production workplace, I compiled a rough gender map. Seeking out as many female names as possible, I collated them progressively into hierarchies and specialities. I searched all manner of ABC histories, memoirs and biographies, looking specifically for women. I considered the women listed in the ABC annual reports, the guest commentators and the experts selected for ABC advisory panels. I then moved on to unpublished sources and considered the female staff mentioned in the industrial archives, in management reports, wage policy papers, contracts and performance reviews. I reviewed a variety of memory sources, including the oral history collections from the ABC, NFSA, private collections and also the recollections that ex-staffers posted to their ABC 'Gore Hill' community website. These memory sources were useful starting points to find women and subsequently contextualise their experiences as professional broadcasters.

I then located these women within their ABC divisions and hierarchies, connecting them to certain divisions and duties, to certain interest groups and specialties. My initial list of

post-war staff included the following senior ABC women: commissioners Ivy Kent, Dame Enid Lyons, Elsie Blythe and Rhoda Felgate; radio presenters and producers Lorna Hayter, Norma Ferris, Mary Rossi, Catherine King and Ida Osborne; television producers Margaret Delves, Joyce Belfrage and Therése Denny; producers and programme officers Clare Mitchell, Ruth Stirling, Dorothy Crawford and Kay Kinane; dramatist Gwen Meredith; publicity officer Bonnie McCallum; lawyer Joyce Shrewcroft; audience researcher Nancy Sheehan; technical manager Flora Cameron; and executive secretary Betty Cook.

As I investigated the post-war landscape, I began to see how particular roles and content divisions were assigned as either 'masculine' or 'feminine'. The bulk of female staff worked in below-the-line administration and production support roles. Both jobs and content were gendered systematically according to anachronistic social constructs; it was extremely difficult for women to attain positions of authority. Of the small group of women who did succeed as senior producers and programmers, more tended to work in female-friendly divisions such as Education and 'Women's' programming, such as Catherine King and Ida Osborne. A few producers and technical officers performed what were deemed to be 'male' roles, such as Therése Denny and Joyce Belfrage. Others, such as lawyer Joyce Shrewcroft, were 'specialists' working independently in stand-alone positions.[157] Alternatively, administrator Betty Cook gained her authority through her long-term professional partnership with General Manager Charles Moses.

It also became apparent that there was a wide spectrum of female ambition and agency. Aside from fulfilling personal ambitions, each female staffer at the ABC had their own economic and familial responsibilities, which affected their ability to commit to a career. In an earlier discussion of the landscape of women's work at the ABC in 2016, I explained the difficulties facing women who were unable to delegate their domestic duties:

> *The road to the ABC was littered with the discarded resumes of aspiring women who did not have the financial or social support to commit to the demands of professional life; departing because they became pregnant, could not get help with childcare, or had husbands who insisted they remain at home to maintain the idealised role of wife and good mother.*[158]

[157] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 139.
[158] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 31.

ABC women also manifested a wide variety of aspirations. For some women, a career as a secretary in a lively cultural institution such as the ABC was exciting and fulfilling. For others, the pinnacle of achievement might be performing music recitals with the ABC orchestra. Alternatively, some wanted to be social commentators and play a part in shaping contemporary discourse within the Talks department, a highly contested 'male' domain where public-affairs commentary was debated and produced for national consumption.

I was interested in this latter group. Their careers existed in a contested space and, as senior *authoritative* women, they were unusual. 'Talks' women put themselves in positions where they directly challenged social conventions that argued women could not and should not speak with authority. Kay Kinane, Therése Denny, Catherine King and Joyce Belfrage eventually came into focus through this particular historical lens. These women formed the basis for my group biography. They did not necessarily work with each other (although some were friends and others' paths crossed at times) and they did not team up as a collective; however, they shared specific vocational agendas and were each confronted with the same systems of discrimination. I imagined this cohort, as Krista Cowman described a type of group for biographical study, as people sharing the same 'prism of a particular life'.[159]

To gain a sense of the type of ABC woman that Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were, I sought to identify their agendas and ambitions, and track and map their career development. I studied their work products (including radio or television projects, scripts and creative briefs, as well as synopses and critical reviews). I also examined the reports reviewing their professional performance and contractual documents, which reveal the manner in which they negotiated their terms of employment. I evaluated the ways that they were memorialised by the organisation, questioning if they were interviewed repeatedly for official archives or excluded altogether. I studied the various memory sources they left behind, interrogating their interviews and personal correspondence for meaning. I also considered how they used the press to present their work to the public and the industry.

[159] Cowman, K. 2012, 'Collective biography', in S. Gunn & L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, p. 90.

After consolidating a wide variety of biographical information, I was able to contextualise the reasons for their successes and failures. I discovered that this particular cohort of female producers shared a distinct set of goals, skills, actions and achievements. They were all intelligent and highly educated, culturally sophisticated, politically confident women. They each had their own cache of social and familial support networks that motivated them to be public servants and facilitated their careers as national broadcasters. They were seen by the ABC as exceptional women, with the ambition, qualifications and resources to take on demanding broadcasting careers. What follows is an analysis of the circumstances and characteristics that effectively 'built' these women into proactive, professional public broadcasters, assets that facilitated their ability to overcome the contested and highly gendered environment of ABC Talks production in the 1950s and 1960s.

Kay Kinane

Kay was the most senior woman employed at the ABC in the post-war era. Her belief in the value of education was a fundamental force driving her career as a broadcaster. She had a multifaceted life at the ABC. A proficient radio and television producer, in both the Talks and Education divisions, Kay was also an expert international advisor. She believed that radio and television were powerful tools with which to communicate information that could improve people's lives. Like the other Talks producers in this cohort, Kay's programmes promoted culture, the arts, science, politics and social justice issues.

Kathleen (Kay) Kinane was born in 1912, in Perth, Western Australia. In 1930 she began a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Western Australia and, two years later, she enrolled in teaching college, continuing her degree part-time. It was during her time at university that Kay began to casually produce dramatic radio plays for the ABC with her university friends. She worked for 10 years as a primary school teacher, all the while contributing regularly to the ABC's programming slate. Recognised for her innovative approach to producing educational content, Kay was the first woman to lead a state department when she became Western Australia's Supervisor of ABC Schools Broadcasts in 1944. Four years later, Kay transitioned to a national role, this time Federal Script Editor (Education). In 1949 she consolidated her position by training overseas with BBC Radio through the Imperial Relations Trust Scholarship. Kay represented the ABC in international

educational broadcasting conferences and produced scores of radio programmes. In addition to creating numerous adult education programmes, including a range of radio programmes for migrants, Kay created hundreds of educational programmes for children, such as the celebrated narrative series, *The Days of Good Queen Bess* (1948),[160] and a 12-part environmental history series, *The World We Live In* (1955).[161] Prior to Australia's initiation of television broadcasting, Kay was selected to join the National Association of Educational Broadcasters to study television production in 1955. She returned and became a technical and creative advisor, and foundational member of the ABC's first television training school.

As the ABC's first female television showrunner, Kay produced *Woman's World* for the Talks Department from 1956 to 1960. When asked in 1995 about the philosophy she applied to the show, Kay explained:

> *We wanted … to say, look, the world's a wonderful place, c'mon!' That's why we'd get psychology lecturers, we'd get people from university talking about career paths for women, we'd get anything at all that led to showing what we felt about the world, that it was worth all of us becoming and passing on, the things we'd found out about living. Because it was a wonderful place to be!*[162]

Together, Kay and original host Mary Rossi pushed beyond the boundaries of what were determined to be 'women's interests'. They discussed a diverse range of issues: from fashion design to the assimilation of migrant communities. Kay's show explained how to diagnose dyslexia, discussed the wonders of the classical world, presented comedy performances and book reviews, and offered audiences empathic insights into the plight of single mothers.

[160] *The World We Live In*, 1955, Kinane, K. radio programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.
[161] *In the Days of Good Queen Bess*, c. 1948, Kinane, K. radio programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.
[162] Kinane, K. 1995, Interview with Kay Kinane, oral history, Interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.

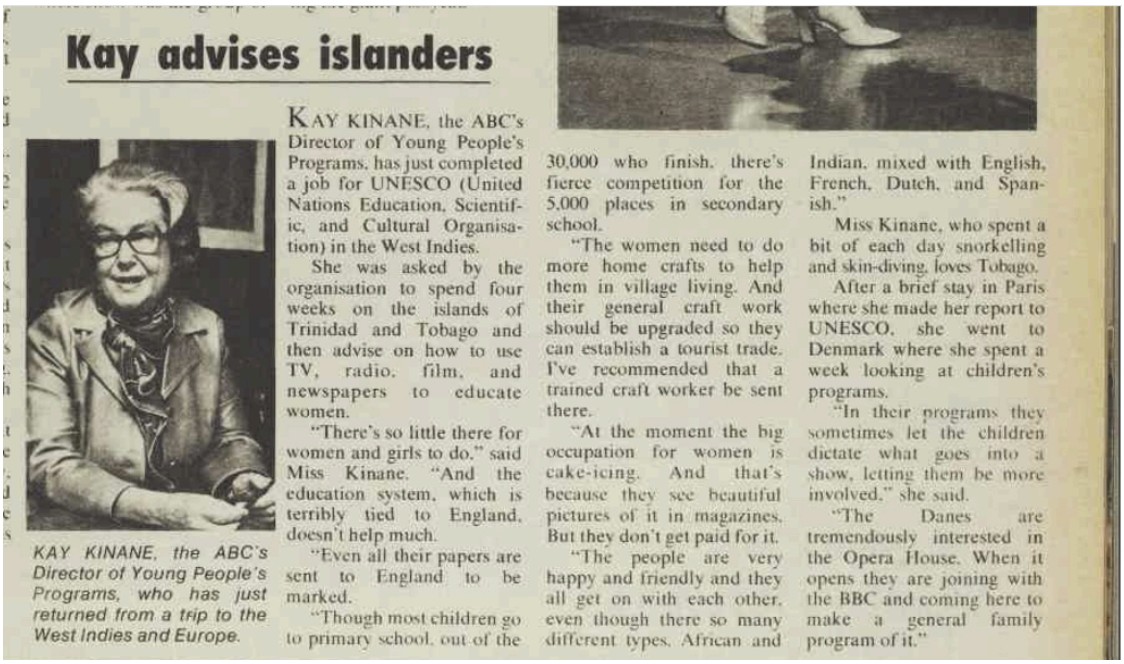
Figure 2: Kay Kinane is hired as Assistant Director of Education, 1964.
Radio-Active: The ABC Staff Journal, vol. 1, no. 10, February 1964.

In 1960 Kay left *Woman's World* and returned to supervise the ABC's Education division, again in a female-first role. Promoted to Assistant Director of the national department in 1964, Kay was later promoted to Federal Director in 1971. Between 1960 and the mid-1970s, Kay undertook five journeys overseas as a consultant with the Colombo Plan. After her first project, assisting Thailand's Ministry of Education to formulate a range of foundational initiatives for its national broadcasting programme, Kay subsequently travelled through South East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, providing expert advice on how to develop national educational broadcasting systems and practices. Kay had already contributed to the formation of Australia's own national educational broadcast policy and practice in consultation with Australia's Directors General of Education and state educational authorities. In 1964 she played a key role in the creation of a national television training programme for teachers – an innovative, collaborative programme that implemented new ways of using television to teach maths, science and English curricula.

Kay also represented and advocated for staff rights and workplace relations as an elected member of the ABC's Senior Officer's Association (SOA). She frequently spoke to ABC commissioners and provided reports for government inquiries; for example, presenting a paper to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts in 1972.[163] Prior to her retirement in 1976, Kay was promoted to be Federal Supervisor of Young People's Programmes (another of her many firsts for a woman). She continued her role as international advisor and later worked as a consultant on women's education initiatives for UNESCO.

[163] Memo from ABC Senior Officer's Association Executive Subcommittee to Staff Members, 1972, titled *Paper for Presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts by the Senior Officers Association of the Australian Broadcasting Commission*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, via NLA Nq331.8811384544 SOA, 26 May, p. 3.

This research focuses less on Kay's role as an educator and, instead, targets the aspects of her growth within the ABC from an institutional perspective, considering her experiences as she inhabited a variety of authoritative roles. Her presence in this cohort is due to her status as one of the ABC's most senior producers and programme officers; for her progressive approach to gender as showrunner and producer of the ABC's first women's television programme, *Woman's World*; and finally, for her stated belief that staff should not be marginalised on the basis of their sex, that they be defined by the quality and meaning of their work.



Kay advises islanders

KAY KINANE, the ABC's Director of Young People's Programs, who has just returned from a trip to the West Indies and Europe.

KAY KINANE, the ABC's Director of Young People's Programs, has just completed a job for UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation) in the West Indies.

She was asked by the organisation to spend four weeks on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago and then advise on how to use TV, radio, film, and newspapers to educate women.

"There's so little there for women and girls to do," said Miss Kinane. "And the education system, which is terribly tied to England, doesn't help much.

"Even all their papers are sent to England to be marked.

"Though most children go to primary school, out of the 30,000 who finish, there's fierce competition for the 5,000 places in secondary school.

"The women need to do more home crafts to help them in village living. And their general craft work should be upgraded so they can establish a tourist trade. I've recommended that a trained craft worker be sent there.

"At the moment the big occupation for women is cake-icing. And that's because they see beautiful pictures of it in magazines. But they don't get paid for it.

"The people are very happy and friendly and they all get on with each other, even though there so many different types, African and Indian, mixed with English, French, Dutch, and Spanish."

Miss Kinane, who spent a bit of each day snorkelling and skin-diving, loves Tobago.

After a brief stay in Paris where she made her report to UNESCO, she went to Denmark where she spent a week looking at children's programs.

"In their programs they sometimes let the children dictate what goes into a show, letting them be more involved," she said.

"The Danes are tremendously interested in the Opera House. When it opens they are joining with the BBC and coming here to make a general family program of it."

Figure 3: Kay Kinane consults for UNESCO in 1973.
The Australian Women's Weekly, 11 July 1973, p. 15.

Catherine King

For Catherine King, Perth's long-serving *Women's Session* radio producer and presenter, the ABC provided a powerful site from which she could manifest her higher calling. Like Kay Kinane, Catherine saw broadcasting as a way to manifest her vocation to serve and improve society, and advocate for others. Prior to her retirement in 1966, Catherine had forged a formidable reputation during her 24 years as a producer and presenter. Her loyal community of listeners valued the sense of community that she and her team fostered, appreciated her refusal to consign women's content to superficialities and shared her

desire to celebrate culture in all its forms. Oftentimes a thorn in the side of ABC programme executives, Catherine nevertheless became one of the organisation's most esteemed broadcasters in the post-war era.

Figure 4: Catherine King, circa 1960.
National Archives of Australia: SP1011/1, 2760 [1].

Catherine King was born in 1904 in Melbourne. Her family moved to Perth and in 1924 she enrolled at the University of Western Australia to study English and Philosophy. Two years later, she undertook a Diploma of Education at the University of London. After marrying Alec King in 1929, Catherine continued her career as an early childhood educator and advisor; she worked as a committee member and Vice President for the Kindergarten Union and advised community groups such as the Marriage Guidance Council. In 1936 she was invited, at the age of 32, to join the ABC community as a guest lecturer by her father, Walter Murdoch, and husband, Alec King, both academics and ABC contributors. After producing occasional literary and educational segments, Catherine became a book reviewer for the early incarnation of the *Women's Session*, presenting more than 60 sessions on children's literature during the next few years. In 1942 the state's infant schools were shut down in fear of an invasion after Japan's bombing of Darwin. Catherine was sent by the Kindergarten Union to ask the ABC if they could pioneer an educational radio format for preschool children. Despite the ABC's initial derision of the idea, Catherine persisted, and *Kindergarten of the Air* was commissioned. It soon became a foundation of ABC programming, adopted nationally and replicated by the BBC.

In 1944, Catherine was 40 years old and a mother of three when she agreed to produce the state's *Women's Session* radio series. Respectful of the power the medium offered, Catherine took a firm line and insisted that the programme be more than just a superficial 'self-improvement' show. Like many producers of women's programming in the post-war decades, Catherine saw the show as an opportunity to bring the world to her listeners. Catherine used the daily 45-minute show to discuss a wide variety of philosophical, religious, scientific and political issues. Catherine wanted to make high culture accessible to everyday Australians and constantly celebrated the arts. Catherine's session encouraged discussions about different cultures, with contributors travelling the world and sharing their insights. Her goal was to deepen the community's engagement with the wider world and provide, in her words, 'a vivid picture of as many facets as possible of the life of a democratic community, so that we can have a deeper understanding of its variety and richness'.[164]

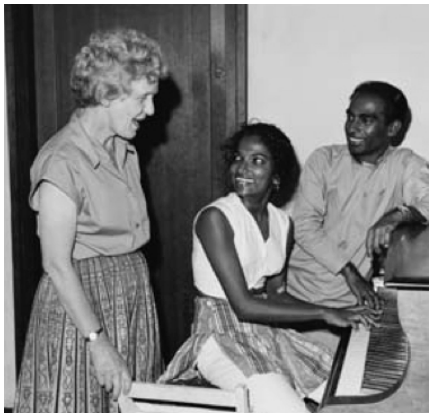


Figure 5: Catherine King and visiting performers, Chitrasena Ballet Company director Amaradeva & performer Vipuli, in 1963. National Archives of Australia: A1501, A42253/3.

Catherine created a programme that presented listeners with 'women's material', which did not adhere to the patronising notions of what was appropriate for each gender at the time. Refusing to limit her audiences to the narrow construct defined by many ABC managers in the post-war years, Catherine's show also attracted a substantial male audience. Catherine's *Women's Session* spoke to listeners in remote West Australian districts and sought to remedy the isolation that they experienced. She focused on the importance of family and community, encouraging listeners to be more socially, politically and culturally active in everyday life, to embrace new ideas and information and to advocate for those less privileged.

[164] 'Listeners like "highbrow" WA woman believes' 1945, *The Sun*, 28 January, p. 8.

Catherine assembled a team of professional women who worked with her to produce the show. The group was consolidated by her wide network of academics and cultural consultants, professionals, adventurers and religious practitioners, many of whom were women. Catherine also cultivated a sense of community with female broadcasters further afield. As one of the founding members of the International Association of Women in Radio (IAWR), Catherine joined other like-minded women who were motivated to produce content about similar issues and who were confronted with similar obstacles. When television was introduced to Western Australia in 1960, Catherine ambitiously extended her focus to incorporate the new medium. She managed to simultaneously produce both radio and television versions of her show for two years, before choosing to focus solely on radio in order to prevent her programme agendas from being diluted.

Catherine was embraced by the ABC as one of its exemplary broadcasters. In a report written in the year of her retirement, Head of Talks, Alan Carmichael, encapsulated her career:

> *Mrs King has conducted the WA session for more than 20 years; it has been built around her. Its success has been due partly to her own intellectual qualities, and partly to the diverse contacts she has established with extraordinary energy – far beyond the call of duty – backed by her family associations … In WA radio, Mrs King has been a phenomenon thrown up by her times. I can think of no one available as compere who, starting now from scratch, could sustain what Mrs King has achieved due to her special qualities and advantages.*[165]

Over the years, Catherine had become an ABC institution. ABC bureaucrats, some more begrudgingly than others, learned to respect Catherine's authority and her capable handling of the show's production. Senior officers recognised her formidable capacity for work, her intelligence and sense of purpose. They also respected how she had built a substantial fan base; their loyalty allowed her to resist pressures to compromise the show's focus.

[165] Memo from Carmichael, A. to Manager WA, 1966, titled *Women's Session (WA)*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King 3 BC:5019248, 28 February.

Therése Denny

Therése Denny was born in Adelaide in 1923 to a politician father and musician mother. She studied at a local Catholic school and was tutored throughout her youth by a scholarly aunt. Eager to start a career, Therése joined the ABC's Adelaide studios as a teenage stenographer in 1939. By the end of the war, she had worked sporadically in minor presenting roles for ABC Melbourne before moving to commercial radio to pursue her ambitions to produce. In 1949, 26-year-old Therése realised that her career had more potential overseas and set off for London. With borrowed recording equipment and a brazen, nothing-to-lose attitude, she quickly accumulated an impressive collection of hard-to-get interviews and negotiated her way into steady radio contract work for the BBC. Within a year, she was selling her interviews back home to the ABC. She produced interview segments for shows such as *BBC Calling Australia*, *Voices from Overseas, Weekend Magazine, Women's Session, London Calling, This Is Britain, The Showman* and *Window on the World*. Juggling her radio work with her editorial and publicity work at Collins Publishing in London, Therése assisted renowned broadcaster and war correspondent, Chester Wilmot, research and collate his book *The Struggle for Europe*, which was published in 1952.[166]

Throughout the 1950s, Therése diligently forged a career for herself, transitioning from interviewer and freelance radio host to BBC researcher and documentary writer. She was also a constant ABC contributor, with many of her projects shared by both the BBC and ABC. Her slate of BBC television projects included the series *Portraits of Power* (1958), *Men of Action* (1959) and *Great Captains* (1960). Therése had formed solid working relationships with some of Britain's leading military experts and cultural commentators and, by the early 1960s, the tone of her work was more confident, and more political. She produced documentaries including *The Long Struggle* (1963), on the British welfare state, *The Titans* (1962), on the tension between Russia and the United States, and *South of the River* (1964), an insightful study of one of London's working-class communities and its post-war recovery. By the time Therése returned to Sydney in 1963 to produce a series of ABC Talks documentaries, she was a highly qualified radio and television producer and director.

[166] Wilmot, C. 1952, *The Struggle for Europe*, Collins, London.

Figure 6: Therése Denny at the ABC, circa 1964.
National Archives of Australia: SP1011/1, 1727.

Throughout her career, Therése had regularly returned to Australia to reconnect with ABC programme officers, pitch new projects and visit her family. In 1964 she was selected as one of the few producers on the exchange programme between the ABC and BBC. It was rare for a woman to be given a position producing and directing general Talks content, and Therése unapologetically exerted her independence and expertise. During her yearlong exchange, Therése wrote and produced a series of documentaries: *A Changing Race* (1964), *A Boy in Australia* (1964), *Weekend in Australia* (1964) and *The World of Father Silvio* (1965). They variously engage with issues of race, gender, faith and culture, and at times presented scathing judgments on less-admirable aspects of Australian life, particularly its parochialism, cultural complacency, sexism and racism. Therése eventually returned to London, many of her subsequent projects shared again with the ABC, before her death from cancer in 1975.

Joyce Belfrage

In April 1963, Joyce Belfrage ended her four-year term at the ABC with a mighty crash. Having heard that Assistant General Manager Clem Semmler and the TV Producer's Assessment Committee decided to downgrade her for a second time, Joyce had had enough. After escaping the ABC's Forbes Street production offices to drown her sorrows, Joyce was fuelled with rage for the unjust treatment she felt she had received at the hands of 'pedantic, po-faced' bureaucrats. She returned and stalked around her office until her frustrations boiled over. Taking her lipstick, Joyce scrawled 'FUCK THE ABC' on her office wall. She reached above her production assistant, by then in hysterics, hauled down a

defunct typewriter that had been looming precariously over them for months and heaved it out the window. The useless machine, a painful reminder of Joyce's unrequited desire for workplace efficiency and programming authority, smashed onto Stanley Lane below.

Joyce was born in London in 1923. In 1941, at the age of 18, she was accepted into Cambridge University and undertook an honours degree in English literature, studying languages and representing Girton College as a rower. In 1944 she finished her degree and began working for the Psychological Warfare Division of the British Army, writing publicity and propaganda for the Allies. After the war, Joyce moved to Paris and worked as a radio producer for Radiodiffusion Française (RDF). Politically outspoken and passionate about writing and communications, Joyce was driven to find a broadcasting role that was both socially and professionally worthy. She was constantly drawn to public broadcasting. By 1947, Joyce had found work in radio production at the BBC and in 1952 joined the Canadian Broadcasting Commission's (CBC) new television division. At the age of 35, Joyce was forced to move to a warm climate for her husband's health and was readily recruited by Australia's public broadcaster in 1958.

Figure 7: Joyce Belfrage, ABC publicity photo, circa 1960.
National Archives of Australia: SP1011/1, 1068.

As the ABC's first female television 'pool producer', Joyce was hired at the highest grade. She produced, wrote and directed a wide range of television programming, producing TV magazine programs such as *Spotlight* and expert panel shows such as *The Critics*. She was also called on to casually direct and produce segments and shows within other series, such as *Woman's World*. Joyce was most proud of her work creating a series of 30-minute documentaries titled *Inquiry Into,* which interrogated topical social and cultural issues.

She presented her views on topics such as the Beatnik generation and Sydney's rebellious 'Push' movement, alcoholism, old age, school leavers, adoption, the Salvation Army and road safety. Her 1960 documentary, *Inquiry into Migrant Problems*, was acclaimed for its insightful approach to the migrant experience. The final project that Joyce developed for the ABC was a long-format documentary on Indigenous Australians and assimilation. Although Joyce left the ABC before this could be made, her proposal survived and was eventually adapted and produced by Therése Denny.

Throughout much of her time at the ABC, Joyce battled with management. She gained a reputation for being demanding after constantly requesting better resources and conditions for production staff. Unfortunately, Joyce was caught up in the chaos of the ABC's difficult transition to television; her ambitions were stymied by a range of practical and bureaucratic compromises. After her dramatic departure from the ABC, Joyce continued to pursue her passion for broadcasting and communications; she initiated one of Australia's first media studies courses at Macquarie University in the early 1970s, where she designed courses on communication and the latest studies of mass media.

How the cohort was 'built' to be public broadcasters

As I examined the careers of Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce, it became clear that they embodied unique characteristics that served their roles as public broadcasters. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce grew up within families who celebrated intellectualism and a love of learning, families who advocated community responsibility and social service. They were imbued with a social and moral authority, and a certain way of looking at the world, one which aligned firmly with the core philosophies of public broadcasting. From their youth, they felt a sense of social responsibility and were encouraged to be active citizens. Their professional vocations were underpinned by a sense of social maternalism. They 'saw themselves as capable and culturally superior and felt confident to advocate for others and make judgments about what was best for society.'[167]

[167] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 31.

Kay's background and mission

Kay Kinane was born in 1912, the third of six children to Mary and William Kinane, in Perth, Western Australia. In her youth, Kay was delicate and very late to speak. She occasionally remarked that her late development was due to the fact she was born prematurely after a cow had butted her mother, joking that she often felt that throughout her life she 'kept on getting butted into things.'[168] When examining Kay's career, however, it appeared she, in fact, proactively 'butted' herself into a series of challenging situations. While her mother, Mary, appeared rarely in the local news, Kay's father, William, was known for his interest in West Australian politics. He was described as a 'prominent' public servant who worked for decades as an accountant for the West Australian Taxation Department. I found several examples of his letters to the Editor of *The West Australian* newspaper, offering his analysis of the state's economic policies and financial policy opinions. At one point, he gave a detailed argument in favour of federalism ahead of the 1933 referendum on Western Australia's debate on federal secession. Like Kay, he spent nearly 40 years working for one organisation.

The Kinane children were sent to Catholic schools in Perth and Kay attended Loreto Convent College. Loreto students were encouraged by the teachings of Mother Mary Gonzaga Barry to make the world a better place, to 'leave after you something on which others may build'.[169] Kay grew up in an environment where Christian values instilled a desire for self and social betterment, and which valued efforts to overcome adversity. She loved performance, sport, painting and literature. Kay was encouraged in these pursuits by her parents, who supported their children's cultural and community activities. She had caught the 'stage bug' in high school; she joked about the benefits of her newfound height paying off, as she was often given the male leading roles.[170] Kay was later president of her university's dramatic society and continued to be involved in repertory theatre for the next two decades, producing and performing in-between her teaching and ABC work. Kay even performed for troops based outside Perth during the war.[171] One incident in her later life reveals how Kay's career was inspired by heroic family narratives. In 1954 she was interviewed for *The ABC Weekly* and suggested that her vocation had been influenced by

[168] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.
[169] 'Mary Gonzaga Barry', 2016, *Loreto: Australia & South East Asia*, website, viewed 14 September 2016, <http://archives.loreto.org.au/Home/Our-Story/Loreto-In-Australia/Mary-Gonzaga-B.aspx>.
[170] 'Kay Kinane' 1947, *Broadcaster*, 9 October.
[171] Swannell, J. 1947, 'ABC's new woman school broadcasts producer is qualified teacher, script writer, actress and artist', *The ABC Weekly*, 6 December, p. 19.

family legends of challenge and resilience. Kay shared stories about her grandmother, who stoically cared for 10 children after her husband died in the outback. She also spoke of her father's gold rush adventures, how he 'pushed a barrow over the hundred miles from Southern Cross to Coolgardie – wheeling a sick mate most of the time.'[172] The article was subsequently titled 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit'.

In 1930 Kay enrolled at the University of Western Australia. Her other sisters were already attending university and her younger sibling, Bill, was soon to follow. A busy 18 year old, Kay immersed herself in the university's various societies and clubs, including the Dramatic Society, the Debating Society and Boat Club social committee. After two years, she decided to enrol in teaching college, continuing her university studies part-time. One reason for her choice, she confessed, was her aversion to working in an office.[173] Being constrained to a desk to do clerical work did not appeal to Kay. Teaching, she thought, would provide her with an opportunity to travel and exercise a degree of autonomy. During this time, Kay developed the tenacity and creative ingenuity she would later implement at the ABC. When her teaching training college closed down, Kay and a group of peers strategically resolved a way to complete the curriculum on their own; they managed to be kept on in local schools as trainees. Soon running classes on her own, Kay had to learn quickly on the job because she was assigned a class of 60 students:

> *I've often thought, at the time I thought it was a dreadful thing not to be trained like that, but I've often thought it was a jolly good thing because it forced me to think for myself. It forced me to read about teachers, teaching and children much more deeply, I think than if I were at a training college. Because when you are faced with a big gang of kids you've got to do something about it. You've got to keep them interested. You've got to get results.*[174]

It was the first of many challenging teaching scenarios that reinforced Kay's belief in the value of inventive and stimulating educational material.

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[172] 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit' 1954, *The ABC Weekly*, 6 February, p. 20.
[173] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.
[174] Ibid.

Before long, Kay's dramatic interests drew her to ABC Radio. A friend in the dramatic society suggested that they pitch an Easter special to the ABC's Basil Kirke and Kay leaped at the chance to contribute. She recalled, 'we went into the studio with absolutely no experience of radio at all. We had great fun!'[175] In those days, the ABC studios were on the corner of Hay and Milligan Streets in Perth (later moving to larger premises in the Stirling Institute in St Georges Terrace in 1937). Kirke asked Kay to return and she was then cast in their production of *Hedda Gabler*. Kay offered to do more and was hired to produce dramatic programming for ABC Schools Broadcasts on a project-by-project basis.

Kay and her cohort finally sat the teaching exam, and in 1933 she was despatched to her first teaching assignment, a one-teacher school in a remote migrant community near the Margaret River, south-west of Perth, called 'The Groups'. The Group Settlement Scheme was an alternative to the Soldier Settlement land development programme and encouraged struggling Britons to settle, buttressing the White Australia policy. Kay witnessed how many settler families struggled; the families of her students were often 'utterly bewildered by this Jarrah forest in the south west, they just could not come to terms with it at all. But the kids were delightful. They used to walk anything from six miles through the forest to school.'[176] Kay quickly discovered new ways to help activate learning and engage her distracted students, initiating a range of activities from debating to gymnastics and physical movement, music and singing. Kay even thought of a way to address their lack of nutrition, getting each child to bring a vegetable each day to add to her communal pot of stew that she cooked for lunch.[177]

Kay was willing to overcome extensive practical and physical challenges to get the job done. She believed that her sense of humour helped get through what was a difficult time. Needing a way to get around the rangy wildness of remote country town life, Kay bought an old motorcycle from a friend 'for a fiver' and taught herself to ride, taking on the falls as well. On the way to a dance in a nearby town one evening, she decided that she should get a licence and spontaneously entreated a local policeman out of the local billiard saloon. Kay, in a long black evening gown, with her police examiner riding pillion behind her, then passed her driving test.[178] After her second assignment in the remote wheat belt

[175] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.
[176] ibid.
[177] Gledhill, B. 1998, 'ABC producer led birth of TV', *The Australian*, 17 February, p. 17.
[178] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.

community of Carnamah, Kay eventually returned home to Perth, a wiser and more confident 24 year old.

Kay found work as a teacher in Subiaco Senior State School and resumed her university degree, continuing to pursue all manner of subjects that appealed to her curiosity: French, German, Italian, Fine Arts, English, Education and Philosophy. It was with this last subject that Kay found herself forced to resist what she believed were counteractive political narratives. She refused to finish her final course, believing that the university's philosophy curriculum promoted communist ideologies. Years later, she argued that her belief in the power of the individual and the freedom to choose one's faith set her at odds with the university, explaining that while she could simply sit the exams, she felt it would be the cowardly option. In her first biographical interview with the ABC in 1977, she said:

> *So I went round, oh asking advice, getting advice from priests, 'Oh pray my child'. Fat lot of good when you're going to do a tutorial the next week! In the end I thought well the only thing I can do is not sit!*[179]

Kay's university 'failure' was an early signpost to her determination to follow a certain set of ideals and standards. Guided by her faith, but not locked down by doctrine, Kay was confident in her own identity and judgment. She may not have been politically and academically assertive enough to challenge the university, but she later found it easier to argue her agendas with the ABC. She had faith in her work as an educator and her broadcasting expertise.

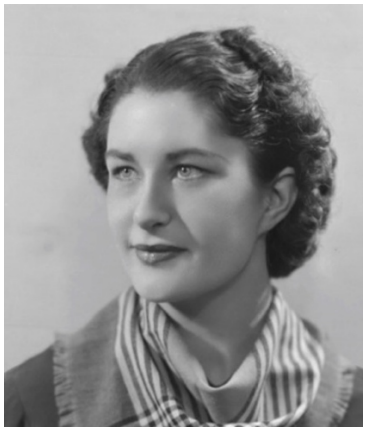
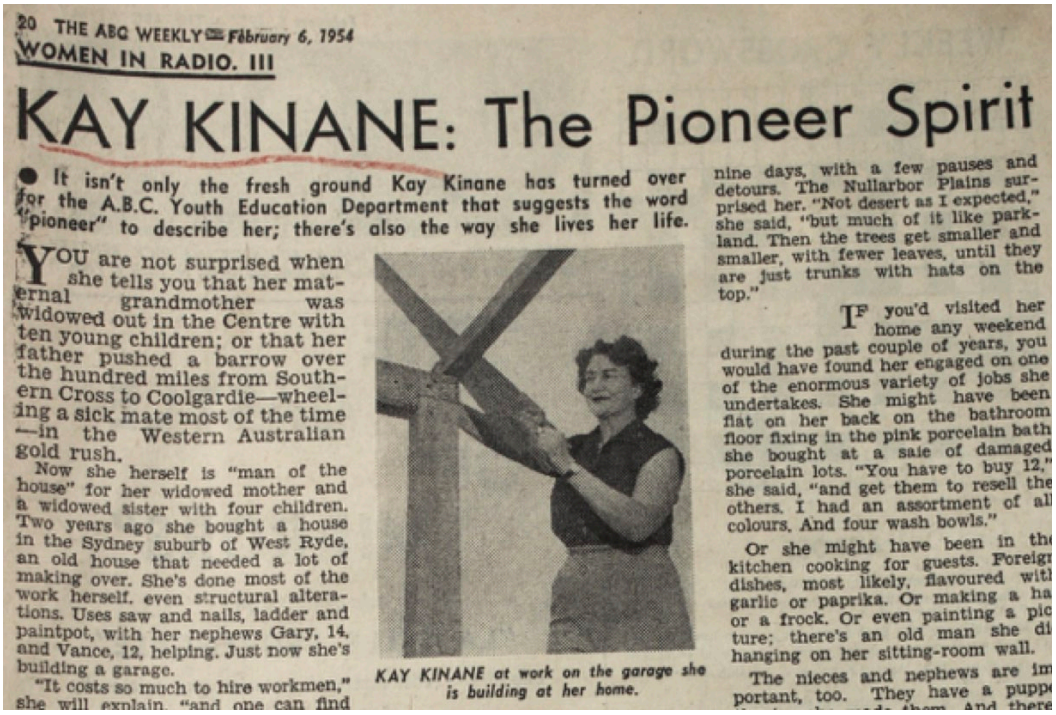


Figure 8: Miss Kay Kinane in May 1938.
State Library of WA, 304567PD.

[179] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.

Kay never married but was dedicated to her family. During her time running schools and broadcasting in Perth, she was offered work in Sydney but turned it down because she was supporting her widowed sister and her four children, who were living with her at the time. Looking back, Kay recalled 'I was more or less father of the family.'[180] In various press and oral history testimonies, Kay manifested her pride in her strength to get the job done. The subtext was that she did all this without a man in her life. In the previously mentioned 1954 *ABC Weekly* article, Kay described the pleasure she took doing her own major renovations to her home, as 'man of the house'.[181] Building the garage, doing the plumbing, Kay presented herself at odds with contemporary gender constructs – another philosophy that Kay incorporated into her ABC programming.



20 THE ABC WEEKLY February 6, 1954

WOMEN IN RADIO. III

KAY KINANE: The Pioneer Spirit

● It isn't only the fresh ground Kay Kinane has turned over for the A.B.C. Youth Education Department that suggests the word "pioneer" to describe her; there's also the way she lives her life.

YOU are not surprised when she tells you that her maternal grandmother was widowed out in the Centre with ten young children; or that her father pushed a barrow over the hundred miles from Southern Cross to Coolgardie—wheeling a sick mate most of the time—in the Western Australian gold rush.

Now she herself is "man of the house" for her widowed mother and a widowed sister with four children. Two years ago she bought a house in the Sydney suburb of West Ryde, an old house that needed a lot of making over. She's done most of the work herself, even structural alterations. Uses saw and nails, ladder and paintpot, with her nephews Gary, 14, and Vance, 12, helping. Just now she's building a garage.

"It costs so much to hire workmen," she will explain, "and one can find

KAY KINANE at work on the garage she is building at her home.

nine days, with a few pauses and detours. The Nullarbor Plains surprised her. "Not desert as I expected," she said, "but much of it like parkland. Then the trees get smaller and smaller, with fewer leaves, until they are just trunks with hats on the top."

IF you'd visited her home any weekend during the past couple of years, you would have found her engaged on one of the enormous variety of jobs she undertakes. She might have been flat on her back on the bathroom floor fixing in the pink porcelain bath she bought at a sale of damaged porcelain lots. "You have to buy 12," she said, "and get them to resell the others. I had an assortment of all colours. And four wash bowls."

Or she might have been in the kitchen cooking for guests. Foreign dishes, most likely, flavoured with garlic or paprika. Or making a hat or a frock. Or even painting a picture; there's an old man she did hanging on her sitting-room wall.

The nieces and nephews are important, too. They have a puppe

Figure 9: 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit'
The ABC Weekly, 6 February 1954, p. 20.

Catherine's background and mission

The eldest woman in this cohort, Catherine (Murdoch) King was born in Victoria in 1904 to parents Walter and Violet Murdoch. Both sides of Catherine's family had backgrounds

[180] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[181] 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit' 1954, *The ABC Weekly*, 6 February, p. 20.

in education and social activism. With two grandfathers in the clergy, many members of Catherine's family had vocations that sought to educate and enlighten society. Her maternal grandparents were both teachers from the mid-19th century, and Catherine's mother and two siblings were also educators, opening schools of their own, offering progressive curricula to female students in Victoria.[182] Catherine's aunt, Annie Hughston, after a long career at Presbyterian Ladies College in Melbourne, established the girls' school Fintona (named after their mother's birthplace in Ireland). The school gained a reputation for its modern approach to academic work. Scholarship was key. Girls were instructed in the sciences, geography, mathematics, music and the classics. They also taught girls the social skills that would help them lead constructive and active lives.[183] It was a family effort, with Catherine's aunt, uncle, mother, then father, Walter Murdoch, all teaching there.[184] Catherine attended Fintona until the age of eight, when her father's academic career led the family to Western Australia.

Catherine's mother and aunt, Annie, were strong female role models in her life. Her aunt was a reserved, gentle woman, yet was determined in her convictions: Annie was one of the signatories to the Victorian Women's Suffrage Petition in 1891. Catherine's mother, Violet, was less career-focused once her own children came along. According to Walter Murdoch's biographer, John La Nauze, Violet applied her love of teaching to her own family and dedicated herself to help others in her community. Catherine's mother was nevertheless a socially active university wife, who embraced her husband's intellectual community and was unafraid to share her opinions with his peers.[185]

Walter and Violet had sent Catherine and her siblings to schools that offered high standards of education and endorsed their notions about social responsibility. As a teenager, Catherine was enrolled in another academically centred girls' school, The Perth College, an Anglican school run by the Community of the Sisters of the Church. Looking back on its manifesto during that era, the Perth College explained its 'modern' approach:

[182] Lush, M., Christensen, E., Gill, P. & Roberts, E. 2015, 'The Lady Principal, Miss Annie Hughston 1859–1943', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Canberra*, website, viewed 16 November 2016, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/essay/16/text31928>.
[183] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 4.
[184] Lush, M., Christensen, E., Gill, P. & Roberts, E. 2015, 'The Lady Principal, Miss Annie Hughston 1859–1943', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Canberra*, website, viewed 16 November 2016, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/essay/16/text31928>.
[185] La Nauze, J. 1977, *Walter Murdoch: A Biographical Memoir*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, p. 79.

> *In those days, the Sisters' vision of the potential of women challenged the accepted ideas of the time, and so a strong belief system was born: the notion that young women should work hard to make the most of their opportunities and use their positions in society or privileges to make a difference. The Sisters who founded the School were aware of building for posterity, believed in girls' education, and saw the potential of women to achieve great things. From this beginning, Perth College Old Girls have pioneered new roles for women and made significant contributions to the community over many generations.*[186]

Catherine's education reinforced the social principles promoted at home, values that celebrated knowledge and culture, and used them to improve everyday life. This sense of social responsibility reflects the culture that Janet McCalman identified in her 1993 work *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation*.[187]

Catherine, like Therése, Kay and many middle-class children attending private schools in the early 20th century, received an education loaded with moral purpose, where children were taught that privilege came with responsibility. McCalman stated, 'they were surrounded with teachers and parents and preachers who told them that much was expected of them – that they were different, privileged, fortunate and therefore burdened with a special duty of service.'[188]

Catherine's father, Walter Murdoch, played a major role in her vocation as an advocate and public broadcaster. The son of a Presbyterian minister in Scotland, Murdoch became a teacher after university. He wrote articles and textbooks (his first called *The Australian Citizen)*.[189] He was a highly regarded lecturer at Melbourne University and was favoured by students such as Katharine Susannah Prichard.[190] After being overlooked for an appointment, Walter leaped at the chance to take on a founding role with the new University of Western Australia in 1912. He remained involved with the university for the next half-century. Murdoch passed on to Catherine a belief that scholarly discussions could and should be accessible to all manner of people, not just intellectual elites.

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[186] 'History of Perth College', *Perth College*, website, viewed 16 November 2016, <https://www.perthcollege.wa.edu.au/our-school/history>.
[187] McCalman, J. 1993, *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation, 1920–1990*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria p. 136.
[188] Ibid, p. 144.
[189] La Nauze, J. 1977, *Walter Murdoch: A Biographical Memoir*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, p. 25.
[190] Ibid, p. 44.

For Catherine, home was a place where ideas about art, politics, economics, culture and faith could be openly discussed and questioned. The Murdochs were not regular churchgoers but were, nevertheless, driven by Christian principles of social justice and community.[191] From an early age, Catherine joined various charitable groups and social clubs, replicating her mother's charity work. Throughout her life, Catherine volunteered as an advisor and board member for organisations such as the Marriage Guidance Council and the Children's Film Council in WA and, as I will discuss in more detail, spent many years dedicated to the Save the Children Fund (SCF).[192] When interviewed by Barbara Farrant in 1985, Catherine recalled the sense of purpose that resonated within the family. She explained there was a 'strong urge, [and] conscience about being involved in other people, care of other people … there was a sense of responsibility. That sounds awfully smug,' she said, 'but it was taken for granted.'[193]

Starting an Arts degree at her father's university in 1924, Catherine joined a stimulating yet insular community. In an interview in 1985, Catherine explained that her transition to university was presumptive; she had no need to battle for entry due to her gender, nor did she feel confronted by sexism. She said, 'I'd been bred in the university.'[194] Her father also had connections to organisations that facilitated Catherine's social reform ambitions and her mother was constantly volunteering for one charity or another. One example of Walter Murdoch's political activities include his time as President of the Perth League of Nations Union.[195] He also gave lectures to trainee kindergarten teachers, initiating a decades-long partnership between the Kindergarten Union and the Murdoch family.[196] Catherine began teaching at the age of 25 and joined the Education Committee of the Kindergarten Union as a volunteer; this commitment would last more than 15 years.[197]

Catherine's parents were also progressive in their sharing of home duties, something she carried through into her own life and into her programming. Catherine believed her

[191] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 3.
[192] Lewis, J. 1979, 'Catherine King', in D. Popham (ed.), *Reflections: Profiles of 150 Women Who Helped Make Western Australia's History*, Carroll's, Perth, p. 184.
[193] King, C. 1985, *Happy Families and Human Relationships*, oral history, interviewed by B. Farrant, State Library of Western Australia State Library of Western Australia , OH1667-18181193, Perth, 19 April.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 11.
[196] Ibid. p. 4.
[197] Lewis, J. 1979, 'Catherine King', in D. Popham (ed.), *Reflections: Profiles of 150 Women Who Helped Make Western Australia's History*, Carroll's, Perth, p. 184.

parent's marriage was a partnership of equals, despite her father's increasing success and renown.[198] Her own marriage was similarly based on a deep mutual respect. Catherine met Alec King in Britain in 1926, when she was studying a Diploma of Education at the University of London. The son of a clergyman, King had studied pedagogy at Oxford University, wrote poetry and was musically gifted. He was quickly embraced by the Murdoch family, who recognised that they shared similar philosophies about the world.[199] Before long, Alec King was working at the University of Western Australia. He joined Murdoch at the ABC soon after.

Catherine's father had been invested in the ABC's development from its inception and, importantly, 'broke the ice' for Catherine. Before moving to Perth, he was a member of the Brown Society in Melbourne. This was hosted by Herbert Brookes (the son-in-law of Alfred Deakin), who was later Vice-Chairman of the first ABC Commission, one of Walter's lifelong friends. Brookes invited Walter to speak on air and they often privately debated the merits of public broadcasting. In one letter to Brookes, Walter declared, 'I am really very glad to hear that you are to be concerned in so vital a matter; for it is vital – anyone can see that broadcasting will sooner or later take the place of literature for a vast number of people.'[200] His biographer La Nauze stated that Murdoch was unafraid to 'press his views' directly with his friend Brookes on the Commission, and spoke at length with General Manager, Charles Moses, and then with the Head of Talks, B.H. Molesworth (later Catherine's national supervisor), often about the importance of talks programming.[201] Walter was invited to join various Talks advisory committees and soon moved behind the microphone himself, becoming one of Australia's most well-known broadcasters in those early years on radio.[202] He became a foundational member of the ABC's Education Broadcasting Committee in 1932. A year later, Catherine's husband Alec was elected. Within a few years, all three could be heard over the airwaves.

In 1944, the same year that Catherine began producing the *Women's Session* and 11 years after he joined the ABC as a consultant, her husband published his book, *Everyone's Business*.[203] Mirroring the beliefs that Catherine's family espoused, it stressed the

[198] King, C. 1985, *Happy Families and Human Relationships*, oral history, interviewed by B. Farrant, State Library of Western Australia, OH1667-18181193, Perth, 19 April.
[199] La Nauze, J. 1977, *Walter Murdoch: A Biographical Memoir*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, p. 82.
[200] Ibid, p. 108.
[201] Ibid, p. 109.
[202] Ibid, p. 109.
[203] King, A. 1944, *Everyone's Business*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

importance of active democracy and the pursuit of everyday cultural and intellectual engagements. As the war was nearing its end, King encouraged Australians to reject complacency and ignorance, and the increasing sense of self-satisfaction. It was the sort of thing Therése Denny railed against some years later. King declared:

> *Our pioneering past is past; we cannot go on congratulating ourselves on the undoubted virtues it produced in us … and don't let us deceive the young with shouts of what 'a fortunate people we are in sunny Australia'; Australia is sunny, but in all that matters most we are in great danger of becoming one of the most backward peoples of the civilized world; and that is hardly fortunate for the young. Unless, in the next thirty or forty years, we can set ourselves firmly on the road to becoming an educated, a properly civilized, people, there will be every excuse for the argument that we should get out of Australia altogether, out of a land we have exploited but never made the home of any human life of real and lasting value.*[204]

It is likely that King's social beliefs and faith in the functions of public broadcasting were enhanced by his experience as an ABC committee member. The Reithian notion of public broadcasting, as media historian Paddy Scannell explained, was to be a 'cultural, moral and educative force for the improvement of knowledge' and, importantly, it had 'an immense potential for helping in the creation of an informed and enlightened democracy.'[205] It was no wonder that Catherine's husband was supportive of her career at the ABC; she was enacting their shared ideals through a national forum.

Alec King was progressive within the domestic domain as well. Illustrating his support of Catherine's career and their shared ideas about educating the community, he helped Catherine modify part of their home to establish a much-needed preschool for their daughter Elizabeth and others in the local community in 1943. Catherine and her lifelong friend and broadcasting partner, Erica Underwood, set up the centre and named it 'Greenhill' after Alec's family home in England.[206]

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[204] King, A. 1944, *Everyone's Business*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 95.
[205] Scannell, P. 2000, 'Public service broadcasting', in E. Buscombe (ed.), *British Television: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, pp. 47–48.
[206] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. pp. 27–28.

It is clear that Catherine's journey to the ABC was driven by the values instilled in her from childhood, the same values she shared with her husband. As a team of educators, academics and advocates, the Murdochs saw themselves as a force for good. They guided her to a particular path in life, encouraging her to locate herself confidently in a particular culture and find a life partner with similar values. They helped her learn the skills and foster the networks that advanced her life's work. These were all factors, as Catherine herself recognised, that played a part in the success of her career as a public broadcaster. In addition, with her father and husband's guidance, she learned the ABC 'way'. As I will detail, Catherine used their help to make the most of the organisation's strengths and to avoid its pitfalls.

Joyce's background and mission

Joyce (Hunter) Belfrage was born in 1923 in Wimbledon, London. She attended a variety of schools because her father's work as a commercial traveller required the family to move around during the economic depression. Joyce consequently struggled to make friends as a child. Her family did, however, encourage her to embrace her studies. Joyce's academic ambitions were instilled in her from a young age. Looking back on her youth, Joyce told interviewer Graham Shirley in 2001 that her mother wanted Joyce to get the education that she and Joyce's father had been denied.

> *My mother was a very disappointed person who wanted to stay at school because she liked school, and she wanted to learn French and learn the piano and all kinds of things which she never had a chance to do. And so she tended to expect me to do all those things. Which was nice in one way, but maybe got a bit onerous sometimes.*[207]

Joyce was 16 when the Second World War began. Her teenage years were focused on a methodical pursuit of her education. She first attended a convent school in Birmingham and had been inspired by the leadership and friendship of the 'sisters' educating her; Joyce confessed she had 'taken to the nuns in a big way'.[208] However, once again, Joyce was re-settled in another school, this time to the more academic Solihull High School for Girls,

[207] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[208] Ibid.

in order to advance her progression towards university. Her parents hope was that she would attend either Cambridge or Oxford.

From 1941 to 1944, Girton College, Cambridge, became Joyce's home. In the 1940s, Cambridge was a disrupted space. Most teachers and students had volunteered for military service; many female students had also signed up for the war effort in some way. It is not clear why Joyce did not leave university and join up; she was clearly passionate about Britain's fight and cared about the war. Perhaps it was because a university education was so important to her and her family, Joyce felt she must graduate first. Thinking back to her time at university, Joyce suggested that the dissonance of Cambridge's wartime years was one of the many times in her life that she suffered a 'lack of continuity'. She did, however, make friends and enjoyed Cambridge's many social and sport groups. She joined hiking and mountaineering clubs, and the Cambridge women's rowing squad. Joyce frequently went to the cinema with fellow students, learning to smoke and squinting through the haze to watch films such as *Battleship Potemkin*, students using these events to share their newfound political ideologies. Joyce also joined the Socialist Club, cementing a lifelong interest in socialism. In 2001 she said, 'I always have felt a great affinity with parties who lean towards the equality of people rather than the differences.'[209]

Throughout her youth, Joyce was a voracious reader; literature and language went some way to ease her loneliness. It was a passion that she carried throughout her life. Cambridge had plenty to offer. Already fluent in French, Joyce took on the next of many languages she would learn in her lifetime, Russian. (Later, Joyce would take up Chinese, Spanish and Italian.) In 1944 she completed her Honours degree in English literature. At the time, women were denied a full degree and Joyce was accordingly bestowed with a 'Title of Degree'. Joyce had a brief and difficult two-year marriage in the late 1940s, but found happiness when she fell in love with legendary BBC newsreader, actor and commentator, Bruce Belfrage. They married in 1952 and were devoted to each other throughout their lives.

Joyce sustained her socialist philosophies throughout her life; she often spoke about how she detested Britain's insular, 'provincial', conservative thinkers and their self-sustaining entitlement. Passionate about equality and opportunity, Joyce was disappointed in the

[209] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.

failure of the Atlee Labour government. She imagined that Australia might offer an alternative to the entrenched snobbery of the British class system. Some years after emigrating, she wrote to her brother-in-law Cedric from their home in Sydney's leafy suburbs: 'I can't go back to England. Not to work that is. I can only swallow so much underprivilege, discrimination and smog. After the limit is reached, I begin to gag.'[210] Although Joyce loved the wonders of Australia's natural environment and appreciated its egalitarian character, she found herself wishing that Australia was more culturally and politically sophisticated. To that end, the projects Joyce that produced at the ABC reflected her desire to stimulate social and political discussions; she sought to resist the type of conservative, parochial thinking she so disliked about the British system.

Therése's background and mission

Therése Denny was born into a prominent Adelaide family in 1923, the daughter of William Denny and Winefride (Leahy). Denny, a South Australian Labor politician, had been the state's Attorney-General, as well as minister for the Northern Territory, and minister for local government, repatriation and railways. Denny was nicknamed 'Walking Bill' for his tendency to walk and talk for hours with his constituents, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds. He was responsible for the 'Female Law Practitioners Act' (1911) and the 'Thousand Homes Scheme', which provided homes for the poor.[211] Therése's mother had given up a promising career as a concert pianist after marrying Denny; however, Winefride made sure that music and culture featured prominently in the daily life of the family's Portrush Road home. The Denny family was known for hosting wartime fundraisers, social gatherings and political dinners. Therése inherited her mother's kind and welcoming nature, and her passion for socialising and community. Therése ('Trissie') and her three siblings grew up in a busy home full of culture and lively conversation.

The Denny family's Irish Catholic identity permeated Therése's youth. Like Kay Kinane, she was educated by Loreto nuns. A tradition for many Denny women, a Loreto education was considered good preparation for those young female citizens eager to confront the world. Therése's uncle, Richard Powers Denny, was a priest and Glenelg pastor who

[210] Belfrage, J. 1963, Correspondence to C. Belfrage, *Cedric Belfrage Papers*, The Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, March.
[211] Female Law Practitioners Act 1911, Section 1050, South Australia.

became a Cathedral administrator and later Pastor Emeritus and Consultor of the Archdiocese.[212] Her aunt, Mary Catherine, was a politically active woman known for her Christian philanthropy, founding of hostels and work for the Catholic Congresses.[213] Their visits were a constant part of family life; for Therése, Friday night whiting dinners were reassuring but nevertheless tedious for a young woman who longed for variety from tradition.

In addition to their faith, education and social betterment were key principles of the Denny family. Aunt Mary Catherine was fastidious about the education of her nieces and nephew. She graduated from the University of South Australia with a psychology degree in 1903. A vociferous advocate for women's education, she was a senior figure in the South Australian education department and was one of the first female Inspectors of Schools. Never married, she played a public role in the state Labor movement and, together with her two brothers, made a mark on Adelaide society. A somewhat intimidating figure, Mary Catherine insisted that Therése visit her every week for special tutoring. Although she did not appreciate it at the time, Therése believed her Aunt's tutelage played a key part in her later success.[214] Mary Catherine was remembered as a forthright woman, her wig 'slightly askew' and breath at times a little flammable, but determined nonetheless to give her family as much help as she could offer, something Therése mirrored in her own life.[215]

For the Denny children, university was valued but not a priority. Therése's father believed that it was admirable to roll up one's sleeves early in life; university was something one could do later, as he had done. The family's lack of wealth impeded her chance to gain a degree. Therése's family lived in progressively cheaper homes as the years went by; her father's unflinching focus on politics and the law saw them suffer some financial setbacks. I could find no evidence, however, that Therése was upset by her inability to attend university; instead, it appears that she was quite keen to escape the 'fishbowl' of Adelaide life and seek out a career elsewhere.

Just as with Catherine and Kay, the notion of serving one's community, of dutifully contributing to making the nation stronger and better, was ever-present in Therése's youth.

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[212] 'Adelaide diocese bereaved' 1941, *Advocate*, 19 June, p. 7.
[213] 'Death of Miss MC Denny' 1936, *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 12 October, p. 19.
[214] Denny, T. 1975, Correspondence to B. Denny, Bill Denny Private Archive, 4 March.
[215] Denny, B. 2014, *Bill Denny Interview*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.

This moral imperative was less dominant than in Joyce's upbringing, although it was there; her focus leaned towards more intellectual and political activism. Therése's father and his siblings firmly planted the notion of social justice as a core family value, kindling a dynasty of politically aware progressives. Denny family memories resonate with recollections of late-night dinners, with high-level social and political debates among powerful and clever guests and relatives. Therése's home was visited by politicians and prelates, including the likes of prime ministers Billy McMahon, Robert Menzies and the odd bishop or two.[216] It was these events that imbued Therése with a lack of self-consciousness around powerful figures; something that helped her as she bluffed her way into interviewing world leaders and cultural icons in the early days of her career in London, and gave her the confidence to stand up to authoritative male bureaucrats.

Figure 10: Therése Denny, publicity image, circa 1964.
National Archives of Australia: SP1011/1, 1727.

Despite her strong Catholic background, Therése was not a regular churchgoer. She constantly tried to enact Christian philosophies throughout her life, but rejected their moral panics and refused to adhere to strict social conventions that she saw as unfair and arbitrary. Therése ruffled family feathers after she refused to spurn a divorced sister-in-law and, later in London, she stood by the Profumos when 'polite' British society insisted that they be shunned.[217] After Therése's death in 1975, friend Catherine Gaskin wrote to Therése's mother:

[216] Denny, T. 1975, Correspondence to B. Denny, Bill Denny Private Archive, 4 March.
[217] Denny, B. 2014, *Bill Denny Interview*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.

> *sometimes we came close to quarreling, but we never ceased to be friends. I know she often thought me too cautious and cool, and I thought her too rash and impulsive, but Huw Weldon spoke it truly when he talked of her integrity. By God, she had it, and I always felt ashamed of my own holding back when I saw the way she tackled every situation life presented to her. Never for her not to get 'involved', no matter the cost. She gave of herself with extraordinary generosity, and in return, many people loved her. I wonder who of us will be able to count on that at the end of our days.*[218]

Although the family joked about Therése's uncanny similarity to Patrick Dennis' eccentric character 'Auntie Mame', younger family members said they admired Therése for her courage in doing the *just* thing, which was not necessarily the *correct* thing.[219] Her favourite catchphrase, 'Well, what are you going to do about it?' lasted long in their memories.[220]

Responsible citizens, cultural custodians and the public broadcasting remit

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were raised and educated in a way that fuelled their ambition to engage with cultural, social and political discourse. They were imbued with a sense of social responsibility to do something worthwhile with their privilege. Janet McCalman explained that, in the early 20th century, Australia's middle class were increasingly imagining themselves as 'the backbone of the nation' and agents of social development.[221] Reflecting this national ambition, women such as Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce chose careers that allowed them to enact a social and cultural advocacy framed through active citizenship. Their vocations as public broadcasters gave them the opportunity to be 'pilgrims' in the exciting new arena of mass communication; their personal and professional ambitions justified by a higher purpose.

Historians Marilyn Lake and Judith Brett pointed to the ways that progressive women shaped their identities as citizens in the early and mid-20th century. In the post-suffrage

[218] Gaskin Cornberg, C. 1975, Correspondence to W. West, Bill Denny Private Archive, 5 August.
[219] Persson, M.L. 2016, *Interview with Marie Persson*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 24 August.
[220] Denny, B. 2014, *Bill Denny Interview*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.
[221] McCalman, J. 1993, *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation, 1920–1990*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria p.136.

era, Australian women commonly imagined their citizenship to be framed, as Brett stated, 'in terms of service and obligations rather than rights and claims.'[222] Citizenship was a key framework through which post-suffrage feminists could enact their new freedoms. Marilyn Lake stated that the early part of the 20th century was 'the self-proclaimed era of the "woman citizen" when feminists attempted to reconcile their maternalist mission of protection with the feminist emphasis on the independence due to full citizens'.[223] Brett argued that feminist activists were increasingly empowered by the growing authority of middle-class women as dutiful, responsible citizens.[224] As young women, Kay, Catherine, Therése, and Joyce in England, were part of an aspirational shift upwards. Young women of their generations and class were educated so that they could advance themselves through some type of positive and meaningful social and cultural activity. It was hoped that they would share their mothers' ambitions for them. McCalman suggested that, 'as ever, upward social mobility within families took place in generational steps: the manual occupations were replaced with clerical ones, the clerical workers' daughters entered the lower professions, the lower professionals' offspring entered the learned professions and the intelligentsia.'[225]

The idea of being a member of Australia's cultural 'intelligentsia' was one that was particularly important to the women in this cohort. When Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce each came to work at the cultural institution of the ABC, they became members of a privileged group of producers and programmers. Senior staff valued their roles at the ABC because they believed broadcasting was a powerful mechanism to comment on contemporary issues and shape national identity.[226] The ABC's programming officers and producers imagined themselves as cultural and social custodians. Media historian Kate Murphy discovered a similar vocational aspiration among senior women producers at the BBC in the interwar years. Murphy described their belief in their moral authority:

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[222] Brett, J. 2001, 'Retrieving the partisan history of Australian citizenship', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 36, no. 3, p. 430.
[223] Lake, M. 1998, 'A history of feminism in Australia', in B. Caine, M. Gatens, E. Grahame, J. Larbalestier, S. Watson & E. Webby (eds.), *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne. p. 134.
[224] Brett, J. 2001, 'Retrieving the partisan history of Australian citizenship', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 36, no. 3, p. 430.
[225] McCalman, J. 1993, *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation, 1920–1990*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria pp. 136–137.
[226] Memo from ABC Senior Officers Association Executive Subcommittee to Staff Members, 1972, titled *Paper for Presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts by the Senior Officers Association of the Australian Broadcasting Commission*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, via NLA Nq331.8811384544 SOA, 26 May.

> *Those with a fuller academic training were entitled to their superior position in society. This, of course, had a moral nobility: the life of the mind, the banishment of ignorance and the pursuit of knowledge were human endeavours upon which the health of civilization depended entirely. Knowledge was more important than material wealth …*[227]

The evidence suggests that Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were motivated to do the same, to 'banish ignorance' and encourage 'the pursuit of knowledge'. These intrinsic imperatives fuelled their authority as public broadcasters. For example, when Kay was being considered for the West Australian Supervisor of ABC Schools Broadcasts in 1943, national supervisor Rudi Bronner saw her as a capable and qualified educator and producer, but more importantly, saw Kay's greater value in being someone who firmly *believed* in the power of the medium to communicate and educate. He declared to the ABC Educational Appointments Advisory Committee that Kay:

> *appears to have the personality and, over and above all else, to be keen on this work and to believe in it. People may have all the academic honours ever invented and yet be worse than useless to us in our specialised kind of work.*[228]

For Kay and the others in the cohort, a career at the ABC offered them a site through which their vocations could be fulfilled. The public broadcasting remit presented them with an official public-service philosophy, which aligned with their own agendas.

The ABC worked to replicate the philosophies and professionalism applied by the BBC, to 'emulate the very high standard set by the British Broadcasting Corporation.'[229] Paddy Scannell succinctly outlined of the principles of public broadcasting set out by the BBC:

> *Here we find a cogent advocacy of public service as a cultural, moral and educative force for the improvement of knowledge, taste and manners … had a social and political function too. As a national service, broadcasting might*

[227] McCalman, J. 1993, *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation, 1920–1990*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria pp. 141–142.
[228] Memo from Bronner, R. to Educational Appointments Advisory Committee, 1943, titled *Educational Broadcasts Supervisor*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP285/1 CS:WOB 3/0 BC:10955441, 13 December.
[229] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p.12.

> *bring together all classes of the population. It could prove to be a powerful means of promoting social unity … But more than this, broadcasting had an immense potential helping in the creation of an informed and enlightened democracy. It enabled men and women to take an interest in many things from which they had been previously excluded.*[230]

It is not surprising, therefore, that Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce wanted to join the community of public broadcasters who worked to fulfil this remit. Again, the parallels between the cohort's peers at the BBC were evident: Kate Murphy noted that this sense of public service was appreciated by the earlier generation of women working at the BBC in the interwar years: 'not only was there a sense of pride in working for the BBC but also, for many, a belief that they were improving people's lives.'[231]

The same was true for many ABC producers and programmers. From its inception, the organisation was seen as a valuable contribution to Australia's cultural and intellectual development. In a letter to ABC commissioner Herbert Brookes in 1935, Catherine's father expressed his hopes for what the ABC could provide:

> *the public should be given something a little better than it wants, or than it thinks it wants. At present I can't see that the public taste is being raised in any particular by wireless, or the public intelligence being educated, or the public ideals being heightened … it isn't good enough, my dear Herbert; it simply IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH … Australia deserves something better.*[232]

The cohort valued the ABC for its public-service principles and its expectations of excellence. They also recognised the ABC's great worth as a vehicle to communicate to the nation; its ability to produce national communications with powerful reach and resonance. Radio and television were influential media that worked upon audiences in different ways. Catherine believed that radio was the perfect medium from which she could communicate her ideas and messages. Cultural historian Lesley Johnson, in her studies of the early development and nature of Australian radio, explained that the

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[230] Scannell, P. 2000, 'Public service broadcasting', in E. Buscombe (ed.), *British Television: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 47–48.
[231] Murphy, K. 2016, *Behind the Wireless: A History of Early Women at the BBC*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 17–18.
[232] La Nauze, J. 1977, *Walter Murdoch: A Biographical Memoir*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, p. 110.

medium was an ideal mechanism to bring public issues to women in the home. For those who could not get to meetings and political events, radio educated the nation and brought 'that non-ordinary world to listeners in the comfort of their own home'; a world to which they could now relate.[233] Catherine was daunted when first offered a major radio role, in awe of the way an authoritative site like the ABC could connect with large audiences, capture their attention and privilege a producer's message.[234]

However, it was not always easy to get to work in public broadcasting. Joyce had trouble re-joining the BBC after her husband fell ill in Canada; she had to console herself with work in commercial broadcasting for a time. Decades after her short time working on ITV's 'Moment of Fame' television show, Joyce still demonstrated her distaste for the work, which she described as 'crass commercialism of the most horrible kind … I regarded it as *extremely low*.'[235] In that first year of commercial television in Britain, Joyce hosted guests who performed randomly bizarre acts to get their 'moment of fame'. The 'final straw' for Joyce came when she interviewed a guest famous for being able to eat 200 oysters in rapid succession. She found some short-term work at the BBC, in women's programming, but was frustrated when she was excluded from working in News and Current Affairs. Joyce subsequently made an appointment with the ABC's representative in London, T.W. Bearup, and confirmed her move to the ABC. She was willing to emigrate in order to attain a permanent position as a public broadcasting Talks producer.

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce each embodied a particular identity that the ABC found appealing. They were all highly educated, culturally sophisticated and public-service minded, and had made clear their mission to produce programming that aligned with their remit. In the eyes of the male-centric ABC management, their professional status was acceptable because their ambitions and activism reflected narratives of female citizenship and aligned neatly with the public broadcasting philosophies of public service and social improvement.

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[233] Johnson, L. 1987, 'The early years of radio', in T. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds.), *Communications and the Media in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. 76.
[234] King, C. 1966, *Women's Session*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH175,18181156, Perth, 27 May.
[235] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.

Their mission in action

Ambitious and motivated, the women in this cohort were on a mission. They saw their professional lives as a vocation and used their hard-won positions at the ABC to challenge social and cultural complacencies. They encouraged their audiences to rethink contemporary attitudes and conventions, which they believed were detrimental to the nation's health and happiness. After studying their productions, it became clear that they all focused on similar issues. They actively used their positions at the ABC to critique post-war society and encouraged audiences to rethink social attitudes and conventions. They presented alternative perspectives and identities in their programming, critiquing issues surrounding gender and race and advocating for the marginalised of Australian society.

One common characteristic manifested in the cohort's work was their own version of nationalism; they presented audiences with programmes that lauded the beauty of the nation's natural environment and celebrated Australia's modernity, and its creative and industrial potential. They also praised the talents of Australian production staff, recognising the skill required to produce high-quality programming within production environments less substantial than those in Britain and America.[236]

They also demonstrated a shared sense of frustration when opportunities to enlighten the nation were wasted. Kay, Therése, Joyce and Catherine were critical when complacency and parochialism was manifested in ABC programming. They actively resisted when those values were forced upon their own projects. They were concerned with maintaining the quality of the messages they shared with the nation and were concerned with the workplace conditions that affected their ability to produce those messages. With varying degrees of success, they attempted to do this in the workplace as well. Demonstrating an obstinate and stoic determination to confront the obstacles placed before women in the broadcasting industry, Catherine, Therése and Kay contested discriminatory ABC workplace policy and practices throughout their careers. In a 1982 radio interview, Kay provided an example of how she worked to revise gender in everyday production life. Here Kay recounts what she told her male peers who constantly gendered content:

[236] 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit' 1954, *The ABC Weekly*, 6 February, p. 20.

> *I said, we're educating both boys and girls, we're dealing with a public that is both male and female, so therefore every male has got to be aware of the female audience and every female's got to be aware of the male audience. So we've got to be ambivalent in these terms.*[237]

These types of efforts were seen by the cohort as part of their legacy and were often brought up in interviews years later.

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The following section presents examples to illustrate how the cohort manifested their mission within their radio and television projects.

Kay: On the Murrumbidgee

For 10 hot weeks in the summer of 1951, Kay Kinane escorted a production and logistics crew on a journey down the Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers, re-enacting the Sturt and Macleay expedition of 1829 for the ABC. By this time Kay, at 39, was a proficient radio producer with more than a decade of experience; she had also recently completed an extensive training sojourn with the BBC. Kay was a member of the small production team who, along with the contingent of army personnel managing the whaleboat and their supplies, escorted actors Rod and Grant Taylor, and explorer's descendant Anthony Sturt, on a journey of more than a thousand miles in celebration of Australia's Commonwealth Jubilee. Broadcast every weeknight, *The Sturt Report* captured the events of each day's re-enacted passage. ABC listeners around the country were swept up in the spectacle. The exercise provided the ABC with the opportunity to apply its new technical and creative skills and 'flex its muscles' as a cultural institution, shaping and sharing nationalistic narratives.

[237] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.

Figure 11: The Sturt re-enactment comes to Goolwa in 1951.
State Library of South Australia, B69844.

On this project, Kay took a stance on the ABC's complicit construction of heroic national narratives, something she did constantly throughout her forty-year career at the ABC. Without realising it, Kay had been perpetuating a nationalistic narrative that 'othered' Aboriginal Australians and discredited their agency, ignoring their perspectives on colonisation. As the 'advance' person, Kay was required to deal with the Sturt project's logistics, drum up publicity, encourage locals to get involved and facilitate the community's understanding of Australian history. At one point, she had been running one advance session with local schoolchildren in a small schoolroom in Echuca, explaining the significance of colonial exploration. Throughout the excursion's progress, Kay incited the locals to participate in the re-enactment. In an oral history interview Kay gave after her retirement, she described the moment that she realised how readily she had been perpetuating this negative narrative, and then sought to redress it in some way.

> *I was telling them the story. I looked down at the front desk, where I was talking, and saw a pair of brown eyes in a little Aborigine face, so guilt ridden because he was on the side of the baddie. I thought what am I doing? What am I doing making a side of this? I quickly changed it over to say how brave the Aborigines were, standing up to this invader and how it was their homeland and … changed it round. It made me realise that in many of the history books that we'd been using as sources, many of the things that had been done we were making baddies and goodies, where we should be*

> *presenting things for children so that they could think about it and make decisions for themselves.*[238]

This was a pivotal moment in Kay's career. After this incident, she worked to complicate the racist and sexist tropes that permeated national narratives, the negative historical constructs that dominated the contemporary historical curriculum. Kay used the ABC's educational remit to redress complacent scholarship and prejudiced racial and gender stereotypes. She began to shape her radio and television feature formats, so they could effectively present the complexities of particular themes and issues. Kay did this on projects for audiences of all ages, including in projects she made for *Woman's World*.

Catherine: A 'thorn' in the ABC's side

As a producer of 'women's programming', Catherine King disagreed with the notion that shows for female audiences inhabit a demarcated space. Instead, her aim was to create a program where 'people' listened, not just 'women'.[239] Speaking at a women's conference in Tasmania in 1950, Catherine asserted her views on gendered content: 'the idea of a separate place for women in it [broadcasting] is surely as ridiculous as a separate place for them in the world in general – and as demoded.'[240] She went on to argue that

> *broadcasting is good or bad broadcasting by standards which have nothing to do with sex, and the sooner the idea that women have a specialised set of interests and are incapable of wider ones, is exploded, the better it will be!*[241]

Catherine wanted to create general programming with a woman's perspective; that is, an intelligent, socially progressive, politically aware, culturally engaged and ethically driven woman's perspective.

In one of Catherine's files in the ABC archives, I discovered a 1955 press release (apparently written by Catherine herself), which encapsulated her broadcasting manifesto.

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[238] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[239] King, C. 1982, *6WF Radio – ABC 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH572-18181211, Perth, 1 July.
[240] King, C., 'Speech to conference of university women, Hobart, 1950', quoted in Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 49.
[241] Ibid. p. 49.

She had been running the *Women's Session* for 10 years and the document confidently outlined her expertise and achievements, and praised the 'high calling' that she pursued against the forces of ignorance:

> *the motivating idea was her firm belief that women are not interested in just the four walls of their homes, that their interests are not divorced from men's interests, and are in fact, identical with them. Many people shook their heads over her proposed programmes, and prophesised dismal failure, but within a few weeks it was evident that an extraordinary success had been achieved. Since those early days, the talks have ranged over the widest possible field.*[242]

For more than 20 years, Catherine produced her late-morning sessions with a well-meaning intellectual generosity that resonated with her listeners.

When she was encouraged to use scripts that she saw as substandard, Catherine was quick to negotiate modifications. For example, in 1946 she wrote to the Head of Talks to suggest modifications to a prewritten script. Her diplomatic suggestion, to make a few small changes, masked the fact that her changes were fundamental. Catherine clearly thought the original script ridiculous.

> *Dear Mr Molesworth, thank you for the script on 'Adventures in Fashion'. My first feeling was one of shock, it is so much the antithesis of all that I've been doing. But on second reading, I think perhaps that is quite a good thing. The only minor alteration I would like to suggest, is that Mrs Fallon might suggest that the fun of buying a new spring hat is not the female equivalent or substitute for the adventurous life of men, but merely a pleasant adjunct to the more serious and exciting adventures of life. You see, the whole trend of our session is to prove that life, whether in war or peace, is every bit as full of exciting possibilities, whether in local government or science, or art, or literature, or education, or exploration, as life for men. And while I am far from being a feminist, or an exponent of ideas on the equality of the sexes, it would certainly put the session in a queer position if we were suddenly to*

[242] Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1955, *Catherine King* [press release], NAA, S:SP1011/2 CS:1063 BC:10832626, 9 February.

> *suggest that to men, belongs the high adventure, for women, the dashing accessory to her wardrobe.*[243]

Catherine refused to limit women's interests to superficialities.

Catherine's final show in 1966 was typical of her regular programme. Her daily shows discussed contemporary issues; they were researched and presented by members of her inner circle, as well as herself, and covered a wide range of cultural, political and social issues. They also featured a spiritual reading, often presented by a friendly bishop. Catherine usually interviewed an expert to discuss their craft or profession, followed by poetry readings and music performances, with easy-to-understand explanations to enhance the audience's understanding. The show often featured a discussion between Catherine and her father, or an occasional contribution by her husband, Alec, often presenting a piece of literature or musical interlude.

On Catherine's last radio broadcast, her first featured speaker was regular contributor Valerie Sisson, who first spoke about migrant issues then shared her thoughts on abortion. This segment illustrated Catherine's goal to present contemporary discourse that pushed – but did not break – the boundaries of controversy. Alec King and writer Margaret Webster read poetry, followed by a religious reading presented by show regular, Bishop Brian MacDonald, providing the type of spiritual commentary that Catherine hoped would inspire her listeners. In tribute to Catherine's dedication to the show over the years, the reading on this particular Friday discussed the 'grace of continuance'. It encouraged listeners to prevail over adversity and pursue their goals with grit and determination, celebrating those who serve others.[244] The show continued with an interview between Catherine and ABC journalist Anne Deveson, who turned the tables and asked Catherine to look back and discuss her career. They spoke of their shared appreciation of the power of the medium to affect public opinion and the sense of responsibility that came with the role. Comparing herself to Anne, Catherine argued that the next generation of women were the more 'professional broadcasters', with greater training and technical knowledge. Catherine suggested that the reason for her own success was not due to any technical expertise, but because audiences recognised her passion and purpose for the subjects and

[243] Memo from King, C. to B.H. Molesworth, 1946, titled *Dear Mr Molesworth*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP1558/2 CS:650 BC:10781332, 14 October.
[244] King, C. 1966, *Women's Session*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH175,18181156, Perth, 27 May.

philosophies she presented on air.[245] For Catherine, the message was of utmost importance.

ABC state manager Douglas Channell briefly fronted the microphone to give Catherine an official farewell. Ironically, his well-meaning comments ran contrary to the principles that Catherine enacted in her show. Channell said, 'I'll hope you'll forgive me for butting in to the sacred precincts of the ladies' programme, but I didn't want to let this opportunity go past … without coming along and saying goodbye …' The notion that content for women should be segregated and 'sacred' was antithetical to Catherine's broadcasting philosophy. Channell then corrected Catherine's joke that she had been a 'thorn' in the ABC's side, by suggesting in fact she was 'a rose, an adornment.'[246] His response suggested he saw her programme was an aesthetic embellishment compared to other, more serious ABC programming.

Despite staying within the content domain most receptive to female broadcasters, Catherine still found it necessary to unleash her full arsenal of assets and resources in order to produce her preferred type of challenging content for the *Women's Session*. As we will see in more detail, she (ever-so-politely) appealed, argued and at times threatened to resign when she felt her message was compromised. The ABC begrudgingly accepted her excursions beyond their gendered boundaries over the years, because she had built up a strong following; her audience had coalesced into a strong shared community, which management was wary of upsetting.

Joyce: Critical inquiries and criticising the ABC

In June 1960, Joyce produced the television documentary, *Inquiry into Migrant Problems*. Interrogating the complexities of assimilation, the program presented the human face of migration and discussed what a person might need to settle happily in Australia. Typical for TV Talks documentaries, Joyce brought in an expert to provide the foundational knowledge; in this case, sociologist George Zubrzycki. Joyce incorporated Zubrzycki's comments into her script and sourced a range of other contributors, from youth workers at the Villawood centre to community advocates such as the Capuchin Fathers and the

[245] King, C. 1966, *Women's Session*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH175,18181156, Perth, 27 May.
[246] Ibid.

New Citizens' Council. One excerpt from the script illustrates Joyce's desire to encourage a sense of empathy from mainstream Australian audiences, stating: 'so many migrants' problems are not different from problems any Australian would have – just made difficult by language barriers and that terrible fear that overtakes a human being when he is uprooted and feels outcast and not understood.'[247]

Another of Joyce's documentaries, *Inquiry into Alcoholism* (1960) demonstrated her determination to encourage a new way of looking at stereotyped social problems. In a 2001 interview, Joyce looked back on the project with pride, stating:

> *I liked that program, it was done … with great sympathy for the victims of alcohol. And it did attempt, as I remember it, to introduce the idea that alcoholism was not simply a phenomenon of the down and out but permeated society.*[248]

Joyce argued that one of the biggest problems with alcoholism was the way society stigmatised and denigrated alcoholics, rather than seeing them as people who were suffering.

Another successful project was *Inquiry into Beatniks* (1960). Presenting the perspective of young Sydney students of 'the Push', Joyce created a programme that embodied her own philosophies. She recalled the plan of this documentary was:

> *to question the values of society. This was the whole point of the program. I hope this was carried on after I left the series. That was certainly the intention at the beginning and I felt it was of utmost importance in a society as complacent and decadent as the Menzies government's latter years have produced in Australia. It was necessary to have an inquiring spirit into what were the accepted values.*[249]

[247] Belfrage, J. 1960, *Enquiry Into Migrant Problems No.9*, television script, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, NAA, S:C1984 CS:TV Enquiry 1960 BC: 9683979.
[248] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[249] Ibid.

Joyce was happy that her work on the *Inquiry Into* series allowed her to share her interests and her concerns with the national public. The show was a vehicle through which she could manifest her contempt with the ignorance and smugness of the parochial, 'established' social conventions that she believed were at odds with her socialist ideologies.

One of Joyce's greatest battles, however, was with the ABC itself. Valuing the public-service remit of the ABC, Joyce was frustrated when she thought the organisation was not living up to its responsibilities. After her dramatic departure from the ABC in 1963 (when she was charged with destruction of government property and fined 100 pounds), Joyce initiated a publicity campaign against the ABC, arguing that it had strayed from its public-service mission. She gave a highly publicised presentation to the Humanist Society, titled *What's Wrong with the ABC*.[250] Her criticisms were featured in several newspaper stories in Sydney and Melbourne. In addition to censuring senior ABC staff for their willingness to be swayed by political interference, Joyce described programming officers as entitled, self-serving bureaucrats, who failed to appreciate the technical and creative demands of the television craft and who refused to share their power with the new television producers.[251] Joyce strongly believed in the ABC's duty to be democratic and fought hard against ABC programme officers who, she argued, refused to allow others to contribute their own perspectives and arguments.

Therése: Four challenging ABC documentaries

A Changing Race (1964) was the first of four documentaries produced by Therése during her ABC producer's exchange in 1964. It was the most well-crafted of her four directly commissioned documentaries, with its focused interrogation on the treatment of Indigenous Australians. *Weekend in Australia* (1964), *The World of Father Silvio* (1965) and *A Boy In Australia* (1964) presented less sophisticated criticisms of Australia's anachronistic approach to gender and culture.

With *A Changing Race* (1964), Therése utilised a sophisticated level of film craft to present confronting and uncomfortable truths about race relations, in a way that evoked a degree

[250] Belfrage, J. 1963, *What's Wrong with the ABC?* speech, presented to the Humanist Society, Sydney, 24 July.
[251] 'Improvements for ABC Suggested' 1963, *The Age*, 25 July.

of sympathy and understanding from audiences. The film subverted the traditional approach to framing stories about minorities by privileging the perspectives of Indigenous Australians and presenting white Australians as the 'other'. Rather than having a white narrator, much like a white 'protector' speaking for them, the film's contributors were made visible and humanised by speaking to audiences directly. Therése recruited popular singer Jimmy Little, a Yorta Yorta man, to introduce the film. He was an eloquent, handsome, talented and assimilated Aboriginal Australian, who could mediate the message to poorly informed white Australians.

The film introduced a diverse group of Indigenous Australians, who each explained their concerns and feelings about their role in society, and discussed the difficulties their people face in improving their lives. The documentary presents two key critiques: the first was to shine a light on the systemic failure of missions and reserves to sustain a proactive approach to the care of its people; instead, these were fostering dependency and despondency. Contributors lamented that the useful aspects of mission life, the vocational and educational opportunities made possible years before, had progressively faded away to a systematic incompetence and lack of care. The second criticism was that the Aboriginal Australians were unable to assimilate effectively, and subsequently improve their quality of life, because they lacked constitutional equality.

Figure 12: Jimmy Little, presenter of *A Changing Race*, 1964.
Australian Broadcasting Corporation Library Sales.

Therése presented assimilation as a solution, as long as there was self-determination and a way to retain aspects of traditional identity and culture. She made a point of suggesting that Aboriginal Australians should be asked for their opinion when decisions were being made about their lives. The documentary also touched on Aboriginal land rights, their long history on the land and spiritual concepts of The Dreaming. Therése encouraged contributors to speak of the richness of their culture. The documentary was poetic in its

visual representations of the Australian landscape. Therése juxtaposed beautiful outback panoramas with depressing images of dilapidated missions and intercut footage of tidy and bright-eyed assimilated people with aimless and unhappy mission-dwellers. A wide variety of Indigenous voices and faces were presented, with a variety of different opinions; some were pro-mission and others against.

Critic Sylvia Lawson was particularly impressed, stating that the film 'pulls no punches.'[252] Lawson declared, 'this is propaganda of almost incendiary energy; Miss Denny flings us the sourest part of the present situation and tacitly challenges us to digest it … The film contains wretchedness and pathos, but also pride and realism on the parts of underdogs and fringe-dwellers'[253] However, while the press was generally full of praise for the documentary, the response of one critic suggests that Therése hit a nerve with the white Australians who preferred to maintain the illusion that Australia's Indigenous issues were safely put to bed. *Women's Weekly* TV critic, Nan Musgrove, wrote how 'irritating' the project was for its particular failure to contextualise the whiteness of its Indigenous contributors and its lack of a narrator:

> *I like a commentary that fills in essentials … I would have been very interested to know whether viewers were listening to a South Australian aboriginal or one from northern Queensland, NSW, or Western Australia. Also I would like to have known when I was listening to a full-blood, a half-caste, or a citizen with a tinge of aboriginal blood – it all makes a difference.*[254]

Critics like Musgrove became uncomfortable when confronted with the poverty and dispossession forced upon Aboriginal Australians; they did not like being lectured by them.

Ultimately, *A Changing Race* (1964) fulfilled a social agenda Therése had been working towards. She was unrepentant in her advocacy, ensuring that the film be a platform from which Indigenous Australians could constructively criticise the inadequacies of their white governors and speak directly to white Australia. Therése used her knowledge, her political, social and professional skills in a way that allowed this controversial theme to be relatively undiluted. She highlighted the humanity of people too often invisible, doing

[252] Lawson, S. 1964, 'Miss Denny's Aborigines', *Nation*, 14 November, p. 19.
[253] Ibid, pp. 19–20.
[254] Musgrove, N. 1964, 'Documentary That Missed', *The Australian Woman's Weekly*, 9 September, p. 15.

so in a way that encouraged white audiences to understand and engage with uncomfortable issues.

Therése's other three ABC documentaries adopted similarly critical approaches. In *Weekend in Australia* (1964), Therése disrupts the innocuous framework of a slice-of-life documentary on the iconic Australian lifestyle with barbed critiques of the anachronistic gender constructs permeating Australian society. Therése chose a British outsider to comment on Australian society, playing into the cultural insecurities of the post-war era. In one instance, her criticism of Australian gender relations was particularly sarcastic. The narrator stated:

> *There is still a 'separateness', a lack of intellectual and emotional communication, even if there is a physical contact. Women are all right for the social occasion but not for the really serious things of life like football and racing – and even politics. In these fields they should know their place. Sex doesn't necessarily mean companionship. Australia is a man's world and don't let the Australian woman forget it.*[255]

A Boy in Australia (1964) was narrated by a young Australian man and presents an optimistic view of an enterprising new era in Australia, while at the same time makes blunt critiques of our parochialism and cultural complacency.[256] The film implicitly challenges Australians to move away from notions of social and cultural inferiority. Among a range of contributors from entrepreneurs to young university students, Therése introduced journalist and author of *The Lucky Country* (1964), Donald Horne. Horne was invited to share his views about the pedestrian, backward-looking political landscape and outlined his admiration for the way Australia's younger generations took a more critical, open-minded approach that challenged stereotypes and snobbery.

A key aim of Therése's final ABC documentary, *The World of Father Silvio* (1965), was to foster cross-cultural understanding.[257] Therése produced a film that explained the difficulties facing migrants and attempted to debunk the myths that encouraged post-war xenophobia. Narrated by journalist Pino Bosi, the film presents migrant issues as seen

[255] *Weekend in Australia*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.
[256] *A Boy in Australia*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.
[257] *The World of Father Silvio*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.

within the community of protagonist Father Silvio, a chaplain with urban missionaries based in Leichhardt, Sydney.

Discovering ABC women

The women in this cohort were each driven by a powerful sense of social responsibility and respected the philosophies of public service. They pushed the limits of their authority in a variety of ways and challenged the post-war concepts of femininity that justified the marginalisation of women, becoming 'pilgrims' in the process. They advocated for the less privileged and marginalised in society, presenting insightful and empathetic arguments about the plight of Indigenous Australians, displaced people and migrants. They urged their audiences to be more involved and engaged with their local and national communities, to feel a sense of worth and to aspire to better lives.

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce challenged the gender constructs that limited the scope of 'women's programming' and surreptitiously worked to extend women's roles in the workplace. They were careful agitators, who confronted sexism in the workplace in order to attain positions from which they could frame the debate and insert their own perspectives into public discourse. They viewed themselves as cultural custodians, each on a mission to enhance Australia's cultural identity. They believed that innovative radio and television formats were powerful tools to educate society and imagined that a producer's role at the ABC was a way make a difference. Unlike many of their ambitious peers, who had to resign because of their family responsibilities and married status, the women in this cohort were also able to work more freely – they had the familial support and financial independence that allowed them to pursue demanding careers. The cohort saw education as a key aspect of Australia's enlightenment and encouraged learning for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. They loved culture and the arts, and had a 'whole world' philosophy; they encouraged audiences to think critically about their world and their place in it. They were media craftspeople, and loved radio and television as powerful mediums – their versatility, reach and resonance.

They did not actively function as a collective; however, at times they worked in alignment. For example, Therése Denny had admired Joyce's work on *Inquiry into Migration* (1960)

from afar and readily picked up the pieces of her planned, but as yet un-produced, project on Australian race and assimilation practices. Kay and Catherine had known each other for decades and respected each other's work.

Just as I learned that these women shared a range of philosophies, characteristics and assets, which fuelled their ambition and ability to become public-affairs producers, I also learned that they applied a range of industrial strategies, which sustained and advanced their authority and industrial mobility. One of the key local strategies, for example, was the way that they managed to gain the assistance of powerful male gatekeepers, who were willing to advocate on their behalf. I learned that Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce each initiated a range of highly effective local, transmedial and transnational strategies, which facilitated their success. I will discuss these strategies in detail in the second section of this thesis. Beforehand, the next chapter details the extensive range of obstacles that confronted women in the ABC workplace. It essentially sets the scene, describing the working environment that the cohort experienced as they pursued their careers as public broadcasters.

Chapter 3 – The ABC and gender

This chapter outlines the systems of discrimination at the ABC and contextualises the obstacles that confronted women in the workplace during the 1950s and 1960s. Despite being an 'enlightened' cultural institution with a democratic, socially conscious remit, the ABC was nevertheless a product of its environment. Through its staff, it manifested conservative social conventions that privileged male identity and authority. The dominant paradigm of the dutiful married woman pervaded the post-war ABC. It influenced the type of jobs that women were able to hold, how much they were paid and the way they were represented to the nation. The bulk of women workers at the ABC were constrained by pathways that positioned females into superficial, supportive roles. Even for the women who were exceptions to these rules – the minority with expertise and connections, remit-aligned agendas, socioeconomic autonomy and industrial mobility – there were numerous obstacles to be negotiated and overcome.

This chapter refers primarily to the ABC, yet it also discusses the experiences of ABC producers as they worked overseas, primarily in Britain and America, providing comparative examples from the other broadcasting communities with which they engaged. In doing this, I have been able to contextualise various ways in which the sexual division of labour was manifested within western broadcasting communities, as well as identifying how transnationally mobile women benefitted by strategically negotiating their way around those gendered workplace cultures.

The marginalisation of 'women's work'

The 'woman worker' was a problematic figure in the post-war era. Generations of women workers were compromised by the political economies of gendered labour, of discriminatory systems and industrial hierarchies legitimised by gender constructs. In her 1993 work, *The Woman Worker*, Joan Scott outlined how women's work was framed as a separate, lesser type of labour and explained why the notion of the woman worker was problematic.[258] Nineteenth-century social conventions asserted that home and work were two clearly delineated domains. Waged labour and family duties were envisioned

[258] Scott, J.W. 1993, 'The woman worker', in G. Fraisse & M. Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women in the West: Volume IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London.

separately as 'full-time and spatially distinct jobs.'[259] Male wages were endorsed as reimbursements for sheltering and feeding a family. Women's paid work was deemed as supplemental and therefore worth less. Women were designated to the private sphere, subsumed into the monolithic identity of the married, home-based mother and wife, eschewing the many different identities and agendas of the diverse range of women workers, such as single, working-class and non-white women. The ideal woman was a full-time wife and mother; alternatives were seen as 'unnatural'. Scott explained how these gender rationales were formulated:

> *The way the story of the separation of home and work selects and organizes information achieves a certain effect, one that sharply underscores functional and biological differences between women and men and so legitimizes and institutionalizes these differences as a basis for social organisation. This interpretation of the history of women's work drew on and contributed to the medical, scientific, political and moral opinion that has variously been called the 'ideology of domesticity' or the 'doctrine of separate spheres'. It might better be referred to as the discourse that conceptualised gender as a 'natural' sexual division of labour in the nineteenth century.*[260]

It was a pervasive concept, which influenced attitudes towards women's work in 20th century. It was also hard to disrupt. Well into the post-war decades, as Encel, MacKenzie and Tebbutt reported, paid work for women was seen as unorthodox: 'men expect to work through their lives, but women expect to care for a family – this division of labour between breadwinners and home-makers has set definite limits to what women can or wish to do outside their domestic role.'[261]

Pressure was placed on both men and women to conform. ABC compère Mary Rossi remembered how some husbands in her social circle felt that their social status and masculine identity would be compromised if their wife had a job; they would be seen as inadequate breadwinners. Women were only supposed to work if another income was necessary. One of Mary's friends was interested in taking on paid work but was held back

[259] Scott, J.W. 1993, 'The woman worker', in G. Fraisse & M. Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women in the West: Volume IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, p. 400.
[260] Ibid, pp. 401–402.
[261] Encel, S., MacKenzie, N. & Tebbutt, M. 1974, *Women and Society: An Australian Study*, Cheshire Publishing, Melbourne, p. 40.

by her husband; he was concerned that it would reflect negatively on him.[262] Catherine King's husband, Alec, was criticised for failing to maintain control over his outspoken, publicly active wife. She laughingly recalled on one occasion, 'it was suggested that my husband should be paid enough to keep me off the air!'[263] A woman's place was in the home, and it was a man's duty to keep her there.

Women's work at the ABC was further limited because jobs were 'sex-typed'. Scott pointed to the prevalence of notions from the late 19th century that defined particular types of work as best suited to feminine characteristics. She said, 'in teaching and nursing they were said to be nurturing; typing was likened to piano playing; and clerical tasks supposedly drew on feminine submissiveness, toleration and repetition, and fondness for detail.'[264] In the modern ABC production workplace, 'male' jobs (such as floor manager, technical operator and set maker), were determined by their reliance on traditional male skills, such as a need for physical strength or the ability to delegate and lead others. Women's work (such as producer's assistants, wardrobe mistresses, continuity assistants, makeup artists, and at times, editors) was based on the presumption that a woman had a more delicate physical and emotional state.[265] The 1977 *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women* (AWBC report) examined the ABC's Victorian Film Services division and discovered:

> *All cinecamera'men' (and assistants), all sound recordists (and assistants), all film editors (and assistants) and all photographers were men. In contrast, women were present in two lower level service positions; negative film cutting and film preparation assistants*.[266]

These two, more 'female' categories were seen as more appropriate for women because they were more hands-on, delicate tasks. One film supervisor responsible for recruitment suggested, 'A negative cutter must be a woman as the work demands patience and a light touch.'[267]

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[262] Rossi, M. 2015, *Second Interview with Mary Rossi*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 23 May.
[263] King, C. 1966, *Women's Session*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH175-18181156, Perth, 27 May.
[264] Scott, J.W. 1993, 'The woman worker', in G. Fraisse & M. Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women in the West: Volume IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, p. 415.
[265] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 39.
[266] Ibid, p. 39.
[267] Ibid, p. 41.

Discouraged from seeking positions of authority and denied access to the channels of advancement, female staff were often depicted, according to the AWBC report, as 'inferior, less important, less responsible, less creative than men.'[268] Some of the ABC's senior male officers argued that female assistants and secretaries were *naturally* tactful, patient and diplomatic. Women with typing skills were relegated to working in the typing pool; they were deemed to be 'more dexterous … especially tolerant of routine … and easier to supervise.'[269] From the early 20th century, typing particularly was seen as a woman's job, determined to be best suited for female staff because of its mundane skillset and its interchangeable temporary commitment, suitable for the unmarried woman. One ABC secretary complained that 'behind a typewriter, one's IQ, sensitivity and ambition are diminished in others' eyes somewhat – and it's hard to convince them otherwise.'[270] The accepted convention that typing was 'feminine' work became a handy excuse to leverage female production staff into clerical support roles and clear the way for men.

Kay Kinane had an experience on location during the 1951 Sturt radio project that illustrated the way in which gender constructs encouraged people to ignore a woman's institutional seniority. At 39, Kay was a federal supervisor for the ABC Education division and one of the ABC's most senior producers and script editors. As the expedition's forward agent, Kay was responsible for moving ahead of the group to brief each town in advance, advising them on two fronts. In her production capacity, she instructed each community about what they could do in anticipation of the 'explorers' arrival and coordinated aspects of civic ceremonies that meant so much to local dignitaries and social groups eager to participate. In her secondary capacity as educator, Kay would present locals with historical details and foster a dialogue about the nature of the original event. On one occasion, Kay had just arrived in Mildura when she received a call. She had been invited to return to the previous town to celebrate with the re-enactment team. Flattered and grateful that her work and status were publicly recognised, Kay agreed to drive back for the dinner. After a long and dusty journey, Kay arrived, only to be told that, in fact, it was the men who were to have the dinner, 'but would you mind helping the women in the kitchen?'[271] There were incidents like this that stayed clear in Kay's memory. (Throughout

[268] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 4.
[269] Ibid, pp. 65–66.
[270] Ibid, p. 64.
[271] Kinane, K. 1982, *50 Years of Radio Collection*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA S:C100 CS:1378666 BC:13360990, 4 July.

her numerous oral history testimonies, Kay had a cache of stories like this, which she was able to draw upon when asked about the gender setbacks that she found annoying.)

Many believed that male nature was predisposed to authority and decision-making. Men were also imagined having a natural aptitude to commit to long-term careers. Alternatively, women were portrayed as being unable to apply complex political and industrial strategies, and unable to commit. They were also thought to be marginal to the public sphere. These attitudes were systematically enacted in the workplace. As female careers were seen as short term, they were subsequently aligned to lower, menial roles that were interchangeable and required little commitment.[272] One example of this attitude can be seen at the ABC in 1952, when the ABC cadetship programme was reinstated. Male cadets were designated as potential ABC officers and female staff were not offered positions at all. According to ABC historian Ken Inglis, post-war ABC policy asserted that 'senior personnel should be preponderantly male officers.'[273] Senior male managers (such as the Chief Personnel Officer) believed that it was a waste of time to hire women for full-time production roles, as they were 'apt to marry' and were better suited to 'take down and transcribe the words of men'.[274] Well into the early 1970s, senior male management were still manifesting this type of thinking. One was noted as saying, 'we don't want women if they're at the breeding age.'[275] Contributors to the AWBC Report recounted the type of questions they were asked in job interviews: 'I was asked if I was going to marry and have babies.'[276] They were asked what their husbands did for a living. One ABC female staffer recalled being challenged by a male colleague with: 'Why don't you do your duty and have a baby?'[277]

Senior roles that required full-time commitment, a clinical approach to disseminating data and an ability to negotiate public domains (such as a producer's role in the ABC Talks department), were prescribed as 'male'. The male worker's supposed primacy justified the prioritisation of their interests and capabilities over women's. The majority of women working at the ABC were rarely encouraged to apply for positions of authority. The AWBC

[272] Film and Television School (Australia), Toeplitz, J. & UNESCO, 1976, *Women in the Media: The Professional Participation of Women in the Audio-Visual Media: Film, Radio and Television,* The Film and Television School (Australia), Sydney, pp. 10–11.
[273] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 139.
[274] Ibid, p. 139.
[275] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 82.
[276] Ibid, pp. 110–111.
[277] Ibid, pp. 110–111.

report revealed that 66 per cent of ABC women were placed in supporting roles, which were predominantly secretarial, clerical, switchboard and catering jobs; male staffers were assigned to management and other 'masculine' roles, such as 'looking after buildings and stores and driving cars and minding the garages.'[278] International research undertaken for UNESCO (in conjunction with 19 nations) reported that, by the 1970s, only a minority of female broadcasters around the world were allowed to take on jobs that required input into 'policy, decision-making and creative positions and even fewer in technical operations.'[279]

Summarising the findings of his UNESCO research, industry scholar Jerzy Toeplitz acknowledged that there were 'deeply rooted traditions' in broadcasting that positioned 'men as leaders and women as helpers.'[280] There was a tendency for male staff to imagine their female peers in the same way that they saw their relationships with women at home:

> *Occasionally women become producers and directors (particularly of education programs, children's programs, variety shows and women's programs) but they are more likely to be found as somebody else's assistant, or in research, in wardrobe, in make up or as continuity girls. Casting directors and freelance agents are very often women. All these jobs could be classified as co-ordinating, supportive, mothering, power-behind-the-throne jobs.*[281]

The AWBC Report also identified this culture of the 'mother-wife', the female worker who was expected to 'care about her bosses' needs.'[282] Some secretaries were frustrated with the extracurricular tasks expected of them. They were often asked to go shopping for their male supervisors; for example, to purchase things such as cigars and birthday presents for wives and to pick up their dry cleaning. They were also expected to work as quasi-caterers, buying food and alcohol for work events, then tasked with 'hostessing' and cleaning up afterwards. They even minded children on occasion.[283]

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[278] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 29.
[279] Toeplitz, J. 1976, 'Keynote address', *The Media as a Profession for Women: Problems and Perspectives Conference*, Australian Film and Television School Research and Survey Unit, Ryde, Sydney.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Film and Television School (Australia), Toeplitz, J. & UNESCO 1976, *Women in the Media: The Professional Participation of Women in the Audio-Visual Media: Film, Radio and Television*, The Film and Television School (Australia), Sydney, p. 30.
[282] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, pp. 65–66.
[283] ibid, p. 67.

There were, however, women at the ABC who were not troubled by the sexual division of labour in the ABC workforce. Judith McErlain was 16 when she started as a typist at the ABC in the early 1960s. Typing scripts for Children's television early in her career, Judith enjoyed the camaraderie shared between the 'girls' in the typing pool, and appreciated the supervision of office manager Billie Lean, who 'looked after her brood like our mother'.[284] Unlike Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce, Judith was happy to work in the administrative domain. She liked having a professional identity, the fact that it was minor was not a concern. She loved being immersed in such a creative environment and was happy to contribute in small ways. Judith recalled for example, how she enjoyed being asked to shortlist the paintings contributed by children for a competition. Judith left the ABC briefly in her twenties to travel and, after returning in 1965, moved into the Transmission Planning department as a secretary, finding that she had a talent for new administrative technologies. Still at the ABC in the 1980s, Judith helped with the introduction of computer technology and took great pride in her clerical proficiency.[285] When I asked her if she had fulfilled her career goal, she replied, 'I wasn't a dreamer, just went with the flow. Most of the girls in the typing pool went on to be PA's in the studio. I was more interested in the Administration side [sic].'[286] In 1988 Judith resigned, after the ABC refused to give her the credit and higher wage for the role she was actually performing. Although unhappy with certain managerial decisions, Judith maintains a positive outlook on her career at the ABC. She enjoyed the many social activities that the ABC hosted, recalling the fun of ABC Christmas parties in the studios, when they played the 'goof tapes' of the year's productions. When I met Judith in 2015, she was a vibrant member of the monthly social get-together organised by retired ABC staffers, continuing the sense of camaraderie that she enjoyed during her career.

Post-war Australia was slower than other western nations to accept changes to the role of women in society. Encel, MacKenzie and Tebbutt argued Australia lagged behind Britain and America, and that 'family life in Australia … has remained closer to the Victorian model … the traits, desires, capabilities, interests and social potential of the modern woman are treated as if she were still leading the life her grandmother led.'[287] This was a situation that illustrated Mungo MacCallum's description of the hostile reception to

[284] McErlain, J. 2015, Correspondence to K. Andrews, personal communication, 12 March.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Encel, S., MacKenzie, N. & Tebbutt, M. 1974, *Women and Society: An Australian Study*, Cheshire Publishing, Melbourne, pp. 40–41.

women in authority. MacCallum argued that male staff at the ABC found the presence of women such as Therése Denny stressful and strange, stating, 'Miss Denny would be the first to agree that had she been Mr Denny, ABC officials would have breathed less deeply.'[288] MacCallum noted how more privileged domains, such as prime-time broadcasting, worked to exclude women from their 'male ordered world.'[289]

Not all men at the ABC insisted that their female peers conform to limiting gender stereotypes, however. At various times, and to varying degrees, certain male staff expressed support for the capabilities of ABC women in the 1950s and 1960s. Some, like Mungo MacCallum, spoke publicly about the unfairness of social tropes that discouraged women from attaining positions of authority. Rudi Bronner was one senior staffer who was known for his support of Kay Kinane; however, Kay herself described how at times she worked to re-educate Bronner to think differently about women and work. General Manager Charles Moses was also known for his support. Betty Cook, Moses' long-serving executive assistant, recalled how the pervasive cultures of discrimination would override individual efforts to promote women, countering even the efforts of the General Manager. In an interview with Neil McDonald, Cook described how women would be promoted by Moses then held back or demoted by a review committee when he was away. Cook told McDonald that 'no sooner did he secure a promotion for a talented woman than there would an appeal timed to be heard when he was overseas. "Then we'd have to start all over again"'.[290] Ruth Stirling had a similar experience when she was Federal Organiser of Women's Programmes in the mid-1960s. Individual male staff, who were supportive at times, could also lapse back into a collective complacency and hostility when discussing women in general.[291]

Demonstrating her refusal to simply 'go with the flow', Kay Kinane often worked to readjust the thinking of her male co-workers. In 1982 she provided an example:

> *I'd also feel indignant when in discussions in the office, Rudi Bronner and Charles Bull who was the assistant director would be talking about women and you know, being a bit superior about it and I'd say 'Hey wait a minute,*

[288] MacCallum, M. 1965, 'This band of sisters', *Nation*, 26 June, p. 15.
[289] Ibid, p. 15.
[290] McDonald, N. 2001, 'Therese Denny's *A Changing Race*', *Quadrant*, vol. 45, no. 10, p. 66.
[291] Stirling, R. 1980, *ABC Oral History – Ruth Stirling*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP 1762/1 CS:1059730 BC:13196802, 20 May.

> *I'm here!' and they'd say 'Oh yes but Kay you don't think like a woman, you think like a man'. And I'd say 'That's the biggest insult you could give me.* People *think, not men and women.' But it took them a long time to realise that one could be a woman and still be accepted a person which is what I worked on.*[292]

The fact that this conversation stayed in Kay's mind for more than two decades suggests that Kay found this type of reasoning arbitrary and frustrating. Revealing the nature of their conditioning, Kay's male peers intrinsically believed that characteristics of intelligence, analytical thinking and strategic professionalism were male; when Kay manifested those characteristics, they thought she was acting 'like a man'. They were in fact, complimenting her on her 'maleness'.

In the mid-1970s, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) identified common patterns of behaviour whereby secretaries subsumed their career ambitions and interests into those of their male bosses.[293] It was expected that a secretary's primary goal was to advance *his* career, not her own. The CBC report stated that male bosses commonly delegated onerous or mundane tasks to their female secretaries, in order to maintain their own focus on more rewarding, stimulating work. The report claimed that, at times, the relationship 'begins to resemble that of a master and servant … it takes rare dedication at this stage [for female staff] not to lose pride in one's work, and not to retaliate in small ways.'[294]

Secretaries at the ABC and BBC similarly shared this frustration. In 1957 and 1958, BBC and ABC staff magazines (*Ariel* and *Radio-Active*) both published a satirical article titled 'The psychology of secretarymanship'.[295] Written by a BBC executive secretary, the 'letter' proposed that a postgraduate course be created to advise secretaries on how to gain control of their bosses; the goal was to convert demanding male executives into obedient 'lambs'. The joke was, in fact, a critique of the ridiculous characterisations of a secretary's capabilities and ambitions, and to a lesser degree a criticism of the egotistical prerogatives

[292] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[293] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1975, 'Women in the CBC, Report of the CBC Task Force on the Status of Women', Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada, quoted in L. Fell & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women,* Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1977, p. 66.
[294] Ibid, p. 66.
[295] Kellett, L. 1958, 'The psychology of secretarymanship', *Radio-Active: The ABC Staff Journal*, 17 February, p. 6.

of senior male executives. The article suggested that secretaries play on the annoying stereotypes that were forced upon women: they should refuse to do hard work and argue that they were either too weak and delicate, that they had domestic responsibilities, or that their substantial beauty demands needed more attention. The article encouraged secretaries to play either the delicate flower or the intimidating nag; they could halt the complaints of bosses with either a stern look or 'a tearful gambit' (accompanied by a dramatic flourish of a frilly handkerchief). The fact that staff magazines such as *Radio-Active* and *Ariel* were publishing articles that highlighted discrimination, and brought the woman worker's perspective to production cultures, illustrates the fact that women wanted male staff to know that they were unhappy with their lot and were seeing other possibilities. Changing attitudes was, at least, a public issue. Whether their male peers were listening was another matter.

One possible explanation for the convenient bias sustained by so many male broadcasters was raised in a 1974 report to the Annan Committee on British broadcasting:

> *[The BBC's] biased image of women does not necessarily arise from deliberate male attempts to patronise or degrade women; it often develops because of the unconscious assumptions and prejudices of the mostly male directors and producers who work in a largely male atmosphere (e.g. film editors, film cameramen, studio technical managers, heads of departments) where there are few women to put forward alternative views and where these few women are, they are mainly in subordinate positions.*[296]

The argument that gender discrimination in broadcasting was not 'deliberate' is too convenient. The 'unconscious assumptions' of male producers was more likely a wilful denial of factors that might disrupt their self-serving status quo. Back at the ABC, requests for change were actively ignored, even when requested by male staff. In addition to the demands of women producers themselves, male producers such as Tom Manefield and Mungo MacCallum advocated loudly for the abilities of their female peers. Androcentric production departments, nevertheless, continued to perpetuate outdated assumptions of women. Because female workers were not able to join in and prove that they could do

[296] Women in Media, 1974, 'Submission to the committee on the future of broadcasting (Annan Committee)' quoted in L. Fell & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women,* Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1977.

the jobs, they were assumed to be incapable, and the exclusion of women seemed justified.

After evidence on the systematic discrimination of women from the AWBC report was shared with senior male staff in the mid-1970s, there was still a degree of 'wilful denial', particularly from those in management. The ABC accepted only some recommendations and refused to adopt suggested protocols that would inform and encourage more women to apply for a wider range of jobs.[297]

In the 1950s and 1960s, the ABC imagined its female staff as belonging to either of two categories. The first, the main group of female workers, was imagined as support staff and general staff, who were assumed to be working temporarily, filling in time until their family duties required their attention. Their work was seen as a way to supplement the incomes earned by the men in their lives. The second category of female staff was seen as 'exceptional'; they had a professional expertise and authority that set them apart in the eyes of the ABC's decision-makers. This category is where the ABC's senior women resided, the producers and programmers, such as Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce. Kate Murphy's studies of British women broadcasters in the interwar era reveals that the same division of female labour existed at the BBC. Murphy identified how BBC employment structures could be used as markers for these divisions. Salaried women, paid monthly, were more 'exceptional'. They were the senior women, from producers to press officers. Alternatively, the bulk of women workers were paid a weekly wage, and staffed lower-level positions, from secretaries to cleaners.[298]

Both ABC and BBC women followed legislative regulations that forced women to resign when they married. In Australia, the marriage bar was repealed in 1966. In the meantime, if broadcasters wanted to keep their 'exceptional' female staff, they had to get creative. Murphy found that, although the BBC introduced their own marriage bar in 1932 (to appease growing public interest in 'convention and respectability'), the broadcaster modified the policy so it could keep employing the women who were doing exceptional work.[299] The BBC's other, less 'exceptional' married women, were supposed to have

[297] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 117.
[298] Murphy, K. 2014, 'A marriage bar of convenience? The BBC and married women's work 1923–39', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 535.
[299] Murphy, K. 2014, 'A marriage bar of convenience? The BBC and married women's work 1923–39', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 536.

greater responsibility in home life; they were framed as women whose 'mind is not here but in their homes.'[300] Subsequently, their status and their rights in the workplace were diminished.

Reinforcing the notion that women should only be working if they had no male to support them, the ABC mirrored Australian Public Service policy and applied a marriage bar until 1966.[301] ABC women were allowed to work but, if they did marry, were required to resign. As a consequence, women who wanted to remain in broadcasting were forced to move to casual work (or hide their marriage). Producers such as Ida Elizabeth Osbourne and Margaret Delves retired in their prime. I described the situation in my 2016 article 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC': 'Some in-demand producers like Osbourne managed to return in various capacities as contractors, but for many potential female producers, willingly or not, marriage ended careers.'[302] One female producer, who requested to remain anonymous, provided her testimony about a failed job application to the Talks department. She recalled her frustration at how easily her qualifications and experience were ignored, justified by prevailing gender conventions:

> *Anyway, he called me down and he said 'Look this application of yours for Talks', he said. 'It's very difficult', he said. 'I know you could do it … but we don't give those jobs to women'. And I said 'Well, why not? I can do it and I can do it better than most of the other people who have applied.' And he said, um 'yes, but we don't give jobs to that, Talks jobs to women. Because you might get married again.' And I said, 'Well I've got no intention of getting married again, I would like the job.' And he said, 'Well, I'll do my best for you but …' And the jobs at that time were given to people sitting in a seat long enough. You could be a* driver*, with no experience of broadcasting, but you could get to be program director! And the person that pipped me for that job was a clerk of some kind who'd never done a day's work in the studio …*[303]

[300] Murphy, K. 2014, 'A marriage bar of convenience? The BBC and married women's work 1923–39', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 536.
[301] *Commonwealth Public Service Act* 1902, Commonwealth of Australia.
[302] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 33.
[303] Anonymous, at interviewee's request, 1993, oral history, National Film and Sound Archive Australia (NFSA).

This testimony illustrates how the social construct of the dutiful married woman was arbitrarily applied to exclude any woman from a position deemed important and permanent, even those with no plans to marry.

In 1982, Kay Kinane was interviewed by the ABC as part of the celebrations of the organisation's 50th anniversary. Many of the oral history interviews undertaken during this period adopted a feminist tone; in this case, Kay provided a range of responses to the question of her behaviour as a feminist. In addition to recounting how she worked to encourage other producers to create gender-neutral content and how she tried to correct her male peers when they praised her for 'thinking like a man', Kay provided the following account of how frustrating it was to work under a marriage bar:

> *you were taking a punt on a woman in a way, because in those days if they married they had to leave and so if you appointed an attractive woman you'd probably only have her for about two years and she'd go. You had to take this into consideration. And I always felt indignant when people would do this. I'd say 'it's not fair', but I could see a reason for it in other ways.*[304]

It is interesting that Kay said she 'could see a reason for it in other ways'. One wonders what she meant. Perhaps she understood this stricture from an ABC management perspective. After considering the evidence within the archives and re-listening to her oral history interviews, it was clear Kay did not manifest any support for this type of discrimination. One possible reason that Kay added the comment was to make a brief diplomatic concession to the ABC. Perhaps it was an example of how she folded a small compromise into her criticisms so that they triggered less resistance. Moments later in the interview, Kay confessed that, on one occasion, she dressed as attractively and femininely as possible and 'played it up' when pitching a particularly challenging series to conservative educational authorities. This second account fuels the argument that Kay was willing, to a degree, to mask her natural mannerisms and modify her language in order to serve her underlying goals.[305] The marriage bar, nevertheless, took a substantial

[304] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[305] Ibid.

toll on women's advancement at the ABC. The AWBC Report noted that, in 1975, only two women were department heads (Kay was one of them). Both were unmarried.[306]

It was common for female candidates to be placed behind male applicants, even though they may have been more experienced; unless it was in a specifically 'female' role, which men did not want. For example, a female production staffer who had been an acting floor manager for some months would lose against a male staffer who had no studio experience; he was deemed to have more ability to commit, more natural authority and control, and a greater long-term potential. Here is Kay Kinane again, from that same interview in 1982, lamenting the way that male staff were privileged during her career:

> *I found, in working, that any woman in the ABC had to do a job better than a man in order to get a promotion. And I say that advisedly because I've sat on committees interviewing women and men. And I've seen the women – that unless the women were manifestly better than the men – turned down.*[307]

This workplace convention explains why so few women achieved seniority at the ABC. Not only did they have to be single, they had to have exemplary skills to overcome the manufactured negatives of their female gender. Essentially, they had to far exceed the male candidates so that the gender bias would be overcome. When Kay was promoted to Assistant Director of Education in 1963, Charles Moses wrote a detailed press release praising her talent and expertise in a manner that justified her promotion.[308] The nature of the statement suggests that the ABC felt a degree of satisfaction in having a senior executive who was female. It was as if they were saying, 'Look at how unusual she is!' There was an undertone of pride that she was awarded the position *despite* her gender.

One of the lines of reasoning that further diminished the value of women's work was the notion that they were working 'just for the pin money'. It was common for post-war broadcasters to argue that female workers were simply on a detour from their inevitable, 'natural', domestic duties. They would only be working until they were married, or working casually to earn in addition to their husband's income. It was a common

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[306] Film and Television School (Australia), Toeplitz, J. & UNESCO 1976, *Women in the Media: The Professional Participation of Women in the Audio-Visual Media: Film, Radio and Television*, The Film and Television School (Australia), Sydney, p. 30.
[307] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[308] Moses, C. 1963, *High Post for ABC Woman* [press release], Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP1462 CS:Kinnane Kay BC:13619645,12 December.

justification to pay women less and deny them the long-term positions that required commitment. On one occasion at the BBC Birmingham studios in the 1950s, Joyce found herself arguing that, unlike some of the young women working for 'pin money', she was a production journeywoman, in it for the long haul. In her 2001 interview with Graham Shirley, Joyce proved that she was more than willing to call upon on memories of long-past injustices and recounted one such argument with a male manager:

> *He summoned me to his office and said, 'Joyce, I feel I must speak to you because I really don't think you ought to come to work in trousers'. So I said 'Well, I'm terribly sorry about that Denis but it is rather cold weather and I've only got one skirt because I can't afford to buy any more skirts, because the BBC only pays me five pounds a week'. And so he said, 'Well I don't see why you can't. My secretary earns less than you do and she manages to dress perfectly respectably'. So I said, 'Your secretary is the daughter of one of Birmingham's richest industrialists and, I don't doubt, gets an allowance from her father to augment the pin money that she gets from you.' And that didn't do me career any good, either! But I was just so incensed you know, that he should take that attitude! But that was absolutely typical.*[309]

Joyce saw a danger in being labelled a 'pin-money' worker. She wanted, in fact, she *needed* to set herself apart. To disrupt any narrative that might suggest she was lacking the commitment and drive necessary to be a producer. To Joyce's mind, these numerous instances of discrimination added unnecessary levels of difficulty to her ability to produce. For her, a decent wage was a necessity. The 1950s were a time of austerity in Britain and Joyce needed every pound. She had no additional sources of income and supported herself for most of her career. I was surprised to discover that the 'pin-money' excuse was still being used at the BBC in the 1970s. Jean Seaton detailed how the stereotype was exhumed to pay women less, to rationalise that they were not to be taken as seriously as their male counterparts. In one instance, for example, BBC *Today* show programme anchor, Joan Bakewell was told by director of Programmes, David Attenborough, that she should be paid less money because 'you only do it for the pin money.'[310]

[309] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[310] Seaton, J. 2015, *Pinkoes and Traitors: The BBC and the Nation, 1974–1987*, Profile Books, London, p. 222.

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, there were 46 'major' job categories officially categorised by gender within the ABC (covering 95% of ABC staff). Of those 46 categories, 24 were assigned as 'Men's' jobs, 13 were 'Mixed' jobs and nine were 'Women's' jobs.[311] I have reproduced the 'Analysis of the Occupancy of 46 Major Job Titles (95% of Employees)' statistics taken from page 18 of the 1977 AWBC Report:

24 Men's jobs (% Male)	**9 Women's Jobs (% Female)**	**13 Mixed Jobs (% Female)**
Management – 100% Cinecamera'man' – 100% Engineer – 100% Setmaker – 100% Sound Recordist – 100% Staging Assistant – 100% Store'man' – 100% Technical Officer – 100% B'casting Trades'man' – 100% Commissionaire – 100% Driver – 100% Electrician – 100% Operations Assistant – 100% Model Shop Crafts'man' – 100% Set Finisher – 100% Technical Instructor – 100% **TV Producer – 98%** Operations Officer – 97% Announcer – 94% Presentation Officer – 94% Reporter – 93% Floor Manager – 92% Designer – 91% Film Editor – 91%	Typist – 100% Clerk/Typist – 100% Producer's Assistant – 100% Steno-Secretary – 100% Telephonist – 100% Accounting Machinist – 100% News Ops. Assistant – 99% Attendant (tea/canteen) 99% Wardrobe/Cutter – 92%	Make-up Artist – 80% Cleaner – 69% Programme Assistant – 59% Orchestral Musician – 39% Education Officer – 38% Publicity Officer – 30% Clerical Officer – 30% Graphics – 21% Programme Officer 14% Journalist 14% Draftsman 12% SFX Officer 11% Clerk 11%

Figure 13: AWBC Report, 1977, Analysis of the Occupancy of 46 Major Job Titles.

All senior management and producing positions were categorised as 'Men's' jobs and of TV producers, for example, 98% were male. Further down the production ladder, we can see that some women were assigned to 'Mixed' jobs; however, the majority of female staff were confined within nine types of 'Women's' jobs.[312] Of the 13 'Mixed' jobs categories, women dominated the lower ranks.[313]

These statistics can be reinforced visually by glancing through the photo pages of *This Is the ABC* (1983) and the ABC's staff magazine *Channel* (1975). Among photos of ABC management and policy-makers over the years, the dominance of male decision-makers is very clear. I selected four photos from the book and magazine to illustrate the visual

[311] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 18.
[312] Ibid, p. 26.
[313] Ibid, pp. 18–19.

absence of women in ABC industrial narratives. The suited white men in these photos filled positions of authority at the ABC. They were federal officers and state managers, 'Talks' programme officers, newsreaders and producers.

Figure 14: ABC Federal Officers and State Managers, 1950.
(Note: The one woman in the photo is Betty Cook, the General Manager's executive secretary).
Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc. Melbourne, p.102(c).

Figure 15: ABC Talks officers, Sydney, 1951.
Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p.182(b).

Figure 16: ABC National News Readers, 1954.
Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc. Melbourne, p.214(b).

The Producers Conference — pinning hopes on a dubious scenario. (from left to right): Les Wallace P.S.B.), Bruce Allen (Producer, Lloyd Capps (Producer), John Lewin (Industrial Officer), David Salter (Producer), Peter Vendrell (Producer), Julian Pringle (Producer), Roger Grant (Federal Secretary A.B.C. Staff Association), John Gaucci (Producer), Colin Dean (A.B.C. Management), Bert Breen (A.B.C. Industrial Relations), Fred Bennett (C.P. and E. A.B.C.), Peter Dell (A.B.C. Management), Dick Stradwick (P.S.B.), Stradwick's assistant (name unknown).

Figure 17: 'Producers: The fine talk', 1975.
Channel, the Official Journal of the ABC Staff Association, vol. 2, no. 1, March, p.1.

The following testimony, provided in the AWBC Report, was given by one of the few women who attended management meetings in the mid-1970s. It conveys the feelings of alienation and otherness that a woman experienced when infiltrating the male-centric environments of the ABC:

> *I sometimes wonder if the men I see at supervisors meetings can have any inkling of what it's like to be the only woman there – or one of, say, two women in a bunch of twenty-odd men … It's not that they scare me – though the first few times I was nervous. But when you look around at a sea of black*

> *stretch socks and suspenders and conservative suits and forty-ish faces and you know these are all men used to exercising authority – when you have to establish yours – and that they're separated from you not only by sex but by a fair age gap; when you listen to their peculiar jokes and the way they score points off one another – then you know you've wandered into a totally different world.*[314]

This account demonstrates how male staff in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s found it reassuring to be constantly surrounded by peers who shared the same characteristics and perspectives, fuelling their sense of belonging.

Another aspect of the ABC workplace culture that marginalised women's ability to advance was the way in which women were excluded from social networks once they moved outside the ABC office and studio. Denied access to the 'old boy' networks that congregated outside office hours, female production staff missed out on informal conversations about new jobs and project ideas.[315] Australian women were banned from drinking in public bars until the 1970s and were, instead, confined to separate 'ladies lounges'. Even Kay Kinane, exceptional in her seniority, with a fair amount of support from her male peers later in her career, was constrained from joining them socially. In a 1982 radio interview, Kay presented a somewhat confusing account of how she dealt with the problem:

> *But they used to forget that I was a woman, because, mark you – in the early days of meeting with the other Supervisors we used to meet once a year, round Australia – I knew that they were used to going off to have a beer after work. And in those days women couldn't go into a bar, remember … I was the only woman. I used to just quietly disappear so as not to embarrass them. But, the interesting thing was, they started to chase after me to say 'come and have a drink' in the parlor or in the room or, they made opportunities because they realised we were all in it together and it was fun to have me along. And*

[314] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 28.
[315] Ibid, p. 107.

so, I never lost out through that, I never had to be aggressive about it. Because we worked together.[316]

Kay's story suggests that there is an element of composure at work in her memory-making. Despite her seniority, Kay was not in a situation where she could change conventionalised customs and criticise the men for their exclusivity; rather, she played a more circumspect role and waited for them to do the right thing. The nature of this memory allows Kay to argue that 'she never lost out', that her male peers quickly modified their behaviour to accommodate Kay. However, other evidence of workplace behaviour indicates that even the 'good men' of the ABC were still occasional facilitators of discriminatory behaviours and conventions.

Ruth Stirling remembered how careful a woman had to be to negotiate the differences between acceptable work and social behaviours. At work, male staff could hold work-related conversations with her but, once the social environment changed, attitudes altered, particularly at events where partners attended. There were dangers in overstepping gendered customs at work socials. Ruth learned that it was possible to antagonise the wives of male co-workers by simply talking to their husbands at parties. In one interview from 1982, she described the situation, stating that if she had left the women's group and crossed the floor to talk to her male co-workers, she would be seen as desiring their husbands.[317] A decade earlier, Kay Kinane had been amused by the nervousness expressed by her subordinates on a location crew, who, she laughingly described years later, were 'very loathe to spend a night in the bush with a lady producer.'[318] Disconcerted by the thought of camping in the outback with a woman, this example illustrates how some men found it difficult to contravene social conventions, particularly when they strayed into situations outside the office.

[316] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[317] Stirling, R. 1982, *Interview with Ruth Stirling for ABC 50th Anniversary*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1201800 BC:13271766.
[318] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC:13196286, 15 November.

Compromised channels of advancement: Getting trapped in the typing pool

Moving from the typing pool into a 'thinking job' was seen as almost impossible. An unofficial motto heeded by young women with ambitions to produce was to hide the fact that they could type. Once a woman was relegated to the typing pool, it was difficult to escape. Producer's Assistant Ruth Page penned her thoughts on the difficulty for ambitious typists to move up the production ladder. In a 1957 issue of ABC staff magazine *Radio-Active,* Ruth wrote an article that lamented the fact that, although her female predecessors 'stormed the ramparts' for the right to work in an office, following generations were required to stay satisfied with doing secretarial work. 'It was almost expected of us,' she wrote, 'we took our lot for granted, but we were not content. As we sat at our typewriters we dreamed (in this modern age) of being script girls in television.'[319] According to the AWBC Report, even in the 1970s, the majority of clerical staff sought to advance away from the typewriter, with ambitions to move into areas such as 'script writing, announcing, film editor, administration, producer's assistant, floor manager, secretary, producer'.[320]

Producers Therése Denny and Bev Gledhill started at the ABC as teenagers, Therése in the late 1940s and Bev in the 1950s. Both were determined to avoid being 'trapped' in the typing pool. Therése had been a shorthand typist for music and variety producers at the ABC in Adelaide, and later bragged about what a terrible a typist she had been; she was cheerful about her 'failings' because they gave her a way out. The evidence suggests that Therése was downplaying her abilities; her scores of typed letters, reports and memos in the archives are relatively faultless. Her supposed clerical inadequacy gave Therése permission to try a different path, in production. Therése soon left the ABC and found work compèring a commercial radio show.[321] Similarly, when Bev Gledhill joined the ABC, she quickly decided that she would like to be a producer. She recalled her decision to start in despatch, then try for a production role, refusing to be sidelined: 'I didn't learn to type because producers didn't need to type, so there was absolutely no point in my learning to type because I was going to be a producer.'[322] Bev became a production assistant and junior all-rounder before being admitted to the ABC's television training

[319] Page, R. 1957, 'The whirld of a script girl', *Radio-Active: The ABC Staff Journal*, 15 October, p. 4.
[320] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 72.
[321] Gott, S. 1963, 'Therése is the BBC's only woman TV producer', *New Idea*, 3 July, pp. 6, 23.
[322] Gledhill, B. 2005, *Interview with Bev Gledhill*, oral history, interviewed by C. Hogan, *Women Working in Television Project*, NFSA, Screen Australia, 738866.

school in 1956. Therése and Bev's refusal to type suggests that they were aware of how difficult it was for women to transition from secretarial to 'thinking' roles at the ABC. As we will see with their careers, it was often easier to leave the organisation in order to recalibrate one's career trajectory.

Script Assistants, also known as Producer's Assistants, were further up the production ladder than typists; nevertheless, their potential for advancement was also constrained. The gendered nature of the role was characterised in a 1956 *Radio-Active* article on the ABC's new television training courses, in which a special training course for production 'girls' is described:

> *… with 19 girls, introducing them to the intricacies of being 'girl Friday' to a TV producer. After a bewildering introduction to the studio, where they tried their hand at everything from working cameras to calling shots in the producer's booth, the girls settled down to doing routine script assistant work for three short productions. They typed scripts, filled out an impressive array of requisition forms and raced round Sydney finding props, as well as assisting at the productions.*[323]

After being introduced briefly to hands-on production skills, which, apparently, they were not suited for, and thus 'bewildered', the 'girls' were guided back to more appropriate roles, roles that required the 'feminine' predispositions to do manual labour and do what one was told. In everyday working life however, Script Assistants often proved themselves capable by stepping in when their producers were absent. Unfortunately, even though a woman may have months of experience in a role, they were commonly denied promotions into the official position.

ABC women were also unable to attain wage parity with male peers on parallel career tracks. Despite female staff arguing that assistant directors (male roles) and assistant producers (female roles) shared similar responsibilities and duties, ABC management asserted that the (male) floor managers and directors required different, more responsible and complex skill sets, and thus deserved a higher rate.[324] Floor manager and producer

[323] 'TV training' 1956, *Radio-Active*, 16 July, p. 7.
[324] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 58.

Pauline Thomas came to the ABC in 1951, straight after graduating from school; a precocious sixteen-year-old with qualifications to teach music and advice to go to university. She instead approached the ABC and was summarily sent to the 'Female Personnel Officer'. Pauline described the situation when I interviewed her in 2015. She recounted how she declared optimistically to the ABC recruiter: 'I'm a musician, I like theatre, I've done acting, won an acting award … I know about the church, I like sport, I play tennis, in other words, I could fit in anywhere.'[325] She was then asked, 'But what can you do? Can you type?' The last thing Pauline wanted to do was type, so she said 'no'. Regardless, she was told to only return after learning to type.[326] She had moved from administration and joined the all-female Script Assistants course when television was introduced. Pauline finally began to make headway in production after serving 10 years as a production assistant. Assigned to the 'pool' of Script Assistants, she eventually managed to work as a casual floor manager in the mid-1970s.

Changes to the roles and status of Script Assistants proved *very* hard to implement. In 1958, Kay Kinane was having problems with poorly trained vision mixers. All men, as the job was assigned 'male', Kay found that their mistakes were compromising the quality of her shows. A vision mixer sits in the studio control room and should, with perfect timing, switch the image between cameras at the request of the director. In its first few years of television, the ABC lacked a fully trained and qualified roster of mid-level production staff. Kay offered a simple solution; she suggested that management reassign a few Production Assistants to be vision switchers. The female staffers were already familiar with production protocols, she argued, and 'would understand the problems involved.'[327] Kay added that this versatile cohort of Assistant/Mixers would quickly become valuable 'specialists'. But it was not to be. A note scribbled at the bottom of Kay's archived memo reveals that her suggestion was rejected. The handwritten comment said: 'Discussed producers meeting – decided no action at present.'[328] Despite proving to be a highly valued production expert and having the ear of most senior policy-makers at the ABC, including its commissioners, Kay Kinane's suggestions to change the gender restrictions placed upon Script Assistants were ignored. It would take more than a decade before Producer's Assistants finally gained

[325] Thomas, P. 2015, *Interview with Pauline Thomas*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 20 February.
[326] Ibid.
[327] Memo from Kinane, K. to Acting Controller of Programmes, 1958, titled *'Woman's World': Telerecording for BBC – Recorded Monday 26th May*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP727/2 CS:6/1/12 BC:1506540, 27 May.
[328] Ibid.

some headway into better conditions, after they formulated the ABC's first industrial strike in 1973.[329]

Effective workplace behaviours predicated by one-on-one communications and a direct exchange of ideas were progressively constrained as the ABC expanded. Kay Kinane found it much easier to commission work in the 1950s than she did 15 years later. Kay recalled how, in the early 1950s, she could walk in to see Charles Moses and pitch him a good idea. A decade later, numerous inefficient permission gateways had to be passed through. Kay believed that programmes suffered as a consequence. Looking back, Kay lamented, 'you had to argue your way through people who knew nothing about production …'[330] By the late 1960s, there were too many gatekeepers controlling the message, too few creatives and too little individual autonomy. It was a common dilemma; many producers at the ABC became increasingly frustrated with pedantic bureaucrats.

The more the ABC expanded and enlarged its management staff and systems, the more women were pushed to the sidelines. Entrenched behaviours such as sexual discrimination became conventionalised and bureaucratic conventions sustained the authority of those in charge. Michele Hilmes explained how the process was similarly implemented in the American radio industry: 'as in any new field, early flexibility gave way to institutionalised rigidity that worked to contain and repress radio's more potentially disruptive aspects …'[331] As bureaucratic systems harnessed and processed creative practices, they also played a part in modifying gender behaviours within workplace culture. The conventional and officious nature of the ABC allowed for gender constructs to filter through the workplace.

Gendered behaviours

Traditional stereotypes about gender also defined what emotional behaviours were acceptable at work. Female staff members were expected to be 'feminine', that is, placid and easy-going; to be subservient to the needs of those men they were there to assist. They were also expected to feel grateful that they had a job at all. The interchangeable nature

[329] Bowden, T. & Borchers, W. 2006, *50 Years: Aunty's Jubilee! Celebrating 50 Years of ABC-TV*, ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, p. 162.
[330] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[331] Hilmes, M. 1997, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, p.132.

of clerical and assistant positions at the ABC was a result of social constructs proposing that women workers had to be replaceable, because they might need to go back home. This notion fuelled the instability of their positions and denied them the opportunity to be assertive in their rights. Ruth Page's 1957 article in the ABC staff magazine presents us with another perspective of how most female staff, assistants, were expected to stay silent, well behaved and grateful:

> *The man to whom you have been for the most part sweetness itself, and who in return has been approximately human, if a little erratic, has turned suddenly into a not-so-far-from-erupting volcano … it is now that you hope you've done everything, and that the volcano doesn't erupt at you.*[332]

Male staff were forgiven for their volatile behaviour. Angry outbursts were accepted as natural side effects to the masculine demands of their male-defined jobs; roles defined as risk-taking, creative thinking, single-minded tasks.[333]

There also was a degree of pressure on senior women to behave modestly; arrogance was not a helpful trait for a female trying to succeed in a male division. In Joyce Belfrage's case, performance reviews criticise her intractability and opinionated behaviour on productions.[334] It is possible that she was just too outspoken, too political, too arrogant and too 'male'. TV editor Terence Gallacher recalled Joyce's stubbornness on set. At work, Joyce would insist on shooting in the expansive manner she was used to, rejecting the more economic, tailored-to-the-edit style that ABC crew favoured. Gallacher stated that 'working with Joyce was quite an experience. Whether right or wrong, everything had to be done her way and she was prepared to out-shout everyone else connected with a production.'[335] Joyce's tenuous autonomy in those early years of television production at the ABC was weakened by her abrasive personality. She was less successful than Kinane and Denny. Although they, too, were forceful and demanding professionals, they made efforts not stray too far from acceptable 'female' behaviour and were viewed more favourably by ABC management.

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[332] Page, R. 1957, 'The whirld of a script girl', *Radio-Active: The ABC Staff Journal*, October 15, p. 4.
[333] Hesmondhalgh, D. & Baker, S. 2015, 'Sex, gender and work segregation in the cultural industries', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 63, pp. 23–36.
[334] Memo from Miley, D. to Director of Talks, 1961, titled *TV Producers' Gradings*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 28 November.
[335] Gallacher, T. 2012, 'Colleagues: Mrs Belfrage', *Terence Gallacher's Recollections of a Career in Film*, website, viewed 10 May, 2014, <http://terencegallacher.wordpress.com/2012/08/28/colleagues-mrs-belfrage/>.

Gallacher's difficulty with an autocratic female director/producer was not an isolated incident. Certain members of Therése's Australian crew struggled to accept her authority when shooting on location in 1964. Therése's younger sister, Mary Kenihan, told me that during a production dinner with Therése and the crew (they had been shooting near their home town, Adelaide), a male crewmember awkwardly confessed how much he disliked working with Therése. Kenihan believed that it was because 'they weren't used to having a woman run the thing' and stated that she was fairly sure Therése was aware of their discomfort, but 'battled on regardless.'[336] Perhaps it was just too disconcerting for male crewmembers, used to working under male directors who relied on well-worn local production manners and methods, to surrender to the autonomy of a woman; it may have been even harder when that woman applied methods and techniques from a different, more elite broadcasting culture.

As I detailed earlier, when Neil McDonald interviewed *A Changing Race* (1964) cinematographer Bob Feeney in 2001, he allowed Therése's authority as a director to be obfuscated in the retelling. McDonald did, however, capture Feeney's thoughts about having Therése in charge of the production. Although Feeney admired her skill and professionalism in drawing out remarkable performances from nervous contributors, 'with sympathy and understanding,' McDonald noted that Feeney confessed to having found her difficult at times. Feeney said that, at times on location, he would jokingly abuse his assistant, telling McDonald, 'I'd pretend to tear him off a new strip and he'd just say "yes sir, yes sir".'[337] Feeney described how Therése had misunderstood this as cruelty and quickly stepped in, telling him she was 'disgusted' with his treatment of a co-worker. Feeney told McDonald that he was annoyed because Therése had doubted his professionalism: 'she couldn't believe it was only a joke'.[338] McDonald subsequently spoke to other male crewmembers and confirmed that this sort of teasing behaviour was accepted among the male production staff at the time. Therése's insistence on professionalism and her desire to protect her team subsequently marked her as flinty and uptight. Clearly, she was not one of the ABC 'boys'.

Experienced female television director/producers learned that their authoritative presence could easily disconcert male co-workers. Early in her career as Schools Supervisor in

[336] Kenihan, M. 2014, *Interview with Mary Kenihan*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.
[337] McDonald, N. 2001, 'Therése Denny's *A Changing Race*', *Quadrant*, vol. 45, no. 10, p. 66.
[338] Ibid, p. 66.

Perth, Kay Kinane recruited Ken Watts to join her team. He had stayed in Borneo in the army reserves after the war before Kay sought him out. Watts worked with Kay then, gradually, progressed ahead of her, becoming Federal Director of Education, then Federal Director of general programming, and finally Controller of programming in the 1970s. Although Kay and Watts shared a strong mutual respect, Kay remembered that Watts found it difficult to accept to a woman in authority. Illustrating how authoritative women had to make an effort to ensure their male peers were 'comfortable', Kay said, it was

> *[a] fairly ticklish relationship because Ken wasn't used to being, to having a lady as a boss. I had to tread very carefully to make it a co-operative effort, I think, to make Ken comfortable. We worked happily together there until I moved away.*[339]

Therése also found it necessary to 'train' male contributors to accept an expert woman's authority. In the archived papers of Australian biologist Alan (Jock) Marshall, a small collection of letters capture her failed attempts to negotiate a productive working partnership with the London-based professor of zoology. It was 1960 and Therése had been impressed by Marshall's fresh approach to the natural sciences and his passion for the Australian environment. She wanted the biologist to contribute new insights into Australia's cattle and pearling cultures in the Kimberley in a short series of documentaries to be aired by the ABC and BBC. Marshall, however, was unfamiliar with the practical demands of television production. Prior to their first meeting, he had been informed that his pitch for a BBC documentary had been rejected.[340] When Therése approached and presented him with the chance to work on a project in Australia, on location in the outback, Marshall quickly accepted. Naively imagining that the shoot would be a well-paid jaunt, he quickly wrote to several friends, entreating them to join in the fun while on location. It would be an opportunity, he said, to 'get the old firm back together again.'[341]

After a series of letters between them, Therése, apparently sensing that she may have trouble with Marshall's attitude, subtly suggested that he focus on the mission at hand. She quickly set about educating him to the dynamics of a professional location shoot,

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[339] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[340] Marshall, A.J. 1959, Correspondence to P. Male, *Papers of Jock Marshall*, 1930–1967, NLA, MS 7132, Series 16-12, 15 July.
[341] Marshall, A.J. 1959, Correspondence to R. Drysdale, *Papers of Jock Marshall*, 1930–1967, NLA, MS 7132, Series 16-12, 15 July.

particularly the necessities of filming in a challenging, remote location. Clarifying where the project's agenda lay, and where the power would ultimately reside, Therése wrote:

> *if you get just one human being who is difficult in the group, then the tensions and strains on the group affect the programme. Like all things, it has to be very much a matter of give and take and, unlike your [scientific research] trip where everybody had the one interest, within a camera crew very often there is a clash of interest – the cameraman is interested only in the pictures, not really in the programme as a whole; the sound man is interested only in the quality of his sound. The poor wretched producer has to be responsible for welding together all the elements – in fact – has not only to be 'the boss' but recognised as such; and when that poor wretch is female the job is doubly hard, because instinctively and understandably they resent being told what to do by a mere female, and yet, if the whole thing is to hold together that is the way it has to work. Indeed, as I am sure you will be only too quick to understand, if it comes to the point – although I am sure it never will – these same rules apply to you, or anyone else in the party!*[342]

It was this final assertion, the need for Marshall to acknowledge and accept her autonomy on location, that drew his ire. He quickly withdrew from the project. While Therése negotiated Marshall's withdrawal, his letters to friends reveal his petulant disapproval of her insistence for control. Marshall laid the project's failure squarely on Therése's shoulders when he wrote to one friend, stating,

> *I have now several times met the producer of the series, who would unfortunately be in charge of the party. She has turned out to be a garrulous, assertive lady, and I have concluded that she would drive me mad in the close confines of a camp. So I've written saying I'm no longer available. I did this with a good deal of reluctance because I met the male camera team and found them all to be extremely nice chaps.*[343]

[342] Denny, T. 1960, Correspondence to A.J. Marshall, *Papers of Jock Marshall*, 1930–1967, NLA, MS 7132, Series 16-12, 5 February.
[343] Marshall, A.J. 1960, Correspondence to P. Male, *Papers of Jock Marshall*, 1930–1967, NLA, MS 7132, Series 16-12, 26 February.

Essentially, Therése was acting in the manner required of every good producer: running a tight ship, seeking strong creative partnerships, and anticipating and addressing potential problems. Marshall was unwilling to subjugate his prerogatives to the practical agendas of TV documentary production, instead, blaming Therése's female weakness for the project's failure.

Despite Marshall's opinion of Therése, her gender was not always an issue with her male counterparts. Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks had been interviewed by Therése early in the 1950s and encouraged her to participate on Huw Wheldon's *Men of Action* television series. Horrocks held Therése in high regard after their first radio broadcast; he appreciated how she had thoughtfully and professionally guided him through the challenging process.[344] A respected WWII general, Horrocks likened the television industry to a 'ferocious' field of battle, where production personnel were like soldiers. He saw Therése as a kindred spirit, a battle-producer of sorts, who effectively marshalled her crew to the task in hand.[345] Praising her in his autobiography, Horrocks commended her for her precision and skill:

> *I soon found that I was no longer the general but the front-line soldier who had to go over the top. The commander was the producer – originally Huw Wheldon and now Therése Denny – sitting somewhere out of my sight, in a room full of monitor television sets and surrounded by the chief staff officers concerned with sound, light, and cameras, to mention the three most important. All the men who are operating the dollys on the floor of the studio are wearing ear-phones and from her box Therése controls their movements like a commander on a battlefield. This must be a nerve-wracking job because the producer can make or mar the programme.*[346]

Horrocks' biographer Phillip Warner believed that the General's broadcasting success was due, to a large degree, to Therése's professional guidance, and that the Horrocks himself was grateful for it.[347] Surprisingly, it was a 'masculine' military man who most valued Therése's capabilities and contributions. Horrocks did not have a problem with her authoritative characteristics.

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[344] Horrocks, B. 1961, *Escape to Action*, St Martin's Press, New York, p. 300.
[345] Ibid, p. 302.
[346] Ibid, pp. 303–304.
[347] Warner, P. 1984, *Horrocks: The General Who Led from the Front*, Hamish Hamilton, London, p. 151.

Figure 18: Therése on location for *Men of Action,* Mount Athos, Greece, 1958.
With women unwelcome on the monastic island, Therése dressed as a boy for the day's shoot.
Denny Family Archive.

The ABC's 'other' women contributors

There were women positioned at different levels within the ABC's production hierarchy, each contributing in different ways, each with their own agendas, options and capabilities. At the top were staff such as Kay Kinane, a Federal Supervisor, then senior programme officers such as Ida Elizabeth Osborne and Ruth Stirling in charge of women's programming, who, like Kay, also produced radio. Then there were the radio and television producers/directors such as Joyce Belfrage, Catherine King and Therése Denny. Further down the production ladder were Producer's Assistants such as Ruth Page, then clerical workers and secretaries such as Judith McErlain. There were female commissioners and female members in the various state and federal advisory committees. There were also many casual contributors, journalists and writers, guest lecturers and, of course, numerous female performers. In addition to expert contributors, the ABC's own audiences were encouraged to contribute to a wide range of content, from recipes to poetry and travelogues. In their own ways, these amateur contributors were like Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce, in that they sought to express their ideas and beliefs through

the powerful voice of the ABC. In a 1980 ABC oral history interview, Ruth Stirling recalled how rewarding it was to see the ABC give home-bound women an outlet for their creativity. Housewife Jane Birch was one woman who treasured her own small contributions to the ABC. According to Ruth, in the beginning, Jane's husband was a little condescending about her attempts to write for radio. But once her stories were commissioned, her husband and family rallied in support. Jane confessed that her casual ABC 'work' helped her regain her identity as an individual, declaring to Ruth: 'I became a person! Not just "mother".'[348]

As the ABC prepared its first slate of television programmes in 1956, Kay Kinane was looking for the right type of female presenter to fulfil her vision for *Woman's World*. Kay recruited Mary Rossi, impressed by her intelligence and worldview, and her modern approach to motherhood. Together, they worked to create a wide range of stimulating and progressive programming for broadcast each week. Mary's cheerful ability to juggle her large family and her domestic responsibilities with her part-time production career was discussed frequently in the press. The presenter was surprised that her one-day-a-week role on *Woman's World* raised concerns with some members of the public, concerned about where a woman's 'true' responsibilities and focus should lie. 'The main criticism was the fact that I was jeopardising my children's future', she told me in 2015.[349] At the time, attempting to placate those critics (of whom most were female), Mary argued that her work was simply a part-time hobby, something she did on her day off.[350] The reality was, in fact, quite different. Mary was particularly proud of her new role as a 'professional' and relished the intellectual stimulation that the role offered; she enjoyed having projects to plan and develop during the week in her 'down time'.[351]

Gendered language and the ABC 'girl'

The sexual division of labour at the ABC was reinforced by gendered language. Job titles were often depicted as male, such as foreman, storeman, cinecameraman, gripsman. Language in memos and reports tended to use male pronouns. Job advertisements not only used the gendered pronouns, they were placed in gendered sections of the

[348] Stirling, R. 1980, *ABC Oral History – Ruth Stirling*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP 1762/1 CS:1059730 BC:13196802, 20 May.
[349] Rossi, M. 2015, *Second Interview with Mary Rossi*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 23 May.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Rossi, M. 2014, *Interview with Mary Rossi*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 28 June.

employment classifieds.[352] The AWBC Report noted that even phone message notepads validated male authority: the box to be ticked if the recipient was to return the call stated, 'Please call him.'[353] The AWBC Report also identified how derogatory labels were given to women; negative language often analogised them to animals, calling them '"birds", "hens", "chick's", "fillies", "old ducks".'[354]

The professional identities of female producers were often trivialised in the press. Therése and Kay were often identified as 'girls'. However, Catherine King, Joyce Belfrage and Mary Rossi were not. It is likely that, because the latter group were married, they were imagined differently; a woman somehow became more mature when married. Their characterisations as 'girls' also suggests that unmarried women were seen as less serious, regardless of their age and experience. Kay was 31 when she was appointed Schools Broadcast Officer, yet a story headline stated 'Local girl gets ABC job'.[355] Therése was 40 years old and an internationally established public-affairs producer and yet one journalist described her as a 'diminutive little dear from Down-Under Adelaide.'[356] As I studied the descriptions of ABC women in the press, it became apparent that a woman's public identity was regularly based on her affiliation with her father or husband. The members of the cohort were often framed as someone's daughter (Catherine, Therése and Kay) or someone's wife (Joyce and Catherine). One strong reminder of how things have changed since the 1950s and 1960s was the presence of scores of letters written to the ABC that were signed by women who did not use their first name. The custom at the time was for a woman to sign as a 'Mrs' to their husband's full name, for example, 'Mrs John Smith'.

One final example of the way the 'feminine' construct permeated everyday life at the ABC was evinced in the Miss ABC competitions. I found various references in *The ABC Weekly* to these female contests (there was no 'Mr ABC' competition), from the late 1940s into the 1960s. Early on, eager young entrants had to 'parade in sportswear, day frock and finally in evening gown', and were judged on their 'figure, looks, deportment, voice, photogenic qualities, and general knowledge.'[357] These six categories were clear

[352] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, p. 101.
[353] Ibid, p. 104.
[354] Ibid, p. 11.
[355] 'Local girl gets ABC job' 1943, *The Mirror* (Perth), 18 December, p. 8.
[356] Miles, J. 1963, 'TV is helping Australia to grow up', *Adelaide News*, 5 December.
[357] 'Girl employees compete for "Miss ABC" title' 1949, *The Sun* (Sydney), 20 October, p. 13.

manifestations of the ABC's preferred characterisation of its young women workers: 'girls' who looked and behaved well.

JULY-AUGUST, 1963 RADIO ACTIVE

Eight

WHO WILL BE SYDNEY'S MISS ABC?

These attractive young ladies are entrants in the 1963 Miss ABC Contest in Sydney. The winner, to be announced at the Sydney Staff Ball on August 23, will compete in her suburban segment of the Miss Australia Quest. Staff members in Sydney have been invited to select first, second and third place getters in the contest, and record these selections for a fee. Person who picks the three in the right order will win a prize. A committee is working to raise money for the Miss ABC finally selected. This money, which will help the Spastic Centre, could entitle Miss ABC to a special award as the girl raising the most money in NSW. or the Commonwealth. The committee raised over £3000 for last year's Miss ABC

SHANE CARSON
Management

SUE ANGUS
Film Dept.

MARGARET JOLLOW
Reference Library

ROSEMARY PEAKE
Federal Education

ROSLYN TULLOCH
Children's Session

TASSY MISS

ELIZABETH GORDON
Children's Session

MONICA GRAHAM
TV Times

LOUISE MUTTON
Film Library

- 5 SEP 1963

Miss ABC Tasmania is Miss Ann Mee, an 18 year old typist, in the Hobart News Department.

Miss Mee is interested in swimming, cooking, skiing and music.

She is being well supported by a strong committee, which has already raised a considerable sum.

Miss Mee is in good company. Miss ABC in Tasmania two years ago was Pat MacMichael . . . who became Miss Tasmania in the Miss Australia Quest, and took part in the quest's national finals.

☆ ☆ ☆

JEAN MACKAY
Record Library

SANDRA PARROT
Film Dept.

SUSANNA MAIZELS
Programmes

DENISE GANLY
Script Assist.

JOHANNA KOVACS
State Education

JUDITH HALL
Federal Music

CHRISTINE LANG
Children's Session

Turner and Henderson Pty. Ltd., Sydney.

Figure 19: 'Who will be Sydney's Miss ABC?' 1963.
Radio-Active: The ABC Staff Journal, 1963, July–August, p. 8.

The gendering of content divisions

Gender constructs not only legitimised the exclusion of females from senior managerial and production positions in the ABC workplace, they also justified the gendering of subject matter. The ABC's programme divisions for much of the post-war years were as follows: News, Talks, Education, Features, Light Entertainment, Sport, Rural, Music, Children's and Religion. There appears to have been a direct correlation between the authority and analytical skill deemed necessary for each genre, and its degree of masculine identity. General Talks was a clearly delineated male division; women were generally only welcomed in its Women's Session department. News and Sport were also

treated as male divisions. Certain aspects of Rural broadcasting were reserved for male broadcasters. In a 1982 interview for the ABC's landmark feminist radio show, *Coming Out Show*, radio compère Elizabeth Bond recalled how frustrating the gender conventions for content were in the 1960s:

> *It wasn't so bad by 1970 but when I joined the ABC, which was 1964, it was very unusual for a woman in the first place, as an announcer. And for a short time I was the only one amongst 32 men. And there were a whole series of things that you couldn't read. You weren't allowed to read sports results. And for some reason you weren't allowed to read river heights and rainfall. Nothing to do with agriculture at all. And you weren't allowed to read the stock exchange and you were never allowed to read the news. Ever. That was a golden rule. But things had changed a little by 1970. I believe I was the first woman in the ABC after the war, to read the news, which was quite a struggle to get there.*[358]

There were, however, content domains more welcoming to women and more willing to accept their seniority. A female producer 'had a greater chance of promotion if she stayed within the Education or Children's divisions, perceived more within a female's area of expertise.'[359]

However, even then, those more female-friendly divisions underwent their own transitions to accept women workers. For example, Kay Kinane's early on-air presence as a narrator of the dramatic plays she produced was one such modification of the broadcaster's conventions about gender. ('Conventions' which, in fact, had been in place for less than 10 years.) Kay recalled how the new State Supervisor Jack Halls responded to hearing Kay narrate a sequence of educational dramatisations:

> *He came over and was rather aghast to find this going on. He said, 'Who produces these?' I said, 'I do'. 'But,' he said, 'you're contracted to write them, not to appear!' I said, 'Well I do appear, I narrate them'. He said, 'Oh I don't approve of women narrators'. I said, 'Well if I'm good enough to do a whole*

[358] *Coming Out Show*, 1982, radio programme, ABC 50th Anniversary, Episode 26/82, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1378649 BC:13360987, Sydney, 3 July.
[359] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 33.

Talk, I'm surely good enough to do a narration at the beginning. This is what you contract me for.'[360]

Left for some time on her own to get on with the job, Kay was able to disregard the convention that said the female voice could not adopt an authoritative tone and 'narrate'.

Female broadcasters were expected to accept that particular domains were off limits. These gendered content conventions, however, were not isolated to Australia's national broadcaster. A decade earlier, Joyce Belfrage found the BBC News division was uninterested in accepting her application. Joyce explained to interviewer Graham Shirley in 2001 that, despite her experience, she was told by a senior staffing administrator: 'Well you *were* the only woman who applied you know …' Joyce said, 'And I was expected to take that as an answer!'[361] In the post-war decades, the ABC closely replicated much of the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) philosophies, structures and workplace cultures. It was evident that the ABC also replicated the BBC's unofficial belief that women did not belong in news and current affairs. Media scholar Janet Thumim explained that, in post-war broadcasting, there was a tradition of separating the feminine from authority: '[for] a woman [to] be the conveyor of truth and authority on the television screen was something they just couldn't imagine, couldn't accept.'[362]

Talks was a particularly difficult domain for female producers to infiltrate. The ABC had high standards in its recruitment of producers, both male and female. Talks producers had to be intelligent, politically and culturally enlightened, with relevant expertise to the subjects that they were covering in their division. They also benefitted from having a community of contacts and contributors with whom they could rely on to research and present their programmes. In 1956, Head of Talks Alan Carmichael wrote a memo that outlined the type of highly capable media practitioners the new television Talks producers needed to be:

Controversy will obviously loom large in TV. This officer, therefore, must have a good knowledge of national and international affairs; he must be an 'ideas

[360] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA, S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.
[361] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[362] Thumim, J. 2004, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 189.

> *man'; he must have the power to control and direct important people in situations that may require a lot of tact. He must possess intelligence and judgment of a high order. He must have moved around enough to know the sort of people who should be sought out as talent for particular sessions.*[363]

These difficult-to-attain assets explain why so few women were Talks producers in the post-war years. Carmichael's gendered language indicates how these particular characteristics were also imagined as 'male'.

Senior producers needed to be *so* capable that there would be no doubt of their ability to be a showrunner in Talks. Some women were skilled professionals but were seen as lacking a particular public-affairs mindset. Unlike Joyce Belfrage, who had an endless supply of opinions on society and politics, Margaret Delves, a successful producer in Light Entertainment, was judged as lacking the strategic, driven agenda required to take over as showrunner on *Woman's World*. Kay Kinane, in her last oral history interview in 1995, confessed to Emma Rossi that the authoritative show-runner skillset was hard to find: 'It didn't collapse, I mean, someone took over for me for a while. But nobody knew what it was all about.' Kay continued, 'Margaret Delves did it for a while … and she's a jolly good producer, and a very, well, capable, sort of person. But she didn't have a background that enabled her to do this.'[364] A woman had to have been 'built' a certain way and then be so qualified that they could overcome the gender biases that insisted those skills and characteristics were male traits. For female producers to succeed in mainstream Talks production, they had to be manifestly better than their male peers. As I argued in 2016, they had to 'be strong-willed and confident in their knowledge and professional skill, especially when men were competing for the same roles.'[365]

Contesting women's 'worlds'

The ABC had difficulty coming to terms with a 'modern' notion of what constituted 'women's programming' in the post-war years. The genre was often disregarded and constrained by senior programming officers. From its instigation, the various incarnations

[363] Memo from Carmichael, A. to Talks Head Office, 1956, titled *Talks Staff – Television*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, C:1979 BC:1853615, 19 April.
[364] Kinane, K. 1995, Interview with Kay Kinane, oral history, interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.
[365] Andrews, K. 2016, 'Don't tell them I can type: Negotiating women's work in production in the post-war ABC', *Media International Australia*, vol. 161, no. 1, p. 31.

of the ABC's 'women's sessions' had been constructed as a separate, marginalised domain where women's interests were set apart from mainstream interests. Broadcasters began to incorporate gender constructs into programming plans in the interwar years. In her cultural study of Australian radio, Lesley Johnson explained how early radio programmers began to align women's programming to particular domains. She said, 'radio [subsequently] worked to produce the sense in which all women were commonly defined by one thing: their relationship to the private, domestic sphere of family life.'[366] This constrained view of women's interests proved difficult for many producers to shift in the post-war ABC.

I found that there was a range of diverse views on what constituted the women's domain among the various producers of the ABC's various state and national women's sessions for radio and television. Similarly, Mary Irwin, in her study of women's programming at the BBC, found that there were 'competing discourses of femininity' within the genre.[367] It was clear that the ABC's broad cohort of women's sessions producers manifested competing views of what constituted 'the female domain'. Some, such as Ida Osborne, leaned towards traditional feminine identities, which viewed women's programming to be more domestic and parochial. Others, such as Catherine King, directly challenged those conventions and worked to redefine the genre.

I had to be careful, nonetheless, not to assume that some of the more traditional frames of content were intentional manifestations of a producer's agenda; they were, of course, under instruction from their state managers. In the post-war decades, all state managers were male. Unlike Con Charlton in Western Australia, who was supportive of Catherine King's progressive agenda, other state managers could be dismissive and patronising, unwilling to have their region's 'Women's Session' transgress from the traditional feminine constructs. In 1951 there was a policy review of all women's radio programming. State and federal officers, producers and stakeholders, such as the Women's Advisory Committee, all weighed in with their views on what the national broadcaster's female audiences wanted and needed. The comments of the Tasmania state manager E.J. McCann were revealing. Presenting his consideration of content policies for the national women's sessions, he stated: 'It must be remembered that what interests a woman in Cooktown

[366] Johnson, L. 1988, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural Study of Early Australian Radio*, Routledge, London, p. 101.
[367] Irwin, M. 2014, 'Women's viewpoint: Representing and constructing femininity in early 1950s television for women', in M. Andrews & S. McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York. p. 114.

might not interest a woman in Hobart. This is particularly noticeable with advice on subjects as clothes, interior decorating, gardening, tackling white ants, etc.'[368] In McCann's view, these were the types of issues relevant to female listeners. He went on to insist that 'talks on foreign affairs should not be included' and concluded his report by reasserting his own romantic notions of femininity: 'It is doubtful whether poetry readings should be programmed regularly, but if the editor comes across a poem that might appeal especially to women it could be read by somebody with a pleasant voice and a natural manner.'[369] This insidious enforcement of gender stereotyping perpetuated a distorted view of a woman's domain. Some male staff, like McCann, insisted that there were certain styles of music, literature and poetry, certain ways of speaking and dressing, and a certain female gentility that needed to be sustained. Any depiction of women as fractious, political, sexualised or angry beings was unnatural and unwelcome.

Catherine King was in a position to disrupt these stereotypes; however, she had to walk a fine line in order to push the boundaries as far as possible. This was evident in a 1960 memo by Keith Barry (then the national Assistant General Manager for Programming), when he noted,

> *The Women's Session in Western Australia has never been presented on the traditional lines of the Women's Session in other States and this has been chiefly due to the personality of Katherine King [sic] … Mrs King arranges a good programme but it is of general interest rather than of specific interest to a female audience. There have in fact, been problems in regard to some of the material which Mrs King incorporates …*[370]

Rather than ask Catherine to change the show itself (a difficult task considering her passion for the show and her strong fan base), Barry suggested that they simply change the name of the show to something generic, thus avoiding further debate over her show breaking the rules about what was appropriate feminine content. Despite Catherine being fine with this, the ABC preferred to maintain the brand across the board and things continued

[368] Memo from McCann, E. to Director of Talks, 1951, titled *Programme Policy Committee*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:Women's Session 1951/73, BC:11094548, 7 June.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Memo from Barry, K. 1960, titled *Woman's Session – Western Australia*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:02008 2001/02079749 CS:Carmichael Part 1 BC:9683985, 30 September.

unchanged. Catherine continued in her usual manner and management turned a blind eye. The show's title became a misnomer, grudgingly accepted by the ABC.

Kay Kinane fought a similar battle to Catherine King when she was tasked with producing *Woman's World* on television in 1956. Rather than being a superficial parade of recipes and fashion, Kay believed that the series could celebrate the wisdom and power of women and their potential to enhance the lives of their families and communities. The show incorporated a wide range of stories and information that Kay believed her audience would benefit from and enjoy: from the perspective of immigrants arriving from Tito's Yugoslavia to simple jobs around the house, and a naturalist demonstrating how trapdoor spiders hunt. Mindful of how ABC programme officers were willing to criticise explicit challenges to gender norms, Kay and host Mary Rossi made sure their statements about the possibilities available for women were subtle. Kay told Emma Rossi in 1995 that,

> *if we met an interesting woman … we didn't ask 'Wouldn't it be a good idea if you were back in the home, what's happened to your children?' We'd say 'Isn't it wonderful! Are there difficulties in doing that?' Saying, 'you can get round it can you?'*[371]

In compère Mary Rossi, Kay found a kindred spirit who shared her progressive, holistic way of looking at the world. They planned to provide a 'window on the outside world', a show that could address the concerns of women like Mary, who felt 'bereft' of intellectual stimulation when working at home to care for the family.[372]

Producers of the women's radio and television shows were warned that they had no remit to produce news and current affairs – these were to be covered in general programming. This demarcation of mainstream content was a contentious issue for some female producers. Earlier in 1947, the first federal organiser of Women's programming, Clare Mitchell, resigned after 18 months, arguing that the women's radio content was trivialised and was 'wishy-washy'.[373] In an interview on radio 6WF in 1982, Catherine King recounted how she was reprimanded for including material deemed beyond the scope of

[371] Kinane, K. 1995, *Interview with Kay Kinane*, oral history, Interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.
[372] Rossi, M. 2015, *Second Interview with Mary Rossi*, oral history, Interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 23 May.
[373] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 169.

her 'female' domain. Catherine often included segments on international affairs, providing educational discussions on social and geopolitical issues. She told her ABC interviewer:

> *they finally defeated me over international affairs talks. They felt it was not the place for Women's, in Women's programmes. They thought they could listen to 'Notes in the News' at six minutes past one. But my feeling was that one wanted to look at every aspect, and I had different speakers and so on. And I was on the point of resigning over that if they were going to do this to me, but my father who was always a mediator with me … said that there were ways around it, instead of having straight talks called international affairs, I could just do interviews with people who were authorities in international affairs, which of course was quite wise.*[374]

ABC management were often unsettled by Catherine's stubborn insistence on extending the boundaries of 'women's issues'. Catherine may have argued that she was undeserving of the title of feminist, yet she took great pride in the way she challenged ABC programmers when they tried to hold her back and limit the scope of women's content. This particular battle with them was one that she was proud of; she repeated it in two on-air interviews and shared it with writer Julie Lewis in her 1979 biography.

Alternatively, there were other producers of women's sessions who had little problem with the constraints placed on women's content, such as Ida Elizabeth Osbourne. Famous for her performance in the radio series *The Argonauts*, Ida produced *Women's Sessions* radio shows out of Sydney throughout the 1950s and was the national supervisor of Women's programming. Ida retired when she remarried in 1958 and was replaced by Ruth Stirling. Two decades later, Ida was interviewed on *Coming Out Show*; she was questioned about her view of women's programming back then. Ida explained that it was much the same as the women's 'interests' sections of contemporary press:

> *The newspapers always had one or two, and on Thursday mornings, three or four, full pages of women's interests. That was home, cooking, food, children, clothes. All those things that were supposed to be women's interests, and in fact were, because most of our listeners in the fifties were women confined to*

[374] King, C. 1982, *6WF Radio – ABC 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH572-18181211, Perth, 1 July.

> *the home. Not the figures that astonish us today of women out in the workforce, just didn't apply then, most women were at home, were in the kitchen feeding the baby, whatever, at half past ten, and that's where our audience was and that's where we directed our programme.*[375]

When asked about her view of current affairs in women's content, Ida adopted the official ABC line, arguing that 'we didn't see that really as part of our working Women's Session; the current affairs were dealt with very adequately in the general program, and that was for men *and* women.'[376] Ida believed that the women's radio sessions should only focus on 'things of *particular* interest to the housewife,' feeling no need to speak to working women.[377]

This rationale, that general programming was meant for both 'men *and* women', was problematic. These 'general' programmes were inhabited and presented by men and were consistently framed through the male perspective. Female comperes of mainstream programming were censured if they incorporated female perspectives. For example, Lorna Hayter, a highly regarded radio producer working for ABC Rural, recalled how, even in the Rural domain, female perspectives were unwelcome:

> *When I first started the man in charge of Talks didn't quite approve of me talking things relating to women, and sometimes he would complain to the director of Rural broadcast that I had overlapped on something that I had said that was their province, but that of course broke down in no time …*[378]

Despite being lectured on the gender content rules, certain women, such as Lorna Hayter, Catherine King, Kay Kinane and Mary Rossi, continued to chip away at these confining boundaries.

The ABC's approach to women's content in the 1950s and 1960s was more limited than the BBC in the same era. According to Janet Thumim, programmers of women's sessions in British post-war television were faced with a 'double-bind': to produce content that

[375] *Coming Out Show*, 1982, radio programme, ABC 50th Anniversary, Episode 26/82, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1378649 BC:13360987, Sydney, 3 July.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid.

would appeal to 'conventional "women's interests" in order to secure their audiences' while at the same time recognising how limiting those conventions were 'informed by the interests of patriarchy.'[379] Both BBC and ABC women's session producers shared similar dilemmas, yet the BBC parameters gradually opened the field to include more political commentary. Janet Thumim, Kate Murphy, Sian Nicholas and Kristen Skoog have each examined how women's programming at the BBC changed after World War II, responding to the widening scope of female listeners' lives. While BBC women's programmes still presented subjects centred on the domestic domain, they also became more 'outward looking' and sought to include more current affairs (not surprising in the aftermath of the war).[380] Skoog explained how post-war programming changed. The focus, she said, 'turned to subjects such as current affairs, women's employment, and other areas of national and public interest … and requests were also made to include regular talks on current affairs and Parliament.'[381]

The ABC's female audiences were imagined to be listening during the daytime, as they fulfilled their domestic duties. During the evenings, they were seen as secondary listeners while their husbands were entertained and kept up to date with the more important news and current affairs of the day. Johnson argued that this convention, of women being suited to daytime broadcasting, was based on an artificial construct. In the early days, broadcasters attempted to establish regular listening habits in audiences to enable programmers to anticipate and formalise the scheduling according to the specific interests of listeners. They sought, as Johnson said, to 'structure women's listening patterns, to habituate them to listening to programmes at particular times of day.'[382] Similarly, in 2018 media historian Sarah Arnold explained that BBC audience research on women's listening and viewing patterns were reverse-engineered; research frameworks were skewed to justify the marginalisation of women's content and facilitate its scheduling into a less-dominant timeslot. Her analysis revealed that female audiences were, in fact, sharing mainstream (prime-time) listening and viewing hours with men. Arnold stated that 'gender discourses of the audience were *introduced to*, rather than stemmed from, the research

[379] Thumim, J. 2004, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 58.
[380] Skoog, K. 2014, 'Striving for editorial autonomy and internal recognition: BBC Woman's Hour', in M. Andrews & S. McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York, p. 100.
[381] Ibid, p. 103.
[382] Johnson, L. 1988, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural Study of Early Australian Radio*, Routledge, London, pp. 106–107.

undertaken'.[383] This enforcement of marginalising modes of female listening was another example of how post-war broadcasting manifested gender. By moving women to the margins of broadcasting, the wide range of women's perspectives and interests were forced artificially into a narrow, and often shallow, programming format.

Joyce worked for BBC women's television in the early 1950s, after failing to get work in the news division. In her 2001 oral history, she lamented the fact that public broadcasters aired their women's sessions in the daytime, ignoring working-class audiences. Joyce thought that this practice was undemocratic in its failure to speak to all classes of audience. Joyce said:

> *I stuck it for two and a half years in Women's Programs which were extremely snobby, and talked down to the women no end, and were terribly fuddy duddy and oh, in any case, I've always been anti that kind of discriminatory program naming. You know, it's like women's magazines which are only about cooking and only about children and stuff like that. And that was the way that attitude was carried over into women's television. And they were horribly condescending programs about psychology and you know, how to treat your husband. And oh god, it absolutely awful! And it was sort of addressed exclusively to jobless women at home because it was put on at two in the afternoon, you see, and obviously any working woman wasn't anywhere near it … So it was about do-mest-icity. And it just got right up my nose. I felt so depressed!*[384]

Joyce's desire to produce social commentary was frustrated by what she saw as a narrow vision and a condescending attitude, at odds with her own interpretation of what women's interests were.

[383] Arnold, S. 2018, '"Discovering" the female audience: Gender and audience research in the early BBC years', paper presented to the *Doing Women's Film and Television History IV: Calling the Shots, Then, Now and Next*, Southampton University, 2 May.
[384] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.

Working without colluding

Another phenomenon that arose within the complicated dynamics of gender in the production workplace was identified by Janet Thumim in her study of the BBC. Thumim noted that certain BBC senior women appeared to 'collude' with the systems of discrimination, at times endorsing masculine work cultures.[385] Thumim found a memo from 1951, in which senior producer Mary Adams suggested that men were more suitable to be Talks producers. Thumim quoted Adams' memo: 'The work is strenuous, and candidates should have physical stamina. On the whole, men are more suitable for jobs as producers (at any rate in the present development state of the television service).'[386] When I read this, I recalled Kay Kinane's argument that Margaret Delves was ill-suited to be showrunner of *Woman's World* and was momentarily concerned that Kay was suggesting that women were not as qualified as men. However, I found Kay was just as critical of her male peers when judging their abilities as producers.[387] In fact, I could find no evidence that Kay, Catherine, Therése or Joyce actively 'colluded' to support the primacy of male staff. Instead, the cohort's workplace dialogues were peppered with references about women doing the jobs normally assigned to male staff. Kay and Catherine, however, were very careful to diplomatically frame, and even mask, their revisionist approaches to the women's genre, in order to avoid the critical gaze of controlling senior programmers.

I also found evidence of the cohort helping other women and wanting to work with other women. Therése, Kay and Catherine were famous for their generosity and willingness to hire women. There was the previously mentioned example of Kay vainly suggesting production assistants cross over to be vision mixers. Furthermore, when Kay was tasked to produce *Woman's World*, she modified conventional production protocols to accommodate the needs of working mother Mary Rossi. She was mindful of Mary's responsibilities at home and her demanding role as a mother of five, then six children. Kay was proud of her female-friendly version of pre-production. Instead of having meetings at the office, Kay went to Mary's home and, together, they would discuss ideas and 'angles' for the next few shows. Kay recalled how they would talk while she lay out

[385] Thumim, J. 2004, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 175.
[386] Memo from Adams, M. to British Broadcasting Corporation, 18 July 1951, BBC WAC 531/164/1, quoted in J. Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2004, p. 50.
[387] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC:13196286, 15 November.

on the floor stretching and Mary cooked something for the children.[388] Kay also modified methods of shooting and scheduling to keep Mary on the show for as long as possible when she was pregnant. It was a little befuddling to management, who were more inclined to just hire replacement presenters when their female talent were 'in the family way'.

Kay also believed that, if she demonstrated that women were capable of fulfilling a 'male' production role with skill and technical proficiency, she could improve the chances for women to be hired in other ABC departments. Kay explained her rationale, in 1982:

> *certainly, in schools broadcasting it began to change … because, I suppose because I was there, we started appointing men and women and we got a very good quality of woman coming in who proved that they could stand up to what the men were doing. And so I suppose the staff was about fifty fifty of work that was being done, and they were being accepted. And because Schools Broadcasting showed that this could happen, this then went into the other areas.*[389]

It was easier to do this from her education division, which was seen as less 'male', and in which Kay had an extensive amount of authority.

Women's programming was not as flexible as the Education division in Kay's time. It was common for the ABC's senior (male) programming staff to display a general disregard for the various women's sessions. Because women's programming was moved to the margins, it was often under-resourced and underfunded. Ken Inglis noted that, from the early days, the ABC women's radio sessions was seen as inconsequential; it was simply 'altered a little every two or three years when [Talks supervisors] Molesworth and Barry took time to think about it.'[390] As producers of women's content, Kay and Catherine had limited resources and funds. There was a tendency for women's programming to be under-budgeted in public broadcasting. Kristen Skoog wrote how the BBC *Woman's Hour* radio programme was also consistently under-resourced in the 1950s.[391] With practically no

[388] Kinane, K. 1995, *Interview with Kay Kinane*, oral history, interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.
[389] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[390] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 169.
[391] Skoog, K. 2014, 'Striving for editorial autonomy and internal recognition: BBC Woman's Hour', *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York, p. 104.

budget for props or wardrobe for *Woman's World*, Kay and Mary Rossi used items from their own homes and borrowed props and wardrobe from friends. Women's content producers at the BBC had similar concerns. According to Kate Murphy and Kristen Skoog, over the decades, producers were constantly underfunded and had to fight for recognition.[392] The shows were often thought of as 'superfluous' in the grander scheme of broadcasting.[393] In 1951, for example, *Woman's Hour* producer Isa Benzie asked for help from Talks management to remedy the problem of her peers' disdain and disrespect.[394]

In the early 1960s, Ruth Stirling witnessed how the interests and intelligence of female audiences were disparaged by patronising male programmers. In her 1980 ABC oral history, Ruth recalled how one day, as Federal Organiser of Women's Programmes, she snapped during a senior management meeting, disappointed in the behaviour of her male peers who, she thought, should have known better:

> *Alan Carmichael, he was the Director. He was a very good Director, you could always talk to him. And [he] did fight for his staff too. He did try to do the right thing. I felt in lots of ways he had people who were rather disloyal to him. But perhaps he was too gentle for this tough sort of world. Nevertheless he did a good job. But he held these staff meetings and we used to gather round and I was the only woman. And the programmes were sorted out and all sorts of things brought in; and they had this dreadful way of saying 'That'll do for women's session', 'Oh yes, that'll do for women's sessions'. And, no doubt they baited me, they used to, but I used to get furious, and I remember on one occasion I was sitting at the end of a long table, and Alan Carmichael at one end and all these brainy gentlemen, various ages, and someone said 'That'll do for Women's Sessions' and I said 'Excuse me, I'm going!' I said 'You behave like members of the Marrickville Bowling Club and you're supposed to have the best brains in the community, and you throw out to women, who, the vast majority, oh the majority but a vast number of them are citizens of this country, and you treat them, and my god, you know!'*

[392] Murphy, K. 2014, 'From Women's Hour to other women's lives: The BBC talks for women and the women who made them, 1923–1939', in M. Andrews & S. McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York, p. 32.
[393] Skoog, K. 2014, 'Striving for editorial autonomy and internal recognition: BBC Woman's Hour', in M. Andrews & S. McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*, Routledge, New York, pp. 104–105.
[394] Ibid, pp. 104–105.

> *I said 'I suppose I should put an apron on and bring some buns to this meeting!' Anyhow, I remember Alan Carmichael who's probably forgotten this, said 'come on, sit down, sit down, Ruth, do sit down, sit down!' And so I sat down and they didn't do it again to me. They'd done it for a long while and I'd had enough!*[395]

Ruth believed that this attitude was a direct result of the culture that fostered the belief the women's programming was 'second-rate', that women's agendas and interests were far less important.[396]

ABC women and citizenship

Kay, Catherine and Therése did not adhere to a coherent feminist ideology, although they certainly worked against systems of discrimination. Rather than identifying as feminists at the time, the cohort instead embodied the identity of the citizen; their activism was enfolded into agendas of social maternalism. One possible reason for their refusal to identify as feminists in the 1950s and 1960s was the contemporary view of 'feminists' as politically driven activists, intent on disrupting the status quo. Feminism was a complicated and often-confusing concept for ABC women to embrace and could prove dangerous for one's career in the post-war years. Catherine learned this lesson early on. In 1944, the ABC was looking to restart its radio sessions for women and cast their eye for the right person. Being given responsibility for a daily show like the *Women's Session* was a serious commitment, even if it was 'only' women's radio. ABC management wanted someone trustworthy, who had a remit-friendly approach to social and cultural issues, someone who fit their notion of a 'good' woman. One applicant, Irene Greenwood, had spent six years producing the *Women in the International News* segments for the earlier incarnation of the *Women's Session* and was known for being outspoken regarding women's rights.[397] Catherine King believed that she was given the role instead of Greenwood because ABC management did not want their women producers to be too political, too confrontational. In a radio interview in 1982, Catherine stated that State Manager Con Charlton chose her because he did not want a self-proclaimed feminist in

[395] Stirling, R. 1980, *ABC Oral History – Ruth Stirling*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP 1762/1 CS:1059730 BC:13196802, 20 May.
[396] ibid.
[397] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 29.

the role. She said, 'so that's why he thought I'd be safe, me not being a feminist, just being a woman.'[398] Charlton's decision indicates the ABC's preference for where a women's interest should lie: the ABC chose an expert in motherhood and teaching, rather than a feminist, for the role of producer and presenter of *Woman's World*. Once Catherine settled into the position, she was much less acquiescent, much less 'safe' than they thought.

One example of how ABC women could be confused by feminism was illustrated when Ruth Stirling discussed her thoughts on her career and feminism in 1982. Many of the ABC's interviews undertaken in the 1980s questioned female staffers about their views of feminism and whether they incorporated feminist ideologies into their work in the post-war years. (We saw this in the interviews with Kay Kinane, Elizabeth Bond, Ida Osborne, Lorna Hayter and Ruth Stirling.) Ruth used her programmes to encourage greater equality between the sexes, yet her response suggests that she was still coming to terms with what she imagined a 'feminist' to be:

> *Interviewer: Were you a feminist?*
> *Stirling: I am a feminist but I like men.*
> *Interviewer: Well they're not mutually exclusive!*
> *Stirling: No, I think, I, yes, I dislike … the position of women where they must go cap in hand and say, 'Darling may I have a new dress?' or, um, that sort of relationship between a man and a woman as the master and slave. It's not a marriage in my book. A marriage is a partnership in my book.*[399]

Catherine King was also presented with similar questions about past careers and gender. She responded by stating that she was unworthy of the 'feminist' honorific herself, arguing that she did not have to fight for her rights, nor adopt a politically active role as 'a stirrer'. Catherine's oral testimony contained a range of contradictions. Moments after confessing how much she enjoyed stirring up debate, Catherine stated she could not see herself as an activist:

> *But, as for being a big influence, well, I did have one friend who said to me that she thought I'd been a very bad influence because I had disturbed so*

[398] *Coming Out Show*, 1982, radio programme, ABC 50th Anniversary, Episode 26/82, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1378649 BC:13360987, Sydney, 3 July.
[399] Stirling, R. 1982, *Interview with Ruth Stirling for ABC 50th Anniversary*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1201800 BC:13271766.

> *many people who had been living quite contentedly (laughs) … I don't think I was ever a feminist. And to this day I don't really know what a feminist is. I never had any resentment for being a woman, I was never treated worse because I was a woman … No. I wasn't an activist of any sort, I wasn't a stirrer. That's what Mr Charlton found disturbing. He found that I was showing signs of stirring. But I, oh, no no, I wasn't on any platform at all … Well, I took the risk of being offensive and upsetting, and if it did upset them, jolly good show!*[400]

For women producing Talks content at the ABC, to intervene in public discourse, claim a position of authority and negotiate with a male-privileging bureaucracy (including taking a role in shaping public debate about gender), they had to be careful how they presented their ambitions and depicted public identities.

The ABC and gender

In describing the systems of discrimination that confronted the ABC's women workers in the post-war decades, this chapter has detailed the ways that women's work was marginalised. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were part of a larger female workforce shaped by the sexual division of labour. ABC work cultures were underpinned by traditional gender constructs which justified the assignment of leadership positions to men. Women workers were constrained by stereotypes, which argued they were naturally suited to work that reflected their 'natural' subordinacy to men. The organisation systematically separated the sexes and created pathways that privileged male staff. It was a process facilitated by the ABC's expanding bureaucracy. Entrenched discrimination became conventionalised as the industrial cultures that upheld the authority of those in charge were sustained and expanded. Women's programming was a particularly contested domain, because the competing forces of conservative, constrictive policies of what defined 'women's content' was confronted by certain female producers, ambitious to to provide more progressive programming to their audiences. Women broadcasters also manifested differing views on gender. The more progressive that ABC women were, the

[400] King, C. 1982, *6WF Radio – ABC 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH572-18181211, Perth, 1 July.

more careful they had to be to shape the narratives of their activism in order to survive the discriminatory environment of ABC production.

During the course of my research, I endeavoured to learn the ABC's female staff ratio. Despite an extensive search of the archives, even with ABC archivist Guy Tranter's assistance, we could not find a summary, nor any reference in the ABC Annual Reports. As a solution, I was permitted access to the 1960 staff list and tallied each individual position according to gender. I learned that women made up roughly 33% of the ABC workforce (male staff 58% and unknown 9%).[401] According to the AWBC report, in 1976 women comprised only 28% of ABC employees.[402] It is my hope that further research could shed more light on why the ratio of female staff went down in those 16 years.

Gender clearly played a key role in the nature of both work and content. ABC divisions were gendered according to how 'male' they were and female producers were expected to accept that particular domains were off limits. Despite having a multitude of different ambitions, interests and capabilities, women workers in the 1950s and 1960s were overwhelmingly channelled into administrative, support positions. Certain women were more able to avoid these workplace constraints – these were the 'exceptional' broadcasters who had the expertise, knowledge and independence to set themselves apart. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce constantly worked to adjust the thinking of their male peers and worked to have women seen as more than the stereotype.

* * *

The second section of this thesis discusses the industrial strategies that Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce implemented in order maximise their autonomy, authority and industrial mobility, as they progressively worked and developed their careers over the years. Chapter 4, 'Strategies at the Local Level', outlines the cohort's preliminary, localised responses to the gendered workplace, the industrial diplomacies, mentorships and

[401] There were 3,048 positions listed, which were usually gendered. Female staffers were easily identified because they had a 'Miss' or 'Mrs' prefix. Some had named staff assigned, other positions were left blank. I split these unnamed roles into three categories: roles assigned as female, roles assigned as male, and finally, those which were unclear. For example, the unnamed female positions were gendered, either noted as '(F)', such as 'Cleaner (F)' or 'Clerk (F)', or were Script Assistant, typist and secretarial roles, designated female jobs. The final tally is as follows: Total number of listed positions: 3,048. Positions filled by named male staff: 1,660. Positions filled by named female staff: 485. Unnamed 'male' positions: 98. Unnamed 'female' positions: 536. Unnamed 'unclear' positions: 269. Total male positions: 1,758. Total female positions: 1,021. Total unclear: 269. The 1960 gender ratio was therefore: 58% male, 33% female and 9% unknown.

[402] Fell, L. & Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-Operative, 1977, *Women in the ABC: Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, July 1977, p. 14.

negotiations undertaken with ABC management. The subsequent chapter discusses their transmedial and transnational engagements, which further helped them sustain their agendas, enhance their status and traverse previously inaccessible avenues of opportunity. As I will demonstrate, these strategic advantages came in two forms. They were either direct consequences of each women's actions or were supplementary consequences of each woman's membership of specialist broadcasting communities.

Chapter 4 – Strategies at the local level

This chapter discusses how Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce developed their professional status strategically through preliminary engagements within the local ABC environment. It describes how the cohort benefited from having local ABC mentors and advocates, facilitating their progress through previously restricted gateways. It explains how ABC women took advantage of a range of disruptions in the workplace, using the gaps created in moments of transition as opportunities to take on positions with potential; positions which, if they were lucky, were overlooked long enough for them to establish new skills and authority. This chapter also outlines how the cohort of women producers found ways to use their local industrial assets, such as Catherine's substantial and loyal audience base or Therése's industrial mobility, to negotiate from positions of strength; pressuring the ABC to be more appreciative of their value. In the process, they forced shifts in ABC workplace conventions and cultures. The final component of this chapter discusses the ABC's transition to television and examines how Joyce Belfrage was caught up in a chaotic industrial culture that hindered her ability to do the job, it facilitated the advance of male peers at the expense of her own professional wellbeing.

ABC mentors and advocates

One factor that contributed to the success of female producers in the post-war years was their ability to forge productive working relationships with senior ABC decision-makers. Kay, Catherine and Therése received advice and importantly, advocacy, from high-ranking male mentors. Having an advisor to provide insight was useful but it was more beneficial to have an advocate, a senior ABC officer who encouraged producers to show initiative and put them forward for new projects. Catherine King's career was constantly aided by her familial connections. Her father and her husband's broadcasting status and influence facilitated her presence at the ABC and buttressed her work for two decades. Kay Kinane won over head of educational programming, Rudi Bronner, during her early days as an inventive, enterprising producer. A kindred spirit in all things educational, Bronner's support fuelled Kay's progress and positioned her as an active participant in the international educational broadcasting community. Lacking any mentors or advocates in her early career, Therése Denny systematically forged new professional relationships with the heads of the Talks department. Joyce, unfortunately, failed to sustain any useful

alliances; as a result, she became highly vulnerable to industrial shifts, her position made more tenuous.

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were all talented and professional, but talent was not necessarily enough for a woman to sustain a successful career at the ABC in the 1950s and 1960s. As evidenced by the ABC's rejection of Irene Greenwood, there needed to be solid connections between the producers and management, and a sense of trust and respect; otherwise, ambitious women producers would find themselves isolated and vulnerable. Pilgrims without protectors, so to speak. As we saw in the previous chapter, women were only allowed to enter the workplace based on certain conditions. It was difficult for them to be noticed and to be permitted to do more, to gain entrance into more demanding and responsible fora. For some, doors were opened. Once through guarded gateways, they had greater access to the knowledge and training needed to advance; opportunities which were presumptively offered to their male counterparts.

In the post-war years, beneficial mentorships were forged predominantly within radio. The firmly established medium was dominated by men who had consolidated their positions as knowledgeable controllers of the message. It took some years before ABC television managers attained that consistent level of expertise and stability. In the first several years of television production at the ABC, radio-centric programme officers fuelled a chaotic and compromising work environment, driven by their refusal to share power with the new and necessary influx of producers for television. Joyce discovered first-hand how difficult it was to survive without a mentor during that time.

Catherine King's father and her husband were advisors and advocates throughout her long career at the ABC. They even participated in her programmes. Murdoch provided his daughter with a wise voice of reason when Catherine found herself disputing ABC policy and practice. In the late 1960s, for example, Catherine's criticism of apartheid was seen by management as proselytising. She was told to stop her active engagement with political issues. Catherine saw this event as one of the worthy battles of her career. Decades later, she told interviewees that she had been willing to resign over the issue. Of course, in the process of telling, she was reinforcing a heroic narrative of her own activism. Luckily, Catherine's father suggested a workable solution. She recalled:

> *I was on the point of resigning over that if they were going to do this to me, but my father who was always a mediator with me … said that there were ways around it, instead of having straight talks called international affairs, I could just do interviews with people who were authorities in international affairs, which of course was quite wise. He said 'the way to establish a fact was to never pull out of it, to find a way around it'. A wily old man!*[403]

Murdoch provided Catherine with this type of practical advice throughout her career. As a long-term contributor, he understood how the ABC worked; he was able to share his knowledge in such a way that Catherine could minimise the various compromises forced upon her.

Catherine also gained a substantial amount of support from state Manager Con Charlton. Charlton frequently protected her from unnecessary conventions that marginalised women's programming. In one situation, he was instructed by national managers in Sydney to save money and cut back Catherine's show days from five to three. Catherine, as the radio showrunner, was told to fill in the remaining two days with pre-recorded segments, segments that she thought inane. Charlton, offering to break the discs, threw the memo in the bin and kept Catherine on full-time.[404] It is likely that Catherine's degree of immunity was buttressed by her father's reputation and status at the ABC, and his frequent presence within her programmes. There was also a certain degree of freedom the Perth branch experienced due to its distance from Head Office. Charlton, on more than one occasion, ignored directives and encouraged Catherine to continue. However, as previously testified by the anonymous female producer, Charlton also adhered to gender constructs that prohibited women from working in 'male' roles.[405]

Kay Kinane won the respect of a powerful ABC mentor, Rudi Bronner, after he spotted her innovative work as a casual producer in the early 1940s. He fought for her appointment in 1944, believing that Kay manifested an expertise and innate appreciation for broadcasting's ability to communicate and educate.[406] He then promoted Kay to be a national script supervisor in 1947. Bronner supported her attendance at training courses

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[403] King, C. 1982, *6WF Radio – ABC 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH572-18181211, Perth, 1 July.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Anonymous, at interviewee's request, 1993, oral history, National Film and Sound Archive Australia (NFSA).
[406] Memo from Bronner, R. to Educational Appointments Advisory Committee, 1943, titled *Educational Broadcasts Supervisor*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP285/1 CS:WOB 3/0 BC:10955441, 13 December.

overseas and subsequently encouraged Kay to share her ideas and new knowledge with staff in each state. Bronner also invited her to represent the ABC at international educational broadcasting communities. In 1949, after Kay had just completed her radio training with the BBC, Bronner asked her to join him at the International Conference of Educational Broadcasters in Toronto. Kay ended up speaking in Bronner's place and solidified her place in the international community.[407]

Over the years, Bronner and Kay worked together with ABC education staff and government education stakeholders. They produced a cohesive and effective radio broadcast curriculum. In 1982 Kay explained how wonderfully their partnership worked. She said that Bronner had been 'very shrewd' in combining his own cool analytical approach with Kay's more creative, 'enthusiastic' presentations; combining their strengths, they effectively won over the state education board members.[408] Kay was also grateful for Bronner's generosity at a time when women's contributions were constantly downplayed and claimed by others. She said that Bronner 'was great because he always gave you credit. You know how so many men want to take credit for what you do? Never would Rudi do that. He'd always say, "Good on you girl, try it out"'.[409] Bronner's mentorship gave Kay the opportunity to develop her ideas and strengthen her work. While Bronner was her main supporter, Kay also forged constructive relationships with other senior staff, including General Manager Charles Moses.

In the late 1940s, Therése Denny struggled to find work at the ABC. She had worked casually for the ABC and commercial stations, but never seemed able to capture the interest of the senior ABC staff responsible for giving fledgling producers the opportunity to try their hand. When Therése decided to work in the British broadcasting community, she initiated a campaign to build useful alliances with key ABC programmers back home. Her goal was to work for both the ABC and BBC. Therése realised that her skills were underdeveloped. Without formal training, she needed solid industrial feedback on her work in order to improve her skill set. It was especially important because, as a freelancer, Therése had less chance to learn on the job, unlike other junior producers who had recording equipment, facilities and experts surrounding them. She had to get organised,

[407] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA, S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[408] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[409] Ibid.

quickly. Once Therése had produced a small slate of interesting interviews in London, she reached back to local ABC management and re-introduced herself, instigating a course of correspondence with senior ABC programming staff. Therése strengthened these tenuous connections with senior Talks officers, exchanging information and ensuring that she became known and considered useful, and thus no longer invisible to decision-makers. Before long, she was in a position to solicit their advice.

In 1950 the ABC cautiously agreed to start buying some of Therése's London interviews. Head of Talks, B.H. Molesworth, offered to provide her with feedback on the few interviews she had produced. She moved quickly to strengthen this tenuous connection. In first review of her work, Molesworth told Therése that, although she was skilful in getting great subjects, her production and interview techniques needed a lot of work.[410] Later, he had one of his radio producers review her interviews. Their expert opinions provided Therése with useful, specific advice.[411] She and Molesworth communicated regularly. Early on, she stressed how eager she was to improve:

> *I do want to thank you very much indeed for your most helpful letter. You have no idea what a difference it makes to feel that someone in Australia is taking an interest, and your criticism was such good, constructive criticism, it has given me new heart.*[412]

In her letters, Therése humanised herself, even admitting that she experienced a sense of depression in moments of failure. She adopted a confessional tone and positioned Molesworth as a confidant. Therése detailed particular difficulties and asked for Molesworth's suggestions, admitting her failings and stating that she knew she had much to learn. In her letters, Therése portrayed Molesworth as a professional advocate who could remedy her professional isolation and guide her to success.

Also, in her early letters, Therése surreptitiously constructed an identity of herself that inferred she was connected with and immersed in ABC workplace culture. Masked as casual conversation, she outlined her work history, her connections and her strong regard for the ABC community:

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[410] Memo from Molesworth, B. to T. Denny, 1950, titled *Dear Miss Denny*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 13 July.
[411] Ibid.
[412] Denny, T. 1950, Correspondence to B. Molesworth, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 24 July.

> *How is everyone in Sydney? I suppose most of the people I knew would have left by now – even in Adelaide where I worked for five years I find very few that I know now … please give Dr Barry my very kindest regards. Tell him the 'adventure' has been well worth it and I love this country. Could he see me hitch-hiking, he would know how really adventurous it is!! My regards to Mr Moses and Mr Pringle, both of whom I knew in my 'programme' days in Adelaide.*[413]

Therése was exaggerating her friendship with these ABC officers. Although she did have a mild acquaintanceship with Keith Barry and Harry Pringle, memos between senior staff suggest that they only knew her superficially in those early years, explaining why they had not been prepared to make any effort to promote her into production when she applied the year before.[414] Therése was projecting herself into their community, encouraging a sense of familiarity that suggested she belonged and was worthy of their support. Before long, that became a reality.

Therése proffered interesting news and gossip about the London broadcasting scene to Molesworth, offering information that could assist him in some way. For example, she recommended producers who might be useful to him.[415] Therése positioned herself as a facilitator and encouraged the reciprocity of information. The tone of their correspondence became more familiar and appreciative over time, usually adding a touch of human interest: 'please forgive this awful typing Mr Molesworth, but it's so cold my fingers will not even work!'[416] Molesworth later replied:

> *you ask for any comments. I thought you handled that particular interview very well. We have liked your work much better in recent months, and I am pleased that our advice and suggestions have been of help to you. I must congratulate you on getting some of these big personalities.*[417]

[413] Denny, T. 1950, Correspondence to B. Molesworth, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 24 July.
[414] Memo from Barry, K. to Director of Talks, 1949, titled *Miss Therése Denny: London Interviews*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 29 September.
[415] Denny, T. 1950, Correspondence to B. Molesworth, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 5 November.
[416] Ibid.
[417] Molesworth, B. 1961, Correspondence to T. Denny, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 6 July.

Over the years, Therése's letters changed their tone and became less submissive. Initially, she portrayed herself as a wide-eyed production ingénue, flattering to facilitate her knowledge. As the ABC began to rely increasingly on Therése's provision of charming, hard-to-get and increasingly better-produced interviews, the focus of her ABC correspondence moved into more practical negotiations about providing more work. Therése became well-regarded, once they knew who she was and what she could do.

Therése repeated this behaviour throughout her career. The BBC archives contain numerous examples of Therése's method of building positive, friendly connections with her peers. Letters to senior producers, assistants and crew members reveal that she sustained an active interest in the work of others, offering advice, insights and helpful explanations that worked to smooth over the challenges of production life.[418,419] (These letters are another example which counteract Jock Marshall's claim that she was difficult to work with.) Therése worked extremely well in collaboration with authoritative public-affairs broadcasters, including her BBC supervisors, Huw Wheldon and Grace Wyndham Goldie. The crucial turning point came for Therése in 1950; she had begun to produce successful interviews in London and was finally getting noticed by the ABC. She had also started a relationship with broadcaster Chester Wilmot, who further encouraged her to pursue her ambitions and be a more ambitious and confident interviewer.

I found little evidence that Joyce Belfrage had any success in finding an advocate at the ABC workplace. Joyce forged friendships with her peers in production but was known to antagonise senior programme executives. During the time she was assigned to the producers' pool in the early 1960s, the television department was a chaotic and under-resourced division and was not conducive to a producer's professional development. Joyce battled to achieve a mandate to determine her own programme content; she was forced to quash her ambitions in order to serve an understaffed production slate. Joyce's ability to establish beneficial mentorships was also undermined by her lack of respect for the Talks officers, many of whom were unfamiliar with the new medium. Like many television producers of the day, she believed that they were far too fixated on retaining their bureaucratic authority and had far too little knowledge and appreciation for the new craft of television production. Among Joyce's personal letters, her oral history interview

[418] Memo from Denny, T. to Edward (unknown), 1959, titled *Edward Me Luv*, BBC Television Studios, BBC Written Archives Centre, T32/1 510/1, 1 October.
[419] Memo from Denny, T. to B. Maros, 1959, titled *My Very Dear Basil*, British Broadcasting Commission, BBC Written Archives Centre, T32/1 519/1, 9 December.

and the ABC records, there was no mention of any beneficial ABC mentorship of any kind. Instead, the archives alternate between documents outlining her clever project proposals and memos detailing various conflicts surrounding her work.

Unable to escape the compromises forced upon pool producers at the time, Joyce was unwilling to build bridges with senior Talks officers; instead, she saw them as hostile agents who constantly compromised her ability to do her job effectively. One main reason for this was the fact that new, male staff were given prime positions as Talks programmers, despite a serious lack of technical knowledge. Prior to her transfer to Sydney in 1959, Joyce worked in the Melbourne studios. She was paired with a new and very inexperienced Talks assistant. He was given control over the message, which frustrated Joyce. (She knew from her experiences in Canada that, usually, a television producer has a high degree of autonomy over the content they produce – this was not the case for pool producers at the ABC.) Decades later, Joyce's sense of injustice was still resonating in her memory of the time. She explained to interviewer Graham Shirley how she believed that those unqualified male bureaucrats were undeserving of their authority:

> *[he] knew from nothing because he was only about 23 and hadn't even seen a television set until he stepped into the job, let alone watched any programs or you know, done anything … I suppose he was straight from Melbourne University where he had probably read some sort of Arts degree, and he had ambitions to be a writer, so he was made into an officer … He was supposed to tell me what to put in my program … but he couldn't do it … because he didn't know what was involved. So I would say 'Tony we can't do that, we'll do this, because we can't do that because it's not do-able you see dear'. And* of course *he didn't like that at all! You know. He was told he had the say so, but of course he didn't have the say so, because he knew nothing. So it was all very difficult. It was much the same in Sydney. They were absolutely floundering.*[420]

Joyce was forced to subjugate her own hard-won position to bolster the skillset of inexperienced Talks officers, to strengthen their own positions at the expense of her own.

[420] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.

Joyce remembered enacting a small revenge for being 'summoned' to help Head of Talks Alan Carmichael learn about the new medium, a medium he was placed in charge of:

> *On one occasion he decided he would learn about television and I was summoned, and was told I was to take him to Gore Hill and tell him about the tele. So I duly took him to Gore Hill, and um, I had a lovely afternoon actually, blinding him with science. Because I kept referring to things and he kept having to ask what I meant, and I kept explaining you see. But I would blind him with more science … I had a lovely time …*[421]

Joyce expressed no regret for expressing her frustrations and did not imagine that perhaps Carmichael could have been of some help to her. To Joyce, he was part of the problem. As I outlined in Chapter 1, while Joyce was right in her assessment of Alan Carmichael's lack of television expertise, she was slightly mistaken in her assumptions about his lack of faith in her work; he had, in fact, recognised her talent and fought to see her projects funded.

In Joyce's frustration, she butted heads with Talks officers and gained a reputation for being more antagonistic than diplomatic. She had fewer options at this point in her life and found it difficult to leave; as the family income earner, she was constrained to locations suitable for her husband's health.[422,423] For Joyce, it was either stick with the ABC or move to another field altogether. Listening to Joyce's testimony, it is possible to hear the bitterness in her voice, as she remembered the ABC's treatment of their overworked and underappreciated producing teams. Joyce's views of the bias of some programme officers seemed far-fetched at times; however, after further investigation it was apparent that her concerns could often be validated.

Unlike in radio, in those early years of television I found little evidence of any sustained mentorship of female producers. There were those who trained others at the television school, such as Mungo MacCallum and Kay Kinane. Royston Morley and later Rudi Bretz were hired from overseas to help. However, none were identified as mentoring or advocating for female producers in any substantial way. Early TV staff, such as *Woman's*

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[421] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[422] Belfrage, J. 1961, Correspondence to C. Belfrage, *Cedric Belfrage Papers*, The Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, 3 September.
[423] Belfrage, J. 1961, Correspondence to C. Belfrage, *Cedric Belfrage Papers*, The Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, March.

World presenter Mary Rossi and production assistant Bev Gledhill told journalist Christine Hogan that they lacked mentors in their early days of television. In Hogan's 2006 celebratory history of women in Australian television, *Look at Me!* Hogan interviewed three women from the 1950s about their TV careers: presenter Mary Rossi, performer Toni Lamond and producer Bev Gledhill.[424] Of the three, both non-actors of the group (Rossi and Gledhill) said that they had no mentors. Gledhill was Kay Kinane's niece and, while Kay may have been a door-opening presence in Gledhill's early radio career at the ABC, Gledhill's believed that 'there wasn't anyone to follow' in television.[425] Mary Rossi said the same. It is odd that Mary did not name Kay as a mentor, possibly because Mary saw Kay as her production partner, a supportive comrade who, while senior and knowledgeable, was still forced to compromise on budget and resources, and follow the Talks Supervisor's wishes.

Opportunities that arose during industrial disruption

After examining the historical landscape, it became apparent that there were certain phases in ABC history when it was easier for women to take on roles normally assigned to male staff. These opportunities usually arose during times of industrial and technological shift. When the status quo was interrupted, ambitious women could take on projects and duties that men were unable or unwilling to take on.

Initially, many women entered the ABC to fill the roles left by men serving in the military during World War II. In an ABC interview in 1982, Betty Cook, executive assistant to the ABC's general manager, recalled the type of work that women were able to take on:

> *so many men, the younger men, particularly people like announcers went to the war. And that resulted in a shortage of people who were capable of working in broadcasting. And this was the first time that women got a chance. No woman, for example, had ever been an announcer before. It was an incredible thing when there was a woman announcer who was … considered capable of reading the news. Because it had always been argued that a man's*

[424] Hogan, C. 2006, *Look at Me! Behind the Scenes of Australian TV with the Women Who Made It,* ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.
[425] Ibid, p. 34.

voice was required to give the authority that was necessary for the news. To their astonishment they found that women could do it quite well.[426]

By 1942, each state in Australia had female announcers and newsreaders. Phyllis Hope-Robertson and Judith Halse-Rogers were two early newsreaders. Others gained work during the war as journalists, sound-effects operators and public relations officers. Dorothy Crawford had a brief role as ABC Talks Presentation Officer (before moving on after the war to start a production company with her brother, Hector). Other federal senior roles were offered to women in the library and in staff administration.[427] Senior positions, however, were rare and rarely kept. Once the men returned from the war, most female staff were told to step aside. However, some made such an impression that the ABC invited them to return in another capacity; often, they were moved into departments that seen as more female-oriented divisions.[428]

Looking back to the start of her ABC career in 1942, Kay Kinane believed that, if not for the war, a woman would not have been considered for the role of state supervisor.[429] Being an officer, a decision-maker in charge of a department, was considered to be a male role. Unlike most of the women who were pushed to return to domestic life, Kay was able to keep her position because she had proved to be talented, she was viewed as an exception and allowed to stay, despite her gender, able to compete with her male peers.

The second major opportunity for women arose during the introduction and subsequent expansion of the ABC's new television division in 1956. With an overall lack of television staff, female production workers were allowed to step in and help fill the vacuum. Some took advantage of the ABC's television training courses and became permanent members of television production teams. In the year leading up to the first ABC television broadcast, the ABC had begun an extensive recruitment drive. Some examples from the ABC's list of newly created positions included: Film Editors, Graphic Designers, Announcers, Continuity Writers, Floor Managers, Designers, Carpenters, Stagehands, Wardrobe Mistresses, Makeup Artists, Clerks, Typists, Producers, Script Assistants, Technicians,

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[426] Cook, B. 1982, *Unedited Interview, Betty Cook: ABC in Wartime*, oral history, NAA, S:C100 CS:1201795 BC:13271765.
[427] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 105.
[428] Ibid, p. 139.
[429] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.

Drivers and Riggers.[430] Not all were available to women, however, as we saw in the previous chapter.

The following three examples illustrate how women were able to take on more stimulating, demanding roles when television was introduced. Many junior women left administrative roles and moved into the Television division as support staff, such as Ruth Page, Prue Bavin and Bev Gledhill. In 1955, the year before television was introduced, bored ABC secretary Prue Bavin bumped into Assistant General Manager A.N. (Huck) Finlay and, in passing, mentioned her desire for a more substantial role.[431] To her surprise, she was quickly reassigned and sent to train as a vision mixer in the new television training school. As a script assistant, Prue was often assigned to the Outside Broadcast (OB) team. She then worked in a variety of departments, on drama productions and the first episode of *Four Corners*, among other shows. (Prue had to leave the ABC 1963 after marrying one of her co-workers.)

Ruth Page began as a junior secretary in the Adelaide Talks department in 1945. Unlike Prue, Ruth did not train at the ABC but gained television production experience at the BBC during a 1954 sabbatical to the UK, returning to join the new television team as a Script Assistant. Like Prue, Ruth partnered with producers in a range of divisions, including Sport, Schools, Women's, Children's, Music, Drama, Light Entertainment and Opera, as a Script Assistant. She eventually became a Floor Manager and TV Presentation Officer, and produced on occasion, from the mid-1970s.

Margaret Delves had produced educational radio for the ABC before moving over to the television training school in 1956. After training under Mungo MacCallum and Kay Kinane, Margaret joined the pool of television producers who, like Joyce, who were tasked to a variety of major programmes.[432] Unfortunately, like Prue, Margaret was forced to resign after marrying a co-worker; however, she was able to return as a contractor and produced a variety of projects.

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[430] Memo from Moses, C. to Programming Staff, 1956, titled *Television Staff*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 2 July.
[431] Bavin, P. 2006, 'Conversation with Prue Bavin (now Wyndham)', *ABC TV at Gore Hill in the Fifties*, website, viewed 1 May 2016, <http://www.abctvgorehill.com.au/assets/contributions/prue_bavin_2E.htm>.
[432] Moore, M. 2006, 'Margaret Delves (now Moore) remembers', *ABC TV at Gore Hill in the Fifties*, website, viewed 2 June 2015, <http://www.abctvgorehill.com.au/assets/contributions/margaret_delves_2E.htm>.

Bev Gledhill was working in the despatch department when she applied to join the ABC's television school in 1956. After training as a script assistant, she was assigned to the production pool. Once she became experienced, Bev sought ways to move higher up the production ladder. She had not enjoyed working within the pool system, being randomly allocated to various productions; she decided to take the leap and try working for a commercial channel. It was the first year of television and, in the chaotic environment of production, broadcasters were casting about for experienced staff. Bev was immediately hired by Channel 7 and, within a year, was co-producing a variety show. Within two years, Bev was sent to Perth as an executive director to consolidate the network's fledgling production facilities. Eventually, overwhelmed by the workload, Bev sought a more steady environment to produce and re-approached the ABC in 1965. Happy to have her back, the ABC assigned the now-experienced producer to their producer's pool. Bev stayed for another 20 years.[433] Her experiences illustrate two things: the first was how ambitious broadcasters, including women, could make great leaps into the production hierarchy, if they had enough television experience to remedy the lack of qualified staff in those early years of television. Bev's career also illustrates how women were able to leap up the production ladder, by leaving the ABC and taking on producing work elsewhere. She broke away from set paths of promotion, pathways that proved to be gendered and highly bureaucratised. As we will see, Therése Denny did the same thing. She was able to re-enter the ABC at a much higher level after finding opportunities to gain expertise elsewhere. Recalling Mungo MacCallum's 'Band of sisters' article, it appears that this strategy was particularly useful for female producers, looking for ways to overcome local pathways that were resistant to promoting female staff.[434]

In addition to these two phases of opportunity, it was possible for women to advance in the workplace if they were prepared to take on projects that were difficult or compromised in some way. Kay Kinane proved this in 1956, when she became a showrunner in an under-resourced and chaotic production environment. She took on a new and unformed role that would have appeared troublesome and risky to the male staff who safely occupied established positions within the production hierarchy. This provided Kay with the opportunity to rapidly expand her experience and experiment with new techniques and practices. In her study of the BBC workplace, Jean Seaton identified a similar

[433] Hogan, C. 2006, *Look at Me! Behind the Scenes of Australian TV with the Women Who Made It,* ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, pp. 29–34.
[434] MacCallum, M. 1965, 'This band of sisters', *Nation*, 26 June, p. 15.

phenomenon: 'Women always did best when innovation required new skills,' she said, because 'they could move into these spaces without challenging entrenched views and established [male] careers.'[435] Judy Wajcman, author of *Feminism Confronts Technology* (1991), saw this occurring with the women who rode the waves of new technology in the 1970s and 1980s.[436] She stated that, 'it has been more common for women to enter new jobs requiring new skills than to break into traditional male preserves'. She continued with the caveat that 'even the allocation of these completely new jobs, where no gendered custom and practice has been established, is a fundamentally gendered process.'[437]

The new television studios at Gore Hill were still being developed and workplace conditions were *very* challenging; it was remembered by staff as a disorganised shambles of a site. The photo below depicts the staff 'tea room' at the ABC's new television studios. The plan was to construct two large, purpose-fit television studios, but that would take some time. Production staff made the best of what the primitive 'Arcon' studios offered. At the same time, excitement about the new medium and a desire to make the best of the challenging conditions forged a strong sense of camaraderie and team spirit among the new television staff.[438]

Figure 20: The Staff 'tea room' at Gore Hill in the early days of television.
'ABC TV Gore Hill' Collection donated by Bruce Valentine 1958.

[435] Seaton, J. 2015, *Pinkoes and Traitors: The BBC and the Nation, 1974–1987*, Profile Books, London, p. 228.
[436] Wajcman, J. 1991, *Feminism Confronts Technology*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney.
[437] Ibid, p. 34.
[438] Moore, M. 2006, 'Margaret Delves (now Moore) remembers', *ABC TV at Gore Hill in the Fifties*, website, viewed 2 June 2015, <http://www.abctvgorehill.com.au/assets/contributions/margaret_delves_2E.htm>.

Kay quickly learned to juggle her show's inadequate resources and adapt to the limited studio facilities. The hours were long and physically demanding, and there was a great deal of shuttling between the studios and ABC production offices in the city. Kay worked 90 hours a week at certain points, without overtime.[439] In the first of many instances, she found it necessary to educate ABC management about the realities of television production. In her 1977 ABC oral history interview, Kay explained:

> *You just worked as it was needed. Because I had a half hour magazine program a week, plus another quarter of an hour program every week, we had to do all the research ourselves, get the material ourselves and [do a] rehearsal, so it meant very hard work. They called for our diaries, because there was some talk that perhaps there should be overtime and I sent mine in and I got a note back saying, 'You must really organise your work so that you don't – you've worked far too hard'.*[440]

Kay's long hours were long, not because she was disorganised, but because she was doing the job of three people, with limited resources and money. As we will see from Joyce's experiences a few years later, it took a few years for ABC management to adapt to the complex demands of television production. In the meantime, if one was willing to take on difficulties and challenges, like Kay did in 1956, one could learn and grow in a very quick period of time. Before long, Kay had forged strong production partnerships, established her seniority and gained credit for running a complete show on her own authority.

Catherine and Kay were also able to advance their agendas when their supervising officers were distracted by other things. When their work was overlooked, they could break the rules and pursue agendas that they preferred. Sometimes, however, they suffered setbacks when their autonomy was recognised and quickly re-apportioned back under the authority of male supervisors. We saw this in Kay's strategic departure from *Woman's World*. Thanks to the chaos of transition, and management's occasional disregard for 'women's content', Kay and Mary Rossi were able to move the show's content into more

[439] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA, S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC:13196286, 15 November.
[440] Ibid.

progressive, challenging socio-political spheres. Kay remembered, 'it was the beginning of television, so it was such a place for getting things started. Everybody was too busy to say, "What are you doing"?'[441] Kay and Mary had created a show similar in content style to Catherine's radio programme; it saw the 'women's domain' as a vastly broader spectrum than what was usually defined by Talks officers. For the first two years, *Woman's World* covered cooking, home repairs, culture and the arts, fashion and design, the natural sciences, women's health, geopolitical discussion, education and child development, interspersed with a variety of performances. Head of Talks Alan Carmichael was usually in agreement with Kay's approach, and Kay found Carmichael supportive. Usually, his only concern for her show was to maintain decorum. Kay laughingly remembered how Carmichael was once worried about a male ballet dancer's tights being too revealing.

However, a real problem arose when Talks programming officers realised that Kay was running the show autonomously; she had been ignored while their attentions were on other more 'important' shows. A few years before he wrote his article 'This band of sisters', Mungo MacCallum was in charge of reviewing the performance of television producers. As he completed his annual 1958 performance review, he reported that Kay had asked for *Woman's World* to be better resourced and funded. At the time, the project was produced separately from the rest of the shows under the Talks television umbrella. His response was to suggest to management that the new Women's Organiser, when she came on board, would be best tasked to deal with Kay's issues.[442] It is unclear whether MacCallum was in agreement with Kay, a peer whose skills and knowledge were similar to his own; however, it appears that he thought it best to let Kay pursue the matter with the department's new supervisor. Unfortunately for Kay, the woman who replaced Ida Jenkins as Federal Organiser of Women's Programmes had a different view of what constituted appropriate 'women's content'.

Ruth Stirling had previously worked in promotions and advertising but never broadcasting.[443] The fact that ABC management hired a woman without experience to run *both* radio and television divisions was a good indication of their ignorance for television's complexity and their lack of respect for women's programming. Kay was unimpressed

[441] Kinane, K. 1995, *Interview with Kay Kinane*, oral history, interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.
[442] Memo from MacCallum, M. to Acting Controller of Programmes, 1958, titled *TV Producer's Assessment*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 1May.
[443] Stirling, R. 1975, *An Interview with Ruth Stirling*, oral history, interviewed by H. de Berg, National Library of Australia: Oral TRC1/869.

with Ruth's inexperience and limited perspective, and her plan to compromise the show's content. Kay expressed her disappointment in the ABC, and Stirling, when she was interviewed by Mary Rossi's daughter, Emma, in 1995:

> *We were aware it was one of the most successful shows because we were rating quite high. That's where the jealousies came in, and people in the Talks department who didn't want this thing going on because it wasn't under them you see. We were completely our own bosses. And then, I mean I always talked it over with them about policy, but had no worries about it. And then time came for this 'starter' to be regulated more. You see the ABC was shaped into departments according to the needs of radio and then television came in and they just plastered it on without knowing what they were doing … And so, they came into the Talks Department, 'they' being the permanent members of the Talks Department, and had appointed a woman who would be in charge of Women's Broadcasting, god help me, and who was going to be in charge of our program … And she said, 'Ah, I know a lot of, I've done a lot with the Electricity Board and I've done programs and I believe you've done some too.' And I said, 'Look, I don't have the time for meetings about this sort of thing, I've got to be able to get on with the program'. 'Oh well', she said 'I thought about that and if I slipped a little bit of paper on your desk with my ideas for what might be on the program next week?' And they were these ideas were all these awful things they'd done on women's programs on radio, you know, how to keep a shine on your best shoes, or how to you know, anything excepting of interest. Awful! And so I knew I couldn't do it, so I resigned, from the Talks Department. Went back to my home, and left it. Then, the program just went pfft.*[444]

Kay believed that a group of Talks programme officers had seen her autonomy as a threat to their culture of control. As a consequence, Ruth Stirling was brought in and readily asked for more traditional content. Ruth thought it was a good idea to re-play syndicated segments such as 'The sewing room', featuring segments like how to make a dressing gown. Kay refused to play along and made a strategic departure back to her 'home', the Education Division. It was a domain that provided the most freedom and authority, where

[444] Kinane, K. 1995, *Interview with Kay Kinane*, oral history, interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.

she could unleash her expertise and get the job done with as little interference as possible. Over the next few years, Ruth Stirling became progressively more confident and began to encourage her producers to push content constraints. Eventually, Ruth too came to be a troublesome ABC woman; she gained the confidence to admonish her Talks officer peers for their sexism, as she demonstrated when she criticised her male supervisor peers for acting like sexist bullies.[445]

Over in Perth, Catherine King also benefitted by being overlooked. In 1942, thanks to the Perth office's remoteness and a distracted Sydney office, Catherine produced *Kindergarten of the Air* with just her local manager's endorsement. Hesitant to go through a complicated development and permission process, Catherine convinced Con Charlton that she could produce something effective and compelling; the show was quickly put together without being sanctioned by federal supervisors in Sydney. It was common for Head Office to downplay the contributions of the ABC's 'BAPH' offices (Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart). Kay Kinane, who was still in Perth at the time, recalled that sceptical managers were quickly won over by Catherine's new radio show: they were 'agog at how very good it sounded.'[446] Praise of the show eventually reached the ears of ABC Controller Keith Barry, who expressed his surprise about a program that he had not authorised. But, by then, it was had proved highly successful with their young audiences. Within a few months, other states were following, with some minor modifications of their own.[447]

Sometime later, once Catherine had won Charlton over, their distance from Head Office allowed him to ignore directives that would have fundamentally undermined her programme goals. Ironically, Catherine gained some notoriety for her constant lobbying for greater regional representation from BAPH divisions. In one memo between the Head of Talks and the Controller of Programmes from 1968, Catherine was identified as a key member of a 'pressure group' who criticised ABC management for promulgating the production culture that privileged east-coast programming and complacently encouraged the syndication of generalised programme formats. (Another member of this pressure group apparently, was Irene Greenwood, the woman Catherine beat to the women's

[445] Stirling, R. 1980, *ABC Oral History – Ruth Stirling*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP 1762/1 CS:1059730 BC:13196802, 20 May.
[446] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA, S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.
[447] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 26.

sessions producer's role.) Catherine argued that the east-coast bias was detrimental to regional listenership and was a failure of the broadcaster's democratic remit.[448]

Bargaining from a position of strength

Because public-service-minded staff were naturally drawn to the ABC's public-broadcasting remit, there was a belief among policy-makers that the privilege of the role would compensate for the compromises that production staff were forced to make in everyday life. ABC staff made personal and professional compromises in exchange for the privilege of manifesting their public-service goals. However, the more experienced and better positioned the producers became, the more they were able to negotiate for better conditions and greater autonomy. This was particularly apparent in Catherine King and Therése Denny's experiences at the ABC. For example, once Catherine developed her skills and consolidated her agenda and the purpose of her show, she was more likely to request better conditions and better wages for her production team. Catherine was most vocal in her complaints when her aims for the show were compromised in some way.

At times, the ABC took the loyalty of mission-oriented staff for granted, expecting them to accept restrictive industrial conditions. For example, in early 1951, Therése was renegotiating her contract to supply the ABC with her London-based radio interviews. Like Catherine, Therése had overcome her inexperience and had gained a reputation for creating effective and professional broadcasts. Both the BBC and ABC were interested in her work. Armed with a better understanding about the business of the industry, Therése went on the front foot and negotiated assertively. The relationships she had forged were strong enough to survive demands that may have earlier been seen as presumptuous. Therése asked to be exempted from the ABC's reliance on standardised (basic) payment fees for overseas contributors. Her work, she argued, was of a different nature and format, and thus worth more. Therése meticulously explained why the rates were unrealistic, considering the amount of work that was required to research, enlist, interview and edit each episode. The ABC wanted her to produce three a week, but Therése argued that it was more realistic to do two for that price. Her demand for higher pay was the subject of a great deal of discussion among senior ABC management; it was seen by some as a threat to the status quo. Keith Barry (Controller of Programmes), T.W. Bearup (London

[448] Memo from Carmichael, A. to Controller of Programmes, 1968, titled *Letter from Mrs Irene A. Greenwood*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP1299/2 CS:12/1/1 BC:3159684, 24 June.

Representative) and Harry Pringle (Head of Variety) were supportive,[449] but Head of Talks B.H. Molesworth argued that, if other producers discovered that Therése was getting paid more, they would want more as well, setting a dangerous precedent. He fretted that 'the news would get around'.[450]

Arguing in support of Therése's claims, Harry Pringle provided a telling insight into the organisation's reliance on its remit as a means of compensating staff. His memo suggests that some ABC managers had convinced themselves that, for production staff, the job itself provided its own type of reward. Pringle's report stated (with my highlights):

> *Miss Denny is trying to make a living out of it which is a formidable task for an Australian and I feel she should be given every help and consideration in view of the excellent results. The prominent people she has interviewed are a feather in her cap. I would hate to see such initiative and enthusiasm thrown aside for such a small amount. Many other people engaged by the Talks Department quite obviously do the work without consideration of the fee because they want to do it or are so hard up that they are prepared to accept any fee.*[451]

Pringle's comment reveals the compromises forced on many ABC contributors. Motivated by the public-service remit, they were willing to accept financial sacrifices for the privilege of contributing to national discourse. Furthermore, some staff were powerless to make demands because ABC jobs were hard to get and highly valued; they had a weak foundation from which to negotiate. As we saw with Kay Kinane's early days in television, she was prepared to work long hours extensively and in difficult conditions because, in addition to giving her an opportunity to learn and advance, she gained the privilege of running her own show, producing her own messages for national consumption. It was a price that she was willing to pay.

Catherine and Therése both used their increasing status and expertise to force complacent wage deals into being more reasonable. Management tended to stick to conventional

[449] Memo from Barry, K. to B.H. Molesworth, 1951, titled *Therése Denny*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 12 February.
[450] Memo from Molesworth, B. to Controller of Programmes, 1951, titled *Therése Denny*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP613/1 BC:3187689 Photo: IMG_0098, 5 February.
[451] Memo from Pringle, H. to Controller of Programmes, 1951, titled *Therése Denny*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP613/1 BC:3187689, 6 February.

employment conditions until they were forced to pay staff more competitively. Returning to Therése's request for a more competitive rate for her work, it took some time for management to resolve their internal dispute on the matter. Therése held her nerve and waited; she knew what other broadcasters were paying and also knew that the ABC realised that she had very healthy employment prospects with other public broadcasters. The ABC subsequently gave Therése what she asked for, but in a way that allowed them to save face. They agreed that she would get the official rate but could charge extra for research and other expenses (preserving Molesworth's precedent).[452] Before long, however, the BBC offered Therése full-time work in television and, much to the chagrin of Molesworth and his peers, her situation changed and she was only able to produce radio for the ABC in her spare time.

Catherine was also usually prepared to put up with a compromised production budget and put in many uncharged hours of overtime, because she was doing what she loved and was usually left alone to do it. In 1960, ABC management again demonstrated a willingness to take advantage of the dedication of its producers. Catherine was asked to produce Perth's weekly *Woman's World* television show *in addition* to her daily radio programme, at a rate considerably less than if the ABC had hired a separate television producer. Already contracted to £20 a week, Catherine was offered only an additional £8 a week to produce the television show.[453] In comparison, when Kay was assigned to *Woman's World* in Sydney in 1956, her salary was £1,796.[454] Even taking into consideration her higher pay as a senior television expert, there is a major disparity between Kay's £34 a week and the £8 offered to Catherine to produce a weekly television show. Catherine agreed, however, knowing the workload was going to be 'hell'. She was so passionate about the *Women's Session*, and its powerful ability to connect with the public, that the idea of a television version of her show was too tempting to refuse. As we will see in the next chapter, the workload proved too crushing and, combined with the limited resources usually relegated to women's programming, Catherine began to buckle under the pressure.

[452] Memo from Bearup, T. to C. Moses, 1951, titled *Extract from Mr Bearup's Letter Dated 12.11.51*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP613/1 BC:3187689, 12 November.
[453] Memo from Sholl, E. to Acting General Manager, 1960, titled *Mrs Catherine King – Contract Artist*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King 2 BC:5019247, 13 December.
[454] Memo from Moses, C. to Programming Department, 1956, titled *TV Producers Pool*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 19 November.

Alternatively, Catherine's passion to embodying the public broadcasting remit also meant that she had to be taken seriously during contract negotiations. If Catherine thought that her ability to produce the show was compromised she would threaten to leave. In 1949, she disconcerted Ewart Chapple (Con Charlton's replacement as state manager) with the idea that she would pursue her social mission elsewhere. Suddenly, the ABC were reminded of how much extra work she put in without financial compensation. Chapple wrote to Head Office:

> *in the event of Mrs. King leaving us we could not expect any other person to apply herself so diligently to the session, nor would the session retain its high standard. Mrs King's hours exceed far beyond her office hours. A very large part of her work is done between 8pm and midnight, and she generally starts her day with one or two calls before breakfast. All of which shows that she is putting as much of herself as humanly possible into the session, and the result of her efforts speak for themselves.*[455]

Chapple wanted Head Office to help him 'remove any thoughts she may have about leaving us owing to overwork and insufficient remuneration' but negotiations dragged on.[456] A few months later, on the eve of one of her long research sabbaticals overseas (taken, usually, at the end of one of her contract periods), Catherine sent a 'farewell' letter to Head of Talks Molesworth in Sydney. In the letter, Catherine acts familiar and friendly, yet plays a subtle game, reminding him of how hard she has worked for the ABC and inferring that she might not return:

> *I thought I'd like to tell you, now that I have finished work at the ABC, except as a foreign contribution, how grateful I am for the chance you have given me for the last five years. Alec and I both feel that we may have to be carried on board our boat, but we'll soon recover. And we are both very conscious of the generous and sympathetic way you have treated us – indeed for far more than just my five years of formal employment. I know I must have often been a bit of a thorn in your side, with my haphazard and occasionally high handed ways. But I have been grateful for your forbearance, for your continual*

[455] Memo from Chapple, E. to Director of Talks, 1949, titled *Memorandum from 6WF 6WN Perth*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008, CS:King1, BC:5019246, 28 June.
[456] Ibid.

backing, and for your help whenever I've asked for it. If I had this time of life over again, I'd ask for just the same job – whether I'd get it of course is questionable![457]

Catherine's contract was eventually renewed, and at a slightly higher rate.[458] Later, during another round of contract negotiations in 1956, Catherine put in for a full year's leave and let her contract run out.[459] She took her time renegotiating while away, gaining another, moderate pay rise. As a contract staffer, she had more flexibility to take time off to pursue her social and intellectual agendas elsewhere.

Catherine's strong relationship with her audience was another key negotiating asset, which she relied on when dealing with ABC management. Over the years, Catherine had built a formidable listener base. It was a badge of honour for her, a successful embodiment of her agenda. In 1951, as part of a national review of women's programming, Catherine was asked to make an official summation of her programme agendas. In her report, she highlighted the consistent and substantial audience reception of her programme, stating that 'during the last six years, something between ten and twelve thousand letters from listeners have come in.'[460] Catherine's network of listeners was particularly loyal, a shared community who regularly communicated with Catherine and her team about their ideas and concerns. Catherine made sure to remind ABC decision-makers that her views were worth paying attention to and that her presence at the ABC was recognised as an asset.

Joyce and the ABC's difficult transition to television

Unlike her peers in the cohort, Joyce Belfrage in fact, suffered a serious failure at the local level. From her arrival in 1958 until her departure in 1962, Joyce's ability to produce quality public-affairs programming was compromised as the ABC mismanaged its transition to television. The organisation struggled to employ the necessary television staff, resources and technologies, and battled to implement an infrastructure that could manage them effectively. Senior management exacerbated an already challenging transition by

[457] King, C. 1949, Correspondence to B. Molesworth, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King1 BC:5019246, 21 November.
[458] Memo from Molesworth, B. to WA Talks Department, 1949, titled *Contract Artist – Catherine King*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008, CS:King1, BC:5019246, 8 July.
[459] Memo from King, C. to E.K. Sholl, 1956, titled *Dear Mr Sholl*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King 2 BC:5019247, 28 September.
[460] King, C. 1951, *Comments on Women's Session – from Catherine King*, Report, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:Women's Session 1951/73 BC:11094548.

combining radio and television under the one, radio-centric executive. The introduction of a new cohort of television producers caused seismic shifts in ABC Talks management culture in the late 1950s. Talks officers, now tasked to create and supervise programming in a medium with which many were unfamiliar, often underestimated the skills, methods and resources required to produce television.[461] It took some years for ABC management to fully appreciate the extent to which television and radio were fundamentally different, finally separating the divisions in 1965.

In an *ABC Weekly* article from November 1956, ABC Chairman Sir Richard Boyer encapsulated two key issues at the core of transition: the impending production chaos to be weathered as television was initiated and consolidated, and the powerful nature of the new medium that privileged those working within it. Writing to staff and ABC audiences, he stated:

> *From earliest childhood to the closing years of old age, television has an inherent potentiality for the enrichment of life and for the deepening of its meaning, but we shall have years to experiment and of trial and error before the real possibilities in this field will be known. In the meantime, we hope that our viewing audience will realise that we are explorers into an unknown country and will be tolerant and sympathetic.*[462]

There certainly was a period of 'trial and error' as the ABC addressed the demands of the new television division. Rather than following the advice of its British and Canadian public broadcasting counterparts, the ABC chose not to separate radio and television divisions.[463] Managers had done their research and spoken with their peers. They recruited international experts in anticipation of the transformation.[464] Nevertheless, they planned to combine both production systems under the existing radio-centric management structure. Management believed that existing radio officers could move into a television production pool and, together with newly recruited producers, form a diverse resource of talent.[465] It was a naïve assumption. There was an extensive range of technical skills for

[461] Throughout this period at the ABC, the role of 'producer' generally comprised the duties of writing, directing *and* producing, although at times, a producer could delegate some tasks.
[462] Boyer, R. 1956, 'A landmark in national history', *The ABC Weekly*, November 3, p. 2.
[463] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p.196
[464] Ibid, p. 197.
[465] Memo from Moses, C. to Programming Staff, 1956, titled *Television Staff*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 2 July.

radio Talks officers to attain; complex creative and conceptual skills to learn as well. As Ken Inglis explained, 'a new vocabulary had to be learned.'[466]

Joyce worked at the ABC during this time, when the scope and authority of a producer's role was contested and marginalised. Established Talks officers found that they were losing sovereignty over the message; their lack of television experience meant that they had to share the role with new producers, (like Joyce). As a result, some ABC programmers battled to have the new television producers stripped of the authority to develop and produce content on their own initiative; they sought to diminish the scope of the television producer's role. What eventuated was a system where a core group of experienced television producers generally did the bulk of television production work, while Talks officers planned and controlled programming content. Many of these officers were not yet capable of producing major work themselves, (as we saw earlier, with Joyce's frustration at having to train her television 'supervisors'). Adding to the problem, with time and resources in short supply once broadcasting commenced, it became difficult for unskilled staff to have the time to focus on learning production methods.[467] Tom Manefield, another pool producer, remembered the long hours, the small budgets and the lack of production support from the Talks officers, who were supposed to be producing alongside them. Interviewed by Graham Shirley in 1990, Manefield recalled:

> *they were always having problems getting producers and getting good programs to work. And so they would always be employing and looking for new people. They couldn't see where the real problems were starting from. They were trying to make programs that germinated through administrative people sitting round board tables, saying, 'Wouldn't it be a good idea if we made a program about XYZ, and they would even plan the content of the program and hand it over to a producer!' I mean, that's having the cat by the tail, isn't it. And they couldn't wake up to the fact … that if you want to make good producers, you look for the people with the ideas and you hear their ideas. You don't impose upon them ideas!*[468]

[466] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 195.
[467] Denton, K. 1968, 'Public affairs', in M. MacCallum (ed.), *Ten Years of Television*, Sun Books, Melbourne, pp. 59–61.
[468] Manefield, T. 1990, *Manefield, Tom: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, NFSA ref: 214897, 4 & 17 August.

Manefield was describing the environment that Joyce had been working in since 1958. She worked extensively, but rarely on projects she developed herself.

Prior to the introduction of television in 1956, the role of the ABC radio Talks officer had, in fact, been a type of producer. They came up with policy-driven concepts, researched and recruited spokespeople and advisors, commissioned presenters and talent, wrote scripts, and managed the development of the production. They also supervised the other, contracted producers who ran their own shows (like Catherine King), offering feedback and criticism in order to sustain overarching agendas set by senior management. For example, when Kay Kinane was Federal Script Editor and Producer for Youth Education, part of her role was to be a producer – albeit a senior one.[469] Some Talks officers were disconcerted when they realised that the new television producers, such as Joyce, expected to do those very same things, often with a more intense focus and on a more complex scale.

Enfolded within their powerful privilege of speaking for, and to, the nation, Talks officers imagined themselves as protectors of the public broadcasting charter. Their sense of loyalty to the remit fostered a culture of reverence, which allowed some to piously justify their own worthiness and authority. In an interview for the ABC's 50th anniversary in 1982, retired programme executives Clem Semmler and Allan Ashbolt talked about the hierarchies of production and referred to debates about who was worthy of controlling the message. Semmler admitted: 'When I came to the ABC in the 1950s I said it was rather like entering a church. And it was too. There were certain rules you had to obey. You knew the rules almost instinctively.' Ashbolt then continued: 'We were like a priesthood, weren't we Clem? And there was no doubt that these memos came down, as instructions, that we were perfectly willing to obey.'[470] A few years later, Ashbolt asserted that ABC production culture was compromised by bureaucratic careerists. A phenomenon, he said, that was common in the 'upper echelons of management – where attitudes have often been shaped by the career syndrome.'[471]

[469] 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit' 1954, *The ABC Weekly*, 6 February, p. 20.
[470] Semmler, C. & Ashbolt, A. 1982, *The Pursuit of Excellence, ABC Radio 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 2FC, Sydney, NAA, S:C100 CS:1378666 BC:13360990, 4 July.
[471] Ashbolt, A. 1987, 'The ABC in political society', in T. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds.), *Communications and the Media in Australia* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. 92.

When their autonomy was threatened, some programme officers portrayed the new cohort of television producers as incapable or unworthy of deciding Talks content. One officer who stood out for his antagonistic stance was Murray Gordon. Gordon jealously guarded his authority. In 1962 he composed a manifesto, which he sent to his superiors, arguing that it was essential to differentiate between real 'Talks men' like himself and these new 'so-called producers'.[472] For Gordon, producers like Joyce were a necessary evil to be strictly controlled until a new, more trustworthy generation of producer/directors could be built from the programme-officer side of the ABC. Gordon declared that the three dedicated Talks pool producers – Joyce Belfrage, Henri Saffran and Kevin Shine – were 'inadequate' and incapable of creating programming in a manner that embodied the public-service remit.[473] Reading his 1962 memo, it is clear that he was constructing a heroic identity for himself as a 'Talks man'. He wrote:

> *I have always felt very strongly that it is much easier to teach people to direct television programmes than to produce them. The direction is a purely mechanical process – like driving a car – which doesn't require any great knowledge of how the car works … The difficult thing is to teach people to produce programmes in the way that Talks assistants always have done in radio and for this they need, a fairly complete understanding of Talks policy, one aspect which is sadly lacking in the three so called producers we have at present. Without this no man can produce a Talks programme, and we haven't a Talks man in Sydney at present who can direct television programmes.*[474]

Gordon had an extremely limited understanding of the sophisticated craft of television production. The ABC's established Talks officers were used to invoking and controlling radio programme directives in a relatively straightforward way; from concept to production and broadcast. However, they were unsettled by the more complex medium and misunderstood how difficult it was to produce an audiovisual project effectively. It took some time for them to realise that, with the onset of television, production methodologies would take a greater percentage of the process of crafting and manifesting the message.

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[472] Memo from Gordon, M. to Director of Talks, 1962, titled *Television Producers*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 20 December.
[473] Ibid.
[474] Ibid.

Years later, Joyce told Graham Shirley how Murray Gordon, and officers like him, compromised the ability of pool television producers to have any creative programme authority of their own:

> *The Officers were there to edit out the undesirable elements that the producers might put in, is what one felt. And the idea was really that eventually, what they were aiming for, what I always felt, was that the producer was merely a handle winder. A studio ok. You know, who happened not to be a tech, but happened to be the one who made the noises for the techs to do things. But you had absolutely no say at all into whatever went into the program.*[475]

As a result of the inefficient structure of the new television production system and the intransigent, self-privileging nature of the ABC Talks management, Joyce failed to thrive. Unlike Kay, who inhabited a relatively autonomous, dedicated-to-one-programme role, Joyce was a pool producer, a resource to be assigned to a variety of projects according to the needs of the new production department. Joyce found it almost impossible to manifest her ambitions to produce substantial public-affairs programming. The nature of the producers' pool at the time was necessarily transient. Producers in the pool could be quickly moved off benchmark programmes and diverted to serve the more immediate needs of the department. What little programming autonomy Joyce had was often compromised, either by the loss of the preordained budget (used for another show), or her reassignment to other projects. Joyce enjoyed her work on the series *Inquiry Into*, but struggled when reassigned to less controversial, short-term shoots.

In 1961 Alan Carmichael declared in departmental memos that the Talks Department was 'acutely understaffed' and that its television production unit would suffer if producers continued to be shunted around to fix the ABC's staffing shortages.[476] Producer, director and writer Kit Denton looked back on the production environment facing Talks producers in the early 1960s and lamented that they had to wait several years before they would be

[475] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[476] Memo from Carmichael, A. to AGM, 1961, titled *Producers: Talks Department*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 14 March.

able to dedicate themselves to particular programs and pursue particular themes.[477] If they lasted, that is. Denton argued that 'men of ideas, of opinion, of imagination will only work for so long under such conditions and, since the commercial channels offer little incentive to them, they tend to go away – out of the industry or overseas.'[478] Eventually, new General Manager Talbot Duckmanton separated the divisions in 1965; producers were more able to specialise.[479] Unfortunately, Joyce had moved on before this came to pass.

Throughout 1961, Joyce had been developing a short series on Indigenous Australians and assimilation. Alan Carmichael liked her ideas and presented her proposal to the Film Assessment Committee (FAC). He argued that Joyce's series would be a feather in the ABC's cap, stating that:

> *if Mrs. Belfrage's sixth sense is right, it will prove to be the clincher which gives us the up-to-the-minute, forward-looking spearhead to the programme which will prove the ultimate selling-point both at home and overseas … A closely integrated argument, and a serious attempt to present the complexities of the problem from the points of view of aborigines, half-castes, teachers, local people, and last but not least, the government who carries the can overseas.*[480]

This type of project proposal was, in Joyce and Carmichael's eyes, a sophisticated social study appropriate for Talks programming. Unfortunately, Joyce found herself constantly thwarted. The first setback came with the FAC's complaints that the project would be too expensive; they did not see the value in doing full pre-production research (which in all likelihood would have saved money in the long term).[481] The next major setback came when C.V.J. (Colin) Mason, then the acting head of Talks, pushed for Joyce to be taken off her project and put on two smaller, more superficial documentaries. She was moved to quickly remedy a scheduling gap on the show *Spotlight*, and assigned to produce a show on the Stock Exchange.[482]

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[477] Denton, K. 1968, 'Public affairs', in M. MacCallum (ed.), *Ten Years of Television*, Sun Books, Melbourne, pp. 59–60.
[478] Ibid, p. 54.
[479] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 257.
[480] Memo from Carmichael, A. to Film Assessment Sub-Committee, 1961, titled *Proposed Series of TV Documentaries on Aborigines' Assimilation Problems*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP1299/2 BC:3161668, 22 May.
[481] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[482] Memo from Mason, C. to Assistant Director of Programming (NSW), 1961, titled *Producers – Talks Programmes TV*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 5 May.

Writing to her brother-in-law, Joyce expressed how aggrieved she felt in her failure to produce her own, more substantial projects:

> *I've never done so little work in my life, as the TV bosses here are hopelessly incapable of organising staff and programmes … I had a big series of progs on aborigines' assimilation problems – four months' research and planning – postponed more or less indefinitely because they haven't got any film editors – won't offer them enough pay to stick around. Now I'm doing a prog on the Sydney Stock Exchange – apparently there are enough editors for that … funny isn't it?*[483]

Joyce's confusion over why the project was dropped was not surprising, considering the lack of open communication between programmers and producers at the time. The ABC was not keen to encourage transparency, fuelling a sense of distrust between Talks management and its television producers.

Ken Inglis explained that the ABC's highly bureaucratised system was particularly 'cumbersome' to documentary production; programmes made by committee subsequently proved to be insubstantial and infrequent.[484] When Catherine King moved to television, she found the environment to be 'departmentalised' and 'impersonal', unlike the more flexible and independent style of the radio production environment.[485] There were numerous committees and competing agendas; with Talks Supervisors and Heads of Departments, the new Film Assessment Committee, lower-level Talks officers and, finally, the producers themselves all having input into programming. It was not an environment conducive to creating quality productions. Kay Kinane recalled that one of the factors that triggered her decision to retire was the ever-increasing bureaucratisation of the production process. She grew tired of fighting to realise the vision for each project:

> *I was suddenly going in to work one morning and thought, thinking to myself, 'Ah I'm going to have to fight with the Programme Director to get this, I'm going to have to fight with Effects to get this.' Oh, this is not what life's about.*

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[483] Belfrage, J. 1961, Correspondence to C. Belfrage, *Cedric Belfrage Papers*, The Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, 3 September.
[484] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, pp. 224–225.
[485] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 115.

Fighting with people. I don't enjoy fighting with people. I enjoy working with them. Why am I doing this?'[486]

In the early days of her career, Kay found it much easier to gain the encouragement and 'ear' of decision-makers which, in turn, enhanced her projects' creativity and ingenuity. As the departments expanded, the process was convoluted by increasingly more input from new programme officers. Television complicated the process even further. Kay recalled the change: 'You had to argue your way through people who knew nothing about production in order to get money. And they really didn't know what you were talking about, because they hadn't gone through the mill themselves.'[487]

The inadequacies of the ABC's over-bureaucratised production system and committee culture played a key role in Joyce's progressive demotions. In 1958 Joyce was hired at the highest producers level, grade five. Henri Saffran, one of the other two Talks pool producers, sat at grade three. Within two years, Joyce was downgraded a level, then again in April 1963.[488] On both occasions, the Producers' Assessment Committee declared that she had not done enough major work to justify her high ranking. Joyce argued that she had in fact, made 26 project proposals and, of those, she was only allowed to produce two.[489] The committee refused to take responsibility for the compromises that it placed on the production pool and ignored the fact that it was the programme officers themselves who denied Joyce the opportunity to develop those projects.

As I examined the internal workings of ABC production during television's early years, I wondered if Joyce would have had more success if she had been hired as a Talks officer first, rather than as a producer. Someone seen to be part of the policy team, who could also do the creative and technical work – like Kay Kinane. Alternatively, the evidence suggests that Joyce would have had more success if she had joined the ABC later in the 1960s, when the ABC film unit had developed and programme-specific production teams had replaced the 'pool' of producers. Therése Denny, who came to the ABC in 1963, had a much greater degree of autonomy. Joyce was deployed superficially; her scope to work effectively was limited by the urgent staffing needs and she was often restricted to enacting

[486] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Memo from Semmler, C. to Director of Talks, 1963, titled *Biennial Review of Television Producers – 1963*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 4 April.
[489] Ibid.

the ideas of others. Her second demotion was the last straw. Out went the typewriter. And out went Joyce.

Preliminary, localised responses

Some producers were able to thrive because they forged productive workplace mentorships. They strategically built diplomatic and productive workplace relationships, which offered them opportunities and smoothed over their challenges to the status quo. Some producers advanced as the local environment underwent disruption and transition, seizing opportunities because they were overlooked by distracted programme controllers, or taking on challenging roles that, despite their difficulties, gave them the opportunity to experiment. As they consolidated their experience, they learned how to make the most of the ABC's management conventions and cultures, fortifying their status in the marketplace and bargaining from a position of strength. Unfortunately, as Joyce discovered, there was only so much one could do when trapped within a compromised production environment; denied the opportunity to work consistently on her own projects; and imagined as a threatening interloper by Talks Officers, compromised by their self-protectionist agendas. Joyce lacked powerful television allies, who might have been able to better protect her against the harsh judgments of the Producer's Assessment Committee.

In the next chapter, I look at the ways the cohort benefitted by moving across media platforms. I will outline how they moved fluidly amongst the interconnected media available to them within their creative industry; maximising their industrial mobility, they increased the ways that they could convey their ideas and opinions to the public.

Chapter 5 – Transmediality

It is telling that each member of this cohort of successful female producers had careers in both radio and television and utilised a variety of media and creative formats to express their thoughts and agendas. Being open to different modes of communication gave post-war producers a flexibility and mobility, which helped them adapt and bypass the obstacles they faced in the production workplace. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce each worked in both radio and television, often moving back and forth between mediums, or producing both simultaneously. They also used print media to construct appealing public personas for themselves, and used a range of public fora to speak to the issues they cared about. In addition to producing both radio and television, members of the cohort wrote creative fiction and children's stories, produced community theatre, formulated educational and academic curricula about the theories and practices of broadcasting, and devised a large amount of publicity material to promote their programmes. By adopting a more inclusive, 'entangled' view of the actions of broadcasters within the integrated systems of media industries, as historians Dahl (1994)[490] and Nicholas (2012)[491] have both suggested, it has been possible to see that these often-disregarded ancillary behaviours were, in fact, productive transmedial engagements which buttressed and enhanced the work of mission-oriented broadcasters. In this chapter, I will discuss how and why female broadcasters crossed between radio and television, and describe how they used other formats to express their personal beliefs and interests.

Moving between radio and television

The women in this study all began their careers in radio before reaching out to embrace the new format of television – a likely progression considering how the media landscape changed in the post-war years, with radio expanding dramatically and television introduced progressively around the globe. They did not all stay consistently with television, however. They moved between radio and television when it suited their needs. Each member of the cohort started their careers in radio. Kay, Catherine and Therése gained reputations for their innovative approaches to radio production: Kay in ABC educational broadcasting; Catherine, first with the ABC's *Kindergarten of the Air* and then

[490] Dahl, H.F. 1994, 'The pursuit of media history', *Media Culture & Society*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 551–563.
[491] Nicholas, S. 2012, 'Media history or media histories: Re-addressing the history of the mass media in inter-war Britain', *Media History* vol. 18, no. 3–4, pp. 379–394.

the *Women's Session*; and Therése, with her international interviews for the ABC and BBC. Although Joyce worked in a variety of radio roles before coming to Australia, she did not excel until she moved into television.

The powerful reach and resonance of the medium was highly regarded by the cohort. In the early 1940s, for example, Catherine was simultaneously thrilled and terrified when given her first chance to produce for ABC radio. She was in awe of what radio could do, recalling,

> *I remember discussing with Dr Barry that I couldn't stand the idea of power of the medium and I thought this would be an overpowering thing to oneself, to feel that one had this amount of air, time on the air.*[492]

Catherine, nevertheless, embraced the role and used radio's capacity to reach into the homes of the remote West Australian region to remedy the physical and cultural isolation experienced by so many of her listeners. It was the perfect medium to embody her social agenda. Kay Kinane found radio to be an extremely effective vehicle to educate audiences, particularly young audiences. In the early days of her career in the ABC's Perth studios, Kay formulated new types of educational programming to replace boring lectures. She experimented with her team of volunteer teachers and performers, and worked on radio's ability to capture the imagination of audiences. Kay recalled,

> *my job was to think up ideas, find people who could do them and then produce them. I think that what was so exciting about radio in those days was, you had, you could do anything, because everything was new. You could experiment with all sorts of things.*[493]

It was common for Kay to be inundated with letters and pictures from children, who related to her creative 'lessons'.[494] Proving a powerful and effective medium to connect with large and receptive audiences. Radio enabled Kay, Catherine and other creative and

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[492] King, C. 1966, *Women's Session*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH175-18181156, Perth, 27 May.
[493] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[494] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC:13196276, 15 November.

driven producers to embody their agendas, and in order to produce the most effective messages, they alternated between television and radio when necessary.

When television appeared on the horizon, Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were all interested in engaging with the format's complex creative components. Television provided new modes of spectatorship, new ways to connect with audiences. Television also offered exciting new professional challenges, appealing to their ambitions as public broadcasters. In 1956 Catherine produced a report for ABC management, which outlined her views on the benefits of creating a televisual version of her show. She argued that, if done well, television could enhance her ability to produce 'quality' programming, which would improve the social and cultural lives of Australian audiences.[495] Catherine was optimistic about television's ability to expand on radio's attributes and argued that it would initiate a greater response in the minds of viewers and 'enliven the imagination and intelligence' of her audience.[496] Catherine was particularly excited by television's potential to more evocatively represent the work of a variety of creative and social communities, and more explicitly illustrate creative expression and the human experience.

Kay Kinane similarly praised television's potential to elevate the ability for mass communication to resonate with audiences. After researching and training extensively with American television broadcasters, Kay produced a series of informative reports to assist senior ABC staff in coming to terms with the various methodologies of television. Among Kay's numerous briefs about policy and production management, infrastructure and resources, she also wrote about the wonder of television and its ability to inspire audiences – as long as projects were well planned and crafted of course.

Of the cohort, Joyce Belfrage was the first to work in television. Joyce had worked in radio, first with the BBC, briefly, then with RDF in Paris, then back in various capacities with the BBC. After taking on a rather ineffective documentary internship with Rotha Films in London in 1947, Joyce was hired to produce television for the CBC in 1951. After her husband, Bruce, had a severe stroke in 1955, they returned to Britain and Joyce quickly found work producing for the newly-introduced commercial networks. Money was a

[495] Memo from King, C. to B. Kirke, 1956, titled *(Untitled)*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King 2 BC: 5019247, September.
[496] Ibid.

priority and Bruce had numerous medical expenses to be covered. As mentioned previously, Joyce stayed in commercial production only until she could find her way into a role at the BBC, where she later completed a brief in-house television training course with Royston Morley. Joyce then negotiated a television producer's role with the ABC in 1958 and emigrated soon after, starting in the ABC's Melbourne studios before moving to Sydney in 1959.

Therése Denny transitioned from radio to television in 1954. She was recruited by the BBC programme makers who had worked with her in radio; they were aware of her extensive cache of radio interviews. Therése began her television work as a research assistant and assistant producer on historical documentaries such as *Portraits of Power* (1957). She developed her television skills working on the job and was producing and directing on her own by 1958. At the same time, Therése continued her radio work, with shows like *American Journey* (1955). Therése's radio and television work was subsequently broadcast by the BBC and ABC.

Kay Kinane was committed to the idea of television after gaining glimpses of the new medium's potential during her first BBC visit in 1949. She had 'kept an eye' on television's development over the following decade. As I will outline in the next chapter, Kay was determined to be qualified when television was introduced to Australia in 1956; she found a way to train in America in 1955 and, subsequently, became a key member of the ABC's first team of television staff.

Catherine King had a much longer wait to work in television than the others in the cohort. Television was not introduced to Western Australia until 1960. Like Kay, Catherine knew that television was on its way and asked the ABC to endorse her training at the BBC. She undertook one of the six-week BBC television training courses in 1957.

Being adept in the production of both formats meant that Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce could alternate between formats when the need, or desire, arose. For example, Kay reverted back to Educational radio in 1960, after the scope of *Woman's World* was reduced by an overly controlling and constrictive television bureaucracy. Kay returned to a senior position where she had more autonomy and control over her programmes.[497]

[497] Kinane, K., 1995, *Interview with Kay Kinane*, oral history, interviewed by E. Rossi, Northwood, Sydney, Emma Rossi Private Archive, 4 August.

After briefly returning to radio, she was promoted to a major management role, the ABC's Federal Programme Officer for Education. By 1963, she was again promoted, this time to Assistant Director of Education, the first female in to attain a role on the 'Director' hierarchy.[498] Kay was a rare beast, a programming officer who was also a creative and technically proficient producer in both radio and television.

Simultaneously producing radio and television programmes proved an extremely difficult task. After leaving *Woman's World*, Kay was asked if she wanted to run both radio and television for Education: in the manner that Ruth Stirling was doing as Federal Organiser of Women's Programmes, but on a much greater scale and with more hands-on production work. Prior to that time, there had not been any televised school broadcasts (predominantly because it was taking some time for televisions to be placed into schools around the country). Kay declined the offer, explaining to management that it was too difficult to produce in both formats, on that scale.[499] She knew how heavy the workload would become, and how much of a 'wrench' it would take to change one's thinking to suit each medium. Even for someone as experienced as Kay, she saw it as unwise. Explaining her reasoning at the time, she said:

> *They asked me to go back and take radio and television in Education and I said, 'Well, I can't. It doesn't work that way … If you're going to really work creatively in the thing, you've got to have one media or the other. You can perhaps administrate both sides, but not creative thinking'. My recommendation was that they divided my job into two and gave me television and that someone else did the radio and after a lot of playing round, they decided that they would do this.*[500]

The ABC's offer exemplifies management's refusal to recognise the demands of television production work and the size of the task at the time. It is possible they hoped that dedicated staff such as Kay would be prepared to overwork themselves to make up for the production inadequacies of the transforming organisation, which was what happened with Catherine King.

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[498] 'Big ABC post given to woman' 1963, *The Age*, 16 December, p. 8.
499 Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC: 13196286, 15 November.
[500] Ibid.

In 1960 Catherine was asked to produce to *Woman's World* for Western Australian audiences. She had been fulfilling her mission on radio for nearly 20 years and was ready to expand its scope, excited about the possibilities that television offered. Concerned with the workload, she initially refused, suggesting that they hire a separate producer. There were divergent opinions among senior management as to whether Catherine should take on both mediums. Some programming officers warned against it, knowing, like Kay, how difficult it would be.[501] Others were more willing to push Catherine to take on the extra role, trusting that the new programme would be safe in her hands.[502] Catherine finally accepted on a trial basis (as mentioned previously, at a substantially reduced rate to Kay). It is likely that she did not want to risk seeing the ABC hire an inexperienced or inappropriate producer in her place. From 1960 to 1962, Catherine and her television assistant, Romola McSwain, produced *Woman's World*. *A*t the same time, Catherine continued to produce and present her daily radio show. She enjoyed the challenge but was eventually worn down by the long hours and the technical complexities of the new medium. Looking back from her retirement, Catherine stated that her decision to produce both radio and television versions was a mistake. The experience did, however, help her realise that her agendas and attributes were inherently suited to radio:

> *it was time consuming, it was nerve wracking … But if I'd been taken off radio and done it, oh I would have hated that. Radio is a much more honest medium I think. Because you don't have to be thinking how you look … I remember when I was in training in London, we had to do an exercise and I said to camera one 'track in' and couldn't remember how to stop it! So it [kept moving] right in and right up and bashed up against the piano. I mean they're all those little things that somebody else ought to be thinking of, that distract you, I think.*[503]

Catherine finally shrugged off the burden of television with relief, rationalising that it was more important to do one job 'decently'.[504] She was not alone in believing that she was better suited to radio. In *This is the ABC*, Ken Inglis mentioned that other producers

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[501] Memo from Mason, C. to General Manager, 1960, titled *Organiser – Women's Session WA – Possible Use in TV*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King 2 BC: 6019247, 17 March.
[502] Memo from Sholl, E. to Acting General Manager, 1960, titled *Organiser – Women's Session WA – Possible Use in TV*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008 CS:King 2 BC: 5019247, 14 March.
[503] King, C. 1982, *6WF Radio – ABC 50th Anniversary*, radio programme, ABC Radio, 6WF, State Library of Western Australia, OH572-18181211, Perth, 1 July.
[504] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. pp. 115–116.

underwent a similar process: 'some broadcasters would find that by temperament and talent they were suited better to the old medium where a person might make a programme almost in solitude.'[505] Catherine saw radio as a purer, more independent medium, where her message was much less likely to be compromised. At the heart of Catherine's decision was her belief that television, with all its demands, technicalities and bureaucratic processes, obstructed her ability to get her message across.

Unlike Catherine, Therése relished the new medium and was not distracted by the creative and technical complexities of television production. In 1963, she was interviewed by the *Adelaide News* and reporter John Miles outlined how television would have presented her more completely than he could:

> *Television is her passion, her work, and her gauge of a community … She herself is best seen in her own medium, because a written interview can convey only what she thinks. On television you can hear how she speaks, see how she looks, watch what she does with her hands, see how she reacts. You get her full impact as a personality on your senses. This is what television is for, and this is the strength which Therése Denny recognises in it as a medium of human communication and progress.*[506]

Therése believed that television encouraged audiences to experience a greater understanding and sense of connection with characters on television.

Using the press

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce used print media for a variety of purposes. They frequently used the press to publicise their shows and promote their own issues and agendas. Therése and Kay, for example, inserted themselves into the new narratives about broadcasting, public narratives that were of increasing interest to listening and viewing audiences. They used the press to frame appealing public personas and strengthened their professional identities. The ABC's promotional magazine, *The ABC Weekly*, proved to be a useful tool for their purposes. Through it, they could speak to their peers, their managers

[505] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 196.
[506] Miles, J. 1963, 'TV is helping Australia to grow up', *Adelaide News*, 5 December.

and their audiences. Beyond this magazine, the wide range of local and international print media provided them with the means to speak without being muzzled by ABC controllers, evidenced for example, by Joyce's use of newspapers to criticise the ABC for its failings after she left in 1963.

Of all the women in this study, Therése Denny was the most active manipulator of her public persona in the press. In addition to publicising her programmes, she used the print media to construct a particular professional identity, often portraying herself as an authoritative expert from a more superior industrial environment. From the early 1960s, for example, *Woman's Weekly* TV and film critic Nan Musgrove portrayed Therése as a dynamic, professional woman with an interesting international career. This was four years before Therése annoyed Musgrove with her progressive documentary, *A Changing Race*. Back in 1960, however, Musgrove was still happy to share Therése's opinions of the Australian television industry with her readers. Musgrove wrote:

> *'It is very easy to carp and criticise,' Miss Denny said, 'but to be fair, I think Australian TV has not yet had time to develop … I saw a very good documentary on ABC-TV called "Inquiry Into Migration", and I thought it was very good' she said. 'It had a quality and was the sort of thing that will eventually develop a characteristic Australian TV. Things are so different in TV abroad. There they have learned that original TV needs a lot of two things spent on it – time and money'.*[507]

As her international experience grew, Therése's statements about the differences between the ABC and BBC became more confident and more judgmental. Three years later, a story in the *Adelaide News* reported:

> *But the BBC is her finishing school. She is now a television producer of world status, and she is a citizen of the world … it makes her competent to look at the old home town through the eyes of a TV producer who is trained in making assessments of societies and communities …*[508]

[507] Musgrove, N. 1960, 'BBC films will show Australia on TV', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 13 July, p. 71.
[508] Miles, J. 1963, 'TV is helping Australia to grow up', *Adelaide News*, 5 December.

Therése's portrayal of herself as an expatriate with expertise tapped into the culture of industrial subordination between the ABC and BBC, a dynamic that Therése used to further empower her professional status. Depending on her goal for each article, Therése alternated between portraying herself as a humble career woman, who became successful thanks to just a bit of hard work and a bit of luck, and a more industry savvy, expert producer with international experience.

Therése used her presence in the press as currency to promote her career. She would have been aware that the ABC kept press clippings relating to their producers and their programmes; they proved to be a useful asset in building one's industrial reputation. The image below is a compilation of just a few stories on Therése that were held in the ABC's archive, illustrating how an ambitious broadcaster could manipulate her career narrative to highlight specific experiences and expertise.

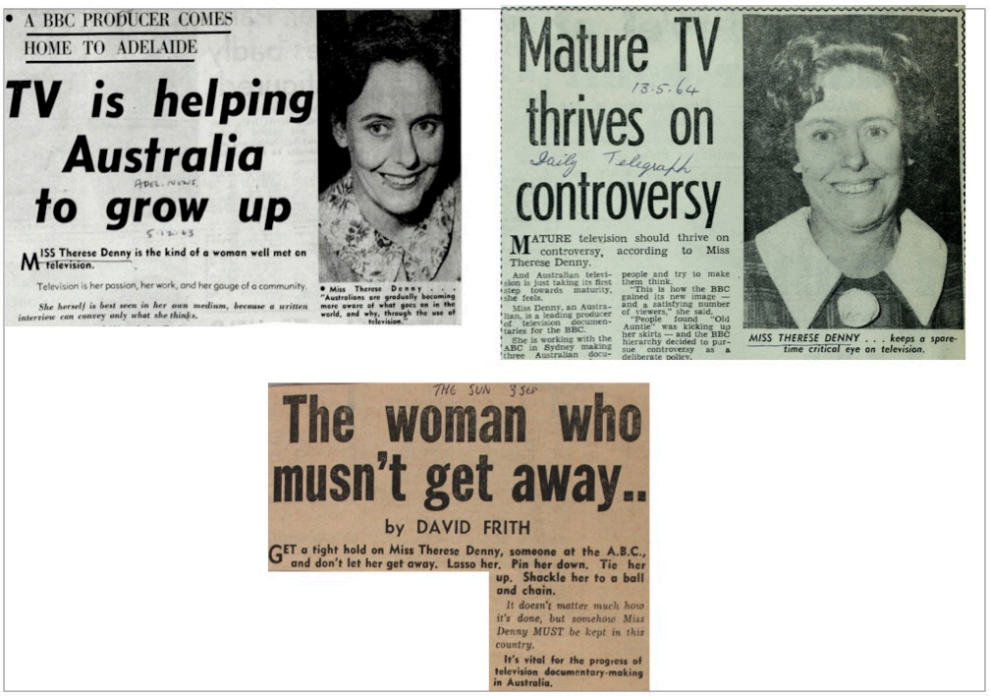


Figure 21: Examples of Therése Denny's use of the press.
Frith, D. 1964, 'The woman who mustn't get away', *The Sun*, 3 September.
Miles, J. 1963, 'TV is helping Australia to grow up', *Adelaide News*, 5 December.
Rigg, J. 1964, 'Mature TV thrives on controversy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 May.

After examining Therése's promotional press articles from the 1950s and 1960s, it is apparent that she reframed her career narrative according to the agenda of each interview and the nature of each audience. In some instances, she was careful to promote her professional success in a way that would not insult women readers without careers. Therése modified her narrative when she thought it necessary to deflect criticism for

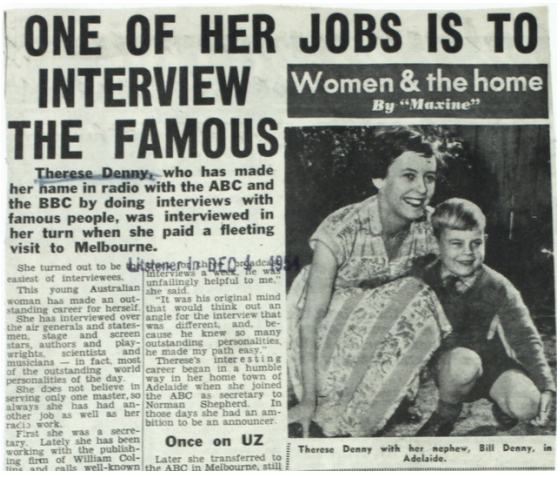
choosing a career instead of a family. Rather than antagonising stay-at-home women readers (and potential audiences for her shows), Therése sought to evoke sympathy for her failure to become a wife and mother. At the same time, she encouraged readers to celebrate her success as a plucky female adventurer who, luckily, found herself in a glamorous industry overseas. While promoting one series of war documentaries, Therése stated that she had no choice but to take on a career after her marriage plans fell through soon after arriving in London: with 'no job, no fiancé and £12 in the world'.[509] She was quoted as saying:

> *It's funny how I've got myself mixed up with all the battles and fighting and wars. They call me the girl who only produces generals. And all I want is to find the right man and produce six children. But life never gives you what you want, does it?'*[510]

There is no evidence, neither documentary nor from family members' recollections, that indicates there was ever an engagement at all. More likely, Therése fabricated, or at least modified, her tale of woe to gain sympathy and thus, permission, to have a career.

This narrative appeared more commonly in the interviews that she gave to women's columns. In the 1950s, *The Listener-In* magazine incorporated programming information and stories about media celebrities and production staff. Therése was featured in one of their 'Women & the home' section stories in 1954. The story discusses Therése's 'humble' origins as a bored secretary before becoming a successful radio and television producer. However, Therése did not let the fact that she lacked a husband and children restrict her from presenting a family friendly focus, as was the wont of the column; she simply coaxed her nephew Bill into posing with her for the photo.

[509] Franklin, O. 1962, 'The jilted titan of the BBC', *UK Daily Mail*, 12 February.
[510] Ibid.



ONE OF HER JOBS IS TO INTERVIEW THE FAMOUS

Women & the home

By "Maxine"

Therese Denny, who has made her name in radio with the ABC and the BBC by doing interviews with famous people, was interviewed in her turn when she paid a fleeting visit to Melbourne.

She turned out to be an easiest of interviewees.

This young Australian woman has made an outstanding career for herself.

She has interviewed over the air generals and statesmen, stage and screen stars, authors and playwrights, scientists and musicians — in fact, most of the outstanding world personalities of the day.

She does not believe in serving only one master, so always she has had another job as well as her radio work.

First she was a secretary. Lately she has been working with the publishing firm of William Collins and calls well-known

Listener-In, DEC. 1954

interviews a year, he was unfailingly helpful to me," she said.

"It was his original mind that would think out an angle for the interview that was different, and, because he knew so many outstanding personalities, he made my path easy."

Therese's interesting career began in a humble way in her home town of Adelaide when she joined the ABC as secretary to Norman Shepherd. In those days she had an ambition to be an announcer.

Once on UZ

Later she transferred to the ABC in Melbourne, still

Therese Denny with her nephew, Bill Denny, in Adelaide.

Figure 22: Therése Denny's 'family friendly' career, *The Listener-In*, December 1954.

This article illustrates another theme prevalent at the time, a trend of portraying television work as accessible and possible; a particular genre of magazine writing suggested the notion that the everyday person (read: woman), could make it big in this exciting new world of television. The 'lucky to be here' narratives, projected onto careerists such as Therése Denny and Kay Kinane, forgave their success by inferring that they were just like everyday viewers, only they had stumbled their way into exciting media careers. Susan Bye argued that this genre of post-war Australian reportage was promulgated because it fuelled audience's interests and imaginations, and heightened their sense of participation.[511] The reality, as Bye clarified, was actually quite different: 'of course', she said, 'the fledgling television industry to which the readers were given the illusion of access, was in reality a predominantly male world.'[512] To excuse her ambitions, Therése strategically 'confessed' to reporters that she was just an ignorant novice who tried her hand at interviewing: 'I was too green to know that this was not the right way to behave', she said in one newspaper report. 'I mean I'd never heard of Public Relations and Publicity. So I'd just phone whoever it was at their hotel …'[513] Considering that Therése had spent almost two years prior to this interview as a full-time publicity agent, her strategic use of the press became obvious.

When Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were working as producers, they did not want to have their actions constantly discussed and defined by their sex (unless the show was explicitly challenging gender constructs). However, discussions about their gender as

[511] Bye, S. 2007, 'Watching television in Australia: A story of innocence and experience', *Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture*, vol. 4, no. 4. p. 77.
[512] Ibid, p. 79.
[513] Franklin, O. 1962, 'The jilted titan of the BBC', *UK Daily Mail*, 12 February.

producers in non-female roles was usually unavoidable in the press. For example, Therése often had to address questions about working in a 'man's' role; she was asked to discuss the issues she faced as a woman confronted with 'male' technology. One story in *New Idea* introduced her as: 'a woman [who] sits at a control panel with a bewildering number of switches'.[514] Perhaps they were bewildering to journalist Shirley Gott, or perhaps she meant that the technology would be bewildering to her readers, but they were not bewildering to Therése. As outlined previously, female producers also had to accept being called 'girls' in the press, their work trivialised or presented as an interesting anomaly. It is unsurprising then, that public professionals such as Therése worked to control their own narratives.

Joyce also had a press presence during her career, although to a smaller degree. It was, however, much more brutally applied. In the months after Joyce left the ABC in 1963 (after 'the typewriter incident'), Joyce used the press to sharply criticise the organisation. Angry and bitter, she gave a public lecture for the Humanist Society, titled *What's Wrong with the ABC?* and made sure to notify numerous newspapers in advance. Speaking to the press, Joyce put forward her own perspective and judgments on the organisation's behaviour. *The Melbourne Sun* duly reported Joyce's assertion that 'ABC television executives were sometimes wary of the "aura of brilliance" in its creative staff … it often seems expedient to use them and get rid of them.'[515] *The Sydney Sun*, with a subheading 'Radio Men Blamed', reported Joyce's arguments in more detail:

> *'Creative workers are not permitted to rise to administrative positions', she said. 'There is a strict barrier imposed between the old radio hands who were there before TV and who now administer it and the newcomers who do TV's creative work.' Miss Belfrage said the ABC television producers who tried to get a say in administration were either promoted out of the way or made to work so hard that they wore out. Others were ignored until they became frustrated or hog-tied by staff rules. She said this allowed second-raters to get administrative control and they in turn reproduced their own kind … Today Miss Belfrage said she was not vindictive toward the ABC but she felt it was time the public knew what a mess it was.*[516]

[514] Gott, S. 1963, 'Therése is the BBC's only woman TV producer', *New Idea*, 3 July, p. 6.
[515] 'Inquiry on ABC sought' 1963, *The Melbourne Sun*, 25 July.
[516] '"ABC choking itself" Ex-producer attacks TV' 1963, *The Sun*, 26 July.

Joyce was fearless in her use of the press to get her point across. One can imagine that she took pleasure in seeing her complaints made public and the consternation her comments must have caused inside the ABC. Interestingly, despite repeated searches, I could find no evidence in the ABC archives of the event, apart from a file of press clippings – no internal documents mentioning her 'resignation' nor anything referring to the court case in which the ABC was a participant.

Later in her career, print media provided Joyce with a new outlet for her literary interests and her love of debate. In the 'Letters to the editor' column of *Nation Review* magazine, Joyce provoked an argument with a new adversary, writer Bob Ellis. In 1971 Joyce lambasted Ellis' review of the new *King Lear* film, declaring that he was an ignorant and inept commentator. She criticised 'the hideous lacunae in his education and understanding of the theatre' and suggested that the editor find someone more qualified to replace this 'pop art' specialist, perhaps a person more familiar with 'serious films'.[517] Taking the bait, Ellis responded and their debate continued in the journal for some weeks.[518] One can imagine Joyce gleefully rubbing her hands as she undertook a new battle of wits. It was ironic that these two had such a contest, slugging it out over who had the greater language skills and literary knowledge, when they, in fact, had much in common. Both were ex-ABC and both disliked ABC's programming 'oafs' and their fear of controversy. This is just one example of how Joyce used the press as a vehicle to express her values and ideals; to speak about the issues she cared about deeply. She wrote columns for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and was interviewed in various journals and magazines to discuss her work.

Catherine King used the press to make explicit statements about the core values of her programme and to share her own beliefs about gender and society. In the Perth *Sunday Times* in 1954, an article titled 'A woman's slant on men' reported how Catherine decried the use of gender politics in the workplace, arguing that women could be just as capable as men:

> *There are two types of men that Mrs King does not like. First is the one who treats a woman as of no account, simply because she is a woman. The second*

[517] Belfrage, J. 1971, 'Pitying our fool', *Nation*, quoted in R. Walsh, *Ferretabilia: Life and Times of 'Nation Review',* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia Queensland, 1994, pp. 40–41.
[518] Ellis, B. 1971, 'Shakespeare's casserole', *Nation*, quoted in R. Walsh, *Ferretabilia: Life and Times of 'Nation Review',* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia Queensland, p. 40.

> *is the type who must pay attention to a woman just because she is female. When Mrs King meets someone, she says she things that far more important than their sex is their quality as a human being.*[519]

Catherine also wrote the occasional story herself. For example, in 1954 she produced an article for the Perth *Sunday Times*, in which she discusses the important research being done with children's film.[520] Catherine argued that there should be more to children's entertainment than cheap and unsophisticated imports from Hollywood; mass-produced and poorly crafted, those films gave little or no thought to child development. Praising a local West Australian initiative between the West Australian Association for Children's Films (which Catherine helped establish) and the British Children's Film Foundation, Catherine used the article to educate the public about the benefits of screening thoughtfully produced children's adventure stories and cartoons. Her journalistic forays allowed her to push another of her favourite agendas, that of West Australia's contribution to national achievements. She leaped at the chance to point out that, in this case, Western Australia was in advance of eastern states, writing: 'the usual story is that we in Western Australia make steps of this sort later than the Eastern States, but in this case we can feel very like pioneers.'[521]

Other formats

The producers in this study also utilised media other than radio, television and the press to manifest their professional and social agendas. Kay, for example, initiated a uniquely Australian collection for the ABC sound-effects library. She often took sound recording equipment on location, even on family holidays, in order to record local birdcalls and bush effects. Kay had noticed early on that ABC sound editors used British sound-effects discs; she argued that she 'couldn't possibly make a program about Alice Springs with the little tweet-tweet of the English hedge birds that were about all the birds in the effects library.'[522] Kay insisted that Australia's unique characteristics were worth celebrating.

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[519] 'A woman's slant on men' 1954, *Perth Sunday Times*, p. 20.
[520] King, C. 1954, 'We lead Australia on child films', *The Sunday Times* November 7, p. 6.
[521] King, C. 1954, 'We lead Australia on child films', *The Sunday Times* November 7, p. 6.
[522] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC:13196286, 15 November.

Kay also branched out and created teaching curricula as part of a series of musical broadcasts for primary school children. For example, she produced *Don and the Rainmakers* (hiring Rob Inglis to write and Robin Wood to compose). This was a musical programme that guided teachers and students through the process of developing and performing the story of a young white boy living on an outback property, coming to terms with drought and engaging with Dreamtime legends.[523] The project is a nod to Kay's ongoing interest in theatre production throughout her life and her desire to celebrate Australia's Indigenous identity. Kay sustained her love for drama and performance in her spare time; throughout the 1950s, for example, she produced children's community theatre, often interpreting a variety of Christian legends.

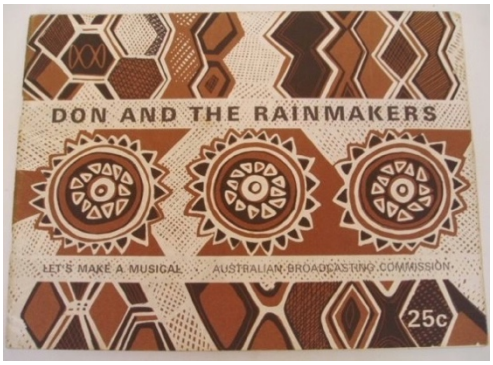

Figure 23: *Don and the Rainmakers*, produced by Inglis, Wood & Kinane, 1970.

Joyce Belfrage's late career work provides this chapter with some final examples of the cohort's transmedial behaviours. After leaving the ABC, Joyce worked in advertising agencies, where she produced political relations strategies and publicity material. She shaped mission statements and crafted political messages for the Australian Labor Party's 1963 election campaign. When Joyce became a lecturer in media studies at Macquarie University, she was invited to present the Arthur Norman Smith Lecture in Journalism at the University of Melbourne in 1970. Her 'Mass media maketh man' lecture spoke of the power of each broadcasting medium and discussed the difference between writing academically and for real-world media functionality.[524] Joyce set out the Australian media landscape for her audience of writers, and (correctly) anticipated the future for broadcasting. Ever the advocate for critical and progressive approaches, she spoke of the need for the older generation of media practitioners to recognise and embrace the younger

[523] Inglis, R. Wood, R. Kinane, K. & Taran, D. 1970, *Don and the Rainmakers: Let's Make a Musical*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.
[524] Belfrage, J. 1970, 'Mass media maketh man', conference paper, *The Arthur Norman Smith Memorial Lecture in Journalism*, University of Melbourne, 26 November, p. 3.

generation's multifaceted engagement with multi-media. Around this time, Joyce also wrote a book chapter discussing language within the Australian media, *Good Australian English and Good New Zealand English* (1972). Using case studies, she discussed the different ways of writing for print, radio and television, and outlined Australia's changing broadcasting landscape as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each medium.[525]

Joyce, Therése, Catherine and Kay utilised a variety of interconnected media and formats to put forward their ideas and agendas. Between them, they worked in radio and television, promoted themselves strategically in the press and used reportage to push their agendas. They created sound-effects archives, wrote curricula for young audiences and industry trainees, formulated public relations policies for political parties, wrote articles and book chapters, gave public lectures, and produced local theatrical performances. All these transmedial engagements spoke to issues that these women cared about. They also combined transmediality with transnationalism in a way that further magnified their agency and identities as broadcasters, as I will explain in the next chapter.

[525] Belfrage, J. 1972, 'The mass media and our English', in G.W. Turner (ed.), *Good Australian English and Good New Zealand English*, Reed Education, Sydney, p. 120.

Chapter 6 – Transnational engagements

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce all benefitted from overseas travel. They collected a cache of new experiences and insights through their international journeys and transformed into the type of globally sophisticated, cultural agents who embodied the public broadcasting remit. Their new social and cultural experiences proved to be valuable assets, which subsequently contributed to their confidence and authority as public broadcasters. They underwent profound professional transformations when they trained, worked and networked overseas. By diving into broadcasting's transnational channels, they found new ways to develop their expertise and armour themselves against the discrimination they faced in the workplace. Although the ABC workplace had its limitations, it provided the cohort with substantial secondary opportunities, thanks to its connection to global broadcasting networks and communities. As they moved beyond the national, they attained assets, opportunities and skills that the local environment was not providing, and subsequently gained greater industrial mobility, status and confidence. The cohort's transnational engagements provided them with both direct and indirect benefits. For example, recipients of training scholarships gained specific technical expertise which boosted their authority back at the ABC. They forged social networks among other like-minded broadcasters and were provided with alternative sources of endorsement and moral support, which helped them push their programme agendas more confidently. They discovered how they could be endowed with a greater degree of respectability and authority, simply by being recognised as members of the public broadcasting industry; they were trusted and given privileged access to pursue their 'respectable' professional agendas. Another valuable asset that their transnational adventures provided was perspective. By immersing themselves in other broadcasting environments, they gained a greater understanding of the nature of their own local broadcasting community; they learned how things were done, for better or for worse, by other national broadcasters.

Guided by Pierre-Yves Saunier's framework for transnational analysis, I contextualised the international broadcasting environment as fibrous, fluid, interconnected networks; sites of transnational 'connections' of people and organisations; 'circulations' and channels of movement' and the corresponding 'relations' and 'formations' that were formed in response to those systems.[526] Working within Western broadcasting's various networks

[526] Saunier, P.Y. 2013, *Transnational History*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire New York.

and channels, Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce accessed a large, interconnected global community where many things, official and unofficial, were exchanged, shared and contested: information, people, jobs, ideologies, structures and systems, and programme content. The cohort's international excursions provided them with professional opportunities on a much larger scale than they had access to in the local Australian industry.

One of the dominant factors stimulating the mobility and status of ABC staff in the post-war years was the nature of the ABC's relationship to the BBC. My research has been informed by Simon Potter's studies on the British broadcasting empire, particularly the BBC's relationship with the members of its Commonwealth broadcasting community.[527] The BBC's influence over broadcasters such as the ABC was sustained by a framework of 'shared Britishness' where, according to Potter, 'connections between media organizations around the empire were created and nourished by regular exchanges of personnel.'[528] The Imperial Relations Trust training scholarship (IRT) was one framework through which people, technology and content could be exchanged. Potter summarised the scope of one such round of staff exchanges in the late 1950s, stating:

> *Between 1 January 1957 and 30 September 1959, 18 individuals from Australia attended BBC courses on attachment: they were joined by 11 from South Africa, 10 from Malaya, 8 from India, 5 from Canada and 4 from New Zealand. Many of these visitors came with IRT support. The BBC argued that this scheme was valuable to the bursars 'not only for the broadcasting experience obtained but also for the enlargement of the knowledge of each other's countries'.*[529]

The British public broadcasting network provided an accessible, global 'institutional mobility'; it became a transnational site that facilitated active channels of connection and exchange of people, fostering a shared community, which in turn, 'strengthen[ed] the bonds of empire.'[530] Potter detailed how the BBC worked to 'stimulate the movement of people around the empire and thus forge both sentimental and practical connections.'[531]

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[527] Potter, S.J. 2012, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922–1970*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[528] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 193.
[529] Ibid, p. 199.
[530] Ibid, pp. 193–205.
[531] Ibid, p. 194.

Commonwealth broadcasters, such as the women in this cohort, were encouraged to travel and engage with each other throughout its global community.

However, the women in this study did not benefit solely by engaging with public broadcasting's 'dominion dynamic'. While producing for the BBC, Therése Denny also researched and filmed documentaries in the United States; Catherine King formed professional networks within a much broader global community of broadcasters in the International Association of Women in Radio; and Kay Kinane trained with a range of American public broadcasters during a long research sabbatical. Because of Kay's public broadcasting experience and her reputation within the international educational broadcasting community, she was also selected to assess and advise for a range of international institutions and schemes – including UNESCO, the Colombo Initiative and the European Broadcasting Commission – working with a wide range of national broadcasters from developing nations, including Thailand, Nigeria and Afghanistan.

Thanks to their activities in the international arena, Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce each gained a cache of skills and assets that made them stronger, more confident and, subsequently, more competitive at the ABC.

Secular pilgrimages and transformative departures

The cohort were part of a growing movement of women from the early and middle decades of the 20th century, who undertook international journeys in order to improve their positions within much larger and more dynamic social, cultural and industrial environments. Ros Pesman and Angela Woollacott have written about the transformative, 'secular pilgrimages' undertaken by generations of Australian women. For the women who journeyed overseas in the early 20th century, travel was a response to what they were facing at home. They travelled, according to Woollacott, as an 'assertion of independence, a bid for self-discovery, and an escape from domestic gender constraints.'[532] By departing from their local environment, they were able to act more independently, escape domestic constraints, reach for their professional potential, and act on their social and political aspirations to be more engaged citizens of the world.

[532] Woollacott, A. 2001, *To Try Her Fortune in London*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 19.

Catherine King was 22 when she left with her family for a year abroad in 1926. The Murdochs had been planning the trip for some time. Her father's love of Italian culture led to them spending many months in Italy, followed by a stay in London to reconnect with Walter's academic community. Catherine was captivated by this new environment and decided not to return home with her family; instead, she enrolled in a Diploma of Education at the University of London. Decades later, in one of the ABC's promotional staff biographies, Catherine described this first international journey as an opportunity to test herself, stating that she 'felt strongly the urge to strike out for herself in a new and unfamiliar environment'.[533] This desire to be challenged and prove oneself was common among women embarking on overseas adventures. Travel allowed them to undergo physical, social and cultural transformations. It offered them a new way to see the world and, importantly, themselves. Historian Ros Pesman explained that 'voyaging far away, placing themselves in new and challenging situations, engaging with alien modes of life' was a way for women to undergo transformations, 'processes of self-testing, self-discovery, a revelation of purpose and future direction'.[534] Catherine's first journey would not have been very 'alien', however. Rather, her first trip allowed her to connect with the sophisticated cultures that she had been taught to value from an early age. She spent much of her sabbatical visiting museums and galleries, and attending concerts and lectures. Facilitated by her father's standing, Catherine made friends with a range of educators and scholars while studying in London.

Catherine returned to Perth with her soon-to-be husband, and spent the next two decades in Australia raising her family. While working as a mother throughout the 1930s, she continued to develop her career; the relationships she forged with her overseas network of friends and advisors sustained and invigorated her broadcasting mission. Thanks to her cultural sabbatical, Catherine was able to maintain connections with a wider, international 'tribe', drawing the threads of those connections back with her to Perth. She invited them to share their interests and opinions with her listeners (either remotely or in person), to help her illustrate the great 'tapestry' of life that she valued so much.[535] Catherine took three long breaks from the ABC, each of around 12 months. The first long trip that she and Alec undertook was in 1950, another in 1957 and again 1964. These

[533] Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1955, *Catherine King* [press release], NAA, S:SP1011/2 CS:1063 BC:10832626, 9 February.
[534] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 185.
[535] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 59.

sabbaticals were focused on social research, advocacy and charitable work, technical training, and networking with like-minded women broadcasters. Each journey was part cultural excursion, part professional development and part humanitarian action. All became fuel for her broadcasts.

It was common for people of Catherine's generation to believe that aspirational and 'enlightened' Australians should journey to Europe to remedy their cultural deprivation.[536] Young (and usually wealthy) women would set off for their 'tour'. As Ros Pesman explained, they changed 'from colonial caterpillar into European butterfly'.[537] Although there were concerns about young women leaving the safety of the family unit to travel, fears were generally alleviated by the belief that these women were still inhabiting the shared, familiar social structures of the British dominion community.[538] As the century progressed, these journeys were no longer the sole domain of upper-class girls looking to be 'finished' in Europe. Increasing numbers of middle-class women travelled overseas, some from financially constrained backgrounds. While jobs were available, and travel more affordable, it was nevertheless easier for white upper- and middle-class women. Historian Anne Rees explained that 'race, gender [and] class' were key enablers.[539] For example, when Therése departed in 1949, she had very little money. However, she was a well-educated, socially sophisticated middle-class woman, well-armed with industrial knowledge and a set of useful secretarial skills. Therése was fairly well equipped to undertake her journey.

As a career-focused, unmarried woman, Kay would have been a likely candidate to depart on a cultural sabbatical; however, in the interwar years, she was busy finishing her degree and training as a teacher. Then the Second World War began and, before it ended, Kay had already begun her ABC career. Kay's first international adventure was provided by the ABC. It was a journey of professional transformation. Kay's first trip overseas took place after she was chosen to train with the BBC through the Imperial Relations Trust Scholarship in 1948. She left for England a few days after her 36th birthday. This first trip had a specific training focus, but Kay saw it as a bigger opportunity, calling it her first 'great adventure'.[540]

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[536] Woollacott, A. 2001, *To Try Her Fortune in London*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 4.
[537] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 184.
[538] Rees, A. 2017, 'Reading Australian modernity: Unsettled settlers and cultures of mobility', *History Compass*, vol. 15, no. e12429, p. 7.
[539] Ibid, p. 3.
[540] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.

Kay settled in at the BBC and began to assimilate into the production culture, learning who did what, making friends and connections. Before long, she realised that she would progress more smoothly if she downplayed her Australian identity. In 1982, she recalled:

> *I trod very gently because I realized of course that really no one in the BBC was interested in Australia. One had to talk their language in order to learn anything. And gradually they accepted the fact that it might be worthwhile asking me to do a production. But it was pretty slow.*[541]

Kay's experience was not uncommon; many expatriates were disconcerted by Britain's apathy and disdain towards Australia. One woman in Pesman's research, Alice Henry, lamented the lack of regard for Australia. She said that Britons 'knew nothing of it and did not care. No wonder I had an inferiority complex on behalf of Australia.'[542] It was something media historian Simon Potter referred to in his 2012 work, *Broadcasting Empire*.[543] Anxieties about the 'stain' of colonial inferiority were fuelled when expatriates saw how they were imagined by their British counterparts: as lesser members of the Empire, from a social and cultural backwater.

An increasing number of Australians believed that the nation's culture was stagnating, as it persistently deferred to and replicated British culture (triggering writer A.A. Phillips' declaration in 1950 to 'concede no inferiority to Britain').[544] There was a growing concern that we had little to offer. Judith Brett described post-war Australia as having a 'cultural life that seemed frozen by smugness, fear and indifference, and dominated by the values and assumptions of a bygone age'.[545] Catherine, Therése and Kay sought to battle the social and cultural complacencies that allowed for those beliefs to be sustained; complacencies that Catherine's husband Alec had warned of in his book *Everyone's Business* in 1944 and that *A Boy in Australia* (1964) contributor, Donald Horne, critiqued in his book, *The Lucky Country* that same year.[546] Putting Australia's social insecurities in

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[541] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[542] Henry, A. 1944, *Memoirs of Alice Henry, edited by Nettie Palmer*, p.29, Quoted in R. Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, 1996, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 173.
[543] Potter, S.J. 2012, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922–1970*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 202.
[544] Hesketh, R. 2013, 'AA Phillips and the cultural cringe": Creating an "Australian Tradition"', *Meanjin*, vol. 72, no. 3: Spring, pp. 92–103.
[545] Brett, J. 1993, *Robert Menzies' Forgotten People*, Pan Macmillan Australia, Chippendale, Sydney, p. 2.
[546] Horne, D. 1964, *The Lucky Country*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK.

context, the cohort strengthened their resolve to speak to national issues in their programmes. Kay, Catherine and Therése each felt a deep sense of love and loyalty for Australia and its people; they wanted to use their positions as public broadcasters to encourage new, more independent and enlightened manifestations of Australian culture. For example, as Kay penned one of her regular reports to the ABC from London in 1948, she exhorted the ABC to be more confident in promoting the Australian perspective:

> *I am left with a strong impression of the role that we, in Australia, must take if the worthwhile in our way of life is to continue. We are too often inclined to sit back and think, because our cultural arts come from Europe, all fresh impetus must come from there too. I feel that the vitality and freshness of our attack has a definite place to take in a world that is tired, and that we must become aware of our responsibility in that direction. That we must realise that we are not alone in our far off corner, but are with the world force and must direct our energies.*[547]

As their careers progressed, Kay, Catherine and Therése became more willing to critique the negative, backward-looking aspects of Australian culture and to argue that Australia deserved better.

Therése was explicit in her criticism, in both her ABC documentaries and the Australian press. In 1963 she told the *Adelaide News*, 'we are still too remote, too apathetic, too immature, too pleased with ourselves'.[548] She used her ABC films to present Australian audiences with her view of what needed fixing – particularly Australia's cultural complacency and its problematic views on gender and race. (For example, in her 1964 documentary *A Boy in Australia*, Therése had Sydney art gallery director Rudy Komon speak of Australia's cultural insecurities, describing how local artists were rejected unless they had been feted in Europe.)[549]

Therése's experience with gender discrimination in her early working life was another reason to emigrate to London. Ros Pesman's study of the career of Australian writer Jill Kerr Conway demonstrated that she, too, had similar concerns to Therése. Pesman wrote,

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[547] Kinane, K. 1948/1949, 'Copy of report on a visit to Britain, 14 September – 2 March 1948/49 from Miss Kinane of the ABC', *R49/2671/1*, quoted in S.J. Potter, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, 2006, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 196.
[548] Miles, J. 1963, 'TV is helping Australia to grow up', *Adelaide News*, 5 December.
[549] *A Boy in Australia*, 1964, Denny, T. television programme, Australian Broadcasting Commission.

> *[Conway] believed she could not find a fulfilling life in Australia, that her gender would in Australia prevent her doing something that counted, serious work. The crisis came when she was not offered a traineeship with the Department of External Affairs. This rejection brought her face to face with discrimination, raised her consciousness, turned her ambitions to scholarly and academic life, and took her to another and more congenial place. She stayed away and became an expatriate, but one still constrained to do battle with the Australia that she believed had forced her out.*[550]

Therése may have spent the better part of her life working overseas but, like Conway, she thought constantly about Australia and wanted to contribute to its social and cultural rejuvenation.

Kay, Catherine and Therése's transformative departures operated within traditional cultural hierarchies and yet their transnational mobilities were manifestations of modernity. Broadcasting itself was a medium of modernity. By becoming active participants of broadcasting's transnational communities, the cohort, like the Australian women that Pesman, Woollacott and Rees wrote about, embraced the modern. They immersed themselves in rapidly growing industrial communities and demonstrated a willingness to embrace new ideas, cultures and technologies; simultaneously, they rejected the social conventions that prevented women from making advances. Joyce did not undertake the same type of transformative departures that Kay, Catherine and Therése experienced, but she embodied modernity in her transnational career, moving from job to job to maximise her engagement with the craft of broadcasting.

It is evident that the Australian-born members of the cohort felt that their cultural and industrial isolation to a much greater degree than Joyce, based in Britain. Unlike her 'colonial' producing peers, Joyce did not feel that she had to leave the country to remedy a lack of culture and experience. She had immersed herself in literature, politics and the arts since her university years in Cambridge, and had embarked on a busy life in cosmopolitan London.

[550] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 218.

In addition to travelling to strengthen their cultural and industrial knowledge, a key reason that many women travelled overseas in the early to mid-20th century was to gain respite from constrictive domestic roles and behaviours. Ros Pesman suggested that travel was a means of escape for some women: 'their exodus was both a product and subversion of prevailing ideologies of womanhood and domesticity.'[551] Away from home, women could take risks with less chance of social repercussion. Angela Woollacott concurred, arguing that 'because of their distance from their familial and cultural contexts,' the process of departure provided a gateway for women to bypass normative barriers.[552]

Therése found that she had more opportunities to work in Britain and was more free to live a less traditional life than that experienced by her family and friends back in Australia. Whereas Catherine and Kay returned to Australia after their long adventures overseas, Therése moved permanently to London. Some of the more traditionally minded members of the Denny family were disconcerted by her refusal to settle down and start a family in Adelaide. Others argued that it was inevitable she would seek adventure and opportunities elsewhere. Therése was excited by the prospects of joining a community more exciting and diverse than the one Australia offered. By the late 1940s, family life was unhappy for Therése. Before his death in 1946, her father's political career had declined, fuelling his depression and causing the family's finances to suffer. Her younger sister, Mary Kenihan, believed that Therése had inherited their father's stubborn courage and well-meant wilfulness, describing her sister as 'wildly ambitious'.[553] Therése quickly settled into the dynamic social life of an expatriate in London. Newly arrived Australians tended to cluster together, particularly in their early days, renting cheap flats in southeast London around Earls Court. The area came to be known as 'Kangaroo Valley' for that reason.[554] Pesman explained that expatriate Australians often supported each other, helping with accommodation and local insights. In Pesman's words:

> *this London of the young Australians was a colonial world of the Overseas Visitors Club, Australia House, the Down Under Club, the Zambesi club, and Kiwi House, of Australian dentists, of the search for the Saturday-night parties in the flats of the children of the white Commonwealth.*[555]

[551] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 212.
[552] Woollacott, A. 2001, *To Try Her Fortune In London*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 7.
[553] Kenihan, M. 2014, *Interview with Mary Kenihan*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.
[554] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 214.
[555] Ibid, p. 214.

Therése initially lived in 'the Valley' but did not limit herself to socialising with expatriates. Once she began working, her social world expanded dramatically and she forged close friendships with many locals, such as editor Billy Collins, writer Catherine Gaskin and actress Valerie Hobson.

Ros Pesman argued that travel provided a much-needed respite for the Australian women who felt they were misfits, who felt they did not belong because they did not mirror popular stereotypes that determined the ideal Australian woman. Whether single, career-minded or simply deemed unattractive, certain women could gain relief by removing themselves from the pressures of 'kin and neighbourhood networks.'[556] With two more beautiful sisters, Therése believed that she did not fit the image of the pretty young girl waiting to be courted. Instead, she chose to embrace the persona of a vivacious, professional woman of the world. Therése's niece, Marie Louise Persson, affectionately recalled how her aunt manifested a more divergent female persona. In 2016, Persson described her aunt's individuality: 'she would have smoked as soon as she could get her hands on a cigarette … and had bad taste in clothes. She didn't care!'[557] Therése's sister believed that was she ahead of her time in her rejection of gender constructs, one of the reasons she never married. She said, 'I think *today* she would have fitted in. A strong woman. But back then, I think she was considered just too much for the average man.'[558]

In choosing to put her career ahead of a traditional family role, Therése had bypassed the domestic, suburban life that her siblings had chosen. During my interview with Mary Kenihan, it became clear that her view of Therése was ambivalent; she seemed torn between her love and respect for her sister and her achievements yet, at the same time, saw Therése's choices as a rejection of her own family-centric values and preferences. Mary recalled how tense she felt during the times Therése returned home; she found Therése's lack of familiarity with the mundane aspects of family life grating. Therése would return every few years and attempt to make up for her absence, leaping into action with gestures of help and support, which pleased some in the family but caused others some discomfort. On one return visit, for example, Therése discovered that their widowed mother was almost insolvent; she then matter-of-factly confronted South Australian

[556] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 213.
[557] Persson, M.L. 2016, *Interview with Marie Persson*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 24 August.
[558] Kenihan, M. 2014, *Interview with Mary Kenihan*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.

Premier Sir Thomas Playford to ask for a pension for her mother, the long-suffering political widow. According to family legend, she took Playford to task and, successfully, proposed that he initiate a pension, telling him, 'I think you need to do better.'[559]

Women who embarked on overseas journeys could also recalibrate their sexual identities. They could 'find new ways of speaking, living and loving', as Pesman herself discovered when she travelled to Europe a few years after Therése's departure.[560] A year after arriving in London, Therése fell in love with the gifted (and married) writer and broadcaster Chester Wilmot. They met in 1950, when Therése was tasked by her employer at the time, publisher William (Billy) Collins, to help Wilmot organise his book on World War II. Back home in Adelaide, the scandal would have been significant. However, due to Therése's dislocation from her local social network and her liminal status as an expatriate, their illicit relationship was easier to overlook. This was post-war London, after all, a sophisticated, hectic social melting pot. Certain circles, such as the one that Therése inhabited, were more forgiving of extramarital affairs; her relationship with Wilmot was an accepted 'secret' among Therése's new friends and associates in London. It was thought that Therése would have loved to marry Wilmot, but he was unprepared to separate officially from his wife and leave his children. Tragically, he was killed in a plane crash in 1954.

The assets embodied by the ABC's elite women producers – their intelligence, cultural and political sophistication, global awareness, and social connections – were all enhanced by their international experiences. Travel allowed them to escape a range of domestic expectations and responsibilities, and facilitate their ambitions to become enlightened, educated, intellectually curious citizens of the world. It was those same ambitions that also drew them to the ABC. Senior contributors at the ABC were expected to have a sophisticated, informed view of the world.

Next I will discuss how the cohort improved their career options by joining the channels of opportunity available to them within transnational broadcasting's fibrous and far-reaching networks, through both training and employment. As global characters, they embodied the remit and, at the same time, used their adventures to move beyond certain limitations of the ABC. The interconnected networks of transnational broadcasting offered

[559] Denny, B. 2014, *Bill Denny interview*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Adelaide, 13 November.
[560] Pesman, R. 1996, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, p. 217.

the cohort a range of opportunities to grow. Thanks to their travels, the cohort matured professionally, as well as personally.

Kay Kinane and the Imperial Relations Trust scholarship

Kay's first incursion into transnational broadcasting channels occurred in 1949, when she travelled to London and joined the BBC as a recipient of an Imperial Relations Trust scholarship (IRT) – an instructional sabbatical where dominion broadcasters were invited to train and work with their BBC counterparts. Kay had recently been promoted into a federal supervisory position and was eager to take her career to the next level. She had been encouraged to try for the scholarship when visiting BBC legend Mary Somerville, who admired the dramatised educational programmes and magazine-format radio shows that Kay had developed for older children. In 1982, Kay remembered Somerville's 'very British' munificence. Re-enacting their conversation during one of her 1982 oral history interviews, Kay described how the Schools Broadcasts expert encouraged her to visit the BBC. Kay said that Somerville asked, '"Who produced those my dear?" and I said, "I did." "And whose idea were they?" And I said, "Mine." "You know they're *very* good you know! You ought to come to the BBC." And so I did!'[561] Although Kay had successfully developed her own programme formats and styles, she believed that she would benefit from learning how the BBC did things. Kay's time as an IRT participant proved most beneficial. She learned the latest creative and technical production practices, and consolidated her skills as a producer, gaining the confidence and authority to assert herself in her new, demanding supervisory capacity.

The IRT scheme required visiting staff to join the BBC for 12 weeks (at a minimum); half of that time was devoted to hands-on training and, in the remaining weeks, trainees were assigned to work within the BBC divisions that related to their specialties. Kay entered the scheme as an education specialist. Simon Potter believed that the higher proportion of schools broadcasting staff sent from Australian and New Zealand reflected the extent to which education was deemed a priority by these broadcasters at the time.[562] Potter also noted that women had a stronger presence in the field, in fact, an 'over-representation in

[561] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[562] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 203.

the field of schools broadcasting.'[563] The ABC's first women in the traineeship (Ida Osborne and Kay Kinane) were assigned within the 'female-friendly' domains of Children's education and Schools Broadcasting, confirming how the ABC gendered particular content domains.

The selectivity of these training excursions imbued those chosen with a sense of status and responsibility. It was a competitive field and being chosen was a privilege; it was empowering and confidence boosting. Recipients of the IRT scholarship were often seen as being the best and brightest from each division; they were identified by ABC management as having the potential to do well – and do well for the ABC. They were expected to return and share their knowledge within their local production communities.[564] Participants were also chosen because they were seen as trustworthy and had demonstrated a degree of loyalty to the empire.[565] They would have needed to be good public broadcasting 'soldiers', on board with the remit and trusted by the ABC in order to be given the privilege of representing the ABC overseas. Recipients were mentioned frequently in the Australian press, particularly in industry publications such as *The ABC Weekly* and *Radio-Active*. They submitted lengthy reports, which were reviewed by supervisors at both the BBC and ABC. Under the spotlight, they shared their learning experiences and shared their new insights into broadcasting practice and policy, and how this new information could relate to the ABC.[566] These exchanges offered female producers such as Kay a greater presence in the local production workplace. Their new, substantial authority allowed them to compete as equals and even as superiors to their locally based male peers.

Kay learned production methods that validated ideas she had in Australia, ideas that she had previously not been confident enough to push through. For example, Kay had been unhappy with some of the ABC's entrenched production cultures, particularly the convention that discouraged rehearsals. At the time, Sydney's voice artists were allowed to ignore creative direction from producers. Often reading their lines for the first time, moments prior to the broadcast, they would speed through the script, repeatedly performing the same vocal expressions and tones. They were therefore unable to

[563] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 203.
[564] Ibid, p. 195.
[565] Ibid, p. 199.
[566] Ibid, p. 195.

understand and subsequently convey the full meaning and intention of the producer's (Kay's) message. With the authority of her new radio knowledge, Kay was able to be more assertive when she returned to Australia. She was more confident insisting on change. One of her first actions was to modify those ad hoc voiceover sessions to be more thoroughly conceptualised and properly rehearsed. In her 1977 ABC oral history interview, Kay recalled how she gained confidence after learning those new skills in an environment of expertise at the BBC: 'I saw that what I'd been fumbling for – saw how it could be done in the way they did it there. I enjoyed this tremendously.'[567]

Kay learned that time spent in pre-production and rehearsal paid dividends in the quality of programming. She was reassured by the BBC's production methods, and developed and honed her skills, from radio stagecraft to details in the technicalities of sound transmission. She thought that it was 'marvellous' to be able to formally conceptualise the 'science of sound'.[568] The ease with which Kay adapted to new technologies allowed her to embrace the most complex aspects of radio production. With the latest broadcasting techniques now in her repertoire, Kay was able to improve local production cultures and improve production craft in her division.

The IRT offered its Australian participants the opportunity to learn within a larger and more sophisticated industrial environment. Simon Potter suggested that there was a belief that recipients were shown how 'the best' did the job at the BBC.[569] In 1969 Therése Denny told *The Sydney Morning Herald* her decision to stay in the British industry was a calculated professional rationalisation:

> *I went home [to Australia], but it isn't the same. The scale and scope is just so much greater in England naturally, there is more money going into TV … and much more original work being done. For a career woman there is really no choice. England is my home while I am working.*[570]

[567] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[568] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[569] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 200.
[570] Lang, B. 1969, 'Where were you that day when war broke out?', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 September.

While Kay admired the BBC for its high production values, like most visiting dominion broadcasters, she was well aware that her British counterparts had bigger budgets and more time to work on their craft. In a 1954 article for *The ABC Weekly*, Kay conceded that, yes, she was 'a little bit envious' of the time and resources allocated to BBC writers and producers; however, she was proud of what ABC producers were able to do with the resources they had. Kay argued that, given what they had to work with, the ABC was 'second to none in its own field, "otherwise our scripts and programmes wouldn't be acceptable to the BBC."'[571]

Other opportunities for transnational learning

Alongside the flow of producers who were chosen for training scholarships and exchanges – such as Mungo MacCallum, Kay Kinane and Charles Bull – there were others who travelled overseas more informally, seeking work experiences that allowed them to learn new skills, new techniques and new production cultures. The Imperial Relations Trust scholarship was just one type of transnational exchange that endowed its participants with valuable skills and assets. Producers' exchanges were another, in which Therése participated. In addition, local ABC producers were encouraged to travel overseas and study, and could take leave to up-skill. Talks producer Henri Safran, for example, went to Italy and Germany (to stations RAI and RTV) to study TV documentaries and drama in 1963.[572] In 1957 Catherine King spent six weeks at the BBC television training school. Contract producers such as Catherine were not eligible for the IRT; however, on the eve of her second yearlong overseas sabbatical in 1957, Catherine saw her chance to familiarise herself with the new medium and asked the ABC if she they could find a way to enrol herself in the BBC's television training school. Rushed endorsements were sent from the ABC's London manager, Catherine's supervisor in Perth and ABC General Manager Charles Moses. Catherine was squeezed into one of their regular, non-IRT courses. The only woman on that particular round, and the only 'foreigner', Catherine learned exactly how demanding television production could be.[573] Although Catherine struggled with the complexities of audiovisual production, her stay at the BBC was advantageous, as she also forged valuable new connections with a whole new network

[571] 'Kay Kinane: The pioneer spirit' 1954, *The ABC Weekly*, 6 February, p. 20.
[572] Memo from Semmler, C. to Director of Talks, 1963, titled *Biennial Review of Television Producers – 1963*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1979 CS:NN BC:1853615, 4 April.
[573] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 110.

of public broadcasters. Catherine made friends with a new cohort of like-minded public broadcasters and gained new insights into the changing international broadcasting landscape.

In addition to senior producers, mid- and low-level female staff also benefitted by working in the international broadcasting community. Although ineligible for formal overseas training exchanges, production staff such as Adelaide secretary Ruth Page nevertheless found ways to travel for personal and professional growth. Ruth began working at the ABC in 1945. She was a secretary in the radio Talks department. Ruth waited nine years before she and some friends from the Adelaide studio decided to take a yearlong leave of absence. 'Four of us girls decided to spread our wings,' she said.[574] The image below, of Ruth and her ABC friends, was taken from the 1954 edition of ABC staff journal *Radio-Active*. The story was like many others that featured in the magazine at the time, it promoted the idea of ABC staff adventuring abroad, combining work, research and holiday. There were also stories written by, and about, BBC staffers visiting Australia, encouraging ABC staff to see themselves as members of the larger, British dominion public broadcasting community.

Figure 24: The ABC's Ruth Page (far right) and friends head overseas in 1954.
Radio-Active, 25 August 1954, p. 7.

After Ruth travelled around Europe and Britain, she decided to delay her return and try to gain some television experience. Ruth and her friends wrote to Charles Moses, asking for a letter of recommendation for some BBC casual work; with his endorsement, she was offered a contract position in the BBC Light Entertainment division (Moses again proving

[574] Page, R. 2005, 'Conversation with Ruth Page (now Harris)', *ABC TV at Gore Hill in the Fifties*, website, viewed 4 June 2015, <http://www.abctvgorehill.com.au/assets/contributions/ruth_harris_2E.htm>.

how willingly he supported his female staff in their endeavours). In an interview for the ABC ex-staffers website in 2005, Ruth recalled how much she learned, simply by visiting that new production environment as a casual staffer:

> *When I started I'd hardly seen a TV program, let alone a TV studio. I sat in on a few shows with other Producer's Assistants, and soon was on my own, booking casts, and learning a whole new language, such as dry runs, dolly mobile cameras, shooting scripts and requisitions.*[575]

Ruth's attainment of production skills prior to their introduction in Australia facilitated her immediate assignment at the ABC when television was eventually introduced. Ruth was hired as a Script Assistant in the Sydney studios. Some years later, she was promoted to Floor Manager and later became a Studio Supervisor and producer prior to her retirement. Ruth may not have been a senior producer like Kay, but her training on the job at the BBC gave her a head-start back home at the ABC.

From the 1930s, an increasing number of grants and scholarships were available to women who wanted to travel for their professional development. Ann Rees studied the post-war movement of female teachers and librarians who left Australia to train in America, and discussed the growing trend for aspiring women to travel to further their professional skill sets.[576] Funding opportunities were more common in fields deemed more suited to the feminine identity, such as education. The evidence suggests that this transnational movement also encapsulated female educational broadcasters. Catherine King was sponsored by the British Council in 1949 so that she could visit universities in Cambridge and London.[577] Ida Osborne gained a Carnegie grant to study children's television in the North American and the Italian industries, followed by another sponsored trip in 1947 to train with the BBC as the first female Imperial Relations Trust recipient from the ABC (Kay Kinane was the next, in 1949). Earlier, in 1936, ABC contributor Lorna (Byrne) Hayter, an educator and agricultural scientist, was given a Carnegie grant to research for a year; she studied rural education systems in Britain, Sweden, Poland,

[575] Page, R. 2005, 'Conversation with Ruth Page (now Harris)', *ABC TV at Gore Hill in the Fifties*, website, viewed 4 June 2015, <http://www.abctvgorehill.com.au/assets/contributions/ruth_harris_2E.htm>.
[576] Rees, A. 2016, '"Bursting with new ideas": Australian women professionals and American study tours, 1930–1960', *History Australia*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 382–398.
[577] 'They're going to London and they'll do some acting … and some study' 1949, *The Sunday Times*, 4 December, p. 5.

Germany, Russia, America and Canada.[578] Hayter took up a regular role presenting the 'women's segment' within ABC rural programme *Country Hour*, from 1954 to 1967. Her successor, Elizabeth Schneider also took Churchill Fellowships to study overseas.[579] It was clear that a certain cohort of ABC women, whose work focused on education, benefitted through this building wave of female patronage.

The imbalanced polarity of the 'dominion dynamic'

The imperial dynamic that underpinned the ABC's relationship to the BBC fostered a particular polarity in the transnational exchanges between the two organisations; it was a dynamic that could help or hinder dominion producers, depending on their location. Through the various exchanges of people, programming and policies between the BBC and ABC, the BBC prioritised its own social, cultural and political agendas and identities. It was less keen to adopt the work and ideas of dominion broadcasters; they were imagined to be receptacles of British culture. The BBC's influence over the ABC was a manifestation of Australia's cultural deference to Britain. Of the many criticisms that Joyce Belfrage unleashed when she left the ABC, one was to scold the organisation for its 'derivative and kowtowing' deference to the BBC policy and culture.[580] This deference was consolidated by the fact that the Australian radio and television industries were smaller, and worked with less funding and resources. Australian producers found that their work was often stigmatised as a poor cousin to the British standard. It was easier for British producers to feel superior; they had cultural authority, bigger budgets and more resources, and the protection of a national broadcasting monopoly.

What resulted was an imbalanced transnational relationship, which disproportionately benefitted Australians, like Therése Denny, who interposed themselves into the more powerful British broadcasting community. It also benefitted British broadcasters, like Joyce, who chose to work in Australia. One manifestation of Australia's deference to Britain was the notion that gifted Australians would naturally relocate themselves (either temporarily or permanently) to a more cosmopolitan and sophisticated society.[581]

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[578] *Coming Out Show*, 1982, radio programme, ABC 50th Anniversary, Episode 26/82, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1378649 BC:13360987, Sydney, 3 July.
[579] Black, J. 1995, *The Country's Finest Hour: Fifty Years of Rural Broadcasting in Australia*, ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, p. 90.
[580] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[581] Woollacott, A. 2001, *To Try Her Fortune in London*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 6.

Alternatively, talented Britons who chose to come here were seen as an anomaly. Joyce told Graham Shirley that she was constantly annoyed by the confusion of local staff when she told them that she had made an active choice to work in Australia:

> *And they'd ask: 'Where did you work before?' and I said, 'I worked at the BBC', and [they said] 'Ooh, you must be marvellous if you worked at the BBC!' That was one reaction, which totally astonished me because I couldn't see any connection between marvelousness and the BBC and myself, at all. And the other reaction which was equally astonishing was, 'Oh, whatever have you done that you've got to leave the BBC and come here?' One didn't know what to reply, to either! I mean what do you say to people with that attitude?*[582]

After examining a series of press stories about the exchanges of ABC staff with the BBC, it appears that Australian staff on exchanges tended to travel to the BBC to learn, and their British counterparts travelled to the dominions to teach and lead. However, if one gained that BBC status in some way, they were thus empowered; their BBC skillset improved their status in Australia. This could be advantageously applied by staff who were transnationally mobile.

The exchange of programmes within transnational networks

Just as there was an imbalanced polarity in the exchange of staff between nations, there was an imbalance in the sharing of programming content. While the ABC tended to replicate numerous BBC show formats, it was unusual for ABC content to get British airtime.[583] Simon Potter provided an insight into this dynamic when he described the events of the first Commonwealth Broadcasters conference in London, in 1945. Senior public broadcasters from around the world met in person, there to share their own issues, forge productive industrial relationships and receive the BBC's guidance. ABC General Manager Charles Moses brought samples of radio shows that he thought could be exchanged, including *Kindergarten of the Air*. The collaborative dynamic, however, was

[582] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[583] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 200.

overshadowed by the tension caused by the BBC's dominance of programming exchanges. According to Potter, the CBC's Ernie Bushnell believed that:

> *New Zealand, South African and Indian broadcasting authorities were highly dependent upon the BBC for programme material, and that their delegates therefore tended to treat the BBC as 'the Great White Father' of broadcasting'. By contrast, the Australians and Canadians were cooperative, but keen to promote their own agendas.*[584]

Wanting to retain its authority and protect its 'standards', the BBC were generally resistant; implying that content from dominions was not as relevant as British content.[585] Programme formats were copied, although rarely were shows from Australia replicated by the BBC.[586] Catherine's early foray, *Kindergarten of the Air,* was one of the few programmes that did reverse the dynamic. The successful show was adapted by the BBC into a programme titled, *Listen with Mother*. It was the first time that the BBC replicated an ABC show.[587] Before long, it was reproduced by other dominion broadcasters around the world.[588] Kay occasionally produced content that appealed to the BBC, although it was usually a type of 'Australian special' exchanged within the network of Commonwealth broadcasters; projects created to embody novel aspects of Australia that would interest other countries. One documentary about the Royal Flying Doctor Service featured the wonders of the outback. Kay also produced documentaries that depicted Australia as a modern metropolis. One programme about Australia's national agricultural industries and cultures was framed in such a way to demonstrate the economic strengths of Australia's professional wool industry.[589] This type of uniquely Australian programme was more likely to be adopted than Kay's more generic content.

Alternatively, Therése's radio and television work was frequently shared with the ABC; it was easier to share her shows because they were produced from the British side of the equation. In the early 1950s, Therése expanded her production slate by producing content

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[584] Potter, S.J. 2012, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922–1970*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 141.
[585] Ibid, p. 142.
[586] Ibid, p. 190.
[587] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 167.
[588] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 1, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058766 BC: 13196276, 15 November.
[589] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC: 13196286, 15 November.

for a range of radio shows created to connect nations under the umbrella of 'shared Britishness' that Simon Potter described.[590] They included *London Calling, BBC Calling Australia*, *Voices from Overseas, Weekend Magazine, Women's Session* and later, *Window on the World*. I could find no evidence that Joyce's ABC programmes had been sent back to the BBC. The format of Joyce's first major show, however, *The Critics*, was a BBC replica.[591] As a pool producer in those early years of ABC television, her shows were produced for local audiences.

Joyce Belfrage and public broadcasting's employment networks

Joyce did, however, benefit from another type of transnational broadcasting dynamic, one in which the international public broadcasting community facilitated the transnational mobility of its members. Public broadcasters tended to share the same set of industrial cultures, standards and practices, particularly those under the BBC dominion umbrella; as such, employees could transfer between member organisations relatively easily. Joyce's career history illustrates this phenomenon. Prior to working at the ABC, Joyce had a long and varied career as a writer and producer, travelling the world in various capacities as a radio and television producer. Among her other radio, film and television experiences, she worked with public broadcasters in Britain, France, Canada and Australia, moving between nations according to her professional and personal needs.

In 1945 Joyce farewelled her co-workers in the Psychological Warfare (PsyOps) Division of Supreme HQ, London, and looked for a role in which she could pursue her passion in broadcasting and communications. She found her first BBC role as an Assistant Producer for their Radio Features department. However, it soon became apparent that Joyce's working life at Rothwell House would have to change if she was to learn anything of substance; her department was chaotic and undisciplined in those early days after the war. Joyce adapted as best she could. Her supervisor Jack Dillon, who Joyce described as a 'terrific drunk', did most of his work from the pub across the road, leaving her back in the office without guidance.[592] She recalled that, at the time, 'nobody taught you anything.

[590] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 193.
[591] Inglis, K. 2006, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932–1983*, 2nd edn, Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 212.
[592] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.

You were expected to know, sort of by magic.'[593] Taking the initiative, Joyce decided she had to get over to the pub to learn from Jack, while he and researcher and musicologist Frank Collins coordinated the programme for each day. It was difficult for workers to thrive in those early days after the war. Joyce was paid so little by the BBC that she resorted to stealing the forgotten sandwiches of her 'woozy' supervisor when he was not looking.[594] However, the BBC did provide Joyce with alternative ways to train and up-skill. In-between programmes, she completed a two-week training course, learning to operate the mixing desk and finding more opportunities to learn on the job. She said, 'I picked it up on the job gradually, making a lot of mistakes of course'.[595] For example, Joyce improved her method of managing actors and shaping their performances by watching other directors over the months; she learned the best ways to write creatively for radio, such as breaking the script into sequences and inventing dialogue for actors to perform.

Joyce knew that to advance she would have to be up-to-speed with the latest modes and techniques in contemporary programming, as well as sustain her knowledge of what was going on in the world; however, she found herself increasingly compromised by the low wages and poor learning opportunities at the time. (Joyce was paid so poorly after the war that she could not afford a radio – a handicap for someone who needs to stay up to date with current events.) In 1946 she decided to accept a risky and rather tenuous job in Paris, producing for another public broadcaster, Radio Diffusion Française (RDF). Joyce hitchhiked her way to the Channel ferry and boarded with a Catholic refuge to save money until she settled into the job. Once in the role, Joyce had many opportunities to test her skills as a producer and, on occasion, fronted the microphone herself. Never one to miss an opportunity, Joyce stepped in and read the news whenever her American colleague was absent, often in an American accent.[596]

Joyce had been inspired by the documentary work of British filmmakers John Grierson and Paul Rotha, particularly appreciating their focus on social commentary. In 1947, Joyce won a London traineeship with Rotha as an assistant director and writer, but found that the position had only been created to take advantage of new government subsidies. She and her co-trainees 'working' in Rotha's Catherine Street offices spent most of their

[593] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ibid.
[596] Ibid.

time playing cards instead of learning documentary production. It was also at this time that Joyce had another career disappointment, after meeting her idol John Grierson. In her 2001 interview with Graham Shirley, Joyce explained how Grierson gave her some trouble when they met at the first Edinburgh International Film Festival in 1947. Joyce said, 'I had thought that I'd like to go work for him but after meeting him I decided against it … he was a terrible womaniser … the most fearful groper and worse, and one had to dodge like mad.'[597] Before long, Joyce was looking for work again.

The happiest era of Joyce's career occurred while she was working for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. When Joyce and Bruce arrived in 1952, Canada had two television stations, one commercial and one public broadcaster (as well as the American programmes bleeding over the Canadian border). Joyce had not made any approaches beforehand, she just turned up with her resume. She described her precocious approach to Graham Shirley: 'Well I just walked into the newsroom and said "I hear you want news people, I'm a news person", and gave them all my details and they said 'Yeah, how about this evening.'[598] This casual approach to staffing was indicative of the trust given to staff with BBC experience and the amorphous nature of television management in its formative days. The connection between Commonwealth broadcasters meant that Joyce's BBC experience was trusted and welcome; there was a sense that brother and sister public broadcasters could be relied upon.

Canada began broadcasting television in 1952 and Joyce's timely arrival caught the organisation in a state of flux; formative and experimental, television was an expanding field. After writing television news stories for a year, Joyce became part of a three-person team running their news magazine programme, going out and covering stories with her 16mm camera crew, then editing and collating other programmes from different regions into a cohesive news magazine format. Unfortunately, in 1955, Bruce had a major stroke and Joyce's life changed forever. He was no longer able to speak or care for himself and Joyce brought him home to the UK for intensive therapy. From that time on, she became the family breadwinner; her creative and professional ambitions were influenced by her need to pay for her husband's rehabilitation and to earn money for them to live on. Although Bruce did eventually recover, he never returned to his previous health. In the

[597] Belfrage, J. 2001, *Belfrage, Joyce: Interviewed by Graham Shirley*, oral history, interviewed by G. Shirley, NFSA, ref: 535333, 20 July.
[598] Ibid.

short term, the financial necessity of working in commercial television was a bitter pill for Joyce to swallow; however, she was determined to return to public broadcasting and, eventually, found her way back to the BBC. Women were not welcome in the News division so Joyce joined the Women's programming department. Joyce was unhappy with the tone of the programmes she was asked to produce. She struggled to advance up the production ladder at the BBC, even after doing a TV training course. Because of Bruce's health, Joyce could not go back to Canada, so the ABC became Joyce's next option. She again presented her resume, full of references to her work at the BBC, RDF and CBC, and was soon offered a job with the ABC to be one of their top-grade television producers. Packing their bags for a new beginning in Australia, Joyce and Bruce headed off in late 1958. The transnational 'dominion dynamic' provided Joyce with an avenue from which to pursue her broadcasting career.

Therése manipulating the 'dominion dynamic'

A key factor in Therése Denny's success was her ability to work the dominion dynamic to her advantage; she was particularly efficient in her manipulation of the ABC's deference to the BBC. Therése also recognised, as did Joyce, how certain channels of opportunity were open to those inside the international public broadcasting community. Therése applied a range of strategies that made the most of her dual identity as a public broadcaster and Australian 'novelty'. In her early years, Therése worked for the BBC and yet, because she was an outsider, she was not constrained by restrictive British broadcasting cultures and conventions. She invoked the respectability of the public broadcaster to its fullest potential to gain the trust of potential interviewees. When she returned to Australia, Therése weaponised her BBC experience and authority in order to get her way. She was determined to make the opportunity count; Therése had been waiting a long time to produce her Australian-themed projects.

As a young woman in her early twenties, Therése spent the latter stage of World War II at the ABC's Adelaide studios, working for music and variety producer Norman Shepherd and later, Trafford Whitelock. In those early years, she dreamed of being an on-air presenter but could not manage to break into producing. In 1946 Therése moved to Melbourne to try her luck in commercial radio. With the men returning from war, her best chance for any type of opportunity was within 'female' domains. Therése finally started

her broadcasting career as a contributor to the 3UZ women's programme and ran a regular radio show called *Back Stage*, interviewing performers and artists. Playing to her strengths, Therése relished the opportunity to produce Arts commentaries. In 1948 she became the national publicity officer for the Regal Theatre Company. It was a challenging role; Therése had to travel all around Australia as an 'advance man', managing the logistics, verifying venues and publicising theatrical productions to the local newspapers in each regional town on the company's busy tour schedule. Therése longed to work as a producer at the ABC, but had only managed to get freelance work contributing to dramatised radio talks in 1948. Therése had been pitching stories and project ideas to senior Talks officers at the ABC with no success; she had neither the body of work nor the reputation to trigger their interest.[599] Believing that she had few options left in the Australian industry, Therése decided to move to London and try her luck in a much larger, dynamic broadcasting community. In an interview for *The Australian Women's Weekly* in 1954, she was quoted as saying she left Australia in order to 'move round in the radio world and try her luck.'[600] Therése envisaged the landscape of interconnecting broadcasting networks as a larger, more accessible reservoir of opportunity, a new 'world', which she could explore and infiltrate.

As soon as Therése arrived in London in 1949, she found work as a secretary. Despite happily confessing to being a 'poor typist' back at the ABC, Therése's secretarial work helped pay her way. She worked for Republic Pictures, the Rank Organisation, and finally, Collins Publishers, choosing roles that might potentially lead to a job in broadcasting. Therése borrowed some basic recording equipment and began to approach celebrities in the hope that she could convince them to be interviewed. In her early days working as a secretary, she used every spare moment to think of ways to push her career along. For example, while out buying tea buns in her full-time position, Therése would quickly sneak into a phone booth to pitch potential subjects. Years later, she bragged about her audacity in an interview with the *Women's Weekly*:

> *I rang Mr Rank from a public phone – and pressed the button first so that the pennies wouldn't make a noise. His secretary happened to be out, and he*

[599] Molesworth, B. 1949, Correspondence to T. Denny, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:1354157, 6 October.
[600] Clive, R. circa 1954, 'Candidly speaking', *The Australian Women's Weekly*.

> *answered the phone himself, and said he'd be 'delighted, my dear,' to be interviewed for Australian listeners*.[601]

Clearly, she was proud of her ingenuity in winning over hesitant interviewees.

Therése had two strategies that facilitated her initial success in those early years, trying to infiltrate the BBC. She used the novelty of her Australian identity to catch the interest of celebrities and icons, who were tired of the traditional British interview. She also stressed the fact that she was with the ABC, using its reputation as a reassurance that she was still a trustworthy and legitimate broadcaster.

Therése believed that London's celebrities, artists and politicians were bored with the deferential, class-conscious behaviour to which so many BBC interviewers adhered. She decided to adopt a directness that most were unwilling or unable to apply at the time. Therése believed that she could charm potential interviewees if she presented herself as a precocious Australian. Considering the way in which Australians were patronised in British culture, she turned what for many would have been a negative into a positive, presenting herself as a novelty. In 1963 Therése told *The Sun Herald*, 'the fact that I was an Australian – and a woman – were my greatest assets … people were intrigued to meet an Australian.'[602] Therése argued that her sense of 'Aussie egalitarianism' helped her to approach intimidating, powerful people (in addition to the sense of ease around powerful people she gained in her early life). Five years after starting her London career, Therése wrote an essay for *The ABC Weekly*, encouraging her Australian peers to forego their deference and instead celebrate their unique Australian characteristics:

> *Our whole background and upbringing enable us to feel we are as good as the next man, and, when as so often happened to me, we read that someone of interest has arrived in a country, or that someone of some weight has made an interesting statement, we do not see any reason why we should not approach them for further information … we are not inhibited either by their name or their status in the world*.[603]

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[601] 'She interviewed the famous, and had a proposal from Danny Kaye' 1954, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Women's Section), 5 August, p. 5.
[602] 'Found a Russian film bonanza in USA' 1963, *The Sun Herald* (Women's Section), 20 October, p. 121.
[603] Denny, T. 1954, 'The Australian Initiative', *The ABC Weekly*, 6 November, p. 5.

Although she sought to locate herself within the very British hierarchy of the BBC, Therése used her Australianness as an asset.

Therése also used the reputation of the ABC surreptitiously. She wielded the identity of the respectable public broadcaster as an added reassurance to reticent interviewees. Public broadcasters were seen as trustworthy, reputable practitioners; being able to claim that one was working for the ABC or BBC was empowering. Realising that interviewees would take her more seriously when she told them she worked as a public broadcaster, Therése would frequently say that she was doing a 'goodwill' project for the ABC and 'would they agree to be interviewed?'[604] It was an approach she saw as necessary. In those early days as a freelancer, Therése likely convinced herself that it was not *really* a lie; she *had* worked for the ABC in the past and *was* planning on selling them her interviews.

In her first three years in London, Therése built up an impressive cache of interviews. Many were re-broadcast in Australia for radio shows such as *Celebrity Parade* and *The Showman*; they reflect a mix of cultural influences from both Britain and America. Danny Kaye, Tyrone Power, Robert Helpmann, Paul Robeson, Bing Crosby, Rex Harrison, Elizabeth Arden, Margot Fonteyn, Graham Greene, Somerset Maugham, Yehudi Menuhin, Orson Welles, theatre legend Sir Charles Cochran, industrialist J. Arthur Rank and Eleanor Roosevelt are examples of her early conquests.

Therése's early engagements with the BBC also demonstrate how transnational women benefitted by working outside the local system. As a freelancing producer, she became an exception to the rule. Just as she used her Australian 'otherness' to trigger the curiosity of European interviewees, Therése's status as an outsider made it easier to bypass BBC workplace conventions. Becoming 'foreign' was another type of 'disruption' that could be utilised to bypass normative gender hierarchies. The liminality of the experience encouraged experimentation and risk-taking, similar to the ways in which personal transformative departures allowed a break from traditional expectations.

Enjoying her new life in London, Therése immersed herself among a social set of intelligent and powerful people, who also provided her with advice and support. Like Catherine, Therése surrounded herself with the people who shared her interests: writers, artists and performers, social commentators, and broadcasters. In their company, her

[604] 'Found a Russian film bonanza in USA' 1963, *The Sun Herald* (Women's Section), 20 October, p. 121.

knowledge and experiences blossomed. Soon, she was widening her scope and engaging with more challenging political and social subjects. She interviewed Cecil McGivern, Controller of BBC TV; war hero Group Captain Douglas Bader; writer Catherine Gaskin; actor John Mills; director John Huston; and even Bill Dalton, a London rat catcher. She interviewed military and political icons such as General Sir Brian Horrocks, Field Marshall Montgomery and even Yugoslav dictator Grand Marshall Tito. Therése became known for her ability to win what was thought to be impossible-to-get interviews. Sadly, less than a handful of these interviews survive. In her sessions with poet Christopher Fry and disabled war veteran Bader, her informed, authentic interest in their contributions drew out rich responses. Therése's questions were well timed, brief and concise. In the interview with Fry, both participants were clearly having fun, joking about writing and poetry. With Bader, the tone was more respectful and encouraging. Despite the poor sound quality, one can hear Therése's low, sonorous voice as she actively responded to her guests.

Therése was also successful because she understood the dominion dynamic and took advantage of the trusted, symbiotic relationship between the two national broadcasters. Once she managed to gain her first interviews in London (promoting herself as an ABC operative), Therése then approached the BBC with her new collection of interviews, making sure they knew she had worked at the ABC in the past. Once the BBC began to purchase a few of those interviews, Therése wrote back to the ABC to promote the fact that she had made BBC commissions. It was a course of action that finally made her visible in the eyes of programme officers and department heads at the ABC. The ABC saw her in a different light once Therése had some BBC experience behind her. Impressed by the work she had done in the UK and the opportunities she had made for herself, London-based ABC executive T.W. Bearup wrote to Molesworth, the Talks Supervisor (who would soon become Therése's mentor):

> *The BBC people who have been in touch with her express considerable admiration for her style and are somewhat surprised at the people she has 'lined up'… She seems very worthy of encouragement …*[605]

[605] Memo from Bearup, T. to B.H. Molesworth, 1950, titled *Extract from Mr Bearup's Letter Dated 10.5.50*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S: C1987 CS:Denny Therese Part 1 BC:13541575, 19 May.

Therése's BBC experience became an increasingly powerful tool, which made her more competitive in the Australian market. When viewed through the lens of the smaller, more parochial ABC culture, her professional reputation was magnified.

Therése took advantage of the ABC's symbiotic relationship with the BBC, capitalising on their mutual trust in order to get her radio proposals endorsed. When writing to the ABC in the hope that they would commission some of her London-made radio interviews, Therése was careful to mention how interested the BBC was in that same programme. I found evidence in the archives indicating the ABC often asked the BBC for copies of her work. By the time of her Producer's Exchange to the ABC in 1963–64, Therése had sharpened her approach, playing the BBC and ABC against each other. She had accumulated an extensive range of radio and television work throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, and yet had struggled to manoeuvre her BBC work in such a way that she could produce a series of documentaries on Australia. After failing with the Jock Marshall project on the Kimberley, Therése found success after she was chosen to be the BBC's representative on its annual producer's exchange.

Once Therése arrived at the ABC, she made sure to exhibit the BBC 'baggage' she carried. She used her BBC status and experience to limit the unwelcome suggestions offered by ABC programme officers. Therése made it difficult for ABC programmers to modify or object to her plans, by stating that she had the support of the BBC for particular ideas. Therése wielded (and likely exaggerated) her BBC endorsements as a defensive strategy. For example, in the case of her controversial concept for *A Changing Race* (1964), she stressed the BBC's interest in the project:

> *I had long talks with Mr del Strother of Television Enterprises before I left. The situation we agreed was, that he and the BBC are more than interested, indeed are anxious to buy them, for as you know, they are aware of the fact that not much of ABC work is shown on BBC whereas a lot of their stuff is shown here. He asked me to keep him informed, which I have done. I have written to him about the Aboriginal programme, saying that we've deliberately started it off with a statement from a part-Aboriginal saying, 'that the native problem of Australia is not merely a problem of Australia, but a problem of the world', and we expand on that. My hope, therefore, is that the*

BBC will take it, for although it's a local problem it's presented on as broad a basis as possible.[606]

The subtext of this memo was that, if the 'superior' BBC likes her ideas, why the ABC would not? During her yearlong sabbatical at the ABC, Therése was ruthless in her use of her BBC status to sustain her authority within a production workplace that she knew to be insular, insecure and resistant to women in authority. Therése was not interested in compromising production values and some ABC staffers were disconcerted by the way she wielded her BBC authority. She was no longer the 'wide-eyed production ingénue' who needed Molesworth's production advice. Therése came across as a polite authoritarian – someone who caused some ABC men to 'breathe deeply' from frustration, as Mungo MacCallum noted in his 1964 *Nation* article.[607]

During the course of her exchange, Therése's numerous production memos convey a particular theme, applied to intimidate ABC staff. She often referred to 'the BBC way' of doing things, when pressured to meet the more compromised conditions facing ABC staffers; it was almost as if she was shaming them into leaving her alone. For example, early in pre-production, when she was asked for clarification on production budgets, she would write, 'at this stage, I would think the costs would be no different to those of the BBC … but maybe I could go into it all with one of your experts on my arrival in Sydney.'[608]

Therése barrelled her way through standard ABC production processes, triggering dismay from the outset. In a confidential memo from October 1963, Film Production Officer Neil Edwards wrote to ABC Film Production Services and complained about Therése's tendency to 'hound' management to get the staff and resources she wanted. Edwards wrote:

A Miss Theresa Denny is on attachment to us from the BBC … Miss Denny is an Australian who has spent some time working for the BBC and is now more

[606] Memo from Denny, T. to Acting General Manager (Production), 1964, titled *ABC – Inter Office Memo*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP1299/2 CS:TV30/2/45 Part 1 BC:3161668, 16 June.
[607] MacCallum, M. 1965, 'This band of sisters', *Nation*, 26 June, p. 15.
[608] Memo from Denny, T. to Controller of Programmes, 1964, titled *Films To Be Made for ABC*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP1299/2 BC:3161668, 14 January.

British than they are. She is by the way a producer with a highly regarded reputation.

Apparently she has been talking to the General Manager AGM(P) and D.Talks and she has in mind making three documentaries of from 45 to 60 minutes in length on the following subjects:- 1.Aborigines Against the Urban Scene 2.The Kimberleys 3.A Boy in Sydney.

I explained the rationing facts of the ABC film production life to Miss Denny and suggested that she make her peace with D.Progs (NSW) and with D.Talks, pointing out to her that if Talks were happy to give up their entire allocation of film staff to permit her to undertake these productions, that was Talks business.

I have a sneaking suspicion that we may have some trouble with this dame; she will probably hound us to death.[609]

The memo is unusual because Edwards states explicitly why Therése was a disruptive force in the production unit: she was not local, she was highly regarded and in regular dialogue with ABC bosses, and she had already resisted attempts to ration her resources. Complaining that she was 'now more British than they are', Edwards also presents Therése as a type of traitor who rejected her Australian identity. The memo also suggests that there was a degree of ambivalence in ABC staff's thinking about the BBC. Although the official channels of exchange were open between the two broadcasting nations, some ABC staff resented the fact that their playing fields were not level.

In her dealings with senior ABC staff, Therése projected a confident authority. She pushed her first documentary, *A Changing Race* (1964) into production immediately. Unusually, Therése started shooting before a full production treatment had been approved by the appropriate film managers. With just a ballpark budget authorised, she booked her crew and was shooting in Alice Springs while the film office staff were wondering when the paperwork could be resolved. Her approach alienated Federal Supervisor of Talks (Topical) Allan Ashbolt early on. He was to supervise her projects but, a week after Therése sent him one of her forceful-but-polite memos, he had handed the job over to Kip Porteous in the Film Division.[610] It is possible that Ashbolt disliked her authoritative

[609] Memo from Edwards, N. to ABC Film Production Services, 1963, titled *Talks Documentaries*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, SP1299/2 BC:3161668, 29 October.
[610] Memo from Porteous, K. to Acting General Manager (Production), 1964, titled *Denny Documentaries*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP1299/2 CS:TV30/2/45 Part 1 BC:3161668, 20 March.

approach and saw, like Edwards, that she would be difficult to control. It is also possible that he was jealous of the privilege and authority she had in creating a series of such challenging television documentaries.

Conceding Therése's unusual autonomy a month into her exchange, Porteous wrote to senior officers explaining her special status. He said, 'I understand that Miss Denny's technique of production demands a high degree of independence and every effort will be made to avoid encroaching up this unless such action is absolutely necessary.'[611] It was March 1963 and, as Therése was shooting in Alice Springs, Porteous struggled to keep up. He found that she had already shot much of the footage before he had approved the initial shooting ratio. The 52-minute documentary had an original film budget of 8,500 feet. The film division begrudgingly agreed to increase it to 16,000 and, eventually, Therése shot 17,500 feet.[612] Rather than the usual 5 to 1 shooting ratio, Therése shot a more luxurious ratio of 9 to 1. Not long after this first documentary was broadcast, industry gossip reported Ashbolt's dissatisfaction with the film's commentary on Australian race relations, complaining that it was 'five years behind the times.'[613] Ashbolt was likely referring to his own ground-breaking radio story on racism in Moree, *A Study in Attitudes* (1957). ABC Commissioner J.R. Darling came to Therése's defence and rejected Ashbolt's complaint with the comment; 'it might be five years behind your times, old boy … but it is a good 25 years ahead of mine'.[614] Another factor that may have further strengthened Therése's determination to push ahead was her knowledge of Joyce's failure to gain the resources and permissions to shoot an earlier version of this project. With both fans and detractors, Therése stayed focused on her mission to make some key statements about Australia and ploughed ahead.

Kay Kinane connecting with American broadcasting

The BBC's dominion network was not the only transnational community that offered ABC staff opportunities to train and work. Kay also benefitted from her engagement with the American broadcasting industry, particularly with their public broadcasting networks. Kay's BBC radio training had given her the technical and creative knowledge to create

[611] Memo from Porteous, K. to Acting General Manager (Production), 1964, titled *Denny Documentaries*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP1299/2 CS:TV30/2/45 Part 1 BC:3161668, 20 March.
[612] Ibid.
[613] 'Capital letter by Gang-gang' 1965, *The Canberra Times*, 11 February, p. 3.
[614] Ibid, p. 3.

innovative and well-executed radio programming. The experience also provided her with a cache of industrial strengths and authorities, which improved her status and gave her more freedom to advance in the ABC workplace. At the time of her BBC sabbatical, Kay had been captivated by television's promise. She had known that it was just a matter of time before the ABC would follow. Anticipating the introduction of a more dynamic and complex new medium, Kay was determined to attain a similar level of expertise as a television producer.

In 1955, as the ABC prepared for the onset of television, Kay began to make her plans. However, as she surveyed the list of staff waiting to train with the BBC television training school, she realised that, even with her seniority, she was going to miss out. In her 1982 oral history interview, Kay explained the moment she realised that she needed to form a new strategy to get the technical training she needed: 'I counted up the number of people who are likely to get scholarships to go abroad, to have a look and thought, "they certainly won't get down to me, better get to work myself."'[615] Kay independently negotiated a scholarship with the National Association of Educational Broadcasters and then presented it to the ABC to endorse.

Kay spent more than four months in the United States. She travelled extensively, visiting a range of universities and public broadcasters, predominantly researching and working with people who specifically produced educational content. She attended a summer school at the University of Iowa and trained with WQED in Pennsylvania (an early public broadcasting station). Kay joined Rudy Bretz and Edward Stasheff (authors of pioneering texts on televisual techniques and systems of production) at the University of Ann Arbor in Michigan, and visited the Educational department of Princeton to study 'the effect of TV on schoolchildren.'[616] Kay thrived during these training assignments; she picked up the technical instruction easily and immersed herself in the theoretical approaches to media craft.

This second training sabbatical presented Kay with an alternative to the BBC model and it was equally, if not more, useful. In the same way that IRT scholars were expected to report much of what they learned back to the ABC, Kay did that and more. She assessed and gathered information and provided her analysis and advice back to the most senior

[615] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[616] 'To study TV for children in US' 1955, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Women's Section), 19 May, p. 4.

echelons of ABC management. Embodying the role of what Michelle Hilmes called a 'cultural translator', Kay functioned as a conduit between broadcasting nations.[617] Her role then expanded into one of a more authoritative expert, advising ABC programme officers eager to learn more about how to implement new television practices and policies.

Kay became a small player within a larger and more fluid transnational dynamic: one in which Australia was the third party aligned closely to the contested relationship between British and American national broadcasting industries. The tension between public and commercial broadcasting systems was a defining element of transnational broadcasting, as Michele Hilmes explained in *Network Nations* (2012). Hilmes described how both the American and British networks simultaneously inspired and provoked each other over the decades. There were connections and channels of exchange between them: '[a] constant circuit of transnational eavesdropping and cultural one-upmanship, as well as cordial transatlantic visits and vital productive relationships' that were part of the British–American relationship.'[618] Australia, too, was part of those visits and relationships, as Kay's American travels illustrate. Kay became part of the ABC's exchange of programming and personnel with the United States, and played a role as the ABC increasingly looked to America for content.

Throughout the 1950s, the ABC progressively worked to prepare for the transition to television. Existing ABC programme officers sought to learn about the new medium, to understand how it communicated its message and how programmes were subsequently received by audiences. In addition, there were the extensive practical preparations that had to be made – resources and budgets, and the recruitment and assignment of staff into specialties. As Simon Potter detailed in his 2011 research, 'Invasion by the monster. Transnational influences on the establishment of ABC television, 1945–1956', the ABC initiated a range of training excursions for senior programmers and producers, and utilised the Imperial Exchange Scholarship for staff television training.[619] ABC senior management were in close contact with their BBC counterparts; they corresponded and attended conferences together, and experienced production staff were recruited from America and

[617] Hilmes, M. 2017, 'Entangled Media Histories: A Response', *Media History*, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 142.
[618] Hilmes, M. 2012, *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting*, Routledge, New York and London, p. 5.
[619] Potter, S.J. 2011, 'Invasion by the monster. Transnational influences on the establishment of ABC television, 1945–1956', *Media History*, vol. 17, no. 3.

Britain. Kay's training in America provided her with a similar introduction to television production but, importantly, it also gave her an insight into a different type of public broadcasting production environment. In this case, it was one in which public broadcasters shared the market with commercial peers in a dual system, like in Australia. America's diverse independent public broadcasting networks were very different to the BBC's conventional and cohesive institutional system; alternatively, BBC television was protected by a monopoly until 1955, and BBC radio until 1966.

Throughout the 1950s, the increasing influence of commercial broadcasting loosened the tight-knit connection between the BBC and its dominion broadcasters. Transnational broadcasting networks began to shift more dramatically after World War II and Australia began to turn its cultural and industrial gaze towards America.[620] Some ABC managers and commissioners desperately wanted to sustain the British connection but accepted that the post-war landscape was changing. In 1950, the BBC's Australian representative noted that, although Australians were still strongly connected to British culture and industry, the country was steadily becoming more independent, gaining a greater sense of its own nationhood.[621] Despite its loyalty to the BBC, the ABC, as a participant in a dual broadcasting system, was constantly mindful that it had to compete with commercial broadcasters. As such, the ABC progressively moved outside the 'dominion dynamic' and selectively incorporated American content over the years. Encapsulating Australia's major broadcasting influences in the post-war era, historian Ann Curthoys explained:

> *Part of the distinctiveness of Australian cultural history, in TV as much as in film and theatre – and indeed in screen and cultural theory themselves – has been that in a creative sense it has been Janus-faced, looking both to American and British cultural forms, innovations, and influences. This is to say, a lot of Australian cultural history is distinctive, not in being unique or entirely 'new', but in always negotiating between, rejecting, modifying, adding to, changing, and transforming, British and American cultural forms and arguments. The dual system in broadcasting, first in radio and then in TV, has helped and enriched this process.*[622]

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620 Potter, S.J. 2011, 'Invasion by the monster. Transnational influences on the establishment of ABC television, 1945 – 1956', *Media History*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 254.
621 Potter, S.J. 2012, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922–1970*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 146.
622 Curthoys, A. 1991, 'Television before television', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 167.

The ABC increasingly acted on its membership of a wider community of Western broadcasters.[623] The nature of the transnational exchanges between Western broadcasting nations were shifted further once the BBC lost its broadcasting monopolies. When the ABC was preparing for television, it made sure to look to both the BBC and the American market for inspiration and material. The head of the ABC's formative television division, Talbot Duckmanton, wrote to Kay in America and asked her to do more research on what type of new content she thought might be appropriate for the ABC, stating, 'I feel we shouldn't rely solely on BBC material and that we should allow our people to see how the "other half does it."'[624]

The BBC had thrived within its monopoly until Britain introduced a dual broadcasting system for television in 1955. Simon Potter historicised how the BBC's relationship with its dominion members changed rapidly when it was finally forced to share the market with commercial broadcasters. It began to shift its focus away from 'old imperial ideas about the use of public broadcasting as a means to cement British Commonwealth unity'.[625] Once the BBC had to become more competitive, dominion broadcasters such as the ABC were no longer offered favoured-nations licensing deals that had, until the mid-1950s, provided them with large, cost-effective blocks of BBC content. After the BBC changed the financial basis for the sharing of that content, the ABC had a greater reason to seek out non-BBC content providers; it increasingly imported formats and programme content from American networks, as well as from commercial stations in Britain, such as the new ITV network.[626]

When Kay presented ABC management with her American scholarship offer, they quickly approved her request for permission; they saw the value in what Kay could bring back to the organisation, particularly within her area of expertise, educational broadcasting. Kay's American traineeship also gave the ABC the opportunity to place another agent in the market from which larger quantities of content would be required. The ABC also saw the American market as a site from which effective programme ideas and protocols could be

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623 Potter, S.J. 2011, 'Invasion by the monster. Transnational influences on the establishment of ABC television, 1945–1956', *Media History*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 265.
624 Memo from Duckmanton, T.S. to K. Kinane, 1955, titled *Miss Kay Kinane*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 30 June.
625 Potter, S.J. 2011, 'Invasion by the monster. Transnational influences on the establishment of ABC television, 1945–1956', *Media History*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 255.
626 O'Regan, T. 2000, 'The international circulation of British television', in E. Buscombe (ed.), *British Television: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, London, p. 308.

replicated and adapted; Kay was quickly tasked with analysing and reporting on American production practices and told to review and negotiate a wide range of content that might be appropriate for the ABC to purchase. Duckmanton asked Kay to provide him with samples of useful programme formats and structures. Kay approached a variety of television studies such as Sterling Television and the Ford Foundation, and negotiated the hire and sale of programmes. Duckmanton had also asked Kay to formulate data that the ABC could then provide to the Federal Treasury to set financial quotas for Australia's impending commercial television. By the end of her trip, Kay had essentially become a trade envoy for the ABC, negotiating for library sales and footage, visiting major commercial networks, recommending the contracting of American experts and participating in the exchange of ideas.

As she worked in America, Kay experienced a different public broadcasting culture to the one she experienced with the BBC. American public broadcasters proved to have much in common with their ABC peers. Unlike the BBC, the high temple of public broadcasting, where a great deal of time was spent crafting the message, Kay placed herself at the coalface of American broadcasting production, where public broadcasters shared the market with commercial competitors (like the ABC) and where budgets and time were *very* limited (like the ABC).

During these traineeships, Kay had the opportunity to immerse herself in the various techniques of television production. Working hands-on, Kay operated studio cameras, set up lights and produced her own shows. Her love of performance and her experience of theatre set design were, in Kay's mind, valuable assets when visualising and creating a stimulating televisual landscape.[627] Kay easily embraced the new medium. When working in Michigan, Kay saw how the chaos of live television could be harnessed:

> *Which was great fun because we worked like Trojans! We worked – it was a living thing – we worked from breakfast until 10 or 11 at night we were on the go. It was very different from the BBC tempo. Rudy Bretz and Ed Stasheff were running it. We'd known their names from books they'd written. They, when some of the participants were having nervous collapses in the corner and weep and say they couldn't do it, they'd rub their hands together and*

[627] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC:13196286, 15 November.

> *say, 'Great school, great school! Stress is beginning to build up!' (Laughing). But it was good. It was very interesting and gave me a feeling that I could look at four different places at once and the script and something else, which I think is the key of television really, you've got to be aware of so many different things.*[628]

The ABC archives contain numerous examples of the detailed reports that Kay sent home to the ABC. They extensively discuss Kay's views on the technical, creative and practical realities of the new medium. She made her opinions clear on where success and failure would lie, stepping outside her Education role in order to provide industrial analysis relevant to the entire ABC television production system. After studying a wide range of television methods and policies, Kay made recommendations for the ones that she thought would best suit the ABC's focus, size, finances and its technical capabilities. Identifying the challenges facing broadcasters with commercial competitors, limited budgets and resources, Kay made sure to identify cost-effective creative solutions, alternatives to the more 'traditional' BBC way of doing things. For example, she outlined how to set up a network of small-scale studios, suggested specific cameras and even detailed the latest microphone innovations.

In an endeavour to educate ABC management about the challenging nature of the new medium, Kay ensured that her reports included theoretical knowledge about the nature of the medium and provided examples of effective projects. She explained that programmes would inevitably fail if they did not have a clear thematic direction.[629] Kay also assessed the merits of a range of genres and formats, and projected them into a hierarchy of appropriateness for the ABC's specific needs (including information about the new morning 'magazine' TV show, for example). Always the teacher, Kay could not help but warn management about dangers in their own domain; they must be mindful of how bureaucracy may impact on the new medium and how it could easily crush the type of creative solutions needed for cost-effective public broadcasting. She stated that:

> *One thing seemed to become increasingly clear to me as I moved around the stations; there had to be opportunity for good knocking together of heads for ideas to keep coming. And too much departmentalization was a great danger*

[628] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[629] Kinane, K. 1955c, *Report No. 9 from Kay Kinane, Pittsburgh, July 24, 1955*, Internal Report, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 24 July.

> *… in order to keep feeding the intensely hungry maw of the growing giant that is television, there must be a programme plan that lets imaginative people work together with a minimum crew …*[630]

Kay realised that assumptions would be made about the similarities between radio and television; she warned that the bureaucratic systems that had worked for radio may potentially fail for television.[631] Unfortunately, as we saw with Joyce's experiences, many of these lessons came too late. In one letter to Kay, Duckmanton admitted his department's lack of expertise:

> *They shouldn't really be finalized until our programme people have had the opportunity of expressing some opinion but unfortunately, as you know, at this stage very few of our programme officers have sufficient TV knowledge to enable them to give a worthwhile opinion. I would be grateful therefore to have your comments on the following points …*[632]

In her collection of reports, Kay argued that, with the right approach, simple but effective programmes could be produced with minimal production expense, if the producer was skilled enough and the production department organised effectively.[633] Again, reflecting the concerns that Joyce so bluntly expressed in her disputes with the ABC, Kay warned that, without the right training, a less imaginative producer would be likely to throw money at a pedestrian concept.[634]

Kay's advice provided knowledge about fields not normally considered 'female': she provided technical specifications, strategic management, public broadcasting policy and practicalities for start-up television divisions. In addition to Duckmanton and Moses, her reports were read by ABC commissioners, as well as division controllers, state managers and senior technical administrators.[635] These reports helped determine the ABC's approach to television broadcasting. The General Manager and Head of Television each

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[630] Kinane, K. 1955d, *Television Programmes*, Internal Report, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, September/October.
[631] Kinane, K. 1955a, 'Copy of report on general television programming prepared by Miss Kay Kinane', Internal Report, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281 (undated).
[632] Memo from Duckmanton, T.S. to K. Kinane, 1955, titled *Miss Kay Kinane*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 30 June.
[633] Kinane, K. 1955c, *Report No. 9 from Kay Kinane, Pittsburgh, July 24, 1955*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 24 July.
[634] Ibid.
[635] Kinane, K. 1955b, *Report No. 8 from Kay Kinane Dated July 14th 1955, From Pittsburgh*, Internal Report, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 14 July.

wrote to Kay, praising her shrewd assessments and informed, practical advice.[636,637] She was encouraged to continue and was often set specific tasks to research. Talbot Duckmanton, who had been put in charge of planning, building and resourcing the ABC television studios, gave Kay a list of questions to answer. On one occasion, for example, he set Kay more tasks:

> *I have been very interested in the excellent reports you have sent back in the last few weeks. With the GM's approval and primarily in order to save time I am writing to you direct to answer some of your queries and to ask you to let me have, if possible before the end of July, information on certain matters relating to studio facilities that are at present under review.*[638]

Kay was one of several overseas ABC producers writing reports; each had their own assessments to share, Frank Watts, Mungo MacCallum and Neil Hutchison among them. Kay also made recommendations about the exchanges of people; for example, as a consequence of her recommendation, General Manager Charles Moses invited Rudi Bretz to join the ABC as an expert trainer and advisor.[639]

Kay returned to the ABC fold with the practical experience and technical knowledge that gave her confidence and, importantly, made her an authority in the eyes of management. She was made part of the television training team, the only female member.[640] She and other internationally trained staff, including Frank Watts, Neil Hutchison, Mungo MacCallum and Harry Pringle, formed the first wave of television producers and instructors.[641] She and MacCallum ran the classes, Kay relishing the chance to implement her new knowledge. In these training environments, Kay had more authority than the bulk of male staff (including senior officers), and her assessments of the capabilities of production staff were accepted as expert.[642] She encouraged all senior management to participate, so they could better understand the practicalities of production. In her post-

[636] Memo from Duckmanton, T.S. to K. Kinane, 1955, titled *Miss Kay Kinane*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 30 June.
[637] Memo from Moses, C. to K. Kinane, 1955, titled *Miss K Kinane*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 9 November.
[638] Memo from Duckmanton, T.S. to K. Kinane, 1955, titled *Miss Kay Kinane*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574, CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 30 June.
[639] Moses, C. 1955, Correspondence to R. Bretz, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C1574 CS:TV2/2/6 BC:13536281, 16 November.
[640] 'ABC begins TV staff training' 1955, *The ABC Weekly*, 10 December, p. 13.
[641] Ibid, p. 13.
[642] Memo from Kinane, K. to Assistant Controller of Programmes, 1957, titled *'Woman's World' Tuesday June 25, 1957*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S SP727/2 CS:6/1/12 BC:1506540, 1 July.

retirement oral history interview in 1977, Kay explained her approach to training staff, both senior and junior:

> *I said it was essential if you were going to order people from the control tower to know what it felt like to have people yelling at you, to understand what it was like if the instructions weren't clear and to get the feel of the floor as well as in the control room. We put through the school a tremendous number of people. Nearly all the people who were going to administer television, as well as possible producers. I remember looking through the confidential files some years later, before I threw them out, where we had reports on everybody from Tal Duckmanton down, as to whether we thought they were going to make a good producer or not.*[643]

Kay thought that this would go some way to resolve the problems that arose when programming officers lacked the production knowledge to ensure that their policies were practical, to help them better understand the technical and creative demands of the complex new medium. The TV training school moved progressively around the country, and Kay went with it, further adding to her status as an authoritative, national operative.

Kay's American training sabbatical consolidated her position as one of the ABC's best educational broadcasters. It also cemented her status as an internationally qualified and expert broadcaster. She learned methods of production and consolidated her knowledge of the wider international broadcasting community – its cultures, patterns and dynamics.

the mike into position) and others as the particular show may require. There's more teamwork required than in a football XV.

Camera enthusiasts will have a high old time in T.V. They'll be able to talk wisely of apertures, lens diameters, depth of field, focal length, focal numbers and so on until everyone else is seeing circles of confusion. They'll also argue over picture quality, a vital part of T.V. production because, it is claimed, the eye is a good deal more sensitive than the ear. Distort a voice slightly on sound radio and only the highly critical notice; but serve up a

• *NEIL HUTCHISON, DICK HEALEY, KAY KINANE and PETER MACGREGOR with the head of the Royal Melbourne Technical College Radio School, Mr. Kempson.*

Figure 25: Kay Kinane advising with the Melbourne TV training school.
Radio-Active, 26 April 1955, p.1.

[643] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC: 13196286, 15 November.

The privileges of public broadcasting membership

As transnationally active members of the international public broadcasting community, producers such as Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce were not only offered opportunities for work, networking and training, they were also endowed with a considerable professional and social status. Being able to say that one worked for the ABC or BBC meant that a producer was imbued with a respectable, institutional authority. As we have seen, Therése wielded her public broadcasting affiliation as a way to clear obstacles from her path and invoke a sense of trust from the people she approached. In the post-war years, the international network of public broadcasters was a closely connected network of cultural institutions with a set of shared characteristics. Consequently, that institutional reputation was passed on to members. Public broadcasters prided themselves on their moral and industrial authority, and were mindful to protect that reputation. Staff, particularly producers and programme officers, were chosen with care; they were trusted to embody the remit and expected to sustain the organisation's goals and its reputation. Some public broadcasters, (like Catherine and Kay), if they were imagined by the ABC to be trustworthy enough, were encouraged to extend their broadcasting agendas. They were given funding and letters of endorsement in order to extend their research and forge productive affiliations with like-minded broadcasters in the international community.

Because the ABC preferred its senior contributors to have a sophisticated, informed view of the world, it was good policy to allow their producers to maintain these interests and gain the latest information on the subjects that they located at the core of their programming. Just as the ABC sent producers on training exchanges, they gave staff leave to research their special fields. Kay, for example, wanted to learn more about the plight of displaced people after World War II, and asked the ABC if she could extend her international training sabbatical to include a field trip on the way home. Kay, like Catherine, Joyce and Therése, saw that post-war migration was an important social issue, which needed to be addressed in programmes. Kay imagined that she could help migrants primarily through her role as an education broadcaster. In her 1977 oral history interview, Kay described her objective:

> *It was while I was in London that I heard that the first DPs were coming to Australia after the war, the first displaced persons, that we were going to take a large number. I thought if displaced persons are going to come to Australia,*

> *we should know something about them. We should know something about their background. We should know something to be able to help them.*[644]

At the end of her scholarship, after some haphazard negotiations, Kay was allowed to visit German refugee camps. The ABC sent word through the BBC and Kay, endorsed by two national public broadcasters, was suddenly endowed with an ambassador-like status as she went into the field. She was given the rank of colonel and a car and driver to escort her on her research trip.[645] Such were the privileges of membership as a public broadcaster. Kay found her time at the camp was humbling and compelling, fuelling her intrinsic agenda to help people live better lives. She learned first-hand the tragic dilemmas facing particular groups of refugees. She believed that it was this knowledge that could help 'influence … what the ABC could do for migrants.'[646] She had already begun to think about how her programmes could help transition into Australian culture.[647] The time that Kay spent in Germany allowed her to pursue the moral imperative of her profession.

Catherine was another highly trusted member of the ABC community, whose transnational training, research and advocacy were facilitated by her employer. Of the three yearlong breaks that Catherine took from the ABC, (in 1950, 1957 and 1954), each trip was part industrial research, part cultural excursion and part humanitarian action. All became fuel for her broadcasts. Catherine's passion for public service meant that she, too, was seen as an asset worth investment. State manager Basil Kirke outlined the reasons why she was worthy of their support, stating 'Her sense of good taste and her imagination, combined with her educational background and her deep human interest, have allowed her to develop in the interests of the Commission a service of unequalled quality.'[648] This phrase, to 'develop in the interests of the Commission', suggests that Catherine was someone who personified the public-service remit of the ABC. She relished the opportunity to enact her humanitarian agendas and the ABC was willing to become her accomplice. As a broadcaster with global connections, Catherine believed that she was in a position to do some good. When a friend who represented the British Council in Australia suggested that she should apply for a grant to help her on her journey in 1950,

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[644] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[645] Ibid.
[646] Ibid.
[647] 'Saw displaced persons in German camps' 1949, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 April, p. 7.
[648] Memo from Kirke, B. to Director of Talks, 1956, titled *Mrs King – Proposed Visit Abroad*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C2008, CS:King2, BC:5019247, 12 October.

it was General Manager Charles Moses' endorsement that sealed the deal. Catherine's proposal to visit a range of professional and welfare organisations was accepted, and the ABC offered some funding to facilitate the trip.[649] Although Catherine's absence from the station was problematic from the perspective of organising replacements and management, the ABC approved; it would not harm their reputation to have a vocal humanitarian as one of their broadcasters on 'women's issues'.

Catherine was also worried about the humanitarian crisis experienced by displaced persons after the war in Europe.[650] After spending time with Save the Children Fund workers dealing with refugees in Germany, Catherine produced a moving radio segment called *Life in a German Transit Camp*, which detailed the terrible conditions and opportunities facing refugees. The script included the following narration:

> *I did see enough to make me feel ashamed of the comfort and safety which you and I and our children enjoy. I saw a woman cry as she told her story to a social worker – cry endlessly – on and on and on. She had just been told that she and her little boy couldn't be accepted and allowed to remain with her grown-up son and daughter, but must go back along the autobahn to almost certain persecution, or else take to the woods and fields and a life of cold and hunger and fear.*[651]

Senior ABC managers would write letters of endorsement to facilitate the research of their elite producers. For Catherine's 1963 trip abroad, WA manager Eric Sholl wrote to the General Manager and summarised her extracurricular public broadcasting research plans:

> *Mrs King has introductions to our friends in the Bengal Refugee Service, the Mission to Lepers, the Cheshire Homes, the Save the Children Fund, USAID, the National Council of Women and the Mysore University and she already knows appropriate people in both the BBC and CBC, but it would help her if you could introduce her to those listed above …*[652]

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[649] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. pp. 52–54.
[650] Ibid. p. 53.
[651] King, C. 1950, *Life in a German Transit Camp*, script, Australian Broadcasting Commission (undated).
[652] Memo from Sholl, E. to General Manager, 1963, titled *Mrs Catherine King – Proposed Visit to Asia Minor and Europe*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S: C2008 CS: King 3 BC:5019248, 13 December.

Thanks to the public-service remit that Catherine shared with the ABC, management were willing to endorse her as their representative – as long as she agreed that her programming would not explicitly promote specific charities and adhered to ABC rules about impartiality. Although the ABC occasionally insisted that Catherine focus more on 'the peoples, customs and traditions' of the regions she was visiting, when writing subsequent programming content, senior managers demonstrated a good-natured resignation to the amount of airtime Catherine spent inspiring audiences to help others, both locally and overseas.[653]

For elite, trusted public broadcasters such as Catherine and Kay, broadcasting proved to be a powerful vehicle through which they could act on their ambitions to advocate for the disenfranchised. Throughout her career, the ABC supported Catherine's mission to serve the community. Back in 1945, facilitated by her associates at the Country Women's Association (CWA), Catherine was introduced to the Save the Children Fund by her listeners. What began as a community appeal for clothing and school supplies became a lifelong passion for Catherine. Throughout (and after) her career at the ABC, Catherine advocated to help improve the lives of impoverished children. From the 1950s on, she spent part of her ABC research sabbaticals researching children's needs in places such as Algiers, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jerusalem, Jordan, Libya, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and Yemen. Catherine regularly spoke about the work being done and the help that was needed, and tapped into her listener's middle-class morality, encouraging them to do something to help the less privileged.

Networking through transnational subcultures

In addition to their more official transnational interactions, producers such as Kay and Catherine were also members of alternative broadcasting communities, formed by specialist members with shared agendas. Kay Kinane formed transnational connections with members of the educational broadcasting community, for example, and Catherine was a founding member of the International Association of Women in Radio (IAWR). Thanks to fibrous, interconnected networks of transnational broadcasting, Kay and Catherine were able to become members of these broadcasting subcultures, supportive spaces where members shared knowledge, and developed policies and practices that they

[653] Memo from Acting Director of Talks to Manager of WA, 1963, titled *Women's Session – Catherine King*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S: C2008 CS: King 3 BC:5019248, 20 December.

could re-introduce to their local networks. As media historian Thomas Hajkowski explained, 'the history of imperial broadcasting after the war was, in some ways, one of continuities. Personal encounters among staff from around the empire continued with increasing frequency, encouraging the development of professional networks and mutual understanding.'[654] Through these communities, they benefitted by getting advice and recognition from like-minded broadcasters. These were helpful and inspiring 'networks of collaboration'.[655] These transnational affiliations also added another layer of respectability to the status of these producers in the eyes of the ABC. Through these groups, Kay and Catherine were inspired by other media practitioners; they discussed pioneering methods and shared their ideas and their frustrations. With the support of their peers, those 'mutual understandings' strengthened their resolve when it came time to further their cause back at the ABC.

After Kay's first BBC training exchange in 1949, she was invited to attend her first educational broadcasting conference in Canada.[656] She was to join her mentor, Rudi Bronner, and start building her own relationships within the community of educational broadcasters at the International Conference of Educational Broadcasters in Toronto. Bronner had already built a strong network of international contacts, including the BBC's Mary Somerville, and was scheduled to speak alongside Somerville's successor, Raymond Postgate. These specialist conferences allowed participants to form a closer community of broadcasters; in this case, educational broadcasters at the forefront of the field. These events also provided the opportunity for Commonwealth broadcasters to speak directly with each other, rather than simply acting as isolated extensions of the BBC dominion dynamic. In his study of the transnational mobility of dominion broadcasters, Simon Potter noted that 'such mobility thus helped forge connections not just between Britain and each of the Dominions, but also among Canadian, Australian and New Zealand broadcasting authorities.'[657] Kay remembered the event as an unexpected confidence booster. Rudi was unable to make his speech (his new false teeth had begun slip) and Kay had to step in, realising that she was suddenly taking her place among these experts from around the world. Without a plan, Kay decided to simply speak about her department's work and the projects they had made, then played samples of their work. She recalled:

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[654] Hajkowski, T. 2014, 'Broadcasting empire: The BBC and the British world, 1922–1970', *Media History*, vol. 20, no. 3, p. 324.
[655] Wagner, H.U. 2015, 'Keynote speech', *Australian Media Traditions Conference*, Canberra, CMH & NSWFTO.
[656] 'Television for young people as lecturing theme' 1971, *Lismore Northern Star*, 9 June.
[657] Potter, S.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the bonds of the Commonwealth: The Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946–1952', *Media History*, vol. 11, no. 3, p.197

> *I, with no preparation at all, had to stand up on the rostrum and give this second speech of the conference – which I didn't mind because I'd felt that they were all far too theoretical – and my theme was that broadcasting is what we're about, and making broadcasts the children want to listen to was really the whole effort of it. It was all very well saying what we should do, but how we did it was equally as important! I talked and then said that I had one of the programs that we'd made, fortunately … Do you know they gave us a standing ovation, the whole conference! It was really a highlight of the whole thing.*[658]

Being recognised and endorsed in this way, by a select community of expert broadcasters, was a validation of Kay's work; for herself personally and also in the eyes of the ABC. Senior management heard about her speech. Her attendance gave her an added momentum when she returned, she was expected to share her newfound knowledge with staff at home. The ABC appreciated the fact that their staff gained the respect of the international community. They ABC often supported staff who were invited to speak at international conferences, believing that it not only improved the quality of their work, but also added to the ABC's reputation.

Catherine had always been eager to talk to other producers about 'women's programming', eager to push the boundaries and expand the potential for the format. In 1949, she had the opportunity take a much wider, international perspective, when she was contacted by Mrs Lilian Posthumus-van der Goot, a Dutch broadcaster and producer of women's programming for the Netherlands public broadcaster (AVRO). Lilian and Catherine had spent some time corresponding with each other and, during the Catherine's 1950 trip to Europe, the two women met in Amsterdam. Lilian had germinated a plan to start an international association for women in radio. Catherine admired Lilian's strategy to formalise an international collective of female journalists and broadcasters, a site through which they could unite and share information about their work.[659] Lilian had witnessed the power of radio during her time in occupied Holland and wanted women to

[658] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 2, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058772 BC:13196285, 15 November.
[659] Rhunbro, C. (ed.), 2008, *Voices/Pictures: The Story of International Association of Women in Radio and Television,* International Association of Women in Radio and Television, Stockholm, digital book, viewed 2 December 2016, <http://www.iawrt.org/publications/2014/story-iawrt>, p. 10.

use radio to promote cultural and social healing and growth (an issue on many people's minds in those years after the war).[660] She and Catherine shared their ideas and, later that year, the first official meeting of the International Association of Women in Radio (IAWR) was held in London. It was attended by three women: Lilian, Catherine and Dorothy Lewis, a producer from United Nations Radio in the USA.[661] Their common philosophy, as Lilian officially summarised, was 'to help people enjoy the infinite variety of interests of the world today, enlightened by as much knowledge as possible about every country in the various phases of its struggle to actually become a democracy' and 'to make women realise that family life is part of a whole'.[662] These notions were perfectly aligned with Catherine's own broadcasting philosophy, one that refused to constrain 'women's domain' into culturally narrow and socially limited parameters.

As the association grew, Catherine enjoyed being part of a community of like-minded women broadcasters, who took the social function of public broadcasting seriously. She attended the Paris conference during her next sabbatical in 1957 and was elected to the board as vice president. By then, the IAWR was endorsed by UNESCO. It was also more structured; members produced newsletters and reports to be shared among each other.[663] That year, Catherine also visited her Canadian counterparts and 'had some talks' with the CBC about its programming; she even spoke with the Director of the Canadian Broadcasting Commission himself.[664] Catherine had been contributing updates on the progress of radio in her field, as did increasingly more members from around the world; by the time she attended her next international conference in Vienna, in 1964, there were 22 nation members.[665] The ABC saw a benefit in having their staff associated with such a 'solid standing' organisation, as the Head of Talks described the association.[666] Management agreed to sponsor part of Catherine's tour in 1957, and did so again in 1964. They perceived Catherine's participation to reflect positively on them as well.[667]

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[660] Badenoch, A. 'Willemihn Hendrika (Lilian) Posthumus-van der Goot, (1897–1989)', *Women's Radio in Europe Network (WREN)*, website, viewed 2 December 2016, <https://womensradioineurope.org/about/>.
[661] Rhunbro, C. (ed.), 2008, *Voices/Pictures: The Story of International Association of Women in Radio and Television,* International Association of Women in Radio and Television, Stockholm, digital book, viewed 2 December 2016, <http://www.iawrt.org/publications/2014/story-iawrt>, p. 11.
[662] Ibid, p. 12.
[663] Ibid, p. 17.
[664] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 64.
[665] Ibid p. 53.
[666] Memo from Carmichael, A. to Assistant Federal Director Gen (P), 1964, titled *Mrs Catherine King – Contract Artist*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S: C2008 CS: King 3 BC:5019248, 15 May.
[667] Memo from Semmler, C. to General Manager, 1964, titled *Mrs Catherine King – Contract Artist*, A.B. Commission, NAA, S: C2008 CS: King 3 BC:5019248, 19 May.

In 1964 Catherine, preparing to meet with the IAWR on her next trip to Europe, wrote to the General Manager to clarify her goals for the conference:

> *The point of the conference is merely that women who are involved in the problems of broadcasting in their own countries should have an opportunity of pooling their difficulties, ideas and if possible have a look at the jobs they are doing and decide whether they are useful or not. For instance there is to be one session on whether women's programmes as such are worth doing at all – I think this is to be led by me and Doreen Stephens of BBC television … There is to be a certain amount on the role of women in broadcasting as a reflection of their role in our society, also on radio in emerging countries.*[668]

Through her networks and experiences outside Australia, Catherine was able to expand the scope of her work and learn valuable lessons from female broadcasters undergoing similar experiences, giving her more confidence and strengthening her resolve. Her new knowledge could be used to justify her own programming. She referred to work being done by other public broadcasters when making particular arguments.[669] Catherine gained confidence from these international connections, knowing that there were other women, respected in their own organisations, interested in the same topics and issues, and undergoing the same battles that she was.

In addition to these broadcasting communities, there were other international networks formed to specifically connect women with shared goals and interests. Angela Woollacott and Alison MacKinnon noted that there were women's clubs such as the Lyceum in London, where Australian and British women could join in order to share modern philosophies; the club provided 'a prime example of that internationalism, of feminists' cultural and economic agenda, and, for Australian and British women, of the empire as an evolving context for feminist ambitions.'[670] Women with transnational mobility could form networks where, along with their individual 'subjectivities and ambitions', they could act communally.[671]

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[668] Memo from King, C. to C. Moses, 1964, titled *Conference 21/28 Sept. Vienna*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S: C2008 CS: King 3 BC:5019248, 1 September.
[669] 'Mrs King tells of big tour', 1968, *The West Australian*, 5 March.
[670] Woollacott, A. 2001, *To Try Her Fortune In London*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p. 116.
[671] Mackinnon, A. 1997, *Love and Freedom: Professional Women and the Reshaping of Personal Life*, p. 185, quoted in A. Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune In London,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2001, p. 116.

Kay's final, global opportunity to embody her mission

Thanks to the ABC's place in the global community, Kay was able to extend her original ambition to be an effective and authoritative educational broadcaster, from the local to the national, and then into the international sphere. After her training and research journey in America, her work as a television trainer and advisor, then her role as a showrunner on *Woman's World*, Kay moved back to the ABC's Education department. For the final 16 years of her career, Kay spent an increasing amount of time travelling to developing countries (from South East Asia and the Caribbean, to Africa and the Middle East) to assist in the formulation and implementation of new national broadcasting systems. She travelled with the ABC's blessing, sharing her knowledge and expertise, commissioned to analyse and assess fledgling national networks, and provide reports and analysis to major national and international institutions. There were at least nine major international assignments in this latter stage of her career. Kay valued each adventure as an opportunity to advocate for developing communities and engage with new cultures.[672]

Not long after Kay said her farewells to Mary Rossi and *Woman's World*, she was seconded to the Australian Government under the Colombo Plan Initiative. From the 1950s, in light of the spread of communism and de-colonisation in the international sphere, the ABC took a more proactive approach to forging relationships with developing broadcasting nations. Acting as a patron to less-developed nations, the ABC imagined itself taking its place alongside the BBC and American organisations as an international benchmark, perpetuating imperialistic notions of Western authority and technical proficiency. Australia's attempt to alleviate communist influence was manifested through its involvement in the Colombo Plan. In his study of the scheme, David Lowe explained that a 'people-to-people connectedness was forged' between participants; members were encouraged to forge alliances of trust and connection.[673] Australian institutions, including the ABC, began hosting a range of visitors from Asia on scholarships to study Australian industry, agriculture and professions, and offered courses with the intention to giving visitors knowledge and training (infused with Western democratic values), which they could implement back at home. It was, as historian Daniel Oakman described, an 'easy and relatively inexpensive way to solidify political and military support in an unstable

[672] Kinane, K. 1982, *Research Interviews: Kay Kinnane: From Carbon Mikes to Satellites*, oral history, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:C100 CS:1248784 BC:13297163.
[673] Lowe, D. 2015, 'Australia's Colombo Plans, old and new: International students as foreign relations', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 448–462.

regional context'.[674] Education was one of the leading subjects, and journalism and broadcasting became increasingly popular.[675] Kay's work for the ABC as an international expert and advisor became her final transnational career engagement.

Kay began her advisory work in Thailand and, after six months, she had progressed to Malaysia, the Philippines and Japan. In Thailand, she worked with the Ministry of Education in Bangkok, assessing then suggesting strategies to develop the country's radio and television systems in ways that would embody the 'inform and educate' social benefits of public broadcasting, while retaining and celebrating more traditional aspects of Thai culture.[676] Kay recognised that Thai broadcasters were ambitious, stating that they were 'very conscious of the fact that the Western world was coming to them when they were unprepared and they wanted to use radio and television to build up their traditional standards.'[677] She also remembered how Thai broadcasters were eager to work with Australians, seen as less domineering than their British and American counterparts. In one interview, Kay stated that the Thais disliked being thought of as a British colony and 'didn't want the British colonial attitude to come in'.[678] Kay's generous nature and open-mindedness helped when communicating and connecting with the Thai people. She found the experience rewarding; as an educator, the philosophies and values of her hosts affected Kay deeply and rekindled the altruistic principles driving her career.[679]

Kay returned to Australia to continue her work in Educational television, travelling overseas again in 1964, this time to Geneva on special assignment with the European Broadcasting Union. Kay used her ABC knowledge as a supervisor and planner to compile an extensive report on what was required to develop and construct 'instructional television' networks.[680] The European Broadcasting Union also asked Kay to write a book on television in developing countries; she was to choose six developing countries with fledgling educational studios, analyse the situation and review how they were managing with minimal budgets and facilities – their creative solutions, their needs and agendas.[681]

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[674] Oakman, D. 2010, *Facing Asia: A History of the Colombo Plan*, ANU Press, Acton ACT, p. 128.
[675] Ibid, p. 181.
[676] 'Television for young people as lecturing theme' 1971, *Lismore Northern Star*, 9 June.
[677] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC: 13196286, 15 November.
[678] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 4, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058790 BC: 13196287, 15 November.
[679] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 3, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058780 BC: 13196286, 15 November.
[680] Memo from Watts, F. to Controller of Technical, 1964, titled *Television Training School – Kellett Street – Costs*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NAA, S:SP1424 CS:TV4/3/2 BC:13774055, 7 October.
[681] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 4, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058790 BC: 13196287, 15 November.

> *They said that it was all very well for the BBC and big organisations to come along and say, this is what you do to start education television, the big organisations had the money and the resources to do it. But there were some countries that were starting with much less than this. They wanted to know how it was done. So they said to me, find six countries that have started education television, visit them and write us a book on it – lovely assignment.*[682]

To fulfil this mission, Kay visited Algeria, Ghana, India and Nigeria; identifying correlations between each country's proactivity towards nationalism and the amount of educational television being encouraged.[683]

By 1968, Kay was reaping the rewards of her seniority and expertise as an international broadcaster. She was invited to attend a series of international conferences (one in Brussels, the other in Tehran) to speak about educational broadcasting and negotiate the sale of ABC programmes.[684] Looking back on this phase of transnational assignments, Kay recalled how she felt greatly rewarded by the experience; she portrayed this final stage of her career as an important aspect of her career legacy. At one point, Kay recounted a story of being a judge in an Iranian children's film festival, describing how she enjoyed being part of a community of broadcasters and filmmakers, who used their craft to help diverse groups of people connect with each other, particularly through a desire to educate. She said that 'the young Persians took to filmmaking like ducks to water, even those almost illiterate would turn to filmmaking. They were making *brilliant* little films!'[685]

Like Catherine, Therése and Joyce, Kay had become a regular participant in the transnational flow of broadcasting cultures; she became an agent to carry information and ideas between nations around the world. What began in a local ABC studio – her belief that radio and television were powerful tools to provide enlightenment and education to local listeners – had now expanded to citizens of the world.

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[682] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 4, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058790 BC: 13196287, 15 November.
[683] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 5, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058796 BC: 13196288, 15 November.
[684] 'Kay Kinane heads out' 1972, *TV Times*, 17 June.
[685] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 5, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058796 BC: 13196288, 15 November.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

As a feminist media history, this thesis challenges and revises. It works to counteract the historical narratives of Australian broadcasting that have traditionally framed achievement through a male lens and erased women from the historical landscape. This thesis refutes the myth that women were only involved in the domestic world in the post-war decades and presents evidence of a wider range of activism and achievement. It complicates what is now becoming a more nuanced history of women post-1945. It contextualises how women were systematically marginalised in the post-war workplace and works to remedy the gendered historiography that has ignored the contribution of those women who prevailed in spite of those restrictions.

This thesis challenges the complacent historical narratives that fail to recognise how the Australian media landscape has been, to varying degrees across time, a gender battlefield; narratives that assume that, just because women were not dominant in official historical texts, they were not present at critical times in history. Few women were listed in histories of the ABC's achievement and, with that in mind, I was determined to interrogate this absence, discern the nature of women's work and contextualise their contribution to the post-war production environment. Group biography proved to be a particularly effective method, enabling me to build a more cohesive landscape of evidence about subjects usually relegated to the margins of history.

As I have demonstrated, as a production history of Australian broadcasting, this thesis views the post-war Australian media landscape as a network of shared communities; it studies the interconnecting and competing subcultures, and recognises the work of individuals enacting their own agendas in the creation of cultural texts. By adopting an integrated, transnational approach, it extends its capacity to more fully incorporate the actions of historical protagonists and to better capture the scale and scope of each female broadcaster's career. It reveals how a cohort of women strategically engaged with the larger social and industrial dynamics and political economies of cultural production that affected the nature of the post-war production workplace. It follows them as they adapted and extended their work to a variety of formats and regions in order to sustain their autonomy and develop their expertise. As a result, I have been able to identify an extensive range of assets, skills and strategies that women deployed in order to participate in the privileged domain of public broadcasting in the post-war era.

This history interrogates the industrial status and behaviour of the ABC through a gendered lens. In doing so, it has been possible to identify patterns of discrimination and patterns of resistance. It contextualises women's achievements and recognises the many subtle ways they acted for change and challenged the status quo. While the ABC sought to be a democratic, enlightened organisation, it was nevertheless encumbered by a culture that privileged male identity and justified male authority, systematising a sexual division of labour and gendering both jobs and content. Although women were marginalised in post-war broadcasting and held back from many senior, authoritative roles, they made considerable achievements in spite of these discriminatory systems.

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce may not have been able to revolutionise the gendered nature of the ABC workplace, but they each made an impact on public broadcasting and were able to fulfil their own personal and professional ambitions, a difficult thing to do for many women of the time. They acted for change in both the workplace and in the identities and discourses being constructed for national consumption. Through their programmes, they discussed social justice, offered cultural learning and education, and encouraged audiences to be more active and engaged with the wider world. They encouraged their audiences to behave better, to think harder, to celebrate culture, to be better citizens. Advocating for the disenfranchised, they criticised ignorance and social and cultural complacency. Manifesting their self-determined role as advocates, they constantly challenged racism and sexism. They worked to counter the marginalisation of women's programming, constantly chipping away at the limiting stereotypes that forced women's interests into superficial constructs.

Their off-air achievements were just as substantial. Their presence as authorities in the field, as public-affairs producers, was a form of activism in itself. They also challenged the status quo by taking on positions of authority; to have a woman more senior than a man, was a solid blow to the gender dynamics of the day. Through a complex series of strategies, the cohort were able to further their authority and seniority as producers, and at times, made the ABC shift to accommodate their ambitions and agendas. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce chose public broadcasting as a profession because it provided a powerful public framework through which they could embody their ambitions and agendas. They saw the ABC for its value as a cultural institution and for its potential to make change. A national forum, official and authoritative, the ABC was a powerful site

for reflecting and reshaping national identities, and for interrogating national issues. Similarly, these women wanted careers through which they could create legacies. It was a good partnership. Both parties were motivated to produce cultural texts that would improve the lives of the community, striving for excellence and integrity.

This thesis has also uncovered, thanks to the application of group biography, the common causes of this cohort's success. One preliminary factor was that the women in the cohort were able to succeed because they were 'built' to be public broadcasters. They sought out careers that enabled their vocation – to contribute to the development and health of the nation. Their careers as public broadcasters were underpinned by the values instilled in them from their youth. Taught to appreciate their privilege and be responsible, active citizens, they embodied a sense of social maternalism that endowed them with a sense of social responsibility. They imagined themselves as capable and culturally superior, and felt confident to speak for others and make judgments about what was best for society; they felt that they were qualified to belong in the community of cultural custodians running the ABC. This group wanted an opportunity to be challenged, to take risks, to prove themselves, to do something with their education and knowledge, to excel.

Their success was also fuelled by the fact that the ABC's public broadcasting philosophies aligned neatly with their own missions, giving their professional identities greater legitimacy. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce shared a particular group of skills and assets, which appealed to the ABC. They were all white, middle-class, highly educated and culturally sophisticated. They manifested a public-service mindset that mirrored the ABC remit. They wanted to improve society and advocate for those less privileged. They were also accepted because they were seen to be 'safe' and unlikely to diverge from ABC policies. Women who were seen as too political, or troublesome, were rejected.

Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce improved their ability to survive and advance within a workplace averse to women in authority, by adopting a range of industrial strategies and embracing opportunities whenever possible. Opportunities arose during times of industrial disruption. Many stepped into careers at the ABC during times of staff shortage, when gender preferences became secondary to industrial staffing necessities, such as during wartime and again during the ABC's expansion into television. As manifested in other industries, ABC women also benefitted by taking on prototypical work as technology changed. They innovated and took risks, they took on difficult tasks and experimental

roles that their male peers were unwilling to sacrifice their safe, established positions to do. Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce also benefitted from transmedial mobility. They moved between a variety of media formats to sustain their authority, moving between radio and television, or between divisions, when their positions were compromised. They also branched out into other public and creative fora to continue to express their ideas and opinions, to pursue issues that they wanted to address and debate.

The cohort managed to advance within the gendered workplace by forging professional mentorships and finding advocates within the senior ABC bureaucracy. These advocates gave them invaluable advice and encouragement, ABC men who were willing to recommend their work and speak on their behalf. Applying a range of industrial diplomacies, the cohort progressed from level to level; their journeys made easier with the support of key gatekeepers.

The women in this study benefitted by travelling overseas at various points in their careers. Their departures were transformative. They grew culturally, professionally and personally. Their overseas excursions built them up into sophisticated, wise women of the world. They connected with international communities, and enhanced and widened their own networks of collaboration. They forged beneficial networks with like-minded public broadcasters, who shared their love of culture and had similar sociopolitical agendas.

Studies of the transnational experiences of the cohort reveal that they used the channels, flows and networks of transnational broadcasting to further their professional and personal agendas. While the ABC was a site that often limited women's agency, it nevertheless offered opportunities through its external connections. The ABC's relationship with the BBC, and its position within the larger network of dominion broadcasters, provided a range of new options for ambitious women. The four protagonists of this study participated in the transnational exchanges of people, programmes and production cultures within the shifting and expanding flows and exchanges of transmedial and transnational broadcasting. Their transnational engagements connected them with other broadcasting nations, their cultures and practitioners. As members of the public broadcasting community, they were offered avenues for training and professional development – opportunities that, in the post-war years, would not have been available if they stayed within their local workplaces. They took part in training scholarships and producers' exchanges; they joined various international communities; and they shared ideas with

like-minded broadcasters. Their official status as public broadcasters strengthened their technical and creative expertise, and built their confidence as media practitioners. By engaging with broadcasting's various transnational modes, the cohort gained more power to arbitrate their rights and determine their own agendas at the ABC.

They also succeeded because they were able to visualise the various cultural and imperial dynamics that determined the nature of the ABC, and worked those hierarchies and conventions to their advantage. By seeing and then moving beyond the national, they were able to work upon the industrial forces and cultural dynamics that affected their broadcasting worlds. To varying degrees, the cohort took advantage of deferential power dynamics, adopting the stronger identities and characteristics of other broadcasting environments and using them to advantage when brought home – at times with ruthless accuracy – justifying their authority. They became active agents in a variety of exchanges between broadcasting nations, useful conduits to the wider broadcasting world. With their newfound status and knowledge, their status and value in the eyes of the ABC was magnified.

For the reasons previously outlined, I have chosen a particular era, a particular organisation and a particular cohort of women with which to frame my interrogation of gender in Australian media production. As my research progressed, it was difficult to refrain from expanding the focus to include a larger group of historical protagonists, to study another group of worthy historical subjects. One of the areas in which I would suggest further study would be the career of Kay Kinane, and the impact that radio and television has had on the development of national educational curricula in Australia. Another avenue of research to pursue is to construct large-scale collective and group histories of Australia's Indigenous and migrant broadcasters and, like this project, study how they used Australian broadcasting for their own political, social and cultural purposes. I would argue, however, that it is necessary when writing histories of media practitioners from more 'regional' sites such as Australia in the post-war decades, to consider the necessary transmedial and transnational mobilities applied by broadcasters, as they engaged with the rapidly developing international opportunities available at the time. I am reassured to know that I am only one member of an expanding field of feminist media historians; however, there is still a need for more of these feminist media histories, particularly Australian histories, from different generations and eras.

Epilogue

As this thesis functions as a group biography, the following epilogue historicises how Kay, Catherine, Therése and Joyce ended their careers as public broadcasters.

These women chose careers that would allow them to act out their ambitions as socially responsible, culturally engaged and active citizens. When they ended their time at the ABC, they found ways to continue to enact those agendas: they fostered a variety of social and cultural activities in their communities, volunteered to help others, and worked to improve the lives of the less privileged.

In the last four years of Kay Kinane's time at the ABC, she worked as Director of Young People's Programmes, simultaneously performing her transnational duties as international advisor to developing broadcasting nations. Kay was, however, becoming frustrated with ABC management and its increasingly dictatorial approach to staff and programming. Kay was particularly concerned by the ABC's new approach to ratings and viewing figures; 'minority' programmes, which catered to smaller audiences, were considered less important than higher-rating shows, regardless of their effectiveness. In one moment of conflict, Kay recalled making an unsuccessful, 'last ditch' effort to save a radio programme of dramatic book-reading segments, which had proved to improve the literacy of young audiences. In 1976, the new controller of television programmes John Cameron rejected Kay's appeals and argued that, despite Kay having direct endorsements from the Commission, he was going to cut most funding from children's programming. According to Kay, he did not believe in their relevance, according to his interpretation of the ABC's remit. In her 1977 interview, she recalled the conversation that fuelled her resignation:

> *He said, 'I'm sorry, I'm the one with the money and you're not going to get the money to do it, I don't believe in children's programmes'. He warned me, that as soon as I retired, that he was going to stop everything that I was doing. This made me terribly sad, that one man, without the policy approval of the Commission could decide to do this and was doing it! This is what made me decide to retire a little earlier than I need have*.[686]

[686] Kinane, K. 1977, *ABC Oral History – Kay Kinnane*, oral history, Part 5, ABC Studios, Sydney, NAA S:SP1762/1 CS:1058796 BC:13196288, 15 November.

Cameron was, in Kay's mind, harming her legacy and failing to fulfil the ABC's democratic remit. Just as she left *Woman's World* when she saw her own professional remit was going to be compromised, Kay decided that it was time to leave the ABC.

Kay wisely adopted a focused transition into retirement, bracing herself for a new start. Her social life had been primarily an extension of her professional life; most of the people she spent time with were broadcasters like herself, so Kay worked to find a stimulating new community to replace what she had at the ABC when living out her retirement in Sydney's northern beaches. Kay had seen first-hand how often retired staff suffered after leaving the community of public broadcasters with whom they had so much in common. In an interview given five years after retiring, she confessed, 'there's nothing more *boring* than old retired officers coming into the office and hanging around, you know, so, I thought I've got to make a new community for myself out of where I'm living, get to know people.'[687] Kay could not help but be drawn, even in some small way, back to education and media production; again, she was helping others, celebrating media, encouraging learning, people who needed help. She worked with local high school children, teaching drama and theatre production. She volunteered with Meals on Wheels and became President of the local St Vincent de Paul Society. Prior to her death, she gained a final moment of notoriety in the press (typical of Kay's stoicism and her physical confidence); at 83, she and her sister Tess got the hoses out and battled a fire at their home in Avalon until the fire brigade arrived. Kay died in January 1998.

Catherine King retired as producer of the Western Australian 'Women's Session' in May 1966, after her husband Alec was offered a position teaching with Monash University that same year. That same year, she received an MBE for her contribution to the community, for her work with the ABC and the Save the Children Fund (SCF): 'for her services in the interests of women and children.'[688] Once relocated, like Kay, Catherine leaped into action to fill the void that her broadcasting career had exposed, increasing her role with the SCF. However, after only a few years, Catherine lost her two great partners in life. Alec was diagnosed with cancer in 1970 and died soon after. That same year, Catherine's father Walter Murdoch also passed away.

[687] Kinane, K. 1982, *City Extra*, radio programme, ABC Radio, NAA, S:C100 CS:88/10/1358M BC:11615731, 23 June.
[688] Lewis, J. 1979, 'Catherine King', in D. Popham (ed.), *Reflections: Profiles of 150 Women Who Helped Make Western Australia's History*, Carroll's, Perth, p. 184.

After Alec's death, Catherine decided to make a major advocacy-focused journey for the SCF in 1971.[689] Some years earlier, Catherine and her husband had used their 1964 career sabbatical to continue their work for the SCF, visiting among other places, Nepal and India. They met the Dalai Lama and visited refugee centres for those displaced after China's oppression of Tibet; she then moved across to work with the Bengal Refugee Service in India.[690] According to biographer Julie Lewis, this new trip would be 'a long pilgrimage' for Catherine. Her journey finished in Europe, presenting talks in Britain and sharing her experiences and advice with SCF administrators and team members. As a result of this work, Princess Anne invited Catherine to join the Queen, Prince Philip and her for lunch at Buckingham Palace.[691] Catherine eventually returned to Australia and moved back to Perth to live with her family. She made regular engagements around the region to get support for the fund's work, often through the CWA network. Catherine also returned to radio, this time with community radio station 6NR, (sponsored by the West Australian Institute of Technology), where she hosted a weekly segment promoting the fund, connecting audiences with the broad network of SCF advocates from around the world.[692] Catherine died in 2000.

In the decades after Joyce Belfrage left the ABC, she worked in advertising and political public relations. She became senior lecturer in the School of English Studies at Macquarie University, where she designed courses on communication and studies of mass media. It was during this time that Joyce was diagnosed with breast cancer. While battling surgery and radiotherapy, she continued with her work at the university, eventually becoming principal lecturer in 1970. Throughout the ensuing decade, Joyce appeared as an industry expert on various radio commentaries, sat on judging panels for a series of press awards and occasionally wrote scripts for commercial drama productions. She constantly sought ways to sustain her passion for media, literature and the arts. In 1973, Joyce wrote to her brother-in-law about the cultural development of her new home. As always, her wry view of the world was sharpened by her wit:

> *Our Opera House just opened (Queen appears next month to do the honours) and I bought B. tickets for his birthday surprise. The country's*

[689] Lewis, J. 1979, *On Air: The Story of Catherine King and the ABC Women's Session*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, WA. p. 137.
[690] Ibid, pp. 123–127.
[691] Ibid, p. 127.
[692] Ibid, p. 138.

> *getting quite civilized. Our fifteenth University opens next year. Actors, writers, can actually earn a modest income. Many can read and write. Horses are no longer worshipped every Saturday.*[693]

Like Catherine, Joyce immersed herself in work and travel to help cope with her grief. After Bruce Belfrage died in 1974, Joyce took leave and organised a research trip to Britain to meet with other media scholars, coordinating an attachment with Leeds University to assess their media and communication courses. She returned to her university work and her students, and continued until retiring in 1981. Joyce's health had been suffering, particularly her sight. After leaving Macquarie University, she returned to university as a student herself. Finding a way to get by with limited vision, she undertook a degree in Italian and Fine Arts at Sydney University. Joyce travelled to Europe in 1984, and again in 1987, visiting old friends and family; getting her latest 'dose' of culture, she believed that these final tours would sustain her during her retirement.

I recently spoke to one of her close friends, who recalled that, while Joyce may have had a brittle, tough and dedicated professional persona, at the same time, she was a gentle, selfless, loving wife and friend.[694] (Joyce had written to friends and family to ensure that her cancer diagnosis was hidden from her husband Bruce; she was determined not to add to his distress while he struggled to cope with his own disability.) In the decade before her death, Joyce continued to be active in the educational and media communities, always finding a way to engage with learning, language and literature. Until she became too ill to continue, Joyce volunteered as a teacher with the University of the Third Age (a university run by volunteer educators, working with aged students) and taught Italian and Shakespearean studies, among other classes. She also worked as a volunteer for the Sydney University Chancellors Committee, taking guided tours and fundraising. Joyce died in 2007.

Therése Denny ended her producer's exchange with the ABC in 1964 and returned to the BBC. After creating a series of radio segments on her trip home through America, she resumed her production partnership with social commentator Malcolm Muggeridge and produced documentaries such as *The Road to Canterbury* (1967), which discussed the

[693] Belfrage, J. 1973, Correspondence to C. Belfrage, *Cedric Belfrage Papers*, The Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, 3 October.
[694] van Leeuwen, T. 2016, *Interview with Theo van Leeuwen*, oral history, interviewed by K. Andrews, Sydney, 27 April.

modern person's feelings about faith and religion.[695] Others include *The Spirit of the Twenties* (1968), a programme that offered a sociological and historical view of society in the 1920s, and *Where Were You the Day War Broke Out?* (1969), a social-history documentary shared among dominion broadcasters, including the ABC.[696,697] Therése was still working under Huw Wheldon's domain at the BBC when she, too, was diagnosed with cancer.

Therése worked right up to her death at the age of 53. Like the other women in the cohort, her professional life was not just a career but a true vocation. Therése combined her personal life with her work; she loved socialising and spending time with colleagues and contributors. In her last days, Therése provoked her doctors' wrath by turning up to chemotherapy late, with a hangover, after staying up till 2am with BBC colleagues. In his eulogy to Therése, Huw Wheldon, BBC Head of Television, described her commitment to helping others, her loyalty and love of her friends and family. She had sadly regretted, Wheldon said, never marrying. He added that Therése's professional life was shaped by her determination and spirit to embrace challenge and to protect the integrity of the messages being produced.[698] He recalled how, typically for Therése, when something extraordinary needed to be done, she somehow got on with it; he recounted how she managed to 'induce' British parliamentary authorities to turn the clock back on Big Ben to match a scene that she was shooting.[699] Wheldon praised Therése for her tenacity, her resistance to poor quality and mean-spirited ideas, and for how she faced her illness.[700]

Therése died in 1975. Ever the planner, she organised every detail of her own funeral and was determined that the wake would be a celebration of life. After the funeral, her Notting Hill apartment was jam-packed with admirers. Shoulder-to-shoulder, co-workers and friends were committed to fulfilling her wish of staying till every drop of the substantial cache of alcohol she had prearranged was consumed. Therése was buried with photos of her family, a copy of Chester Wilmot's book, in which he had written to her that it was 'a memorial to a memorable time',[701] and a toy Koala.[702]

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[695] *The Road to Canterbury*, 1967, Denny, T. television programme, BBC Television.
[696] *The Spirit of the Twenties*, 1968, Denny, T. television programme, BBC Television.
[697] *Where Were You the Day War Broke Out?*, 1969, Denny, T. television programme, BBC Television.
[698] Wheldon, H. 1975, *Therese Denny: An Address Given by Huw Wheldon at the Carmelite Priory*, speech, presented at Requiem Mass in memory of Therese Denny, London, 29 July.
[699] Ibid.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Gaskin Cornberg, C. 1975, Correspondence to W. West, Bill Denny Private Archive, 5 August.
[702] 'Penelope', 1975, Correspondence to B. Denny, Bill Denny Private Archive, 30 July.

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[703] I have kept the incorrect spelling on this reference, and others like it, as it reflects how the documents are categorised in the ABC archives. (As I searched, I learned to accommodate human error in the categorisation of archives, on occasion finding useful, incorrectly labelled texts).

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