

government might find dangerous in the perceived crisis of national security, and in the process undermining crucial aspects of the educational apparatus.

Drawing on an impressive archive and selection of secondary literature, Chia connects each of these crises with a critical examination of the relevant curricula, usefully outlined for his readers. Palgrave Macmillan has, in turn, allowed Chia good space for notes and bibliography, so often curtailed in today's publication scene. His analysis is paired with clear, well-written and concise accounts of Singapore's political and economic history helping the reader (though with far too many acronyms) unfamiliar with Singaporean history to keep up throughout the narrative.

The wide scope of the historical narrative that included state formation and economic development, however, was only partially matched by Chia's discussion of political discourse. In this sense, civics education – even with social science and history – was too narrow to really explore the nature of the relationship between education and the Singapore “developmental state”. His focus on culture was interesting, but it was unable to offer a causal or structural relation to the state or economy.

As far as culture goes, race dominates Chia's narrative, as politicians and educators seek to use curricula to forge unity. Chia has deftly outlined the racial tensions that informed debates over Singaporean curricula, though this left me curious about some other important, related issues. Political discourses veiled the sources and nature of inequality that sat under some of the concerns it expressed, leaving me unsure about the ways that race might interact with class or gender in allowing or inhibiting opportunity for social mobility through education as the “developmental state” grew.

For Australian educational historians *Education, Culture and the Singapore Developmental State* ought to be a welcome intervention. In a historiography where our shared knowledge of education in Asia is principally related to Australia's Cold War “Colombo Plan”, a better understanding of the history of neighbouring educational systems is long overdue. Furthermore, Chia's book also raises a range of issues that are relevant today. Contemporary Australian debates about civics education are in some respects forged by crises that echo those Chia has detailed: youthful ambivalence that political leaders fear might undermine national stability or even democracy itself, and who may seek to bolster political interests with specific curricula and hegemonic historical narratives.

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## **Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World 1850-1939**

Tamson Pietsch  
Manchester University Press  
Manchester  
UK  
2013

**Keywords** British, Academic  
**Review DOI** 10.1108/HER-01-2016-0003

The *End of Empire* should have been fatal to imperial studies. Instead, as the remarkable Manchester University Series edited by Emeritus Professor John Mackenzie attests – and of which this current book by Dr Tamson Pietsch is a stellar example – the reverse has

been true. Where the iconic Professor Jack Gallagher could once laconically remark that “the sun never set on the problems of the British empire”, so a new generation of remarkable scholars has “problematized” the very nature of that extraordinary political and cultural phenomenon of “Empire” – by asking new questions about ideology and culture, institutions and networks, gender and patronage, nationality and identity. Above all perhaps, “empire” has been integrated into global connections and social transformations. Beyond revisionism of old orthodoxies, here has evolved nothing less than a new narrative of historical understanding. Knowledge and education has been integral to that process.

*Empire of Scholars* is the evocative title to frame a rigorous and innovative analysis of a major lacunae in the formation of a “British World” overseas – namely, members of the imperial “Bureau” of universities, later the “Association of Commonwealth Universities” (ACU). The focus is specifically on aspects of university education and research, together with the social history of those who formed them. As the author states boldly: “This study focuses on the elite world of universities in the United Kingdom and the settler colonies, and on the white, middle-class men who inhabited them. As instruments of culture and expertise, these were institutions that helped extend colonial rule, and the knowledge produced by those who worked in them was dependent upon a host of situated relationships with loyal agents and actors whose participation has since been erased”. And yet this is no guide-book to the more traditional making of empire through transplanted institutions: “My focus [...] is not on these expanding and expansionist aspects of universities, but rather on their internal practices, structures and organisation” (p. ix).

It certainly does that. Within nine elegantly written analytic chapters – based on exemplary research, as befitted an original Oxford DPhil – an “Anglo” project of Britannic education and training is seen to take shape, falteringly at first but ultimately transforming colonial societies, as well as the metropolitan hub of empire itself through the nineteenth century. Colonial knowledge and research (especially in the natural sciences) is harnessed as a key force for Empire in the Great War. And yet, within decades of a new century, more exogenously dynamic of growth saw the so-called colonial “periphery” creating intra-colonial, and then international linkages.

These webs of connection soon evolved into becoming nascent networks of association and knowledge, with significant movement of peoples, the transfer of ideas and the emergence of collaborative research projects. A final chapter accordingly explores the complex and nuanced issue of “alternative ties” – how the “local” became the “global” without losing a sense of colonial genesis. “When scholars travelled on academic exchanges, took up their travelling scholarships or attended international conferences”, as the author writes, “they did so not as members of the expansive British academic world, but rather as representatives of national scholarly communities” (p. 193).

A pattern of macro historical change is boldly mapped by the author covering the last two centuries or so, which is expressed in four organising sections: early nineteenth century institutional foundations up to the formative empire changes of the 1880s (involving the “localising of universal learning”); the building and exploitation of intra-colonial connections prior to the Great War; the remarkable migration of peoples, learning and skills in the decades before the Second World War (and which ultimately shaped the *Empire of Scholars*) – “a world in which experiences of study and travel, and the strong personal connections forged during them, created shifting social landscapes of intellectual production and exchange” (p. 120).

Two excellent documentary appendixes (pp. 202-212) chart the foundation dates of these universities established in the UK and overseas empire up to the Second World War; and also usefully offer a separate timeline for the various higher education institutions granted “affiliated status” at the University of Oxford from 1888 – a critical dimension of what became a prototype for distance education. In conjunction with these tables, it would also have been valuable if Dr Pietsch had been able to draw further from her rigorous researches to offer a data appendix setting out the statistical profile of the institutions within the time-scale of historical sample involved. This might include metrics on staffing, gender and levels of qualifications, student numbers (with graduate and post-graduate outcomes), funding allocations and discipline spread. Such data would give an even greater sense of scale and proportionality in social and institutional change over time.

Several issues of universal scholarly interest also emerge from this pioneering book. The first concerns how to evaluate these developments against a contemporary fascination with “the transnational” in writing the history of modernity. “The categories of national history do not help us make sense of this world”, as the author reflects. “Segmenting the story of universities in Britain and the Dominions was part of the post-war project of nationalising knowledge. It fragmented the long-distance connections that had shaped settler institutions and the lives of those who worked in them”. On the other hand: “[...] to cast these connections as transnational is also misleading. It ignores the racial and imperial imperatives that, as late as the 1960s, still framed what R.B. Haldane in 1903 called ‘the British nation in its parts’ [...]”. We are left with subtle theorising which invokes “our need for at-once more capacious and demarcated way of thinking about British settler universities in this period” (p. 201).

The other broader, sociological issue that arises relates to the rise and the professions within higher education. Here is a micro case-study of just how “academe” in settler universities emerged through a remarkable reliance on British trained scholars; “trust systems” of personal acquaintance in the taking up references and in the filling appointments; the nurturing networks of familial associations with overseas study leave and exchanges; and adoption of metropolitan cultural norms of distinct and genderised social classes in forming the collegium, thus effectively excluding those of other backgrounds and other broad ethnicities. It was not quite “the perfect circulation of elites”, as the famous idiom has it, but it represented a relatively closed social system of affinity and cultural identity involved in the shaping, rise and demise of the “settler universities” in the older colonies of migration.

It was ultimately to take the “academic revolution” of the later twentieth century – a mixture of micro-reform in liberal capitalist states within a rising engagement with internationalisation – to see these social and cultural formations be swept away in favour of a new post-modernity which challenged gender, class and ethnicity.

This historical study offers a satisfying and elegant inner account of that complex story, while leaving open that remarkable, sequential growth of mass higher education – outside the settler colonies and across the broader “empire-commonwealth”. The Centenary of the ACU (2013) recently highlighted this under-researched dimension of international higher education. British post-war reconstruction incorporated a revived Empire, with the new public university foundations across Afro-Asian, Caribbean and Pacific island domains. These tertiary initiatives were then to be massively expanded with decolonisation, notably through private providers. The settler university members who once dominated the club-like ACU were increasingly to be swamped by new members and new networks from around the globe. (There are

now some 700 members of the ACU with an “associate member” category open to non-Commonwealth institutions.) This new “network of higher education” largely belongs to the “South” – populous developing societies who were soon making their own claims for skilling and social advancement in a post-imperial world order of nations. As historians of education we have great opportunity to explore that theme more closely, while taking inspiration from Dr Pietsch’s bold analytic study.

In short: this important first book does more than fill a major lacuna in the place of “settler universities” within the educational history of Empire. It powerfully interrogates assumed historical orthodoxies together opening new questions and perspectives. Readers will here indeed encounter revisionism at its measured best: “Not all readers will be sympathetic to this endeavour, but I hope this book will encourage them to think in new ways about the history of subjects and institutions they know well” (p. ix). That it certainly does, while also strongly announcing the arrival of an original and creative scholar. Dr Pietsch is surely set to change the way we think about higher educational history.

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**The Institute: a centennial history of the Institute of Senior Educational Administrators, formerly known as the Institute of Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators, and before that as the, USA**

Reynold Macpherson

2015

Strategic Book Publishing & Rights Co.

**Keywords** Schools, History of education, Restructure, Leadership

**Review DOI** 10.1108/HER-02-2016-0014

This *Centennial History of the Institute of Senior Educational Administrators* offers an extensive and discerning account of its subject and makes an important contribution to the understanding of leadership in Australian education. Founded in 1914 to represent and promote the interests of all NSW school inspectors, the Institute today acts for just a small group of mid-level educational administrators. Reynold Macpherson skillfully appraises the enormous influence that the Institute and its members once wielded over the NSW public education system and the steady decline that followed.

In a story that is as rich as it is long, the history of the Institute is essentially the history of public education in NSW. Its establishment was readily agreed to by the Director of Education, Peter Board, who called inspectors his “missionaries”. The Minister of Education, 1984-1988, Rodney Cavalier lauded inspectors as “the eyes and ears of the Department”. Every permanent head of the education department up to 1992 worked their way up from the ranks of the inspectors. Although the Institute was dealt a near mortal blow when the inspectorate was disestablished, it survived, but only as a shadow of its former self.

For most of its history it has stood at the hub of power in NSW education. At its peak, its members had control of curriculum, student assessment, school certification