Perspectives of Women as Historians: an exploration of women’s learning and historical practice

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Certificate of Originality

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Adele Nye
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Abstract

This research emerged from a desire to undertake a feminist exploration of academic debates in History Theory, postgraduate studies in History and the legacy of this learning in historical practice. I have examined the development of historical consciousness, the historicised self and historical scholarship. My research acknowledges an intellectual and historic sisterhood and its associated cumulative body of feminist knowledge and practice.

This thesis was centred on the stories of a group of women, with whom I studied postgraduate history at the University of New England in the early 1990s. This research process was largely shaped by feminist poststructural methodologies and incorporates interdisciplinary writings highlighting the alternate ways we can examine the past. I was interested in the ideas of a developing historical consciousness, historical scholarship and practice.

The findings demonstrate the benefits of adopting a multifaceted approach to the study and practice of History. I have advocated that students of history would benefit from an early and broad immersion in history theory. I have recommended that a concerted inclusion of Postmodernism, Feminism, Materiality or Thing Theory, Place based pedagogies and Public History can evoke new and enriched questions of the past.

This thesis provides a snap shot of women’s learning experiences and subsequent historical practice rather than a definitive study of all students. It also recommends incorporating an interdisciplinary perspective to higher education teaching practices in History.