



Female Friendship in the World of Higher Learning: The Entangled Lives of Grethe Hjort/Greta Hort (1903–1967) and Julie Moscheles (1892–1956)

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Abstract • During WW2, the Danish scholar of English literature Grethe Hjort developed a close friendship with the Czech-Jewish geographer Julie Moscheles. Their paths crossed in Melbourne, and afterwards they settled in Prague. When Moscheles died in 1956, Hjort returned to Denmark to become only the second female professor at Aarhus University in 1958. Based on a study of private correspondence, this article has three interlinked intentions. Firstly, I explore the two women's entangled lives and their encounters with the world of academia during peacetime and war. Secondly, I situate their biographies in a historical context in light of the academic paths followed by modern young women of the interwar generation, who experienced education as a gateway to independence from conventional gender norms. Finally, the article offers an affective sensibility that adds to the conceptualization of scholarly personae.

Keywords • history of higher learning, scholarly personae, modern women, female friendship, Julie Moscheles, Grethe Hjort [Greta Hort]

Introduction

In the summer of 1928, two young women applied for a position as lecturer in English at what was then called the University Teaching of Jutland (*Universitetsundervisningen i Jylland*). Neither of them was considered qualified. The board decided to hire a male applicant who, five years later, after the University Teaching had become Aarhus University, was promoted as professor. Shortly after this rejection, the two women left Denmark to travel the world, only returning to Aarhus University in the late 1950s.¹

One of these young women was Grethe Hjort (1903–1967), who, in 1957, became an associate professor (*docent*) and the following year only the second female professor at Aarhus University. By then, she could look back on an international career within academia. When she died ten years later, it was the image of a diligent and internationally oriented researcher that those who survived her wanted to support when they handed over her papers to the Royal Danish Library. Apart from illustrated drafts of seven short poems from her time as a college president in Melbourne, some business cards from her years studying in Cambridge, a draft of a letter of condolence from her years in Prague, and some congratulatory telegrams to Hjort, everything personal had been weeded out or disappeared. However, it should be noted that a few personal

1 Ning de Coninck-Smith, “Telling Stories Differently,” in *Knowledge Actors: Revisiting Agency in the History of Knowledge*, ed. Johan Östling, David Larsson Heidenblad, and Anna Nilsson Hammar (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2023), 179–200.

belongings, most notably her address book, were donated to AU's archives many years later by a former student of Hjort's.

The discovery of these seven poems in a special folder gave me the feeling that there was more to Hjort's biography than hard work and academic success. There was a life, but how was it connected to her academic endeavours? And could her story serve as a gateway to a narrative of the university as performed by people in the course of their everyday lives, rather than something to be celebrated on anniversaries? As will become clear, it was not long before this account came to include Hjort's relationship with the Czech-Jewish geographer Julie Moscheles (1892–1956).

When Hjort applied for a lecturer (*docent*) position at Aarhus University in 1956, Professor Frans Blatt (1903–1979), with whom she had been in touch, mentioned at the meeting of the faculty that her reason for spending the past ten years in Prague was a project to create an international university. According to the later memoirs of her student, Jørn Carlsen, she had settled in Prague in 1947 to take care of a female friend who was dying of cancer.² However, the story was messier, and more surprising than her contemporaries seem to have known or wanted to let the public know. On the one hand, in light of international research, I realized that Hjort and Moscheles' individual journeys into academia shared many similarities with the choices made by other female students of the interwar generations who wanted to lead an independent scholarly life. On the other hand, personal circumstances came to impact the choices the two women made and the consequences of these choices. It is this entangled story that I will tell in the following.

Before presenting these intersecting lives, I will first provide an overview of existing research and discuss my sources and the affective readings that I apply. I then portray the lives of the two women through their travels during periods of both peace and war and through the years they spent together in Prague. I conclude the article by summing up my findings and describing my fascination with the silences and complexities of the archival material, which have sparked my imagination concerning what might have mattered in the lives of my two protagonists.

State of the art

In 1936 Grethe Hjort decided to apply for, and obtained, naturalization as a British citizen. She also decided to change her name to Greta Hort.³ In the years to come, she was internationally known by this adopted name, while, in a Danish context, she kept her original name. In the following, I switch between her two names, depending on the context. The life of Grethe Hjort has been the subject of short biographical entries and

2 Frans Blatt, Forhandlingsprotokol nr. 6, Det humanistiske fakultetsråd 1955–1958, møde 19.4.1956, 60. Aarhus Universitets arkiv, Rigsarkivet; "Jørn Carlsens erindringer om Grethe Hjort," AU Universitetshistorie, Aarhus Universitet. <https://auhlist.au.dk/showroom/galleri/personer/grethehjort1903-1967/joerncarlsenserindringeromgrethehjort>.

3 Grethe Hjort British naturalization 5.8.1938, National archives Kew, online; Annual Report, 1936, 95, Girton College Archive, University of Cambridge.

she is mentioned in the memoirs of several of her contemporaries.⁴ Most is known of her time as president-elect of the Women's College in Melbourne, as described by John Stanley Martin in 2003. In a separate article, the present author followed the academic trajectory of Grethe Hjort and compared it with that of Johanne M. Stochholm, the other of the two female applicants for the position at Aarhus University in 1928.⁵

In recent years, Julie Moscheles has drawn attention from Czech scholars⁶ and international historians of science alike, interested in the interplay between empire and geography, and especially in the first generations of female geographers. Like landscape gardening, geography was considered an acceptable subject for young middle-class women, who might already have travelled when accompanying their parents on their annual trips abroad.⁷

Hjort and Moscheles were part of a generation of young women during the interwar years who saw higher learning as a gateway to independence and a way of breaking away from conventional expectations of becoming wives and mothers.⁸ This movement was a breath of fresh air at the Anglo-American female colleges and saw to a rise in the number of foreign students.⁹ Among them was Grethe Hjort, who visited Cambridge for the first time in the mid-1920s and returned as a PhD student at Newnham College in 1929. In a large-scale prosopographical study, Goodman et al. examined the career trajectories of students at the University of Cambridge's two women's colleges, Newnham and Girton, between 1869 and 1939. Most of the foreign students settled in England, while a small number either returned to their home country or travelled to other countries. Of the five continents, Australia was the least popular destination, meaning that Grethe Hjort went against the grain when seeking employment in Melbourne.¹⁰ Overall, travelling played a key role in not only in the profes-

4 John Stanley Martin, *Greta Hort: Scholar, Educationalist and Pioneer* (Melbourne: Scandinavian Australian Migration Project, 2003); Anna Rutherford, "Why Aarhus?" in *A Shaping of Connections: Commonwealth Literature Studies, Then and Now*, ed. Hena Maes-Jelinek, Kirsten Holst Petersen, and Anna Rutherford (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989), 32; Jorgen Erik Nielsen, "Grethe Hjort," Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon, https://kvindebiografiskleksikon.lex.dk/Grethe_Hjort; Ulla Hoff, "Greta Hort (1903–1967)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hort-greta-10549>.

5 Martin (2003); de Coninck-Smith (2023).

6 Jiri Martinek, "Woman – Geographer: The Complicated Story of Julie Moscheles," (unpublished paper); Jiri Pesek, "Julie Moscheles (1892–1956): Eine jüdische Geografin zwischen dem Prager deutschen und tschechischen Milieu," in *Mitteleuropa denken: Intellektuelle, Identitäten und Ideen: Der Kulturraum Mitteleuropa im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Walter Pape and Jiří Šubrt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 187–200; Pavel Kreisinger, *Češi a Slováci v Austrálii v 1. polovině 20. století a jejich účast ve světových válkách* (Praha: Academia 2018), 333–37; H. J. Fleure, "Dr. Julie Moscheles (Obituary)," *Geography* 41, no. 4 (1956), 273.

7 Ian Klinke, "A theory for the 'Anglo-Saxon Mind': Ellen Churchill Semple's Reinterpretation of Friedrich Ratzels *Anthropogeographie*," *Geographica Helvetica* 77, no. 4 (2022), 467–78; Nicolas Ginsburger, "La féminisation professionnelle d'une discipline sous tension: Carrières de femmes dans la géographie germanophone (1897–2017)," *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines* 35 (2019), 25–58.

8 Birgitte Soland, *Becoming Modern: Young Women and the Reconstruction of Womanhood in the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

9 Joyce Goodman et al., "Travelling Careers: Overseas Migration Patterns in the Professional Lives of Women Attending Girton and Newnham Before 1939," *History of Education* 40, no. 2 (2011), 185.

10 Goodman et al., (2011).

sionalisation and modernisation of academia,¹¹ but particularly in improving women's chances of gaining employment within higher education. However, as Tamson Pietch has shown, even if they were not rejected outright, women were rarely considered for the many positions at the new universities within the British Empire, also known as "settler universities." Women found themselves excluded from the men's network and their research was often deemed to be of lower quality and less relevance than that of male peers. They were often relegated to pursuing a career at women's colleges, and thus a marginalised position in academia. When they finally got a foothold in academia, it was frequently through marriage and/or as an assistant or administrator – and thus at the less visible end of university life.¹²

In several studies, Joyce Goodman has explored how the financial and social support available to women academics through the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) contributed to the emergence of a particular female global citizenship, closely linked to the peace movement under the auspices of the League of Nations.¹³ However, Goodman has also pointed out that this cosmopolitan citizenship or humanitarian understanding across borders included some while excluding others through its roots in British/Western European academic culture and the white middle class.¹⁴

One thing was peacetime; with the onset of World War II, these international women's organisations and networks became crucial to the rescue of the many female academics who, after 1933, were forced to flee the German Reich for political or religious reasons. Studies paint a consistently positive picture of the efforts made by British and American women to assist these refugees with obtaining residence permits and academic work.¹⁵ However, as demonstrated below, not all of the many women who came to the United Kingdom as refugees were received with open arms. Moscheles was among them.

A subdivision of the IFUW (*Kvindelige Akademikere, KA*) was founded in Denmark in 1922. Apart from a statistical study that only extends to 1925 and a very fragmentary essay,¹⁶ there has been no significant study of the organisation, nor of the role of Danish female academics during the German occupation and the rescue of the Danish Jews. In 1925, KA celebrated the 50th anniversary of women's entry to University of Copen-

11 Heike Jöns, "Modern School and University," in *A Companion to the History of Science*, ed. Bernard Ligthmann (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 310–27.

12 Tamson Pietch, "Geographies of Selection: Academic Appointments in the British Academic World, 1850–1939," in *Mobilities of Knowledge*, ed. Heike Jöns, Peter Meusburger, and Michael Heffernan (Cham: Springer Open, 2017), 157–79.

13 Goodman et al. (2011), 711; Joyce Goodman, "International Citizenship and the International Federation of University Women Before 1939," *History of Education* 40, no. 6 (2011), 701–21.

14 Joyce Goodman, "Cosmopolitan Women Educators, 1920–1939: Inside/Outside Activism and Abjection," *Paedagogica Historica* 46, no. 1–2 (2010), 69–83.

15 Susan Cohen, "Crossing Borders: Academic Refugee Women, Education and the British Federation of University Women During the Nazi Era," *History of Education* 39, no. 2 (2010a), 175–82; Susan Cohen, "The British Federation of University Women: Helping Academic Women Refugees in the 1930s and 1940s," *International Psychiatry* 7, no. 2 (2010b), 47–49; Christine von Oertzen, *Science, Gender, and Internationalism Women's Academic Networks, 1917–1955* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2012).

16 Lis Jacobsen, ed., *Kvindelige Akademikere 1875–1925* (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendal, 1925); Marianne Alenius, "Glimt fra foreningen Kvindelige Akademikeres historie," in *Clios dotre gennem hundrede år*, ed. Marianne Alenius, Nanna Damsholt, and Bente Rosenbeck (Kjøbenhavn: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 1994), 119–38.

hagen with a dinner party attended by about 360 guests. According to the seating plan, Grethe Hjort did not participate in the celebration. An Aase Hjort did, presumably a relative, sitting next to Grethe's lifelong friend Edith Kalkar.¹⁷ Hjort's absence could of course be deliberate, but it could also be due to a research stay in Cambridge in connection with her master's thesis. Membership lists are unfortunately not preserved, but it seems unlikely that she was not at some point a member of KA. On several occasions, she used the international organisations for female academics. When in London, she always stayed at Crosby Hall, which housed a residential block, meeting rooms, a library, as well as the offices belonging to the British Federation of University Women. It was also here that she also took a course to become a college bursar. Upon her return to Aarhus, she became the chairperson of the local branch of Kvindelige Akademikere.¹⁸

Whereas Hjort chose to pursue a path through women's colleges early in her career, Moscheles seemed to have closer ties to scientific societies. When she found herself in a precarious situation, it was her male colleagues who rescued her from Prague, although she also turned to IFUW and was assisted by sister organisations in England and Victoria, Australia.

This shows that women used different strategies and means in their endeavours to gain academic recognition and employment, or in other words to become a scholarly persona in gender, body, and action, as Niskanen and Barany, among others, have stated. In this process, travelling, networking, and attending conferences played important roles, as did the acquisition of a particular academic language and composure. Not least, it was important to learn to accept and make use of masculine-defined scientific templates and repertoires.¹⁹

As the German historian Marti M. Lybeck has pointed out, there is an extra layer to this story of the rise of a new and independent female scholarly persona, namely the relationship between female affective desires and emancipation. Educational settings created a space for homo-sociability among women, provided it was kept within the boundaries of socially acceptable emancipation.²⁰ How this figure of the modern female scholar was interpreted and negotiated was dependent on the historical moment,²¹ as the following micro-historical and source-based mapping of Grethe Hjort and Julie Moscheles' intersecting and connected lives will show.

Sources and affective readings

My study of the relationship between Moscheles and Hjort stems from an ambition to write the history of universities as a narrative about people doing university in the

17 Table plan in Alenius (1994), letter from Julie Moscheles (JM) to Sven Hedin (SH), 15.8.1946, passed on to him through "eine Freundin (Edith Kalkar) meiner Freundin (Grethe Hjort). weil Ich befürchte, dass ein Brief an Ihre Adresse von hier nicht befördert werden würde." Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

18 Nielsen, https://kvindebiografiskleksikon.lex.dk/Grethe_Hjort; *The Angus*, July 19, 1938.

19 Michael J. Barany and Kirsti Niskanen, eds., *Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona: Incarnations and Contestations* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 5, 338.

20 Marti M. Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890–1933*, (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 2014), chap. 1.

21 Herman Paul, "Scholarly Personae: What They are and Why They Matter," in *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000*, ed. Herman Paul (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 6–7.

course of their everyday lives. I want to explore how the impact of gender on university and vice versa. It is the affective aspects that interest me, and I have therefore been inspired by the affective turn in both sociology and history. In the introduction to the edited volume *Affective Methodologies*, Timm Knudsen and Stage write that affective methodologies imply asking different questions, looking for different answers, and thinking differently about empirical material.²²

The latter is particularly relevant in this context, where private correspondence is an important source. It raises the question of reading them at many years distance and out of context, placing me in an ethical dilemma when I present a narrative about a female friendship that those concerned might have wanted to keep secret.²³ I have chosen to take this dilemma on my shoulders because the following is not only a private story about two women and their intersecting paths, but also a more general story about encounters between women and academia and how such encounters have been shaped by the body, gender, and sexuality.

From her early youth, Julie Moscheles corresponded with the Swedish adventurer and explorer Sven Hedin (1865–1952); she had met him in London as a child, at the home of her English family.²⁴ Letters and postcards were sent at Christmas, New Year and Easter, where she wrote about her studies and her professors, her work as a nurse during World War I, her participation in international conferences, the joy of receiving books from Hedin and her desire to follow in his footsteps in Tibet. She came back from time to time to their few meetings, and she frequently invited him to visit her in Prague. Sven Hedin expressed sympathy with the Nazi regime in the 1930s in the hope that it would protect Scandinavia from a Russian invasion. The regime took advantage of this, and Hedin was used as one of their intellectual ambassadors. In return, he gained privileged access to the inner circles of the German government and thereby also opportunities to advance applications from Jewish colleagues who had to flee the Nazi regime. More than 100 Jews were purportedly saved from deportation through Hedin's intervention.²⁵ Their correspondence was obviously very dear to Moscheles, and in her last letter to him before leaving Prague in July 1939, she mentions that the only things she had brought with her from Prague were his letters.²⁶ What happened to them later is unknown, while her letters to Hedin – and to his sister – are included in Sven Hedin's huge private archive at the National Archive in Stockholm (*Riksarkivet*).²⁷

It is not only Hedin's letters to Moscheles which seem to have been lost, but also

22 Britta Timm Knudsen and Carsten Stage, *Affective Methodologies: Developing Cultural Research Strategies for the Study of Affect* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 4–19.

23 Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir, "Fragments of Lives—The Use of Private Letters in Historical Research," *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 15, no. 1 (2007), 35–49.

24 Postcard from Gladys Mac Dermot and JM to SH 6.1.1939, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

25 Nils Uddenberg: *Drömmaren: En bok om Sven Hedin* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 2023), 256; Axel Odelberg, *Vi som beundrade varandara så mycket: Sven Hedin och Adolf Hitler* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2012), 181, 215; the number is mentioned on Wikipedia, but not confirmed, email from Håkon Wahlquist 4 July 2023.

26 JM to Miss (Alma) Hedin, 18.11.1939, as above.

27 Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

any private papers that she might have had. By contrast, Hjort left a large private archive, mostly consisting of scholarly notes, along with, as mentioned, a few private documents. Newham College Archives hold her application for a scholarship in 1930 and drafts of testimonials, written by presumably, the college mistress.²⁸ Her address book testifies to an extensive international network, but very few letters, written to acquaintances from her time in Cambridge and Melbourne, have survived, located in the archives of Girton College and University of Melbourne. These letters tell of her journey back to Europe from Australia, about a complicated everyday life in Prague – and about her time in Aarhus, burdened by administrative tasks, academic disagreements, her relationships with colleagues and her health.

The women referred to each other as female friends. In a letter, Moscheles mentioned that ‘die Greta’ would come to Prague to seek work, and that they planned to live together,²⁹ while Moscheles’ death was the main reason why Hjort returned to Denmark, since there was nothing left to keep her in Prague, as she wrote to a Danish colleague.³⁰ It is almost unthinkable that there did not (once) exist an extensive correspondence between them. But what happened to these letters – were they lost during the war, destroyed out of fear of the Czech secret police, which kept a vigilant eye on the two women during their co-habitation in Prague,³¹ or did somebody else remove them later? Hjort was a keen amateur photographer, but I have only come across a few photos of Australian landscapes – none of Moscheles or photos relating their private lives.³² None of this is especially surprising. In her seminal text from 2003, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Ann Cvetkovich compares the silence surrounding lesbian lives in the archives to the lack of words that can adequately describe trauma since it is “unspeakable and unrepresentable ... marked by forgetting and dissociation, it often seems to leave behind no records.”³³

Archives can nevertheless be read in ways other than for their imperfections. They can be read affectively, with a focus on their genesis and composite emotional layers. They can be read with an attention to “a female presence and intimacy, beyond reductive reading of their relationship as gay or straight, sexual or otherwise,” as Agnes Meadow suggested in her recent interpretation of the correspondence between Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham.³⁴ However, archives are not just words, but also mate-

28 AC/3/2/31 – Research Fellowship and Research Grant Applications, 1930, AC/5/2/8 – Student File (G Hjort); AD/6/1/8 – Roll Office [Alumnae] File (G Hjort), Newham College Archive.

29 Letter from JM to SH 15.8.1946, Letter from GH to SH 10.11.1947, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

30 Det Humanistiske Fakultet, Det humanistiske fakultetsråd 1934–1991, forhandlingsprotokol nr. 6, 1955–1958, 19 April 1956, p. 60, (Rigsarkivet). Only one Czech contact is to be found in her telephone book, which could support her description of not having made many friends during her stay.

31 Martinek, 7–8.

32 A suitcase with 600 negatives had been lost between Cairo and Jerusalem, only to arrive some months later in Prague. Fortunately, she had sent some of her negatives to Dr Moscheles, who was in London. Letter from GH to Lady White, 23.12.1946 and 1.2.1947, Papers of the Derham Family, file 2015.0011.00123, University of Melbourne Archive.

33 Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality and Lesbian Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press 2023), 7.

34 Agnes Meadows, “‘To Destroy’: Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham in the Freud Archive,” *History Workshop Journal* 93, no. 1 (2022), 209–24, 222.

rialities where stationery, postcards, ink and pencil, handwriting and typing make a difference and can create openings where affect might be imagined in between the lines of the ordinary.³⁵

Lives

Grethe Hjort was born into a middle-class family in Copenhagen in 1903. She went to the prestigious all-girls Natalie Zahle's School, from where she graduated with a high school degree (*studentereksamen*) in 1922. She then enrolled at The University of Copenhagen as a student of English language and literature. In the middle of the 1920s, she visited Cambridge to collect material for her master's thesis on different versions of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. For this study, she gained a gold medal from The University of Copenhagen. In 1929, she left Denmark to enrol at the all-female Newnham College in Cambridge. For her PhD, she chose to study the 14th century allegorical narrative poem *Piers Plowman*. In 1931, she successfully applied for the Pfeiffer Fellowship at Girton College, another all-female college in Cambridge, to continue these studies.³⁶ This grant made it possible for her to live and study at Girton College for the following two years. At Girton, she made the acquaintance of the College Mistress, the philosopher Helen Wodehouse (1880–1964). Together, “they investigated the world of the mystics and sought a key to its understanding in extra-sensory perception,” as John Stanley Martin describes in his biography of Greta Hort. Such interests were not uncommon among British intellectuals.³⁷

When she was asked later in life why she had left Denmark, Hjort explained that there had been nowhere in the world of academia where she could hang her hat. She had tried to follow in the footsteps of her “*Doktorvater*” (her master's thesis supervisor), the internationally renowned linguist Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) but did not finish her dissertation in time to apply for his vacant professorship.³⁸ According to Jespersen, she was one of his brightest students, but, at 23, was too young to become a professor when he retired.³⁹ After working as a college bursar at a women's college in Birmingham, England, she arrived in Melbourne in 1938 to take up a position as president-elect of the new women's college. The job had come her way through a recommendation from Helen Wodehouse.⁴⁰

35 Maryanne Dever, “Provocations on the Pleasures of Archived Paper,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 41, no. 3 (2013), 173–82.

36 Application in file GCAR 2/5/6/1/4, Girton College Archive.

37 Martin (2003), 3; mail from Joyce Goodman, 11.11.2021.

38 de Coninck-Smith (2023).

39 Nielsen, https://kvindebiografleksikon.lex.dk/Grethe_Hjort

40 Martin (2003), 4.



Figure 1. Greta Hort, surrounded by the students at the University of Melbourne, Women's College, after her arrival as president-elect in 1938. Hort sits in the middle of the second row from below.

Source: Papers of the Derham Family, University of Melbourne Archives, UMA-IT-000047103

During her time in Melbourne, Hort developed a new interest in Judaism⁴¹ and chaired the Czech branch of the Australian Red Cross as well as a pro-Palestine committee.⁴² Somewhere along the way, she crossed paths with Julie Moscheles. She had been born in 1892 into a wealthy Jewish family in Prague. At a very young age, Julie Moscheles travelled to London to live with her uncle – the painter Felix Moscheles (1833–1917) – and his family. Her mother, who was blind, could not take care of her. Together with her British relatives, she explored North Africa and several European countries. Trained as a geographer, she was one of the first women to graduate from the German University in Prague in 1917.⁴³ She attended European geographical conferences and became affiliated with the British Le Play Society, named after the French sociologist Frédéric le Play (1808–1882), who had used fieldwork and observation methods to study the living conditions of the working poor.⁴⁴ One of her earliest fields of interest was Scandinavian geomorphology. She soon switched her attention to the new field of anthropo-geography, studying the relationships between human communities, cultures

41 Martin (2003), 12.

42 *Australian Jewish Herald*, August 6, 1943, and August 13, 1943; Martin (2003), 12–13.

43 Pesek (2018), 189.

44 S. H. Beaver, "The Le Play Society and Field Work." *Geography* 47, no. 3 (1962), 225–40.

and economies, and their interactions with the environment. In Prague during the interwar years, she became a key representative of the Central European intelligentsia, sent on yearly academic and diplomatic missions by the new Masaryk regime.⁴⁵

After the Munich Agreement and the invasion of Sudetenland by Nazi Germany in October 1938, and later of Prague in March 1939 installing a pro-German government, life became difficult for Moscheles. As the only one in her family, she converted from Judaism to the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession.⁴⁶ Her letters to British colleagues and to Sven Hedin became more pleading and desperate. In December 1938, she wrote to Hedin that she was now in London, living with the family of Professor C. B. Fawcett (1883–1952), one of the founders of Le Play Society, since she did not meet the race criteria that would allow her to remain in her native country. She was to deliver an address at the annual New Year's conference of Le Play Society, as well as giving lectures at a number of British universities. "Only the gods would know what my future holds,"⁴⁷ she wrote, adding that maybe the Association des Géographes Français "could get her over the water [most likely to Australia]," since Melbourne had come up, but she feared it would take a long time for an official decision to be made. "I have learned over time to look at life from the bright side, and maybe this could be an opportunity to travel to unknown countries," as she finished her letter.⁴⁸

Moscheles decided to return to Prague to take care of a very ill female friend.⁴⁹ Here life had become more complicated and dangerous. From the preserved correspondence in Sven Hedin's archive, Moscheles tried at first to get back to England through Sweden. The idea was suggested to Hedin by a mutual acquaintance, living in England, Gladys Mac Dermot. Hedin answered that this was no longer an option, he did not have friends among the Swedish authorities and Sweden had already taken more refugees, than recommended.⁵⁰

She then presented her two British colleagues Professor C. B. Fawcett and another founding member of Le Play Society Professor H. J. Fleure (1877–1969) with a research proposal, that should make it possible for her and her assistant, Josef Fraenkl (1902–) to leave Prague. They planned to make a survey "of the adaptation of immigrants of the various kinds in the countries to which they have gone." The idea was to combine lecture tours in Canada, the French Empire, Brazil, and Australia with research on place in the tradition of Le Play Society. They were both in good health and were not planning on taking work from others, as they wrote in the proposal. There was just one caveat: they were not able to perform manual labour.

On Moscheles' behalf, Fleure send a copy of the plan to Hedin and circulated it in his Anglo-American network.⁵¹ In his reply, Hedin mentioned, that he had already been approached by Moscheles.⁵² He had written to the Nazi authorities in Berlin and

45 Pesek (2018), 197.

46 Pesek (2018), 192.

47 All translations from German by NCS.

48 JM to SH, 24.12.1938, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

49 Postcard JM to SH, 16.3.1939, as above

50 SH to Gladys Mac Dermot, 31.3.39, as above

51 H.J.F. to SH 18.4.39, as above

52 Copy of letter to JM from SH 12.4.39, as above

supported her wish to leave Prague as powerfully as possible, explaining her situation in every detail. "She is perfectly brilliant as a Geographer, and she is worthy of every possible assistance that could be given to her." He had asked Moscheles for whom to get in touch within Prague but had no news from her.⁵³ In June, Hedin received a letter from Julie Moscheles, informing him again about the plan, and her dealings with the Czech authorities and the application for three months exit visa.⁵⁴

Hedin accepted her invitation to write a short recommendation, addressed to "Die Führung der Geheimen Statlichen Polizei, Prag." In the letter, he stated that he had known Moscheles for long and that she was a brilliant and serious scholar.⁵⁵ With this in hand, she returned to Gestapo and was granted an exit visa to herself and Fraenkl, so she could return to London and bring him with her. They left Prague 22 July 1939.⁵⁶ Legend has it that Moscheles escaped the Protectorate disguised as a beggar.⁵⁷ In the end, she had no doubt as to the key role Hedin had played in saving her life and that of her assistant. "Your name will stay with me forever," somebody, maybe her assistant, wrote on her behalf in the hours before leaving Prague, 22 July 1939.⁵⁸ Fraenkl spent some time in Switzerland, visiting his fiancée, before arriving in London. Their residence permits and financial guarantee had been assured by Fawcett and Fleure.⁵⁹ In London, Moscheles got in touch with the International Association of University Women to set up invitations to hold talks and lectures abroad. She was working at the library at Australia House to prepare herself for the journey while everybody else had gone on holiday. In August 1939, she obtained an Australian visa, but by Christmas that year, she was still in London with Fraenkl who, she wrote to Hedin, had planned to go to bed early and forget which day it was, while she would do what she usually did and sit up late reading.⁶⁰ They were burdened by worries about those they had left behind and of whom they had received little news, unable to maintain correspondence out of fear for their mutual safety.⁶¹

Because of her friendship with Sven Hedin, "whose close Nazi sympathies are known," Moscheles was reported to the MI5 (the British intelligence service) by the former American Commissioner in Prague and Unitarian minister Waitstill Sharp (1902–1983), accused of being a German spy. Suspicions had been aroused among refugee workers in Prague when Moscheles, despite her Jewish background, had received a re-entry permit from the Gestapo that was "good for any time," as well as by her failure to contact the Czechoslovak delegation upon arrival in London, instead of keeping in touch with the German Embassy, which allegedly supplied her with money. Furthermore, she brought with her "a young Jewish lad, presumed to

53 Copy of letter to H.J.F. from SH, 23.4.39, as above

54 JM to SH 5.6.1939, as above; Martinek 6

55 Copy of support letter by SH 8.6.39, as above

56 Letter from JM to SH 22.7.39, as above.

57 Martinek, 6.

58 JM to SH, 22.7.1939, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

59 Letter from JM to SH, 1.8.39, as above What happened to him thereafter, if he left for Australia together with Moscheles, has not been possible to identify.

60 JM to Sven Hedin 12.12.39, as above.

61 JM to Alma Hedin, 16.9.39; Letter from Zdenka Fraenkl (Josef's mother) to SH 5.8.39, as above. Moscheles arrived in Melbourne in February 1940, *The Herald* 23.2.1940.

be her assistant, likewise supported in this odd way.” When confronted with these stories, Moscheles claimed that she owned a German passport without the “J” stamp, and that the Czech nation no longer existed.⁶² Furthermore, she had turned down an offer to work for the Czech government-in-exile in Paris in favour of an offer she had received from Australia. She argued that being Jewish, Josef Fraenkl, who was travelling with her, had been in danger in Prague and that she was the victim of a heinous smear campaign by a group of sociologists and geographers who were not members of the Le Play Society.

Despite not dismissing all her arguments, the doubts about Moscheles’ situation led the Emergence Subcommittee for Refugee of the British Federation of University Women to turn to the Home Office, asking “if you [Home Office] would recommend Dr. Moscheles for assistance. They [the members of the committee] understand that her case has already been brought to the special notice of your department.” The reply came within two weeks, advising the Federation to turn to the Czech Refugee Trust Fund for more information. The fund had been created by the British government to assist Czech and German refugees from the Nazi regime.⁶³ By this point, Moscheles had most likely left for Australia.

While the Australian government had been reluctant to receive Jewish immigrants during the 1930s, attitudes changed after the Munich Agreement and subsequent invasion of Prague. The Czechs were considered victims, sacrificed on the altar of European peace. With the possession of 200 Australian pounds, professional skills, and the ability to have a conversation in English, emigrants could gain a visa to Australia.⁶⁴ The new situation made it more realistic that Moscheles’ friends ‘down under’ affiliated with the Victorian Graduate Women’s Association could secure her a permit to enter Australia. She arrived in Melbourne in February 1940 to take up a position as a tutor in economic geography at University of Melbourne. According to the list of teaching staff, she was not the only refugee to find employment at the University – two of her new colleagues also came from Central Europe.⁶⁵ During her stay, she was granted a six-week leave of absence to work as a cartographer for the Dutch army, compiling a bibliography on the geography of Indonesia and surrounding areas that served as a basis for military operations against Japan.⁶⁶

While Hort seemed to have benefited from her extended female network, as well as her use of the international organisations for university women, Moscheles’ experiences were more mixed, maybe because of her Jewishness and her German training and links

62 JM had a passport (not clear if it was German or not) allowing her to give a lecture in London, which was extended for two years in August 1939 to include Australia, Martinek, 6. According to Kreisinger, the passport also allowed travel to New Guinea, Kreisinger (2018), 334.

63 Information of November 28, 1939, about Dr Julie Moscheles, copy of letter to Home Office, 29.12.1939, answer from Home Office, 10.1.1940, Copy of letter from Miss Perkins to Dr Hollitscher, 18.2.1940 British Federation of University Women, refugee subcommittee file Julie Moscheles, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) library and archive.

64 Anna Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under: Jewish Refugees from Czechoslovakia in Australia 1938–1944* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017), 54, 131, 152.

65 *The Herald* 19.6.1940; University of Melbourne, calendar, 1942; Minutes Victorian Graduate Women’s Association, 1939–1940 University of Melbourne Archive.

66 Letter JM to SH 15.8.1946, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm; Martinek, 6–7; email from Sophie Garrett, University of Melbourne, Archive 22.1.2023 with copy of staff records. JM resigned from University of Melbourne 30.11.45.

to Le Play Society and Sven Hedin. However, female networks were not sufficient in ensuring the work and safety of either woman. At different points in time, they needed to know how to navigate the male-dominated world of academia and the university by asking for testimonials or getting male colleagues to mobilise their networks on behalf of Hort and Moscheles.

Scholarly embodiments

Before leaving Britain, Greta Hort gave an interview to the Melbourne newspaper *the Mercury*. The journalist described her as the essence of a modern academic and sporty woman who not only tolerated but actively encouraged socialisation and camaraderie among young women and men. Despite not using makeup herself, she found its use by young college students natural, if it did not leave marks “which the unfortunate domestic personnel have to deal with.”⁶⁷ Upon her arrival in Melbourne, the local press commented on how Greta Hort was dressed. When speaking to an audience of 300 people at the all-female Lyceum Club in Melbourne, she wore a fur cape over a burgundy dress.⁶⁸ Despite her wish to appear neat and feminine, she was remembered by others from her time in Melbourne as a classic Girton College student – an old blue-stocking with a penchant for holed stockings.⁶⁹

This mixed bodily impression is echoed in a series of undated, handwritten, and illustrated vignettes – or poetry hunts, as she named them – from her time in Melbourne. In these, Greta Hort drew a bulgy, simple, half-naked woman in a floral design, or a dainty, clever woman in a green dress, with a smile and coiffured hair. However, she also added a third figure, a woman dressed as a man, who did not believe in “a snag” (difficulties) but knew how to cut “the entangled Gordian knot.” All the vignettes ended with a variation of the same theme – that the woman in the poem will one day return to her homeland and show what happens when she “to Australia roam.”⁷⁰

The poems evoke a space between the life lived and the life imagined.⁷¹ In a 1960 interview with the popular Danish women’s magazine *Alt for damerne*, Grethe Hjort was depicted as the incarnation of a studious professor, surrounded by books, wearing glasses, and dressed in a doctoral gown and hat. As the journalist wrote, she was a professor in her own right, not the wife of a professor. She was clearly also a woman who cared about how her home was decorated, placing value on a vase of flowers, and wearing a nice dress. A female professor dressed as a man such as depicted in Hjort’s illustrations, seems an impossibility in this setting.⁷²

At a meeting at the Faculty of Humanities at Aarhus University shortly after Hjort’s death, the dean, Holger Friis Johansen (1927–1996), said a few words of remembrance. Hjort would be remembered as a dear colleague, strongly influenced by her many years in the world of Anglo-Saxon academia. It had been important for her to share these

67 *The Mercury*, May 11, 1938.

68 *The Angus*, July 19, 1938.

69 de Coninck-Smith (2023).

70 Håndskrift nr. 1185-119, Grethe Hjorts Arkiv, Royal library, læg: Grethe Hjort, 7 vers.

71 Halldórsdóttir (2007).

72 Margrethe Spies, “En stor personlighed,” *Alt for Damerne*, November 15, 1960.

experiences with others while maintaining an openness to the values of the Danish university tradition. She could be a harsh critic – even provocative – but one did not have to have known her long to experience her eagerness to help and her desire to collaborate with others.⁷³ It fell to Professor Torsten Dahl, who had been the successful applicant for the associate professorship in 1928 and who since 1957 had been Grethe Hjort's closest colleague, to write the official Aarhus University obituary. After a summary of Grethe Hjort's academic production – and how her destiny had been sealed when she encountered mysticism – he added a few psychological pencil strokes. Grethe Hjort had put a lot of pressure on herself, often working into the night, and she expected the same of others, colleagues as well as students. This had led to disappointment that she had difficulty shaking off with a smile. He then added that “Her self-centredness, which was undoubtedly part of her character, could partly be explained by the many personal sacrifices she had made along the way. Her energetic self-wanted to acquire a position reflecting her skills and abilities.”⁷⁴ Grethe Hjort had made an impression, not so much because of her research, on which Torsten Dahl modestly noted that he was no expert, but more because of the ways she embodied her scholarly personae. One of her former students, Jørn Carlsen, recalled that Hjort taught in English, which was unusual in Denmark at the time, and how she stressed the importance of being fluent in other languages. Among other things, she introduced a workshop on English writing and used gramophone records in her classes. She was strongly influenced by her many years living in the British Commonwealth,⁷⁵ conservative and very anti-American. She was a lone wolf, with few collegial relationships; considered intriguing by some and scary by others. Torsten Dahl, whose English was not without flaws, must have had to swallow his pride after her arrival, Carlsen suggested. Grethe Hjort never missed an occasion to speak up. Her apartment was small and cluttered, dominated by a giant pillow on which her students sat during tutorials, and she wore dresses dating back to the 1930s. To his mind, she was by no means affluent.⁷⁶

Julie Moscheles left a similarly complex impression on her surroundings. At one point in her dealings with the International Federation of University Women, somebody described Moscheles as “...a queer duck – physically as well,” with queer used here in the sense eccentric. It is difficult to know what had caused this impression. Seemingly, it was in reaction to Moscheles' defence against accusations of being a German spy and Nazi sympathiser, as well as the fact that she travelled accompanied by her young assistant. It might also reflect the dire circumstances of her stay in London.⁷⁷

73 Det humanistiske fakultet, Det humanistiske fakultetsråd, forhandlingsprotokol 1934–1991, kasse 11, meeting 28.8.1967 (Rigsarkivet).

74 Torsten Dahl, “Grethe Hjort, 1903–1967,” *Aarhus Universitet, Aarsberetning 1967–68* (1968), 5–10, 10, (translation NCS); Torsten Dahl, letter to Girton College, 20.8.1967 in GCAR 2/5/6/1/4: file: G Hjort (or Hort) 1931.

75 In 1966 Grethe Hjort opposed the writer Thomas Winding, who had published an op-ed about apartheid in Australia. There was no issue with apartheid in Australia, but a social issue, and the indigenous people had the same voting rights as “white Europeans,” according to Grethe Hjort. *Aktuelt*, October 18, 1966, December 30, 1966, and January 3, 1967.

76 “Jørn Carlsens erindringer om Grethe Hjort,” [https://auhist.au.dk/showroom/galleri/personer/grethehjort1903-1967/joerncarlsenserindringeromgrethehjort; de Coninck-Smith \(2023\).](https://auhist.au.dk/showroom/galleri/personer/grethehjort1903-1967/joerncarlsenserindringeromgrethehjort; de Coninck-Smith (2023).)

77 Letter from E. Rosalind Lee to Miss Parkins, 3.12.1939, British Federation of University Women, file Julie Moscheles, LSE library and archive.

The two women both struggled to gain recognition as a scholarly persona – maybe because of their demeanour, their way of dressing, or maybe because of their way of life. When living in Prague, they were under surveillance by the Czech secret police because of their “extravagant lifestyle.” Since the file was destroyed in the 1980s, one can only speculate as to what had first roused police interest. Despite the 1950s being a time of sexual liberation in Czechoslovakia – in contrast to the homophobia that characterised the West during the Cold War – the secret police used information about citizens’ private lives “as blackmail ammunition.”⁷⁸ Extravagant spending can most likely be ruled out as a reason for the surveillance. When Moscheles died in 1956, a collection was made among her colleagues to pay for her burial. No traces of her grave have been found – if there ever was one.⁷⁹

Composite might be the best adjective to characterise how the two women embodied their scholarly personae. There are no simple categories in the story of the friendship between Hort and Moscheles or how they were perceived by their peers, only complex, volatile lived lives contained in the archives.⁸⁰

Returns

Julie Moscheles left the southern hemisphere for London at the end of 1945 and was repatriated to Prague.⁸¹ In the meantime, Hort had given up her position as president of the women’s college in Melbourne. She embarked on a new journey, which took her to Palestine, England, and Denmark to visit family. Hort explained to an Australian friend that she had left Melbourne due to a lack of intellectual challenges and conversation partners and had no plans to return: “Returning would mean abandoning scholarship for good and all, which neither can or should be done.”⁸² There were, however, rumours that she had faced criticism for perceived favouritism and poor governance, which may have fuelled her desire to leave.⁸³

Somewhere along the way, perhaps due to the turn of events, the two women must have decided to meet in Prague. In August 1946, Moscheles was back living in Prague, and Hort must have joined her shortly thereafter. Moscheles’ father had died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1943 and the family home was gone, but somehow, miraculously, her large collection of books had survived thanks to two colleagues.⁸⁴

Moscheles became affiliated with the department of geography at Charles University in October 1950 and was appointed docent in 1953, running most of the lectures on

78 Jaroslava Hasmanova Marhankova, “Voices from Silence? Reflections on ‘Coming Out’ in Socialist Czechoslovakia,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 68, no. 13 (2021), 2214–33.

79 Martinek, 8. The file from secret police has been destroyed, mail from Pavel Kreisinger, 9.3.2023.

80 Leila J. Rupp, “‘Imagine my Surprise’: Women’s Relationships in Mid-Twentieth Century America,” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York, N.Y.: NAL Books, 1989), 395–410.

81 JM to SH 15.8.46, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

82 GH to Lady White, 23.12.1946, Papers of the Derham Family, 2015.0011.00123, Letters from Greta Hort to Lady White, 1946 University of Melbourne Archives.

83 Martin (2003), 7.

84 Letter JM to SH 15.8.1946, Hjort to Hedin 10.11.1947, Sven Hedins arkiv vol. 433, Riksarkivet, Stockholm; Institut Terezinské Iniciativy, “Dr. Vilém Moscheles,” Holocaust, Database of Victims, <https://www.holocaust.cz/en/database-of-victims/victim/110090-vilem-moscheles/>.

regional geography. In the end, Hort remained in Prague until Moscheles' death in January 1956. In her letters, she hints at difficulties in finding an apartment and explains how she taught Moscheles about Danish Christmas traditions. Moscheles never completed a planned monograph about Australia, most likely due to an eye condition that made it difficult for her to read. She was invited to speak at the Danish International Folk high School in Elsinore in 1948 but was not permitted by the authorities to leave the country, officially because of insufficient funds, and her travel was subsequently limited to trips to Czech spas.⁸⁵ In 1946, shortly before leaving Melbourne, Hort had translated and published a collection of essays by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Two years later, these translations were included in a new collection of his essays on Hasidism. In a letter from Prague, Hort mentioned that she needed to work on "her book," which most likely was a historical study of the plagues of Egypt.⁸⁶ She also translated several books on a wide range of topics including Gothic women's fashion, the restoration of a Jewish synagogue and prehistoric animals.⁸⁷

After Moscheles' death, Hort decided she wanted to return to Denmark. As a foreigner with a residence permit, she could not easily obtain an exit visa from Czechoslovakia, which was by now part of the Soviet-controlled Eastern Bloc. She therefore had to smuggle a letter out of the country,⁸⁸ with Professor Frans Blatt the likely recipient. At a board meeting at Aarhus University's Faculty of Arts, Blatt not only supported her application for a position as an associate professor at the Department of English, against Professor Dahl's candidate, he also admitted that he had been encouraging her to apply.⁸⁹

Together and a joint proposal

As mentioned, almost nothing has been left from the two women's ten years of co-habitation in Prague between 1946 and 1956. The only testimony to their intellectual collaboration is a joint proposal to create an international university of the social sciences.

In April 1948, Greta Hort had participated in a conference in Paris organised by the International Association of University Professors and Lecturers (IAUPL). The organisation had been founded during the Second World War by a group of Polish scholars who had fled to the UK. The founding member and later professor of law at Oxford University, Stephan Glaser, had proposed the creation of an International University of Human Studies, with the dual goals of helping to raise awareness of the humanities and contributing to world peace. His first written proposal had been met

85 Martinek, 8; GH to Ulla Hoff, 15.12.1949 (summary made by University of Melbourne Archives), GH to SH 10.11.1947, as above.

86 Buber, Martin and Greta Hort, *Hasidism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948); Greta Hort, "The Plagues of Egypt," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 69, no. 1–4 (1957), 84–103; Greta Hort, "The Plagues of Egypt," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 70, no. 1 (1958), 48–59.

87 Olga Sronková, Greta Hort, and Emil Fiala, *Gothic Woman's Fashion* (Prague: N.p., 1954); Hana Volavková, *The Pinkas Synagogue: A Memorial of the Past and of Our Days* (Praha: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1955); Josef Augusta and Burian Zdeněk, *Prehistoric Animals* (London: Spring, 1957).

88 Martin (2003), 14; Martinek, 7–8.

89 No letter from GH in Frans Blatt, private archive at The Royal Library; Det Humanistiske Fakultet, Det humanistiske fakultetsråd 1934–1991, forhandlingsprotokol 6, 1955–1958, (19 Apr. 1956), 60 (Rigsarkivet); de Coninck-Smith (2023).

with enthusiasm by the members, and he was now putting forward a revised version, asking for comments.⁹⁰

For Greta Hort, this must have been a unique opportunity to make use of her extensive experience as not only a long-time student within the Danish and Anglosphere university systems, but also from her time as a college bursar. She might have been motivated by hopes that she would be among the five proposed faculty members if the new institution was in Prague.⁹¹

She added a few comments to Glaser's proposal and then set out to describe her own visions. The university of her dreams would be a single-faculty university of social sciences, centred around comparative studies in law, history, psychology, geography, sociology, and economics, with students coming from all over the world. She chose the British collegiate university as a model, and the proposal included detailed descriptions of students' food, dress, the importance of gowns and blazers, and suggestions of how to fund the new university through generous donations from the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations. When it came to the location of the new university, Hort eagerly advocated Prague – a city she found vibrant, with good food and widespread interest in everything related to England and Englishness.⁹² Factors in Prague's favour were its location in central Europe, that there was an existing university with a long history (Charles University) with which the new institution could be affiliated, and that food and lodging were cheap compared to Geneva in Switzerland, which had been the suggested home of the new institution. She supported her argument by mentioning that several international conferences had been held in Prague, including conferences organised by UNESCO, which was an important partner for the IAUPL.⁹³

The cover of Hort's proposal included the addition of the name Julie Moscheles, handwritten in red pencil along with her title in Czech as an associate professor at the Faculty of Science, Charles University. We can only speculate as to how Moscheles contributed to Hort's proposal – and why. Maybe she also hoped to be part of the new faculty if their visions were realised.

In any case, dreaming about how higher learning or universities could contribute to a better and more peaceful world was nothing new for Moscheles. While growing up in London, she had been introduced to pacifism – and during the interwar years, she had made a proposal to the internationally oriented president of Czechoslovakia Tomas Masaryk of creating "*eine landeskundlichen Arbeitstelle*" (a regional studies centre) with the purpose of informing (in English) about the state of life and industry in Czechoslovakia based on scientific studies – presumably including her own stud-

90 *Communication* no 8 (no year) 40-43, no. 10, 1948, 2-13 (Bodleian library). How GH had got in touch with IAUPL is unclear. It *might* have been through one of its board members, the classical philologist from the University of Copenhagen, Carsten Høeg (1896-1961), a central figure in the Danish resistance movement. While in Australia, GH was involved in Frit Denmark, which supported Danes stranded in Australia and sent help to Denmark after its liberation, Martin, 2003, 12. However, no letter can be found from her among his private papers at The Royal Library, so the above is speculation.

91 Mentioned by Frans Blatt, Det Humanistiske Fakultet, Det humanistiske fakultetsråd 1934-1991, forhandlingsprotokol nr. 6, 1955-1958, (19 Apr. 1956), 60, (Rigsarkivet).

92 GH to lady White, 23.12.1946, Papers of the Derham Family, 2015.0011.00123, Letters from Greta Hort to Lady White, 1946 University of Melbourne Archives.

93 Plan of an International University of Human Sciences, håndskrift nr. 1185.37, Grethe Hjort privatarkiv, Det Kongelige Bibliotek (The Royal Library).

ies of, for instance, Prague's climate. According to one of her biographers, Jiri Pesek, she took this step out of sympathy with the new republican, liberal and democratic government, which had come to power following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of the new state of Czechoslovakia.⁹⁴

Nothing came of this proposal, and the proposal to create an international university suffered the same fate. In the end, it might have been *too* utopian at a time of new geopolitical tensions between East and West.

Conclusion

Hjort and Moscheles' trajectories were like those of countless other modern women who pursued academic careers in the mid-twentieth century. Female organisations and networks played an important role – especially for Hjort, whereas Moscheles chose to make use of the network of male colleagues, she had met at international conferences and through her connection with the Le Play Society. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was because Moscheles, as a German-educated Jewish woman, was more exposed to exclusion and suspicion than women from other backgrounds or whether it was a personal choice. For both women, travelling became an important tool in obtaining a higher education, life experience, recognition, and employment. The dark clouds that gathered during the interwar years and the subsequent persecution of the Jews and outbreak of World War II had a major impact on their lives and were partly responsible for them meeting and becoming close friends.

To a considerable degree the professional lives of Hjort and Moscheles took place at the margins of universities, within female colleges, female academic networks and in temporary employment. Their connection to male colleagues became of importance at specific situations, paving the way to scholarship and tenure and in some cases, quite literally saving their lives. However, the impression remains, that they were tolerated – and needed as colleagues to take on administrative tasks or teaching, but not necessarily appreciated as scholars, maybe because of their composite personalities, maybe because they were women.

The exploration of gendered scholarly personae – as embodied within a male-dominated world of higher education – has been somewhat pivotal in my search for relevant sources and my affective reading of these sources. I have studied poems and drawings, handwriting, postcards, and stationery to get a sense of the situatedness of these material relics. I have thus been fascinated by the creation of the archives and the establishment of a conversation with the silences and blurred impressions.

I was particularly struck by the near absence of sources from the time Hort and Moscheles spent together in Prague. It brought my imaginative archive to life – a method that Clare Hemmings has suggested to explore “the unsayable and imagine what cannot be retrieved [from the archive].”⁹⁵ Crossing paths, the unpredictable and coincidental have pushed me to imagine how the two women's lives unfolded. There are no simple conclusions regarding their entangled life stories or their female friendship. On the contrary, there are blurred lives, connected lives and professional lives. In their creation of a scholarly persona, travel became crucial as an escape from the

⁹⁴ Pesek (2018), 192.

⁹⁵ Clare Hemmings, *Considering Emma Goldman: Feminist Political Ambivalence and the Imaginative Archive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 7, 33.

male-dominated world of universities and from heterosexual expectations, offering an opportunity to find work and friendship.

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