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DEBATES ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN POST-WAR BRITAIN:

An Analysis of *Universities Quarterly*, 1947-1963

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## Introduction

The post-war era in Britain commenced a time of great changes in policy, economy, society, culture, and public life. One of the many transformations was within higher education, which became the focus of “resonant speeches of prominent vice-chancellors and others, a variety of pronouncements, analyses and debates in professional and academic journals.”<sup>1</sup> The creation of *Universities Quarterly* in 1947 is just one testament to exactly how much attention was being paid to higher education: never before had there been a journal solely devoted to the topic of universities. Upon the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the journal, Michael Shattock claimed that *Universities Quarterly* is a “treasure trove for historians of the development of higher education and for the policy-makers of the future”<sup>2</sup>; however, despite this encouraging proclamation, the pages of *Universities Quarterly* have remained relatively unexamined in contemporary scholarship. It is for this reason that this thesis will rely on the articles of *Universities Quarterly* as primary sources in answering my research question: what were the scholarly discourse and debates regarding higher education in Britain during the years of 1947-1963?

I am not the first to delve into the pages of *Universities Quarterly* and to use its articles as primary sources. Most notably, Harold Silver relied on many articles from *Universities Quarterly* as he constructed a history of the major debates surrounding the development of higher education in post-war Britain in *Higher Education and Opinion Making in Twentieth-Century England*. Silver and others<sup>3</sup> have already crafted detailed histories of the developments within higher education during the turbulent post-war era:

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<sup>1</sup> Silver, Harold. *Higher Education and Opinion Making in Twentieth-Century England*. London: Woburn Press, 2003, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Shattock, Michael, ed. *The Creation of a University System*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, xi.

<sup>3</sup> Including Malcolm Tight, Michael Shattock, Robert Anderson, Ted Tapper and Robert Troscitz.

the government reports and commissions, the struggles over expansion of the university system both in the rapid growth in admissions and in the creation of new universities, and the concerns about university governance and the increasingly important role of the University Grants Committee. Because this history has already been examined in detail, it will not be the focus of this thesis. Instead, I seek to examine what scholars concerned with the state of higher education were truly discussing at the time and what issues were the focus of their debates. Therefore, to discover the concerns of scholars and others writing about higher education at the time, I turn my attention to the articles within *Universities Quarterly* from the years of 1947 until 1963, many of which have laid unexamined since they were first published.

In order to identify the most prevalent topics discussed by scholars in *Universities Quarterly*, I examined each issue of the journal from Volume 1 Issue 1 in 1947 until Volume 17 Issue 4 in 1963 and categorized each article into topics and sub-topics. I classified the four main topics that emerged as follows: ‘idea of a university’, life at English universities, disciplines, and universities abroad. Each of these four topics is the subject of a chapter in this thesis. Within in each chapter, I focus on the two or three sub-topics which had the largest number of articles. Because there were over 500 articles published in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* during the years 1947-1963, I will be analyzing only a select few articles in each chapter. I chose the articles based on a combination of factors including the strength of the argument made, the level of response to the article in later issues and the importance of the author in public life at the time. I did not include editorials or letters to the editor in my study. Although some of the topics concern higher education in Britain at large, this thesis will focus on England and English universities simply because most of the articles and authors in *Universities Quarterly* come from and discuss issues that pertain particularly to English universities rather than

Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish universities. As for the justification of the years I have chosen to study, 1947 was the year in which *Universities Quarterly* was first published, so it therefore serves as a natural beginning to my inquiry. The year 1963 seemed a natural endpoint of this study because it was in that year that the Robbins Report was released. The Robbins Report was the end result of a Committee assembled by the Conservative government two years prior for the purpose of reviewing “the pattern of full-time higher education in Great Britain” and advising the government on any changes that should be made.<sup>4</sup> The publication of the Robbins Report is commonly seen among scholars as “the symbol of university expansion” and as a “decisive turning point”<sup>5</sup> in the transition from a system governed by privilege to one ruled by meritocracy and from a hierarchical society to a “democracy of multiple and divergent values.”<sup>6</sup> It therefore follows that the years up until 1963 were the primary years of transition and deliberation as the system shifted, which makes it a most fruitful period to study.

Each chapter will begin with a brief history of each respective topic compiled from secondary sources in order to provide context for the analysis of the primary sources from *Universities Quarterly*. The first chapter of this thesis will start by examining the more theoretical and philosophical debates occurring in the pages of *Universities Quarterly*. These debates centered on a single question: what is the purpose of a university and a university education? The second chapter will focus on more practical considerations and examine the articles concerned with the issues related to the rapid expansion of universities in this era, most notably issues pertaining to admissions and student life at the universities. The third chapter will address the disputes occurring between the university disciplines of the arts, sciences and social sciences at the time.

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<sup>4</sup> Silver 143.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, Robert. *British Universities Past and Present*. London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006, 131.

<sup>6</sup> Anderson 129.

The fourth chapter will discuss the conversations surrounding universities abroad, centering on the Empire (most notably the colonies in Africa), the United States, and Europe and the Soviet Union. The fifth and final chapter will discuss two topics, the experience of women and ethnic minorities in universities during this time, which notably were absent from the pages of *Universities Quarterly* but which I have identified as being important issues during this period.

The results of this investigation have been a mixture of the expected to the surprising. Some common concerns in *Universities Quarterly* were indeed those already identified in the existing secondary literature including the expansion of the university system, how to deal with admitting thousands of new students a year, and how the universities should be governed. However, for every article about these well-documented concerns, there were articles about topics less often featured in the histories of the development of higher education: concerns about the purpose of a university education, about changes in student life such as the building of new residence halls, about how the disciplines were changing in the post-war world, and about the development of universities in the British Colonies. These concerns and others were just as common, if not more common, topics of articles in *Universities Quarterly*. These types of articles, specifically those articles which were not related to “state intervention and university independence in relation to...government funding,” are dismissed by Silver as failing to address what was going on at universities at that time.<sup>7</sup> While they may not address what to many historians of the subject view as the primary concern of the time, that does not mean that those articles are worthless of study. To the contrary, I believe that the articles and symposia featured in the journal can tell us something far more interesting and worthwhile about the true diversity of concerns and opinions of scholars in the period.

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<sup>7</sup> Silver 128-129.

Some examples, dismissed by Silver as disjointed, are nonetheless fascinating and ripe for study; these include symposia on the teaching of various subjects from psychology to Russian studies, the place of religion in the university, health (including mental health) and welfare of students, and various symposia on universities around the world. These symposia featured in *Universities Quarterly* don't show us that scholars were ignoring the "primary concern" of the time, but rather, that they identified a rich assortment of pressing topics and concerns worthy of discussion and debate. Not only would it be a discredit to simply ignore them in constructing a history of discourses surrounding higher education, but also examining these articles can reveal important insights into the minds of scholars in the post-war era and can and should be used to construct a broader intellectual history of post-war Britain. I hypothesize that the scholarly discussions and debates in *Universities Quarterly* about the concerns facing higher education in the post-war era are deeply intertwined with broader public debates about many of the larger issues facing the post-war British state and can serve as a means of understanding the larger anxieties felt by scholars regarding not just the future of Britain's higher education system but also the future of the nation at large.

## Chapter 1: Idea of the University

### 1.1 Background

“What are universities for?” asks the title of Stefan Collini’s 2012 book which sparked much discussion and debate upon its publication. In fact, it is a question that has been on the minds of those concerned with higher education for centuries. Collini’s book is one in a line of what is considered “idea of a university” literature; works which, according to Collini himself, “protest against the current subordination of universities to economic or other utilitarian purposes,” asserting the university’s role as the place for “open ended inquiry.”<sup>8</sup> This description is a bit reductive. As I will examine in this chapter, there have been numerous scholars on the other side of the debate advocating for the utilitarian or vocational purpose of universities. In the post-war era in Britain, the debate over the mission or purpose of the university was a contested issue and one that was certainly on the minds of those contributing to *Universities Quarterly*. Therefore, this chapter will explore what kind of debates surrounding the purpose of the university were articulated in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* from 1947-1963, and how these articles can be seen as part of the larger tradition of “idea of the university” literature.

To understand the context in which the debate about the purpose of the university was taking place, it is important to trace a brief history of why the first British universities were created and for what purpose they were used in the medieval and early modern periods. While the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge were initially founded on the Paris model, which was “devoted primarily to philosophy and theology,”<sup>9</sup> it is a misunderstanding to assume that these universities were “ivory towers devoted to

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<sup>8</sup> Collini, Stefan. *Speaking of Universities*. London: Verso, 2017, 144-145. Kindle e-book.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson I.

pure scholarship.”<sup>10</sup> To the contrary, in their early years, Oxford and Cambridge were “essentially vocational and utilitarian in character,” providing training for positions serving the church and state.<sup>11</sup> In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the “huge influx of lay students from the upper classes” precipitated what is considered by historians to be an “educational revolution” in which the universities saw students attending simply to “acquire social and cultural polish.”<sup>12</sup> In terms of curriculum, the focus shifted away from the vocational faculties and instead to the “general liberal education given in the arts,” resulting in the “atrophy of the professional faculties and the centrality of the general or “liberal” education.<sup>13</sup> This shift from focused and vocational training to a broader more “general” education would lay the foundation for one of the primary debates within the “idea of a university” literature: should the purpose of higher education be to provide focused training for specific vocations or jobs, or to provide a general liberal or “well-rounded” curriculum to its students?

What about the idea that a university education gives something greater to its students: not just training for a vocation, and not just an education, but wisdom, self-knowledge, and what the 19<sup>th</sup> century theologian John Henry Newman in *The Idea of a University* calls “a philosophical habit”? The idea didn’t originate with Newman, but it is one of the ideas most often attributed to him due to the canonical status of his book. The enduring legacy and “continued prominence” of Newman’s book is “curious,”<sup>14</sup> according to Collini, considering that the book originated as “a collection of occasional pieces written to justify the creation of a new institution...which proved to be for the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Collini, Stefan. *What Are Universities For?* London: Penguin, 2012, 120. Kindle e-book.

most part a failure:"<sup>15</sup> a Catholic university in Ireland. Newman was a member of the "Tractian" movement within the Anglican Church before converting to Catholicism in 1845, becoming a Catholic priest and eventually accepting an invitation from the church to establish a Catholic university in Dublin.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, much of the text is spent justifying the creation of this institution as well as the "centrality of theology to a university."<sup>17</sup> However, it is not these points of the book that are widely cited, but the defense Newman makes of the "liberal" education. Newman's case is that "a university provides a liberal not a professional education."<sup>18</sup> The ultimate goal of the liberal education for Newman is that "philosophical habit": "a habit of mind...which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitable-ness, calmness, moderation and wisdom."<sup>19</sup> Newman sees this "philosophical habit" as the "central fruit of the education furnished at a University" and the university's "main purpose...in its treatment of students."<sup>20</sup> Newman believes that universities do not have to serve a practical purpose, either to the individual or to society. Rather, the purpose or end of a university education is knowledge itself, because "any kind of knowledge...is its own reward" and "is capable of being its own end."<sup>21</sup>

Newman's work did not stand alone. It sparked a lively public debate about the "fundamental, alternative conceptions...of what constituted a university and a university education" which would continue throughout the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> Of the 19<sup>th</sup> century thinkers engaged with the idea of the university, John Stuart Mill's ideas about higher education most closely echoed Newman's. In Mill's 1867 rectorial address

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 124-125.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 126-127.

<sup>19</sup> Newman, John Henry. *The Idea of a University*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Silver 15.

at St. Andrews University, in what seems to be taken directly from Newman, he announced that universities “are not a place of professional education...Their object is not to make skillful lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or manufacturers, or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings.”<sup>23</sup> Two other notable thinkers of the time, Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley, were likewise invested in the debate, although their ideas differed slightly from Newman’s. Many have written about Arnold and Huxley as two men whose ideas opposed each other, with Arnold devoted to literature and the arts and Huxley to the natural sciences. However, Arnold’s and Huxley’s ideas about higher education were similar. Both men venerated the German Humboldtian model of the research university, and saw the British universities as lacking in what the Germans call *Wissenschaft*, “knowledge acquired by strenuous and systematic pursuit of the truth.”<sup>24</sup> Both men thought that both humanities and sciences (and other “modern studies”) should be better incorporated into Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>25</sup> Most importantly, both Arnold and Huxley agreed that the main purpose of a university education should not be vocational. Arnold argued that a liberal university training should be the backbone of “a liberal culture” to be shared by all, and Huxley insisted that science “had an educational value independent of its practical applications” and that it should be an “indispensable element of ‘culture’ and hence of liberal education.”<sup>26</sup> Here Arnold and Huxley diverge a bit from Newman; whereas Newman saw knowledge for its own sake as justification enough, Huxley and Arnold had a larger vision of the liberal arts education playing an essential role in the creation of a broader “liberal culture” which would benefit society at large. This is the origin of another debate within the “idea of a university” literature: is

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<sup>23</sup> Anderson 106.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 104-105.

<sup>25</sup> Silver 4.

<sup>26</sup> Anderson 106.

knowledge for its own sake justification enough, or should knowledge be pursued for some kind of larger societal purpose or benefit?

After the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a decades-long lull in the “idea of a university” genre in which there were no “echoing pronouncements of the kind associated with Newman, Mill or Huxley.”<sup>27</sup> However, upon reaching the 1940s, the genre was quite suddenly revived in Britain, with two major works receiving much public attention: Bruce Truscot’s *Redbrick University* (1943) and Walter Moberly’s *The Crisis in the University* (1949). Truscot’s<sup>28</sup> *Redbrick University* is largely an argument for raising the standard of ‘redbrick’ universities, the civic universities established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Truscot thought they should be “raised to equal status with Oxbridge” and that they could do this through research. Truscot saw research as the universities’ “nobler and more fundamental task” as opposed to teaching, which had always been the priority at Oxbridge.<sup>29</sup> Curiously, Truscot’s text also advocates for “the sponsorship of religious worship” at civic universities, which had been established as strictly secular schools.<sup>30</sup>

The theme of religion also runs, albeit much more strongly, in Moberly’s *The Crisis in the University*. Published after the horrors of World War II, the book argued that the world “faced a spiritual crisis, to which universities had a duty to respond.”<sup>31</sup> Moberly, a devout Anglican and former vice-chancellor of Manchester University, believed that universities had a social obligation to engage with the problems in post-war society and that the “cult of research and ‘objectivity’ had led the universities to withdraw” from their obligations to society.<sup>32</sup> While both Truscot’s and Moberly’s books dealt specifically with 20<sup>th</sup> century problems, their ideas echo back to familiar arguments

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<sup>27</sup> Silver 24.

<sup>28</sup> Truscot’s real name was E. Allison Peers, professor of Spanish at Liverpool University.

<sup>29</sup> Anderson 125.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 126.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Newman regarding the centrality of religion to their respective visions of the mission of the university. Likewise, the idea of the obligation of the universities to society can be traced back to Arnold and Huxley. Both Truscot's and Moberly's texts made a large impact in the field of higher education, and some of their arguments stimulated debates in the years to come in the pages of *Universities Quarterly*.

Through this brief history of "idea of the university" literature, some major themes and questions have appeared: should universities provide a focused vocational and/or technical education, or rather a "general" or "liberal" humanities education? Is the purpose of a liberal or humanities education to "acquire social polish" or to furnish the soul with a lifelong "spiritual habit"? Is knowledge in and of itself a noble goal, or should knowledge and the pursuit of research have broader applications to culture or society? What is the obligation (if any) of the universities to society at large? These are the kinds of questions to keep in mind as I move now to analyze some of the works written in *Universities Quarterly* during the years 1947-1963. These works assert themselves into the "idea of the university" debate, attempting to answer some of these and other broad and sweeping questions about the purpose of universities and attaining a university education.

## 1.2 Post-War Concerns and the Civic Ideal

In 1948, the historian and Master of Trinity College Cambridge G.M. Trevelyan wrote a piece for Volume 3 Issue 1 of *Universities Quarterly* entitled "The Mission of the Universities." Trevelyan sees the universities as being "more important to the nation than ever" because they are the last remaining means of "promoting the best products of

civilization.”<sup>33</sup> The other means of promoting civilization, he laments, had in recent years been “reduced or extinguished by economic and political change.”<sup>34</sup> He does not name those prior means of promoting civilization, but one can assume that these “other sources and centres of literary, intellectual and scholarly activity in the nation” were those created by and for the upper classes.<sup>35</sup> He laments that “the wealth and leisure of the upper and professional classes have been very much reduced by a system of taxation,” resulting in what he fears will be the loss of the culture promoted by those who had the means of funding “private libraries” and “financing cultured enterprises and publications.”<sup>36</sup> Trevelyan’s fears about the loss of Britain’s upper-class culture are only assuaged by the idea that the universities can become stronger and take over the job of “maintain[ing] the standard of quality as distinct from quantity and popularity” in the newly “equalitarian society” of post-war Britain.<sup>37</sup>

Trevelyan’s remarks are somewhat surprising and may seem out of place in the world of the post-war consensus. However, this article is a good place to start with the discussion of the concerns of scholars regarding higher education in the post-war world. Trevelyan’s remarks read as a lamentation for the Victorian and Edwardian eras, times which had passed away and made way for a new society based on values like equalitarianism and meritocracy. Trevelyan himself seems to represent that dying era, a vestige of the past who looks to the future with trepidation, one who is not sure how “fine works of scholarship” will be produced now that the “present system of taxation and dislike of domestic service are in effect abolishing those leisured and semi-leisured

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 481.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 481-482.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 482.

classes.”<sup>38</sup> Despite these outdated ideas, Trevelyan does not wish the universities to remain in the past, at least in terms of size and exclusivity. He sees the present population of university students as too small and hopes to see university expansion, with government funds being allocated mostly “to the newer universities, which lack the liberal endowments” from private benefactors.<sup>39</sup> However, his advocacy for the expansion of the universities is likely rooted in his anxiety that, with the influence of the upper classes passing away, all traces of ‘high civilization’ may disappear and be replaced by mass media and culture. He hopes to see the universities as the new upholders of the national culture and civilization. These ideas are not unlike those of Arnold and Huxley, who thought the mission of the universities was to promote a ‘liberal culture’, a culture, in Arnold’s words, of ‘sweetness and light’, which would be for the benefit of the entire society. Emblematic of the attitudes of those from an earlier era who feared the ‘decline’ of Britain after WWII, Trevelyan’s opinions can serve as a bridge from the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘ideas of the university’ to other more dominant debates within the post-war era about the purpose of universities.

Also writing in 1948, professor of English at the University of Leeds Bonamy Dobrée had a different vision of the mission of the universities in the post-war era. His article “Citizenship in the Universities” appeared as part of a symposium on the social sciences; however, the implications of his article are much broader than the discipline of social science. Dobrée impresses upon the reader the utmost importance of universities to create not just learned young men and women, but “citizens”: “someone who sees the part he can play in the life of the community and what part his own particular job fills in

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 483.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

the pattern of community living.”<sup>40</sup> So important is it to Dobrée that students learn to become citizens that he proposes multiple ways in which universities can impress this upon their students, either through the existing disciplines or the creation of a new interdisciplinary course that all students would be required to take. He advises students (as well as the departments) to ask themselves, “What are all our activities for? How do they serve the community?,” criticizing the fact that most faculty “live by faith...that their subject is in itself worthwhile.”<sup>41</sup> These sentiments are a long way from Newman, who believed that a university education and knowledge for its own sake were worthwhile ends in themselves.

Dobrée was not alone in his concern over the making of “citizens.” He cites a recent unspecified “post-war development report” which stated that one of the principle aims of universities, and the one which is presently most neglected, is “the development of the social consciousness of students.”<sup>42</sup> Citizenship and “social consciousness” are broad and unspecified terms, but luckily Dobrée defines them for us. A “citizen” is someone who has an idea of “the basic principles on which society is built” and who understands “what is meant by liberty and social responsibility.”<sup>43</sup> The citizen knows “something of the material conditions of the society in which he is a part, and how this society came to take the shape it has.”<sup>44</sup> This concept of the university training “citizens” was not necessarily a new idea. In fact, Collini asserts that the “civic model” of the universities, which sought to prioritize “the making of citizens, the inculcation of the

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<sup>40</sup> Dobrée, Bonamy. “IV. Citizenship in the University.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.3 (1948): 283-294, 283-284.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 286.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 288.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

shared ethic... to help define and strengthen the identity of the polity” was one that was foundational to continental European universities.<sup>45</sup>

Collini’s definition of the civic model is broad enough to include the ideas of 19<sup>th</sup> century thinkers like Arnold and Huxley, as well as both Dobrée and Trevelyan, all of whom saw the importance of the university to the polity or society at large. While Dobrée and Trevelyan agree that universities have a role to play in society at large, and that this task should be carried out through “the inculcation of a shared ethic” upon its students, they diverge on what exactly the “shared ethic” should be. Trevelyan’s vision is at its core an elitist one, in which a select group of the highly educated can act as leaders in the creation and preservation of “civilized” (elite) culture amidst the proliferation of popular or low culture. On the other hand, Dobrée’s vision is one more fitting to the post-war consensus and the creation of the welfare state. Just as the state recognized its responsibility for the creation of a better society for all of its citizens, he believes that individuals should likewise develop a consciousness of their own responsibilities to their community, and that this consciousness could and should be promoted in the universities.

### 1.3 Crisis and Controversy

In 1949, Walter Moberly, philosopher and former vice-chair of the University of Manchester, announced to the world that the universities were in a crisis in his much discussed and debated book *The Crisis in the University*. Mere months after it was published, *Universities Quarterly* devoted an entire issue to responses to Moberly’s book and a subsequent critical review of it written by Michael Oakeshott. Moberly’s and Oakeshott’s diagnoses were both pretty grim; Moberly believed that the “technical and economic revolution of [the] time has brought...a complete breakdown of established

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<sup>45</sup> Collini *Speaking* 43.

values and convictions” and that universities have a responsibility to society to “respond to the spiritual needs of the time,” or else leave students “without guidance in a puzzling world.”<sup>46</sup> Oakeshott’s assessment was even worse; he considered “the present state of the world to be a chaos” and that to “save its soul the university must cut itself off as far as possible from the values ruling the world.”<sup>47</sup> According to both Moberly and Oakeshott, the universities were swept up in what they saw as the mess of the modern era, and only by embracing religion (Moberly) or disengaging entirely from society (Oakeshott) could they be saved.

Did the writers in *Universities Quarterly* agree with Moberly about this supposed “crisis”? While the writers earnestly engage with Moberly and Oakeshott’s ideas, the tone is overall one of gentle disagreement and even of bafflement. The introduction to the issue states that the “most striking thing about the “crisis” in the universities is that it has blown up so suddenly. Until yesterday, almost, it might have seemed that universities were enjoying the sunshine of public favour.”<sup>48</sup> Roy Pascal, professor of German at University of Birmingham, likewise offers a rebuke of Moberly and Oakeshott. Pascal does not believe that the universities had lost their identity, rather that the intense recent growth of universities has “brought an enriching of the true purpose of the university tradition” and that “the atmosphere” within his own university was not one of decline and chaos, but rather “vigorous life.”<sup>49</sup> Pascal is rather optimistic about the “opportunities and reality of [their] times” and believes that universities are adequately responding to the present challenges. He sees Moberly and Oakeshott as simply suffering from the malady

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<sup>46</sup> Pascal, Roy. “III. The Universities & Social Purpose.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.1 (1949): 37-43, 39.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> “The Mission of the University - A Discussion.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.1 (1949): 15-18, 15.

<sup>49</sup> Pascal 41.

of “cling[ing] to old habits of mind.”<sup>50</sup> The post-war era had brought many material and societal changes; Pascal believes that some, like him, are ready to embrace these changes. Pascal believes in the good of the “rise to power of a social class which creates new demands and new standards,” whereas he sees Moberly and Oakeshott as part of that party who view the post-war ascendance of the working and middle classes to prominence with “something akin to despair.”<sup>51</sup>

Ernest Simon, also known as Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, the Manchester industrialist, chairman of the council of the University of Manchester as well as editor and founder of *Universities Quarterly*, was similarly skeptical about Moberly’s idea of a “crisis.”<sup>52</sup> Simon saw Moberly’s “crisis” as being not one specific to the universities, but rather a “crisis in the civilization of the western democracies,”<sup>53</sup> an issue which Simon acknowledges is real but is surely beyond the scope of the universities to singlehandedly solve.<sup>54</sup> Simon rebukes Moberly’s point that universities are creating individuals who “neither car[e] nor know...where civilization is going” by pointing out that “university graduates do render great services to democracy in the field of public affairs” such as in the “administrative civil service,” where “a body of men and women from the universities...serv[e] their country for modest salaries with a devotion and success which...have rarely been equaled.”<sup>55</sup> However, Simon does see room for improvement in the universities. He believes that universities can better equip their students to consider the broader issues facing society but that the answer does not lie within religious education as Moberly suggests. Rather, Simon echoes Dobrée when he suggests that

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>52</sup> Lord Simon of Wythenshawe. “VIII. University Crisis? A Consumer’s View.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.1 (1949): 73-81, 73.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 79.

“courses for education in citizenship” be taught at the universities, and that these courses could ensure that universities render their greatest service: producing graduates with an “understanding of the values and problems of democracy” and who will be “likely to develop into leaders in public affairs.”<sup>56</sup> For Simon, Dobrée and others writing for *Universities Quarterly*, the way forward was not through reinstating the values of religion in the essentially secular universities, but rather through encouraging the modern values of citizenship, democracy and social responsibility.

One cannot talk about Moberly’s *The Crisis in the University* without mentioning religion. It is a uniting theme of his work and is his ultimate prescription to cure the “crisis” facing the universities in the modern age. Broadly, those writing in *Universities Quarterly* in response to Moberly were not in agreement with this prescription. According to Lionel Elvin, Moberly’s primary problem with the universities was that students were not asking, and were not encouraged to ask, “the really fundamental questions” including the “most important question of all...how a man should live,” a question inherent to engagement with religion and theology.<sup>57</sup> However, Elvin argues that undergraduates at Oxford are in fact engaging with the “fundamental questions” and that they are “responding at least as seriously now to the challenge of [their] time as [they] ever did” without direct encouragement from the university.<sup>58</sup> The general consensus among *Universities Quarterly* writers was that Christians did not hold the monopoly on these “fundamental questions” and that the “virtues which it would be right to expect in university teachers, researchers or students...are not solely Christian values”; rather, they were “upheld and practiced no less conscientiously by our colleagues who claim to be

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 81.

<sup>57</sup> Elvin, Lionel. “II. The Universities and Social Change.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.1 (1948): 24-36, 25.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

agnostics or humanists.”<sup>59</sup> The place of religion in the university would again be discussed in a later issue of *Universities Quarterly*, in which the writers, including Birmingham professor of philosophy L.J. Russell, agree that Moberly’s points about religion are largely irrelevant. Russell argues that there are no reasonable arguments for the infusion of a theological perspective into all of the subjects and that students’ “freedom and responsibility” should be respected in regards to their beliefs.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, Moberly’s ideas about religion in the universities did not meet a very receptive audience in *Universities Quarterly*.

However, the writers in *Universities Quarterly* did not disagree with Moberly about everything. Moberly criticized the universities for producing narrow-minded specialists rather than well-rounded generalists, an issue which he regarded as nothing less than a moral failure. This was an issue also discussed by the writers in *Universities Quarterly*, who agreed that the students of their time were far more pressed to learn specialized information than they were in the past, leading to less time for “lengthy discussions about how to put the world right” with their peers, which many agreed was a thing of “most lasting value in university life.”<sup>61</sup> However, none went so far as to claim that specialization constituted a moral failure for the universities. In fact, the more practical-minded recognized that “specialization is inevitable” given the limited time of undergraduate education, and that minds are not necessarily “broadened” by simply “adding subjects” of study.<sup>62</sup>

The issue of specialization would continue to be discussed in the journal throughout the years, perhaps because it constituted a seemingly unsolvable issue. Those

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<sup>59</sup> Adams, John. “VI. Aims and Methods.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.1 (1949): 59-66, 65.

<sup>60</sup> Russell, L.J. “The Place of Religion in the University: I.” *Universities Quarterly* 7.1 (1952): 18-25, 25.

<sup>61</sup> “The Mission...” 16-17.

<sup>62</sup> Adams 62.

involved in higher education had a “fairly widespread agreement about the need for general education”; however, the solution did not lie in remaking the university courses so that “general ideas were to have a monopoly.”<sup>63</sup> Some looked towards the creation of “The Common Course,” a course in Western Civilization from ancient to modern, which would be shared among all students regardless of their specialty.<sup>64</sup> Others argued that the disciplines should offer various perspectives on their field so that scientists shouldn’t be forced to read philosophy but rather to be trained to “be more philosophic about [their] science.”<sup>65</sup> The question of specialization versus generalization was essentially a philosophical one about the purpose of the university and of university education: were universities there to provide technical and vocational training for the professions, or to provide a higher general education for enrichment of the individual and/or society as a whole? There was no clear answer, because while the economy of the post-war world required technical and specialized knowledge, a general education provided a sort of “technical education” of its own “in the highest possible sense”: the making of “good citizens and good rulers.”<sup>66</sup>

The issue of generalization versus specialization brings us to consider the related, but distinct issue of the humanities versus sciences.<sup>67</sup> While the issue was not present in such words in Moberly’s work nor in the responses in *Universities Quarterly*, it is certainly implied when considering whether a general (humanities) education or a technical (scientific) education should take precedent in the universities. This debate came to a head in the early 1960s in the form of the Leavis-Snow controversy. Charles

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<sup>63</sup> Fulton, J.S. “General Education.” *Universities Quarterly* 5.1 (1950): 41-48, 41.

<sup>64</sup> Bibby, Cyril. “The General Education of the Specialist Student.” *Universities Quarterly* 8.4 (1954): 369-375, 371.

<sup>65</sup> Adams 63.

<sup>66</sup> Morrison, John. “V. Socrates and the Professors.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.1 (1948): 50-58, 58.

<sup>67</sup> This issue will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Snow, a Cambridge scientist and civil servant, had “formulated the idea of the ‘two cultures’,” an idea which “diagnosed the split between the literary and scientific cultures” and which generated much debate after it was articulated in a 1959 lecture.<sup>68</sup> Snow took issue with the humanities’ dominance within the “administrative and political elite” and advocated for the ascendance of scientists. After all, they were the “‘new men’ who had won the war” and were creating “progress and prosperity.”<sup>69</sup> A bitter response came from F.R. Leavis, Cambridge literary critic, who in 1962 launched a “highly personalized attack” not only on Snow’s thesis but also his personal reputation.<sup>70</sup> Leavis had written his own little-discussed “idea of a university” book in 1943. This book postulated that the “study of literature was essential to the preservation of British identity and culture” and that the elites of society ought to study English literature because it provides a unique “training in values, discrimination and sensitivity” which would allow them to solve the problems of their day.<sup>71</sup> This clash can be seen as an inflection point of everything thus far discussed: should students be taught a specialized and scientific education, or a broad and humanities-oriented one? How should universities best train the next generation of leaders and what skills should they have? What are the responsibilities of the universities to society as a whole: to preserve the traditional elite culture or to propagate a new and modern one? These and other questions would remain on the minds of those writing in *Universities Quarterly* as they looked towards the future.

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<sup>68</sup> Anderson 128.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

## 1.4 Conclusion

This chapter served to identify the major debates in the “idea of a university” literature in post-war Britain. The tensions identified can be classified as being one broadly of traditionalists versus progressives. Traditionalists, such as Trevelyan, Moberly and Leavis, articulated the particular anxiety of those skeptical of the many changes within society in the post-war era, whether that be the increase in taxes and the creation of the welfare state, meritocracy and the ascendance of the working and middle classes, scientific and technical advancements, or increasing secularism. These writers felt it was the universities’ duty to act as a moral stronghold against these changes by preserving elements of the old, such as the primacy of the upper classes, the influence of religion, and the traditional British culture and identity which were increasingly losing their influence. A different set of writers, including many of those writing for *Universities Quarterly*, were more eager to embrace the changes occurring in their society, and saw the important role universities had to play in ensuring the society they built after the war was a successful and just one. Therefore, they advocated for universities to train students in values analogous to those which shaped the new post-war society; citizenship, democracy, and social responsibility. Many of the questions and debates raised in this chapter do not have clear answers and are still relevant to the philosophy of education today: should higher education be vocational or general? Is education something primarily for the benefit of the individual or for society? How can higher education ensure the best training of the next generation of leaders? While we will perhaps never have any clear answers to these questions, in the next chapter, it will become clear that time was on the side of the progressives with the massive expansion of higher education still to come.

## Chapter 2: Life at English Universities

### 2.1 Background

The last chapter explored the debates among scholars surrounding the “idea of the university” after the Second World War. Because these debates were mostly theoretical, they fail to give us an understanding of the actual landscape of universities in England in this period. For that reason, this chapter will concern itself more specifically with the English universities themselves and the details of creating, running, maintaining, and living at them in the years following World War II until the early 1960s.

Before doing so, however, it will be beneficial to trace a brief history of universities in England. For many hundreds of years, the landscape of English universities was unchanging, consisting of only the two medieval universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It wasn't until 1828 that University College London (UCL) was established, a new university which differed greatly from the medieval universities in that it was “established as a joint-stock company and had neither ties with the church nor with the state.”<sup>72</sup> A few years later in 1831, King's College London was established by the church as a rival to UCL.<sup>73</sup> Because neither of these institutions could grant degrees, the state founded the University of London in 1836 as a “solely degree-awarding, non-teaching institution” of which UCL and King's College London became the first two affiliated colleges.<sup>74</sup> As the 19<sup>th</sup> century went on and more colleges became absorbed into the University of London, it began to take its shape as “an awkward amalgam of examining body and conventional university colleges” which was used to “draw together

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<sup>72</sup> Troschitz, Robert. *Higher Education and the Student: From Welfare State to Neoliberalism*. London: Routledge, 2017, 27.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

and regulate not just the university level institutions in the London area...but those not already of independent university status elsewhere” including not just in the British Isles but also throughout the entire British Empire.<sup>75</sup>

Outside of London, the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the creation of new universities in the industrial centers of England in Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield. Although established from the 1850s through the 1880s, they did not become independent and degree-granting institutions until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when they were chartered.<sup>76</sup> While at first these institutions were “relatively small, local institutions” and were mostly focused on providing a vocational education in order “to serve local industrial and technical needs,” as time went on, their focus expanded to include the arts and pure sciences.<sup>77</sup> In many ways, the civic universities (including London) differed greatly from the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, most notably in that the civic universities “brought higher education closer to the people” and allowed for an increase in total university places in England.<sup>78</sup> However, while the civic universities represented a decided shift away from the elitist model of the medieval universities, higher education still remained a privilege provided only to the few even by the 1930s and 40s and ultimately Oxford and Cambridge still remained in the position of national dominance.<sup>79</sup>

The post-war world saw a massive expansion of higher education in both the number of students and number of universities in England. In 1945, there were eleven total degree-granting universities in England: Oxford, Cambridge, London, Durham,

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<sup>75</sup> Tight, Malcolm. *The Development of Higher Education in the United Kingdom Since 1945*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill, 2009, 12.

<sup>76</sup> Tight 13. Before the chartering of the civic universities, students who wanted to earn a degree had to apply for an external degree which was awarded by the University of London.

<sup>77</sup> Tight 10.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Troschitz 30-31.

Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol and Reading.<sup>80</sup> In the years from 1947 until 1963, the time period studied in this thesis, another 15 universities were either chartered from existing institutions or established anew.<sup>81</sup> This explosion in the number of universities in England is commonly thought to have been due to the “wide-ranging modernization of Britain” after the Second World War; however, it is important to note that “reforms to training and creation of new institutions” of higher education were mooted in Parliament in the 1930s but were delayed until after the end of the war.<sup>82</sup> Once the war was over, it became clear that the issue of the expansion of higher education was a pressing one that the government needed to address. Government-commissioned reports such as the 1946 Barlow Report recommended doubling the existing output of graduates in science and technology and significantly raising the number of students studying the humanities.<sup>83</sup> While the numbers of graduates did rise throughout the next decade, “the increase was not deemed satisfactory” and the 1956 White Paper *Technical Expansion* “suggested further expansion.”<sup>84</sup> While these government reports did not specifically demand the creation of new universities, their call for rising student numbers and predictions about the inevitable expansion of demand for places was the primary pressure behind the founding of the new universities as the 1960s approached.<sup>85</sup> Experts anticipated a huge growth in the number of students demanding a spot in university by the early 1960s. This was due to both population and policy reasons: there was both an impending “bulge” of the student-aged population in England due to

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<sup>80</sup> Tight 55.

<sup>81</sup> The 15 universities were Nottingham, Southampton, Hull, Exeter, UMIST, Leicester, Sussex, East Anglia, York, Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Warwick, Keele and Newcastle.

<sup>82</sup> Tribe, Kenneth. “The “form” of reform. The postwar university in Britain, 1945-1992:” *Leadership and Cooperation in Academia: Reflecting on the Roles and Responsibilities of University Faculty and Management*. Ed. Roger Sugden et al. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2013. 17-31, 19.

<sup>83</sup> Tribe 24.

<sup>84</sup> Troschitz 24.

<sup>85</sup> Filippakou, Ourania and Ted Tapper. *Creating the Future? The 1960s New English Universities*. Cham: Springer, 2019, 88.

the baby boom combined with a “trend” of steady expansion of the number of students achieving the qualifications to enter university, a change primarily due to the 1944 Education Act.<sup>86</sup> It is no doubt that the new post-war universities helped to facilitate the rapid growth in student numbers, which doubled from just under 50,000 in 1945 to over 100,000 in 1950 and expanded to just over 180,000 by 1965.<sup>87</sup>

As student numbers expanded, interest in university students likewise increased among academics, medical professionals and in the government. The government saw university students, or “manpower” as they were frequently referred to in government reports, as being of the utmost importance to national interest because they were regarded as resources to be used or otherwise wasted.<sup>88</sup> The Percy Report, Barlow Report and 1956 White Paper all share the idiom of industry in their discussion of students; students are referred to as a “resource,” “supply,” “reserve,” or “output” which could be “offered,” “provided,” or “wasted,” and which were either “available” or in “shortage.”<sup>89</sup> The state therefore saw students primarily through the lens of how they could benefit (or ruin, if not utilized correctly) the national economy. However, not everyone saw students in such terms; the writers discussed in the last chapter who were engaged with the “idea of a university” discussion such as Bruce Truscot, Walter Moberly, F.R. Leavis and others were all opposed to the “purely utilitarian understanding of the university as a means of manpower production” and thought that there was something more to a university education than simply training students for a useful career.<sup>90</sup> Each writer had his own belief about what students should get from a university education, whether it be moral

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<sup>86</sup> Filippakou 89.

<sup>87</sup> Tigh 55.

<sup>88</sup> Troschitz 36

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Troschitz 45.

values, an understanding of tradition and culture, or character and personality.<sup>91</sup> Others in this period, particularly in the medical community, began to focus on the health and welfare of university students with mental health becoming an increasing topic of concern. Sarah Crook argues that “since the 1940s the student mind been a locus of particular concern in the medical imagination” and that the perceived “crisis” in student mental health can be traced back to the immediate post-war period in which “undergraduates came to be positioned as the luminaries of the future.”<sup>92</sup> Whether one saw university students as a “resource” or be “utilized” for the benefit of the state, as someone to be molded into a moral being, or as a medical crisis to be solved, it cannot be denied that the government, academics and medical practitioners all had a commonly shared concern about the welfare of university students in the post-war era. This commonly held concern about students was often “framed within a discourse” of Britain’s success as a nation and was indicative of the larger anxiety about the future of the British state in the post-war world.<sup>93</sup>

Not surprisingly, a large portion of the articles in *Universities Quarterly* are concerned with life at English universities, the majority of which are student-focused, although some are focused on the lives of faculty and staff. One of the two largest areas of interest were the issues of the selection and entry to the universities, with 34 articles in total. In these articles, scholars discussed their viewpoints on how students should be selected to attend university as well as how universities could maintain high academic standards while simultaneously admitting more and more students each year. The issue of admissions and standards was a large anxiety on the part of many authors considering

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Crook, Sarah. “Historicising the “Crisis” in Undergraduate Mental Health: British Universities and Student Mental Illness, 1944–1968.” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*. 75.2 (2020): 193-220, 194.

<sup>93</sup> Troschitz 35.

that immediate post-war government reports such as the Barlow Report advocated doubling the number of university graduates. Of even more concern was the issue of student life once they were admitted to and enrolled in the universities. A total of 46 articles were concerned with the various issues affecting students' lives while at university. Such concerns included the issue of residence halls and how to accommodate students, how students should be spending their summer vacations, the mental and physical health and wellness of students, and finally their career opportunities and prospects upon leaving university. This chapter will uncover the main concerns among scholars writing in *Universities Quarterly* regarding both the issue of admissions and entry to the rapidly expanding English universities as well as the lives and welfare of students who were studying there.

## 2.2 Admissions

Volume 2 Issue 4 of *Universities Quarterly* was entirely devoted to the issue of entry and admissions. Of the issues facing the universities after the Second World War, the editor notes that the problem which “has received the greatest publicity is the proposal to increase the number of students to be admitted.”<sup>94</sup> In the introduction to the symposium, the language used to describe the issue of increasing admissions is dire and impresses urgency upon the reader. The editor notes that it is necessary that plans and ideas for how to increase the number of students at universities “be thrashed out now” because “in five years it may be too late.”<sup>95</sup> He does not elaborate what it may be “too late” for, although seeing as he notes that the universities have the responsibility to train “the future leaders of the country” and it would be “largely upon these leaders that the

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<sup>94</sup> “Entry and Careers - A Symposium Introduction.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.4 (1948): 329-336, 329.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

survival of the country depends,” one can assume that he means too late for the survival of Britain in the post-war world.<sup>96</sup> Considering the urgency with which this topic was discussed, it is not surprising that *Universities Quarterly* devoted multiple issues to the problem of entry and selection of students throughout the years. This topic remained a prominent one throughout the entire period studied in this thesis.

Authors in *Universities Quarterly* were acutely aware that the world in which they were living was a very different one from that of the past. Lawrence Bragg, professor of physics at University of Cambridge, notes that “when university life was the privilege of a small upper class...the question of standards of entry hardly arose”; however, now that universities were open to “general competition,” the issue of entry standards became more complicated.<sup>97</sup> John Wolfenden, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Reading, also looks back to the past for context, noting that in the “bad old days a college might deliberately accept young men because they were the sons of old members, or because they had rowed for their public schools at Henley” rather than based on their academic promise.<sup>98</sup> Over time, according to Wolfenden, universities called the “propriety of this kind of thing” into question and therefore shifted their entry policy to favoring “more and more of their commoners...on specifically academic grounds.”<sup>99</sup> What Wolfenden is describing is the shift in admissions policy in universities from one of aristocracy or social status to one of meritocracy.

While meritocracy was not a new idea, what was new since 1945 was that, as J.F. Mountford, Vice-Chancellor of University of Liverpool notes, “all universities and almost all faculties have had to refuse considerable numbers of young people who were

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 336.

<sup>97</sup> Bragg, Lawrence. “Standards of Entry to the University for Science Students.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.4 (1948): 346-352, 347.

<sup>98</sup> Wolfenden, J.F. “Selection for Universities I.” *Universities Quarterly* 6.1 (1951): 16-21, 19.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

eager to enter and who had satisfied all of the usual entrance requirements.”<sup>100</sup> Mountford argues that the “increased demand for admission” was due to “the lowering of financial barriers” such as increased availability of state scholarships to students, which has led universities to shift from an “educational ladder” available only to the “intellectual acrobat to climb to its highest rung” to “a broad highway.”<sup>101</sup> What is curious about Mountford’s article is that while he acknowledges that universities are consistently turning away qualified students from their institutions, he is still worried about the lowering of standards at universities. What truly concerns Mountford is not that universities are letting in academically unqualified students, but rather that they are producing graduates who “have only narrow interest and lack the ability to think in general terms and do not possess an active attitude of mind.”<sup>102</sup> Citing criticism from industry and commerce that graduates of universities are not “educated persons” despite being “reasonably qualified for the professions,” Mountford proposes that universities improve their methods of selection so as to ensure that those admitted are “in fact capable of being educated in th[e] wider sense.”<sup>103</sup> Mountford’s main targets are those students whose “main motive is not to advance knowledge, but simply to become dentists, engineers, veterinarians, brewers, social workers, metallurgists or textile technologists”: in other words, those seeking a vocational education.<sup>104</sup> He asks whether universities are to “admit those who we think will most easily qualify in their professional studies, or are we to give preference to those who seem more likely to benefit from the wider influences

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<sup>100</sup> Mountford, J.F. “The Selection of Students.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.4 (1948): 367-375, 367.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* 368.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* 370.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* 369.

of university life?”<sup>105</sup> While he leaves the question open-ended, it can be assumed that his preference would be for the latter.

James Hemming, Research Officer of the Association for Education in Citizenship, was similarly concerned about university standards as the numbers of university students increased. Hemming separates the concept of “lowering of standards” into two different contexts: first, in an academic context, meaning the lowered “intellectual capacity” of students and the “reduction in the academic standards of Honours degree courses,” and second, in a cultural context regarding the “cultural standards of students now attending the universities.”<sup>106</sup> Hemming argues that the lowering of academic standards was not the problem, but rather the lowering of cultural standards at the universities. Hemming assures the reader that “there is little reason to fear that doubling the numbers at universities would overstrain the intellectual reserves of the nation,” citing the fact that there are more able pupils undertaking Post-School Certification courses than before the war.<sup>107</sup> Unconcerned about academic standards, his concern focuses instead on the declining cultural standards of the universities due to the entry of students who are “too utilitarian in their attitude to study, too limited in interests, and too little skilled in the graces of life to suit well the traditions of leisured culture upon which the universities pride themselves.”<sup>108</sup> Hemming’s criticism dovetails with Mountford’s, targeting students who “seem interested only to get on, capture the best degree within reach, and get out” and who want to achieve a “means of livelihood rather than...a philosophy of life.”<sup>109</sup> According to Hemming, this kind of “cultural poverty”

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Hemming, James. “The Reserves of Intelligence and Culture.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.4 (1948): 353-359, 353.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 355.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 357.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 356-357.

needed to be eliminated, and the responsibility should fall on the secondary schools to provide students with a better cultural education.<sup>110</sup>

Some authors, such as Wolfenden, were not so concerned with maintaining academic or cultural standards, but rather with the concept of “wastage” of talent. Wolfenden worried that “leaders of national life in the next generation...may not (to put it mildly) be those who were most successful in the G.C.E. at sixteen-plus” and that the “scholastic criterion” excludes many worthy young people resulting in a “serious loss to them, to ourselves and to the nation.”<sup>111</sup> Wolfenden is here expressing the fear of “wastage” of young talent; if universities rely too closely on test scores, universities may keep their high standard of “scholarship, research and intellectual inquiry” but would fail in “their contribution to the nation and the world of nations.”<sup>112</sup> However, not just concerned about “wastage,” Wolfenden’s arguments also point to his ideals of what a university should be. Wolfenden believes that the mission of the university is “besides nourishing the academic minority, to provide a background for that growth in maturity, responsibility and leadership which for the less academic will make their own lives fuller and happier and enrich the community at large.”<sup>113</sup> If the university is to have such a mission, then the issue of entry becomes somewhat difficult, because test scores, while indicating a student’s academic proclivity, do not speak to his or her other qualities such as “responsibility” or “leadership.” Similarly to Wolfenden, Bragg proposes that the new standards of entry to universities should regard “character and power of leadership...as more important than academic ability,” with the courses becoming “less academic, and combined with considerable practical experience” and universities ultimately becoming

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 357.

<sup>111</sup> Wolfenden 21.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. 20.

“a finishing school for the more active and intelligent ordinary citizens of the country.”<sup>114</sup> This system would, according to Bragg, be separate from the universities’ selective Honours courses, which should be maintained for the minority of the academically inclined elite.<sup>115</sup> Neither author makes clear how universities should test for “character” and “power of leadership”; while they agreed that interviews are the best method for discovering such characteristics, the increasing number of applicants each year meant that interviews with potential students were becoming increasingly impractical or even impossible.

### 2.3 Student Life

The problems associated with the increased number of students at universities in England did not stop at the entry phase. Rather, a whole new set of problems arose once the growing number of students arrived at their universities. One of the issues most discussed in *Universities Quarterly* pertaining to student life at the universities was the issue of student residence. While Oxford and Cambridge operated on the collegiate model in which all students lived in a residential college at the university, the civic universities differed greatly in that they “did not offer accommodation and...therefore students lived at home or in lodgings.”<sup>116</sup> Scholars deemed the situation unsatisfactory and over the years, the civic universities began building halls of residence as they “came to be seen as an indispensable part of university life.”<sup>117</sup> However, based on the articles in *Universities Quarterly* about halls of residence, it is clear that scholars at the time had various ideas about the relative importance of halls of residence, as well as about how

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<sup>114</sup> Bragg 352.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Troschitz 29.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

they should be built and organized. John Murray, Principal of University College of the South-West in Exeter, acknowledges that there is no “accepted theory or philosophy of Halls. There has hardly as yet been time for a philosophy to take shape.”<sup>118</sup> He advises that the modern universities should not simply accept the Oxford and Cambridge model. Murray argues that “the needs of the modern institutions are very distinctive” and therefore they “must find the modalities of the idea best suited to themselves” rather than blindly following the Oxbridge “ideal.”<sup>119</sup> To Murray, a hall is “an academic community in which certain moral and social influences are focused” and it should bear “analogy to a home rather than to an institution.”<sup>120</sup> He notes that the “best results” at his university “in respect of the focusing of moral and social influences, have been got in fine old homes built in ampler days for family use,” with ample room for libraries and common rooms used for housing up to 30 students each.<sup>121</sup>

However, before deciding upon the ideal types of residence halls, some authors such as Eric Ashby, then the President and Vice-Chancellor of The Queen’s University Belfast, thought it necessary to address the elephant in the room: despite the fact that there was a “unanimous desire for halls of residence,” there was an “immense difficulty and expense of putting up halls of residence at present.”<sup>122</sup> Ashby is not optimistic about the prospect of building enough residence halls to “shift some 40 per cent of all students...from their homes...to halls of residence,” because such a large operation “is certain to be slow and in some universities is unlikely ever to be completed.”<sup>123</sup> For this reason, he suggests a cheaper alternative to the building of residence halls. His proposal

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<sup>118</sup> Murray, John. “Halls of Residence in Universities.” *Universities Quarterly* 3.2 (1949): 563- 570, 563.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* 564.

<sup>122</sup> Ashby, Eric. “A Note on an Alternative to Halls of Residence.” *Universities Quarterly* 5.2 (1951): 150-177, 150.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* 153.

is that the universities abandon their “9 a.m. to 5p.m. attitude” and keep their facilities open until 10pm in order to provide a place to study and eat dinner, with the goal of providing a more scholastic environment for students who live at home. According to Ashby, “many of the difficulties of the home students could be avoided, if the students took bed and breakfast in their homes or in lodgings but were able to spend the rest of their time in term at the University.”<sup>124</sup>

Another author concerned about the predicament of the ‘home student’ was Doris Thoday, a former Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham’s Faculty of Commerce and Social Science. Thoday carried out a study in 1951-1952 at Birmingham University which aimed to “compare the use made of [University] opportunities by students living in Hall, in lodgings and at home.”<sup>125</sup> Thoday sampled 503 undergraduates on various aspects of university life such as the use of the Student Union, their membership of societies and committees, involvement in other activities which were “indications of more serious interests” such as reading outside of class, visits to the fine arts institute, and religious pursuits.<sup>126</sup> Overall, her study found that “students living in the two halls of residence took...a greater part in university life” whereas home students “took least part in the activities discussed” and led “a less active life than the rest and ha[ve] much less contact with other students.”<sup>127</sup> Thoday agrees with Ashby that provisions should be made for ‘home students’ to become more integrated with university life; however, she thinks that his proposal to “expand the use of the Union by providing evening meals and...opening the university libraries” is not good enough and should not be pursued “at the expense of Halls.”<sup>128</sup> Rather, Thoday suggests a compromise between

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Thoday, Doris. “Halls of Residence.” *Universities Quarterly* 12.1 (1957): 45-56, 45-46.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 46.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. 53.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. 55.

Ashby's proposal and full residence for all students. She advocates for an "experiment of providing larger dining halls, common rooms and reading rooms in halls of residence and requiring a small number of home and lodgings students to dine in Hall two or three times a week" so that the 'home students' would be able to have contact with the Hall students and "acquire a sense of belonging to their community."<sup>129</sup>

The concern expressed about student residence and participation in student life at university was reflective of another larger concern: that of student success at university. Underlying Murray's, Ashby's and Thoday's concerns about student residence is a greater concern about the academic success and overall well-being of university students. Some authors were more directly concerned with the issue of student success (and failure), such as James Mountford, whose article about student selection I analyzed in the previous section of this chapter. Mountford was the author of a pamphlet titled *How They Fared* which examined "the degree of success and failure amongst a particular group of university students" in the late 1940s at Liverpool University.<sup>130</sup> While Mountford's study found that 11.4 percent of all students failed to complete their course, a figure "much less alarming" than one might expect, he still asks whether "it is really satisfactory that 11.4 percent should entirely fail to complete their course."<sup>131</sup> Mountford's primary interest is in what universities "can do to reduce the number of failures," concluding that amongst other things, universities needed to review their "choice of students" as well as provide opportunities for inclusion of 'home students'.<sup>132</sup> Mountford's conclusion demonstrates how the issues of entry, residence and student failure were all closely

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid. 56.

<sup>130</sup> Mountford, James. "Success and Failure at the University." *Universities Quarterly* 11.3 (1957): 226-234, 226.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 228.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. 232.

intertwined, and to be concerned about one element necessitated consideration of the other two elements.

The issue of student failure was not just connected to the issue of student entry and residence; another key component was the mental health of students. While Mountford did not acknowledge the role in which mental health plays in the relative academic success or failure of students, other authors made a point to mention the mental health of students as a contributing factor to their academic performance. One such author was Nicholas Malleon, the lead physician at UCL's Student Health Association, who reported on the Student Health Association's research into the academic difficulties suffered by UCL students. Their study found that among the four primary reasons for academic failure among students was anxiety. Whether it was "a sense of inferiority, social, academic or personal, or... worry about work and particularly examinations," they found that "anxious students [were] less likely to do well." Meanwhile, students who came to the "Health Centre for help with minor personal and psychiatric troubles relating less directly to academic matters...do in fact do better than the average."<sup>133</sup> Malleon's takeaway from such data is that universities needed to allow students to have "closer contact with more experienced and understanding adults, be their tutors, deans, chaplains or the ordinary teaching staff," which would hopefully work to ease their anxiousness especially in academic matters.<sup>134</sup>

Malleon was not the only author to take an interest in student mental health, as evidenced by the fact that Volume 9 Issue 1 of *Universities Quarterly* featured a symposium on student health including the issue of mental health and psychiatry for university students. Ronald J. Still, physician at the Student Health Department at the

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<sup>133</sup> Malleon, Nicholas. "Student Performance at University College London 1948-1951." *Universities Quarterly* 12.3 (1958): 288-319, 300.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

University of Leeds, notes that “since the war, partly owing to the stimulus of the newly-developed university health services, attention has been repeatedly called to the state of mental health of students.”<sup>135</sup> Still estimates that out of every 100 entrants, “2 or 3 will show signs of serious or moderately serious psychological illness” and “another 7 out of 100 entrants are likely to present symptoms of milder illness.”<sup>136</sup> Together, he notes that this makes mental illness “the chief cause of prolonged absence from studies” to an even greater extent than tuberculosis.<sup>137</sup> In terms of prevention, Still comes to a similar conclusion as Malleson, emphasizing the role that adults at the university can play in promoting a “liveliness of warm human spirit among students and teachers” to ensure that the university’s “social structure and climate do not bring the predisposed nearer to illness.”<sup>138</sup>

While some authors may have been seriously concerned about the well-being of university students, whether that be in terms of their mental and physical well-being or their academic success, Mountford acknowledges another reason why the interest in student life had become so pronounced in the post-war era. Since 1945, Mountford notes, universities had received over 30 million pounds from the Treasury, “a sum which represents about three-quarters of their recurrent expenditure.”<sup>139</sup> Universities had also received generous grants from Local Authorities, upon which a majority of university students had to rely.<sup>140</sup> With all of this public money being funneled to universities and their students, Mountford argues that the universities should expect that “Education Committees and Members of Parliament will ask with increasing frequency whether the

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<sup>135</sup> Still, Ronald J. “III. The Prevention of Psychological Illness Among Students.” *Universities Quarterly* 9.1 (1954): 32-38.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* 37-38.

<sup>139</sup> Mountford “Success” 226.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

sums now being spent on university education are justified.”<sup>141</sup> Mountford is expressing the pressure universities faced in this era to ensure student success; if students failed, the universities would be held responsible and could perhaps lose their public funding. It was perhaps a combination of this pressure along with a genuine concern for the well-being of students that prompted scholars to turn their attention to not just the issue of student life but also the issue of admission. Together they constituted the primary issues facing the universities in the post-war era as they attempted to expand access while simultaneously ensuring success for their students.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter highlighted that scholars clearly felt that the universities had a larger responsibility towards society. Concerns about admission including the lowering of standards as well as the issue of “wastage” of talent speak to the fact that scholars worried that the expansion of the universities might be a failure. Whether they worried that letting in different kinds of students might drag down the standards of education, leading to less intelligent and engaged graduates, or that standardized admissions might leave behind certain students and lead to a waste of untapped human potential, it is clear that scholars believed that the burden fell on universities to generate the next generation of leaders of the nation. This connects to scholarly concerns about student life and wellbeing, particularly the issues of residence life and mental health. Scholars feared that universities might fail students, not just academically but socially. For this reason, some scholars highlighted the importance of a positive living environment for students and pushed for the creation of more student residences. Student success was a vital issue and scholars felt it to be the university’s duty to ensure that

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

students went on to become engaged and useful members of society. If scholars didn't feel student success to be an existential burden, then they surely felt it as a political burden, considering the amount of money universities were being given by the government in the post-war era for the expressed purpose of producing an increasing number of graduates for the betterment of society at large.

## Chapter 3: Disciplines

### 3.1 Background

As demonstrated in earlier chapters, the purpose or mission of the university has been a topic of much debate since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, certain primary characteristics of universities and their purpose must be agreed upon. According to Stefan Collini, a modern university must possess these following three characteristics at a bare minimum:

1. That it provides some form of post-secondary-school education, where ‘education’ signals something more than professional training.
2. That it furthers some form of advanced scholarship or research whose character is not wholly dictated by the need to solve immediate practical problems.
3. That these activities are pursued in more than just one single discipline or very tightly defined cluster of disciplines.<sup>142</sup>

I therefore assert that the primary duty of universities is to provide a post-secondary education to students within a specific discipline as well as to carry out research within those specific disciplines. With the primary activities of the university organized into disciplines, it is not surprising that the topic of disciplines is a prominent topic of discussion and debate among scholars concerned with the state of universities.

The authors in *Universities Quarterly* clearly thought that the discussion of disciplines was important, as evidenced by the large volume of articles published during the years of 1947-1963 concerned with the array of disciplines offered at the universities. These articles ranged from reports on the development of a discipline, defenses of certain

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<sup>142</sup> Collini *What Are Universities For* 32.

disciplines that scholars felt were “under attack,” calls for specific disciplines to be expanded, and even the condemnation of certain disciplines. The articles can be divided broadly into three sections: the arts (including classics, English literature, modern languages, history, philosophy, theology, and fine arts), the sciences (including “pure” sciences like physics, chemistry and mathematics, as well as “applied” sciences like technology and engineering), and social sciences (including sociology, psychology, political science, economics and geography). Curiously, medicine and law, two of the oldest university disciplines stretching back to the medieval era, were not discussed much in the journal, if at all; only nine articles were published about medical and dental education and none at all were published about legal education. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the arts had the majority of the articles with nearly 100 in total. The sciences came in second place with approximately 75 articles and finally the social sciences came in third with approximately 45 articles.

It will be helpful to first trace a brief history of the disciplines within British universities. In the medieval world, students would first study an arts-based curriculum of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy).<sup>143</sup> After this preparatory arts course, students could choose to study further at one of four professional faculties: theology, medicine, church law, and civil or Roman law.<sup>144</sup> The primary discipline at Oxford and Cambridge was “logic, based on the works of Aristotle as interpreted by Christian commentators,” highlighting the fact that both universities were initially founded on the Parisian model, which was “devoted primarily to philosophy and theology.”<sup>145</sup> While much changed in the universities from the medieval era to the modern era, including “the rise of the sciences in the late

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<sup>143</sup> Tight 194.

<sup>144</sup> Anderson 1.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

nineteenth century, and the technologies and social sciences in the first half of the twentieth century,” the pre-eminence of classical studies remained at Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>146</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, “classics retained its own unique prestige as the subject for the future governing elite”<sup>147</sup> and was seen as the “ideal Oxbridge subject, for its combination of academic rigor and moral training.”<sup>148</sup> Classics did face its challengers, such as history, which began to enjoy a “scientific prestige” as a discipline in the late-nineteenth century and by 1914 had overtaken the classics in terms of popularity among students at Oxford.<sup>149</sup> However, no matter if it was history, classics, philosophy or even English literature, the fact remained that “the ideal-type professional destinations for graduates” had been historically “associated with the arts.”<sup>150</sup> While natural science faculties and student numbers were growing, they “attracted few of the elite students destined for politics or the civil service.”<sup>151</sup> Therefore, on the eve of the Second World War, the arts still dominated student numbers: in 1938-1939, students in the arts and social sciences made up the majority with 44.7 percent of the total, with only 25.9 percent of students studying pure and applied science.

The post-war years in which the authors in *Universities Quarterly* were writing was a period of transition from the dominance of the arts to that of the sciences. By 1967-1968 the number of students studying pure and applied sciences had overtaken that of arts and social sciences students with 46.6 percent and 39.3 percent of the total respectively.<sup>152</sup> The post-war emphasis on science and technology can be traced back, at least partly, to a series of reports commissioned by the government that began in the final

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<sup>146</sup> Tight 194.

<sup>147</sup> Anderson 47.

<sup>148</sup> Mander, Peter. “The Humanities in British Universities since 1945.” *The American Historical Review*. 120.4 (2015): 1299-1310, 1301.

<sup>149</sup> Anderson 47.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. 47-48.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Tight 193.

years of World War II and lasted until 1947.<sup>153</sup> These reports made the case for the expansion of higher education in anticipation of the “manpower” needs of the post-war world, particularly in the fields of science and technology.<sup>154</sup> A primary example is the Barlow report, which in 1946 “anticipated a doubling of the output of science graduates with a decade.”<sup>155</sup> At first, these reports simply acted as guidelines and “no strong-arm methods were employed to force universities to shift their supply of courses.”<sup>156</sup> However by the end of the 1950s, some adamantly claimed that not enough was being done to “shift the arts-sciences balance at universities” and that Britain was lagging behind in “scientific, technological and industrial achievements,” leading them on the road to decline if the system was not radically changed.<sup>157</sup> The voice of this movement was C.P. Snow, author of the 1959 book *The Two Cultures* which called for “a scientific renaissance in British education.”<sup>158</sup> Snow’s hope was that skewing the system away from the outmoded Oxbridge-style classics education and towards the sciences would allow Britain to remain internationally competitive in the post-war world.<sup>159</sup> This push towards the sciences that began in the late 1950s led to a somewhat panicked response by the humanities, which some felt to be “in crisis”; some scholars worried that arts disciplines like history and philosophy would have to adapt to the new technological world or else face extinction.<sup>160</sup> With this rather dramatic pitting of the arts against the sciences, it is no surprise that discourse surrounding the disciplines of the arts and sciences was so prevalent in *Universities Quarterly* in this period.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid. 58-59.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. 59.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Mandler “The Humanities” 1302.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 1303.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

This post-war debate of the arts versus sciences left out one major area of study which has a rich history in Britain: the social sciences. The social sciences did arouse some interest by the authors in *Universities Quarterly*; however, the number of articles about the social sciences was approximately half of that of both the arts and sciences. The lesser interest in the social sciences makes sense in the context of the time, not only because the arts versus sciences debate dominated the discourse but also because the social sciences were still very much finding their place as disciplines within the universities. The social sciences were not as widely studied as either the arts or sciences in the early post-war era; from 1945 until the early 1960s, the social sciences went from being taught in just one university (the London School of Economics) to a mere “handful” of universities.<sup>161</sup> Even by 1963, only 12 percent of university students were enrolled in social science courses.<sup>162</sup> This was not just due to a lack of interest among students; in fact, scholars in the social sciences were wary about teaching their disciplines at an undergraduate level, claiming that it was either too complex or simply not suitable for study amongst undergraduates.<sup>163</sup> This wariness to teach undergraduates was at least in part due to the desire among social scientists to avoid being associated with the “marginalized, mostly female students, who came to study social science at university as a part of a training for a career in social work.”<sup>164</sup> Many felt that the association with social work would feminize the discipline and challenge its integrity as a scientific discipline. The expansion of the social sciences at the undergraduate level would not begin until the late 1950s and early 1960s, when “the same technocratic spirit fueling the

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<sup>161</sup> Panayotova, Plamena. “The Teaching of Research Methods in British Sociology in the Twentieth Century.” *The History of Sociology in Britain: New Research and Revaluation*. Ed. Plamena Panayotova. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. 2019. 301-335, 304.

<sup>162</sup> Mandler, Peter. “The Rise of the Social Sciences in British Education, 1960-2016.” *The History of Sociology in Britain: New Research and Revaluation*. Ed. Plamena Panayotova. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. 2019. 281-299, 282.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

swing towards science was manifest in the social-scientific disciplines.”<sup>165</sup> With the promise of “new tranches of serious young men” entering higher education, sociology departments began to spring up at both the expanding ‘redbrick’ universities (Leeds, Sheffield, Leicester) and the new ‘plateglass’ universities to meet the new “perceived demand for sociological and psychological expertise at high levels in industry and government.”<sup>166</sup>

With this context in mind, the following chapter will analyze exactly what debates were occurring in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* regarding the disciplines. The chapter will follow the disciplines in order from most written-about to least written-about: first, the arts; secondly, the sciences; and finally, the social sciences.

### 3.2 The Arts

As discussed above, the government-backed push towards the sciences began during the last years of the Second World War and would continue until the 1960s, reaching a high-point in the late 1950s according to Mandler. However, already by 1948, scholars in the humanities such as Louis Arnaud Reid, professor of Philosophy of Education at University of London, felt their disciplines to be at risk in the increasingly scientific post-war world. Anticipating that “it will become [necessary] increasingly, to justify...arts education in view of...the enormously increased prestige of science and technology in a desperately practical world,” Reid published an article defending the need for arts education.<sup>167</sup> In this article Reid also warns of what may befall the nation if

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid. 283.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Reid, Louis Arnaud. “The Nature and Justification of an “Arts” Education.” *Universities Quarterly* 3.1 (1948): 497-506, 497.

arts education were to become neglected in the universities.<sup>168</sup> Reid highlights the many benefits of an arts education, including that it is “education for living, acting, doing as well as for knowing, thinking, enjoying” and that it “increases man’s capacity to respond and to live as he ought, in himself, in his immediate society, in the world and the universe.”<sup>169</sup> In a world of efficiency and “the constraints of vulgar demands for immediate usefulness,” Reid defends that “efficiency of an arts education is in what it does to the soul of a man, in its production of a habit of intuitive awareness and wisdom.”<sup>170</sup> Here Reid harks back to Cardinal Newman, who argued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the aim of a university education was the development of a “philosophical habit.”

Necessary to Reid’s argument is the stark contrast between the arts and sciences; while the arts “trains in the understanding of the individual...chiefly in appreciating and understanding individuals (e.g. persons, poems) and individual situations (e.g. historical ones”), the sciences train the students in “general concepts, abstract ideas, universals” and “precise predetermined formulae.”<sup>171</sup> It is on these grounds that he not only defends the arts as providing a good training for careers in “social and industrial service, politics, [and] administration” as well as for life generally, but also the grounds on which he condemns the sciences and gives us a grave warning about our future if the sciences are to take precedent over the arts. Reid states that:

When science forgets that its unique and legitimate function is a self-limited one, when science is exalted above the proper study and care of man, or usurps its place, or when technocracy is king, and when this bastard philosophy is politically

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. 498-499.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 500-501.

legitimized, it is not too much to say that everything precious in the life of man, and human life itself, is doomed.<sup>172</sup>

Therefore, for Reid, it seems then that this disciplinary battle between the arts and sciences is not just a university squabble, but it is in fact something much more: a battle between success or failure of their nation, between life and death. Reid's anxiety about the loss of the arts and the ascendance of science and technology is intimately connected with his anxiety about the decline of the British state. For Reid, the arts were responsible for Britain's past greatness and the production of its "character and...leadership."<sup>173</sup> Therefore the decline of the arts would result in the loss of "our vision as a people" and Britain would "surely perish destroying more than [them]selves in the process."<sup>174</sup> However, if the arts are preserved, Reid hypothesized that they may be able to "save [them]selves and the world (if the world survives to be saved) from final technocracy and the annihilation of man."<sup>175</sup> For Reid, the dominance of science and technology would spell not only the end of the great British state, but also end of the world entirely.

Reid was not representative of the whole of authors writing about the humanities in the post-war era; rather, he represents the extreme end. One cannot know whether his distress and pessimism were genuine or if perhaps it was hyperbole in order to emphasize his point. While other authors may not warn of the apocalypse as Reid does, similar sentiments do run through the works of authors writing about the arts disciplines, as there was a general sense that the arts were indeed in some way under threat or attack by the encroachment of the sciences. The majority of the articles about the arts are discipline-

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 502.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 504.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

specific, the most prominent disciplines discussed being the classics and English literature.

The classics, long seen as the quintessential arts education, felt themselves to be the specific arts discipline most under threat in the post-war era. Like Reid, scholars in the classics linked their anxieties about the decline of their discipline with the general decline of the British state and society. Phillip Leon, the head of the Department of Classics at University College, Leicester echoes Reid's anxieties when he states that "we are being compelled to take almost daily stock of our civilization, which we are afraid of losing, either dramatically in one fell cataclysm, or imperceptibly by the slow attrition of circumstances," advocating that the best remedy for this perilous age are the classics.<sup>176</sup> Leon argues that what they need "most crucially is a sane sense of community and of the relation between the individual and society," two things which are "best supplied by the classics."<sup>177</sup> Leon continues by stating that British civilization, a product of both the "Graeco-Roman and Hebraeo-Christian" traditions, must preserve these two traditions if they want to safeguard their own, especially in the face of the recent threats posed to British civilization by Germany and Russia, two nations in which, as Leon points out, the Graeco-Roman tradition has "had least time to establish itself."<sup>178</sup> Therefore for Leon, the preservation of the discipline of the classics was much more than the preservation of a discipline; rather, it represented the preservation of British civilization and heritage.

Classical scholars' pessimism about the decline of their subject in the universities did not preclude all hope. While they acknowledged that their own discipline was unlikely to have a renaissance in popularity, they placed their hope in the younger arts

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<sup>176</sup> Leon, Phillip. "The Place of the Classics in the Modern University." *Universities Quarterly* 6.2 (1952): 175-182, 176.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* 178.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* 179.

discipline of English literature by suggesting that English could take up the place that the classics had once held in the universities as the primary arts discipline. Leon admits that the classics could no longer “safeguard...classical heritage for the general culture,” and that this duty of “safeguarding” would now fall to “teachers of other disciplines, English, modern languages, history, philosophy.”<sup>179</sup> Likewise, in the introduction to the symposium on the classics in Volume 9, Maurice Bowra envisions that the classics “must do more than pursue their ancient paths” if they want to remain relevant to the universities, and in order to do this, they “must be brought into the same orbit as English and foreign languages.”<sup>180</sup> Out of all of the arts subjects, English literature was poised to be the prime successor to the classics. In fact, in an article included as part of the symposium on the classics, L.C. Knights, professor of English at the University of Bristol, makes the case for “English as a discipline capable of taking that central place in a human education once occupied by the Classics.”<sup>181</sup> Like the classics, the “basic material” (i.e., literature) of English “keeps the student in touch with standards of effective thinking and imaginative awareness,” leading to a similarly “liberal and humanizing study.”<sup>182</sup> Knights argues that this “humanizing” aim of the classics may be better executed by English because “the literature of the mother tongue has its unique advantages” when compared to one’s second or third language.<sup>183</sup>

One of the points most central to Knight’s argument is the merit of English literature and what sorts of values can be instilled in students by engaging with it. Knights asserts that “England has a great literature, and to study that literature is also to

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. 182.

<sup>180</sup> Bowra, Maurice. “The Place of Classics in School and University: Introduction.” *Universities Quarterly* 9.2 (1955): 120-125, 124-125.

<sup>181</sup> Knights, L.C. “The Place of Classics in School and University V: The Claims of English.” *Universities Quarterly* 9.3 (1955): 223-231, 223.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. 230.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. 224.

study a way of life, changing with the years but with a recognizable continuity and tradition.”<sup>184</sup> Therefore the study of English literature would offer not just a training in imaginative awareness and critical thinking, but it would also offer a training in English tradition and culture. While classical scholars lamented the loss of the classics as a loss of a national tradition and a common culture, English scholars asserted that the study of English literature offered an equal, albeit updated, study in the Western tradition and would thereby preserve the culture that many in the arts feared they would lose in the post-war era.

### 3.3 Science and Technology

In contrast to the concerned and sometimes rather alarmist nature of the articles written about the arts disciplines, articles about science and technology did not stir up nearly as much panic. While nearly all articles acknowledged that there was a need to expand science and technology departments at British universities as well as the number of graduates in these fields, most articles did not raise many concerns about this process or how it would be completed. The tone of the articles about science and technology was therefore on the whole much calmer, most likely because the authors knew that the government was actively concerned with increasing Britain’s scientific standing among nations. Therefore, while the arts disciplines felt threatened and worried about losing their once prominent place in the universities, the sciences knew that, although the present state of their departments was not ideal, the future would only bring growth and more support.

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid. 227.

Among the unconcerned was physicist Patrick Blackett, director of the Physics Department at Manchester University and recipient of the Nobel Prize in 1948.<sup>185</sup> Although a “forceful advocate of university expansion and government funding of research and development,”<sup>186</sup> unlike some of his peers, Blackett did not believe that there was any kind of “crisis” in the universities. In his 1950 article “The Education of the Scientist in the University of Today,” Blackett states that he “deplor[es] the current talk of a crisis in the universities” because it is “untrue in fact” and he sees it as a “serious impediment to the carrying out of the innumerable practical tasks of making the British universities better.”<sup>187</sup> Blackett’s view was uncommon among those writing about universities in the post-war era; he stood in opposition to those who, in Blackett’s words, “attack” the universities “for not providing the moral and intellectual leadership without which, so it is alleged, our civilisation is doomed.”<sup>188</sup> Compared to the multitude of books and articles by the doomsayers, Blackett’s opinions, such as that “the universities of England are in excellent shape and are doing as good a job as can be expected” and that “the departments of science in our universities...are good by any standard and compare well...to those of any other country to-day”<sup>189</sup> come as a breath of fresh air. Nowhere are the fears about the decline of British civilization or concerns about how Britain measures up to other nations (a topic which will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis). What can account for Blackett’s confidence?

Blackett bases his argument for such confident assertions about the state of English universities on several points, the first of which is to cast doubt upon those who

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185 Nye, Mary Jo. “Blackett, Patrick Maynard Stuart, Baron Blackett.” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, September 23, 2004. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Blackett, P.M.S. “The Education of the Scientist in the University of Today.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.3 (1950): 226-236, 236.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. 226.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. 277.

claim that universities are failing to provide moral leadership to their students. To those proclaiming the moral failure of the British universities, Blackett responds by stating that “the British universities have not led the main intellectual, religious and social movements of the last three hundred years and it is surely idle to expect them...to take the lead now.”<sup>190</sup> He provides examples of some of the most important reforms and changes in English history such as the industrial revolution, the abolition of slavery, the Reform Bill, and the 1945 Labour government, all of which the universities had “little or nothing to do.”<sup>191</sup> Rather, Blackett believes that the role of the universities is, and always has been, a vocational one and that the greatest contribution academics can make to “the education of British youth is as specialists, whether of the arts to sciences, and not...as moralists.”<sup>192</sup> Blackett states that university teachers of science must communicate their “specialist knowledge,” their “delight in the activity of being a scientist...” and lastly give students “the opportunity to share the intellectual excitement of exploring the frontiers of knowledge,”<sup>193</sup> all three of which he believes the universities “are doing quite well,” a claim he supports by discussing the employment successes of his physics graduates.<sup>194</sup> He is likewise optimistic about the student body; in contrast to those who censure the universities for their “narrow, dull [and] apathetic” student bodies, Blackett is impressed by the quality of his students despite the fact that many of them have had poor or working-class upbringings.<sup>195</sup> All of this considered, Blackett believes that the sciences departments at English universities are largely doing their job well, and that if they were forced to “vainly thrash out some common ‘philosophy of life’” (which, he

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid. 229.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. 228-229.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. 229-230.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. 230.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 233.

points out, proves to be elusive in their present society) it would result in nothing but a waste of time.

Despite Blackett's efforts, the idea of introducing a general education or arts course for science and technology students continued to gain traction in this era. Multiple authors in *Universities Quarterly* advocated for some type of arts education for science students. Notably, all of these articles were written by scholars in arts disciplines. Norwood Russell Hanson, lecturer in Philosophy of Science at University of Cambridge, is one such scholar who advocated for a change in how science and technology students were educated. Hanson saw no issue with specialist education, although he thought that in order to be a true "specialist" in technology, one must be educated in both science-based and arts-based training regarding one's specialty. He wanted universities to produce "creative specialist[s]," and that rather than "tack cultural afterthoughts onto an already jammed curriculum," universities should "help [students] find new depths and dimensions in [their] own special studies."<sup>196</sup> However, Hanson's proposals as to how universities can provide this to students remain vague, besides suggesting that technologists should take courses such as the "History and Philosophy of Aviation" for example.<sup>197</sup> John Pilley, Professor of Education at University of Edinburgh, takes issue with Hanson's suggestions. Pilley criticizes Hanson for wanting "us to give up...our traditional technological education, which he insists do not produce educated men."<sup>198</sup> However, Pilley's suggestions remain similarly vague; he thinks there should "still be some humane study included in the scientist's work" and that teachers of technology

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<sup>196</sup> Hanson, Norwood Russell. "The Education of the Technologist 1. Science as a Liberal Education." *Universities Quarterly* 11.2 (1957): 117-126, 122.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>198</sup> Pilley, John. "The Education of the Technologist 2. The Humanities and the Technologist." *Universities Quarterly*. 11:2 (1957) 127-137, 127.

should be persons who have “attained the virtues that humane studies have to impart”<sup>199</sup>; however, he ultimately determines that most of the responsibility for training technologists in the arts relies on secondary schools and not the universities.<sup>200</sup>

The most well-developed proposal for the mixing of arts and science courses actually comes from a scientist arguing for the inclusion of sciences courses for non-science students. Writing in response to Hanson and Pilley, F. Arthur Vick, professor of Physics at University College of North Staffordshire, argues that if some can claim that a technologist “would not know fully what he is about without some education in the humanities,” then it can also be said that scientists can likewise “help students of the humanities to know what they are about” especially considering that “many of the problems and opportunities of the future will be determined increasingly by developments in science and technology.”<sup>201</sup> Vick highlights developments at his own university as proof that educating students with a mix of arts and science courses can be successful; at the University College of North Staffordshire, they have created “honours courses that are a fusion of thoroughness and breadth” in which “during the first two years of the four-year course, each science student continues his studies of the humanities and social sciences alongside his sciences, and each arts student studies at least one science.”<sup>202</sup> Vick notes that these courses are “not the pre-digested survey courses about which Dr. Hanson complains” but rather that they “are designed to promote independent thought” and “to remove intellectual blinkers.”<sup>203</sup> Regarding the success of the program so far, he notes that “many employers have said how much more immediately valuable

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid. 134-135.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.137.

<sup>201</sup> Vick, Arthur F. “Science for the Non-Scientist.” *Universities Quarterly* 11.3 (1957): 245-253, 245.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. 246.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

our arts graduates from Keele are because of their science courses. They give the student humility in the face of the wonders and mysteries of nature.”<sup>204</sup>

Proposals such as Vick’s represent the rising popularity of the idea of a general education for undergraduates in which students could receive a training in both the arts and sciences. This type of general education requirement would be a possible solution to the perceived arts versus sciences battle in the universities. However, the idea was strongly contested by scholars such as Blackett and others, especially in articles about American universities. As will be discussed in the next chapter, British scholars were largely unimpressed with American universities and their prioritization of general education, which they thought drastically lowered educational standards.

### 3.4 Social Sciences

The discussions analyzed so far have all neglected to mention a large section of disciplines, many of which were still in their developmental stages in the universities, such as sociology, anthropology, economics, and psychology. As discussed in the introduction, in the post-war world, the arts and sciences disciplines dominated the universities. Therefore, it is not surprising that the primary discourse about the disciplines would concern themselves solely with the arts and the sciences and neglect the social sciences. However, there were social scientists concerned with the future of their discipline who wrote in *Universities Quarterly*. The majority of these articles were not discipline-specific and claimed to be about the social sciences in general; therefore, this section will focus on what authors perceived as the issues facing the social sciences in general rather than any of the specific disciplines.

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid. 253.

Volume 2 Issue 3 of *Universities Quarterly* is devoted almost entirely to the social sciences. In the introduction to this symposium on the social sciences, Ernest Simon begins with some cautionary remarks. He notes that while the “physical sciences have achieved what is necessary for human material welfare,” “they have destroyed the stability of society and men have not learnt how to adopt social life to the needs of a rapidly changing industrial order.”<sup>205</sup> This is no doubt to get the reader’s attention and prime them for an argument about the necessity of the social sciences in the post-war world. It is interesting that Simon pits the social sciences here against the physical sciences; again, this is an example of the disciplines being seen as challengers or opponents against each other. Rather than arguing for cooperation or agreement between the disciplines, it seems that disciplines were fighting for their place at the table or in the spotlight, each proposing its own methods as the best for dealing with the contemporary issues of society. Curiously, Simon does not devote much room to convincing the reader about benefits of the social sciences, simply stating that “public opinion is beginning to realize the need for scientific thinking in the field of human relations”<sup>206</sup> and that “the government is now beginning to appreciate the urgent need for scientific relations in several fields.”<sup>207</sup> Therefore, it seems that convincing readers of the importance of the social sciences was not a problem as it was for the arts, which many authors felt the need to defend.

Advocates of the social sciences had larger issues than the public perception of their discipline. They did not feel themselves to be threatened like the arts did, even though they were still far away from achieving an established stronghold in the

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<sup>205</sup> Lord Simon of Wythenshawe. “The Social Sciences - The Symposium I. A Survey.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.3 (1948): 254-261, 254.

<sup>206</sup> Simon “The Social” 255.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.* 257.

universities. This was due to the fact that the social sciences had experienced rapidly increasing governmental and public support during and after World War II. Because of this, the social sciences leapt from relative obscurity and into the spotlights in what seemed like no time at all. As Barrington Kaye noted in 1956, “the attitude of administrators and intellectuals towards sociological research has undergone a curious transmogrification over the past twenty years...from being convinced that it was fruitless, unscientific and somehow morally wrong, they have come to regard it as...a sort of Delphic oracle.”<sup>208</sup> Increasingly turned to in order to answer the problems of post-war society, such as “industrial unrest, the problems of a plural society, the break-up of the family, the increase of juvenile delinquency” and more, the social sciences were suddenly greatly in demand.<sup>209</sup> It was simply up to the universities to provide the platform for the expansion of the social sciences and social scientific research.

The largest issue facing the social sciences was one of accessibility to the discipline; it simply was not developed in the universities yet despite the fact that there was a pervading sense of the need for more social scientific researchers. Therefore, in the post-war era, it would become necessary to develop more undergraduate courses in social sciences and increase staff at universities to teach in the social scientific disciplines. Simon points out that amongst all disciplines taught at British universities, the “most inadequately staffed” are those of the social sciences.<sup>210</sup> Besides economics, he points out that “Government, Administration, Political Theory, Psychology, Sociology are represented by a tiny staff and a few scattered chairs.”<sup>211</sup> This was something that, in Simon’s view, must be remedied because “only universities can educate the social

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<sup>208</sup> Kaye, Barrington. “The Sociologist in a Hostile World.” *Universities Quarterly* 10.2 (1956): 172-180, 172.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Simon “The Social” 260.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

scientists who are necessary to carry on research in all the essential fields.”<sup>212</sup> Edward Shils likewise highlights the problem that in Britain, sociology in particular among the social sciences has been “far too undervalued,” resulting in the fact that “only two universities have fully established departments of sociology” and that “training in sociological research has been almost entirely confined to the post-graduate level.”<sup>213</sup>

Not only were the social sciences not available for study at many universities, but they were also largely off-limits for undergraduate study. Simon points to the commonly held belief that the social sciences were “the hardest of all subjects” and that it required “long experience and rare powers of detachment”; while “a man of 25 may be the world’s greatest mathematician...no man under 40 has written an important book on the social sciences.”<sup>214</sup> This idea of the sheer complexity of the discipline was to a large extent the reason why undergraduate study of the social sciences was so underdeveloped. However, most scholars agreed that the social sciences should be expanded to the undergraduate level. Shils suggests that the ideal undergraduate sociology curriculum should “aim at stimulating the student’s curiosity about the social system and at providing him with principles of interpretation” as well as teaching “research techniques, and their possibilities and limitations.”<sup>215</sup>

Training in research methods was also the concern of F.S. Stone, Secretary of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, who noted that training social scientific researchers is an “urgent problem” due to the fact that “training in methods is usually rudimentary or non-existent in in the undergraduate curriculum.”<sup>216</sup> Stone laments the fact that a first class degree “in Economics, Political Science and

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Shils, Edward. “The Relevance of Sociology.” *Universities Quarterly* 3.2 (1949): 584-592, 590.

<sup>214</sup> Simon “The Social” 255.

<sup>215</sup> Shils “The Relevance” 591-592.

<sup>216</sup> Stone, F.S. “Research in The Social Science.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.3 (1948): 275-282, 280.

Sociology...is no guarantee that the young graduate has the most elementary equipment for undertaking a realistic investigation” and that instead such a student is likely “to be ignorant of how to formulate a problem, of how to lay out a campaign of research, of the basic quantitative techniques that will be needed.”<sup>217</sup> Therefore he suggests that “new university research organizations can now undertake the function of providing a realistic training for research” at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.<sup>218</sup> Faced with the need for more social scientific researchers, suddenly social scientists and the universities were pressed to figure out how to expand access to the discipline. This issue of expansion of the discipline to the universities and developing an adequate undergraduate curriculum was their primary concern as expressed in *Universities Quarterly*.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Overall, pervasive in the articles in *Universities Quarterly* about the disciplines is a sense of conflict and struggle. Rather than seeing themselves as complimentary or advocating that the disciplines should work together in closer harmony, authors wrote in such a way that made it appear that each discipline had to fight for its place at the university. The sciences seemed to have had the most secure position due to governmental support; however, they were attacked by the arts and even the social sciences as being dangerous to both the moral and physical safety of the nation if left unchecked. Therefore, some scholars argued that science students should take courses in the arts in order to balance out the possibly harmful effects of a strictly vocational scientific education. In response, scientists questioned why arts students shouldn't have

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

an education in the sciences; after all, it was the way of the future. This back-and-forth between the arts and sciences largely left out the social sciences, whose disciplines were increasingly in-demand and yet extremely inaccessible for students.

In some ways, the battle between the disciplines in the post-war world resembles a generational conflict, with each discipline experiencing a unique part of its lifespan in the post-war world. The classics, the eldest of the disciplines, felt their influence to be slipping away and therefore passed its torch to its closest relative in the younger generation, English literature. However, some thought that the arts were too old-fashioned for the modern world; what was needed were science and technology, which were already well-developed in the universities but would expand even further. The youngest of the disciplines, the social sciences, had just began to achieve credibility and was on its way to establishing a greater presence and influence. Overall, in this time of great change for the universities, scholars felt both a concern for the specific needs of their disciplines if they were to maintain or achieve influence and also a need to identify opportunities to assert the importance of their respective disciplines.

## Chapter 4: Universities Abroad

### 4.1 Background

In the first edition of *Universities Quarterly*, the Foreword written by Dr. Clark Kerr highlights the vital importance of the founding of a higher education journal in the post-war era. Central to his argument are international issues: he notes that since WWII, higher education has been and will continue to be “more central to the lives of more people in more nations than ever before” especially now that “new institutions and new programs are being started around the world.”<sup>219</sup> Kerr emphasizes that it is a “most appropriate time for higher education to be viewed more systematically across national lines” and it is especially important to keep tabs on the development of new universities and programs around the globe in order to evaluate their progress.<sup>220</sup> Kerr asserts that there is no better way to monitor the international developments in higher education around the globe than through this new journal, which he sees as “a great step toward better understanding of the emerging world problems and even of an emerging world system of higher education.”<sup>221</sup>

The post-war world of higher education was indeed becoming more global: with increasing numbers of translations of scholarly works, students and scholars increasingly traveling abroad to teach or study, and the rapid global spread of new ideas due to advancements in media technology, Kerr sees higher education as perhaps “the first truly international community in the modern world.”<sup>222</sup> A.M. Ross furthers Kerr’s sentiments about the importance of establishing an international journal to discuss developments

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<sup>219</sup> Kerr, Clark. “Foreward.” *Universities Quarterly* 1.1 (1947): 1-2, 1.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

within higher education around the world. Ross sees the primary mission of *Universities Quarterly* as “providing an international forum for higher education”<sup>223</sup> where people from different national and academic contexts can share “the wisdom, ideas, insights, experiences, and perhaps, also resources” which were currently restricted to one society.<sup>224</sup> This sharing of viewpoints was the goal of the journal, and as Ross writes, if it is “able to facilitate this voluntary sharing, it will have fulfilled its purpose.”<sup>225</sup>

Universities in Britain had always had an international aspect; even in the medieval era, “the exchange of ideas, of books and of people was a normal and defining characteristic” of the university.<sup>226</sup> Perraton argues that “from their beginnings, universities saw themselves as part of an international network of institutions” and that the presence of foreign students and teachers had exerted an influence upon aspects of their development.<sup>227</sup> University models shifted as influence spread from nation to nation; for example, the creation of the University of London in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was “influenced by continental as well as Scottish models” and “Scottish universities had themselves been influenced by Holland” as well as the “Protestant universities of Germany, notably Göttingen.”<sup>228</sup> The most notable influence on the British universities in the modern era came from “Humboldtian model” of the university as demonstrated at the University of Berlin. This model stressed the union between teaching and research; professors should be both “teachers and original scholars” and teaching should “not be simply a transmission of facts, but a creative process in which the student learnt through discovery.”<sup>229</sup> This method was very different from the one which had been developed in

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<sup>223</sup> Ross, A.M. “Editorial.” *Universities Quarterly* 1.1 (1947): 3-5, 3.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>226</sup> Perraton, Hilary. *A History of Foreign Students in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 21.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>228</sup> Anderson 28.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid. 29.

Britain, where “the ideal of liberal education was based on prescriptive curricula and set exercises designed to train and test the mental powers.”<sup>230</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Britain looked primarily to Germany as inspiration for reform of their higher education system, importing the PhD degree from them and looking to their universities as models especially in the disciplines of science and technology.<sup>231</sup>

If Germany served as the primary international reference point for British universities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then in the post-WWII era, that country became the United States. Emerging from WWII as the most prosperous of the victors, American influence began to spread rapidly in the post-war era, especially in Britain and Western Europe. Britain, keen to rebuild and grow their economy, particularly in the technological sector, saw the United States as a “model of economic growth and a promise of material prosperity.”<sup>232</sup> Particularly in the fields of science and technology, many experts had a “growing dissatisfaction with Britain’s apparent failure to link British...advances to economic growth” which led some to “advocate American solutions.”<sup>233</sup> The United States saw their opportunity in giving economic aid to Britain and Western Europe. The American government-funded and charitable schemes that “channeled expertise and financial assistance to Britain and Europe” were not done solely in the spirit of humanitarian aid, but rather out of a desire to spread American influence in the region and turn Western Europe into a “bulwark against Communism.”<sup>234</sup> Therefore, British reception to American aid such as the Marshall plan was mixed; while the financial and technical assistance for promoting technological and scientific research both inside and

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid. 31.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Bocoock, Jean, Baston, Louis, Scott, Peter and David Smith. “American Influence on British Higher Education: Science, Technology, and the Problem of University Expansion, 1945–1963.” *Minerva* 41.4 (2003): 327–346, 327.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. 328.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid. 329.

outside the university was “widely welcomed,” many feared the spread of “Americanization” and worried that Britain would come to be dominated by American cultural and political influence.<sup>235</sup> The ambivalent attitude towards American institutions persisted throughout the post-war period. In the 1950s and 60s as Britain started moving from an elite to a mass system of higher education, “American models were widely discussed” as they offered the “paradigm case” of a successful mass system of higher education.<sup>236</sup> However, not everyone was so enthusiastic about American universities: many of the scholars writing in *Universities Quarterly* were less than enthusiastic about American universities and pointed out their deficiencies with varying levels of severity. It is impossible to measure the level of influence American universities had on the British university system in the post-war era; however, it was certainly a topic which was much discussed, debated, and even feared among British scholars.

While British higher education was certainly influenced by foreign models throughout history, the British influence around the world cannot be ignored, particularly in the development of higher education systems in the British colonies. C. Whitehead notes that at the outset of the British empire, there was no commonly-held educational policy and thus the education that did occur in the colonies was carried out by religious organizations, resulting in a system of private and independent schools.<sup>237</sup> These schools were “based on parental capacity to pay” and led to a replication of the British social class system, with the “sons of indigenous rulers” attending elite schools and the rest of the population receiving little to no education.<sup>238</sup> The type of education offered at these institutions was in the “liberal/humanist tradition” and was “designed to enable children

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid. 328-329.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Whitehead, Clive. “The Concept of British Education Policy in the Colonies 1850-1960.” *Journal of Educational Administration and History*. 39.2 (2007) 161-173, 164.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. 164-165.

to appreciate Britain's cultural heritage."<sup>239</sup> However, in India, where this system of colonial education was most developed, it soon became clear that liberal English education had given rise to a "militant pseudo intellectual class" who became "hostile to the Indian government and avid supporters of the growing Indian nationalist movement."<sup>240</sup> In order to avoid similar developments in their colonies elsewhere, Britain was hesitant to address the issue of a policy of education in the colonies and therefore it was not until the 1940s when the British government finally accepted the need for an encompassing educational policy in the colonies.<sup>241</sup>

Before the 1940s, there were "few universities anywhere in the colonial empire and none in Britain's African colonies."<sup>242</sup> Therefore, the Asquith Commission of 1945 can be seen as a revolution in colonial educational policy, recommending "the formation of universities in the colonies and set[ting] out proposals to assist with the drafting of their founding constitutions."<sup>243</sup> After the Asquith Commission, the number of universities in the colonies exploded, most notably in Africa where university colleges were established at Accara and Ibadan in 1948, in Makerere in 1949, in Khartoum in 1951 and many others in plans for development in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Uganda.<sup>244</sup> With all of this activity occurring in Africa, it is not surprising that a large number of articles were written in *Universities Quarterly* about the state of the newly opened African universities and what the mission of higher education in Africa should be.

Returning to the first issue of *Universities Quarterly*, A.M. Ross highlights that the journal "intend[s] to draw contributions from all parts of the world and thus become a

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.165.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.169.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Stockwell, Sarah. "Imperial Liberalism and Institution Building at the End of Empire in Africa." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 46:5 (2018), 1009-1033, 1015.

<sup>244</sup> "Education in British Colonies and Former Colonies." In Britannica. Accessed January 16, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/education/Education-in-British-colonies-and-former-colonies>.

truly international journal.”<sup>245</sup> He then explains the rules and logistics for submissions to the journal: all articles must be written in English (in some exceptions in French or German), with the possibility of Russian and other Eastern European languages to be translated into English by one of their editors. Papers from North America were to be sent to an editor in New York, papers from Continental Europe to an editor in Klagenfurt, and British Isles and “all areas not mentioned” to an editor in Lancaster.<sup>246</sup> Therefore, their view of “international” was quite limited to the western, white and generally English-speaking world. It seems a rather glaring oversight that not one mention was made of the colonies or commonwealth. However, this omission did not dissuade papers from being submitted from Africa and Asia, mostly from areas under British rule or influence. In fact, the majority of the articles submitted to *Universities Quarterly* regarding international universities from 1947-1963 were about those “areas not mentioned” rather than North America or Continental Europe. Those articles about higher education in the commonwealth, as well as those about the United States and Europe and the U.S.S.R., will be analyzed in this chapter to see what was being shared and discussed among scholars regarding the development of higher education in the increasingly globalized post-war world. I’ve selected these regions specifically due to sheer number of articles; articles about countries in the British colonies or commonwealth constituted the majority, with the United States in second place, and Europe and the U.S.S.R. not far behind. Articles about other nations (such as Japan and Turkey) were negligible and therefore will not be included in this analysis.

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<sup>245</sup> Ross 4

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

## 4.2. British Colonies

The largest number of articles in *Universities Quarterly* about universities abroad were concerned with universities in the colonies. This interest in the colonies is not surprising given the context of the post-war era in which the British Empire was in decline. Over 60 articles were published during the years of 1947-1963 concerned with some aspect of higher education in the colonies, the majority of which were concerned specifically about the system of higher education in a certain nation or region. Over 20 articles were published about Africa (with Nigeria and South Africa predominating), 14 about Asia (dominantly India and Ceylon), 6 articles about Australia and Tasmania and finally 3 about North America. The rest of the articles ranged from reports from the Commonwealth Universities Congress to the various issues of exchange between British and colonial universities and other topics. Despite the wide range in topics, underlying the majority of these articles was a single debate: what is the purpose of a colonial university and what was Britain's role in facilitating this purpose? This section will address this debate particularly in the context of Africa, considering that it was the subject of the most articles.

With so many nations in the British Empire facing the prospect of self-governance in the post-war era, Britain's continued support of colonial universities was a subject of debate; how, if at all, should colonial higher education policy change once a nation becomes self-governing? Secretary of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies Walter Adams argued that British aid in establishing universities within the colonies was absolutely imperative for the nations now facing independence and statehood, so that they won't have to "depend on other countries for the higher direction

of its research and the training of its intellectual leaders.”<sup>247</sup> Adams, with a vision of progress and success of these independent nations, argues that the “colonies should be equipping themselves with their own universities in which staff and students regardless of colour or national origin are achieving a quality of cooperation and identification of interests.”<sup>248</sup>

Arthur Thomson, Vice-Principal of the University of Birmingham and later member of the governing board of Ibadan University in Nigeria<sup>249</sup>, focuses less on the importance of facilitating self-governance for the colonies and instead devotes more space to praising Britain’s “enlightened attitude...to the natives’ problems,” stating boldly that “future historians” would “unreservedly approve [of]...our changed attitude to the colonial territories.”<sup>250</sup> Thomson determines that a continued British interest in aiding the development of universities in the former colonies is important primarily because it “is of immense practical importance in furthering the interests of the British Commonwealth.”<sup>251</sup> Thomson hopes that graduates of colonial universities may “be grateful to the British influence in their universities” leading them to be “predisposed to favour English tradition in their law and government and English products in their markets.”<sup>252</sup> Rather than attempting to appear interested in the development of colonial universities, Thomson instead seems more concerned with Britain being on the right side of history and ultimately furthering its global influence and economic power. For authors in *Universities Quarterly*, it seemed that the continued development of universities in the

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<sup>247</sup> Adams, Walter. “Colonial University Education.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.3 (1950): 283- 292, 285.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid. 292.

<sup>249</sup> Reinartz, Jonathan. “Thomson, Sir Arthur Peregrine.” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, October 03, 2013. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>.

<sup>250</sup> Thomson, A.P. “Higher Education in the Colonies.” *Universities Quarterly* 10.4 (1956): 359-370, 359.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid. 365.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

former colonies would not only be beneficial for those nations' progress but perhaps more importantly, would be of vital interest to Britain.

If Britain were to continue its support for the development of universities in the colonies and commonwealth, then the question remained as to what kind of institutions these should be. The primary debate was whether colonial universities should follow an Oxbridge-inspired liberal arts and sciences model or if they should focus on more practical and technical subjects like agriculture, medicine and engineering. Or, as worded by Arthur Thomson, scholars wondered whether it was “wise to develop universities like Oxford and Cambridge for primitive and impoverished people and to try to do it quickly” or rather to “narrow the range of university work in the colonies and restrict it...to subjects with direct relevance to the obvious material needs of the population.”<sup>253</sup>

The author who articulated his ideas most sharply on this subject was Thomas Balogh, political economist and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, who would later serve as the economic advisor to Wilson's Labour government in the 1960s.<sup>254</sup> Balogh, who in the 1950s served as advisor to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and was particularly interested in the problems of economically underdeveloped areas,<sup>255</sup> was adamantly against the continuation of Oxbridge-style liberal arts education at colonial universities, particularly those in Africa. Balogh's main argument against the continuation of the traditional English-style university education in Africa is that it would “create an unemployed and thus disaffected intellectual proletariat”<sup>256</sup> who “unable to find jobs...unable to integrate...[and] confronted with the colour bar” would be

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid. 365.

<sup>254</sup> Streeten, Paul. “Balogh, Thomas, Baron Balogh.” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, October 08, 2009. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Balogh, Thomas. “Oxbridge Rampant: Education and Progress in Under-Developed Areas.” *Universities Quarterly* 9.3 (1955): 265-271, 265.

“impelled...to the Communist enemy.”<sup>257</sup> Balogh therefore urges that if Britain wants to “oppose successfully the tremendous drive of Communist indoctrination and training in areas vital to the Commonwealth,” then they absolutely must change the educational policies in the colonies to promote “technical education rather than classical, vocational training rather than ill-digested theories on how to acquire aptitude for administration.”<sup>258</sup>

In a later article, Balogh expounds further on this point, arguing that education should primarily focus on agriculture and “rural education” due to the fact that Africa was primarily a rural and agricultural continent.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, he argues that “the present plans to generalize [colonial] education on the European model, far from aiding African development would only cripple it”<sup>260</sup> and that to “disregard the facts of rural life will only intensify the drift towards barbarism, slavery and worse, which is already threatening large portions of this unhappy continent.”<sup>261</sup> Balogh’s prescriptions for African universities are largely patronizing. Forcing African universities to focus mainly on agriculture and other practical subjects like medicine and engineering at the expense of the liberal arts and humanities, which as Balogh implied should be discontinued because they were useless and possibly even dangerous for Africans to study, completely disregards the concept of taking into consideration what the newly or soon-to-be self-governing African nations might want of their universities.

Thomson was somewhat skeptical of Balogh’s prescription for commonwealth universities, but ultimately fails to condemn Balogh’s ideas and instead offers a weak compromise. Thomson first points out that Balogh’s argument is based on false premises

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid. 270-271.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid. 271.

<sup>259</sup> Balogh, Thomas. “Misconceived Educational Programmes in Africa.” *Universities Quarterly* 16.2 (1962): 243-249.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. 246.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid. 248.

and that it “grossly exaggerates the evils of a situation that does not yet exist.”<sup>262</sup> In fact, according to Thomson, there was no “immense unemployable class of impoverished intelligentsia” in the colonies as Balogh warned about, due to the fact that the amount of graduates from colonial universities was still very small and that a graduate could “obtain[...] a job as soon as he wishes.”<sup>263</sup> Thomson was also skeptical about Balogh’s dogmatic insistence on technical education at the expense of the humanities; he asserted that “the old university ideal of a general background of culture and humanistic study...seems...a great and worthy one,” especially if it is the background to a further technical education.<sup>264</sup> As a compromise between the Oxbridge model and Balogh’s agricultural institute model, Thomson suggests his own University of Birmingham as a model for colonial universities; while it was founded as a technical institute, it had gradually expanded to include the sciences and humanities and was still continuing to adapt and change its curricula. Thomson fails to elucidate further on how this type of institution should be created or promoted throughout the commonwealth.

Despite the disagreements between Balogh and Thomson, both scholars seemed to agree upon the fundamental importance of preserving Britain’s influence on the present and former colonies in the field of higher education. They also agree that Britain and its scholars knew best when it came to the needs and desires of colonial universities. Both men were concerned with the graduates of colonial universities and what they may go on to do later in life; just as Thomson highlighted the importance of keeping a strong British influence in the universities so that students who go on to positions of power might feel grateful and indebted to Britain, Balogh feared that pursuing the “ill-conceived” liberal arts educational program in the colonies might lead those students

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<sup>262</sup> Thomson 366.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

(who will later go on to positions of power) to think badly of Britain and defect to the side of the Communists. Clearly, both Balogh and Thomson's interest in graduates of colonial universities was primarily selfish; rather than considering the interests, thoughts and desires of the actual people of the colonies, both scholars saw the protection of Britain's international standing and the continued success of their economic model as of primary importance.

In contrast to Balogh and Thomson, historian Thomas Hodgkin offers a radically different idea of a colonial university by actually engaging with how Africans themselves saw their universities rather than forcing a British viewpoint upon them. Hodgkin, who became a critic of British imperialism after a term in the Palestinian civil service, spent much of his career in and concerned with Africa, becoming a friend to Kwame Nkrumah and writing books about African Nationalism and the rich history of Islam in Africa.<sup>265</sup> This background is clear in his article "The Idea of an African University," in which he articulates that the attitudes of African intellectuals towards their universities was changing, reflective of a larger shift in African attitudes towards European institutions. In the past, Hodgkin argues, African intellectuals had been content to have "an education of essentially the same type and standard as is provided in those European universities which has been accepted as models," but today their attitude was that these institutions "must...develop specifically African characteristics."<sup>266</sup> This belief was not limited to the universities, but rather encompassed all institutions: African intellectuals wished to develop "African parliaments, political parties, Trade Unions" which would diverge from

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<sup>265</sup> Wolfers, Michael. "Hodgkin, Thomas Lionel." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, January 03, 2008. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>.

<sup>266</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas. "The Idea of an African University." *Universities Quarterly* 12.4 (1958): 376-384, 379.

the European models upon which they were based.<sup>267</sup> Hodgkin argues that these changes are inevitable in the universities due to the fact that “African universities are bound to transform themselves from predominantly European-staffed into predominantly African-staffed institutions,” a development which Hodgkin admits that many European may find “deplorable.”<sup>268</sup> However, Hodgkin undoubtedly sees this development as a positive thing for the development of the independent African nations.

In contrast to Balogh, Hodgkin advocates strongly for the existence of the liberal arts and humanities in African universities. He argues that the primary function of African universities, just like European universities, should not be “simply an efficient mechanism for the manufacture of bureaucrats and technocrats” but rather the “transmission of culture” and the creation of “African men of culture.”<sup>269</sup> To create African men of culture, Hodgkin argues, it is not unreasonable that African students should learn the disciplines of the humanities and sciences with an African focus, just as the disciplines are taught with a European focus in European universities.<sup>270</sup> He notes that this shift of focus towards African studies was already underway in African universities, particularly in the discipline of history, although there was still “a long way to travel” for universities wishing to develop an African focus.<sup>271</sup> Hodgkin suggests a myriad of fields in which universities should recruit teachers, including African archaeology, African history (including Islamic history), African languages like Amharic and Hausa, music, sociology, geography, politics, and even “the growing body of African and Negro literature in the French language, and the ideas and values which it seeks to express.”<sup>272</sup> Hodgkin, who was noted as “doing more than anyone to establish the study of African

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid. 380.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. 381-382.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. 382.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid. 383.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

history in Britain,”<sup>273</sup> clearly saw Africa as a place of rich history and culture, in contrast to his colleagues who saw it merely as an impoverished, desolate land filled with “primitive” people. Hodgkin’s suggestions, which display a familiarity with and sympathy for the desires of Africans and what they wanted for their universities in this period, offer a contrast to Balogh and Thomson’s suggestions, which ignore the wishes of Africans themselves in favor of what would be of benefit to Britain. Ultimately Hodgkin offers an optimistic view of the future of African universities; instead of continuing to be dictated to by their former colonial rulers, Hodgkin looked towards a future in which the former colonies can decide matters of national interest for themselves and for their own benefit.

#### 4.3 United States

In Volume 2 Issue 2 of *Universities Quarterly*, Cambridge professor of Chemical Engineering T.C.R. Fox wrote an article comparing engineering education in Britain and in the United States. He begins on an optimistic note, stating that considering the economic difficulties in Britain, they might do well by looking to the United States for some lessons. Fox surmises that America’s economic prosperity and productivity come from their “development of means of training large numbers of ordinary people to become useful technical personnel.”<sup>274</sup> However, Fox notes that this comes with some great disadvantages, most notably that the American educational system has become “designed for the average man” and that their standards have suffered accordingly.<sup>275</sup> Fox is adamant that if Britain is to expand their system of higher education, they “should

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<sup>273</sup> Wolfers.

<sup>274</sup> Fox, T.C.R. “Technical Education in the United States and Britain.” *Universities Quarterly* 2.2 (1948): 178-186. 178.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.* 179.

retain the selective system and grade [their] courses to the men rather than lower our standards for the sake of uniformity.”<sup>276</sup> However, Fox is not completely dismissive of American methods: he praises the fact that the American system was “built on a constant questioning of existing methods and a consequent discarding of old ideas” and that Britain could use more of “adapting and trying out new ideas.”<sup>277</sup> He urges the universities in Britain to “experiment on a large scale” and to “try to instill the spirit of enterprise in the coming generation of engineers.”<sup>278</sup> This article displays the ambivalence typical of discussions of American universities in *Universities Quarterly*; while certain American ideals as manifested in American universities are complimented, such as their enterprising spirit, others are viewed with disdain, such as the mediocracy produced by their mass system of higher education.

The mediocracy of American higher education is addressed by multiple other authors in *Universities Quarterly*. C.R. Morris observes that the majority of college students in the United States “have received an education which is academically a good deal less ambitious of that of the ordinary university graduate” in Britain.<sup>279</sup> Morris sees this as a broader problem within American educational policy; “the last years at high school would...be regarded by most...university teachers in this country as almost a dead loss” and there is “little or no development in the last years before leaving school at eighteen so far as intellectual attainment is concerned.”<sup>280</sup> Citing “comparatively unambitious aims and standards,” “a progressively wider and more general education,” and the “extremely large” student population of American universities, Morris states that

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid. 179-180.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid. 184.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid. 186.

<sup>279</sup> Morris, C.R. “Some Reflections on College Education in the United States.” *Universities Quarterly* 5.4 (1951): 347-350, 348.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid. 349.

there are certainly many features of the American university which are unappealing.<sup>281</sup> Morris does not see much that Britain should want to import from the system of higher education in the United States, which in his view is a large, ineffective and mediocre.

Even more critical of American higher education is Max Beloff's "American Universities – Some Impressions and Reflections." Beloff also cites the "great deal" of "experimentation" in American universities but he does not necessarily view this as a good thing, as it leads to "a weaker hold on the part of traditional subjects."<sup>282</sup> He is also critical of the "political presupposition" underlying the American higher education system, which is that "every young person has a right to higher education irrespective of ability or previous training," arguing that it makes it impossible to set up any genuine admissions standards and that it leads to a very low level of undergraduate education.<sup>283</sup> Beloff suggests that the United States would "benefit from a smaller student population,"<sup>284</sup> although that wouldn't necessarily address the root of the problem, which Beloff saw as the lack of rigor of the American high school curriculum. Beloff is also skeptical of the American quest to provide a "general education" to college students, warning that it could "easily...degenerate into a superficial acquaintance with bits of books and bits of knowledge, and with second-hand ideas."<sup>285</sup> Beloff's seemingly only compliments to American universities are vague notions of them having a "strength of...human spirit" and "an eagerness to learn and to teach," as well the fact that they are able to introduce young people from "self-consciously philistine" backgrounds to literature, fine arts and music.<sup>286</sup> Overall, Beloff's portrait is not a flattering one and no

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid. 350.

<sup>282</sup> Beloff, Max. "American Universities – Some Impressions and Reflections." *Universities Quarterly* 3.2 (1949): 571-580, 572.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid. 573.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. 574.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid. 578.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid. 579-580.

doubt he would be loath to see any similar changes (large student population or focus on general education) occur within British universities.

More than ten years later, sentiments had not changed much. Writing in 1963, Edwards Shils' "Observations on the American University" identifies that the British universities' lack of innovation has led to institutions which are "perhaps too determinate and too well-defined" and looks towards America's universities, which eschew conformity and embrace individualism, for inspiration.<sup>287</sup> However, Shils is not optimistic about the state of American universities, in which the diversity of institutions were gradually becoming unified and forming a hierarchical structure with a small number of institutions as the leading elite. These "central universities of the country" had risen to prominence as research universities, where "their eminence [came] from the quality of the research published by their staff members and ...their PhDs."<sup>288</sup> This system in which "productivity in research and publication becomes the standard by which university and college teachers judge themselves and are judged by others" leads to what Shils sees as a dangerous development; the rapid decreasing value of teaching undergraduates, leaving the teaching of undergraduates not to the best in the field but rather "juniors...misfits and...eccentrics."<sup>289</sup> The decreasing value of teaching within American universities is combined with a decreasing value of the B.A. degree; having a B.A. is "a goal of the multitudes which many attain" despite the fact that it is "regarded as nothing in itself...only the floor from which real life progresses."<sup>290</sup> Undergraduates are seen as "incapable of...interesting intellectual work" and "too immature for 'serious' work," which lead to the creation of a "very slack intellectual life" and the overall

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<sup>287</sup> Shils, Edward. "Observations on the American University." *Universities Quarterly*. 17.2 (1963): 182-193, 183.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* 185.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* 185-186.

“neglect of the intellectual side of undergraduate education.”<sup>291</sup> Shils is concerned that the United States is intellectually neglecting its young people, with undergraduates wasting their time at college with their “pathetically small” workloads and “meagre” amount of knowledge in their specialization.<sup>292</sup>

The only way out of these disturbing developments was a great change of opinion. Shils hopes that eventually the craze for research will die down and the universities will recognize the need for a more intense undergraduate curriculum with more focus placed on teaching.<sup>293</sup> In this article Shils articulates the fear of what might happen to British universities if they model their mass expansion of higher education on the American model. Underlying his observations of American universities is the hope that British universities will not abandon their commitment to rigorous undergraduate training and high intellectual standards in exchange for research as the Americans had. This fear of the mediocracy perpetuated at American universities was a common theme among writers. Therefore, while the American model was closely examined as British universities faced the need to expand in the post-war era, it is clear that scholars writing in *Universities Quarterly* saw many problems with the American system and subsequently warned their readers about the dangers of following the lead of the United States.

#### 4.4 Europe and the Soviet Union

The Continental European universities, which for so long had been the institutions to which Britain compared its own, ceased to be of much interest to British scholars in the post-war era. This development is demonstrated by the relative lack of articles written

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid. 190.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. 192.

about Western Europe in *Universities Quarterly*. While American universities featured in nearly 30 articles, articles about universities in Western European nations (Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland) totaled less than 20 combined. The news from the Continental universities was not promising; P. Mansell Jones in an article about post-war conditions of universities in France notes that “as in other European countries the conditions of education in France suffer, to a greater extent even than in Britain” and that “the French State [is]...incapable of responding to the desire of its youth for instruction.”<sup>294</sup> This unflattering picture of French higher education in the post-war world was echoed about other Western European nations. In 1959, H.T. Betteridge wrote a letter to the editor of *Universities Quarterly* about the state of higher education in Germany. This letter was written in response to a previous article about higher education in Germany which Betteridge considered to be “flatteringly out of focus” and generated by the “efficient propaganda machinery in Bonn.”<sup>295</sup> Betteridge notes that, after World War II, higher education in Germany was “put...back into the last century by placing all control into the hands of the old professors and administrators,” with the professors acting as “absolute despot[s]” who claim younger scholars’ work as their own, with students unable to complete their B.A. degree in “under six years, and nine or ten are by no means infrequent.”<sup>296</sup> Not only this, but Betteridge was “appalled at the extent of the Americanization” in German universities, with American money going towards not just the “palatial buildings seen everywhere” but also towards the “purchase of American books” with “two-thirds of the syllabus [of the English Department] devoted

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<sup>294</sup> Jones, P. Mansell. “The National Education in France II. Post War Conditions.” *Universities Quarterly* 7.3 (1953): 276-283.

<sup>295</sup> Betteridge, H.T. “The German Universities.” *Universities Quarterly* 13.3 (1959): 300-302, 300.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* 301.

to American civilization and literature.”<sup>297</sup> With these developments in mind, it is not hard to imagine why British interest in Continental universities had waned in the post-war years.

While authors in *Universities Quarterly* were not very optimistic about Western European universities in the post-war world, a different picture emerged regarding higher education in socialist Eastern Europe. After a trip to Poland, B. Simon, lecturer in Education at Leicester, observed that Polish efforts at reconstruction including the rapid expansion of higher education had been an “undeniable success.”<sup>298</sup> Some of the particular successes he notes are the growth in student population from 45,000 before the war to 110,000 in 1951, with the majority of growth being in technical education, as well as the rising of standards of student methods of work with more students completing their exams and graduating on time.<sup>299</sup>

Two British visitors to the U.S.S.R. were similarly impressed with the developments there. Christopher Hill, a fellow in History at Oxford, provides a glowing review of the facilities and educational standards at Moscow University. Hill was impressed with the “remarkable staff-student ratio of 1:6.5,” a figure unlikely to be found anywhere in Britain, as well as the fact that Moscow professors get more time for research than Oxford professors.<sup>300</sup> Hill was particularly taken with the library facilities, especially the Lenin library, which “unlike some libraries one knows, appears positively to welcome applications from readers.”<sup>301</sup> Hill also praises the comprehensive history syllabus (including the fact that Russian students study English history), the high quality of instruction students receive, and the fact that “there appears to be no ‘party line’ which

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid. 302.

<sup>298</sup> Simon, B. “Higher Education in Poland.” *Universities Quarterly* 7.2 (1953): 176-183, 183.

<sup>299</sup> Simon 180.

<sup>300</sup> Hill, Christopher. “II. The Teaching of History.” *Universities Quarterly* 9.4 (1955): 332-241, 336.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

interferes with the freedom of historical reaching or research.”<sup>302</sup> Similarly impressed by the standards of Soviet higher education was Boris N. Cole, Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering at Birmingham. When comparing the British graduate with the Soviet graduate in engineering, Cole admits that there is no proof that “our products are superior to those of the U.S.S.R.,” and concedes that the Soviet graduate may actually be better trained than the average British graduate.<sup>303</sup> Implicit in the writings of Simon, Hill and Cole is the idea that the British might benefit from looking to the east for inspiration in successfully growing their higher education system while maintaining a high standard of education.

However, not all authors in *Universities Quarterly* looked so kindly upon the universities beyond the Iron Curtain. Stanislaw Seliga, lecturer in Polish at St. Andrews, was disturbed by B. Simon’s “rosy report” on Polish education. Seliga argues that Polish higher education had previously been “one of the most glorious in central Europe,” citing the founding of Cracow University in 1364 and the establishment of later institutions “modelled on the western liberal type of university.”<sup>304</sup> According to Seliga, this legacy was now lost due to what he saw as a “considerable deterioration in the standard of knowledge” that has accompanied the restructuring of the system after WWII.<sup>305</sup> In a similar fashion, J. Hampden Jackson of Cambridge laments the fact that the ancient University of Tartu in present-day Estonia had been “perverted out of all recognition by the Russians,”<sup>306</sup> with professors fleeing, standards being abandoned and undergraduates being “admitted on the grounds of class and ideology.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid. 378-379.

<sup>304</sup> Seliga, Stanislaw R. “Some Darker Aspects of Higher Education in Poland.” *Universities Quarterly* 7.4 (1953): 377-379, 377.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Jackson, J. Hampden. “A Lost University.” *Universities Quarterly* 4.4 (1950): 373-378, 373.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid. 377-378.

While the Soviet system disrupted the traditions and legacies of historic universities, it could not be denied that it also created an extremely productive system of mass higher education. With the Cold War in full swing in the 1950s, this led some authors to wonder what threat these developments in higher education posed to Britain and the West. Reporting on the dismal state of scientific and technological education in Britain, Ernest Simon warns that “the Soviet Union is making an effort to develop their...scientific and technical education at the highest level, at a speed not previously attempted by any great nation in history”<sup>308</sup> and that they “have increased their output [of graduates] more than five times as fast as we.”<sup>309</sup> Simon believes that these developments are “frightening,” considering that “a large proportion of their scientists and engineers are devoting their work to preparations for war” and that their “achievements in the design of the aircraft, of hydrogen bombs, of the radio telescope...are as good as anything in the world.”<sup>310</sup> In light of this threat, Simon urges that the British “insist on increasing our output of graduates in both science and technology at least as fast as the Russians.”<sup>311</sup> Whether they constituted a model or a threat, developments within higher education in the U.S.S.R. and its satellite states loomed large in the minds of those writing for *Universities Quarterly*, at least certainly larger than the state of Western European universities.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to detail the main debates occurring from the years 1947-1963 in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* about universities around the world. These articles can be seen as an attempt by British scholars to see their own system in the

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<sup>308</sup> Lord Simon of Wythenshawe. “Student Numbers.” *Universities Quarterly* 10.2 (1956): 122-131, 128.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid. 130.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. 128.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid. 130.

context of the world in order to rank or assess themselves and the strengths and weaknesses of their own institutions. They also express the underlying attitudes of the British academic elite towards different nations and regions of the world in the post-war era. There is a stark divide between the attitudes expressed in the articles about the “developed” world (United States, Europe, the U.S.S.R.) and the “developing” world, including their colonies in Africa and Asia. As for the “developed” world, particular interest was paid to American and Soviet universities; British scholars examined how they were succeeding (i.e. mass education in technical fields) or failing (i.e. falling standards). Authors expressed a commonly held contempt for American universities, perhaps indicating their own feelings towards the American nation and its rise to dominance in the post-war era and their fear that Britain might fall victim to “Americanization.” Meanwhile, the authors’ attitudes towards the U.S.S.R. were more ambivalent, but any praises of its system were necessarily paired with trepidation about what Soviet success might mean for the safety of the world, reflective of Britain’s position in the Cold War. As for the “developing” world, authors debated how Britain should develop universities in the colonies and what these universities should look like. The majority of scholars believed that Britain knew what was best for the “primitive” and “backward” people of the colonies. Except for pioneering African historian Thomas Hodgkin, their attitudes generally revealed disregard or even contempt for the people of the colonies and their own desires for what self-governance might look like. Despite the fact that attitudes had changed regarding the governance of the colonies in the post-war world, it is clear that attitudes had not changed about British superiority and Britain’s right to continue to benefit economically from their former colonies. Overall, although this section was about universities around the world, it speaks more to how Britain and its scholars saw their own position in the world in the post-war era.

## Chapter 5: Neglected Subjects

### 5.1 Introduction

As demonstrated so far, the articles in *Universities Quarterly* addressed a wide assortment of issues which the contributors felt were relevant to the world of higher education at the time including the purpose of a university education, ensuring student success as the system of higher education faced massive expansion, the importance of certain disciplines, and finally the state of higher education in countries around the world. However, for all of the topics that are covered, two topics are noticeably absent: the issues of women's education and education for minority students, two topics which, as will be demonstrated below, were highly relevant to the time. Additionally, in light of the contemporary concern for revisiting and rewriting history from the perspectives of those who were excluded from doing so at the time, I believe this issue deserves to be discussed in the following pages. Therefore, this chapter attempts to understand exactly why the issues and experiences of female and minority students were greatly ignored in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* by elucidating the history of both female and minority student groups in Britain and examining what exactly what was changing for both groups in the post-war era.

### 5.2 Female Students

Some may argue that the education of women was not necessarily an issue in post-war Britain; after all, women had been attending institutions of higher education in the UK since the second half of the 19th century. Girton College, the first women's college in the UK, was established at Cambridge University in 1873. Other women's colleges followed, including Newnham College (1875) at Cambridge, and Lady Margaret

Hall (1878), St. Anne's and Somerville (1879), St. Hugh's (1886) and St. Hilda's (1893) at Oxford University.<sup>312</sup> Other universities besides Oxford and Cambridge seemed to be likewise, if not more so, accepting of female students; by the end of the 19th century, all civic universities fully admitted female students, with many advertising the fact that they made “no distinction of sex,” meaning that they (theoretically) offered equal opportunities to their female students.<sup>313</sup> All of this considered, the writers in *Universities Quarterly* may simply have felt that because women had their own colleges at Cambridge and Oxford and were allowed access to all other major universities, the question of women's education was long ago “solved” and simply no longer relevant for discussion.

However, the debate about women in higher education was far from over at this point in time. Despite the fact that women had been participating in higher education in Britain since the 1870s, the playing field in post-war Britain was still far from equal between the sexes. While in 1945, the number of female students was around half that of male students (16,936 females to 32,873 males)<sup>314</sup> after the war that proportion quickly decreased. By 1950, the numbers of male students had rapidly increased to 80,514 students, while enrollment of female students only grew to a modest 22,567 students. The proportion of female students in higher education wouldn't reach 1945 levels again until the mid 1960s, when in 1965 female students numbered 65,360 to 115,460 male students.<sup>315</sup> The fact was that for most young women in the post-war era, higher education was not considered as an option; in 1959, “only 3,310 girls out of 271,778

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<sup>312</sup> Malkiel, Nancy Weiss. “*Keep the Damned Women Out*”: *The Struggle for Coeducation*. Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016, 1102-1103. Kindle e-book.

<sup>313</sup> Dyhouse, Carol. *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities, 1870-1939*. London: UCL Press, 1995.

<sup>314</sup> Tight 55.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid

leaving school in 1959 went to university,<sup>316</sup> with the vast majority instead entering employment. Even employment was not likely to last long, with prevailing societal expectations being that employment would eventually be abandoned “when they took on the dependent role of wife and mother.”<sup>317</sup>

The writers’ silence on the issue of women’s education can be partially explained by the fact that the 1950s was fundamentally a “transitional” decade in which “expectations” had only just “beg[un] to be challenged,”<sup>318</sup> making way for the more explosive changes, both in feminist issues and in higher education, to come in the 1960s. These changes that began in the 1960s include the admission of women to the previously all-male colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, a gradual process which began in the 1960s and ended by the close of the 1980s,<sup>319</sup> as well as the large increase in the numbers of female undergraduate students, a trend that began in the mid-1960s and continues until this day, when female students quite sizably outnumber male students.<sup>320</sup>

However, just because some of the largest changes were still yet to come, it would be an error to see the 1950s as an era bereft of changes to women’s higher education. One very significant piece of news in women’s education happened one year after the first issue of *Universities Quarterly* and remained unreported in the journal: Cambridge finally allowed female students to earn degrees in the year 1948, a full 75 years after the establishment of Girton College (Oxford had begun awarding female students degrees in 1920).<sup>321</sup> Four years later, Cambridge agreed to establish a third women’s college, New Hall College, which opened in 1954, a fact which also remained unreported in the

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<sup>316</sup> Spencer, Stephanie. *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 6.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid

<sup>318</sup> Ibid

<sup>319</sup> A detailed account of this process can be found in Part IV of Nancy Weiss Malkiel’s *Keep The Damned Women Out* (as cited above).

<sup>320</sup> Tight 55.

<sup>321</sup> Malkiel 1103.

journal. Finally, not until 1957 did Oxford eliminate quotas which worked to limit the number of female students, with Cambridge following suit and eliminating their quotas for female students in 1960.<sup>322</sup> All of these changes seem to indicate that access to higher education was slowly but surely expanding during the long 1950s.

As stated earlier, not one article addressing the issue of women's education was published in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* in the years between 1947-1963. This may lead us to think that no one was seriously contemplating the issue in the 1950s, and that despite some of the changes mentioned above, the debate over widening access to higher education for women simply didn't pick up again until the mid-1960s. However, one letter to the editor of *Universities Quarterly* in 1953 gives us a clue that this actually was not the case. In Volume 2 Issue 4, Judith Hubback wrote a letter to the editor with the hope of "getting in touch with anyone who may be working on the subject of higher education of women," stating that while she is currently engaged in her own research on the topic, she is "unable to qualify for any research grant or fellowship because of family responsibilities."<sup>323</sup> Her research concerns "the substantial proportion of women graduates...at present misemployed" and "the problem of how really intelligent girls should be educated, and which careers they should be advised to train for."<sup>324</sup> Citing the pressing need for Britain to use their best minds in the best way possible, she hopes to investigate the problem of "marriage wastage" (which she calls a "horrible phrase"), which referred to the common phenomenon of women graduates abandoning their careers once they got married and had children. Hubback notes that the rates of "marriage wastage" was "far higher than it was in the heyday of the battle for women's educational

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<sup>322</sup> Dyhouse, Carol. *Students: A Gendered History*. London: Routledge, 2006, 86.

<sup>323</sup> Hubback, Judith. "Letters to the Editor." *Universities Quarterly* 7.2 (1953): 199.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

rights,”<sup>325</sup> and hopes to encourage the return of middle-aged women with university degrees to their careers.

Hubback received no answers in the pages of *Universities Quarterly* although she may have received private answers to her letter, as she provides her mailing address. Fortunately, Hubback did complete her research; she “distributed some 2,000 questionnaires to married women graduates from a number of British universities” probing “women’s attitudes to work, career ambitions, domesticity and family life.”<sup>326</sup> Her findings were published first in 1954 as a report entitled *Graduate Wives*, and later as a book entitled *Wives Who Went To College*.<sup>327</sup> The main theme of these works is, according to Carol Dyhouse, “waste”: Hubback investigated not only whether women graduates were “wasting” their expensive education, but perhaps more importantly whether “the country as a whole was wasting resources by failing to exploit reserves of educated womanpower.”<sup>328</sup>

Hubback was not alone in these concerns, although one wouldn’t know it from the pages of *Universities Quarterly*. Rather, according to Dyhouse, Hubback’s works “fueled controversy...in the press” and the issues she raised in her work led to arguments which “remained in the public eye for most of the 1950s.”<sup>329</sup> Dyhouse provides much evidence for the fact that the issue of higher education for women was indeed a great controversy during the decade; for example, when *The Times* drew attention to the possibility of expanding provisions for female undergraduate students, some male responses were “derisive” including one correspondent who claimed that allocating places for female students more interested in “husband-hunting” than a long-term career was simply

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Dyhouse, *Students*, 79.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid. 80.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid. 80.

“indefensible.”<sup>330</sup> Therefore, Hubback was not the lone voice in the 1950s discussing the issue of women’s higher education. Rather, it seems that higher education for women was actually a contested and controversial issue of the time.

Given that there was such a “heated and acrimonious...public debate over whether university education for girls was worthwhile,”<sup>331</sup> it seems curious that the only sign of this in *Universities Quarterly* is a lone letter to the editor. Perhaps the editors of *Universities Quarterly* felt it was a too hotly contested issue to discuss, or perhaps they simply didn’t think it an issue worth discussing. Either way, this omission is not necessarily surprising, given that “1950s English society was clearly marked along gender lines”<sup>332</sup> and the vast majority of those writing in the journal were men. Fortunately, contemporary historical scholarship has engaged with the issue of women’s education in post-war Britain, allowing us to see its complexity and to view it in light of the progressive changes to come in the 1960s and beyond.

### 5.3 Minority Ethnic Students

The other topic which is notably not often mentioned by the writers in *Universities Quarterly* during the years of 1947-1963 is that of race relations and ethnic minorities in higher education. While the topic of race was mentioned more frequently than that of women, articles tended to focus on racial issues abroad, most notably apartheid in South Africa, and on the whole failed to address the issues faced by students of color in the UK. Notably, the study of race relations in higher education in Britain is a much less developed field than the history of women’s higher education. The issue has come more into focus in recent years, with most of the scholarship concerning ethnic

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid. 90.

<sup>332</sup> Spencer 2.

minorities in higher education having appeared in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That being said, there are unfortunately not many sources to turn to in order to understand the experience of ethnic minorities in higher education in the years after WWII until the early 1960s. Malcolm Tight notes that scholarly interest in this topic only bloomed once “a significant number of the children of post-war immigrants were of an age to be considering higher education,” namely the 1980s and beyond.<sup>333</sup>

Racial issues and the experience of ethnic minorities in higher education is particularly important to discuss considering that the post-war period saw the unprecedented growth of immigration to the UK from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. This growth began in the year 1948, which saw the arrival of the famous passenger liner *Empire Windrush* that carried “some 500 Caribbean workers, mostly Jamaican, mostly male.”<sup>334</sup> Also in 1948, the British Nationality Act was passed which “created a single category of British citizenship” for citizens of the UK and its colonies, “thereby weakening, in law, the boundary between white Britons and black colonial subjects.”<sup>335</sup> Larger and larger numbers of migrants, mostly from the Caribbean, began to arrive each year; by 1953 the total net immigration was 28,000, but by the year 1960, over 58,000 had arrived in that year alone.<sup>336</sup> This rapid increase in immigration led to the 1962 Immigration Control Act which was essentially a “panic-driven response” to curb the numbers of black migrants entering the country. While legislation could try to curb further immigration, it was clear that by the 1960s, “post-war black Britain had become organic and permanent.”<sup>337</sup> This wasn’t the case of a few hundred international students

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<sup>333</sup> Tight 262.

<sup>334</sup> Warmington, Paul. *Black British Intellectuals and Education: Multiculturalism’s Hidden History*. London: Routledge, 2014, 31.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.* 31.

from Nigeria or India coming just for their education; rather, it was a permanent change to the demographic and cultural makeup of the nation.

To my best knowledge, there hasn't been any scholarship concerning the experiences of the post-war immigrants within higher education, although it is true that most of them came for work opportunities, and not for education. However, Hillary Perraton's account of the history of foreign students in Britain can serve as an indispensable resource on the experience of ethnic minorities in British universities in the period. Foreign students have been coming to Britain since medieval times, and for most of this history, "attitudes towards foreign students have often been marked by...ambivalence. While many students have been made welcome...controversies about their presence have often been tinged with racism."<sup>338</sup> Before WWII, while no students were excluded from admission based on skin color, there still existed a clear pecking-order related to skin darkness; it was reported that Japanese, Siamese, and Chinese students generally received the warmest welcome, with Indian students receiving less approval because they were seen as "black men," leaving African students at the bottom of the hierarchy.<sup>339</sup> Those in charge at Oxford and Cambridge expressed their doubts about African students, commenting that they were "doubtful if a negro really would be happy in college life" and that colleges were largely "reluctant to accept coloured students."<sup>340</sup>

Not much changed after the end of the war. While students reported that prejudice was "rarely encountered in a college or university," they still had to accept that "prejudice...was a standard feature of British life."<sup>341</sup> In the 1950s, a survey of colonial

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<sup>338</sup> Perraton 7.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid. 162.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid. 163.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.164.

students found that “nearly three-quarters of Africans had personal experience of colour prejudice” with “smaller numbers of students from Asia and the Caribbean reporting prejudice.”<sup>342</sup> As the decade progressed and issues of immigration and race relations became more heated, “concern about racial tension became a common theme of report by Commonwealth scholars,” with incidences of manhandling and “sudden and shocking behaviours” from strangers becoming more common as the years progressed into the mid-1960s.<sup>343</sup> It wasn’t until the Race Relations Act of 1976, which rendered racial discrimination illegal, that overt prejudice declined.<sup>344</sup>

Unfortunately, despite this context, the issues of race and ethnic minorities in higher education was not well addressed by *Universities Quarterly* during this period. Although Volume 12 Issue 4 was devoted to the topic of commonwealth universities and featured a three-part series on “Overseas Students in the UK,” none of the articles directly address the prejudice minority students might face in Britain. The article in this series which most closely addresses the issue of race in British universities is Martin Banham’s “The Nigerian Student in Britain,” which addresses the unique problems faced by Nigerian students studying in British universities. Rather than addressing any external problems, Banham instead focuses on the psyche of the Nigerian students to explain the “disturbingly high proportion of mental breakdowns amongst Nigerian students at British universities.”<sup>345</sup> Banham argues that “matters of colour conscious landladies, not liking British food or weather, feeling homesick, or having a bad love affair, are all symptoms of the disease, but not the cause,” instead citing the reasons for their difficulties as “taking [themselves] too seriously” and concentrating too hard on their work without

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Banham, Martin. “II. – The Nigerian Student in Britain.” *Universities Quarterly* 12.4 (1958): 363-366, 363.

relaxation.<sup>346</sup> Whether or not Banham's speculations about the Nigerian student's psyche were correct or not, he makes a great error in not addressing the external societal and cultural issues Nigerian students must have faced.

Also featured in Volume 12 Issue 4 was an article entitled "Racial Inequality and Commonwealth Universities" by Julius Lewin, a lecturer at the Witwatersrand University in South Africa. This article, which is one of the only in the journal to directly address the issue of racial prejudice, discusses the "awkward issue of racial inequality" in South Africa, where the South African Parliament was then deciding upon a bill that would "deprive the universities of their right to admit African and Asian students."<sup>347</sup> Lewin's tone is gently disapproving of the discriminatory apartheid practices in South Africa designed to uphold the racial "caste system," and yet fails to condemn it or provide any answers to readers. He asks, "should every African with a first-class education record be given preference in admission over white applicants with second-class records?" To this question he provides no answer to the reader.<sup>348</sup> He instead simply states that the universities in South Africa have reached an "uneasy compromise" of segregation between black and white students.<sup>349</sup> He praises the United States, where they have "ordered things better" and in which "more negroes than ever before are enrolled in the big Northern universities and colleges,"<sup>350</sup> ignoring the fact that in a large portion of the country, discriminatory Jim Crow policies still ruled supreme. Notably, Lewin fails to mention the state of race relations in the UK itself, and only laments that the field of race relations is "still neglected, if not belittled, by British universities."<sup>351</sup> Ultimately, while

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid. 365.

<sup>347</sup> Lewin, Julius. "Racial Inequality and Commonwealth Universities." *Universities Quarterly* 12.4 (1958): 420-425.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid. 422.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid. 423.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

Lewin approaches the issue of racial inequality, he addresses it in an unsure and ambivalent manner.

While it may not be surprising that the authors in *Universities Quarterly* failed to address the hardships faced by minority students in British universities considering that the entrance of Black Studies to academia wouldn't happen until the 1970s, it is still notable. The post-war period was just the beginning of the era which still persists to this day, in which "black British thinkers remain routinely marginalized."<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Warmington 1.

## Conclusion

In the beginning of this thesis, I sought to examine the concerns of scholars regarding higher education in Britain in the years 1947-1963. I took the pages of the then newly created *Universities Quarterly* as my primary sources, hypothesizing that an analysis of this journal and its contents would lead to insights concerning the nature of the scholarly debates surrounding the field of higher education in the pre-Robbins Report era. After studying the contents of the journal, I organized the topics of the articles into four main categories which then became the four main chapters in this thesis: idea of a university, life at the universities, disciplines, and universities abroad. Each of these topics led to insights not only about the most pressing concerns of scholars in Britain about higher education, but also the larger anxieties underlying these scholars' opinions. In this conclusion I will summarize the main insights from each chapter and demonstrate how these insights, when seen cohesively, paint a picture of scholarly anxiety about the future of the British state and society. Not all scholars followed this pattern, however, and those few scholars who stood outside the norm with their hopeful and forward-looking arguments are perhaps vindicated today. I believe the insights of this thesis collectively form a valuable piece of intellectual history of post-war Britain.

The first chapter of this thesis focused on the "idea of a university" literature in the post-war era. While the larger purpose or mission of the university had been a popular topic of debate among intellectuals since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the post-war era there was an upswing in interest in the topic. *Universities Quarterly* featured many articles engaged with this question, both in terms of original works as well as responses to authors like Moberly, Truscot and Leavis who felt that to some degree universities in Britain were facing a crisis. Some authors in *Universities Quarterly*, like Cambridge historian G.M.

Trevelyan agreed with the sentiment that the universities were in a crisis; in fact, he believed that the universities were now in the important position of carrying the entire tradition and culture of Britain now that the old ways were disappearing, making way for a new culture dominated by mass media. Trevelyan's class-based anxieties about the future of universities converged with the work of other traditionalists such as Moberly and Leavis, all of whom were skeptical about the path Britain was on. Whether it was increasing secularism, the rise of the middle and working classes in economic and social status, or scientific and technological advancements, these authors were fearful of change and ultimately decline. To counter them were authors who were fully engaged with the changes occurring in the post-war era, and who saw these shifts as a positive force in the movement towards a more equal and engaged society. Authors such as Bonamy Dobrée and Ernest Simon didn't see the universities as being in a crisis; rather, they saw them as having an opportunity to lead the way in changes already underway. Therefore, they proposed that universities should train students in values such as citizenship, social responsibility, and democracy with the hope that this training might not only produce better leaders but also a more engaged electorate and society on the whole.

The second chapter focused on issues specific to student life at English universities. This chapter revealed that scholars were concerned with the issue of maintaining academic standards and a good quality of life for students as they faced the prospect of having to increase student numbers. These concerns show that scholars felt a great sense of responsibility about the universities' role in determining the future of British society. This was certainly to some extent a product of the government's focus on universities in the post-war era. The government had commissioned numerous reports about the state of higher education, all of which advocated for the massive expansion of student numbers particularly in science and technology. The University Grants

Committee had also funneled substantial amounts of money to the universities for the purposes of expanding. Therefore, in writing about university life, scholars wrote about the issues with gravity, reflecting the pressure the universities were under to produce an ever-increasing number of high-quality graduates for the benefit of the progress of British society. Overall, scholars feared failing their students, not just academically but socially, because to fail them would be to also fail society at large.

The main points of the first two chapters are echoed in the second two chapters of this thesis. The tension elucidated in the first chapter between the traditionalists wary of change and progressives charging confidently into the future is a tension repeated throughout the next two chapters. Likewise, scholars' anxiety about the universities' responsibility in determining the future of the nation as demonstrated in the second chapter is also highlighted in the next two chapters. In chapters three and four, focused on the disciplines and universities abroad, strong tensions exist between traditional and progressive voices. I also believe that the topics of contention in the next two chapters can be extrapolated to a larger and deeper concern regarding the British state and society. This is evidenced by the fact that scholars felt that the decisions universities made would have repercussions on the future of the nation. Chapters three and four reveal that debates about topics concerning universities spoke not just to higher education but also to larger issues in the post-war era such as the loss of the British empire and Britain's place in global politics following the Second World War and into the Cold War.

The third chapter revealed that debates around the disciplines were the most divisive and antagonistic in this era. Authors were not just discussing the relative merits of their discipline, whether it be the arts, sciences or social sciences, but were also actively engaged with putting down other disciplines. The overall sense is one of hierarchy, in which the arts and sciences were battling for the top spot. However, the antagonism was

to the larger degree on the part of the arts, who felt that their relative power was waning in the post-war era in which science and technology had begun to be privileged and prioritized by the government. The arguments were heated because authors believed that their discipline was ultimately responsible for something greater than simply the education of students. They felt that their disciplines had a larger part to play in the future of the British state and society. The arts, particularly the classics and English literature, felt that their course of study was necessary to create the next generation of responsible leaders. Not only that, but some scholars in the arts felt that study of the sciences, if not tempered by any study of the arts, would become dangerous for the moral and physical safety of the nation. Physicist Patrick Blackett provided a unique rebuttal, stating that the universities had no business (nor had they ever) in moral education or determining the future direction of the country. His view that universities should stick to vocational training was not a common view. Most other authors felt that the universities had some kind of other duty, whether it be to the moral education of students and future leaders, or the proliferation of continued scientific and technological development for the good of Britain and its standing in the world of international politics.

The fourth chapter provided what I believe to be the most interesting and important insights into the way in which debates about higher education merged with deeper concerns about the future of the British state and society. In examining the ways in which British scholars wrote about universities abroad, a trend emerged which broadly reflected some of the largest post-war anxieties regarding Britain's changing place in the world. The fear of the mediocracy at American universities was a common theme among writers, who were largely wary about following the lead of the United States. This fear was not confined to developments in higher education but rather can be seen as simply one manifestation of the larger anxiety of "Americanization" or increasing American

influence in Britain following WWII. In this era, with the Cold War in full swing, any praise of Soviet universities was tempered by fearful remarks about what might happen if Soviet universities become too good especially in fields of science and technology. Finally, in discussion of colonial universities, most scholars believed that Britain still knew what was best for the 'primitive' people of the colonies and ultimately advocated policies that would perpetuate Britain's economic interests in the region. Oxford's Thomas Balogh advocated limiting the studies at colonial universities, lest the students and future leaders of many of the soon-to-be independent nations in Africa turn against Britain and towards the Communist enemy. One of the only voices to dissent with this opinion was historian Thomas Hodgkin, who saw a radically different future for universities in Africa. Hodgkin had a vision of African universities being run autonomously by Africans for Africans. Compared to his contemporaries such as Balogh, Hodgkin's proposals were almost radically progressive. With Hodgkin as an exception, most authors' views in *Universities Quarterly* aligned with larger fears about Britain's place in international politics in the post-war era: the hostility towards American influence, the fear of the threat of the Soviet Union and the spread of Communism, and finally Britain's fading place on the world stage as they lost their grip on their empire.

Although *Universities Quarterly* did feature some progressive ideas, ultimately two very important concerns, that of female and ethnic minority students, were ignored by scholars on the whole. This is why I included a final chapter about the experiences of female and minority students in the first half of the twentieth century in Britain. The experiences of female students are much better documented and have a richer secondary literature than that of minority students. For that reason, I believe one major takeaway from this thesis is that the experience of minority students in British universities is an area which needs more attention and can be a topic of future inquiry and exploration.

Another topic which I have addressed in this thesis but I believe could be further studied is how British scholars wrote about colonial universities in the post-war era and how this connects with the issue of cultural imperialism and the anxieties about loss of empire. Ultimately, I hope that the conclusions drawn from this thesis can be used as one piece in the puzzle of constructing not only the history of higher education in Britain but also the larger intellectual history of post-war Britain. I believe that debates among scholars in journals such as *Universities Quarterly* are rich material which can be used by others in a similar fashion for other periods of history. Similar studies could be done for various periods post-1963. One area which would be particularly interesting would be scholarly debates on the trend towards the neo-liberalization and New Public Management (NPM) within higher education which began in the 1980s.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Lorenz, Chris. "If You're So Smart, Why Are You Under Surveillance? Universities: Neoliberalism, and New Public Management." *Critical Inquiry*. 38.3 (2012): 599-629.

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