The Life Experiences of University-Educated Women: Graduates of the University of Liverpool, 1947-1979

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Sarah Jane Aiston

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Abstract

The Life Experiences of University-Educated Women: Graduates of the University of Liverpool, 1947-1979

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This thesis focuses upon the life experiences of a group of graduate women of the University of Liverpool between the years 1947 and 1979. By adopting the use of an open-ended questionnaire the thesis provides an insight into the life histories of the respondents. The thesis discusses the historical background and context to the respondents' lives, and provides an insight into what 'woman' and femininity signified in the post-war era.

The pre-university lives of the group of women are discussed in terms of their family background and schooling, along with an exploration of their motivation to enter university and the support they received in order to do so. At university, the thesis provides evidence of their academic and residential and social lives. The types of degree undertaken by the respondents at undergraduate level are discussed, together with how they felt they were treated on an academic level by male staff and students in a coeducational environment, and how they related to women academics. The impact that the respondents' residential arrangements had on their university experience, particularly their social lives, is also considered. The postgraduate lives of the respondents are then examined in terms of their career and family life experiences. Finally, the group of women further reflect upon their lives as women and their relationship to feminism.

The opponents of women's higher education in the nineteenth century feared that a university education for women would ultimately lead to a sexual revolution. Some feminist researchers, however, suggest that it is a 'major myth' to argue that higher education significantly improves the social position of women, and the evidence from this thesis would appear to support that assertion. Undoubtedly, a university education had enriched the lives of the respondents on an individual level, and for those women from working-class backgrounds it was a life-changing experience. The group of women studied here, however, generally led conventional lives: being female determined their every moment. For example, whilst a university education provided women with access to higher status occupations, the thesis shows that it was the female-ascribed occupations, particularly teaching, that dominated. Furthermore, the thesis documents the discrimination the women faced and the enormous impact family life had upon a woman's career. These women did not reject marriage and motherhood, and the role of wife and mother remained eminent, with the respondents taking ultimate responsibility for the care of the family and the home. The opponents of higher education in the nineteenth century need not have feared that a university education for women would radically alter the 'separate spheres'. As is shown throughout this thesis: 'Limitations operated even for the academic elite, for the role of wife and mother was never lost sight of.'

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I wish to dedicate this thesis to my Mum, and in loving memory of Gulliver, Sam, Travels and Fiver.

Part One
Introduction

Chapter 1

The historical study of women in higher education

The historical study of women in higher education has become a growing area of interest since the end of the nineteenth century.[1] In recent years conferences both in Britain and Europe have considered not only the past, but the present and future of women and higher education.[2] For the researcher whose aim is to explore the history of women and university education in Britain the literature available has several important characteristics. It has focused overwhelmingly upon the women's colleges, especially those of Oxford and Cambridge, and only in recent years has it gradually moved towards a consideration of women at the coeducational institutions. Furthermore, the research carried out has been predominantly concerned with the pre-1939 period, and an exploration of the life histories of highly educated women have been largely neglected until very recently. The following introductory chapter will explore the historical literature available in greater detail. An overview of the secondary literature is important both to provide the framework within which this thesis is situated, and an insight into the historical background of women in higher education. The chapter will then move on to outline the research focus of this thesis.

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[1] See for example, Bremner, C. S., *The Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain* (Sonnenschein, 1897), pp. 122-163, who documents the history of the movement for the higher education of women and the establishment of both the women's colleges and the provincial universities.

[2] University of Aberdeen, 1994, conference entitled, 'Women and higher education: past, present and future'; Academie Baden, Bad Herrenalb, Germany, 5-7/12/1997, conference entitled, 'Education as the key to women's emancipation in Europe: a twentieth-century myth?'; University of Cambridge, 24/9/98, conference entitled, 'The transformation of an elite? Women and higher education since 1900.'

Implicit within this discussion will be a consideration of the research questions, and the framework for the remainder of the thesis.

Changing perspectives on the history of women in higher education

In an article published in 1984 Carol Dyhouse argues that historians of women's higher education initially adopted a 'whiggish' theoretical approach. Historians such as C. S. Bremner in 1897 and Ray Strachey in 1928 presented a notion of linear progress vis-à-vis women and higher education in their concern to encourage women onto greater effort.[3] A paper entitled 'Women and the universities: a changing pattern', presented by Dame Kitty Anderson at the 1963 Fawcett lecture, reflected upon the history of women in higher education and conformed to this model of advancement. In considering one hundred years of women's university education Anderson divided the survey into three periods. The first period, named the 'spearhead attack', referred to the early years in which the struggle for the recognition of a woman's right to a university education took place. The second period, 1902-1944, Anderson refers to as the 'broadening front', in which there occurred 'consolidation following the break-through'. Anderson documents the increased numbers of women entering university in this period, and emphasises the growth in the number of female students from widening social backgrounds, to conclude that: 'no longer was there need to argue about the principle of availability of opportunity for a woman, that battle was won.'[4] The third phase, from 1944 up to the time of Anderson's lecture, is entitled 'combined forces'. Whilst recognising issues specific to women in this period Anderson stresses that:

[3] Dyhouse, C., 'Storming the citadel or storm in a teacup? The entry of women into higher education 1860-1920', in Acker, S. and Piper, D. W. (eds.), *Is Higher Education Fair to Women?* (SRHE, 1984), pp. 51-64.

[4] Anderson, K., *Women and the universities: a changing pattern* (Fawcett Society, 1963), p.14.

> In this period of expansion one is concerned in one's thinking nationally with young people as a whole both sexes, the combined forces...In 1963 it is no longer necessary to segregate the sexes either in university planning or thinking.[5]

Anderson presents the development of the British education system since the end of the nineteenth century as democratic. Having gained entry to university education women simply became part of this democratic process. In the conclusion to the paper Anderson not only marvels at the advancement women had made in higher education, but also at their social position: 'a revolution has taken place; the hundred years have seen a really remarkable advance in women's education and in their place in the universities and in society'.[6] For her the improvement of women's position in society, for example the widening of occupational opportunities, was closely connected with increased educational opportunities. The imagery of the battlefield, of climbing mountains, and of the 'revolution' that had occurred is retained in later histories.[7]

Historians have also discussed the movement to admit women to higher education, whether it was admission to the newly formed coeducational institutions, or the foundation of the women's colleges, in the late nineteenth century. The importance of the ladies' educational associations has been emphasised, and pioneering figures, for example Emily Davis, are exalted.[8] It is important, in the study of the history of women, to acknowledge women's own efforts for change, and

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[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Anderson, K., *ibid.*, p.19.
[7] See for example, Bryant, M., *The Unexpected Revolution: A Study in the History of the Education of Women and Girls in the Nineteenth Century* (University of London, 1979).
[8] For literature which considers the role of the ladies' educational associations in Scotland see for example, Hamilton, S., *Women and the Scottish Universities c. 1869-1939: a social history* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1987), chapter 1; Moore, L., *op. cit.*, pp. 5-11. For a general overview of the ladies' educational associations formed throughout the Britain, and for further references to literature see, Dyhouse, C., *No distinction of sex? Women in British universities 1870-1939* (UCL Press, 1995), pp. 13-17. For reference to literature which considers the pioneers of the foundation of the women's colleges see footnote 17.

the ladies' educational associations certainly played an important part in facilitating women's access to the universities. Dyhouse comments, however, that part of this literature assumes that the widening scope for women to study at university level was brought about almost entirely by the reforming energy, and pressure group tactics of those concerned with removing the barriers around women's education; a 'great woman' theory of history is expounded.[9] Anderson, having emphasised the 'revolution' that had occurred in women's educational history writes: 'Great pioneers such as Dame Millicent Fawcett blazed the trail.'[10] More sophisticated research, however, has highlighted the complexity of the atmosphere within which access was granted.

Joan Burstyn's *Victorian education and the ideal of womanhood* draws upon a range of literary sources to explore the arguments put forward by the opponents of women's higher education in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Having introduced the Victorian ideal of womanhood, which was constructed along middle-class lines and emphasised that men and women had different spheres of influence, Burstyn demonstrates how the opponents of women's higher education used three basic arguments to support their opinions.[11] First, there were those arguments based on the economic ramifications of higher education for women. Such arguments were offered as resistance against women moving away from the domestic sphere and into middle-class occupations. Second, were those arguments based on 'evidence' from comparative anatomy and physiology. It was argued that science had proven women to be intellectually inferior to men, and furthermore that a university education could

[9] Dyhouse, C. (1984), *op. cit.*
[10] Anderson, K., *op. cit.*, p.19.
[11] The concept of separate spheres is often referred to by historians of women as the public/private division: the Victorian notion that a woman's sphere of influence was in the home, whilst a man's was in the public domain of waged work and politics.

actually harm a woman's health. A woman undertaking a university education would be trained in reason, which was not considered a feminine trait. This would consequently lead to a woman becoming more masculine to the extent that sterilisation was likely. Third, were those arguments based on biblical authority and social convention. Social convention and religion dictated that a woman's place was in the home. In leading sheltered lives from the outside world women would be protected from vice, and in turn could retain their morally superior status vis-à-vis men, and uphold moral guardianship of the home. Through these arguments the opponents of women's higher education attempted to prove that the continuance of difference between the sexes, whether these differences be innate or environmental, were essential to the continuance of a civilised society. To tamper with nature's plan was to 'court disaster.'[12] Lindy Moore, drawing upon the work of Burstyn, considers these three primary arguments in the context of the Scottish debate vis-à-vis women and higher education,[13] and Alison Mackinnon stresses that the arguments put forward against the admission of women to higher education were not unique to Britain. Though the arguments varied in intensity, emphasis and timing across the English-speaking world, the same range of arguments was evident.[14]

By the middle of the nineteenth century, in both Britain and the United States, it had become apparent, however, that there were 'surplus' women, demographically speaking. Higher education for women was now advanced as a solution to the 'odd women problem'. A university-educated, single woman would be able to undertake work, albeit in female-ascribed occupations, at a time when middle-class incomes

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[12] J. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (Croom Helm, 1980).
[13] Moore, L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen University Press, 1991), pp. 20-36.
[14] Mackinnon, A., 'Male heads on female shoulders? New questions for the history of women's higher education', *History of Education Review*, 19 (1990), pp. 36-47.

were insufficient to support unmarried daughters. Furthermore, the frivolous education women had received, in which women were qualified to be nothing other than ornamental, came under attack. A higher education for women was gradually accepted as a means by which women could become proficient and cultivated wives and mothers. As moral guardians of the home, the idea that a woman should be instructed accordingly gained support amongst dissenting religious groups. The acceptance of women's higher education did not result in the rejection of the Victorian concept of femininity; it was merely redefined.[15] Moreover, as Dyhouse states, the newly founded coeducational institutions were not in a position to exclude women: universities needed students, and as such: 'universities were concerned with the difficulties of recruiting enough students to keep their recently established departments going. They could not afford *not* to enrol women.'[16]

A privileged history

As previously noted, the women's colleges have enjoyed a privileged status in the history of women and higher education.[17] Studies of the women's elite colleges of Oxford and Cambridge have been particularly dominant. As a history concerned with women's admission to the exclusive ancient universities, at which women were

[15] See for example, Delamont, S., 'The Contradiction in Ladies' Education', in Delamont, S. and Duffin, L. (eds.), *The Nineteenth Century Woman, Her Cultural and Physical World* (Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 134-163; Burstyn, J., *op. cit.*; Howarth, J., and Curthoys, M., ''The Political Economy of Women's Higher Education in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain', *Historical Research*, 60 (1987), pp. 208-231; Gibert, J., *Women at the English Universities 1880-1920* (PhD, University of North Carolina, 1988), chapter 2.

[16] Dyhouse, C. (1995), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[17] See for example, Gardner, A., *A Short History of Newham College Cambridge* (Bowes, 1921); Tuke, M. J., *A History of Bedford College for Women 1849-1937* (Oxford University Press, 1937); Rogers, M. A. H., *Degrees by Degrees* (OUP, 1938); Brittain, V., *The Women at Oxford: A Fragment of History* (George G. Harrap and Co., 1960); McWilliams-Tullberg, R., *Women at Cambridge: A men's university though of a mixed type* (Gollancz, 1975); Sondheimer, J., *Castle Adamant in Hampstead; A History of Westfield College 1882-1933* (Westfield College, University of London, 1983); Griffin, P. (ed.), *St Hughs: One Hundred Years of Women's Education in Oxford* (Macmillan, 1986); Adams, P., *Somerville for Women: An Oxford College 1879-1993* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

denied full membership until 1919 at Oxford and 1948 at Cambridge, it is an important aspect of women's educational history. Susan Parkes traces the history of the 'Steamboat Ladies', a group of seven hundred Oxbridge women who travelled to Trinity College, Dublin from 1904 to 1907. Denied acknowledgement of their formal degrees, in a period in which women had been granted access to the coeducational institutions founded in the late nineteenth century, the 'steamboat ladies' travelled to receive their formal degrees '*ad eundem gradum*'.[18] Historians of the women's colleges are often concerned with the history of individual institutions. Such studies, some of which are very narrative in approach and comparable with general university histories, focus upon the development and leadership of the colleges. The work of historians such as Sara Delamont and Martha Vicinus moves beyond the realm of institutional-based histories to the broader terrain of social relations between the sexes. Delamont, who considers the dilemmas that faced the women at the forefront of the establishment of the women's colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, introduces the notion of 'double conformity'. Arguing that double conformity is a central aspect of the history of women's education, Delamont states:

> This double conformity - a double bind or catch 22 - concerns strict adherence on the part of both educators and educated to two sets of rigid standards: those of ladylike behaviour at all times *and* those of the dominant male cultural and educational system.[19]

Delamont notes that the campaigners for the establishment of the women's colleges can be divided into two groups; the 'uncompromising', that is, those who argued women should study the same curricula as men; and the 'separatists', that is those who argued women should study modified courses more appropriate for their future

[18] Parkes, S. M., 'Trinity College, Dublin and the 'Steamboat Ladies' 1904-7', in Masson, M. R. and Simonton, D. (eds.), *Women and Higher Education: Past, Present and Future* (Aberdeen University Press, 1996), pp. 244-250. 'Ad eundem gradum' means 'at the same level'.
[19] Delamont, S., *op. cit.*, p. 140.

careers as mothers, teachers and nurses.[20] Even the 'uncompromising', however, imbued with the desire to compete for equal educational goals on equal terms with men were unable to shake off the fear of being characterised as unladylike, or worse 'unfeminine'. The pioneers, therefore, 'fell into an inevitable trap - the snare of double conformity.'[21] Vicinus, substantiating the notion of double conformity, examines the personal and public conflicts that college women faced, with particular reference to Constance Maynard, an early Girtonian and founder of Westfield College, London. Vicinus examines how first generation college women felt a deep conflict between the old social expectations of marriage and children, and the new opportunities for independence and a professional career outside of the home. 'They were caught between old ideologies and behaviour patterns and new ambitions and public careers.'[22] Set apart from the personal conflicts experienced, Vicinus stresses the importance of these female communities, arguing that the women's colleges provided an important alternative to the traditional family for single women.[23]

A coeducational history

The history of women at the coeducational universities is a less developed area of research. It might be expected, however, that a history of women at the coeducational institutions would be significantly different, and concerned to ask different questions, in comparison to a history of the women's colleges. This is not the history of a residential, female-only, and largely female-controlled environment, but one in

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[20] Florence Howe, in 'Introduction: The History of Women and Higher Education', *Journal of Education*, 159 (1974), pp. 5-10, notes similarly that the pioneers of women's higher in America took two positions; either women must study the 'men's curriculum', or a curriculum appropriate to their alleged 'nature'.

[21] Delamont, S., *op. cit.*, p. 160.

[22] Vicinus, M., ' "One life to stand beside me": emotional conflicts in first-generation college women in England', *Feminist Studies*, 8 (1982), p. 603.

[23] Vicinus, M., *Independent Women: work and community for single women 1850-1920* (Virago, 1985), pp. 121-162.

which at the end of the nineteenth century many men and women came together in an academic setting for the first time. For the historian seeking an insight into the women of the coeducational universities, the coeducational archives prove less bountiful than the archives of the women's colleges. This will become more apparent in Chapter 2. Perry Williams emphasises that many of the pioneer women students at Cambridge became distinguished, therefore leaving sufficient personal records to enable the historian to reconstruct their experience of higher education. From these records it becomes possible to explore how and in what ways it changed their lives, and what a university education meant to them.[24] Earlier historians, for example Josephine Kamm, in documenting the 'battle' that had taken place in women's admission to Oxford and Cambridge, briefly notes women were freely admitted to all other institutes of higher education, and assumes therefore that there was 'no distinction between the sexes.'[25]

Historians concerned to move away from the study of the women's colleges have sought to explore the above assumption made by Kamm. Mabel Tylecote's research on women at the University of Manchester published in 1941 marked a departure in the history of women's higher education by focusing upon a coeducational institution. Increasingly, in the last twenty years, historians have entered the 'no distinction of sex' debate, considering the extent and nature of women's integration into a mixed university community, both socially and academically.[26] This literature, however, overwhelmingly focuses upon the pre-1939

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[24] Williams, P., 'Pioneer Women Students at Cambridge 1869-81', in Hunt, F. (ed.), *Lessons for Life: the Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950* (Blackwells, 1987), pp. 171-191.

[25] Kamm, J., *Hope deferred: girls education in English history* (Methuen, 1965).

[26] See for example, Tylecote, M., *The Education of Women at Manchester University 1883-1933* (Manchester University Press, 1941); Hamilton, S., *Women and the Scottish Universities c. 1869-1939: a social history* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1987); Gibert, J., *Women at the English Universities 1880-1920* (PhD, University of North Carolina, 1988); Evans, W. G., *Education and Female Emancipation: the Welsh Experience 1847-1914* (University of Wales Press, 1990); Moore,

period, and there has been almost no published literature concerned with the post-1939 period.[27] Historians have arrived at various conclusions as to the extent of integration by women students into the coeducational institutions.[28] For example, in her study of the civic universities, Julie Gibert presents overall a very positive picture of women's position, stating that: 'at the red bricks the cause of female education succeeded quickly and with relatively little controversy.'[29] In contrast Lindy Moore, in a study of women at the University of Aberdeen, describes the academic and social position of women as peripheral, both formally and informally. The women of the University of Aberdeen in 1920, Moore concludes, formed a 'muted group' within the university environment.[30] Dyhouse, however, in an extensive overview of women at the coeducational universities founded and chartered before the Second World War, is wary of any attempt to measure women's progress in terms of their position. Refusing to characterise the pre-1939 period as one of progression or regression, Dyhouse stresses that a narrative of steady progress would not take into account evidence from the 1920s and 1930s that the women of the coeducational institutions, both staff and students, judged their position as 'uncertain'.[31]

L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen University Press, 1991); Dyhouse, C., *No distinction of sex? Women in British universities 1870-1939* (UCL Press, 1995); Edwards, L., *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883 to 1937* (PhD, University of Liverpool, 1999).

[27] For the post-1939 period, Jones, J. and Castle, C., 'Women in UK Universities, 1920-1980', *Studies in Higher Education*, 11 (1986), pp. 289-297 and Groves, D., 'Dear Mum and Dad: letters home from a women's hall of residence at the University of Nottingham 1952-55', *History of Education*, 22 (1993), pp. 289-301, are the only historians at present who can an provide an insight into this later period.

[28] Research into women academics of the coeducational institutions is an even less developed area of research. See Dyhouse, C. (1995), *op. cit.*, pp. 134-188.

[29] Gibert, J., *op.cit.*, p. 8. The universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield are often referred to as the 'civic' or 'red brick' universities.

[30] Moore, L., *op. cit.*

[31] Dyhouse, C. (1995), *op. cit.*

A further development

Having considered the range of literature available in regard to the history of women and higher education in Britain, the second part of the chapter will now outline the research focus of the thesis. The research questions were informed by the literature, especially research from America and Australia that moves beyond the narrow focus of institutional-based histories to the wider terrain of women's position in society. Such research is informed by questions that originate from broader areas of feminist enquiry, and are concerned to ask, what is the meaning of higher education for women? Williams notes that 'the provision of higher education has always been assumed to have been a critical factor in the changing social position of women.'[32] In *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft forcefully argued that only when educational inequalities had been removed would sexual inequalities be eradicated.[33] The opponents of women's higher education in the nineteenth century certainly feared that a university education for women would lead to a destruction of the 'separate spheres', and ultimately a sexual revolution.[34] Anderson, as previously noted, writing in 1963, almost a century after women's admission to higher education, also made the link between increased educational opportunities and women's improved social position.

Dyhouse, touching upon the issue of the thought processes and consciousness of university-educated women, concludes that: 'higher education altered the <u>outlook</u> of a small minority of middle-class women but the lifestyles of the majority registered little change.'[35] The argument that a university education improves the status of those women who undertook higher education has been discussed in greater

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[32] Williams, P., *op. cit.*, p. 171.
[33] Wollstonecraft, M., *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Penguin, 1972).
[34] See Burstyn, J., *op. cit.*
[35] Dyhouse, C. (1984), *op. cit.*, p. 62.

detail by American and Australian educational historians. Jill Conway and Florence Howe, both American educational historians, suggest that it is a 'major myth' to argue that higher education improves the status of women.[36] Access to higher education paradoxically 'keeps women in their place'. Conway states that the coeducational institutions of the United States in fact developed with a compensatory notion of the role of university-educated women in society. Conway's research, furthermore, offers an analysis of the impact of higher education on women's consciousness of themselves as independent intellects, concluding:

> It is essential to grasp that contrary to what educational historians have had to say up to now, it is not access to educational facilities which is the significant variable in tracing the 'liberation' of women's minds. What really matters is whether womens' [sic] consciousness of themselves as intellects is altered. This did not take place as a result of the development of coeducation in the United States.[37]

Gloria Steinem, in a recent radio series concerned with the story of twentieth-century women, suggests similarly that women's self-esteem actually depreciates with every additional year of higher education:

> You know you get good grades, but you come to believe that you can't do it, they can do it, because the higher up you go the fewer women you see in authority, the more the texts are male-centred texts. So education is brainwashing in many ways.[38]

The Australian educational historian, Alison Mackinnon, challenges the theory of 'colonisation' put forward by some twentieth-century feminists: the idea that the more educated women become the more they are 'colonised' by dominant ideologies which prescribe appropriate female roles and behaviour. In considering the meaning

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[36] Conway, J., 'Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the US', *History of Education Quarterly*, 14 (1974), pp. 1-12; Howe, F., *op. cit.*
[37] Conway, J., *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
[38] Steinem, G., interviewed for 'Clever', broadcast on Radio 4 on the 19/8/99. This programme was the second part of a series entitled 'Beautiful, Clever, Rich and Free'.

of higher education for South Australian women at the turn of the century, Mackinnon emphasises that such work is in itself a tribute to the potential subversiveness of higher education. By examining demographic data, Mackinnon wishes to reclaim university-educated women's consciousness, and sense of active agency.[39] Such questions can not only enliven the history of women in higher education, but also provide entry points into a wider range of debates.

A recent conference held in Germany, entitled 'Education as the Key to Women's Emancipation in Europe: A Twentieth-Century Myth?', was concerned to explore the above issues and ask the following questions: does the fact that a growing number of women are gaining qualifications finally provide the key to emancipation? Has education made a crucial difference to women's life-plans and biographies in the course of the twentieth century? Or have their lives been more strongly influenced by other factors – family, national, social, ethnic origin and social system?[40] Whilst this conference was largely concerned with the contemporary situation, and not women and higher education exclusively, such questions are of central importance to the following thesis, which is concerned to explore the meaning of higher education in women's lives. Considering the construction of femininity and how this ideology impacts upon the life experiences of highly educated women are further areas of interest. Angela McRobbie, in *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen*, states that gender was the key influence in the life experiences of a group of teenage girls from Birmingham: 'being working-class meant little or nothing to these girls – but being a *girl* over-determined their every moment.'[41] This thesis is,

[39] Mackinnon, A., *op. cit.*
[40] Academie Baden, Bad Herrenalb, Germany, 5-7/12/1997, conference entitled, 'Education as the key to women's emancipation in Europe: a twentieth-century myth?'
[41] McRobbie, A., *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen* (Macmillan, 1991), p. 64.

therefore, concerned to consider a range of variables that impact upon a university-educated woman's biography and experiences, and to ask: is gender the determining factor?

In exploring the meaning of higher education for women's lives, and the construction of femininity and its impact, it is necessary to move outside the confines of the 'no distinction of sex' debate and study the pre-university background and post-university lives of female students. This research complements and extends work which has been conducted in recent years by historians who have sought to explore the biographies of graduate women. In exploring the life histories of graduate women of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge the work of Sarah Curtis provides an insight into the lives of graduates of St Hugh's, whilst a large-scale project currently being conducted provides a valuable insight into the life experiences of Girtonian women.[42] Judy Wakeling, based at the University of Glasgow, is researching the life histories of women graduates of the University of Glasgow, and Dyhouse has gathered information on the biographies of graduate women of the pre-1939 period from six institutions.[43] The above work builds upon research conducted by researchers contemporary to the historical period that is the focus of this thesis. Judith Hubback's *Wives who went to College*, published in 1957, offers an insight into the biographies of a group of married graduate women, whilst Kelsall, Poole and Kuhn's *Graduates: The Sociology of an Elite*, published in 1972, distributed

[42] See Sarah Curtis, in 'Origins and Outcomes', in Griffin, P. (ed.), *St. Hugh's: One Hundred Years of Women's Education in Oxford* (Macmillan, 1986), pp. 244-283. Professor Pat Thane, Dr Amy Erickson and Kate Perry are currently conducting research into the life experiences of Girtonian women from 1900.
[43] Dyhouse, C., 'Signing the pledge? Women's investment in university education and teacher training before 1939', *History of Education*, 26 (1997), pp. 207-223.

questionnaires to all women graduating in 1960, providing valuable information on their postgraduate lives.[44]

This thesis is concerned to trace the life histories of a group of women who studied for their degrees between 1944 and 1979, adopting a case study approach by focusing upon graduates of the University of Liverpool. The research stands in sharp contrast to the history of the residential women's colleges. It is predominantly the history of a number of women whose family home was within the same city as their university, and who stayed within the Merseyside region for most of their lives. The respondents to the questionnaire, therefore, represent a particular group within the history of women's higher education. In exploring their life histories, this thesis is further concerned to discover the framework within which such life histories operate. As noted earlier, considering the construction of femininity is a central aspect of this thesis. An analysis of the student press of the University of Liverpool in Chapter 4 is a means by which to consider not only male/female relations in the university environment but, moreover, what 'woman' and 'femininity' signified in the post-1945 era. In terms of educational reform this post-war era witnessed substantial changes. The 1944 Education Act and the 1963 Robbins Report provided a widening of educational opportunities.[45] The late 1960s heralded a time of the civil rights movement, student revolts, the lowering of the age of consent, and the birth of the Women's Liberation Movement. Furthermore, this is a period in which legislation

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[44] Hubback, J., *Wives who went to College* (William Heinemann, 1957); Kelsall, R., K., Poole, A., and Kuhn, A., *Graduates: The Sociology of an Elite* (Methuen, 1972).

[45] The 1944 Education Act, although not specifically concerned with higher education reform, was designed to expand secondary schooling, and make provision for those who wished to stay on to do so until the age of nineteen. This, in turn, increased the numbers qualified to undertake higher education courses. The Robbins Committee, appointed in 1960 by Harold Macmillan, was commissioned specifically to undertake a review of the higher education system, and advise upon the expansion of that system.

was introduced with specific reference to women. All in all, the years 1944 to 1979 provide an interesting and dynamic period of study.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part One, which incorporates this introductory chapter and Chapter 2, is concerned to provide the overall framework within which the thesis is situated. This chapter has introduced the secondary literature concerned with the history of women and higher education, presented the research focus of the thesis, and demonstrated that this research focus marks a further development within the history of women and higher education. Chapter 2 will consider the methods employed to discover the biographies and life experiences of university-educated women, and the methodology underpinning the research methods chosen. Implicit within this discussion will be a consideration of the theoretical approach adopted for the study of the past, and in particular the historical study of women. Part Two, which comprises chapters 3 and 4, is concerned to provide the historical context to the post-Second World War period. Drawing upon secondary literature, contemporary sources, oral history and autobiographical accounts, Chapter 3 is concerned to provide an insight into women's lives within this period. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the student press of the University of Liverpool, the *Guild Gazette*. Insight will be provided, not only into representations of university-educated women, but also to women in general. Furthermore, an exploration of women's reaction to such representations will take place. Having provided the historical framework within which the respondents' lives operated, Part Three, which incorporates chapters 5 to 10, is concerned to explore the life histories from pre-university life to post-university life of the group of women who responded to the questionnaire.

Whilst contributing knowledge to the history of women and higher education, this thesis also aims to contribute to the history of women in this period in general. As Mackinnon suggests, 'The history of women's higher education ...offers a rich and fertile field for those who wish to explore the meaning of women's lives in the past.'[46] Chapter 2 will now consider the research methods employed to uncover the life experiences of university-educated women.

[46] Mackinnon, A., *op. cit.*, p. 45.

Chapter 2

Uncovering the life experiences of university-educated women: method and methodology[1]

As shown in the introductory chapter, research conducted by historians of women's higher education has been primarily concerned with the history of the institution and the institutional experience (in isolation), as opposed to the life experience of university-educated women; and has been dominated by the pre-1939 period. The sources predominantly drawn upon have been those available in the institutional archives: very little use is made of questionnaires and interviews.[2] In recent years, however, there has been an increasing interest in considering the life experiences of highly educated women, not only in the pre-Second World War period, but also the post-war era. Researchers have recognised the necessity of employing the use of questionnaires and interviews to discover this experience.[3] In terms of considering the life experiences of women graduates of the University of Liverpool, post-1944, adopting the use of questionnaires and/or interviews proved to be the only means by which to follow and gain an insight into life histories. The University student records

[1] David Hall in *Practical Social Research* (Macmillan, 1996), p. 29, notes how it is important to make the distinction between method and methodology. Whereas method refers to the practice of research in terms of strategies and techniques, methodology refers to the philosophy or general principles behind the research. Hall stresses that in selecting certain methods researchers are consciously or unconsciously taking on board their methodological assumptions.

[2] This is partially due to the fact that much of the literature has been focused upon the pre-1939 period, so that contacting members of a university was simply not an option or somewhat more problematic.

[3] For the Girton project and Judy Wakeling's research the use of questionnaires and interviews features as important aspects of the work. Sarah Curtis, in 'Origins and Outcomes', in Griffin, P. (ed.), *St. Hugh's: One Hundred Years of Women's Education in Oxford* (Macmillan, 1986), pp. 244-283, and Dyhouse, in 'Signing the pledge? Women's investment in university education and teacher training before 1939', *History of Education*, 26 (1997), pp. 207-223, adopt the use of questionnaires as the primary method.

can provide basic information upon students, but their use is problematic. These records, however, cannot provide information as to post-university life, nor can they provide a subjective insight into the life experiences of university-educated women.[4]

The research for this thesis has adopted a 'multi-sourced' approach, employing the use of questionnaires and documentary sources. Within feminist research, it is generally accepted that conducting interviews, when possible, is the paradigmatic research tool. Maynard and Purvis' *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective* highlights the increasing dissatisfaction amongst some researchers with the idea that feminist research should only involve interviewing. The editors indicate:

> In putting forward an argument for multiple methods, feminists are not suggesting, in some naïve fashion, that combining approaches will ensure the increased validity of their data. Nor do they argue that the information constructed through different methods can simply be aggregated to produce a single unitary picture of 'truth'. Rather, along with other researchers they acknowledge that the differences generated from different research techniques are likely to be as illuminating as the similarities.[5]

The differences generated from different research techniques can be quite marked. My previous research, which considered the female student experience at the University of Liverpool from 1944 to 1959, emphasised the discrepancies that can arise when adopting the use of mixed methods. In this instance, whilst oral testimony emphasised the positive nature of the university experience, archival sources suggested otherwise. If one's agenda is to document the historical oppression of women, then in this case it would be simple to disregard the respondents'

[4] The University student records are held on microfilm in Senate House. The information contained is as follows: name, date of birth, previous school, father's name and occupation, course registered for, absences, withdrawal, results and degree passed. Lynn Edwards for her doctoral research, *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883 to 1937*, found these records problematic and difficult to use. The records are listed alphabetically, rather than by year and the earlier records were also somewhat patchy.

[5] Maynard, M. and Purvis, J., 'Doing Feminist Research', in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.), *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective* (Taylor and Francis, 1994), pp. 3-4.

understanding of their university experience as simply 'incorrect', and to elevate the archival evidence as the source which grants us the *real* insight into the 'true' experience.[6] David Silverman, however, cautions against the use of different methods as a form of adjudication between conflicting accounts to discover who is 'lying'. Where attention should be focused is upon exploring how and why these differences occur.[7] This involves a more nuanced understanding of the research process in general.

In terms of the literature which is concerned with research design and process I have adopted a multidisciplinary approach to my reading. To restrict my reading only to the work of historians would neither have been possible, for example in the case of constructing a questionnaire, nor very productive. Social scientists such as sociologists and psychologists, and feminist researchers in general have more of a tradition of discussing the research process on a practical level. Furthermore, social science, along with philosophy, literary theory, linguistics and cultural studies, also has more of a tradition of discussing theoretical concepts. In 1991 Keith Jenkins stated that 'history is, vis-à-vis these neighbouring discourses, theoretically backward.'[8] Oral historians, however, have shown more concern with reflecting upon the interview as a format, almost by necessity, as part of their defence of the legitimacy of their discipline. Women's historians, as part of their challenge to mainstream history, have also been at the forefront of the adoption of a more critical approach to the research process.[9] And in the last decade historians in general have

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[6] For a fuller discussion of this earlier research see Aiston, S. J., '"I didn't look at it that way": oral history and the historical study of women at the University of Liverpool 1944-1960', *History of Education Society Bulletin*, 63 (1999), pp. 4-17.
[7] Silverman, D., *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction* (Sage, 1993), p. 157.
[8] Jenkins, K., *Re-thinking History* (Routledge, 1991), p. 1.
[9] The editorial of the first *Women's History Review*, 1 (1992), p 7, notes 'We also hope that Women's History Review will become a forum for debate about theoretical and methodological issues. Thus we wish to encourage dialogue about the nature of such topics as women's history, feminist history,

become increasingly concerned with the more theoretical aspects of research. The challenge presented by postmodernism has, in a sense, forced the issue.[10]

My research has adopted a qualitative, case-study approach to exploring the life experiences of women graduates of the University of Liverpool. I would argue that my approach is innovative on the following grounds. First, the adoption of a questionnaire for historical research is in itself still a relatively new method.[11] More significantly, however, the manner in which the questionnaire has been developed challenges the traditional format of a questionnaire. Within the social sciences the questionnaire has traditionally being associated with quantification, and therefore there has been a predominance of closed, as opposed to open-ended questions.[12] My questionnaire is comprised of open-ended questions in order to gain a greater insight into the respondents' lives. I am therefore using one particular method with certain conventional associations in a different, new and exploratory manner. Second, my research has included an analysis of a source that has been largely overlooked by historians. It will be argued that the student newspaper is an excellent source from which to consider images of, not only university women, but women in general. There are, in a sense, two levels to the research. On the one hand, the questionnaires

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gender history, black women's history and lesbian history, and about the relationship, for example, between feminist theory and women's history or post-modernism and women's history - indeed, a whole range of controversial themes.'

[10] For example see, Bunzl, M., *Real History* (Routledge, 1997), Behen McCullagh, C., *The Truth of History* (Routledge, 1997) and Munslow, A., *Deconstructing History* (Routledge, 1997).

[11] As previously noted, historians of women's education are increasingly recognising the benefits of adopting the use of such a method. Over a decade ago Sylvia Harrop was one of the first historians to draw upon the use of questionnaires for historical research. Significantly, the use of questionnaires within this project provided an alternative insight to the one gained from the use of conventional sources, i.e. documentary sources. See Harrop, S., *The Merchant Taylors' School for Girls, Crosby: One Hundred Years of Achievement* (Liverpool University Press, 1988). The use of questionnaires, however, still remains a method not widely drawn upon by historians.

[12] Open-ended questions leave respondents with a space to write in their answers just as they like. Closed or pre-coded questions are those which ask the respondent to choose one or more from a set of pre-selected answers. These can range from the simplest Yes/No, through to five-point rating or ranking scales, through to a choice from a checklist of alternatives.

provide an insight into the life experiences of a group of graduate women; and on the other, the student newspapers, which provide an insight into the construction of femininity, highlight the framework within which such life histories operated. Although each specific method will now be discussed separately, each method is by no means mutually exclusive. Rather there is a synergism in terms of first, gaining an insight into the life experiences of university-educated women, and second, each method informs the other about possible ways in which to progress with analysis.

Questionnaires

A critical aspect of feminist research is to discover women's words. As previously noted the interview is seen as the means by which to achieve this. In terms of historical research the analysis of women's written words, for example in the format of diaries and personal letters, along with women's spoken words, has become central. These are not the only means, however, by which historians can discover women's voices, for the use of a questionnaire can provide a new format. Within the following section I will reflect upon both the practical process and the philosophical considerations of using such a method.

The initial stage of designing the questionnaire was to consult numerous social science research books and also reflect upon what kind of information I wanted to elicit.[13] Having gone through several drafts of the questionnaire it was then essential to carry out a pilot study. An important aspect of the pilot study was to choose women who were themselves graduates, so that the consideration of the

[13] See for example, Bell, J., *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First – Time Researchers in Education and Social Science* (Open University Press, 1987); Bright, P. B., *Introduction to Research Methods in Postgraduate Theses and Dissertations* (University of Hull, 1991); Hall, D., *op.cit.* I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Pat Thane, Dr Amy Erickson and Kate Perry, from the Girton project, for allowing me to consult their own questionnaire.

questionnaire would be authentic.[14] Along with the questionnaire those involved in the pilot study were also given a list of questions, relating to the questionnaire, for them to consider.[15] Following their responses amendments were made and the end format was twenty- paged, consisting of open-ended questions and broken down into four sections. The four sections were chronological in their format, reflecting the chronology of life. Section 1 addressed pre-university background, Section 2 university life, Section 3, post-university life and Section 4 asked the respondents to reflect upon their lives as women and as university-educated women.[16] The questions were informed by the secondary literature concerned with women and higher education, and issues of personal interest.[17]

The respondents who filled in the questionnaire were contacted through the University's Alumni Office. Prior to 1989 graduates had to register to 'stay in touch' with the University. For the period under consideration the numbers of female graduates upon the alumni lists are therefore small in contrast to the overall number of women who studied at the University. In order to respect confidentiality I was not given the addresses of the graduates, and therefore the Alumni Office was responsible for sending out any correspondence. The information requested was

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[14] I would like to thank Victoria Lawson, Linda Rush, Audrey Sharp and Susan Haywood for taking part in this pilot study.

[15] See Appendix 1 for a copy of the list of questions given to those who took part in the pilot study.

[16] Sections of this chapter were presented as a paper at the Institute of Historical Research, where I was asked if I had considered structuring the layout of the questionnaire in a format which did not follow the chronology of life. Luisa Passerini, an oral historian, avoids imposing a chronological order upon the interview, thereby allowing interviewees to prioritise their own life history. See Charles T. Morrissey, 'Craft Notes', *International Journal of Oral History*, 9 (1988), p. 76. In terms of the structure of a questionnaire, however, I would suggest that the chronological format that begins with asking respondents to detail straight-forward information about their background, moving on to guide them through their life history and finally to reflect upon their life in a more in-depth and contemplatory manner, is a format that is more recognisable to the respondent and therefore easily completed. It is also less problematic, in terms of analysis, for the researcher.

[17] See Appendix 2 for a copy of the introductory letter and questionnaire. With hindsight I would make alterations and editions. For example, I did not ask my respondents if they were of any religious persuasion, and the question concerned with racial origin should have been presented as a closed-question with options.

name of graduate, year of graduation, and where known, degree and subject studied.[18] It was not possible to construct a representative sample. First, the alumni lists themselves only mirror a small proportion of the overall number of graduates. For example, simple random sampling, which is regarded as one of best means by which to ensure that the sample is representative, has a criteria by which 'everyone in the population has the same chance of selection.'[19] This is obviously not achievable when using the alumni lists, which are the only means by which to contact graduates on any large scale. Second, those listed upon the alumni lists are themselves self-selected and 'bias' is therefore intrinsic to the information. The decision was taken to send out questionnaires, along with stamped self-addressed envelopes, to those women who were currently residing in Merseyside.[20] Previous research, conducted at MA level, had highlighted that women currently residing in the Merseyside area had generally lived in the area all of their lives. Taking the decision only to contact those women who were presently living in Merseyside provided a particular group of graduate women within the history of women in higher education. I asked for the questionnaires to be returned within three weeks.[21]

The response rate was 40 per cent. I received letters from a small proportion of respondents to inform me that the person required no longer lived at the particular

[18] See Appendix 3 for an example of the information given to me by the Alumni Office. Further details could have been requested, for example marital status, number of children and employment. As is apparent from Appendix 3, whereby degree and subject of study is not always known, the alumni records contain sketchy information. Furthermore, as is the case with the University's student records, these records cannot provide a subjective insight into life biographies.
[19] See Hall, D., *op. cit.*, 106-117, for an outline of different sampling methods.
[20] 318 questionnaires were sent out. This represented 18% of the total number of women upon the alumni lists who studied at the University of Liverpool between the years 1944-1979.
[21] It is textbook advice to ask for information to be returned by a certain date. This standard advice, however, may have worked against me in this instance. During this period Liverpool experienced a postal strike! Several respondents made reference to this strike, and to what extent this affected the response rate one can never know. Possible respondents may have thought that their questionnaire would not reach me by the date requested and therefore took the decision not to fill in the questionnaire at all. Since writing this chapter I have received a letter dated 3/6/99, which might suggest that this respondent had only received the questionnaire (one year after the questionnaires were originally sent out).

address, or that they did not have the time to fill in the questionnaire or, in two cases, the inclination to do so (to this point I shall return). A small proportion of respondents did not meet the criterion of having studied for an undergraduate degree at the University of Liverpool between the years 1944-1979.[22] In total I had 82 questionnaires to analyse.[23] This group, as opposed to a 'sample', is not representative, and therefore the findings in the traditional understanding of representation cannot be generalised.[24] In the social sciences to generalise is to claim the data is representative. I would argue, however, that my findings could lead to generalisations and this does not entail crude universal statements, but rather an exercise in highlighting trends, possibilities, and areas of common and divergent experience.[25] Furthermore, as Judith Bennett points out, it is important to move beyond the individual case to some level of generalisation:

> As historians, we work always on two levels; we seek to understand the particularities of past lives, but we also quite rightly seek to place those lives in broader context. At this second level of work, generalization might be risky, but it is both proper and useful.[26]

Alison Easton, reflecting further upon the importance of the individual account vis-à-vis the broader context, notes:

> We need to understand that 'experience' is not simply an individualistic matter. What is subjective is also collective and shared; it is part of the world of social and economic institutions, language and other cultural practices, and

[22] For example, some respondents had only studied at postgraduate level at the University of Liverpool, others had studied at the University's affiliated colleges, whilst others had studied as undergraduates at
the University, but post-1979. In this instance the date of graduation had been entered incorrectly upon the alumni database. The above emphasises both the inaccuracies and the lack of information held upon the database.
[23] The distribution of responses, in terms of year of graduation, is as follows: 1940s-14, 1950s-14, 1960s-20, 1970s-34.
[24] Elizabeth Roberts, presenting a paper entitled *Continuity and Change: oral history and the recent past* for the 1998 Phillimore Lecture, noted that she did not see her 98 interviewees as a 'sample'. For Roberts the word implies a 'scientifically' selected group, which her interviewees were not.
[25] See Bennett, J., 'Feminism and History', *Gender and History*, 1 (1989), p. 265.
[26] Bennett, J., 'Women's History: A study in change, continuity or standing still?', *Women's History Review*, 2 (1993), p. 177.

> is a continuous process by which we come to have a sense of ourselves and our place in the social order.[27]

In terms of the analysis of the questionnaires the use of a relational database was adopted.[28] This was central to making sense of what can turn out to be a mass of data. It provides a framework by which to gain an insight into the defining characteristics of the group. It is a means by which, on the one hand, to view the group as a whole and make comparisons between individuals, and on the other, to focus on one particular life history. Most importantly, the database is a means by which to consider relational patterns that are extremely difficult to carry out manually and impossible to re-check. For example, it becomes possible to consider the relational pattern of those women who noted discrimination within the University and degree studied. Information given, such as degree studied for, place of residence during university, and marital status was less problematic to input.[29] As for the analysis of questions that asked respondents to reflect upon their lives, their life decisions or their opinions upon certain issues, categorisation was necessary.[30] Within this process a sub-group of 20 questionnaires was selected and the answers from each specific question were compared and categories formulated.[31] It was important to consider not only the content of what had been written, but also the way

[27] Easton, A., 'Introduction: What is Women's Studies' in Cosslett, T., Easton, A. and Summerfield, P. (eds.), *Women, Power and Resistance: An Introduction to Women's Studies* (Open University Press, 1996), p. 5.

[28] In this instance *Access* was the chosen database.

[29] Although with hindsight, having constructed the questionnaire first *then* taking the decision to adopt the use of a database, the questionnaire design could have been improved to make data imput easier.

[30] For literature which discusses the creation of categories, see Bliss, J., Monk, M. and Ogborn, J., *Qualitative Data Analysis for Educational Research: a guide to uses of systemic networks* (Croom Helm, 1983); Dey, I., *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists* (Routledge, 1993); Cresswell, J. W., *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Sage, 1994); Miles, M. B., and Huberman, M. A., *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis* (Sage, 1994); Hall, D., *op.cit.*; Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V., *Data Collection and Analysis* (Sage, 1996).

[31] This was achieved by photocopying the 20 questionnaires and cutting out each answer to each particular question and putting them in folders.

in which it had been expressed. In what terms were the respondents expressing their experiences and thoughts? It was important to attempt to recognise the subtleties of the data and not ignore answers that departed from the general picture. As Dyhouse emphasises, 'life histories, unlike folk or fairy tales, have no simple pattern.'[32]

Before moving on to consider the documentary sources consulted it is important to reflect upon the questionnaire as a method. I have adopted the use of a questionnaire in a qualitative manner, with the predominance of open-ended questions. This is not to ignore the importance of quantitative research, which feminist researchers have had a tendency to avoid as part of their rejection of positivism. Positivism, however, is not intrinsically linked to quantification and whilst some researchers do regard themselves as neutral, producing objective and value-free 'facts', others acknowledge that providing figures involves as much as an act of construction as any other kind of research. Enumeration can contribute to our knowledge and understanding of women's experiences and the political potential of such work cannot be overlooked. For example, the significance of violence in women's lives is underlined by studies showing the extent and severity of its incidence.[33] As Mackinnon stresses, women's experiences are not only unravelled from the most intimate sources, but sometimes the most public, such as government generated and collected statistics.[34] The polarisation that has occurred between quantitative and qualitative methods is somewhat false. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. At the simplest level researchers involved in qualitative research are in most instances engaging with quantitative research at the

[32] Dyhouse, C., 'Driving Ambitions: women in pursuit of a medical education, 1890-1939', in *Women's History Review*, 7 (1998), p. 335.
[33] See Maynard, M., 'Methods, Practice and Epistemology', in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp.11-14.
[34] Mackinnon, A., 'Male heads on female shoulders? New questions for the history of women's higher education', *History of Education Review*, 19 (1990).

same time. For example, although I may put forward this thesis as primarily a qualitative study I am involved in enumeration in attempting to make sense of the questionnaire data by recognising trends and frequencies. When I use the term 'the majority' I am engaging in quantification. Furthermore, drawing upon the use of, for example, student registration statistics is an important means by which to situate the thesis in a historical context.

Although by its very nature the questionnaire enforces structure, open-ended questions provided a means by which respondents could engage in the research process and highlight what they regarded as important. The task that faces researchers when adopting 'new' methods is to consider how to approach the process with the same sensitivity as Ann Oakley, who challenged the traditional format of the social science interview.[35] A problem for researchers is not necessarily the form of the questionnaire or the creation of numeric data, but the ways in which respondents are treated.[36] In the case of a questionnaire, providing a detailed introductory letter is important aspect of this process. The aims of the research should be clearly outlined, the confidentiality of the information given must be emphasised and the respondents encouraged to contact the researcher by phone if they wish to discuss the questionnaire further. It is also important to encourage the respondents to engage with the research process as much as possible, by asking them to raise any issues they feel are important that the questionnaire has failed to address and to highlight any questions or wording they regard as odd. It must be emphasised to the

[35] Oakley, A., 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms', in H. Roberts (ed.), *Doing Feminist Research* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 30-61. Oakley's research into the transition to motherhood, which involved actual attendance at the birth in some instances, highlighted the absurdity of the traditional model of the interview as a one-way process in which the interviewer elicits and receives, but does not give information and is controlled, distanced and neutral.
[36] Kelly, L., Burton, S. and Regan, L., 'Researching Women's Lives or Studying Women's Oppression? Reflections on What Constitutes Feminist Research', in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 35.

respondents that they are free not to answer certain questions if they do not wish to do so and that they are free to comment as much or as little as they like.[37]

When considering the questionnaire as a format it is important to acknowledge that it is a source that is both mediated and negotiated. Oral historians, such as Joan Sangster, emphasise the complexities of oral testimony, and acknowledge that as a source the interview transcript is a mediated account. The notion of 'experience' is therefore regarded as problematic, especially by those researchers influenced by poststructuralism. For many oral historians, however, this does not lead to the position that it is necessary to analyse such texts *only* in linguistic terms, and in turn overstate the 'fictionality' of oral history, interpreting interviewees accounts as misguided, or somehow untrue. What is important is the exploration of the construction of women's historical memory, asking why and how women explain, rationalise and make sense of their past. Sangster emphasises that in doing so we may gain:

> ...insight into the social and material framework within which they operated, the perceived choices and cultural patterns they faced, and the complex relationship between individual consciousness and culture.[38]

Even though the interview transcript is recognised as a representation of experience, the concept of experience itself does not have to be dismissed as mere abstraction. Similarly, the questionnaire must also be acknowledged as a mediated source, but as highlighted this does not necessarily entail the abandonment of the concept of 'experience'. Sangster's position occupies the middle ground between the two opposing extremes of on the one hand taking a respondent's account at face value, and on the other dismissing an account as fictional. It is this middle position which

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[37] See Appendix 2, Introductory letter. I would like to thank those working upon the Girton project, who provided me with a copy of their introductory letter that provided a framework for my own.
[38] Sangster, J., 'Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history', in Perks, R. and Thompson, A. (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge, 1998), p. 88.

this thesis adopts in exploring life histories and the framework within which such life histories operate. In Summerfield's terms the thesis is concerned to explore: 'the voice that speaks for itself, but also the voices that speak to it'.[39]

In terms of the questionnaire as a negotiated source it is crucial to acknowledge that there is a dialogue occurring between myself as the researcher and the respondent. Reflected in the questions is my own agenda and this is unavoidable no matter how hard I attempt to negate this situation. Feminist researchers have been at the forefront of emphasising the role of the researcher in the research process. To deny this role is to make claims that the research process is an objective one. A central concern of my research was to consider the relationship between highly educated women and feminism. Referring back to the two respondents who did not have the inclination to fill in the questionnaire, the answer to this lay in the fact that my agenda was very much at odds with their own concerns:

> I am so out of sympathy with anything that contains the word 'feminist' that I am not prepared to consider the questions in your quiz. This may be because of my age.[40]

> For the most part your questionnaire is a form of market research, typical of business seeking to place potential customers in 'socio-economic' categories. As such it is unoriginal and unworthy of a PhD thesis. I am surprised the university is backing it. Who is paying? As for the rest, in the real world, the feminist industry is fast becoming old fashioned, out dated and a subject for yawns. (!)[41]

Whilst these women chose not to fill in the questionnaire because of objections to what they perceived as my agenda, others went on to do so, but positively challenged my preoccupations. For example, one of the questions was concerned with the

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[39] Summerfield, P., *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* (Manchester University, 1998), p. 15.
[40] Graduated 1948, B. Arch.
[41] Graduated 1975, B.A.

concept of role models. Some of the respondents made it clear that this was very much a contemporary concept and one that did not apply to their lives.

There are benefits and drawbacks, just as there are with any method, to adopting the use of a questionnaire. As the quotations both above and below document the format will not always be approved by all concerned:

> Thanks for your letter with the questionnaire. I find it arouses in me very mixed feelings. To be asked to give out all my life experience, (albeit a potted, boxed form) just like that...It's not so much a matter of the time it takes or of the confidentiality consideration. It is, I think, that one's experience is ultimately, all one has. To just be asked to give it out without any apparent reciprocity, feels a bit odd, somehow. The 'I'll show you mine if you show me yours' rule doesn't apply here! If we were all to meet in a room together, it would feel different: it would feel equal. But to just give one's out, that feels weird! – into the void, so to speak. I somehow need something...some reciprocity here...to make the laying out of myself...right.[42]

This quotation succinctly highlights some of the key concerns for feminist researchers. As previously noted, Ann Oakley's seminal work advocating a non-hierarchical model of interviewing and encouraging reciprocity between the researcher and the researched, was obviously an element that was significantly absent for this particular respondent. The encouragement given to contact me, to discuss the project and the questionnaire further was not regarded as being reciprocal or equal enough. As advocated earlier, it is important to attempt to approach the adoption of questionnaires and survey research with the same level of sensitivity as Oakley's work in 1981. Whilst recognising that reciprocity is a crucial aspect of the research process, however, researchers have now questioned to what extent the interviewer and interviewee are in a relationship of 'fair exchange', and to what extent equality in the interview process is actually achievable.[43] In most instances the

[42] Letter dated 18.3.98. Date of graduation and subject of degree not known.

[43] See for example, Stacey, J., 'Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?' and Patai, D., 'U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?' in Gluck, S. B. and Patai, D. (eds.), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (Routledge, 1991).

researcher leaves the research process with far more than the respondents do. The researcher is also ultimately in control of the information given. At this stage the researcher is entering into the ethical issue of who controls the text. What is important in the case quoted above, however, is that this particular woman did not feel completely at ease with the questionnaire and would have felt more comfortable discussing her life experiences on a personal basis, regardless of the issues researchers may raise.

An advantage of the questionnaire is that it does offer respondents anonymity, and as such is useful for gaining personal and confidential information that a respondent may be reluctant to tell, or uncomfortable with telling a researcher. As Liz Kelly, Sheila Burton and Linda Regan note: 'It means something different to disclose information anonymously on paper or computer than to speak/communicate it interactively with another person.'[44] Although, as previously discussed, the researcher's agenda is a recognisable aspect of the research process the questionnaire does offer a format whereby the respondent is less likely to be concerned with pleasing the researcher. The respondent may attempt to achieve this at interview based on their perception of the researcher and what they think the researcher would like to hear. Sangster gives an example of interviewing a male trade unionist who suspected her of being a feminist: his role vis-à-vis the defence of women's rights in the union became aggrandised in the interview, beyond Sangster's understanding of the written records.[45] This situation might have been significantly reduced if the male trade unionist had been presented with a questionnaire. Overall, the questionnaire employed in this research has provided extremely rich data. The majority of those

[44] L. Kelly, S. Burton and L. Regan, *op.cit.*, p. 35.
[45] J. Sangster, 'Telling our stories: Feminist debates and the use of oral history', in R. Perks and A. Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge, 1998), p. 89.

who responded sent accompanying letters and cards to wish me well with my research, and noted that they enjoyed taking part in the research, even a woman who documented the domestic violence she had encountered for many years.

Documentary Sources

Liverpool University Archives, whilst offering little insight into the subjective life experiences of graduate women, contain documentary sources that are of great significance in providing a historical framework to the life experiences of university-educated women. The University Archive provides, first, a general sense of the University and second, invaluable information such as male/female registration statistics.[46] Furthermore, the Archive contains a comprehensive collection of the student newspaper the *Guild Gazette*.[47] Student newspapers to date are not sources that have been considered in any depth by historians working within the history of women and higher education. Moore, Gibert and Wakeling, albeit fleetingly, consider the student press of the University of Aberdeen, the civic universities and Glasgow University respectively, focusing upon gender relations and the issue of female integration into the coeducational institutions. They have probably, however, underestimated the importance of the negative portrayals of women to be found in

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[46] For comprehensive lists of the holdings of the Education Archives see M. Proctor (ed.), *Education on Merseyside: A Guide to the Sources* (Merseyside Archives Liaison Group, 1992) and Information Sheet 15, available from Liverpool University Archives.

[47] The *Guild Gazette* was launched in 1937 as a second undergraduate newspaper. The *Sphinx*, published four times a year since 1893, had been criticised on the grounds that it was too earnest and too infrequent. The *Gazette* was therefore launched as a weekly newspaper concerned to cover current events both inside and outside of the University. The publication of the *Guild Gazette* and the *Sphinx* ended in May 1999, to be replaced by a Liverpool wide publication entitled *Liverpool Student News*.

the student press.[48] Chapter 4 of the thesis is concerned to explore male representations of university women in the *Guild Gazette* from 1944 to 1979.

Within women's studies, deciphering the manner in which women are represented in society is an integral element of a feminist critique. Exploring constructed images of what it means to be a woman and the meanings created through these images is central. Through the analysis of, for example, film, advertisements, fiction, art and religion feminist researchers have considered the ways in which women are stereotyped and how these constructions are presented as reflecting a natural order.[49] For Margaret Marshment the representation of women is an issue that is not to be taken lightly:

> Representation is a political issue. Without the power to define our interests and to participate in the decisions that affect us, women - like any other group in society-will be subject to the definitions and decisions of others.[50]

The study of representation is, furthermore, key to the promotion of cultural change, which is of equal importance for the improvement of women's position and also women's sense of identity. It is not just a matter of legislative, economic and political struggle.[51] Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot note that historically from antiquity to the present the lack of detailed information about women stands in contrast to the abundance of discourse and imagery; and that throughout the ages: 'Philosophers, theologians, jurists, doctors, moralists, and educators have been

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[48] Moore, L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen University, 1991); Gibert, J. S., 'Women students and student life at England's civic universities before the First World War', *History of Education*, 23 (1994), pp. 405-422; Wakeling, J., paper entitled ' University education in twentieth century Scotland, with particular reference to Glasgow University' presented at the University of Cambridge, 24/9/98, conference: 'The transformation of an elite? Women and higher education since 1900.'

[49] See for example, 'Part II: The cultural representation of women', in Cosslett, T., Easton, A. and Summerfield, P. (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 81-149.

[50] Marshment, M., ' The Picture is Political: Representation of Women in Contemporary Popular Culture', in Richardson, D. and Robinson, V. (eds.), *Introducing Women's Studies* (Macmillan, 1993), pp. 123-150.

[51] See Winship, J., *Women's Magazines* (Open University Press, 1990).

tireless in their efforts to define women and prescribe their proper behaviour.'[52] Historians, influenced by adopting a more interdisciplinary approach to historical research, are increasingly exploring the ways in which women are represented and how this imposes the construction 'woman'.[53]

The *Guild Gazette* is a both a material object, in the sense that it is a commodity that is produced and distributed, and a text. It is a text comprised of words and images in which meanings are produced. A recent area of debate within media and cultural studies is a consideration of how the meanings contained in a text are understood by the reader, and to what extent they are responsible for people taking on certain cultural roles. Whilst this thesis is not concerned to explore these issues in any depth it is important to highlight certain points. Penny Tinkler, in an exploration of the construction of girlhood in popular magazines, notes the challenge made to the traditional model of the media as a manipulator of audiences. The research has emphasised the multiplicity of meanings within a text, the heterogeneity of the 'audience', the variety of 'reading contexts' and the way in which the reader is actively involved in the production of meaning[54]. Similarly, using a knitting pattern from a women's magazine, Janice Winship demonstrates that it is too simplistic to conclude that there is *a* meaning to a text or that the reader unproblematically accepts it. Readings, however, are also social to the extent that they tend to be shared and there does occur some agreement over meaning. This agreement refers to what is understood as the preferred or dominant reading of an item.[55] Stuart Hall argues that ultimately not just any meaning can or will be drawn from a text. A text is

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[52] Duby, G. and Perrot, M., ' Writing the History of Women', in Duby, G. (ed.), *A History of Women in the West I* (Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. x.
[53] See for example, Tinkler, P., *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950* (Taylor and Francis, 1995).
[54] Tinkler, P., *ibid.* p. 7.
[55] Winship, J., *op. cit.*, p. 56.

'structured in dominance', offering a pattern of preferred options in line with the 'preferred institutional, political and ideological order'.[56] These preferred or dominant readings are further reinforced by other cultural forms, for example, the cinema, and whilst texts may not be passively accepted but rejected as Winship suggests 'they are none the less powerfully formative in shaping our experiences and our identities as women.'[57] In my analysis of the *Guild Gazette* I have employed a textual analysis as opposed to alternative approaches such as content analysis.[58] A textual analysis is more concerned to explore how cultural meanings are produced: to ask what did 'woman' and 'femininity' signify in post-Second World War Britain and what was the implication of such constructions?

Having provided in Part One the framework for the thesis, Part Two will now provide the historical context to the post-Second World War period.

[56] Hall, S., 'Encoding/Decoding' in S. Hall (ed.), *Culture, Media, Language: Working papers in cultural studies* (Hutchinson, 1980), p. 134, quoted in P. Tinkler, *op.cit.*, p. 7.
[57] Winship, J., *op.cit.*, p. 6.
[58] Content analysis is fundamentally quantitative in approach. For example, a content analysis of women's magazines might count up the column inches devoted to ' domesticity', 'sexuality' or 'paid employment'. Such an analysis would assume these categories and describe and judge a magazine on the basis of how much space each category had been allocated. This is the approach adopted by Marjorie Ferguson in *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* (Heinemann, 1983).

Part Two
A historical context

Chapter 3

Women in post-war Britain: 1944-1979

In exploring the life histories of a group of university-educated women it is important to discuss the framework within which such life histories operated, and consider what 'woman' and 'femininity' signified in the post-war era. The years 1944 to 1979 present an interesting and dynamic period of study within the history of women, and this chapter provides an overview of this period in order to evaluate the extent to which access to higher education altered women's social position. Particular emphasis will be given to educational reform and experiences, and the development of women's dual role as both wife/mother and waged worker.[1]

'Secondary education for all' and the expansion of higher education

The post-war period witnessed substantial changes in terms of the expansion of the educational system. The 1944 Education Act, implemented in 1945 as part of a post-war programme of social reconstruction, introduced for the first time a system of universal secondary schooling. State education under the terms of the act was to be organised into three progressive stages: primary, secondary and further education. The statutory school leaving age was raised to fifteen and the Board of Education was turned into the Ministry of Education, with the power to influence Local Educational Authorities and formulate coherent national policy. More significantly,

[1]Sheila Rowbotham, in a paper entitled 'Thinking about the twentieth century woman: Britain and the United States' presented at the Institute of Historical Research, London, 24/10/97, emphasised that in comparison to the United States secondary literature concerned with British women post-1945 is limited. The following chapter has drawn upon a combination of the secondary literature available, autobiographical accounts, contemporary sources and oral history to provide an insight into this period.

fees were abolished in state-maintained schools. In terms of the organisation of schools, following the recommendations of the Spens Report of 1938 and the Norwood Report of 1943, a tripartite system was adopted. Such a system was based on the premise that in terms of academic ability three types of pupils could be identified and consequently three types of school were required: grammar, technical and secondary modern. In order to identify which school was necessary for the individual child a process of selection in the form of the 11+ examination was introduced.[2]

The tripartite system, whilst not considered as socially divisive by the Labour Party at that time, has subsequently been criticised on the grounds that it simply mirrored the class structure and maintained class bias, as opposed to providing a more democratic system as intended. Following the 1944 Act the grammar school retained a superior position within the state educational hierarchy until the introduction of comprehensive reorganisation. For example, the secondary modern schools with poorer staffing ratios, less well-qualified staff and generally inferior buildings were not only considered as 'secondary', but actually were in terms of funding and facilities. Significantly grammar school children, predominantly from middle-class backgrounds, had the opportunity to take examinations in the form of the school certificate and in 1951 the GCE certificate, which had particular reference to university and professional qualifications. Conversely, secondary modern children,

[2] Those pupils 'interested in learning for its own sake, who can grasp an argument or follow a piece of reasoning...' were identified as requiring a grammar school education, which would prepare them for the 'learned professions' or 'higher administrative or business posts.' Those pupils 'whose interests and abilities lie markedly in the field of applied science or applied art...' were identified as requiring a technical education, which would prepare the pupil for a craft, for example engineering. Finally, there was the pupil who 'deals more easily with concrete things than with ideas' and for whom a secondary modern education was seen as the most appropriate. See the 'Report of the Committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council on Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools. [The Norwood Report], selectively reproduced in Maclure, J. S., *Educational Documents: England and Wales 1816 to the present day* (Methuen, 1973), pp. 200-205.

the majority of whom generally left school at the statutory leaving age, initially had no form of examination. By the 1950s, whilst a small minority of secondary modern children aspired to the GCE examination, which was discouraged on any large scale by the Ministry of Education, the majority of pupils were faced with undertaking, for example, exams set by the local authorities. Steps to end an education system formulated upon principles of selection and differentiation were introduced in a government circular to local educational authorities in 1965. The circular requested that local authorities submit plans in regard to the comprehensive reorganisation of secondary schools in the locality.[3] Comprehensive reorganisation was to be enforced as compulsory in an Education Bill in 1969; however, upon defeat at the 1970 general election Labour's Bill was never to be passed as law. Margaret Thatcher, as the new Secretary of State to the Department of Education and Science, withdrew the request for local education authorities to submit reorganisation schemes, allowing the authorities to determine the shape of provision in their areas.[4] By the end of the 1970s, whilst comprehensive reorganisation had been in operation for over a decade, such reorganisation had limited success. It was not adopted as a universal form of secondary schooling, and a large proportion of local education authorities still maintained a system based on selective principles. Furthermore, those comprehensive schools established also retained selective principles in the form of 'streaming.' Differentiation further occurred between comprehensive schools themselves in regard to geographic location. In the suburbs some comprehensives provided an acceptable alternative to a grammar school education for the middle-classes; by

[3] See 'Circular 10/65: the organisation of secondary education' issued by the Department of Education and Science 12 July 1965 selectively reproduced in Maclure, J.S., *ibid.*, pp. 301-307.
[4] See 'Circular 10/70: the organisation of secondary education' issued by the Department of Education and Science 30 June 1970 selectively reproduced in Maclure, J.S. *ibid.*, pp. 352-353.

contrast, 'inner city' comprehensives were little more than an alternative secondary modern for working-class children.[5]

In terms of university education the 1963 Robbins Report was the most significant report of this period. The decision to initiate the inquiry arose from concern that the supply of qualified pupils outnumbered available places. The Robbins Report recommended funding and administrative changes necessary to make higher education accessible to all those pupils who were 'qualified by ability and attainment.' Once again the democratisation of the system was a central concern. The Report highlighted that the association between a father's occupational status and a child's academic success was even more marked when considering university education than at school level. For example, the proportion of pupils who entered full-time higher education was 45 per cent for those whose fathers were in the 'higher professional' group, compared with only four per cent for those whose fathers were in skilled manual occupations.[6] The government accepted the broad objectives of the report and by 1980 there were twenty-seven more institutions than there had been in 1950.[7] R. D. Anderson emphasises, however, that the expansion of numbers since the 1960s in terms of class composition does not show any strong trend towards democratisation. The opportunity to enter higher education remained a route predominantly taken by the children of professional and middle-class parents.[8]

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[5] For a discussion of secondary education in the post-Second World War period see for example, Lowe, R., *Education in the post-war years: a social history* (Routledge, 1988); Carr, W. and Hartnett, A., *Education and the struggle for democracy: the politics of educational ideas* (Open University Press, 1996), chapter 4.
[6] Robbins, *Higher Education: Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, 1961-63* (HMSO, 1963), p. 51.
[7] Jones, J. and Castle, J., 'Women in UK Universities, 1920-1980', *Studies in Higher Education*, 11 (1986), p. 290.
[8] Anderson, R.D., *Universities and elites in Britain since 1800* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 57-59.

Whilst contemporary commentators and subsequent researchers primarily consider the issue of class inequalities and education, what of the impact of gender upon educational experience? Deborah Thom emphasises that, following the introduction of the 1944 Education Act, demand for a grammar school education outstripped the number of places available and girls were achieving higher marks in the 11+ selection examination. In order to redress the balance between the sexes different norms were established: in practice this meant that girls had to achieve higher results than boys to gain a grammar school place. For example, in the Isle of Ely in 1948 girls were required to gain thirty more points out of a possible three hundred. In Huntingdonshire girls had attended grammar school in larger numbers than boys until 1954, when the local educational authority took the decision to equalise the gender discrepancy by admitting inferior male pupils whilst excluding female pupils who had qualified for a place. The aim was to equalise provision rather than opportunity.[9] For those girls, however, who 'were allowed to travel through the narrow gate at eleven, towards the golden city' the grammar school offered a world of possibilities.[10] For Janet Rider, at school during the 1960s:

> To be able to go to the grammar school really did open up a new world, I mean we were taught by women who were very academically talented, they were amongst the few women who had been to university at their time. What they did give you was a sense, I think of perspective really, of yourself as part of something bigger. I think the most important thing of all was the sense of possibilities.[11]

For those pupils from working-class backgrounds, both girls and boys, who gained entry to the 'golden city' social mobility was within reach. The grammar school also

[9] Thom, D., 'Better a Teacher Than a Hairdresser? 'A Mad Passion for Equality' or, Keeping Molly and Betty down', in Hunt, F. (ed.), *Lessons for Life: the Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950* (Blackwells, 1987), pp. 124-145.
[10] Steedman, C., 'Landscape for a Good Woman', in Heron, L. (ed.), *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties* (Virago, 1985), p.119.
[11] Rider, J., interviewed for 'Clever', broadcast on Radio 4 on the 19/8/99.

offered not only an escape from 'ordinariness' but also an alternative to that 'longed-for femininity.' For the girl who had lost the capacity to be a fairy, that is charming, frail and fragile as opposed to large and clumsy:

> ...lumpen docility could be put to good use in the classroom. It was still possible there to win, to become the object of that other, laudatory gaze, in the place from which once again I might be chosen.[12]

Lord Robbins noted that in the years preceding the Robbins Report the number of boys continuing their education after the statutory school leaving age had risen more sharply than for girls, despite the fact that nearly as many girls as boys passed the GCE examination. In 1963 in England and in Wales only six girls obtained two or more A level passes for every ten boys, whilst in Scotland the proportion was slightly higher (eight girls to every ten boys). The Report concluded that the prospect of marriage was attracting those girls capable of entering the professions to leave school before sixth form. Girls were encouraged to stay on at school 'if only from the national point of view of making better use of what must be the greatest source of unused talent.'[13] Mary Ingham emphasises, however, that the report failed to acknowledge how understandable it was that girls were 'lured' straight towards marriage. Whilst Rider felt inspired by her teachers at grammar school and encouraged to succeed academically she suggests, as does Ingham, that the benefits of staying at school were that not apparent. Qualifications were not seen as a means to higher pay or promotion, because girls were not encouraged to think along such lines. In the 1960s the assumption that a woman would have to leave work at some point in her twenties was deeply entrenched.[14] There seemed little

[12] Steedman, C., *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[13] Robbins, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[14] Ingham, M., *Now we are thirty: Women of the Breakthrough Generation* (Eyre Methuen, 1981), p. 101-102.

point: 'I think it was still very much the feeling that outside the grammar school...your destiny was marriage and motherhood.'[15]

Having considered the association between a father's occupational status and a child's academic success the Robbins Report further emphasised that the link was even more marked for girls than for boys. The Report encouraged girls to read less traditional subjects, such as applied science, and in regard to the issue of grants defended the continuance of the existing system. Prior to 1962 local educational authorities notoriously differed in their procedures. Furthermore, Dulcie Groves notes that some authorities had strict quotas for women students, on the grounds that most 'well qualified' girls should proceed to teacher training college.[16] In 1962 mandatory student grants were introduced, and it was this system as opposed to a system of student loans that Lord Robbins favoured. Without mandatory grants:

> ...the effect might well be either that British parents would be strengthened in their age-long disinclination to consider their daughters to be as deserving of higher education as their sons, or that the eligibility for marriage of the more educated would be diminished by the addition to their charms of what would be in effect a negative dowry.[17]

Following the Robbins Report and the subsequent expansion of higher education the number of women enrolling for degrees substantially increased. From the Second World War to the academic year commencing in 1964 women comprised approximately 25 per cent of students in higher education. In the academic year 1964/65 this figure had increased to 29 per cent, rising to 31 per cent in 1969/70. The 1970s were to witness the most dramatic increase: 40 per cent of students were

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[15] Rider, J., *op. cit.*
[16] Groves, D., 'Dear Mum and Dad: letters home from a women's hall of residence of the University of Nottingham 1952-55', *History of Education*, 22 (1993), p. 292.
[17] Robbins, *op. cit.*, p.211.

female by 1980.[18] On a personal level Carolyn Steedman recalls the effect of the Robbins Report upon her own school:

> I went to the University of Sussex in 1965 to read history, a statistical component of the Robbins generation: my grammar school had sent one girl to university in 1964; sent seventeen of us, the children of 1946-47, a year later.[19]

As noted earlier, however, the expansion of higher education had not led to a significant democratisation of the system in class terms and it would be fair to suggest that this conclusion is equally as applicable, if not more so, to female students.

When considering gender the focus of contemporary debate often centred upon what sort of an education a girl might receive. The assumption that girls were primarily future mothers and homemakers was prevalent (and explicit). For example, John Newsom's *The Education of Girls*, published in 1948, was predominantly concerned with emphasising the differences between girls and boys, and the different education girls would require in order to prepare them for the socially determined role they had to fulfil in a 'civilised community.' Newsom did, however, make a differentiation between gifted girls, who were in a small minority and for whom an academic education was acceptable, and the vast majority of girls for whom: 'the business of home-making and the early nurture of children is a dominant theme in their lives.'[20] Secondary education was to teach girls the skills and personal attributes necessary for them to succeed in their future 'careers' as housewives and mothers. Future education was to teach girls how to grow into women. Lesley Johnson suggests that Newsom encouraged young women to understand themselves first and

[18] See Jones, J. and Castle, J., *op. cit.*, p.290.
[19] Steedman, C., *op. cit.*, p. 123.
[20] From Newsom, J., *The Education of Girls* (Faber and Faber, 1948), quoted in Johnson, L., *The modern girl: girlhood and growing up* (Open University Press, 1993), p. 81.

foremost as 'girls', and as having a shared destiny and identity.[21] In 1963, as chairman of the Committee investigating the secondary education of pupils of less then average ability, Newsom reiterated his conception of a curriculum suitable for girls. Elizabeth Wilson emphasises that whilst Newsom's ideas were generally accepted in 1948, by the 1960s they had become less popular. An article published in the *Observer* in 1964, in which Newsom suggested girls should concentrate upon feminine skills such as flower arranging, received criticism. Wilson argues, however, that concern was directed towards the effect such proposals might have on middle-class or grammar school girls. Newsom's view on the primacy of 'vocational', that is domestic, education for the average girl or rather working-class girl, whose vocation was regarded as marriage and family, was widely accepted.[22] The notion that the more intellectually able female pupil was eligible for a wider academic education was emphasised in the late 1950s amidst fears of the failure of Britain to compete successfully with other countries. The Crowther Report of 1959, which considered the education of girls and boys between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, encouraged a wider curriculum for girls and highlighted the problem of science subjects being perceived as boys' subjects and the need to counteract this. The Report conceded that 'there is not much scope – in school hours, at least – for giving them [academically able girls] any education specifically related to their special interests as women.'[23] For Sheila Rowbotham this acted as 'a stimulus to those with little fondness for domesticity to stay on and apply for higher education. Swots were apparently not expected to breed!'[24]

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[21] Johnson, L., *ibid.*
[22] Wilson, E., *Only halfway to paradise: women in postwar Britain 1945-1968* (Tavistock, 1980), pp. 35-36.
[23] Crowther, *15-18: a Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education* (HMSO, 1959), p. 33.
[24] Rowbotham, S., *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (Penguin, 1997), p. 292.

The notion that intelligence and femininity were mutually exclusive is highlighted in personal accounts:

> Popular culture had a strong message of music, fashion and a very strong sexual message, which was also very traditional in terms of girl's roles. I mean you were sort of dollies, birds, you were chicks, you wore very short skirts, you were very much seen through the male gaze, and female intelligence was quite directly undermined by it. I remember one particular song in the sixties called 'D in love' (You get A in biology, you get A in psychology, you're a whiz in your science class, and in quiz you're a sensitive pass, but when your out with me baby you get D, D in love), so of course there was always this sense that your femininity was negated by being clever.[25]

Similarly Ursula Huws recalls that her 'braininess', which was acceptable in a boy, made her as a girl a 'freak.' In later life, whilst dancing at a party with a man she had known for years, Huws 'accidentally' let slip a mathematical term. The man reacted with genuine shock and indignation for he had no idea that Ursula was clever! Her cleverness had been overtly hidden beneath an acceptable sexy exterior. 'Clearly he felt cheated. He had accepted in good faith what he believed to be a real woman, and here I was revealed to be a counterfeit.'[26] Huws accepted from an early age that intelligence placed her beyond the possibility of conforming to normal feminine stereotypes. For the mother of an academically able girl a source of conflict arose:

> Our mothers were torn between vicarious pleasure at what we might enjoy and achieve and a fear...that the bubble might...burst, that their educated daughters might find themselves discarded.[27]

While Steedman emphasised that at grammar school cleverness could become the object of that other 'laudatory gaze', Huws highlighted that intelligence at Convent school was only permitted temporarily:

[25] Rider, J., *op. cit.*
[26] Huws, U., 'Hiraeth', in Heron, L. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 183.
[27] Gilbert, H., 'Growing Pains', in Heron, L. (ed.), *op. cit.*

> As puberty loomed, there was less tolerance of my deviance and even teachers withdrew their approval. At the convent, we were often told "You're here to learn to be young ladies".[28]

Huws recalls the advice manuals circulated at school designed to teach young women how to become women. Mary Young's *Charm is not enough* published in 1965 and Shirley Conran's best-selling *Superwoman* published in 1977, whilst different in emphasis, were excellent examples of manuals which informed women how to effectively fulfil their 'socially determined' roles as women. Young focused upon how to become the well rounded, 'perfect' woman by providing practical advice on, for example, appearance (the most important aspect to being a woman), how to behave and how to actually interact with the world. Women were presented as passive; life happened to women, and as such life needed to be interpreted and women needed to be instructed accordingly. For example, a section entitled 'Do you really use your five senses?' explained to readers how they might listen, see, touch, smell and taste correctly as women. As regards touch, Young noted:

> A delicacy, a sensitivity of touch – these are things which are part and parcel of being a truly beautiful woman. We can be especially aware of this as we watch...the fashion model caressing her gown in a way that conveys the beauty of the material.[29]

Conran's *Superwoman*, alternatively, was concerned to liberate women from housework by instructing them how to proceed with greater efficiency within the home: the motto of the book being 'Life is too short to stuff a mushroom'. It does not question at any point the very premise that housework was a woman's primary concern. It informed the reader how to understand the household and how to run the household like a military operation. While Conran encouraged women to actually be

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[28] Huws, U., *op. cit.*, p. 182. Gillian Avery in *The Best type of Girl: A History of Girls' Independent Schools* (Andre Deutsch, 1991), p. 195, notes that convent schools had a tradition of not taking seriously academic studies or preparing pupils for the professions.
[29] Young, M., *Charm is not enough* (Brockhampton Press, 1965), p. 23.

more selfish and create extra time for themselves it is suggested that free time could be used, for example, 'to make yourself more beautiful' or 'meet men' if unmarried.[30]

Along with women's magazines, literature, television and film, such manuals served the purpose of constructing the 'feminine' and educating women accordingly. Marjorie Ferguson's *Forever Feminine*, a study of *Woman*, *Woman's Own* and *Women's Weekly* between 1949 and 1980, argues that women's magazines communicated a 'cult of femininity', which instructed women in the values and attitudes of being a woman. There were a 'set of practices and beliefs: rites and rituals, sacrifices and ceremonies, whose periodic performance reaffirms a common femininity and a shared group membership.'[31] Historians, such as Lesley Johnson, Penny Tinkler and Penny Summerfield highlight, however, that the 'cult of femininity' was not in fact as unified a construction as might first appear. It is argued that representations of femininity were full of contradictions and tensions.[32] In a study of the Second World War, Summerfield highlights the contradictory demands which were placed on women. Women were expected to be at home, keeping the home fires burning as they watched and waited for the men to return from the front, and yet were also required to 'do their bit', in a paid or voluntary capacity. They were expected to be carers and mothers, but they were also under pressure to be soldiers and workers. There were demands for women to look feminine, but also to put on uniforms which constrained visible signs of feminine difference.[33]

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[30] Conran, S., *Superwoman* (Penguin, 1977).
[31] Ferguson, M., *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* (Heinemann, 1983), p. 184.
[32] Johnson, L., *The Modern Girl: Girlhood and Growing Up* (Open University Press, 1993); Tinkler, P., *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950* (Taylor and Francis, 1995); Summerfield, P., *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester University Press, 1998).
[33] Summerfield, P., *ibid.*, p. 14.

Prescriptions of how women should be have not constituted a completely unified culture of femininity. Women were instructed on how to be women; however, it is important to recognise the various images of femininity which were presented, the changing nature of such images and the extent to which class and race differentiated the construction of the feminine. Marilyn Monroe and Doris Day provide examples of the different forms femininity could take. Monroe, on the one hand, symbolised vulnerability, naivety, a reverence of men and an untamed sexuality, whilst Day, conversely, was uncomplicated, wholesome, always happy with antiseptic good-sport looks.[34] Johnson notes that in the quest to attract a husband, the emerging mass market of the post-war era emphasised that it was now possible for women to transform themselves from the 'girl-next-door' into the 'sultry siren' simply by changing their hair colour. For Johnson the tensions and proliferation of varying images of femininity ensured their inability to operate totally successfully in women's lives. Women had room for negotiation in producing their own identity, and if different images of femininity could be taken on and off, then so to, by implication, could femininity itself. Furthermore, in being categorised by the mass market as 'women', women of the late 1960s and early 1970s could mobilise as such to challenge the very limited notion of what 'woman' signified.[35] Whilst Johnson presents a rather optimistic analysis, the concept that the contradictions, tensions and varying forms of femininity guaranteed the unsuccessful application of the construction is an interesting one. Feminist researchers argue that the proliferation and confusion of discourses of femininity make it especially difficult for women to attach themselves to an identity:

[34] Rowbotham, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309.
[35] Johnson, L., *op. cit.*, pp. 123-135.

> The discourses through which the subject position 'woman' is constituted are multiple and contradictory. In striving to successfully constitute herself within her allocated gender category, each woman takes on the desires made relevant within those contradictory discourses. She is, however, never able to achieve unequivocal success at being a woman.[36]

Women's dual role

In recent years historians have revised the traditional conception of the Second World War as playing a significant role in the emancipation of women. Whilst the war brought a range of new work and social experience to those who entered paid employment and the auxiliary services, a more careful appraisal emphasises both the limitations in opportunity available to women and the extent to which wartime experience was regarded as temporary and exceptional. For those women who worked in engineering and munitions, traditionally masculine areas of employment, the training, pay and status were not designed to challenge the sexual division of labour. Women received less training and payment during their apprenticeship than men and were pushed back into lower-paid female occupations even before the war ended. The Second World War for women simply represented a suspension of normal life, and did not affect the way in which women were perceived in the long term.[37]

Following the disruption of war anxiety over the stability of the 'family', fuelled by fears of a declining population and rising divorce and illegitimacy rates, resulted in an emphasis upon domesticity and maternity as women's ultimate

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[36] Davis, B., 'Women's Subjectivity and Feminist Stories', in Ellis, C. and Flaherty, M. G., *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience* (Sage, 1992), quoted in Summerfield, P., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[37] Caine, B., *English Feminism 1780-1980* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 227. For literature which focuses upon women's wartime experiences see for example, Braybon, G. and Summerfield, P., *Out of the Cage: Women's Experience in Two World Wars* (Pandora, 1987); Higonnet, M. R. (ed.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (Yale University Press, 1987); Summerfield, P., *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict* (Routledge, 1989); Pugh, M., *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959* (Macmillan, 1992), chapter 9; Summerfield, P. (1998), *op. cit.*

contribution towards society. The family unit was presented as 'natural' and consequently also the separate roles assigned to husband and wife. The priorities of post-war reconstruction, that is, full employment (for men) and better social services (for women and children) highlighted what the 'family' signified in the post-war years. The welfare state developed with the notion of a breadwinner/dependants model. The conception of women as dependants in the family unit was clearly expressed in the Beveridge Report of 1943, where it was assumed that a married woman would not engage in work and therefore could be classified as dependent for administrative purposes. Beveridge's conviction that women would normally be economically dependent upon their husbands became embodied in post-war social security legislation, which was not to be revised until the mid-1970s. The idea of 'homemaking' as a career, a popular theme following the war, emphasised further women's position within the family structure. Whilst the sexual division of labour was not questioned Wilson notes that women's domestic *work* was at least now recognised as such.[38] Sociologists, psychologists, welfare workers and the popular press stressed the importance of women's absorption into family life as essential not only for themselves, but also for the good of their children and society at large. Pat Thane outlines how psychoanalytic theories were remarkably pervasive. The notion that a child, in order to become 'well-adjusted', needed the constant care of its natural mother for the first five years moved beyond the realm of the expert and into popular discourse. D. W. Winnicott and John Bowlby became influential figures, despite grounding their arguments as to the ill effects of maternal deprivation upon unusual conditions (e.g. institutionalised children deprived of any contact with their mothers or families). Intensive mothering was perceived as the key to the physical

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[38] Wilson, E., *op. cit.*, pp. 19-23.

and mental fitness of a child, and exacting standards of motherhood were disseminated in the form of health visitors, welfare clinics and baby manuals.[39] The role of the father and his contribution to a child's development was not an area of discussion, and the fear for a mother that maternal deprivation could lead to delinquency was very much a reality:

> There was some eminent educationalist, whose name I forget, who was saying there was lots of evidence that if children were not in their infancy looked after by their mother they would, without doubt, go to the bad, you know, that it was desperate, it was utterly important that mothers looked after their children...well I bought that one. I thought 'well, this is too important to take a chance on, if the likelihood is that the child is going to be damaged, I don't want that.'[40]

Similarly, Hannah Gavron's *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Mothers*, published in 1966, demonstrates both the power and longevity of the theory of maternal deprivation, as working-class mothers articulated the belief that they were unable to leave their young children even for short periods.[41] By the late 1970s a shift in psychological theory, in regard to the upbringing of children, occurred. The assumption that children needed the continuous presence of a mother gave way to an acceptance that young children could relate to several caring adults as long as they felt secure.[42] Conran's *Superwoman* is reflective of this change, conceding to the idea that time away from the mother for a young child could actually be beneficial; the child will not suffer from 'over-fussing' and the mother will not cling to her children when it's their time to leave the nest.[43]

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[39] Thane, P., 'Towards Equal Opportunities? Women in Britain since 1945' in Gourvish, T. and O'Day, A. (eds.), *Britain since 1945* (Macmillan, 1991), pp. 183-208.
[40] Eileen Nichols, graduate of the University of Liverpool 1952, interviewed on 22.3.96 by Sarah Aiston.
[41] Gavron, H., *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Mothers* (Routledge, 1966).
[42] Rowbotham, S., *op. cit.*, p. 421.
[43] Conran, S., *op. cit.*, p. 149.

Despite the promotion of the ideal of family life the post-war Labour government of 1945 found itself in somewhat of a dilemma. Since 1943 it had become evident that a post-war labour shortage would occur, and from 1947 to 1949 the Ministry of Labour actively encouraged women into paid employment. While at a cursory glance this behaviour might almost appear schizophrenic on the part of government, a consideration of the terms upon which such encouragement was sanctioned shows that the campaign was not in fact contradictory. First, the government targeted older women who did not have young children, therefore taking into account the maternal deprivation theories. Second, women were required to work in jobs regarded as 'women's work.' It was not expected that women would move into 'masculine' jobs as they had done during the war. Wilson concludes that the government was welcoming women into the labour market in a circumscribed way: 'as temporary workers at a period of crisis, as part-time workers, and as not disturbing the traditional division of labour in industry along sex lines.' It was assumed that married women would not naturally wish to undertake paid employment.[44] Nevertheless, according to census statistics, the number of women in the labour market steadily increased throughout the post-war era and the rise was largely accounted for by married women's participation. As Thane stresses, however, it is perhaps unwise to suggest that women became more active in paid employment following the Second World War than they were earlier in the century. She highlights the inaccuracies within statistical data documenting women's involvement in waged labour, such as the census or national insurance statistics, and stresses that it is more important to emphasise the new life-cycle pattern for women established in the post-

[44] Wilson, E., *op. cit.*, p. 43.

war period.[45] From the late 1940s marriage no longer dictated departure from the labour market. The removal of the marriage bar in teaching and the civil service in 1944 and 1946 respectively illustrates the change. The arrival of children now signified a woman's departure from waged work. A 'two-phase' work pattern, whereby women worked after marriage, took some years out of paid employment to care for children and then returned to work once again, was therefore established.[46] By the 1970s, however, these breaks between having children and returning to paid employment became substantially shorter.[47]

Having considered the employment life-cycle established following the Second World War it is important to ask in what ways women participated in the labour market. Lewis stresses that women have remained confined for the most part to low-paid, low-status work and that part-time work has increased with each decade.[48] Viola Klein's *Britain's Married Women Workers*, published in 1965, emphasised that whilst the sons of middle-class families were to be found generally in middle-class occupations this was not the case with daughters. Women from middle-class backgrounds were engaged in the same range of occupations as those from 'humbler' origins.[49] Historians such as Martin Pugh, Rowbotham and Thane emphasise that those women who did enter the professions found themselves in a minority. The proportion of women in professional work rose only gradually post-1945.[50] Furthermore, women were not on an equal footing as regards pay or access to higher earning occupations. In 1944 the introduction of equal pay for teachers was

[45] Both the census and national insurance statistics underestimate women's involvement in paid employment. For example, women involved in casual labour such as cleaning may not pay National Insurance contributions.
[46] Thane, P., *op. cit.*, p. 193-195.
[47] Lewis, J., *Women in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell, 1992), p. 67.
[48] Lewis, J., *ibid.*, chapter 3.
[49] Wilson, E., *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[50] Pugh, M., *op. cit.*; Rowbotham, S., *op. cit.*; Thane, P., *op. cit.*

passed by the House of Commons as part of the 1944 Education Act; however, it was subsequently deleted with the proviso that a Royal Commission would be established to consider the issue of equal pay. This commission was set up in 1946, but unlike any other Royal Commission it was not empowered to make recommendations. A strong argument for the principle of equal pay was put forward, but the report concluded that such a measure would be harmful to the economy. In was not until 1955 that the government agreed to introduce some form of equal pay concession. Under pressure from the active, strongly unionised women of the public sector equal pay was to be introduced over a six-year period into the civil service, local government and teaching. It was not until the 1970 Equal Pay Act, however, that women working in the private sector were incorporated into some form of equal pay legislation. This act established equal rates of pay for the same or similar work, though compliance was voluntary until 1975. Thane notes that the legislation left untouched the processes that excluded women from higher earning occupations, and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 was introduced as an attempt to deal with this issue.[51] The Employment Protection Act of the same year made paid maternity leave a statutory right and dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy unfair. In addition, an Equal Opportunities Commission was established. As Rowbotham stresses, however, there were loopholes in the new laws. For example, equal pay related only to work where no material difference existed between male and female employees.[52] The continuation of the sexual segregation of the work force resulted in the continuation of the majority of women remaining in low-paid employment.

[51] Thane, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 193-5.
[52] Rowbotham, S., *op. cit.*, p. 405.

Assumptions about the type of work suitable for a woman remained throughout the period. Despite concern that women who had scientific and technical training were not using their skills in industry, old attitudes died hard.[53] In *Charm is not enough* Young instructs women how to be more proficient in their 'women's' work as secretaries, factory workers, shop assistants, waitresses, nurses, nannies and hairdressers. Equally as important, women are advised how to look the part for work.[54] By 1977 the range of jobs a woman might wish to consider, outlined in *Superwoman,* still focused predominantly upon conventional female occupations. While more professional types of jobs such as teaching and welfare work were put forward, they did not challenge the traditional conception of what was seen as appropriate.[55] Mary Ingham and Janet Rider, for example, emphasise that management was not considered suitable work for a woman. Women did not have the 'natural' attributes required to take responsibility:

> Management was really seen as a no-go area for girls in the sixties, you know you didn't have the voice for it, you didn't have that natural authority, so I think girl's opportunities were quite limited from that point of view.[56]

Women did not, furthermore, 'tangle with the male-dominated world of commerce and technology', and for Ingham this view, expounded by her own teachers, symbolised a ceiling being placed upon what was considered possible for a woman. Ingham felt pressurised to accept the limitations that her own teachers had had forced upon themselves.[57] Similarly, Valerie Riley did not feel encouraged at school to achieve her ambition to become a vet and felt frustrated by gender stereotypes.

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[53] See for example the study carried out by the London School of Economics in 1962, requested by a small group of industrialists. Reference, Thane, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201.
[54] Young, M., *op. cit.*, chapters 4 and 5.
[55] Conran, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 155-159.
[56] Rider, J., *op. cit.*
[57] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 82.

Valerie wanted to be a 'person', and rather interestingly, identified with the academic conception of 'other' when reflecting upon the choices that faced her as a woman:

> I heard a phrase on the radio today, we were 'other' and I think that is it. Not just somebody who's called Mary and somebody who's called Joe, that's what I call people.[58]

As a woman who had stepped into a traditionally masculine occupation Riley was faced with being stereotyped as 'sexless', or - if successful - 'exceptional.' Furthermore, there were even assumptions as to what type of veterinary work a woman should undertake. Small animal work was considered acceptable for women and 'wimps', whilst large animal work was seen as suitable for 'real' men.[59]

For the more intellectually able young woman teaching was a far more acceptable choice, and provided a means by which to combine a woman's dual role as wife/mother and waged worker. Whilst there was discussion and debate as to how women might actually combine these two roles, for example Mydral's and Klein's famous publication *Women's Two Roles*, the very premise that women should take responsibility for the running of a household and dependants remained unchallenged until the birth of the Women's Liberation movement.[60] For many women, however, the notion that a woman's role as wife and mother took priority remained intact despite this feminist critique. Janet Rider's consideration of the options that faced her in the 1960s reflects the primacy of the family as a woman's central concern: 'you could teach, you could probably combine that with having a family, some of them did even then, secretarial work was another thing you could combine around families.' By the end of the 1970s the bestselling *Superwoman* retained the notion of a woman's 'socially determined' role as that of wife and mother first and foremost.

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[58] Riley, V., graduate of the University of Liverpool 1958, interviewed on 20. 5. 96 by Sarah Aiston.
[59] Riley, V., *ibid.*
[60] Myrdal, A. and Klein, V., *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956).

In considering the combination of working full-time, and being a wife and mother, Conran stresses the difficulties a woman can encounter and the possible risks to her health. The full-time working wife and mother cannot be regarded as anything other than tiresome by her family, and:

> ...there are certain occasions when you would, of course, never think twice about asking for time off work: for anything special which involves your husband's boss, any special occasion involving your child at school, or when a child is ill.[61]

Furthermore, a woman must accept that a husband is not likely to have any sympathy with a wife who chooses to work full-time, and it would be unreasonable of any woman to accept him to do so. A woman's waged work must be 'unobstructive', that is, it must not interfere with a woman's domestic obligations, and help should never be expected. Lewis shows that whilst women have increasingly taken a share of the paid labour market, men have not taken an increasing share of unpaid work. The gender division of housework and caring for dependants has not only shown little change, but remains an essential element of a 'feminine' identity.[62] Furthermore, whilst women within this period have had access to better domestic technology, as Thane outlines, the outcome has been rising standards of household care rather than reduced hours of housework.[63] For women who cannot cope with managing a husband, children, and a full-time job, Conran advises part-time work. As already noted, a large proportion of women working in the post-war period were engaged in part-time work, which offered a solution to the difficulties of combining women's dual role. Finally, if a woman is too tired to make love with her husband, Conran suggests that she 'chucks' the job: 'what a working woman needs is a fast and unerring sense of priority.' As a woman pursuing a profession, Valerie Riley recalls

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[61] Conran, S., *op. cit.*, p.148.
[62] Lewis, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 69 and 89.
[63] Thane, P., *op. cit.*, p. 197.

the prejudice that existed in the 1970s against women combining a successful career (perceived as too demanding) with being a wife and a mother:

> The principal was a woman...but she, like most women vets, was an unmarried lady and she said to me she didn't think anything of women who were married and wanted to do a vet career, you can either do one or the other. You can have your cake, but you can't have your cake and eat it, and that's when I started to evaluate my second thought, which was 'I'm damned if I can't have it. Why? Men have it all the time. Why should there be this choice?.'[64]

As is apparent marriage did not lose its appeal in the post-war period. Thane emphasises that the majority of women still married. First marriages occurred at a younger age (20-24 years old), and at a more uniform age than had historically been normal.[65] Pat Garland, interviewed for *Dutiful Daughters*, stressed that marriage provided a means by which to break away from her parents. Despite having studied away from home Pat felt that marriage would release her from the parental influence. Marriage almost represented a rite of passage into adulthood. Once married a woman could no longer be dictated to and had to be acknowledged as a grown-up.[66] Following the Second World War marriage was presented as a harmonious alliance, in which a man and a woman entered into an equal, but different, complementary partnership. It was not until the mid-1970s that this idyllic presentation of marriage was questioned, as wife abuse was rediscovered as a social problem.[67] Despite increasing awareness of domestic violence within marriage Conran's *Superwoman* contains a curious chapter entitled 'Sex Maniacs and the Single Girl' amidst chapters on household management. It is implied that marriage itself offers a woman protection from unrequited advances, obscene phone-calls and rape. The notion that a

[64] Riley, V., *op. cit.*
[65] Thane, P., *op. cit.*, p. 195.
[66] McCrindle, J. and Rowbotham, S., *Dutiful Daughters: Women talk about their lives* (Penguin, 1977), p. 280.
[67] Lewis, J., *op. cit.* pp. 104-105.

husband may be abusive is in no way considered. While marriage retained its almost universal appeal divorce rates did increase throughout the period. 'Till death do us part' had new significance for couples of the late twentieth century as adult mortality rates were reduced. The introduction of legal aid in 1949 was significant in helping women with the costs of divorce, though they would still find themselves in a precarious financial situation following their release from matrimony. The 1969 Divorce Act, whilst not positively supporting the dissolution of marriage, conceded that when a marriage had 'irretrievably' broken down divorce was an acceptable solution. In terms of family size, the two-child norm was also firmly established in the post-war years. The birth rate reached a peak of 20.7 births per thousand of the population in 1947, decreased in the 1950s and rose again in the mid-1960s. In 1964 the birth rate was 18.8 births per thousand of the population, falling to 16.2 by 1971. From the 1970s it was to average at 12.8. While the decline in births in the late 1960s coincided with the introduction and spread of the use of the contraceptive pill, Thane argues that it cannot unambiguously explain the decline; the birth rate had fallen to lower levels in the 1930s. The Abortion Act of 1967, Thane suggests, is also problematic in terms of establishing the reason for this latter decline. Given the lack of information in regard to the preceding levels of illegal abortion it is difficult to assess the impact of the Act upon the birth rate.[68]

In considering women's lives in the postwar era, with particular reference to their schooling and work, this chapter has shown that inspite of the dramatic expansion in educational opportunites within this period there remained astonishing persistence in sexist assumptions about women's life plans. Having provided an

[68] Thane, P., 'Women since 1945', in Johnson, P. (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social, Cultural Change* (Longman, 1994), pp. 392-410.

insight into women's lives within this period Chapter 4 will now move on to consider more specifically male representations of university-educated women as highlighted within the student press of the University of Liverpool.

Chapter 4

'A Woman's Place...': male representations of university women in the student press of the University of Liverpool

Deciphering the manner in which women have been, and continue to be, represented in society is an integral element of a feminist critique. The following chapter is concerned to explore male representations of university women as presented by the student press of the University of Liverpool, namely the *Guild Gazette*, between the years 1944 and 1979. The first section of the chapter, focusing upon the years 1944 to 1959, will consider the ways in which university women were represented as 'other' and stereotyped in a negative manner. This section will also highlight how university women were presented as unattractive, unwelcome, and motivationally only at university to find a husband. The second part of the chapter will demonstrate how the years 1960 to 1979 signified with regard to the representation of university women. Consideration is given to visual images of female students, and the way in which 'careers' were presented as distinctly male. The final section of the chapter will then discuss the extent to which women writers and contributors to the *Guild Gazette* challenged the representations of their sex.[1]

[1] For a discussion on how graduate women perceived *Guild Gazette* articles contemporary to their period with hindsight, see Aiston, S. J., "I didn't look at it that way': oral history and the historical study of women at the University of Liverpool 1944-1960', *History of Education Society Bulletin*, 63 (1999), pp. 4-17.

The 1940s to the 1950s

As noted in Chapter 2, historians who have briefly explored representations of university women in the student press have probably underestimated the negative nature of the portrayals. For example, Gibert's research suggests that comments made about university women in the student press of the civic universities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not indicative of any serious 'distinction of sex' within the coeducational university environment. She argues that, whilst female students were a frequent subject of satirical comment, such statements should be considered in their proper context. Within this period the student press existed primarily as an outlet for students' creativity and humour and male students were not immune from this satire. The 'acerbic' commentaries, therefore, do not suggest a bitter division, animosity or resentment between male and female students, and the portrait of female students must be evaluated as 'satire and not as serious criticism'. Gibert goes so far as to suggest, in an extremely positive interpretation, that this anti-female satire was a backhanded symbol of the acceptance of female students, and a rejection of the restrictive 'separate spheres' ideology which portrayed women as objects of profound reverence.[2] It could be argued, however, that the manner in which university women were presented in the *Guild Gazette* between the years 1944 to 1959 renders any attempt to suggest that there was 'no distinction of sex' as problematic. Women, and not only university women, were fundamentally perceived and represented as 'other'.[3] Lindy Moore emphasises, in an

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[2] Gibert, J. S., 'Women students and student life at England's civic universities before the First World War', *History of Education*, 23 (1994), pp. 405-422.

[3] The term 'other' is used by researchers to refer to the concept that a dominant group within society sets itself up as the 'subject' of history, social enquiry and philosophy, relegating everything else to the category 'other'. For example, the dominant group in Western culture is white, male and middle-class, and as a group it sets its position in all discourses through the use of negative binary opposites. In using the word discourse I refer to cultural, ideological and political issues and their location in social, political and historical contexts.

analysis of Aberdeen University's *Alma Mater* from 1870 to 1920, that the proliferation of discussion with regard to women's character was symbolic of the conviction that man's character was of course the 'norm', and as such too obvious to be described.[4] When male students were discussed, as will become apparent, such discussion took place on a very different level. The women of the University of Liverpool were even referred to as 'graduatettes'.[5]

As emphasised above, deconstructing the way in which women are and have been represented is a central component of a feminist critique, and the analysis of representations of women as presented by the mass media has been of particular importance for feminist researchers. For example, the media of the 1980s portrayed women in a very limited, one-dimensional manner. Advertisements illustrated the way in which women were presented in a very stereotyped way; in comparison to men they were more likely to be pictured inside the home, or with children. Women were seldom pictured as combining a marriage and a successful career.[6] D. H. Meehan's study of the presentation of women in soap operas, published in 1983, demonstrated how women were categorised into 'types'. Meehan suggests that within American soap operas female characters were essentially reducible to ten types: the imp, the goodwife, the harpy, the bitch, the victim, the decoy, the siren, the courtesan, the witch and the matriarch. The 'goodwife', for example, was domestic, attractive, home-centred and content. She did not wish to be involved with the

[4] Moore, L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen University Press, 1991), p. 113.

[5] Moore has emphasised that the women students of the University of Aberdeen were given feminine versions of the men's names, for example bajanella and semilina. See Moore, L., *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[6] See Trowler, P., *Investigating the Media* (Unwin Hyman, 1988), chapter 8. Rather interestingly, the 1979 edition of *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* contains an entry for 'career girl or woman', defined as a 'girl or woman, often unmarried, who follows a career or profession'. To find an entry for the male equivalent, 'career boy or man', would be inconceivable. Furthermore, the term still remains to be eradicated from usage today. Suzanne Moore suggests that the 'ridiculous phrase 'career woman' be banished to the last century. Women work – that's it.' See Moore, S., *The Mail on Sunday*, 9. 1. 2000, p. 31.

outside world, preferring to leave the public world of waged work to her husband. The 'harpy', conversely, was an aggressive single woman, overpowering and not afraid to take on or chase after men. Meehan also found that women were portrayed as either good or bad, never a combination, highlighting further how women are positioned in mutually exclusive, fixed categories.[7] The good/bad dichotomy, which Meehan explores, is in fact symbolic of an age-old polarisation of women's character. Marina Warner's *Alone of all her sex: the myth and cult of the Virgin Mary* emphasises how women were categorised in terms of their sexuality as either virgin or whores throughout Western history, which is based on the Christian narrative.[8] Similarly, critics of Victorian literature have noted that female heroines were often subject to the virgin/whore dichotomy.[9]

Throughout this period university women were both explicitly and implicitly stereotyped in a negative manner, demonstrating the necessity for men to categorise and describe women's character. Verse, in particular, was a popular medium by which to discuss university women, and the following extract from 1944 is representative of the stereotypes presented:

Varsity Women

The females at this seat of learning are made up
of five sorts.
Consider them: well first of all there is the type
in shorts,
Or slacks or skirts much higher than her knees
She's plentiful at hops and entertainments
such as these.
Approaching she's attractive with a walk
just like a queen

[7] Meehan, D. H., *Ladies of the Evening* (Scarecrow Press, 1983), discussed in Trowler, P., *op. cit.*
[8] Warner, M., *Alone of all her sex: the myth and cult of the Virgin Mary* (Pan, 1985).
[9] Kimberley, R. and Humble, N., *Victorian Heroines: Representations of Femininity in Nineteenth Century Literature and Art* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

Retiring she's different; such things are better
never seen.
Then there's the type who early pleasures shirks,
Devotes herself to music, art, and other cultured works,
She seems enraptured if you see her at the Phil,
I don't know what you think of her - she makes
me feel quite ill.
Thirdly is the maiden of shy retiring ways
Who's never seen outside a class throughout the
weekly days.
She goes back home to mother at 5-5 every night
And even then I think she asks her, Am I doing right?
Now the dashing female of Sylvia Pankhurst breed
Who's determined that she'll practise what she's come to read.
She'll never marry - she says - and in this we
must agree
For who is going to wed her? Please send your
names to me.
And finally, a goddess, a woman who is slim
and tall
Delightful , clever, nice to talk to, not like the
Others, not at all.
I see her only seldom and then she's not quite clear
And when she's there I know the reason - I've
been drinking too much beer.[10]

According to the author, the five identifiable 'types' of women can be categorised as follows: Type one refers to the 'glamour' girl - or rather the 'tart', who is described as attractive from the front, yet not from behind, possibly because her bottom is too large. Type two refers to the art/culture girl, whom the author suspects is only superficially enjoying such cultured pursuits. The use of the word 'seems' implies that really this type of girl is involved in some sort of façade, perhaps to make herself appear more interesting, for she really does not understand culture at all. Type three refers to the 'dormouse' or alternatively the 'swot'/'frump', who is indecisive, dependent and ultimately boring. Type four refers to the feminist who, rather like the arts/culture type, is involved in a game of deception. Whilst promoting herself as

[10] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 26. 10. 1944), p. 8. The 'Phil' refers to the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool.

determined and independent deep down she wants, as all women do, ultimately to marry. This is unlikely, however, for such feminist opinions are not considered feminine. Finally, type five refers to the perfect university women who, predictably, does not exist, except through a drunken haze. Similarly, an article, as opposed to verse, published in 1945 highlighted the same types of university women. The writer of this article noted that such observation was based on intensive psychoanalysis, seeking to give scientific backing to the reality of such identifiable categories of women.[11] The most prevalent 'types' highlighted throughout these years were the 'glamour' girls versus the 'frumps' representing, as discussed above, the polarisation of women's character. Rather interestingly, it would appear that these two 'types' of university women were not confined to the boundaries of the University of Liverpool. A short verse entitled 'Dates and Data' from Mr. Arnold of the United States was reproduced in a 1956 edition of *Guild Gazette*:

Girls at College
Are of two strata
Girls with 'dates'
And girls with 'data'[12]

Hughes and Ahern's study of women at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, also outlines the negative stereotype of the 'frump' contained within the student newspaper *Salient*.[13]

Conversely, when male students were discussed they were presented as caricatures as opposed to culturally recognisable stereotypes. Whilst the 'tart' and the 'frump' were discernible types outside of the university environment, as Meehan's study demonstrates, 'Simon Dawlish' and 'Patrick O'Bhean' were not. They were

[11] *Ibid.*, 12. 1945, p. 6.
[12] *Ibid.*,. 1. 3. 1956, p. 6.
[13] Hughes, B. and Ahern, S., *Redbrick and Bluestockings: Women at Victoria University* (Victoria University Press, 1993), p. 136.

described in terms more specific to university life. Simon Dawlish is the 'lean and suave' young Freshman who from the onset intends to make his mark on Guild politics, and who will be found in the bar each evening wooing the executive with a pint; whilst Patrick O'Bhean is the single-minded genius, who arrives at university for the sole purpose of getting a degree and leaves, obviously, with a first. Both men were described in a positive manner, and were reflective of admirable masculine traits: assertiveness, determination, intelligence and, of course, beer drinking.[14] 'Profile', a regular column up until the late 1950s, considered individual men of the university as opposed to women. The men were not stereotyped, but discussed in terms of their background and achievements on an individual level. The profile of George Wilmot, for example, explained his family background, his subject of study, his contribution to the war and his party-wrecking exploits. He is caricatured for his laugh, his capacity to drink beer and his imitation of trains.[15] The extent to which men and women were discussed differently is perhaps best illustrated by the following example:

Next Year's 'High-up'

> Lady President: Freda Roberts. - Fourth year Medical and this year's Vice-President. Attractive to look at, sensible to talk to, pleasant to drink with and pays for herself. The pride of the Medical School!
> President: Bernard Towers. – Fifth Year Medical. Educated at Preston R. C. College and President of the Catholic Society 1942-3. Resigned Vice Presidency last October on the ground of 'ill-health'. Likes 'blackening'. The pride of the Chaplaincy![16]

Freda Roberts' description, whilst intended to be complimentary, is both derogatory and loaded. As will shortly be discussed, university women were predominantly presented as the antithesis of the above, that is unattractive 'gold-diggers' who were

[14] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 10. 10. 1950), p. 4.
[15] *Ibid.*, 24. 2. 1949, p. 5.
[16] *Ibid.*, 29. 6. 1945, p. 13.

not good company. Freda was an exception to the rule, and was representative of the 'acceptable' female student type. Jean Clifton, Lady President of 1957, was similarly presented as both exceptional and acceptable:

> Among University women she stands out as a well dressed, interested and interesting personality. Her vigour and bonhomie are a refreshing change from the affected boredom and listlessness of many women here.[17]

What was considered as 'acceptable', however, could be contradictory. For example, Professor Sir Charles Reilly, described as the 'father' of the Liverpool School of Architecture, in attempting to compliment the women architects, commented in 1944: 'The young girl architect, believe me, is the most naïve and charming creature in the world'.[18] Reilly is almost attempting to persuade the reader that female architects were 'okay', and frames their acceptance in the feminine virtues of naivety and charm. The 'girl' architect, as opposed to 'woman', which generally denotes adulthood, had not stepped outside the bounds of her gender and become 'masculinised' by this traditionally male subject of study. Conversely, Oriel Markham, a chemistry student in 1956, was singled out by male students from the 'genus of the species 'Woman'' and praised for her enjoyment of beer. Oriel's acceptance is derived from adopting behaviour conventionally associated with men.[19] University women were referred to by frames of reference that retained men's subject position and consequently maintained women's 'otherness'. Women were discussed as a different species. They were often referred to as 'creatures'; set apart from the obvious animal analogy, the word creature, originating from the Latin

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[17] *Ibid*, 1. 3. 1957, p. 6.
[18] *Ibid*, 26. 10. 1944, p. 3.
[19] Sections of this chapter were presented as a paper at the History of Education Society Annual Conference in December 1999. Professor Roy Lowe noted that his daughter, a final year medic, was currently collecting male and female profiles for a student publication. The women medics were discussed in terms of their 'laddishness' and ability to drink beer.

'creare', refers to a person who is dependent upon another, a tool or a puppet.[20] Female students, continuing the animal analogy, were also referred to as breeds, highlighting further the mutually exclusive stereotypes to which women were assigned.

Freda Roberts and Jean Clifton, as the 'acceptable' female students, were presented as the opposite of the majority of university women in the 1940s and 1950s. University women were judged, first and foremost, on the basis of their sexual attractiveness. Appearance, not only in terms of physicality, but also in reference to a woman's personality, was of the utmost importance. A woman's chief concern in life, after all, was to attract a husband. It was the yardstick by which University women were measured, and as part of the 'male gaze' they were represented as largely failing to achieve sexual attractiveness. In a 1945 edition of *Guild Gazette* a letter originally written to *Sphinx* in 1932, according to editor Rex Makin, had a notably modern note:

> Sir.-There is a deplorable slackness among women undergraduates of this University. University education is, after all, a preparation for the serious business of Life: and the serious business of Life, for a woman, whether an ex-undergraduate or not, is to capture and keep captive, a Man.
>
> Proficiency in this Sir, can only be achieved by practice. Yet, do we, in fact see the bulk of our 'undergraduettes' using to the full the many opportunities which our University provides? Of course, we do not.
>
> For most of them seem to hardly bother at all about their appearance - to have yielded prematurely to despair, without ever considering how Art can supply the deficiencies of Nature.[21]

The writer of this article suggested a beauty contest in order to combat such a 'deplorable attitude'. He concluded that such a contest would grant every female fresher coming up to university the prospect of a career, which may lead as far as Ohio, or even Hollywood itself, if they managed to conceal the fact that they had

[20] Hanks, P. (ed.), *Collins Dictionary of English Dictionary* (William Collins, 1979), p. 351.
[21] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 27. 2. 1945), p. 2.

matriculated. As was shown in Chapter 3, femininity and intelligence were often perceived as mutually exclusive entities. University women were represented as either not trying hard enough, or alternatively and rather contradictorily, as trying too hard. On the one hand, university women were chastised for being too aloof: adult ladylike charm and grace did not entail a 'blasé deadpan air of having a nasty smell under the nose.'[22] In terms of sexuality university women were represented as cold and frigid. In an article entitled 'I was a teenage gravedigger', concerned to discuss the unusual vacation work of digging graves, the analogy is drawn between university women and dead corpses: 'Where I worked the women were about as cold, frigid, unresponsive...as any university woman.'[23] Conversely, university women also tried too hard, and therefore went too far in attempting to be sexually attractive, even to the extent that they were presented as a 'crowd of clip clopping, hip-swaying hussies, painted like redskins'.[24] Furthermore, they could not be entrusted to create their own image. For the application of make-up Mal Bird and Wilf Davidson provided 'helpful' beauty tips for the female student who was trying too hard:

> The female university population are going to great lengths to glamorize themselves, but after the fifth coating the result is a blotchy face with two lovely black eyes...by all means do not look like a ghost, a light application is all that is needed.[25]

An article entitled 'Hemline Hysteria' emphasised that since Adam and Eve woman had dressed to please and attract man, yet could not be trusted to design her own clothes. 'Mereman' in the form of Christian Dior, for example, had to take charge.[26] Similarly, writing in *Salient*, the student press of the University of Victoria, in 1952 a

[22] *Ibid.*, 6. 5. 1948, p. 7.
[23] *Ibid*, 30. 10. 1959, p. 3.
[24] *Ibid*, 20. 3. 1957, p.7.
[25] *Ibid*, 27. 11. 1959, p. 5.
[26] *Ibid*, 5. 2. 1948, p. 6.

male student provided much needed fashion advice for the women students of New Zealand, referring to himself, rather interestingly, as 'A Mere Male'. He advises against clothing made of angora wool: 'Fluffiness of this kind does not flatter those bouncing rolls of fat; it makes the wearer look like a run-away sponge cake.'[27]

Throughout this period male students were at great pains to point out how inferior their female colleagues were in comparison to other women. College women and city girls were depicted as preferable. In 1953 college girls were described as a 'grand lot'. The 'Slap and Tickle' girls of Barkill College were particularly praised for their lovely figures, so 'petite and graceful'.[28] University women were nothing more than gold-diggers who would lead men on with false promises in order to secure free drinks and cigarettes. The male student craved 'maiden modesty', and therefore looked favourably towards occupational therapists, or 'ot stuff', nurses and teacher training college students.[29] In the autumn term of 1957 a series of reports entitled 'Wilkinson on Women' were published. The column was designed to discuss the merits of 'The O.Ts', 'The Nurses Home' and 'St. Kaths', and each college was considered in terms of the possibility of sexual encounters. The Liverpool School of Occupational Therapy (as regards geographic location) offered snickets and ginnels, which were darker, cheaper and offered much more scope than the back row of the cinema.[30] Having provided a 'tit-bit of useful knowledge' on how to infiltrate the nurse's home, Wilkinson noted that the journey would not be in vain, for nurses understood what was expected of them.[31] And despite the stronghold of St. Kaths, a Church of England teacher training college, the university male would not be

[27] Hughes, B. and Ahern, S., *op. cit.*, p. 135.
[28] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 5. 2. 1953), p. 2.
[29] *Ibid.*, 25. 11. 1954, p. 5.
[30] *Ibid.*, 1. 11. 1957, p. 5.
[31] *Ibid.*, 22. 11. 1957, p. 4.

disappointed: 'if you are a betting man (and even if you're not) take my tip: risk sixpence each way on a 73 bus for an odds-on chance of romping home a winner in the sport of kings.'[32] City girls were also presented as being a lot more 'promising'. They had never heard of emancipation, had some inkling of dress-sense, could make good coffee and did not start moralising. The 'I'm an intellectual tag' was not appreciated. Once again 'maiden modesty' was central.[33] One male student felt that it would be preferable if union tickets were sold only to male students, thus allowing the men to dictate which women could attend dances:

> For every university girl who claims to have some charm I guarantee that I could produce ten from any Liverpool factory or block of offices who would be better in everything...It is a great pity that half the valuable tickets should be wasted on so many monstrous university women. Why don't they stay at home and read or knit on Saturday?[34]

In conclusion: 'It has been proved that City and College women look better, last longer, are more economical, and easier to get rid of. Get some – tomorrow.'[35] So whilst college and city girls were heralded as a more favourable option they were hardly discussed in a complimentary manner. The writer of the latter quotation could equally have been discussing a particular model of car. They were represented primarily as sexual objects who, to their advantage, were less bothersome than university women. A woman at university raised in the male mind the issue of equality, whilst the college or city girl did not, and therefore respect was negligible.

Throughout this period women's motives for entering university were represented as women 'targeting' a good location in which to find a husband and financial provider: 'It is a well-accepted and ancient truth that a University is a

[32] *Ibid*, 12. 12. 1957, p. 6.
[33] *Ibid*, 1. 3. 1956, p. 6.
[34] *Ibid*, 20. 3. 1959), p. 2.
[35] *Ibid*, 18. 10. 1957, 2.

profitable hunting ground for those females whose essays in the lists of love have been thwarted in numerous other spheres.'[36] In a 1953 edition of *Guild Gazette* a verse originating from a New Zealand university student publication illustrated further that 'well-accepted' and 'ancient truth', whilst implicitly and explicitly deriding women's academic abilities:

> "They (women) have not the capacity for the pursuit of learning for its own sake, and so should be removed from the university - " – Mr. Fieldhouse as quoted in Canta. June 25.
>
> I haven't any function and I haven't the capacity
> For cultivating knowledge for its own, own sake:
> In lectures I'm astonished by the masculine sagacity,
> But I find it very difficult to keep awake.
>
> My mind is rather sluggish and it isn't very logical,
> Mathematics leave me muddled and philosophy's a bore:
> I'm frightened stiff by Freud and all those matters psychological.
> I look forward to that season when they'll bother me no more.
>
> But if you ask me why I tread the cloisters of this varsity,
> I'll give a girlish giggle and I'll turn distinctly pink,
> And tell you it's the only place there isn't any scarcity
> Of males I might entrap with my wicked female wink.
>
> And so while I'm at varsity, be sure I'll study zealously
> How to distract the student from his strivings after knowledge,
> And guard the women's privilege to be a student jealously
> Until I've caught the man I want, and then I'll leave college.
>
> When at last I've got my man and put behind me things scholastical
> Embarked on my career of gossip, bridge and motherhood,
> I'll find my son a varsity that's perfectly monastical,
> And see he keeps as free from female snares as students should.
> ANDY.[37]

All university women, regardless of their type, were represented as deceptive, cunning and manipulative in their quest to 'catch' a man. The university male was presented as defenceless, in need of warning and protecting by fellow male students

[36] *Ibid*, 21. 11. 1944, p. 8.
[37] *Ibid*,. 16. 10. 1953, p. 3.

from the 'wiles' of university women. University women were 'she-wolves' and 'vipers'.[38] The traditional hunter-gather model was turned on its head, as the university male became the hunted: 'But you, my boys, are the mice; so if the cats get at you don't blame us. You have been warned.'[39] University women were placed in an impossible situation. Despite the fact that it was emphasised that a woman's chief concern was to attract a man, and university women were derided for not achieving sexual attractiveness, they were also, paradoxically, attacked for going to university in order to find a man! The university woman was in no-win situation. The point raised in Chapter 3 as regards the proliferation and confusion of discourses of femininity signifying women can never achieve unequivocal success at being a 'woman' is particularly pertinent. Furthermore, in spite of male belligerence, university men did marry university women. Engagements and marriages were often announced in the *Guild Gazette*.[40] Even 'women-hater' Wilkinson married a university woman, despite his series of reports which favoured college and city women:

> Girls remember Edward Wilkinson, the notorious columnist who used to write those vicious, malicious attacks against university women in Gazette. Well he's just got married to a University woman![41]

In a 1959 edition of *Guild Gazette* Richard Rollins 'investigated' why girl students went to university, posing the question: was it a worthwhile investment of tax-payer's money? The caption underneath a photograph of university women read: 'Post-graduate girls...Here for Employment Only?', and the article highlighted the fact that the notion that women went to university to marry 'better' was a fallacy.

[38] *Ibid.*, 12. 1945, p. 6.
[39] *Ibid.*, 1. 11. 1957, p. 3.
[40] See *Ibid.*, 21. 10. 1949, p. 3 and *Ibid.*, 27. 11. 1959, p. 3.
[41] *Ibid.*, 27. 11. 1959, p. 3.

Marriage, however, was often the result. Rollins stated that this occurred for two reasons: they (women) were mixing with educated men, and the 'natural pride of many men discriminates against them marrying a girl of greater intelligence.'[42] So even though Rollins questions the notion, which is reiterated throughout this period, that women only attended university in order to find a man, the rejection of the notion is just as derogatory. University women were perceived as intellectually inferior.

Women at university, furthermore, were not 'good company'. A 1948 article noted:

> for times when one's ego demands that stimulus which only an inferior intelligence can give, women are admissible...But for the ordinary course of events in this life ... above all for comradeship, the company of men is a sine qua non.[43]

This sentiment is reminiscent of a letter from a Cambridge graduate explaining why he voted against giving women formal recognition from the University in 1920. He wrote:

> She cannot realise that man has not the slightest use for comradeship so far as woman is concerned. He thinks about woman in an entirely different way and in-spite of everything woman can do he will go on thinking that way till the end of time.[44]

Conversationally university women were not considered as 'sensible to talk to'; in fact their conversation represented the 'frivolous, aimless and inconsequential chatter of emancipated schoolgirls'.[45] As 'poor conversationalists' the women in the Union spoke in 'words of one or two syllables on a topic generally abstract or boring to death', leaving John Brennan to ask: 'Who would want to be seen with a member of

[42] *Ibid*, 27. 11. 1959, p. 2.
[43] *Ibid*, 22. 1. 1948, p. 4.
[44] 'Clever', broadcast on Radio 4 on the 19. 8. 99.
[45] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 11. 12. 1947), p. 7.

this foppish brigade?'[46] Women at university were not only encroaching upon men's territory, but also providing a distracting influence upon men's academic study. In spite of the fact that the proportion of women at the University within this period never rose above 25 per cent they were represented as almost taking over:

> The time is not far distant when the few remaining will be confined to their particular portion of the basement and our noble Sphinx replaced by a bronze replica of James Mason.[47]

Moore emphasises that Aberdeen's *Alma Mater* contained complaints that the presence of women at university adversely affected men's academic studies.[48] Similarly, Liverpool University women, in their attempt to capture a man, were accused of having a distracting influence. One writer implores the women to give up the 'chase', at least during lectures.[49] Not only were the women represented as distracting, but also as corrupting. Women were comparable with Satan as regards corrupting innocent males. It was the immorality of women that forced men to become 'ladies men', or women haters:

> The danger to the male among the amoral females at University is that, in the space of a few years, he will become either cynical and morally corrupt – a veritable Don Juan, or else a misogynist of the first order.[50]

The 1960s to the 1970s

The years 1960 to 1979 witnessed a change in the way in which university women were represented. The direct comments and stereotypes had largely disappeared. The friction that had characterised the earlier period had gone, and women at university were 'accepted' as part of the course. For what reasons did this change occur? The

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[46] *Ibid.*, 19. 5. 1959, p. 2.
[47] *Ibid.*, 11. 11. 1947, p. 5.
[48] Moore, L., *op. cit.*, p. 130.
[49] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 27. 11. 1959), p. 5.
[50] *Ibid.*, 10. 12. 1953, p. 6.

late 1940s was a period within which ex-servicemen accounted for a substantial proportion of the total university population. In a 1946 Ministry of Labour memorandum universities were invited to reserve 90 per cent of available places for ex-service men and women. Out of the total number of ex-service people at Liverpool University in 1946, however, only ten per cent were women, and throughout the late 1940s the University Annual Reports emphasised the presence of ex-servicemen.[51] In an article which considers women students of the London medical schools in the inter-war years Dyhouse emphasises the 'backlash' against women students following the war. Drawing upon the work of historians Margaret and Patrice Higonnet and Susan Kingsley Kent, who exemplify the inter-war years as an endeavour to 'reconstruct' sexual difference as one of the components of a stable social order, Dyhouse notes:

> This work of 'reconstruction' can be seen to have been fuelled by representations of a 'sex war', in which men set out 'to reclaim territory' which women were perceived to have 'usurped' during the 'unnatural' conditions of wartime.[52]

A general theory of post-war 'reconstruction' and the reassertion of patriarchal prerogatives following the war might account similarly for the adverse reaction to the presence of women at the University of Liverpool throughout the late 1940s. As the first section of this chapter demonstrated, however, attacks were made upon university women in 1944 and continued throughout the 1950s. Such a theory cannot, therefore, be drawn upon to explain why the early 1960s should witness a change in the way in which university women were represented. It would also be rather difficult to argue that the 1960s expansion of the university system, following the

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[51] Aiston, S. J., *Women in Higher Education: The University of Liverpool 1944 – 1960* (MA, University of Liverpool, 1996), p. 29.
[52] Dyhouse, C., 'Women Students and the London Medical Schools, 1914-1939', *Gender and History*, 10 (1998), pp. 122-123.

Robbins Report, could explain this acceptance. Enrolment statistics for female students at the University of Liverpool increased only gradually throughout this period. In the academic session 1961 to 1962 women comprised 24 per cent of the total university population. By 1975 to 1976 this proportion had risen to only 32 per cent, and by 1978 to 1979 had only reached 33 per cent.[53] Having formed approximately a quarter of the university's population from the Second World War until the early 1960s, women students of the University of Liverpool still only represented a third of the total by the end of the 1970s. The shift in the *Guild Gazette* of male attitudes towards university women could only be partially explained by the slightly increased presence of female students. One potential explanation for the change in the representation of university women might be found in the changing nature of secondary schooling: as these schools became more coeducational from the mid-1960s, men and women in the same academic environment became less of a novelty. As such, the need to 'describe' university women was no longer an issue and the men of the University accepted women in higher education as part of the norm.

What is also particularly striking about the *Guild Gazette* in the 1960s and 1970s is the change in its tone and format. It became a much more earnest, serious publication. While Guild news and student concerns remained an important aspect of the student press, political discussion and international concerns became more predominant. Issues such as nuclear disarmament, the common market, the 'Palestinian Problem' and apartheid were discussed, in conjunction with a consideration of more domestic politics. Local news also became a central feature: for example, reports on homelessness in Liverpool, or items in regard to the

[53] Kelly, T., *For Advancement of Learning: The University of Liverpool 1881-1981* (Liverpool University Press, 1981), p. 329.

shipbuilders Cammell Laird.[54] In the preceding period, whereas freshers (*male*) would be welcomed to Liverpool with a report on university women, from the 1960s freshers were provided with more informative articles with reference to the city. Reviews of art, film, theatre, music, literature and sport became more serious, and photography played a greater role, as did advertisements. Overall, the *Guild Gazette* within this period resembled a broad- sheet, in contrast to the earlier publications of the 1940s and 1950s. Working on the paper offered a training ground for potential journalists; and the large increase in the number of students involved in the production of the paper, along with the change in tone and format, symbolises this point.

While the direct derogatory comments and stereotypes that had personified the male representation of university women from 1944 to 1959 had largely disappeared; there remained some continuity with this earlier period. In terms of male and female Guild profiles, as highlighted earlier in the chapter by drawing upon the examples of Freda Roberts and Bernard Towers, men and women still continued to be discussed on different levels. Anthony Enoch, President of the Guild in 1962, was considered in terms of his academic background and arrival in Guild politics. He was noted for his 'easy manner' and 'diplomatic impartiality'. Reminiscent of the earlier period is the quirky end to the profile, which noted that Anthony's smooth handling of people was attributable to his experience of running a mobile greengrocery business. Alternatively, Lady President Ann O'Flanagan is described as having 'more than a touch of the Blarney about her', and was better known for her smile than her efficiency. As a car owner Ann was stereotyped as the woman driver

[54] In the academic year beginning 1974 the name of the newspaper was changed from *Guild Gazette* to *Guild and City Gazette*.

prone to the 'usual misfortunes of the fair sex behind the wheel.'[55] In 1971 President of the Guild Christopher Graham and Deputy President Angela Pelly were discussed in similar terms.[56] Christopher's involvement with Union affairs was discussed, whilst Angela was noted for her hotpants and attractiveness. Angela's decision to stand for the position of Deputy President was described as an alternative one due to her failure to secure the title of Panto Queen.[57] The old arguments regarding Liverpool University women's sexual attractiveness would occasionally resurface. In the 1960s the familiar line of reasoning reappeared that 'Liverpool University has the ugliest, most shabby girls in Great Britain' who were 'not up to scratch'.[58] Generally, however, university women were no longer derided, but celebrated for their sexual attractiveness. The male student in the 1960s who declared: 'There Should Be No Women in the University', in contrast to the previous period, was now branded as a 'dangerous man': 'He is a threat to the peace of mind of every man who has ever been disturbed by a pretty face.'[59]

The 1960s heralded the rise of the beauty competition. University women were encouraged to enter 'Miss University World', a student equivalent of the Miss World competition started in Britain in 1951:

> You've seen it on the tele; you've gaped goggle-eyed as the lovely girls paraded by, smiling seductively into the camera. Now, yes! This very Friday in the Mountford at 7.30 twelve gorgeous girls from universities all over Britain will be competing for the title of Miss University World 1968.[60]

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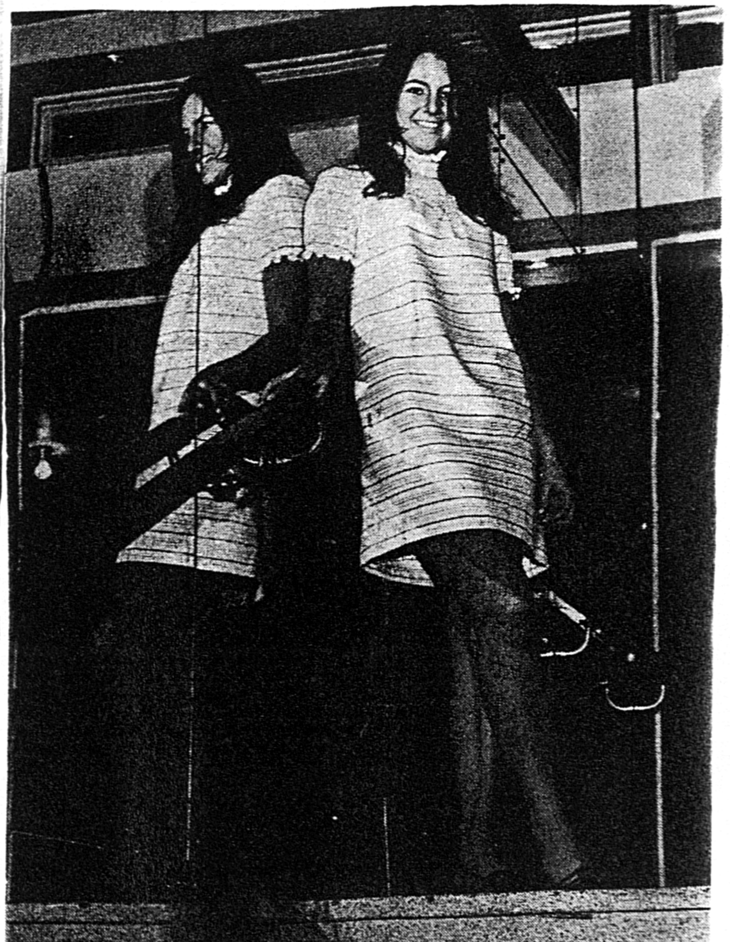
[55] *Ibid*, 6. 11. 1962, p. 3.
[56] In 1969 the gender-specific positions of 'President' and 'Lady President' were replaced with 'President' and 'Deputy President'. In an eleven-year period between 1969 and 1980 only one woman was elected as President, and only four women were elected as Deputy President. See Kelly, T., *op. cit.*, p. 540.
[57] *Ibid*, 5. 10. 1971, p. 5.
[58] *Ibid*, 24. 11. 1964, p. 10 and 28. 10. 1969, p. 4.
[59] *Ibid*, 6. 11. 1962, p. 1.
[60] *Ibid*, 6. 2. 1968, p. 3.

On a more regular, localised level was Liverpool University's annual Panto Queen competition.[61] The *Guild Gazette* provided coverage of this event by supplying photographic images of both finalists and winners[62]:

SPOT THE LUCKY FELLA!
The five finalists for Panto Queen certainly got their hands onto Miss (?) Jean Racquel—one of the other entrants.



This year's Panto Queen and last edition's page girl, Jane Westbrooke is a double celebrity girl. Not only is she to be entered for Miss World University but she has the doubtful pleasure of appearing on "Top of the Pops" with Jimmy Saville. This of course is over and above the tremendous honour it must have been just to win against all that talent lined up against her. And without any doubt at all, we shall be seeing lots more of this particular Panto Queen.

[61] Similarly, Victoria University, New Zealand staged its own equivalent. See Hughes, B. and Ahern, S, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
[62] For reference to the following extracts see *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 1. 12. 1971), p.1 and *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 5. 12. 1967), p. 5.

University women were no longer despised as either unattractive 'frumps' or 'tarts', but celebrated as alluring and photogenic. So whilst the stereotypes and direct disparaging written comments had largely vanished, what stood in their place was a proliferation of visual imagery which still judged university women on the basis of their sexual attractiveness, albeit now in a positive manner. A continuity with the earlier period in the way in which university women were represented is, therefore, retained throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, even though the presentation had mutated into what could be considered a more subtle format. University women continued to remain part of the 'male gaze' in the form of pin-ups. Rowbotham notes that the 1960s signified a change in the visual images of femininity as sex become more overt.[63] Miss Penny Everett looked directly into the 'male gaze' with 'come to bed eyes' in a 1965 pin-up, whilst the unknown university woman who 'can't wait to vote in the Presidential Elections' was seductively poised in a 1969 edition of *Guild Gazette*[64]:

A Penny for your thoughts . . . and this particular Penny is Miss Penny Everett, 3rd year Geography student, seen relaxing after her finals.

[63] Rowbotham, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 361-364.
[64] See *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 22. 6. 1965), p. 10 and *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 18. 2. 1969), p. 3.

We don't know who she is, but it looks as though she can't wait to vote in the Presidential Elections.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s in every edition of the *Guild Gazette* university women were presented in a whole catalogue of sexy poses. Admired for their 'high femininity rating', 'eye-catching publicity' for university events and perceived as attractive 'new decoration' in the Union, university women were represented as objects to be observed. In the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, as was discussed earlier in the chapter, 'Profile' was a regular feature which considered individual male as opposed to female students; from the 1960s onwards, however, university women were to be granted their own 'profile' coverage. The format was reminiscent of a 'page 3' tabloid 'article', and as often as not was actually placed on page 3 of the *Guild Gazette*. For example, a sexy photograph of mathematician Chris Talbot was accompanied by the following comment: 'Chris Talbot's blonde hair and

well-integrated statistics add up to a low availability coefficient'.[65] Felicity Marshall's 'profile' provides an excellent example of this format[66]:

With 19-year-old Felicity Marshall as a partner, tennis is sure to become one of the University's most popular sports. 35-22-36 Felicity has been playing since she was 14, and, strangely enough, lives in Wimbledon. She admits she's not in the champions class, but should warm up to a good game when she gets in practice. Love all, fellas!

[65] *Ibid.*, 28. 2. 1967, p. 1.
[66] *Ibid.*, 10. 5. 1966, p. 3.

In 1970, at the Miss World competition held at the Albert Hall in London, the Women's Liberation Movement made a very public protest in order to challenge the narrow vision of femininity presented. Such an event symbolised for this Movement the representation of women as sex objects. It was against this background that Andrew Stanton emphasised, in a 1971 edition of the *Guild Gazette*, that it was university women who were responsible for the annual Panto Queen 'ritual' held at the University of Liverpool. The argument put forward was that any woman who entered herself was suffering from a severe case of 'hypophotogenia':

> A hypo addict gets her kicks from the stimulation of the retina by a photo flash. Once hooked there is no limit the sufferer will go to to satisfy her habit. The progression is pathetic. It might start with a seemingly harmless beauty contest but it ends up by furtive trips to a coin operated booth in Woolies.[67]

Those university women, who like the group of women at the Miss World competition, protested against women being judged on the basis of their sexual attractiveness were represented as fascists. In 1972 a protest against the annual Panto Slave Auction, whereby university women were raffled in the name of charity to the highest male bidder, was interpreted as a small minority imposing its will upon an unwilling majority.[68] In letters to the Editor, Harvey Morton wrote:

> The Women's Lib demonstrators were a perfect example of a frustrated, cynical, disillusioned sect with no logical arguments; they demanded freedom for women who wanted to be auctioned, be sold; their demonstrations relied entirely on their ability to swear, scream, bite, scratch and kick. They lowered themselves to the echelons of the animal kingdom.[69]

Morton did not go that step further and suggest, as Bob Hope (presenter of the 1970 Miss World competition) had, that: 'Anybody that would try to break up an affair as wonderful as this with these kind of proceedings and with these wonderful girls...has

[67] *Ibid*, 30. 11. 1971, p. 6.
[68] *Ibid*, 18. 2. 1972, p. 4.
[69] *Ibid*, 8. 3. 1972, p. 4.

got to be on some kind of dope.'[70] The old clichés, however, were evident; these women could not get a man, hence their behaviour, and were not rational, but hysterical women. Morton emphasised that the use of foul language was a simply an attempt of a 'weak' mind to appear strong. Similarly, when a demonstration occurred at the presence at the Union of *The Ladybirds*, a topless women's band pictured below, the university's Women's Liberation Society was represented as a group of fanatics. As such they were not interested in a democratic, reasoned conversation, but instead resorted to obstruction to prevent others enjoying themselves:

> ...while they screamed for the liberation of womankind they were offending something which is more all embracing, that is, the liberty of individuals to hold different opinions and pursue their own happiness.[71]

[70] Footage of the 1970 demonstration was shown as part of a BBC2 'Politically Incorrect Night' held on 13. 4. 1998.

[71] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 20. 3. 1973), p. 3. For reference to the photograph of *The Ladybirds* see *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 15. 2. 1973), p. 3.

The imagery of university women stood in sharp contrast to images of university men. Photographs of 'Mr and Miss Success' demonstrate this point, for whilst Mick Avis was presented in a straight-forward pose Sue Crowther showed 'some leg' with a beckoning hand, not looking entirely at ease[72]:

Miss Success....

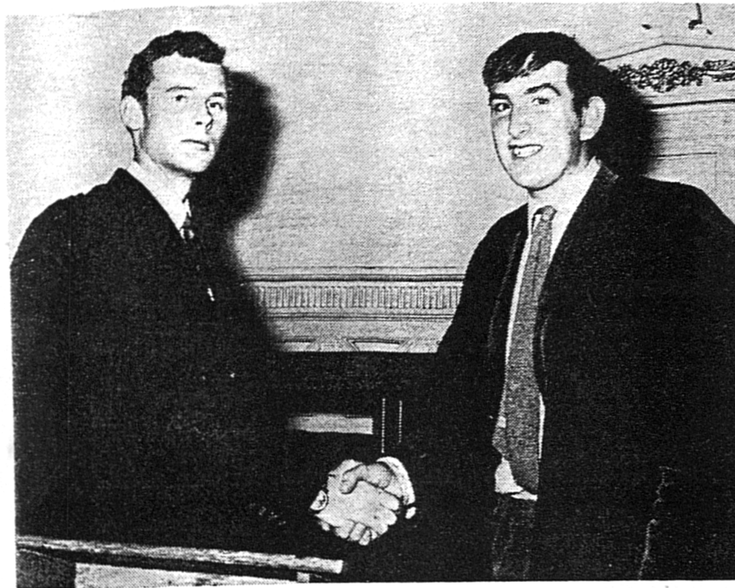
. . . is SUE CROWTHER, English post-grad, who has been chosen to play the title rôle in Dram Soc's "Miss Julie" by Strindberg. The play will be entered for the NUS festival — where Miss Crowther is tipped to win a trophy.

Mr. Success....

. . . is MICK AVIS, who conquered the hardships of blindness to gain ten "O" levels, three "A" levels and a place in the psychology department. Mick also plays trumpet — and dances. He's the bravest man in the University.

[72] *Ibid.*, 13. 10. 1964, p. 1.

Depictions of university men ranged from photographs of male students in the showers holding pints of beer over their exposed private areas to competitors in 'University Challenge'.[73] They were represented as both humorous and serious. The following photograph presents two male students dressed in university gowns congratulating one another with a 'manly' handshake on the success of their debate. Such imagery was not available to female students[74]:



Maiden speakers are a success

Photo shows the main speakers, David Ford (Law) and Ian Horsley (Politics), in the Maiden Speakers' Debate on Euthanasia last week. See lead story this page for Debate Report.

Advertisements, presumably providing revenue for the production of the *Guild Gazette's* more professional format, played a greater role than in the earlier period. Parry's, the University Booksellers, and Barker and Dobson, retailers of 'Cameo Chocolates' and 'Regal Fruit-Drops', represented the mainstay of *Guild Gazette* advertising in the 1940s and 1950s. The late 1950s witnessed the introduction of the 'career' advert, and whilst this chapter has predominantly focused

[73] See *Ibid.*, 25. 6. 1963, p. 10 and 6. 12. 1966, p. 14.
[74] *Ibid.*, 8. 11. 1966, p. 12.

upon male student representations of university women the following section will consider both adverts and student male presentations, emphasising the *Guild Gazette* as a medium by which to convey prevalent gender ideology. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s 'career' adverts were predominantly aimed at university men. The following advert provides a good example[75]:

Unilever Profile No. 1

"About 5 feet 6. Blonde. Blue eyes"

Peter Salt by Peter Salt

Line of work. Marketing. I approve those things they squeeze between television programmes when people hurry to the kitchen for a glass of milk.

But what would you really rather do ? Nothing. I don't mean not to do *anything*. There just isn't anything else I'd rather do.

Driving Force. The usual one. A hungry wife. Two hungry children. A hungry cat and a hungry dog. Besides I get hungry too.

Most paradoxical quality. I'm lazy. I can watch my wife mow the lawn without a qualm of conscience. Yet at the office I work hard.

The terrible temptation. About 5 feet 6. Blonde. Blue eyes. Luckily I married her.

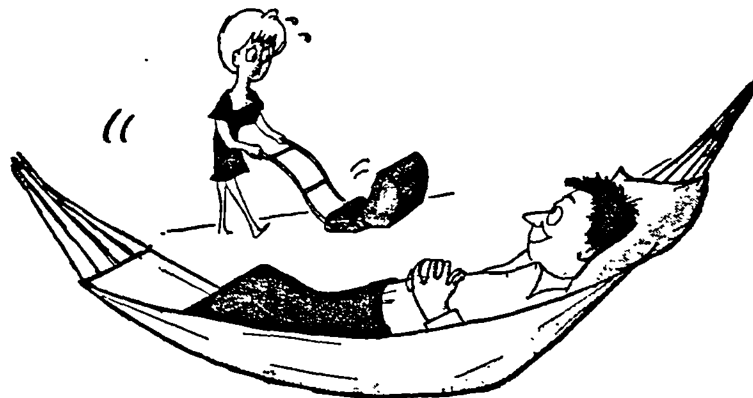
Unfounded fears. Being old and broke. But I have a good job with a future and a good salary.

Personal panacea. Work when I'm upset at home. Home when I'm upset at work. The local when I'm upset at both.

Greatest satisfaction. Joining Unilever after I went down. A man's choice of career is one of the biggest decisions in his life, and his greatest satisfaction is being able to look back and know that he chose the right direction. In Unilever I've found security and financial reward combined with excitement and growth. Within Unilever there is room for expansion in whatever direction a man interested in commerce can desire...management, industrial, technical, production, marketing. I enjoy my work. That's my greatest satisfaction.

If you are choosing a career in industry you should consider the Unilever Companies' Management Development Scheme. Your starting salary is a minimum of £850 a year, which by the end of your training will have risen to not less than £1,200. From then on it's up to you. Senior management positions are open to you which are worth at least £4,500.

For fully informative literature write to:
PERSONNEL DIVISION, REF. (P.D. [illegible]), UNILEVER HOUSE, LONDON, E.C.4.



The above profile of Peter Salt highlights two important issues. First, a man's role in life was understood as providing financially for his wife and children and, therefore, conversely, a woman's role in life was to care for her family. Second, a 'man's career

[75] *Ibid.*, 5. 11. 1963, p. 9.

is one of the biggest decisions in his life', and as part of that career job satisfaction and future prospects were central. The advert was given a further masculine 'edge' by making reference to Peter's love of women and his patronage of the local pub. Language was an important means by which to exclude university women from potential careers:

> We are looking for one arts graduate...He will have all the usual assets of a university education...He will, we hope, be interested in all aspects of the wicked commercial world and will be able to join battle within a few weeks.[76]

Women were excluded not only from positions advertised for science/engineering graduates, which may have been more understandable given the smaller number of female graduates from these disciplines, but also from positions directed at arts students. At the end of the day 'it was the man who mattered', and the use of the male pronoun was also effective in placing limitations upon the career choices of university women. While it was standard practice within this period to adopt 'masculine' language to refer to both men and women, as will become apparent the advertisements and articles were actually specifically referring to men. Those advertisements which appealed to the male student emphasised the managerial positions that would be attained in a short space of time, carrying with them 'real responsibility'. The equation of male and management was a strong one, and reflective of the point made by both Mary Ingham and Janet Rider in Chapter 3. Even the Department of Education's recruitment drive for teachers discussed male entrants to the profession on a different level. Science graduate George Agar was presented as running a 'key' department at the age of twenty-eight. The advertisement went on to

[76] *Ibid.*, 2. 2. 1965, p. 12.

emphasis the promotional prospects to head*master*, and that 'one graduate teacher in five is a headmaster in *his* (my italics) forties.'[77]

The emphasis on career development was simply part of a wider discourse that stressed men had 'careers' whilst women had 'jobs', confirming women's primary role as wife and mother. Articles in the *Guild Gazette* providing careers advice merely exemplified the point: 'This article is mainly for men, partly because there are more of them in this University and partly because they normally require a career rather than a job.'[78] A profile of a tax inspector in a 1963 edition of the *Guild Gazette* reiterated the important points emphasised by many of the advertisements: a male position, working as part of a male environment, with responsibilities and financial security.[79] The imagery, however, would often be subtler. For example, a short article entitled 'Our eyes on the future', which emphasised the necessity of planning a career, was accompanied by a photograph of a group of male architects gathered round a table covered by designs.[80] University women were not always excluded from advertisements; for example, British Nylon Spinners Limited and ICI did not refer to gender, although ICI may have been working on the assumption that women applying for the post of organic chemist was not even a consideration. When university women were brought into the dialogue, however, it was generally in a very circumscribed way. In an article entitled 'The right man for which job?', concerned to emphasise to the graduate the importance of choosing a career carefully, the only point at which the male pronoun was disregarded was the stage at which teaching was discussed.[81] In an advertisement for the Royal Air Force in 1970 a separate

[77] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 18. 2. 1969), p. 5.
[78] *Ibid*, 19. 2. 1964, p. 7.
[79] *Ibid*, 26. 2. 1963, p. 7.
[80] *Ibid*, 23. 11. 1965, p. 13.
[81] *Ibid*, 18. 2. 1969, p. 5.

clause was introduced to note that cadetships were also open to women, emphasising the point that one would not 'normally' expect them to be so. Despite this encouragement, particular emphasis was placed upon women education officers.[82] The *Guild Gazette* also revealed implicit assumptions as regards 'women's work'. For example, Julie Burton, a first year Biochemist, was pictured 'helping-out' in 'Caff': '...where she has been learning the techniques of her future trade'.[83] In 1967 the 'Gazette' staff were involved in learning to type, and within the article the representations available to women were first in the form of the female tutor and second, in the emphasis upon women finding typing easier because of their smaller fingers.[84] In an article entitled 'Little girl at home', the traditional perception of the 'career' women was highlighted in a profile of Gillian Reynolds, programme controller of a local radio station:

> the appearance immediately knocks me off my preconceptional balance, for the new Liverpool radio station's controller is not at all the dour, matronly, sexless administrator with butch hair-do, that I'd expected. Although obviously working under great pressure she manages to retain her vivacity...decidedly one of the new breed of liberated women. But if they were all like her, the ladies could take over tomorrow.[85]

The writer was pleasantly surprised by Gillian's appearance, and noted that if the new 'liberated' women of the 1970s could retain their femininity, whilst engaging in 'masculine' pursuits, then that would be perfectly acceptable.

From the mid-1970s, however, exclusive career advertisements came to an end, plus the proliferation of sexual imagery that had characterised the 1960s, and early 1970s largely disappeared. Pictorially women were represented in a much more positive light. For example, in 1977 Sue Slipman, the NUS's first woman President,

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[82] *Ibid*, 10. 2. 1970, p. 11.
[83] *Ibid*, 23. 6. 1964, p. 5.
[84] *Ibid*, 5. 12. 1967, p. 10.
[85] *Ibid*, 1. 12. 1974, p. 11.

was pictured in a serious pose reminiscent of the presentation of male students throughout the whole post-war period. In 1974 there was the first reference to 'Panto King', and from then on the *Gazette* provided coverage of the yearly Panto King and Queen. In contrast to the previous images of Panto Queen, the female winners were not photographed in seductive poses. The reason for this change in representation of university women could perhaps be explained by an increasing awareness of sexism and issues of equality, as raised by the Women's Liberation Movement, and partially encapsulated within the legislation of the decade, for example, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975. Furthermore, by the late 1970s mixed student flats were more common, and in terms of residential provision provided by the University of Liverpool mixed halls of residence were predominant by the mid-1970s. Men and women studying at the university were finally in a much more integrated environment where the mysteries of the female body were no longer such a mystery.

Contesting the representations

While this chapter has primarily focused upon male representations of university women, this final section will explore the extent to which university women contested the representations of their sex. As has been shown, derogatory written comments characterised the period from 1944 to 1959, and from the 1960s until the early 1970s sexual imagery and exclusively male career adverts proliferated. It is important to emphasise that the editorial board and staff of the *Guild Gazette* between the years 1944 and 1979 were predominantly male. While it is difficult to provide consistent figures with regard to female participation (due to the fact that this information was not always provided) the information available indicates the predominance of men. Furthermore, with the exception of one female editor in 1962,

women upon the editorial board and staff were generally confined to certain roles. Until the early 1960s, presumably the point at which the *Gazette* became free, women were largely engaged in circulating the newspaper. From this point onwards, women editors made an appearance: taking responsibility, for example, for women's fashion pages. It could be suggested that the *Guild Gazette* in this period symbolised the construction of masculinity as much as it did the construction of femininity. The derogatory comments and visual imagery represented men talking to fellow men. It was a discursively male dialogue. In view of the fact that the student press was a largely male-controlled concern, to what extent were male representations of university women challenged?

In the period from 1944 to 1959 the jibes made against university women were constant and generally centred on the issue of university women being unattractive, both physically and in terms of their personalities. The barrage of comments, however, was not uncontested and this period was characterised by bickering between the sexes. The women's responses to the negative representations often differed in approach. First, there were those responses that did not challenge in any way the notion that university women should be judged on the basis of their sexual attractiveness. For example, writing in response to the comment that female freshers were 'vapid, vague and virginal', one female student emphasised: 'We don't mind being called vapid and vague, but - !!'[86] In this instance, whilst the contributor did not reject the notion of being 'vapid' and 'vague', the very idea that she would be virginal implied that she was not sexually attractive and therefore not feminine.

Second (and certainly the most prevalent), were those responses that challenged the premise that university women alone should be judged on the basis of

[86] *Ibid.*, 11. 12. 1954, p. 1.

their attractiveness. In response to the criticism that university women lacked deportment, one woman student wrote:

> Sir, - Might I suggest that before the male members of the University start hurling bricks at the women students, they take a look at their own behaviour and deportment...The women do at least take some pride in their appearance, an example which the men might do well to follow. We certainly have no Beau Brummels around the place. It is a great pity that the arts of surgery and barbering are now separate...otherwise the appearance of many gentlemen would be much improved. Even trouser presses are unknown appliances, perhaps a demonstration of their uses could be arranged. Might I hope to see an improvement in the near future?[87]

The male student, in an article entitled 'I was a teenage gravedigger', who stated: 'Where I worked the women were about as cold, frigid, unresponsive...as any university women' received a selection of letters from enraged female students. The women called upon this particular male to consider the reasons why university women were 'cold', 'frigid' and 'unresponsive'. One contributor asked: 'Have the author and like-minded male undergraduates never felt that the fault may rest with the masculine (?) members of the University.' She continues:

> We had been led to believe that you...were dashing, gallant, fascinating, debonair, virile, spirited, warm, demonstrative, sophisticated, interested and interesting. And what, I ask do we find?[88]

A female dentist elaborated further:

> These males are quite free with their caustic comments on university women, but have they ever stopped to examine themselves and realise that they are not all the gorgeous hunks of male personality and form they imagine themselves to be. Far from it. Present at this University I have never viewed such a collection of variegated drips as congregate in this Guild and University. And, gentleman, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that though you may be in the majority, there is very little choice to be had when one has weeded the sheep from the goats...there are workers, drunks (far in the majority), women haters and of course the wolves! All highly undesirable to a warm hearted, passionate, loving member of the feminine sex. It is little wonder that we women are frigid, frowzy and cadaverous. Men be men, then we women will be warmer to you.[89]

[87] *Ibid.*, 16. 5. 1950, p. 6.
[88] *Ibid.*, 13. 11. 1959, p. 2.
[89] *Ibid.*, 13. 11. 1959, p. 5.

Just as their femininity had been called into question, the masculinity of male students was also queried. Two ladies of University Hall, who emphasised how unimpressed they were with university men, also objected to the stereotypes of the 'tart' versus the 'frump':

> To Mr. Wilkinson, who emphatically states that University women fall into two categories, we beg to render a suggestion – how about taking your feet off your eyes? Is his conception of the human race so narrow that he can believe that individualism is not its prime characteristic?

The two ladies of University Hall went on to remind male students:

> Forget not young man, that there are at least a million other members of your sex on Merseyside; and we are as free and eager as you to find our soulmates outside this University.[90]

In contrast to the above response, which was characterised by the attitude 'you say we are not feminine, but we say you are not masculine', were the much more rare responses that more directly challenged the very concept of what it meant to be a woman. Writing regularly for the *Gazette* in 1950, Jill Maxwell could be regarded as more feminist in her outlook. She encourages women, for example, to consider other career options besides teaching. With regard to Saturday night union dances, she appeals to university women not to view themselves as objects to be picked up when male students felt like doing so. Complaining that male students spent half the evening in the pub, whilst university women stood around assuming the 'I'm-indifferent-to-the-fact-that-no-one-has-asked-me-to-dance-but-I'll-make-you-a-very-nice-partner-if-only-you-will-give-me-a-chance' expression, she asks:

> Girls, why should we stand there patiently waiting until our 'lords and masters' decide they have consumed enough liquor and pub good spirits to allow them to be the life and soul of the festivities. What would happen if we just did not appear at dances until and hour and half after commencement? What kind of wolfs 'I'm-on-the-prowl' expression would they have adopted by the time we arrived? Just think of the way they would avoid us and seek

[90] *Ibid*, 1. 11. 1957, p. 2.

> other partners if we looked lovingly into their heavenly eyes and puffed beery breath up their nostrils...What about it, girls?[91]

In an article in which she discusses the common cold, Jill also makes a sarcastic remark with regard to the fact that women were expected to wear make-up:

> ...nose-blowing results in red noses and no sign at all of any make-up...Judging from the groans which some men may be heard to utter if a girl without make-up inadvertently enters Caf a woman's face without is the most hideous thing in Liverpool.[92]

As shown earlier in the chapter, the derogatory comments made about university women in the 1940s and 1950s were to be replaced by a proliferation of sexual imagery. Throughout the 1960s the way in which university women were visually represented in the *Guild Gazette* was not contested. It was not until the Women's Liberation Movement that the presentation of women as sex objects was directly challenged, and therefore a discourse that confronted such representations was not available to university women. Moreover, it could be argued that university women of the 1960s found the visual images of their sex liberating, rather than repressive. The 1950s have been characterised as a decade of sexual repression. For example, sex as portrayed in British films was a 'grim business', whereby men were 'on the make' and 'nice girls didn't'. Respectability for girls meant 'not doing it'. In contrast, the 1960s have been considered as: 'a time of freedom and experimentation, for the lifting of censorship and the liberalisation of sexual attitudes and taboos.'[93] In a recent series entitled 'My generation', Joan Bakewell described 1960s fashion, and in particular the mini-skirt, as 'liberating'.[94] Writing regularly throughout 1965, Helena Bodington's column provides a good example of the way in which sex had

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[91] *Ibid.*, 9. 11. 1950, p. 5.
[92] *Ibid.*, 23. 11. 1950, p. 5.
[93] ''On these days': a history of the sex survey', broadcast on Radio 4 on the 3rd and 4th February 1998, explored attitudes toward sex in 1950s and 1960s Britain.
[94] 'My generation' was a series broadcast on BBC 1 in June 2000.

become more overt. One particular article encouraged university women to 'work off those 'spare tyres' with your man', and the visual imagery of university women throughout the decade could have been of viewed as part and parcel of this 'sexual liberation'.[95] Sexual imagery, however, could go too far. A report in a 1965 edition of the *Gazette* documented the strong objections raised by university women to Penthouse advertisements being distributed to research students and staff.[96] A report on university women by Frances Donnell in 1966 also belied the pressure university women felt under to have a boyfriend. A second-year maths student emphasised: 'the social stigma of being in on a Saturday night with a brave smile and The Avengers is quite terrible'; whilst a first year biochemist commented:

> In spite of all this jazz about the equality of men and women, University really caters for men, not women. Men can go and get drunk in the bar...all a woman can do is sit at home and bitch about other girls till a man asks her out.[97]

So despite the 1960s being presented as a period of sexual liberation, it would appear that university women were still waiting to be approached by university men. As was discussed earlier in the chapter, in 1970 the Women's Liberation Movement very publicly challenged the representation of women as sex objects, and correspondingly the university Women's Liberation Society also contested this representation. The comments made in the *Gazette*, however, were generally made by men, with only one female contributor entering the debate vis-à-vis the annual Panto Queen ritual. The writer expressed amazement that university women would want to be judged by their looks. She commented, however:

> We cannot blame beauty competition entrants, for they are merely following their conditioning; which starts at birth when one's sex decides one's life style, success and happiness without regard to personal qualities and abilities.

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[95] *Guild Gazette* (The University of Liverpool, 2. 5. 1965), p. 12.
[96] *Ibid.*, 16. 2. 1965, p. 1.
[97] *Ibid.*, 8. 2. 1966, pp. 8-9.

> The role is ever-binding, girls are cast as decorative, mindless and exist only to be attractive to men...beauty competitions seek to promote these ideals, girls as sex objects...this is the continuation of the ideal of woman being at her best, blonde and dumb. Naturally these pre-conditioned roles are fully exploited by the advertising industry. Nude girls grace every product, we must try to identify with or else emulate these always young, slim beautiful girls...This is a powerful drug, a brain washing it is very difficult to escape from.[98]

Against the background and context of Chapters 3 and 4 Part Two of the thesis will discuss the respondents' lives, including their university experience and their postgraduate careers.

[98] *Ibid.*, 30. 11. 1971, p. 6.

Part Three
Life histories

Chapter 5

Entry to the 'golden city': the pre-university lives of women graduates of the University of Liverpool

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The following chapter explores the pre-university life histories of the group of women who responded to the questionnaires. The first section of the chapter provides more quantitative information in order to outline the defining characteristics of the group. Family background, in terms of birthplace, nationality, racial origin, social class, and the extent to which the respondents were first-generation university students will be considered. The respondents' secondary education will also be discussed. The second section of the chapter will examine both the respondents' motivation to enter higher education, and the personal support received in order to do so.

Family and educational background

The civic universities of the nineteenth century were established both as a reaction to the exclusiveness of the older universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and in response to the needs of the newly populous industrial cities. The new institutions rejected the collegiate and residential system, and perceived themselves as primarily local, with strong regional ties. As such, a substantial proportion of students were drawn from that locality. Gibert's research on women at the civic universities between 1880 and 1920 considers the geographic origins of female university students, and demonstrates that local students continued to dominate within this period. In contrast, Gibert notes that it was unlikely that the collegiate institutions would have attracted

primarily local women.[1] In a 1907 publication, entitled *The University of Liverpool: its Present State*, Ramsay Muir noted that the majority of students were local; and Edwards' study of women at the University of Liverpool from 1883 to 1937 supports this case.[2] In terms of the Scottish universities historians Moore and Wakeling reaffirm the locality of university students within the pre-1939 period.[3] For example, women students at the University of Aberdeen between 1894 and 1920 were overwhelmingly local. Over 60 per cent of the arts women matriculating in 1908 were born in the five counties of north-east Scotland, and the figure increased to 71 per cent in 1924. Most of the remainder came from the Highlands or the north of Scotland, with only a very small percentage actually born outside Scotland.[4]

The post-Second World War period was to witness a change in the geographic origins of university students. Following the recommendations of the Anderson report, the introduction of mandatory student grants in 1962, whereby any school-leaver accepted for a university place had the right to living expenses away from home and fees, effectively broke the link between universities and their localities. A further significant development was the introduction in 1961 of a unified admissions procedure, UCCA, which transformed the university structure into a single system of national recruitment.[5] Wakeling found, however, that mobility in

[1] Gibert, J. S., *Women at the English Civic Universities: 1880-1920* (PhD, University of North Carolina, 1988), chapter 4.
[2] See Kelly, T., *For Advancement of Learning: the University of Liverpool 1881-1981* (Liverpool University Press, 1981), 136 and Edwards, L., *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883-1937* (PhD, University of Liverpool, 1999), p. 66. Edwards' consideration of the number of female students living at the parental home during their university years supports the point.
[3] See Moore, L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen University Press, 1991), p. 120 and Wakeling, J., 'University education in twentieth century Scotland, with particular reference to Glasgow University', paper presented at the University of Cambridge, 24/9/99, conference: 'The transformation of an elite? Women and higher education since 1900', p. 3.
[4] Moore, L., *op. cit.*
[5] See Anderson, R. D., *Universities and elites in Britain since 1800* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 17 and Halsey, A. H., *The Decline of Donnish Dominion* (Oxford, 1992), p. 76.

Scotland was less apparent than in Britain, noting that by the mid-1960s under a quarter of British students came from within thirty miles of their chosen university, whilst in Scotland half of all students remained local. Furthermore, there were significant differences in the geographical makeup of different universities. For example, Glasgow became more solidly regional, with a tendency for female students, in contrast to male students, to come from the locality.[6] Information from the *Annual Reports* of the University of Liverpool highlighted an increasing trend towards school-leavers moving further afield to attend university. From the academic year beginning 1947 the Vice-Chancellor's *Report* contained information on students' place of origin. In this year the 'contribution the University makes to the educational services of the area' was emphasised, with 68 per cent of students coming from the counties and boroughs of Lancashire and Cheshire. In terms of male/female percentages the difference was marginal: 68 per cent of men, in comparison to 67 per cent of women came from the local area.[7] In subsequent years information regarding the number of men and women coming from the counties and boroughs of Lancashire and Cheshire was recorded, along with the number of men and women originating from the 'rest of the British Isles'. In the academic year 1954 to 1955 28 per cent of students had come from outside Lancashire and Cheshire; by the academic year 1975 to 1976 the figure had increased steadily to 56 per cent. Despite the increase, however, the university continued to play a significant role in providing 'educational services' to the local region. Rather interestingly, the differences between men and women who had come from the 'rest of the British Isles' notably favoured women students. For example, in the academic year 1962 to

[6] Wakeling, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
[7] *Annual Report for 1947-1948* (University of Liverpool), pp. 21-22.

1963, whilst 46 per cent of men came from outside of Lancashire and Cheshire, 55 per cent of women did so.[8]

In terms of the group of women being studied in this thesis, Table 5. 1 indicates their birthplace.[9] Out of a total of 82 respondents currently living in Merseyside just less than three- quarters of the women (57) were born in the North West

Table 5. 1: Birthplace of respondents

	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	TOTAL
North West	12	10	11	24	**57**
North East	2	0	2	1	**5**
Midlands	0	0	3	3	**6**
South West	0	0	0	1	**1**
South East	0	4	2	3	**9**
Wales	0	0	1	2	**3**
Scotland	0	0	0	0	**0**
Europe	0	0	0	1	**1**
TOTAL	**14**	**14**	**19**	**35**	**82**

[8] See *Annual Report*, archive reference B. 4 until the academic year beginning 1964. After this date see *Report to the Court*. The figures presented in the reports refer to the preceding academic year, and the above discussion has taken this point into account.

[9] The decades refer to the decade in which the respondent graduated from university. In classifying the cities/towns of the respondents' birthplace modern definitions of counties were drawn upon. The English regions were categorised as being comprised of the following counties: North-West - Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumbria; North-East – Durham, Yorkshire; Midlands – Shropshire, Derbyshire,
Staffordshire, Northamptonshire; South-West – Dorest; South-East – Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Kent, London, Surrey, Middlesex, Essex.

(43 of these were actually born on Merseyside). A further nine women were to move to Merseyside prior to university entrance (including the respondent born in Germany). As is shown none of the women came from Scotland, whilst those women who were born in Wales came from the north. In terms of nationality and racial origin all 82 of the respondents are white British.[10] As emphasised in Chapters 1 and 2, an exploration of the biographies of a group of women who were predominantly born in the North West, have studied and currently live in Merseyside, represents a unique group within the history of women in higher education. Questions that arise include: why did these women choose to study in the North West, especially after the introduction of mandatory grants? Furthermore, for those sixteen women currently living in Merseyside who came to study at the University of Liverpool from outside the North West: in what ways did their motivation to study at the University of Liverpool differ from those women born in the North West?

An important aspect of exploring life histories is the consideration of social class. Sara Delamont's *The Nineteenth Century Woman* emphasises the importance of considering class in the history of women's education, stating that sex, class and knowledge have been interrelated in educational debates over the last 150 years. The educational ideology of the pioneers of the women's colleges, Delamont argues, was class-based, concerned to provide a ladylike education equal to men's for upper and middle-class daughters. It was not concerned with or was of little use to working-class women. The pioneers propagated an 'elitist solution to feminist dilemmas'.[11] Historians who have considered the social class origins of women in higher

[10] As has been demonstrated in the introductory chapter, research into women in higher education in the post-Second World War era is limited: historical research into the race and nationality of women students in higher education in Britain is currently non-existent.

[11] Delamont, S., 'The Contradiction in Ladies' Education', in Delamont, S. and Duffin, L., *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World* (Croom Helm, 1978), p. 166.

education pre-1939 show that in contrast to the elite women's colleges, the coeducational institutions of the late nineteenth century drew upon a wider pool of entrants. In considering evidence from the universities of Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol Gibert demonstrates that the daughters of professional and mercantile classes studied alongside those from lower middle-class and working-class backgrounds.[12] In analysing the social class of women at the University of Liverpool in the pre-1939 period Edwards' thesis supports this assertion for the period after 1903.[13] The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool from 1903 to 1919, Sir Alfred Dale, took particular pride in the democratisation of higher education, stating: 'We have got past the shopkeeper and past the clerk to the man who makes thirty shillings or two pounds a week with the work of his hands.'[14] Despite broader social origins, the majority of university students still originated from middle-class backgrounds; and as noted in Chapter 3, this continued to be the case post-Second World War. As Wakeling emphasises, however, it is difficult to generalise. For example, the Robbins Report found in 1955 that students from working-class backgrounds fared best at both the Welsh and civic universities. At the civic universities 34 per cent of male students, in contrast to 24 per cent of female students, had fathers in manual occupations, demonstrating the tendency for women in higher education to come from higher social backgrounds than men.[15]

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[12] Gibert, *op. cit.*, chapter 4.
[13] Edwards, *op. cit.*, chapter 3. Historians Janet Howarth and Mark Curthoys in, 'The Political Economy of Women's Higher Education in late nineteen and early twentieth-century Britain', *Historical Research*, 60 (1987), pp. 217-220, and Lindy Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-123, confirm the different social composition of women attending both the civic universities and the University of Aberdeen. Dyhouse, whose current research is an exploration of the biographies of men and women in higher education pre-1939, highlighted in a keynote paper entitled 'Going to university before 1939: expectations and experiences in relation to class' presented at the History of Education Annual Conference, 3-5/12/99: 'Breaking Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Experience of Education' that whilst researchers emphasise the lack of social mobility in higher education there is often a failure to note that at the provincial universities students were drawn from a wider social base.
[14] Kelly, T., *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[15] Wakeling, J., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Any conclusions drawn in regard to social class are, of course, dependent upon classification; whilst father's occupation is the predominant form of analysis historians use a variety of classifications in order to analyse social class. For the purposes of this research the decision was taken to employ Routh's interpretation of the 1951 Registrar General's classification as a guideline. The analysis of social class based on occupations, along with the analysis of socio-economic groups have formulated, and continue to formulate the mainstay of government classifications.[16] The Registrar General's social classes based on occupation incorporate the five-class scheme, described by the Office of Population of Censuses and Surveys from 1921 (the date of introduction) as an 'ordinal classification of occupations according to their reputed standing within the community.'[17] The classification is far from problematic: time-series comparisons are difficult (for example with every subsequent Census changes have been implemented in the allocation of particular occupations to social classes), and more significantly, it is concerned with an employed population. The retired, students and the unemployed are assigned no social class. For historians of women, as Tinkler emphasises in *Constructing Girlhood*, such a system does not lend itself to the classification of women's work, as women who lived in male-headed households were denied recognition for their work and contribution to the family's standard of living. Furthermore, the heterosexual

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[16] For a discussion of Social Class based on Occupation (SC) and Socio-economic groups (SEG) see Rose, D. and O'Reilly, K., *Constructing Classes: towards a new social classification for the UK* (ESRC/ONS, 1997). This book also considers alternative classifications employed by researchers, for example the Goldthorpe scale, whilst the objective of the book is to provide information in regard to the development of a new government social classification.

[17] Rose, D. and O'Reilly, K., *Ibid.*, p. 2. The five class scheme is as follows:
Class I: Professional, etc., Occupations
Class II: Intermediate Occupations
Class III: Skilled Occupations
Class IV: Partly skilled Occupations
Class V: Unskilled Occupations
See *Census 1951: Classification of Occupations* (H. M. Stationary Office, 1956), p. vii.

couple is 'naturalised', leaving Tinkler to ask: 'How can the experiences of young women be articulated within a classification system constructed around male occupation...especially when they live independent of men, be it a father or a husband?'[18] Despite the problematic nature of the Registrar General's classification Tinkler draws upon Routh's interpretation of the scale, and similarly so too has this thesis. Researchers recognise that there are advantages to be gained; the classification scheme is well established and its wide use permits replication and comparability. In terms of analysing the social class of the respondents to the questionnaires, the decision was taken to employ the Registrar General's scale in order to understand how the respondents' backgrounds would have been approximately classified and perceived at the time of their birth. Drawing upon the occupational categories identified by Routh, and Tinkler's labelling of the social classes, the Registrar General's social classifications in 1951 have been translated as follows[19]:

Social class	**Description**	**Occupational class**
I upper/upper mc:	Higher professional	1A
II middle mc:	Lower professional	1B
	Employers and proprietors	2A
	Managers and administrators	2B
III lower mc:	Clerical workers	3
	Foremen, supervisors, inspectors	4
III upper wc:	Skilled manual	5
IV/V mid-lower wc:	Semi-skilled manual	6

[18] Tinkler, P., *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950* (Taylor and Francis, 1995), pp. 12-13.

[19] Routh, G., *Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906 – 1960* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 155-157 and Tinkler, *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12. According to Routh's guidelines a professional worker allocated in the Census to social class I goes to occupational class 1A; one in social class II goes to occupational class 1B. All employers and proprietors (defined as a self-employed person whose employment requires the use of sufficient capital to make entry to employment difficult e.g. a shopkeeper) have been placed in occupational class 2A, except those following one of the professions of occupational class 1A or 1B to which *all* professionals, of whatever status, have been allocated. Likewise, all managers and administrators go to occupational class 2B, all clerical workers to class 3, all foremen and supervisors to class 4. Manual workers in social class III go to occupational class 5, those in social class IV to occupational class 6, those in social class V go to occupational class 7. Routh does introduce, however, some exceptions to the rules and these are indicated within the text.

Unskilled manual	7

mc = middle-class wc = working-class

Table 5. 2 shows the social class of the respondents at birth.[20] As is apparent just under two-thirds (52) of the women were classified as originating from middle-class backgrounds. It is important, however, to acknowledge that this single label disguises and conceals a wide range of status, for the middle classes do not represent a homogenous group. The division of the middle classes into upper middle class, middle middle class, and lower middle class serves to highlight the different strata. The diversity of the middle class is emphasised by Hamilton in an oral history of women graduates of the Scottish universities pre-1939. In assessing the impact of the different strata upon life experiences Hamilton discovered that for women of the upper middle-classes adaptation to a university education was an easier process than for those women from the lower middle classes.[21] In terms of this group of graduate women the middle middle classes are predominant, with those from lower middle class backgrounds forming the next dominant group. Twenty-six of the respondents were classified as originating from working-class backgrounds; a third of the group represented the mid-lower classification of that grouping. The category 'other' refers to those fathers for whom classification was either not applicable, or in one instance not possible.[22]

[20] The decades refer to the decade in which the respondent graduated. For a complete breakdown of the classification process please see Appendix 4.
[21] Hamilton, S., 'Interviewing the Middle Class: Women Graduates of the Scottish Universities c. 1900-1935', *Oral History*, 10 (1982), pp. 58-67.
[22] Record 24: father unemployed; record 47: father deceased; record 49: father unknown, record 51: unreadable.

Table 5. 2 Social classification of respondents (based on father's occupation)

	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	TOTAL
Upper/Upper middle class	1	1	2	4	**7**
Middle middle class	8	4	5	9	**26**
Lower middle class	3	5	6	4	**18**
Upper working class	2	2	3	10	**17**
Mid – lower working class	0	1	2	6	**9**
Other	0	1	1	2	**4**
TOTAL	**14**	**14**	**19**	**35**	**82**

In terms of the respondents' perception of their social class at birth the majority related to general middle-class, working-class labels. Rather interestingly, those who were somewhat more specific about their social class background came from the middle class, and sought to differentiate their position within that general label making reference to upper/lower middle-class status. The working classes were identified as a much more homogenous group, and only two respondents made reference to the fine line between upper working class and lower middle class.[23] A substantial proportion of the group were in broad agreement with the classification imposed. Nineteen of the women, however, would perhaps disagree, documenting their own understanding of their social class at birth as either higher or lower. This further highlights the problematic nature of classification which, as Dyhouse

[23] Only four of the respondents referred to their social class in an alternative manner: 'educated poor', 'professional', 'socio-economic group B', and 'fairly poor intelligentsia'. Two of the women did not answer this question, whilst two did not know how to describe their social class.

highlighted in a recent conference paper, is a subjective process on both the part of the researcher and the respondent.[24]

Having considered the social class of the group based upon father's occupation, as a historian of women it is equally important to explore the mother's occupation. At the time of the respondents' birth, over two-thirds (59) of mothers were described as housewives. The respondents had therefore largely come from backgrounds in which their mothers had adopted a traditional role with an emphasis upon the primacy of domesticity. Out of the 23 mothers who were in paid employment outside the home, proportionately a larger number were noted as such by respondents who graduated in the 1970s. This was reflective of the post-Second War trend, discussed in Chapter 3, towards married women increasingly taking part in the labour market. Out of the fourteen women who graduated in the 1940s one mother was in paid employment; out of the fourteen women who graduated in the 1950s two mothers were in employment; out of the nineteen women who graduated in the 1960s five mothers were in paid employment; and out of the thirty-five women who graduated in the 1970s fourteen were in paid employment. The occupations listed were as follows: clerk/secretary (5); nurse (4); involvement in family business (3); teacher (3); factory worker (3); shop assistant (2); doctor (1); hairdresser (1); manager (1). Mothers employed within the medical and teaching profession, or those involved in a family business generally originated from middle-class backgrounds, based on the classification of their husbands' occupations. Conversely, those mothers employed as secretaries, factory workers, shop assistants or hairdressers had husbands in occupations classified as working class. The father of one respondent who described her mother as a manager of a building supplier was classified as upper

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[24] Dyhouse, C. (1999), *op. cit.*

working class. The respondent perceived her own social class as 'professional', demonstrating the problematic nature of a classification scheme that does not incorporate a woman's contribution to the household standard of living. Following the birth of their daughters those women who had already been in employment continued, with only two of the mothers actually giving up work permanently to remain in the home, whilst eleven mothers entered the labour force for the first time since their marriage. 'Housewife', however, still accounted for the occupation of 50 of the respondents' mothers.

A large majority of the group were first-generation university students; out of 82 respondents 57 were categorised as such.[25] The decades within which the respondents graduated from university did not have an impact upon this trend. For example, it was not the case that there was a larger proportion of first-generation university women who graduated in the 1970s, in contrast to those women who graduated in the 1940s.[26] In terms of social class origin not one of the seven respondents classified as originating from an upper/upper-middle- class background was a first-generation university student; whilst generally those classified as coming from a lower-middle-class, or working-class background were. Of the 25 respondents who were not first-generation university students nineteen were second-generation, with either their mother or father, or aunt or uncle having experienced higher education.[27] Those with grandparents or great grandparents who had attended

[25] First-generation was defined as a respondent who was one of the first family members to enter higher education (if a brother or sister had entered higher education earlier the respondent was still classified as first- generation).

[26] Out of the fourteen respondents who graduated in the 1940s ten of the women were first generation university students, and out of the thirty-five whom graduated in the 1970s twenty-six were first generation university women.

[27] Higher education was defined as a university education. Three of the respondents' fathers studied for extra-mural degrees, whilst one father attended university and did not complete his degree. The daughters were still classified as second-generation university students, however, for they had not come from a family background in which the experience of higher education was non-existent.

university were in a very small minority. In general it was the men of the family who constituted the first family member to have entered higher education; and whilst thirteen fathers had experienced higher education, only six of the respondents' mothers had done so.[28] Of those women who had brothers and sisters (23 of the respondents were only children) it was not always the case that their siblings also entered higher education, and in the case of 22 of the respondents they had been the only child to undertake a degree. The contrast between subjects studied by brothers and sisters was notable, in that brothers tended to undertake more professional-based degrees such as medicine and law, and the traditional 'masculine' subjects such as engineering and chemistry. In terms of institutions attended Oxford and Cambridge did not play a significant part; only three brothers attended, whilst not one sister did so.

Having considered family background the chapter will now consider the respondents' pre-university educational background. The types of institutions attended by the respondents post-compulsory school leaving age were as follows: state maintained grammar/high (45); state maintained convent/grammar (13); independent/Girls' Public Day School Trust (8); independent boarding (3); further education college (4); comprehensive (3); independent convent (2); technical college (1). Three of the respondents did not undertake any form of post-16 education, in terms of higher school certificate/A level examinations. They were educated at state-maintained grammar/high schools until the compulsory school-leaving age; one woman entered the Architecture Department a year later on the basis of her school certificate, another studied for a certificate of social science at the age of 33 prior to

[28] The universities at which the respondents' mothers studied were as follows: Edinburgh, Liverpool, Oxford and Toronto, USA. Similarly only one of the respondents' fathers studied at Oxford.

university admission, whilst the final respondent entered art school immediately, then teacher training college fifteen years later. In terms of the extent to which the women had attended single-sex institutions, whilst in twelve cases it was not clear 56 had attended all-girls schools, while the remaining 14 had studied in coeducational environments. As noted in Chapter 3, following the 1944 Education Act fees were abolished in state maintained schools from 1947 onwards; for those respondents who were at school prior to this date, however, parents were liable for the costs, or alternatively under the terms of the 1902 Education Act local authority schools were obliged to provide assisted places. For the sixteen women who were at school prior to the introduction of free secondary education, eight parents paid school fees, six of the women were awarded scholarships, one family combined both, whilst one woman received a Ministry of Education teaching bursary (a scholarship dependent upon a 'pledge' to teach). Following 1947 the only parents liable to pay fees were those with daughters attending independent institutions, at which it was possible to receive an assisted place. The respondents generally continued their education at the same institution at which their compulsory education had been undertaken, with only a few exceptions. Three women entered further education colleges to study for A levels in later life, one woman commenting that the reason she left aged fifteen was that her convent grammar school had only encouraged girls to study 'traditional' subjects such as history and English at university. Similarly, two women noted that they had left their independent and convent schools respectively for technical college and a different convent school, because their previous schools had not offered science A levels.[29] In terms of subjects studied, at either higher school certificate or A level

[29] Please see Appendix 5 for an individual breakdown of the respondents' post-16 education.

(introduced in the 1950s), out of the 55 women who stated their subjects 31 took arts, 19 took science, and five studied a combination of subjects.[30]

The women overwhelmingly felt they had been encouraged to apply to university by their schools. The independent/GPDST schools were generally noted for their strong academic tradition, and the women who attended those schools were very definite in regard to the encouragement they had received - with the exception of one case. State-maintained grammar schools Notre Dame, Waterloo Park and Calder High were also schools specifically highlighted as those which had 'very much so' supported university applications. One woman noted that she had been urged by Calder High School in the 1940s to spend a further year at school to apply for Oxford. Her parents, however, did not wish this, and consequently the school lost interest and gave little further guidance. A pupil of the same school in the 1970s emphasised the honour boards that celebrated pupils' academic success, and lamented their removal to 'suit comprehensivisation'. Some of the women noted that support and encouragement were available when a pupil expressed the desire to go on to higher education, whilst others stressed that it was ultimately the 'brightest' who were nurtured. The chosen subject to be studied at university was a particular point of interest. As a girl at grammar school in the mid-1960s Ann had felt encouraged to apply to university, but not for her chosen subject - veterinary science. The school had wanted Ann to study for a music degree, but in holding firm to her original choice she became the first pupil to apply for that subject. The respondent, discussed above, who had felt restricted by her convent grammar school's narrow vision of what a girl could study at university in the 1970s was not alone. Fellow

[30] The subjects documented by the respondents were categorised as follows: Arts - English, history, geography, Latin, art, music, religious studies, French, German, Spanish, and general studies; Sciences – maths, physics, chemistry, biology, botany, zoology, geology.

convent girls emphasised the encouragement to study arts degrees and become teachers. One respondent, Mary, at convent grammar school in the 1960s, who constituted part of the very small minority who had not felt encouraged to apply to university, noted: 'Clever girls in Barrow went into the drawing offices of the shipyard. The very adventurous went to Catholic Training College!'[31] While most of the women had felt personally encouraged to apply to university what was striking, irrespective of the years in which the women were at school, was first, the emphasis upon sixth forms being substantially smaller than one might expect today; and second, the predominance of teacher-training college, with nursing a close second, as the most favoured option for girls, rather than a university education. Rather like Mary, Sheila, at an independent school in the 1960s, had 'not directly' felt encouraged to apply to university:

> I believe pupils were put into three groups by staff and headmistress, i.e. 1) Secretarial/Civil Service 2) Nursing/Teacher-Training College – the vast majority 3) University – the minority. Recommendations were made after 'O' level results. We did have career talks, but it seemed to be qualifications that were the most important.[32]

The women referred to girls with 'good enough' A levels, for whom a university education in the present day would be an obvious choice; but who, from the 1940s through to the 1970s, opted for teacher-training college. In contrast to male pupils, one woman at a comprehensive school in the 1970s stressed the tendency for girls to favour teacher-training college. At grammar school in the 1950s Anne highlights the interplay of social class (Anne's background was classified as upper working-class) and university generation upon educational expectations for a girl:

> Girls who would have been well suited to higher education left school at 16 because it was still felt 'unnecessary' to educate a girl (at least in the class to

[31] Questionnaire, record 45.
[32] *Ibid.*, record 44.

> which I belonged) as they were 'going to get married anyway'. Also, there were plenty of jobs available locally, so most girls left to do secretarial training and to 'start earning'. Our mothers probably had not gone out to work so it was expected we should stop working on starting a family. Also, we were first-generation grammar school girls, and for most parents that was a real 'step up the ladder' and quite as far as any girl might be expected to go.[33]

So, whilst Anne noted the encouragement from her school, she felt that in general parental attitudes were less than favourable for girls from working-class families who had no knowledge of higher education.

Motivation and support

Based upon evidence from the women's colleges of Oxford in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Howarth and Curthoys suggest that in terms of motivation to enter higher education a 'dual market' existed. On the one hand there was the needy career student, whose prospects of marriage were low, and who wanted a university education to qualify for professional employment. For those students from wealthier backgrounds it was less clear what higher education had to offer in relation to life chances. Such women had no specific vocational objectives, and a university education may have in fact damaged their prospects of securing a 'good' marriage.[34] Writing of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Dyhouse confirms the point that attendance at university lectures had been characterised by the presence of a large number of ladies of leisure who were in pursuit of a general cultural education. By 1914, however, the great majority of women who attended university outside the women's colleges of Oxford and Cambridge did so in the hope of improving their opportunities of earning a living either before marriage or in the event of not

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[33] *Ibid.*, record 41.
[34] Howarth, J. and Curthoys, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231.

marrying at all.[35] Dyhouse's current research, which has employed the use of questionnaires, demonstrates that a university education was desired by women pre-1939 for vocational aspirations, and as a means of 'escape' from both poverty and unemployment.[36] For the group of respondents who were asked for this research: 'What factors or forces motivated you to apply to university?', whilst the women often gave a combination of reasons, occupational motivation was not the predominant incentive. The women who did make reference to future careers were largely very specific about the vocation they wished to enter, and a university education was the means by which to achieve this goal. To become a doctor, dentist, architect or vet, higher education was an obvious prerequisite; teaching, however, was the most popular end goal. Francis, who married at the age of eighteen and gave up the opportunity to enter teacher-training college in the 1950s did not begin the process to enter her chosen vocation until some years later. Having encountered some painful experiences she entered the university in the 1970s as a mature student:

> I resigned from my first career in local government when I had a child. I then had several miscarriages, and when my child was five years old I decided to follow my wishes from my teenage years and qualify for a teaching career.[37]

In contrast to those women who had a specific occupation in mind were those who made general reference to undertaking a university education in order to secure 'good job' prospects. The women were from working-class backgrounds, and education was perceived as a form of social and economic mobility. One woman classified as originating from a mid-lower working-class background, whose father was a night watchman and who either died or left the respondent and her mother, emphasised:

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[35] Dyhouse, C., *No distinction of sex? Women in British universities 1870-1939* (UCL press, 1995), pp. 23-24.
[36] Dyhouse, C. (1999 conference paper), *op. cit.*
[37] Questionnaire, record 55.

'The desire to improve living for myself and my mother.'[38] In contrast, those women who had definite occupational goals (predominantly teaching until the 1960s) came from middle-class backgrounds. It was not until the 1970s that two of the women from working-class backgrounds emphasised the specific aspiration to become an architect and a dentist respectively, rather than the general reference to entering university with a view to securing a 'good job'.

Parental motivation was cited most often as the impetus to a university application, and it was primarily women from middle-class backgrounds who were motivated by their parents to enter higher education. Parental influence became less significant from the 1960s, possibly due to the fact that with the introduction of mandatory grants women could now enter university 'under their own steam' without requiring the parental impetus. Prior to the introduction of mandatory maintenance grants the cost of a university education generally required parental input, and therefore the motivation to enter higher education was intrinsically linked to parental attitudes. The women from second or third generation university families who highlighted parental motivation wrote in terms of the expectation and family heritage that had gone before them. Maria, whose grandfather and father had studied medicine, and who entered university in the 1940s, noted: 'Hard work, ambition, fulfilment of talents were all part of my family ethos.'[39] Another respondent who studied at the university in the 1970s reflected:

> I think it was expected that I should go to university. My father (although having a difficult childhood in a foster home) graduated from University College at Nottingham just prior to World War Two. My brother won a scholarship to Oxford at age seventeen.[40]

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[38] *Ibid.*, record 33.
[39] *Ibid.*, record 9.
[40] *Ibid.*, record 50.

University attendance by older brothers and sisters was a motivation to the women, and in contrast to the those women who felt that they were 'expected' to go to university, whether this was interpreted as a positive or negative influence, general references to parental encouragement were emphasised. Beverley's parents had encouraged her to go to university in the 1950s to: 'seek a 'safe' career. Teaching seemed to meet this criteria (sic) and I did not fancy training college'.[41] Moreover, for those women whose parents had not experienced higher education the sense that they wanted their daughters to achieve what they themselves had not been able to, and the importance of education in its own right, were stressed. Ann, mentioned earlier, who applied for veterinary science wrote:

> My parents were very keen for all of us to go, as they had not had the opportunity. My mother is especially brilliant and could not continue her education before matriculation. My father was clever especially with figures, but was dyslexic and his education was limited. They both encouraged me and although I could have gone out to work this was never an option.[42]

It was the father's encouragement and enthusiasm for education that was prominent, particularly for those women at university in the 1940s. Joyce wrote of her father: 'He treated both daughters as if they were sons and wanted for us the education he had been denied', demonstrating a rather forward-thinking attitude towards girls' higher education at a time that often questioned its relevance.[43] While Janice's father was eager for her to enter university in the 1970s: 'Father in particular was very keen for me to pursue a good career. "The world's your oyster" he said (lied?).'[44] One father's encouragement, on reflection, was interpreted negatively as 'pressure':

> I had places to do nursing e.g. St. Thomas Hospital, London, and might have done this, but my father was totally against my nursing. Sometimes I feel that

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[41] *Ibid*, record 20.
[42] *Ibid*, record 41.
[43] *Ibid*, record 20.
[44] *Ibid*, record 71.

> I struggled with academic work and might have preferred nursing - who knows?[45]

Only two of the women indicated that their mothers had been the prominent parental motivation; and in contrast to the fathers, who were all occupied in middle-class occupations, the mothers noted were from upper working-class backgrounds (based on husbands' occupation). This was perhaps reflective of the fact that for working-class fathers the 'psychology of motivation traditionally favoured boys.'[46]

An interest in a specific subject, or a general desire to continue their education formed the second most cited motivational incentive. From a 'fascination with physics', through to a love of English literature which: 'gave meaning and significance to life in a way nothing else did', some of the women indicated the intrinsic passion for higher education.[47] Pamela, who studied at the university in the 1950s, wrote that she had wanted to go to university since the age of ten, whilst for those women who entered university as mature students self-motivation was a key aspect.[48] Employed in a 'well paid' administrative job in the 1960s, but 'hungry for education' Barbara left her 'unfulfilling' career to enter university; while another woman fulfilled her 'desire to learn' in the 1970s at a time in her life when she had the 'freedom' to do so (when her children were at school).[49] As noted earlier in the chapter, the majority of the women had felt encouraged by their school and teachers to enter university, and for some this had actually constituted their motivation to apply for higher education. In a study of women at the Scottish Universities pre-1939 Hamilton discovered through the use of oral history that the motivation of first-

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[45] *Ibid.*, record 38.
[46] R. D. Anderson's study of Scottish university students in the early twentieth century emphasised that there were fewer women from the working class than men, because psychologically boys were encouraged more so than girls. Discussed in Dyhouse, C. (1995), *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[47] Questionnaire, record 82.
[48] *Ibid.*, record 16.
[49] *Ibid.*, records 46 and 68.

generation entrants often stemmed from their schooling.[50] Similarly, this was the case for those women who emphasised the importance of their school and teachers in the decision to apply to university. At a GPDST school in the 1950s Jean emphasised the important part her science teacher played, emphasising the role that chance could take:

> My science teacher said at a parents' evening "What a pity she's not going to university". My parents hadn't realised I was clever enough, so this set the wheels in motion.[51]

In several instances teachers actually dissuaded the women from their original expectation of entering nursing or teacher-training college. For one woman at grammar school in the 1960s:

> A biology mistress, very perceptively, suggested that I might like to consider psychology (an odd choice in those days). Prior to this I had always assumed I would do Nursing.[52]

Likewise Josette at comprehensive noted: 'Teachers' expectations chiefly. My parents were keen too, but the idea first came from school. My sights were initially set on teacher-training college.'[53]

For a small number of the women a university education seemed to be the natural progression, and they had simply assumed that they would go on to higher education. Finally, several women referred to other motivational explanations for applying to university. Four of the women noted that the decision was occupation based, but not in the proactive sense as previously discussed. An awareness of knowing what they did <u>not</u> want to do, and a sense of putting off entering

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[50] Hamilton, S., *Women and the Scottish Universities c. 1869-1939: a social history* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 294-295.
[51] Questionnaire, record 18.
[52] *Ibid.*, record 58.
[53] *Ibid.*, record 74.

employment were the inspiration to enter university. At Liverpool in the 1950s Gillian wrote:

> I went for job interviews at offices like Alfred Holt-but didn't like it one bit. Several boys I knew were applying to Liverpool, and though I didn't like school much university seemed a lot better than Alfred Holt.[54]

Maria, whose family ethos was discussed earlier in the chapter, also felt motivated because of 'social aspirations': the desire to retain the high family social status which her father as a general practitioner bestowed upon the family. For one woman who had initially applied to teacher-training college, higher A level grades superior to those which anyone had anticipated provided the impetus to go to university, whilst the chance to continue her education that had been interrupted because of parental illness was the stimulus to another. Further reasons documented were the fear of regret if one did not attend, an application based on the premise of being the very first in the family to be able to go, the desire to get away from an area (although not necessarily home), and the aspiration to triumph over an 11+ failure.

The majority of the women felt that their families had supported their decision to enter university, and as demonstrated for many parents had been the motivational inspiration. Friends did not generally appear to play a significant role in this life decision. In one instance they actually derided the notion of a university education for women. Joyce, who entered the university in 1945, noted: 'Friends were in the main derisive, and asked what benefit a varsity degree would be for preparation for a married life spent changing nappies or at the kitchen sink.'[55] Judith, who studied for her degree in the 1950s, wrote: 'Friends were indifferent-Penrith in 1955 was not a hotbed of intellectual ambition.'[56] It was parents, rather than extended

[54] *Ibid.*, record 19.
[55] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[56] *Ibid.*, record 32.

family, who formed the mainstay of support. Hamilton emphasises that for those women entering the Scottish universities pre-1939 there was no outright parental opposition, reflective of the liberal and enlightened views which had allowed their daughters to go to university in the first place. These parents did not see their daughters' place as ultimately in the home, or as going out to work at the soonest possible moment.[57] In a study of women at the University of Liverpool Edwards notes that by 1903 parents were beginning to accept the prospect of their daughters entering university, and by the 1920s expected them to do so.[58] Although outright opposition may have been absent, Hamilton shows that the balance of support between parents varied, whilst Edwards identified three distinct types. First, there were those parents who simply supported their daughter; second, were the 'domineering mothers who were eager to interfere'; and finally, there were the fathers who attempted to re-live their lives through their daughters. While the great majority of the women felt that their families had definitely supported their university application, there was a small minority who qualified this support. Three women at university during the 1970s demonstrated this point. One respondent noted: 'My father would have preferred me to attend teacher-training college rather than university, but was still very supportive.'[59] While one woman's parents were a little dubious, Megan's were: 'fairly supportive, although no experience of university. No real encouragement given, but they were not opposed to me going as long as they did not have to pay.'[60] As Hamilton has emphasised, the balance of support between parents could vary. For Gillian and Elizabeth, at university in the

[57] Hamilton, S. (1987), *op. cit.*, 295-296.
[58] Edwards, L., *op. cit.*, p. 71.
[59] Questionnaire, record 48.
[60] *Ibid*, record 69.

1950s and 1970s respectively, their mothers frowned upon their higher education. Gillian wrote:

> Father was supportive. Mother thought it was a bad idea. She was already concerned I was 'still at school', when her friends had children who had 'learned enough to leave and get a proper job.' My being at school at sixteen and seventeen was something she felt a bit a ashamed of.[61]

Elizabeth noted: 'My father was very pleased I was going to any university - my mother thought education was wasted on girls.'[62] Conversely, for Gillian and Barbara, at university in the 1960s, their fathers were not supportive. As a mature student, Barbara noted her husband's support, and equally emphasised her father's hostility.[63] Rather interestingly, whilst it was fathers' encouragement and enthusiasm for education which was highlighted as prominent in terms of the motivation to enter higher education, on being asked if there was anyone particularly supportive, mothers in this instance were more cited. In contrast to Gillian and Elizabeth, Lucy, who studied at the university in the 1940s and whose father died when she was twelve years old, wrote: 'My mother in particular was prepared to spend her last penny to make sure I completed my education.'[64] The respondent mentioned earlier in the chapter who achieved higher A level results than expected, and who entered university in the 1950s emphasised her thanks to her mother who gave her 'no peace' until she contacted Liverpool: 'I am grateful to her for her foresight and persistence.'[65] One woman, who on entering technical college was prompted to consider her career expectations, and who chose to study veterinary science in the 1960s, wrote: 'Many thought I had bitten off more than I could chew, except my

[61] *Ibid.*, record 19.
[62] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[63] *Ibid.*, records 34 and 46.
[64] *Ibid.*, record 14.
[65] *Ibid.*, record 27.

mother who never failed to have faith and was very keen on women having education 'qualifications to fall back on.''[66]

The women chose to study at the University of Liverpool for a variety of reasons, and whilst some gave a combination of explanations locality was the most prominent. As noted earlier in the chapter, 52 of the women were actually living in Merseyside prior to university entrance, and half of the respondents highlighted locality, for a variety of reasons, as the decisive factor. For those women who entered university during the war, or shortly after, wartime conditions mitigated against them leaving home. Mary commented:

> It was in easy travelling distance of home and during the war my parents would not have liked me to have left home - nor was it usual to go to a university away from home when a course was available nearby.[67]

The notion of attending the local university was certainly prevalent in the late 1940s: thirteen out the fourteen women who entered the university in this period highlighted three reasons for this trend. First, there were wartime conditions as already noted, and second, there were parental considerations. Joyce and Audrey wrote of their respective parents: 'Father was a Victorian and wanted me to stay at home, in his control'; 'My mother (and most mothers of my time) would not even consider me going away from home'.[68] Third, there was the expense to consider. As discussed earlier in the chapter and in Chapter 3, mandatory grants were not introduced until 1962, serving to retain the strong links between the provincial universities and their localities. The question of expense was decisive for both working and middle-class families. Maureen, who entered the university in the 1940s, stated:

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[66] *Ibid.*, record 40.
[67] *Ibid.*, record 13.
[68] *Ibid.*, records 10 and 11.

> I would have had to win a scholarship to be able to study elsewhere. Grants were obtainable for those willing to teach for two years, but I was not willing to make such a commitment.[69]

Similarly, Lucy emphasised the cost of a university education, and also highlighted further parental considerations other than simply being disallowed to leave the family home:

> After my father's death we were very poor. When I was fifteen my mother had had a heart attack and was never well again. She supported us by taking paying guests. I had much of the running of the house to do. It was Liverpool or nothing.[70]

From the 1950s onwards parental/family considerations and expense continued to be significant factors in the decision to attend the local university. Only three women noted, however, that their parents were not keen for them to move away, possibly reflecting an increasing acceptance of women attending university further afield. Margaret, at university in the 1960s, wrote: 'My mother wanted me to stay at home as she was concerned for my welfare and morals and for her own security, so I chose Liverpool.'[71] As Lucy highlighted above, it was more a case of family obligation, which was a decisive factor. Several women made reference to widowed or sick mothers who needed caring for, and for those women who entered the university as mature students in the 1970s their own family obligations in terms of a husband and children were the reason for staying locally. In regard to expense the women still continued to mention this factor, especially in the 1950s. After the introduction of mandatory grants it was women from middle-class backgrounds who highlighted this issue. Maintenance grants were subject to a parental means test, and as such, for middle-class families who were required to contribute to the cost of higher education,

[69] *Ibid*, record 4.
[70] *Ibid*, record 14.
[71] *Ibid*, record 38.

to have their daughters living at home was a means by which to reduce the expense. Several women, on a more proactive level, stated that they simply did not want to leave home. For example, Olwen noted she did not wish to study at any other university because she was happy at home, whilst two other women emphasised that they had not wanted to leave their boyfriends (who eventually became their husbands).[72]

The second most cited reason for studying at the University of Liverpool was a combination of the reputation of the institution/departments, and the attraction of courses available. General comments in regard to Liverpool having a 'good' reputation were made, although more frequently the women made reference to specific departments and courses. Architecture, veterinary science, dentistry, physics, English, geography, and Hispanic/Latin American studies were particularly noted as 'well commended'. For the women who studied veterinary science Liverpool was one of a minority of universities that offered this subject, and for those women who studied dentistry in the 1970s the new school building (opened in 1970), providing the latest equipment, was an attractive incentive. The reputation of the university became an increasingly important justification for choosing Liverpool. For example, whilst only two women who studied at the university in the 1950s emphasised this factor, eighteen of the women studying during the 1970s did so. Following the Robbins Report and the subsequent expansion of higher education, combined with the introduction of mandatory grants, students were faced with more options and choice, and therefore the attractiveness of the university was central. Furthermore, for those women who entered the university from outside of the North West this factor was an important consideration. To simply be accepted by the university was

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[72] *Ibid.*, record 48.

another issue raised, and one noted, once again, more so by those women who originated from outside the North West. Two women wrote that their place at Liverpool was dependent on the withdrawal of all other applications, whilst for Gillian, mentioned earlier, a 'curious' professor took a 'chance':

> At sixteen I went for my interview with a letter from the Headmistress saying I 'was not yet ready for university'. This interested the Prof and he offered me a place on condition of two grade A, A levels. A surprise decision I thought.[73]

Further explanations for choosing to study at the University of Liverpool, primarily highlighted by those women from outside the North West, were that they had links to either the city or the university. For example, they knew people in the area, or had friends or relatives who had studied at Liverpool. Alternatively they were simply attracted to the city itself: 'I suspect romantic notions about Merseyside had an influence. It was 1970 when I applied!'[74] Only two of the women from outside the North West documented that they chose Liverpool University to gain their independence away from home; but for even Megan and Sue this desire was qualified by noting that Liverpool was far enough away from home without being too far. For Mary, at the university in the 1950s, Liverpool was chosen:

> ...by my mother who thought Liverpool was a catholic area – this would be an antidote to my course (social science) which was considered to have anti-religious tendencies. Not many universities offered social science, and I had not got my first choice which was nearer home.[75]

In terms of Liverpool being the respondents' first choice out of the 73 women who specified whether it was or not, 56 said that it was. As already discussed, however, for a proportion of the women it was the only option, and they did not in fact have any real choice.

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[73] *Ibid*, record 19.
[74] *Ibid*, record 71.
[75] *Ibid*, record 28.

This chapter has shown that the group of respondents were predominantly first-generation university students who had originated from middle-class backgrounds. The women had largely come from family environments which had been conducive to undertaking a higher education: their families had not lacked 'cultural capital'.[76] The majority of the women had attended grammar schools, described by Carolyn Steedman as a 'golden city', and the respondents had overwhelmingly felt encouraged by their schools to apply to university.[77] Selected as academically more able, the group of respondents were to form an academic elite on two levels. First, in contrast to the majority of girls in this period, the women were provided with a more academic education at secondary school level, and second, in comparison to their academic equals, they did not work towards the traditional options presented to the grammar school girl, namely teacher training, nursing and secretarial college, even though this proved to be their ultimate destiny.

Having considered the pre-university background of the women the thesis will now consider in Chapters 6 and 7 the respondents' university experience. While Chapter 6 is concerned with the academic side of this experience, chapter 7 explores the residential and social side of university life.

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[76] Olive Banks in 'Some Reflections on Gender, Sociology and Women's History', *Women's History Review*, 8 (1999), pp. 401-402, noted that her solidly working-class background lacked those aspects of 'cultural capital' which are emphasised as vitally important for academic success. For example, her parents read little, had no interest, for example, in politics, and did not give her any academic encouragement.

[77] Steedman, C., 'Landscape for a Good Woman', in Heron, L. (ed.), *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties* (Virago, 1985), p.119.

Chapter 6

'What shall I study?': the academic lives of women graduates of the University of Liverpool

Having considered the pre-university background of the group of respondents in Chapter 5, the following chapter is concerned to discuss their academic lives. The first section of the chapter will consider the degrees undertaken by the women at undergraduate level, and in order to provide historical context discuss the university registration statistics for full-time students. The second section will explore how the respondents felt they were treated on an academic level by male staff and students in a coeducational environment, whilst the final section of the chapter will discuss the respondents' perception of female academics.

The student population of the University of Liverpool 1944 to 1979

As highlighted throughout the thesis the post-Second World War era was to witness an expansion of the university sector. Table 6.1 outlines the male and female registration statistics for full-time students at the University of Liverpool between the years 1944 to 1979. With the exception of the final year of the war, in which women comprised 38 per cent of the total number of full-time students, women did not form over a quarter of students until the 1960s. In considering the history of women at Glasgow University, Wakeling emphasises that the numbers of both men and women rose from 1960, due to a combination of the post-war baby boom reaching university age and the trend for more pupils to remain at school longer.

Table 6. 1: Registration statistics for full-time students at the University of Liverpool[1]

	Number: male students	Percentage: male students	Number: female students	Percentage: female students	Total
1944	1332	62%	825	38%	2157
1949	2594	79%	703	21%	3297
1954	2188	75%	731	25%	2919
1959	2926	76%	920	24%	3846
1964	3926	74%	1374	26%	5300
1969	4741	72%	1876	28%	6617
1974	4715	68%	2200	32%	6915
1979	4912	67%	2473	33%	7385

Most importantly, this expansion could not have occurred without being underpinned by the Robbins Report of 1963. Furthermore, Wakeling notes that the rise in the number of women at the University of Glasgow was particularly impressive, and far outstripped the growth of male students.[2] Such conclusions are equally applicable to the University of Liverpool. For example, whilst in a ten-period from 1949 to 1959 the number of full-time students increased by 17 per cent, from 1964 to 1974 the increase was thirty per cent. In examining the registration statistics from 1965 to 1979 the percentage of women in the university had grown by 80 per cent, whilst the

[1] The university registration statistics are contained within the *Annual Reports*, and are inclusive of both undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments. Five-year periods were chosen to give an indication of the trend of growth.
[2] Wakeling, J., paper entitled 'University education in twentieth century Scotland, with particular reference to the Glasgow University' presented at the University of Cambridge, 24/9/98, conference entitled: 'The transformation of an elite? Women and higher education since 1900', p. 2.

percentage of men had increased by only 25 percent. Despite this growth, however, women at the University of Liverpool in 1980 still represented only one third of the total student body.

Historians who have considered the academic paths of women in the coeducational institutions pre-1939, demonstrate that the majority of women followed 'traditional' academic patterns, namely arts degrees. In an analysis of course selections made by women at the civic universities of Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester, Gibert asserts:

> ... that even in an atmosphere of relative academic freedom women were still significantly dominated by the dictates of their society. While free to choose any curriculum in the new universities, they habitually eschewed the practical and professional programs in which civic universities specialised in favour of more traditional, more general, and less openly vocational degree courses.[3]

Both Moore's study of women at the University of Aberdeen, and Edwards' study of women at the University of Liverpool confirm that the majority of women in the pre-1939 period studied Arts subjects.[4] American historian Florence Howe suggests that the assumptions surrounding the 'nature' of women controlled not only what women might study but, also, as importantly, how (and whether) they might put that study to use. For Howe the emphasis upon the arts and humanities kept women in an 'educated place'.[5] Similarly, Gibert and Moore highlight that in opting for arts degrees women were simply accepting the limited opportunities which were on offer to them following graduation:

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[3] Gibert, J., *Women at the English Civic Universities 1880-1920* (PhD, University of North Carolina, 1988), p. 117.

[4] Edwards, L., *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883 to 1937* (PhD, The University of Liverpool, 1999), chapter 4; Moore, L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920*, p. 44.

[5] Howe, F., 'Introduction: the History of Women and Higher Education', *Journal of Education* 159 (1977), p. 9.

> Few women took anything other than arts...This was understandable, for whilst many of the men were intending to make their subsequent careers either in the church or in the legal, medical, or scientific professions, there were few employment opportunities for women outside teaching.[6]

To conclude, Gibert argues that the choice of 'feminine' arts subjects aimed to provide a general cultural education suited to the female roles of wife, mother, and teacher: 'Thus the admission of women to civic universities seems to have had little definite effect on the role of women in nineteenth and early twentieth-century society.'[7]

In considering female enrolments in the post-Second World War period, University Grants Committee Returns demonstrate that generally little had changed from the pre-war years.[8] It is important to emphasise that it is difficult to make year on year comparisons when using the UGC Returns, and in fact the publication itself cautions the reader against conducting such an analysis. This caution is due to the fact that subject areas are regularly recategorised; for example, whilst in the early 1950s Veterinary Science was classified on its own, by the late 1960s this subject area was subsumed into the category 'Agriculture and Forestry'. Nevertheless, it is useful to broadly consider the number of full-time university women in Great Britain who were studying Arts/Social Science as opposed to Science in the post-war era. Taking into account the problematic issue of making year on year comparisons it is interesting to note that from 1947 to 1979 female enrolments for Arts/Social Science degrees accounted for approximately two-thirds of university women, whilst enrolments for Science degrees accounted for, on average, one-fifth of university

[6] Moore, L., *op. cit.*
[7] Gibert, J., *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[8] See *Returns from University Colleges in Receipt of Treasury Grants*, University Grants Committee (London, HMSO) and from the academic year beginning 1966 *Statistics of Education.*

women.[9] Wakeling picks up this discrepancy in discussing women of the University of Glasgow in the post-war era: 'In Scotland as elsewhere in Britain, the pressure for admission by women...was more in arts and social science subjects than in pure science and vocational subjects such as medicine and law.'[10] Wakeling notes, however, that whilst in 1980 45 per cent of women at the University of Glasgow matriculated from the Arts Faculty, there was a trend towards women studying a broader range of subjects. In 1963 Anderson, a member of the Robbins Committee, drew attention to the distribution of female students between university faculties, noting specifically the unequal distribution of male and female students in science faculties. Part of the explanation for the situation was to be found in the inadequacy of science teaching in girls' schools, combined with the difficulties of recruiting science teachers. Anderson wrote:

> It is sometimes argued by way of explanation that a woman's natural bent and instinct incline her to the humanities, but this seems to be disproved when one looks at the Soviet Union where the situation is strikingly different.[11]

While encouraging an increase in the number of women in the scientific field, Anderson, as a product of her time, ultimately did not challenge the perception of women's primary role in society:

> Though marriage may prevent many women from being in the forefront of research and discovery they have much to offer as assistants in the laboratory and in the 'back room'.[12]

Table 6. 2 provides the registration statistics for full-time female students at the University of Liverpool between the years 1944 to 1979. As is apparent, the Arts

[9] It is important to note the following when considering these figures. In view of the changing categorisation of subject areas the calculation for Arts/Social Science incorporates education, social, administrative and business studies, language, literature and area studies. The category 'science' refers to pure and applied science.

[10] Wakeling, J., *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[11] Anderson, K., *Women and the universities: a changing pattern* (Fawcett Society, 1963), p. 18.

[12] Anderson, K., *Ibid.*

Faculty continued to play an important role in the post-war era. It is important to note that the Arts Faculty, and the newly created Social and Environmental Studies Faculty contained the departments of Architecture, Civic Design and Commerce, and therefore the percentage of women documented as studying in the Arts Faculty is perhaps a little misleading. For example, if the male-dominated departments, named above, were removed from the calculation then the percentage of women pursuing arts subjects would be slightly increased. Furthermore, as a proportion of the total number of full-time women studying at the University, enrolments within the Arts Faculty from 1945 to 1980 continued to account for, on average, approximately 54 per cent of female students.

Table 6. 2: Registration statistics by faculty for full-time female students at the University of Liverpool[13]

	Arts	Science	Law	Medical	Dental	Vet. Science	Eng.
1945	462 (57%)	131 (38%)	9 (28%)	180 (34%)	20 (18%)	22 (15%)	1 (0.5%)
1950	391 (32%)	102 (17%)	17 (16%)	157 (23%)	22 (11%)	12 (7%)	2 (0.7%)
1955	387 (40%)	138 (20%)	12 (12%)	148 (26%)	27 (16%)	19 (11%)	0
1960	455 (38%)	234 (20%)	14 (15%)	156 (26%)	42 (23%)	18 (11%)	1 (0.2%)
1965	747 (44%)	380 (23%)	17 (12%)	156 (24%)	30 (17%)	36 (19%)	8 (1%)
1970	1079 (46%)	514 (25%)	26 (10%)	163 (25%)	46 (23%)	39 (19%)	9 (1%)
1975	1202 (46%)	536 (28%)	89 (30%)	233 (30%)	71 (29%)	53 (23%)	16 (2%)
1980	1347 (46%)	585 (31%)	100 (34%)	258 (33%)	91 (37%)	69 (25%)	23 (2%)

[13] The university registration statistics are contained within the *Annual Reports*, and are inclusive of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments. The original Arts Faculty included the Department of Education and departments which comprised the new faculty of Social and Environmental Studies, effective from the September 1st 1971 (Architecture, Civic Design, Commerce, Social Science). For the purposes of continuity and comparability the figures for women in the School of Education and the SES Faculty in 1975 and 1980 have been incorporated into the Arts Faculty as previously calculated.

Edwards shows that from the 1920s women at the University of Liverpool did begin to read a wider range of subjects, and presents the example of the Social Studies degree as evidence of this widening of opportunity.[14] As Eileen Yeo documents, however, the schools of sociology, social science, or social study, which proliferated in the first decade of the twentieth century, largely attracted women. Such women wished to train in social administration and social work, and therefore social science became 'docketed' as a woman's subject.[15] Women undertaking such courses were simply entering into another female-ascribed role: to use the terminology of Yeo - 'social motherhood'.

In the final year of the war women not only comprised 38 per cent of the total number of full-time students (a figure that was not to be reached again within the period of study), but they were also to be found in greater numbers across faculties. Gibert emphasises that the academic paths followed by women at the coeducational universities from 1880 to 1920 differed from those students of the women's colleges: women at single-sex institutions were less likely to remain in traditionally feminine fields.[16] Conway and Solomon, historians of women's higher education in the United States, also suggest that such differences occurred in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.[17] In discussing the women's colleges, modelled on the male elite colleges of the East Coast, Conway writes:

> These women's colleges provided women with a collective female life and gave them a training for the mind which was not derivative and did not assume a role for women scholars compensatory to that of male students.[18]

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[14] Edwards, L., *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883-1937* (PhD, University of Liverpool, 1999), p. 100.
[15] Yeo, E. J., 'Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science, 1850-1950', *Women's History Review*, 1 (1992), p. 73.
[16] Gibert, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128.
[17] Conway, J. K., 'Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States', *History of Education Quarterly*, 14 (1974), pp. 1-12; Solomon, B. M., *In the Company of Educated Women* (Yale University Press, 1985).
[18] Conway, J. K., *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Similarly, in the absence of men, the women of the University of Liverpool in the final year of the Second World War were to be found in greater percentages across a wider range of faculties. For example, in the Science and Medical Faculties these figures were not to be reached again within the period of study. As table 6. 2 demonstrates, setting aside the exceptional circumstances of war women's participation across faculties did represent a picture of growth, despite the fact that this growth was not always steady. For example, women's presence in the Law Faculty was rather erratic, with women students gaining the most ground in the 1970s. Female students were in a very small minority in the Engineering Faculty throughout the whole period, comprising only two per cent of the Faculty by 1980. A Channel Four series entitled 'Why men don't iron', broadcast in 1998, explored why in an 'age of equality' the division of labour is so resistant to change. Interviewing Carolina Bartman, an engineering graduate of the 1980s, the programme considered the social forces that militated against women entering this field. Carolina noted:

> My parents were quite – I think they allowed me a lot of freedom to choose what I wanted to do – and I don't think that they were necessarily over joyed when I said engineering. My teachers were not at first happy, in fact I did have someone tell me that I should reconsider, because after all I'd be wearing overalls and it would be a quite dirty job. I was an exception amongst female friends because I went into engineering and so few did. Everyone always translates that into you act as if you're a male, and that, I suppose, is not at all true of me. I don't know why there are so few women in engineering, partly, I think, there is a lack of role models, and there probably is quite a bit of discrimination.[19]

The above quotation provides an insight into why women comprised, and still continue to comprise, only a very small minority of engineering faculties, and exemplifies well the association of 'masculinity' with engineering, more so than any other subject.

[19] Channel Four, series entitled 'Why men don't iron', broadcast 30/7/98.

As highlighted in Chapter 5 access to higher education was intrinsically linked to expense. Under the terms of the 1944 Education Act parents were no longer required to pay university fees, and non-mandatory student grants were also introduced. Chapter 3 noted, however, the widely different procedures that existed among local educational authorities. Until the introduction of mandatory grants in 1962 other possible means of financial support were Ministry of Education grants, which involved a 'pledge to teach', state, or other scholarships. In a recent article based upon questionnaires, Dyhouse demonstrates the complexities, difficulties and sacrifices involved in securing money to attend university pre-1939. Many of Dyhouse's respondents gave large amounts of detail in respect of finance, reflecting the importance of the issue, and indicating that money was often secured by the careful piecing together of scholarships, grants, loans and parental support.[20] The post-war situation was somewhat less complex; nevertheless, as already highlighted in Chapter 5, the expense of a university education continued to be a central consideration. It played an important role for many of the women in a decision to remain living within the parental home; and even after the introduction of mandatory student grants continued to be an important factor. Furthermore, the combination of financial support from different sources continued to be key. Table 6. 3 shows the avenues of funding which were noted by the respondents.

[20] Dyhouse, C., 'Signing the pledge? Women's investment in university education and teacher training before 1939', *History of Education*, 26 (1997), pp. 211-219.

Table 6. 3 Respondents' funding

	Parents	LEA	Ministry of Education	State	Paid Work	Other
1940s	8	2	6	0	0	1
1950s	5	10	1	1	1	2
1960s	5	17	0	0	2	1
1970s	12	34	0	0	10	0

As is apparent, parental and local education authority awards were the mainstay of the respondents' financial support, with the exception of the Ministry of Education awards granted to those women studying in the 1940s. Of those women who received LEA grants in the 1940s and 1950s, their social class background was generally working or lower middle class. Following the introduction of mandatory student grants such LEA awards were prevalent, and of those women who graduated in the 1970s only one woman, classified as from an upper-middle class background, did not receive any contribution from the local educational authority. As married, mature students in the 1970s, two women received the slightly reduced LEA married women's grants. What is noticeable is the increasing importance of part-time/vacation work for those women at university in the 1970s. After the death of her father, Gillian at university in the 1950s, combined a grant from her LEA and a bursary from the university, with a part-time job selling ice creams at wrestling matches, waitressing in the evenings and bar work in the holidays. Gillian's employment, however, was exceptional, whilst for those women who sought work in the 1970s it was an accepted part of access to a university education for those women from working-class backgrounds.

Having considered how the women's studies were funded, table 6. 4 outlines their degree subjects classified by faculty. As is shown, a significant proportion of the group of women studied subjects within the Arts/Social and Environmental Studies Faculties (this figure is inclusive of three women who studied architecture). The number of women who studied 'professional' degrees, that is law, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and architecture totalled twelve. Not one of the twelve studied at the University in the 1940s and 1950s, which was reflective of the small number of women within these faculties at this time. Out of the twelve women, nine were from middle-class backgrounds, whilst three were from upper-working class backgrounds.

Table 6. 4 Respondents' degree subjects classified by faculty[21]

	Art/SES	Science	Law	Medical	Dental	Vet. Sc.	Total
1940s	8	6	0	0	0	0	**14**
1950s	11	3	0	0	0	0	**14**
1960s	10	4	1	1	1	2	**19**
1970s	25	6	1	0	2	1	**35**
Total	**54**	**19**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**82**

There were varied explanations for course selection. Interest was the most cited reason. For example, for one woman at university in the 1940s, mathematics was chosen because of a long-term desire to study the subject. The second most noted

[21] Appendix 6 provides an individual breakdown of the subjects studied, and the date and age at which the respondents entered university. Ten of the women entered the university as mature students, whilst the remainder entered between the ages of 17 and 19.

explanation was occupational: a certain subject was necessary, or regarded as the most suitable prerequisite for a specific occupation. Maria chose modern languages with aspirations to join the diplomatic core, whilst for Gillian the desire to become a dentist obviously dictated that she study dentistry. Several of the women noted that they chose the subject that they wished to go on to teach. Margaret, who graduated with a law degree in 1960, noted that degree selection was a process of elimination:

> I was not good at science. I took arts subjects. I did not want to teach. I explored the job situation in languages and found it was poorly paid and there were 30 applicants for the poorest courier work...so I opted for Law where I knew I would find employment.[22]

Similarly, another woman chose economics on the basis that she felt it would be a practical subject with good employment opportunities. Ability in a certain subject was also an important consideration. For a small number of women, however, the subject studied was not their original first choice. One graduate of the 1940s described how her gender had prevented her from following in family footsteps:

> I studied architecture. This was not a first choice. First choice was naval architecture, but women students were not accepted for this course, but the School of Architecture did accept women.[23]

For Anne, A level grades stood in the way of her chosen option:

> I did a general Arts degree. I had hoped to read French, but my A level grade wasn't good enough...On looking back I realise my school had not prepared its students sufficiently for the level of oral French needed for a good grade.[24]

Two classics students, of the 1950s and 1960s respectively, were dissuaded from their original choice. One of the respondents noted:

> I studied Classics and Egyptology for my B. A. Hons. Degree. I had applied for a French degree, but on the day of registration I spoke to member of the

[22] Questionnaire, record 37.
[23] Questionnaire, record 8.
[24] *Ibid*., record 17.

> Classics department about learning Ancient Greek for interest, and he persuaded me to change from the French degree![25]

On entering university as a mature student in the 1970s, Elizabeth was steered by university staff, in 'view of her age', from her initial choice of psychology to biochemistry. For several of the women parents and teachers were instrumental in the decision to take certain subjects. Audrey, who studied French and German in the 1940s, did so at her 'father's insistence'; whilst for Mary, who studied architecture in the 1970s, parental input was also central:

> Careers advice at school was negligible, so parental influence was strongest. My parents were adamant that I should aim for a profession. I have no talent for teaching; otherwise I might have studied history. I was a good all-rounder, so nothing was ruled out. I was keen to make a decision and then get on with working towards it rather than postpone the difficult choice.[26]

As a student of the 1950s, Mary emphasised the role that her teacher played: 'I would have been equally happy with English Literature, but the history teacher told me from the age of 11 that I should study history'[27]; so did Maria:

> I wanted to study medicine, I had been put off by one of my teachers telling me how expensive the books were and I felt that my Mum would not be able to afford to support me through medical school. There was the length of course to consider as well.[28]

Male staff and students

On being asked how they felt they had been treated academically by both male staff and students, the women were overwhelmingly positive in regard to their academic experience. In discussing the issue in general terms, without particular reference to either male staff or students, similar phraseology recurred regardless of the period within which the respondent had graduated. 'Excellent', 'very well', 'respectfully',

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[25] *Ibid.*, record 24.
[26] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[27] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[28] *Ibid.*, record 47.

'as an equal', 'fairly', 'no problems' were all words frequently drawn upon by the women to refer to their undergraduate academic years. Studying in the English Department in the 1970s, Katherine wrote of her academic treatment: 'Very well indeed – I discovered standards of courtesy and attentiveness that were almost medieval in value.'[29] Similarly, two fellow students of the 1970s highlighted that there were 'no problems.' Teresa noted the 'personality' clashes that occurred, but emphasised that this was not as a consequence of gender, whilst one mature student stated:

> There were no problems with fellow students or staff, male or female. I had good relations with all. My biggest problem was age-related, since fellow students and some lecturers were much younger than I – but the problem was mainly in my own mind.[30]

As a classics student in the 1950s one woman noted that she was treated 'with great respect, and appreciation of any contributions I might make at lectures and seminars'[31]; while two women, respectively studying languages in the 1960s emphasised that the small size of the departments was conducive to a very close family-like relationship. Margaret, who studied law in the same decade, stressed a positive academic experience, but in turn also indicated the assumptions surrounding a woman's role: 'It was a lot of fun...The men expected us to make tea at Legal Soc Meetings, but we also expected to make it and enjoyed it!'[32] So whilst Margaret felt she had been treated 'very well' she herself recognised that this treatment was ultimately based upon gender difference, however welcome it may have been. A dental student also indicated an awareness of difference in treatment, stating that she was treated: 'fairly, but differently to men.'[33] As noted, many of the women used the

[29] *Ibid.*, record 82.
[30] *Ibid.*, record 68.
[31] *Ibid.*, record 24.
[32] *Ibid.*, record 37.
[33] *Ibid.*, record 64.

term 'as equals'; and in describing her experience of the Arts Faculty in the 1960s Judith highlights an important point: 'As equals. Men were very much in a minority, so perhaps you ought to ask them how we treated them!!'[34] What was striking from all the responses to the question of academic treatment was the way in which the women placed their statements in relation to the number of men upon their course. Women who studied in the Arts Faculty from the mid-1940s through to the 1970s often almost qualified their experience by noting that men (that is male students) were in a minority, with the implication that this factor accounted for their positive recollections. One student actually articulated this point, and furthermore reflected upon the confidence of women in an academic setting:

> There were twice as many women as men studying music and so at the time I was not aware of any particular behaviour...as force of numbers seemed to predominate. Looking back, I think it was noticeable that the men were more self-confident as students than the women and were more likely to be asked questions or to lead a group than the women.[35]

Conversely, however, those women who were in departments in which men were predominant also noted their positive experience in relation to the number of men. For example, two women in the Science Faculty wrote that they were treated: 'Very well. There were only six girls amongst 70 male students'; 'Excellent. Only female on the course.'[36] Those women, such as Margaret mentioned above, who studied in predominantly male departments, may have been more acutely aware of the differences in treatment that could, or did, occur, but noted that as women in a minority they also could recount positive experiences. Not all the women, however, were as upbeat in their general assessment of male staff and students. Stephanie, although not derisive of university men specifically wrote: 'As males treat you

[34] *Ibid.*, record 32.
[35] *Ibid.*, record 75.
[36] *Ibid.*, records 42 and 73.

normally – some as if you are their intellectual equals some not.'[37] While Gillian noted: 'Sexual harassment was invented in the Dental School!! I hated every minute of it.'[38] Jane, who studied architecture in the 1970s, reflects the pattern of qualifying academic experience in terms of the number of male students upon a course, and indicates further the different treatment that women could receive from men:

> Some were patronising some of the time, especially to begin with. As I showed some ability, I had more respect. There were twenty per cent women at the start, but they had a greater drop-out rate than men. My greatest difficulty was 'crits' (when we presented finished design work to the group and answered criticisms) – I found that most women students were given more gentle treatment than the men, but I was perceived as one of the better students and able to take the flak.[39]

Having considered the general comments made by the respondents the chapter will now discuss those responses which more specifically referred to either male students or lecturers. In terms of comments made directly about male students the overall impression was positive. Fellow students were described as 'fine', and once again reference to the male/female ratio upon courses was an important aspect of the women's evaluation. One woman studying social science in the 1950s noted: 'In our year the male students were very much in a minority and were all friendly'.[40] Josette and Doreen, studying history and maths respectively in the 1970s, commented: 'Male students were friendly and co-operative. They treated everyone in the same way. Perhaps the fact that ours was a very small group (four men/four women) is relevant here'; 'Most of my friends were male as more men in class than

[37] *Ibid*, record 65.
[38] *Ibid*, record 34.
[39] *Ibid*, record 63.
[40] *Ibid*, record 22.

women.'[41] For Audrey, a language student in the 1940s, the coeducational environment proved to be very enjoyable:

> The students – all much older, ex-servicemen – just like men to me (I'd never met any young men to talk to before! Sounds unbelievable but true). I was spoiled and enjoyed it all very much! There were fewer women because of ex-service.[42]

Similarly, Mary studying history in the 1960s, stressed the effect of the coeducational environment upon Arts students: 'B. A. – Students in those days were almost all from single-sex schools and so were very bemused by the new social challenges.'[43] Those women who did not have completely positive comments to make were certainly in a minority.[44] Not one of the women who graduated from the university in the 1940s and 1950s had anything negative to write. As an Arts student in the 1960s one women highlighted that she viewed: 'Some male students: - with suspicion. Difficult to accept that females could perform equally well or better. This attitude mainly from boys from single-sex schools.'[45] Dental student Gillian, mentioned earlier, wrote: 'I was one of seven women in a year of 28 students. I got on well with most, but the men were chauvinists and 'used' women.'[46] A fellow student of the 1960s, studying pharmacology, similarly noted: 'Some of the male students behaved like forerunners of male chauvinist pigs.'[47] For Pauline and Megan, whilst the majority of students were simply all friends together, individual men were identified as having problematic attitudes towards women: 'one male student from Gloucester who was from a well- off farming background...appeared to have a problem with females in general'; 'One of my colleagues was the sort who believed a

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[41] *Ibid.*, records 74 and 78.
[42] *Ibid.*, record 11.
[43] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[44] Only six of the 82 respondents made any negative comments about male students.
[45] Questionnaire, record 36.
[46] *Ibid.*, record 34.
[47] *Ibid.*, record 31.

woman's place was in the home, but not in an aggressive way and we just teased him.'[48]

In regard to specific comments made about male lecturers the positive and negative remarks were more equally balanced. Maria and Audrey, as students in the Arts Faculty in the 1940s, recall their male lecturers in a positive light, but highlight the lack of personal contact within the academic relationship: 'There were never problems with male staff who were usually very courteous if somewhat distant and fairly elderly'; 'Male lecturers utterly impartial, though teaching was very distant. Hardly recall any personal contact.'[49] In contrast, Arts students of the 1950s, 60s and 70s recounted the much-appreciated support they received. Gillian wrote of how she was treated: 'With much kindness by the male staff, and as I look back now, so much help when I got confused with the economics and statistics.'[50] Similarly, Rosalind recalled:

> In 1968 very few girls studied economics, and Professor Shackle took the group of us for tutorials so that we would not feel overawed by the males. He built up our confidence tremendously.[51]

Two women highlighted the encouragement and advice the male lecturers had provided: 'The professor was particularly helpful for my first visit to Russia, advising in many ways'; 'Male staff encouraging and had high expectations when I was an undergraduate.'[52] For Hazel, a sympathetic attitude towards personal problems was remembered gratefully: 'Treated with respect and on one occasion during domestic problems treated with kindness and understanding which I still remember and value.'[53] Not all the women, however, were as praiseworthy of their

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[48] *Ibid.*, records 69 and 43.
[49] *Ibid.*, records 9 and 11.
[50] *Ibid.*, record 19
[51] *Ibid.*, record 76.
[52] *Ibid.*, records 33 and 74.
[53] *Ibid.*, record 67.

male lecturers. Dental student Gillian, who asserted 'sexual harassment was invented in the dental school', wrote: 'I hated most male lecturers – they frightened me and were mostly bullies.'[54] A fellow student of the dental school emphasised 'anti' female behaviour, and described one lecturer who addressed the women in the group almost as an afterthought. While highlighting the wisdom of this particular lecturer's advice, the respondent depicts this advice as the lecturer adopting the use of the male pronoun to refer to patients, therefore excluding women from the process of articulating their complaints:

> Some showed no difference, others were very 'anti' females. One particular gentleman who taught us general medicine always began his lecture with 'Gentlemen........and Ladies', however, shocking old misogynist that he was he taught well and his second remark in all his talks was 'Listen to the patient – he is telling you what is wrong with him.' Very good advice.[55]

One science student noted that while fellow students were 'fine': 'one or two male lecturers were not', whilst a student of the physics department similarly emphasised that not all male lecturers were satisfactory: 'A few male staff were a little condescending.'[56] Ann, who studied veterinary science in the 1960s, noted that she felt: 'very intimidated by male staff in first year, but not in subsequent years.'[57] Negative comments in regard to male lecturers were not confined solely to those women undertaking more male-dominated subjects. As a social science student, one woman wrote of the tactics employed by female students to avoid the unwelcome advances of one particular lecturer: 'Some male lecturers had their 'favourites', and we went in pairs to collect work from one male lecturer, who was a bit of a

[54] *Ibid.*, record 34.
[55] *Ibid.*, record 50.
[56] *Ibid.*, record 30.
[57] *Ibid.*, record 41.

'groper''.[58] Similarly Janice, who deeply regretted changing courses in the 1970s, wrote:

> The Prof. was an old lecher. I was his personal tutee and I found him very oppressive, although at the time too naïve to articulate this. I often wonder if that's why I switched courses. They were more aware of equal ops in the Sociology Department.[59]

For Marlene, however, who studied sociology in the 1960s, and who described herself at that stage in life as 'very idealistic', the male staff were somewhat problematic: 'Some staff tended to patronise the female students recognising their idealism and trying hard to knock it.'[60] While for two other respondents (students of the geography and psychology departments) the assumption surrounding a woman's primary role in society surfaced:

> Male staff: In late 1960s still reluctant to promote/encourage women. I was told by my male tutor at the end of my first year, after gaining a IIi in first year exams that it was pointless expecting to be awarded at IIi degree as the policy of the department was not to 'waste' good degrees on women. 95% of women who graduated from the department went into teaching or got married; neither of which required a 'good' degree, therefore men would receive preference. I found this attitude unbelievable and archaic, but it was nevertheless proved to be true.[61]
>
> One or two staff were hostile or dismissive. An example – I had a viva after my finals and the external examiner having awarded me a first asked me kindly if I was going back to looking after my children full-time![62]

Women academics

The majority of the women also came into contact with female lecturers, ranging from those who had one female lecturer to those who recalled several. The women, however, highlighted that academic women were generally in a minority, and

[58] *Ibid.*, record 22.
[59] *Ibid.*, record 71.
[60] *Ibid.*, record 38.
[61] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[62] *Ibid.*, record 79.

recalled the sense of female lecturers being outnumbered by men. Conversely, Maria who began studying modern languages in 1941, recalled:

> Mainly female lecturers...During the war they were promoted in the absence of men (!) to more senior posts, and were more relaxed as they were not in competition with male colleagues.[63]

For those women who did not have any female lecturers in their own department their contact with a woman academic often came in the form of a personal tutor. For example, one woman studying maths in the late 1940s had a personal tutor who was a female lecturer in the biology department. Similarly, those women who did have women academics in their own department also emphasised that their personal tutor was often female. Out of the 82 respondents, eighteen women noted that they did not have any contact with female academics, and just as women students were to be found in a minority outside the Arts and Social and Environmental Studies Faculties, so too were the female lecturers. Two women studying in the Science Faculty, in the 1950s and 1970s respectively, recalled female demonstrators, but no female lecturers. While it was generally women who were students of 'male' orientated subjects that recollected the absence of women academics, the Arts Faculty was not immune. For example, the classics department was highlighted in the 1950s and the 1960s as having no female lecturers; and for one woman within this department the observation of women academics took place from afar:

> B. A. degree – no female lecturers in Classics Department then, but familiar figures around the precinct were Dr. Lucrezia Zaina (Italian Department) and Dr. Miriam Abbott (English). They were held in great awe in those days![64]

For those women who had some form of contact with female academics their comments were overwhelmingly positive in terms of their abilities as lecturers. The

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[63] *Ibid.*, record 9.
[64] *Ibid.*, record 24.

women emphasised that their female lecturers were 'excellent', 'fascinating', 'very impressive', and in some instances 'inspiring'. For one veterinary student of the 1960s, the lectures delivered by one woman were to have lifetime relevance: 'We had one female lecturer throughout the five-year course. She was excellent (I still have and refer to her notes from time to time).'[65] The women academics were noted as conscientious and hard working, and were respected for their expertise in their subject area and for their knowledge and intelligence in general. Their support and advice was also welcomed. Joyce, who studied at the University in the 1940s, outlined the academic relationship that was established with Professor Dorothy Knowles:

> I only had one female lecturer – Professor Dorothy Knowles – she was also my personal tutor and was helpful and made a concrete suggestion that I spent my summer vacation in France (as my A level ill-prepared me for the speed of delivery). Advice which I followed. She also coached me at fencing.[66]

Gillian, mentioned earlier for her gratefulness of the tuition she received from her male lecturers, similarly wrote of her appreciation for the personal support she received from her tutor in the 1950s, and furthermore noted the quality of another female academic:

> My tutor, Miss Spence, was an excellent help and support, especially when my father died and I was going to leave University. A senior female lecturer in the History Department was the best lecturer and preparer for exams by a mile (Mrs Collins).[67]

Fellow history student Mary described Irene Collins ten years later as: 'utterly brilliant – very impressive.' While Mary found Irene Collins to be impressive, other female academics were noted as: 'odd and unimpressive, but could be very

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[65] *Ibid.*, record 40.
[66] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[67] *Ibid.*, record 19.

understanding'; 'painfully shy and therefore an appalling lecturer, although particularly witty.' [68] So whilst Mary had reservations about the abilities of some women academics, other aspects of their personalities were presented as positive. Only a very small number of respondents had anything negative to write in terms of their female lecturers' abilities as academics. Pamela, a Maths and Physics student of the 1950s, found the women: 'conformist and not as inspirational as the men.'[69] While Ann, who studied veterinary science, and who had felt intimidated by the male lecturers in her first year, similarly wrote of her female lecturer:

> Although she was occasionally jovial, she was very intimidating and not approachable. If there was a problem I would have more likely gone to a male member of staff especially one of the professors.[70]

Other women also highlighted this unapproachability. As a language student in the 1960s one woman perceived her French lecturer as 'overpowering' and 'daunting'.[71] Marlene, studying sociology, wrote of her female lecturer:

> Not inspiring. She read her lectures which were rather dull. In tutorials she would sit in silence waiting for us to contribute – fortunately we had a mature social work student in my tutorial group which helped a great deal, as us younger ones were somewhat intimidated by the set-up.[72]

Similarly, one 1970s student described her music lecturer as unapproachable due to her negative self-portrayal: 'She felt very uncertain and awkward, and at times was known to behave towards some students in a way that was calculated to give them a hard time.'[73]

[68] *Ibid*, record 44.
[69] *Ibid*, record 16.
[70] *Ibid*, record 41.
[71] *Ibid*, record 33.
[72] *Ibid*, record 38.
[73] *Ibid*, record 75.

Several of the respondents made comments in regard to their female lecturers that were more concerned with image, rather than their abilities as lecturers. The polarity of the 'bluestocking' versus the married woman was a particular point of reference. Valerie, who studied psychology in the 1970s, highlights the polarisation of women academics:

> One was the archetypal 'between the war' blue stocking – a Jean Brodie...the other was an inspiring superwoman, balancing academic career, four children, plus numerous self-improvement pursuits.[74]

Josette, a history student of the same decade, wrote:

> One an unmarried lady I thought of as rather pathetic at the time, but got to know and very much admired later. She was a 'typical bluestocking' in my eighteen year-old eyes. Also an older married women who was amusing and an excellent teacher.[75]

As is apparent, the women themselves identified the stereotypes. As an English student in the 1950s, Elaine described her female lecturers in the following way:

> One female lecturer in the English Language Department – seemed 'typical' academic spinster. One in English Literature Department – seemed another stereotype – all jangling silver bracelets and brightly coloured clothes.[76]

The 'bluestocking', and all that the stereotype implied, generally lost out in appealing to the respondents at that time in their lives. Such women were perceived as 'dowdy in appearance and personality', 'not always very feminine', and whilst Barbara noted one particular academic as excellent: 'unfortunately she was rather 'frumpish', and what we would have called old-fashioned.'[77] Joan, who studied medicine in the 1960s, noted that the women academics: 'ranged from 'masculine' types who wore suits and ties to very fashion-conscious individuals', and it was the 'feminine' lecturers who appealed to the women rather than the stereotype of the

[74] *Ibid*, record 79.
[75] *Ibid*, record 74.
[76] *Ibid*, record 15.
[77] *Ibid*, records 16, 28 and 70.

unmarried 'frump'.[78] Dyhouse's assertion that female students from the late nineteenth century to the present day, 'have found the vision of a married life more congenial than the celibacy of the majority of women academic careerists', would certainly seem to be applicable to several of the respondents under discussion within this thesis. Considering Mary Paley Marshall, a lecturer at Newnham College in the late nineteenth century, Dyhouse emphasises that it was her beauty, dress, intelligence, and marriage that made her attractive to younger women. Marshall had managed to 'dovetail' her intellectual energies into fittingly 'feminine' lifestyles.[79]

The extent to which the women looked upon their female lecturers as role models was negligible. Of the ten women who noted that they did look upon women academics as role models, as emphasised above, it was not the stereotype of the 'bluestocking' that appealed. While respectful of academic ability, one student of the 1940s also highlighted the 'feminine' qualities of appearance as central:

> Two in particular I considered as role models. One was outstandingly gifted in a number of fields. She was dynamic and striking in appearance. The other gentle and very elegant.[80]

Similarly, for Maria studying in the 1940s it was the 'full rounded' female academics which held the most appeal:

> They stimulated us to emulate their critical faculties, curiosity, powers of communication, and articulate conversation. Some were rather butch and bluestocking, but others were full rounded people with many interests and activities outside academia.[81]

As a student in the 1960s one respondent, noted earlier for her praise of the solitary female lecturer in the Department of Veterinary Science, wrote:

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[78] *Ibid.*, record 35.
[79] Dyhouse, C., 'Storming the citadel or storm in a tea cup? The entry of women into higher education 1860-1920', in Acker, S. and Piper, D. W. (eds.), *Is Higher Education Fair to Women?* (Guilford, 1984), pp. 60-61.
[80] Questionnaire, record 6.
[81] *Ibid.*, record 9.

> As a lecturer she was a role model, a very good communicator, the substance of the lectures was always relevant and delivered concisely. However, there the role model ended! She was kind and caring, but everyone's idea of a female vet in those days (regarded as a male profession).[82]

So whilst this woman admired her lecturer's academic ability, once again the 'masculine', 'bluestocking' image was rejected. One student of the 1970s noted how one particular female lecturer perceived her own role in regard to the women students within her department:

> ...Another had children and was a Senior Lecturer involved in much departmental business. She later told me that she felt it her duty to show us female students that one could have a family and also be active and successful in your professional life.[83]

The ideal put forward was not a rejection of a woman's traditional role as wife and mother, but a role model by which women could successfully combine both family and career. As emphasised, academic and teaching ability was a central aspect for those women who identified their female lecturers as role models. Barbara, who became a lecturer herself, wrote of how she had tried to incorporate some of the lessons she learnt from watching them teach; whilst for Pauline and Mary, studying in the 1960s, their own insecurities meant that their female lecturers were perceived to be at a level that was unobtainable:

> In certain respects, yes, but they seemed so way above me intellectually, I feel I couldn't aspire to be like that.[84]

> Collins – yes – her supremely commanding lecture delivery and mastery of subject. Had I realised at the time that I was capable of pursuing an academic career, I would have used her as a role model; but I thought I was thick and so never considered it at the time.[85]

[82] *Ibid.*, record 40.
[83] *Ibid.*, record 58.
[84] *Ibid.*, record 43.
[85] *Ibid.*, record 44.

The majority of the women did not consider their female lecturers as role models. For several respondents the concept was of no relevance. For example, some of the women at university in the 1940s and 1950s stressed that the notion of a role model was a modern day concern: 'we were not obsessed with role models in my day, they were unheard of'.[86] For Pamela, not only did the concept not exist, but the female staff were to be observed in order to determine how not to conduct oneself:

> The concept of 'role model' was not invented then. Perhaps observed them as specimens of mature adults – more as how not to, then how to behave/react/converse/dress, etc.[87]

Teresa, studying in the 1970s, emphasised that the concept was not relevant for different reasons, namely that a female role model was not required: 'Never felt women not equal (my parents were very 'modern' with regard to gender roles).'[88] Another important aspect to considering women academics as role models was the necessity of being able to identify and relate to them. For many of the women this identification did not occur. Lucy noted as a student in the 1940s that: 'All our lecturers, men and women, were in our opinion old fashioned.'[89] Not knowing enough about them personally was also a predominant reason for not considering the women as role models: 'Mostly they were middle-aged, and I never got close enough to them to evaluate them as people.'[90] For one respondent as a student in the 1950s, the identification did not occur on the following grounds, demonstrating once again the rejection of the 'bluestocking' image: 'I did not think that my career was the be all and end all of my life. They were career women.'[91] While many of the women did

[86] *Ibid.*, record 1.
[87] *Ibid.*, record 16.
[88] *Ibid.*, record 62.
[89] *Ibid.*, record 14.
[90] *Ibid.*, record 27.
[91] *Ibid.*, record 20.

not consider the female academics as role models they were often admired. Joyce, at university in the 1940s, admired Dorothy Knowles for her ability as a woman to be successful, and retain her femininity: 'I admired Dorothy Knowles as a determined, dominant and elegant woman. She was always immaculate in appearance and a charming hostess'.[92] Similarly, one student of the 1950s respected her tutor's combination of high standards in her professional and personal life: 'My personal tutor had very high standards in all aspects of her work and personal life, and I certainly admired her work.'[93] Elizabeth, keen to stress her heterosexuality, found one particular lecturer's eccentricity and intelligence admirable:

> I can't remember regarding them as role models, except that I admired the 'masculine' lecturer for her slight eccentricity (even though I did not have lesbian tendencies myself), coupled with being a fluent conveyor of knowledge.[94]

As a history student in the 1950s, Gillian appreciated the discrimination that the women academics could come up against:

> I admired them as successful women at the University – I realised there was significant bitching between the staff and this was often directed at the women lecturers.[95]

And for Sheila in 1960 it was from her female lecturers that she first envisaged combining a career and a family:

> Not as role models – but it was from them that I first conceived the idea of the possibility of having a family and a career, although this was never discussed with them, or by them.[96]

This chapter has shown that female students at The University of Liverpool in the post-war period continued to be in a minority: until the mid-1960s women

[92] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[93] *Ibid.*, record 22.
[94] *Ibid.*, record 65.
[95] *Ibid.*, record 19.
[96] *Ibid.*, record 45.

represented only 25 per cent of the total student body, and by 1980 still only formed one-third of the university's student population. As had been the case in the pre-1939 period, the Arts Faculty continued to play a dominant role in the academic lives of female students, and this factor was reflected in the degrees undertaken by the group of respondents. Despite their numerical disadvantage, however, the women were generally very positive in regard to their coeducational academic experience, with only a minority of the respondents emphasising problems with male staff and/or students. Women academics, also in a minority, were by and large respected for their academic and lecturing abilities, but the women did not generally consider them as role models.

Having considered the academic lives of the group of respondents, Chapter 7 will now consider the women's residential and social experience at the University of Liverpool.

Chapter 7

'Where shall I live?': the residential and social lives of women graduates of the University of Liverpool

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The following chapter is concerned to explore the undergraduate residential and social lives of the group of respondents to the questionnaire. Historians of women in higher education in the pre-1939 period have generally focused upon life in university halls of residence. This emphasis, however, obscures the history of the provincial universities which, until the 1960s, generally recruited students from the local vicinity. The abundance of documentary sources for halls of residence, available for this earlier period, renders this over-emphasis understandable. Similarly, a discussion of university halls of residence in the post-1945 era forms a significant part of this chapter; the questionnaires, however, provide a unique insight into the experiences of those women who lived in the parental home during their undergraduate years, and the effect that this may have had upon their university experience. Furthermore, it has been possible to explore the experiences of those women who lived in private accommodation. This category also incorporates mature students who lived in their own homes during their undergraduate years. The first section of the chapter will outline both the types of accommodation in which university women lived generally (drawing on the University Grants Committee national returns) and the types of accommodation in which the respondents resided. Section two will consider in more depth the experience of university halls of residence and life in 'digs'; whilst section three will reflect upon life in both the parental home and, in the case of a small number of mature students, life in their own homes.

Residential Life

The table below outlines the national statistics for university women who lived in halls of residence, lodgings and at home in the post-Second World War period.

Table 7. 1 University residence of full-time students (%)[1]

	Colleges and Halls of Residence	Lodgings	At home
1947	34	29	37
1951	41	27	32
1955	40	34	26
1959	40	38	22
1963	37	46	17
1967	41	44	15
1971	43	41	16
1975	46	34	16
1979	46	34	15

As is shown, the percentage of women who lived at home during their university years significantly decreased in the post-war era (from 37 per cent in the academic year beginning in 1947 to 15 per cent in 1979), whilst halls of residence and lodgings remained an important aspect of women's residential experience. With the exception of the mid to late 1960s, the point at which many universities were expanding their residential provision to meet the needs of an increasing student population, halls of

[1] Extracted from *Returns from University Colleges in Receipt of Treasury Grants*, University Grants Committee (London, HMSO). After the academic year beginning 1965 these returns were incorporated in *Statistics in Education.*

residence accounted for the largest percentage of university women's accommodation.

Table 7. 2 (below) summarises the different types of accommodation in which the respondents resided during their undergraduate years.

Table 7. 2 Respondents' undergraduate accommodation[2]

	Halls of Residence	Lodgings/Own Home	At Home
1940s	1	0	13
1950s	4	2	10
1960s	10	7	7
1970s	13	16	15
Total	**28**	**25**	**45**

As noted in Chapter 5, a significant proportion of the respondents were living in Merseyside prior to university entrance, and this is reflected in that the parental home formed the most predominant category of residence. All but three of the 45 women who lived with their parents did so throughout the whole of their undergraduate years. Furthermore, of the 25 women who were classified as living in private accommodation nine were mature students living within their own homes on Merseyside. Seventeen of the respondents who lived in halls of residence came from outside the North West, and of those women who did live in hall and were classified as coming from the North West, seven of the women were from outside Merseyside.

[2] The table reflects the various accommodational experiences of the respondents. The totals therefore do not add up to 82 (number of respondents) as many of the women who lived in hall also experienced life in private accommodation.

To travel from locations such as Blackpool and Blackburn on a daily basis would not have been a realistic option. A number of the respondents who initially lived in halls were to go on to experience life in 'digs', or rented flats, which were usually university approved and sometimes under the aegis of a landlady. Only one of the respondents lived in this type of accommodation for the whole of her undergraduate years.

Halls of Residence

In *No distinction of sex* Dyhouse highlights the benefits of a college life for women, as exalted by women educationalists of the nineteenth century. Halls of residence were seen to provide: 'unparalleled opportunities for women to study: they allowed girls space in which to work without disturbance and where regular hours and regular meals could be guaranteed.'[3] They were regarded as important in avoiding the conflicting demands of home and college life, and furthermore would lead to life-long friendships. While the ethos of the women educationalists was to establish a 'space' for women reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's *A room of one's own*, halls of residence, as importantly, were also often a necessary prerequisite of women's higher education. In a study of women at the University of Liverpool pre-1937, Edwards documents how Emily Davies was required to alleviate the fears of parents by emphasising that their daughters would be supervised, just as if under the control of a 'wise mother', and remain healthy (it was feared that women studying would lead to ill-health). Consequently, women students of Oxford and Cambridge were subject to continuous chaperonage and strict supervision. The founders of the women's colleges

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[3] Dyhouse, C., *No distinction of sex? Women in British universities 1870-1939* (UCL Press, 1995), p. 91.

wished to avoid any scandal which might have called into question the suitability of women's higher education. Strict supervision therefore was viewed as essential to the advancement of women's university education.[4] Similarly, 'careful supervision and chaperonage of the female students was an ever-present feature of life in the early years of the co-educational universities'.[5] University authorities clearly saw a need to regulate and protect female students more than their male counterparts. A study by M. K. Ashby and J. H. Nicholson in 1925, which considered the residential facilities at the civic universities, found that the number of halls for women in almost all cases outnumbered those provided for male students. Furthermore, Ashby and Nicholson documented that internal regulations were tighter within the women's halls.[6]

The feminist historian exploring the implication of women's halls of residence is faced with a difficult task. The ethos of the women educationalists, discussed above, of establishing an environment in which women could focus upon their study without distraction and form close friendships was an important guiding principle. A student of Newnham College writing in 1882 emphasised the benefits of a residential life:

> Altogether life at Newnham is more delightful and fascinating than I could have possibly believed: there is such a feeling of liberty and independence, - so much knowledge and culture permeating everywhere, so much leisure and opportunity for study, and last, but not least, such good fellowship and heartiness amongst the students. This is the sort of life in which men have been luxuriating for hundreds of years and has only just been made open to women...Do not think I am lauding up my own College in especial, I am speaking quite generally of all women's colleges both in England and America.[7]

[4] Edwards, L., *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883-1887* (PhD, University of Liverpool, 1999), pp. 107-109.
[5] Dyhouse, C., *op. cit.*, p. 59.
[6] Ashby, M. K. and Nicholson, J. H., 'Residential life in the civic universities', *The Forum of Education*, 3 (1925), quoted in Gibert, J. S., 'Women students and student life at England's civic universities before the First World War', *History of Education*, 23 (1994), 410.
[7] Stubbs, J., *Miss Anne Jemima Clough (1820-1892): A Reconsideration of Her Work in the Field of Women's Higher Education* (M.Ed, University of Liverpool, 1982), p. 175 quoted in Edwards, L., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

Similarly, residential life at the provincial universities also provided an important 'women's space', and nurtured a strong social and community spirit in the pre-1939 period. Dyhouse's extensive archival research uncovered regular reports of hall activities in student magazines across the country to support this point. Newsletters, records of ex-student and old-girl networks, and annual reunions provided evidence of the life-long friendships made. To conclude, Dyhouse writes:

> Affectionate memories abound, and for many of the women in the civic universities, life in hall of residence was precisely what made the memory of their college years a happy one.[8]

In considering the experiences of women residing in University Hall pre-1937, Edwards concludes:

> While University Hall had close links with Newnham College Cambridge, unlike the women at Newnham, the students in hall, from its foundation, were not restricted in their social activities to the hall itself, nor did they form an isolated community. In fact, it can be suggested that residence in hall enabled women to enter more fully into the wider social activities of the College, far more than their colleagues who resided within the parental home.[9]

In this sense, therefore, women's halls of residence could be interpreted as providing a social and community atmosphere move conducive to a 'fuller' university experience.

The very premise, however, that women were in need of chaperonage and closer supervision, and that the regulations for women concerning residence at the coeducational institutions differed from those of male students, is problematic. Charlotte Conable, in a study of women at Cornell, documents how in the early years of the history of the university, dormitory residence was not obligatory for either sex, and that the university took no official responsibility for supervising or regulating the

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[8] Dyhouse, C., *op. cit.*, pp. 124. *University Hall Fiftieth Anniversary Bulletin* produced by the University Hall Association of the University of Liverpool in 1952 (held in Special Collections and Archives, University of Liverpool) provides a rich insight into the happy experiences of life in hall.
[9] Edwards, L., *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

lives of men and women. Conable refers to this period as one of 'liberal egalitarianism'. In the late 1880s, however, in response to the need to assure parents that Cornell was a safe and proper place to send their daughters, compulsory residence was established. Consequently, an absolute limit on the numbers of women accepted for admission was imposed. The admission criteria for men and women were no longer the same. As the number of students competing for admission continually increased, limits on enrolment were necessary and quotas for both sexes were established. While quotas for male applicants was determined by the availability of classroom space, quotas for women were dictated by the number of available dormitory beds and approved rooms:

> Cornell's decision to regulate the lives of female students by insisting on university-approved housing for them severely limited the numbers of women admitted and caused the rejection of more women than men, regardless of ability.[10]

From the initial period of liberalism to the latter period of conservatism and sexual differentiation, Conable concludes:

> Once the university made the decision requiring women to live in dormitories while men did not, the opportunity offered to women was no longer the same but different, not equal but unequal.[11]

Before moving on to discuss the respondents' recollections of life in hall consideration will be given to the provision, rules and regulations governing women's halls residence at the University of Liverpool in the post-1945 era.

Following the Second World War until 1959, residential provision for women at the University of Liverpool was situated in two halls of residence; University Hall and Rankin Hall (formerly a men's hall). Male students were provided with Derby

[10] Conable, C. W., *Women at Cornell: the Myth of Equal Education* (Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 111.
[11] Conable, C. W., *ibid*, p. 132.

Hall. The university considered itself at this point *in loco parentis*, as the age of majority was eighteen years of age. Women undergraduates, other than those residing with parents, relatives or guardians, were normally required to live during term in a university hall of residence, or other institution recognised by or affiliated to the university. In contrast there was no corresponding stipulation as to where male students should reside until, demonstrating that the university's 'parental control' extended further towards female undergraduates. In regard to internal regulations the personality of the warden had a very influential impact upon the character of a hall of residence, and this was equally as applicable to the men's halls. For example, *Guild Gazette* in 1944 reported discontent at Derby Hall 'owing to the encroachment on personal liberty by the restrictive regulations imposed on the residents by the Warden.'[12] A study conducted by a group of Liverpool social science and medical students in the late 1940s highlighted the policy of the university to supervise the women's halls much more carefully than the men's halls of residence.[13] The discontent expressed by the men of Derby Hall, however, was not evident in the women's hall records, or *Guild Gazette* in the period from 1944 to 1959. In recollecting hall life as student at the University of Nottingham in the early fifties Dulcie Groves emphasises the stern discipline exercised by Miss Spelman, Warden of Florence Boot Hall. The boarding school atmosphere imposed led to confrontational relations with the students, and the hall regime was 'getting them down'.[14] In contrast, an interview conducted with a resident of University Hall in the late 1940s indicated that Dr Margery Knight (warden of University Hall from 1943 to

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[12] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 26. 10. 1944), p. 3.

[13] The study was concerned with student health, and the findings were reported in the *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, Commemoration Week, 1946), pp. 7-8.

[14] Groves, D., 'Dear Mum and Dad: letters home from a women's hall of residence at the University of Nottingham 1952-55', *History of Education*, 22 (1993), pp. 289-301.

1954) fostered a different type of relationship with the women. Pauline emphasised Dr Knight's knowledge of each individual student and the respect she commanded. The relationship was one of honesty and friendship, and as a consequence the imposition of a strict regime was not necessary.[15]

Throughout the 1950s it became increasingly apparent to the university authorities that women's residential provision was inadequate. In 1955 40 women were asked to leave hall in order to accommodate the new influx of freshwomen, whilst in 1957 for the first time several first-year women were housed in approved lodgings as opposed to halls of residence. The increasing number of students studying away from home was placing pressure on the existing provision.[16] In 1959 two further halls of residence were opened: Dale Hall for women and Rathbone Hall for men. In the 1959-60 *Annual Report* the university authorities, however, continued to express concern about the increasing trend towards students studying further away from home. Deans were requested to bear in mind the university policy that freshwomen not residing at home should spend at least their first year in halls. It was advised, given the small number of places available for women in university accommodation, that preference, in terms of admission, should be granted to those women who would remain living at the parental home.[17] 'Female beds', to employ the terminology adopted by the Cornell university authorities, affected the admissions procedure in regard to women. Academic excellence was not the guiding principle in the selection of women students, rather geographic location of family residence.

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[15] Pauline Daley, graduate of the University of Liverpool 19, interviewed on 14. 5. 1996 by Sarah Aiston.

[16] See *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 23. 6. 1955), p. 1 and *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 30. 9. 1957), p. 1.

[17] *Annual Report*, 1959-60 (University of Liverpool).

In a 1960 edition of *Guild Gazette* 'Richard Rollins investigates student flats', noting that more men than women lived in this type of accommodation:

> One could claim that such statistics were due to the University rules which make it virtually impossible for girls below their third year to live outside the Halls of Residence or approved lodgings, where in the former their comings and goings can readily be perceived.[18]

While noting that most university men were under 21, Rollins stated:

> In all fairness one must agree that the restrictions placed on girls in this way are reasonable. Firstly the vast majority are under 21. Secondly most of them are away from home for the first time. Although it would be wrong to hold the University responsible for the moral welfare of all girls who attend it, it is only reasonable that it should as far as possible see that young people leaving home for the first time are properly looked after. Restrictions on the leaving and entering of halls are in general reasonable, and late passes not unduly restricted in genuine cases...on the whole a fair picture results.[19]

A proportion of women, however, did not agree. In contrast to the period 1944 to 1959, hall records and the *Guild Gazette* throughout the 1960s reflected the increasing dissatisfaction by some women with the unequal treatment they received. In an article entitled 'Women Demand Hall Equality', Jackie Hill in 1960 debated the usefulness of women's halls of residence. The notion of attempting to create a 'big happy family', along the lines of the residential colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, was presented as unrealistic. Halls of residence at the University of Liverpool did not function as a separate and complete community. The argument that girls straight from school needed and appreciated the protective nature of hall life was considered unhelpful. Hill wrote:

> There is always the danger that the more retiring girl, coddled within this boarding school atmosphere, will emerge unprepared to meet the many demands of modern society. And there are twice the embarrassments, dangers and difficulties for the gullible, immature twenty-one year old, unable to stand on her own two feet than there would be for an eighteen year old in a similar position who still had the protection of youth.[20]

[18] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 2. 8. 1960), p. 2.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[20] *Ibid.*, 31. 10. 1960, p. 3.

Furthermore, men's halls operated successfully on a very liberal policy: why shouldn't the women's? Studying at the University of Liverpool in the 1960s, Mary Ingham emphasises the injustice that prevailed:

> In my first year, I lived in the hall nicknamed 'the Convent'. The atmosphere was very much like a boarding school, where thin-lipped tutors addressed us formally and entertained us to genteel conversation, sipping sherry while they knitted...Visitors of the opposite sex were only sanctioned on certain days of the week, between certain daylight hours. At those times all doors were firmly bolted, to ensure that any male's arrival (and departure) was carefully monitored. Dreadful warnings circulated about what happened to those who broke the rules. During my first year two second year students were fetched back from an all-night party, one of them suspended for a term and the other sent down, because she had premeditated staying the night by saying she was going home for the weekend. Generations of girls had accepted this blatant injustice, whereby boys were assumed to be capable of running their own lives and girls were not. My generation, however, had become accustomed to a measure of freedom at home which made the rules appear childishly repressive. Our rational minds recognised the irrational assumption that sin only broke out between certain hours...and that your boyfriend could seduce you in his room every night of the week if he so wished, as long as you were home by 10:30pm.[21]

It is more than likely that Ingham is referring to University Hall, which was also referred to by male students as 'The Virgins Rest', 'The Cathouse' and 'The Maidens Madhouse'.[22] Dale Hall, for example, was described by Jackie Hill as more forward-thinking, with the introduction of a system whereby students could sign out up to a certain hour, rather than queue to see the warden every morning.[23] In 1964 the Women's Halls Sub-Committee agreed to recommend a slight relaxation of the regulations governing hall closure and male visitors (referred to as 'men hours').[24] Negotiations between Inter-Hall Committee and the hall authorities were keenly reported in the *Gazette*. A resident of Dale Hall praised the Inter-Halls Committee, commenting:

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[21] Ingham, M., *Now We Are Thirty: Women of the Breakthrough Generation* (Eyre Methuen, 1981), pp. 105-106.

[22] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 2. 11. 1956), p. 6.

[23] *Ibid.*, 31. 10. 1960, p. 3.

[24] *Women's Halls Sub-Committees* (The University of Liverpool, Special Collections and archives).

> At last the wheels of revolution have been set in progress...Inevitably the greatest of feat is the extension of 'men hours'. The previous rule on this issue took us back to the days when a man was driven to distraction by the sight of a woman's ankle.[25]

The small concessions made, however, did not go far enough. In February 1965 the 'no late leave rule after midnight', operating throughout the week, threatened the social activities of women in University Hall, in what was described as the most important week in the Union social calendar. The regulations meant that many women would be unable to attend the Medical Students' Ball and Guild Ball for the full duration. The crisis had arisen due to the fact that Dr Beckett, Acting Warden of University Hall, was not prepared to pay for a late-night porter in the absence of the usual porter who had been taken ill.[26] In November of the same year residents of the women's halls voted 'to end childish rules'. A petition demanded the alteration of hall rules to bring them more in line with the men's halls and those of the more progressive universities. Basing their claim on their 'equality with male students', the women stressed that rules in women's halls were not in accordance with their adult status. Typical complaints emphasised the school-like atmosphere, and the restrictions were criticised as unrealistic. An extension of hall closing and 'men hours' was proposed.[27] The Women's Halls Sub-Committees discussed the students' memorandum, and in June 1966 hall closing and men hours were extended with the approval of Senate. A University Hall resident noted, however: 'They're a great improvement on the old rules but they still tend to treat us like children'.[28] In 1968 an article in the *Guild Gazette* entitled 'More secure?' reflected the continuing

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[25] *Ibid*, 17. 3. 1964, p. 5.
[26] *Ibid*, 2. 2. 1965, p. 1.
[27] *Ibid*, 23. 11. 1965, p. 1. Essex University was documented has having no restrictions on students, whilst at Keele women were subject to the same rules as the men. Bristol University and Leeds University operated key systems that allowed late entry.
[28] *Ibid*, 21. 6. 1966, p. 2.

dissatisfaction with the way in which women were treated. The article presented an ironic analysis of the justification for women's residence. Two incidents were reported in which one student had returned to hall late and was locked out, and two other women were threatened by a man in their own rooms:

> For years the women at this university have been subjected to innumerable petty rules and regulations all in the name of the principle of 'in loco parentis'. They are more secure, it is argued, if the Authorities keep a firm grip on them and restrict them to certain hours, saying that they must be back by one o'clock like good little children. More secure? Don't make us laugh.[29]

The recommendation of the Latey Committee in 1967 to lower the age of majority from eighteen to 21 years of age was to have, however, a significant impact upon the relationship between university authorities and students. Although the report dealt for the most part indirectly with students it was noted that colleges and students would benefit from the removal of the 'pseudo parental obligation'.[30] The report wanted to make clear that:

> We are not envisaging a situation where all college rules and strictures would magically wither away on the age of majority going down to 18. Any collective body...has to have arrangements to make sure, first, that people do what they are there to do – in this case, study; and second, that they do not make each other's lives unbearable by an unreasonable exercise of individual freedom. Colleges will go on demanding that students read books, go to lectures, write essays and stay in a fit state to do so; they will continue to require that the young people do not enjoy themselves with trumpets and strumpets to the point where it keeps other people awake.[31]

What is striking about this passage, because of the final sentence, is its male orientation. Regardless of the fact that women had endured closer supervision under the concept of *in loco parentis*, Latey is essentially referring to male students and their freedom. The implications of the final sentence are two-fold: first, university

[29] *Ibid*, 6. 2. 1968, p. 4.
[30] Silver, H. and Silver, P., *Students: Changing Roles, Changing Lives* (SRHE and Open University Press, 1997), p. 30.
[31] Latey, *Report of the Committee on the Age of Majority* (HMSO, 1967), quoted in Armytage, W. H. G., 'Robbins and the reproductive ratio: a note on the fall in the birth-rate after 1964', *History of Education*, 16 (1987), p. 212.

men could continue to have sex in their rooms as long as it did not disturb others; and second, the women who they were having sex with were promiscuous. The university *Calendar* for the academic year 1970-1 for the first time did not make any differentiation between male and female students in terms of residential stipulations, which were still present, albeit in a far more relaxed form: *all* [my italics] undergraduates in their first year of attendance who did not live at home or in a Hall of Residence were required to live in approved lodgings on board-residence terms. During the 1960s, whilst women were required to reside, for the first two years, in halls of residence or with relatives, male students were only required to live in approved lodgings. By the early 1970s seven of the eleven residential halls provided, including University Hall, the oldest women's hall of residence, were mixed.[32] In recognition that students often preferred the freedom of a flat the university built a self-catering complex: Philharmonic Court opened in 1975. Ingham, referred to earlier, who studied at the University of Liverpool in the late 1960s, also emphasised that the fashion for building student villages (for example, the Carnatic site comprised Salisbury Hall, McNair and the new Rankin Hall at Liverpool) had made enforcing rules an impossible task.[33] The combination of an expanding residential student population and the lowering of the age of majority signified that universities could not realistically or legally continue *in loco parentis*.

The personal recollections of residential students at the University of Liverpool available for the pre-1939 period, and drawn upon by historians Dyhouse and Edwards, provide a rich insight into hall life. For example, *University Hall*

[32] The seven mixed Halls of Residence were as follows: University Hall and Dale Hall (originally women's halls of residence), Rathbone, and Roscoe and Gladstone, opened in 1965 (originally men's halls of residence), and Morton House and Lady Mountford, completed in the early 1970s. Derby Hall remained a men's hall, whilst the newly built halls of the 1960s, McNair, Rankin, and Salisbury remained as single-sex institutions. Salisbury was the last remaining women's hall of residence.
[33] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 106.

Association Fiftieth Anniversary Bulletin and *The Phoenix*, University Hall's magazine, offer a window into the personal experience of hall life in this earlier period.[34] The sources available for the post-Second World War era, however, are not as extensive. As the university became a larger institution and the women increasingly lived in halls of residence for shorter periods, the same sense of belonging to a small community may have gradually disappeared. Miss Joyce Bazire, Warden of Rankin Hall from 1959 to 1972, commented that in 1959 the Rankin Hall Association of former members still existed. The numbers of women attending reunions, however, gradually disappeared:

> Inevitably, since students have not been spending as many years in Hall as previously, and have not therefore felt the same sense of belonging, new members did not join the Association.[35]

The University Hall Association had a longer history; however, as is apparent in the 1967 *Bulletin*, the membership of the association was predominantly comprised of graduates of the pre-1939 period. The notion of being at university in a privileged environment, with only a generation of women before them, may have made the women of the pre-war era more inclined to commemorate their experiences. The personal testimonies of the respondents in this research are therefore particularly important. As noted earlier in the chapter, 28 of these women had experienced some time in university halls of residence. Of the 28, sixteen had shared a room at some point within their first two years of residence. The women generally noted that sharing was not a problem. Staying at University Hall in the 1960s, Sheila highlighted that the women were 'paired off' by the Warden according to their

[34] *University Hall Association Fiftieth Anniversary Bulletin* (University of Liverpool, 1952) and *The Phoenix 1912 –1916* are held in Special Collections and Archives at the University of Liverpool.
[35] A. R. Allan, *The University of Liverpool Rankin Hall 1922-1972: 'The Towers'* (University of Liverpool Press, 1972), p. 41.

background and interests. Marlene, residing at University Hall in the same period, wrote:

> I think it was good to share in the first year, it provided a ready made friend in a subject other than sociology. She was a medic, and we remained friends as long as we were at uni together, sharing a flat in the 3rd year.[36]

Similarly, two women at university during the 1950s recalled sharing a room as beneficial. Having a roommate in fact gave Mary the confidence to meet new people, whilst for Jean it resulted in a lasting friendship. It was not, however, plain sailing for all of the women. Miss Bazire, mentioned above, noted that in most cases it had proved possible for four students to share successfully, and similarly many trios had been able to work a 'modus vivendi', but in some cases difficulties had arisen. Ann, residing at Rankin Hall from 1964 to 1965, was one such case.[37] As a veterinary student sharing with a fellow scientist and two arts students, different workloads and coming and going at different times made life difficult. The extension of 'men hours' and late leave, Miss Bazire felt, had accentuated the problems of sharing a room. Josette, living at Rankin Hall in 1970, bore testimony to this observation:

> I shared with two girls. One was very pleasant and easy to get on with. The other was difficult and had a strange boyfriend who spent virtually all his time with us. I felt driven out of the room a lot of the time.[38]

While demands for more freedom constituted an important part of hall life for some women throughout the 1960s, in the case of shared rooms the actual practicalities of extended hours were somewhat more problematic. For one resident of University Hall in the 1960s a clash of personalities caused difficulties:

> I did not enjoy sharing a room in my first year because of the personality and character of my roommate, but the other friends I made remained life-long friends and compensated for my temporary unhappiness.[39]

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[36] Questionnaire, record 38.
[37] A. R. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
[38] Questionnnaire, record 74.
[39] *Ibid*, record 36.

On being asked if they felt that hall life was restrictive in any way, the majority of women answered no. All the women highlighted the rules and regulations that constituted a central aspect of life in halls, but for the large part the women did not object to them, or find them problematic. The one respondent who lived in halls of residence in the late 1940s noted: 'At that time I never questioned the necessity of being in at a certain time. It was very different.'[40] Similarly, the women in halls during the 1960s documented that by today's standards hall life was restrictive, but that within this era such restrictions were accepted as the norm. In contrast to the complaints documented in the *Guild Gazette* and the hall records of the 1960s, the respondents within hall in this decade did not articulate any great sense of injustice: 'By today's standards it was very restrictive, but my friends and I were perfectly happy with the rules.'[41] The rules, however, could always be worked around, as Marlene highlighted: 'We had french windows in our room in first year and let visitors in and out after hours – we would probably have been sent down if found out, but it was all pretty innocent.'[42] One respondent living at University Hall and Dale Hall during the same period wrote:

> No I didn't find hall life restrictive. Asking for a late pass was a bit tiresome. I had to work very hard (limited brainpower) and didn't socialise a great deal, thus late passes weren't a daily request. Home life was just as restrictive in those days, so no change really![43]

Similarly, Sheila found: 'a great deal of freedom compared to living at home. We did have to request 'late leave', but were never refused it. It seemed a sensible and

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[40] *Ibid*, record 6.
[41] *Ibid*, record 32.
[42] *Ibid*, record 38.
[43] *Ibid*, record 40.

reasonable rule.'[44] By the 1970s, however, as a resident of Rankin Hall Josette found life 'terrible':

> You had to seek approval to spend a weekend away and leave a phone number. I always felt I was being checked up on and treated like a child. It was sometimes too cold to work. Electric blankets weren't allowed and the bursar checked![45]

While the end of *in loco parentis* was welcomed by the Vice-Chancellors and Principals in 1968, and the age of majority officially lowered in 1969, the effect upon hall life could vary. For example, an observer at Liverpool noted: 'A slow process of change post-Latey, depending on the warden'.[46] For Josette, the regulations of Rankin Hall proved to be unacceptable. As noted, the Latey Committee did not anticipate that rules within university halls of residence would effectively disappear, and for two respondents in mixed halls of residence in the mid-1970s such regulations made life difficult and intolerable. Jane, who studied architecture, emphasised the problems of a regimented hall life:

> Meal times sometimes conflicted with crits which went on a long time. Heating went off at a certain time in the evening, so if I wanted to work late I got cold. Then there was a bell for breakfast![47]

Slightly older than the average student and local to the area, one respondent wrote:

> I very rarely stayed there. I was two years older than the other students and found them very immature. I had my own social life and friends outside halls. Felt I couldn't bring my friends back. Couldn't make much noise, had to be back at a reasonable time.[48]

Recollections of social activities which took place in the halls of residence varied, and perhaps reflected the level of involvement in hall life on the part of the individual student. Generally, however, the testimonies did not suggest that a vibrant

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[44] *Ibid.*, record 45.
[45] *Ibid.*, record 74.
[46] Silver, H. and Silver, P., *op. cit.*, p.42.
[47] Questionnaire, record 63.
[48] *Ibid.*, record 80.

organised social life existed within halls of residence in the post-war period; an annual ball appeared to be for the majority the mainstay of any organised social life. Audrey Hillary, the final contributor to the *University Hall Fiftieth Anniversary Bulletin*, and a resident of University Hall in the early 1950s, documented the plays performed, bonfire and firework displays on November 5th, Christmas parties, and entertainment provided in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Audrey emphasised that the record of social events said:

> nothing of the other important realities of Hall Life – the indefinable things which make Hall so much more than just 'a place to stay', and which are as real to present students as they were to those of earlier generations; the small ceremonies – formal dinner, singing grace, bowing to High Table.[49]

Similarly, formal dinner was an important aspect of life in Rankin Hall: Latin grace continued to be sung before and after a meal until 1970.[50] The women who did recollect more than simply an annual ball had resided in either University Hall or Rankin Hall, the oldest of the women's halls of residence, in the period in which they were still single-sex institutions. Within these halls there was perhaps more of a tradition of attempting to continue the ideal of college life as originally promoted by the women's colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. As a resident of University Hall in the early 1960s Shirley recalled:

> Hall formals, formal dinners, sherry parties and 'at homes' given by the Warden. Also informal coffee evenings to entertain visiting guests and academics. These took place in students' rooms after dinner.[51]

Similarly, Marlene provided a rich insight into life in University Hall in the 1960s:

> It was a very secure existence - good when you are away from home for the first time. The food was very good - better than the other halls – so you were well looked after. Never lonely - evenings were spent working and making toast on gas fires in each other's rooms. There was also a library in hall where my roommate and I would sometimes work - you could leave an essay and books spread out to work at. Meals were formal with Latin grace sung at the

[49] *op.cit.*, p. 79.
[50] Allan, A., *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[51] Questionnaire, record 45.

> beginning and at each end. A Dr Clifford (female) was head of halls and sat at top table with bursar and various tutors on a raised platform. I actually enjoyed the formality and ceremony. Permission to leave meal early, or miss meal had to be given by Dr. Clifford in a morning - she would nod you out of the meal and girls hovered there to catch her eye. Some societies had small groups in Hall e.g. Methodist Society would meet in small groups in Hall. Vague memories of a social in the lounge where some students performed – played piano, guitar, etc. End of term dinner I remember Dennis Chapman as a speaker referring to women's halls of residences as fortresses of virginity where the drawbridges were occasionally let down.[52]

As Edwards discovered in regard to the pre-1939 period, women living in halls of residence at the University of Liverpool did not restrict their social activities to hall. This statement was equally, if not more so, applicable to this later period. On being asked to what extent their university life revolved around life in halls and hall friends, it became evident that in terms of social activities university clubs and societies, along with events organised by the Students' Union played a larger part in the women's social lives. Hall friends, however, often played a very important role. Judith, living in Dale Hall in the 1960s, highlighted this point and also emphasised the effect that living in a hall residence, not in the immediate vicinity of the university campus, could have on one's social life:

> I had five particular friends and we almost always sat together at dinner, had late night coffee and philosophy sessions after work was done, went out for walks and shopping trips together. We all belonged to a variety of university societies which kept us late after lectures, but we almost always caught the special 'late bus' at 7pm back to Mossley Hill – so living in hall affected our life outside hall because of the practicalities of transport.[53]

One respondent noted that departmental friends played a greater role in her life, although friendship with four girls from hall had been maintained up to the present day. For a veterinary student of the 1960s, however, the fact that her friends were from hall as opposed to her course was a favourable aspect of hall life:

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[52] *Ibid.*, record 38.
[53] *Ibid.*, record 32.

> University life for me didn't revolve round life in hall, more around the vet course, which was intense compared to non vocational courses, i.e. no free spots during the day. However, being in hall meant that my friends were not vet students (only two of us in hall), which was good thing as conversation was never work and it served as a break. I've remained in touch with several of them.[54]

Nearly all of the women emphasised how much they had enjoyed their time in halls of residence. Those women who had found hall life restrictive in the 1970s, obviously did not, however, enjoy the experience so much, but even they had at least one positive point to make in favour of halls of residence. For example, residing in Rankin Hall in 1970 Josette wrote:

> I hated it. I didn't enjoy the girls' boarding school atmosphere and it was physically very uncomfortable. The cold was awful and the food wasn't plentiful. The hall library was a good place to work, however, and I made one very good friend.[55]

The notion of hall life being a good environment in which to make friends was echoed in the testimonies of those women who wrote of how much they had enjoyed their time in halls of residence. The respondent living in University Hall in the 1940s contrasted her experience with life in 'digs' at the beginning of her degree:

> It was a most valuable experience. My first two terms I was in lodgings found for me by the University and looking back I realise how narrow and limiting was that time. I probably worked much harder in 'digs', but had I stayed there I would have missed so much.[56]

Similarly, one respondent at university in the 1960s emphasised the contrast between starting university life in hall of residence and private accommodation:

> I enjoyed hall very much...Having a large (10) group of close friends from many different faculties made life great fun. I remember we laughed a lot and shared any of our troubles. Those students in digs seemed to lead lonely existences.[57]

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[54] *Ibid*, record 40.
[55] *Ibid*, record 74.
[56] *Ibid*, record 6.
[57] *Ibid*, record 40.

Mary, staying at University Hall in the 1950s, noted: 'I had difficulty socialising because of a rather solitary upbringing, but I would have been even more isolated if I had not been in hall. Hall tutor was helpful and I enjoyed being with others.'[58] While for Mary residing in Dale Hall in the 1960s far from being restrictive, in comparison to home life, halls of residence were emancipating:

> It was liberating, whilst remaining safe. The men's halls were near enough. It was in a beautiful part of the city and enabled me to enjoy Sefton Park, Mossley Hill Church and the sports facilities at Wyncote. I met lots of nice people and found that I was quite gregarious. I had not had these opportunities at home.[59]

As noted earlier in the chapter, a proportion of the women who had spent some time in halls of residence went on to experience life in 'digs'. In a 1967 article in the *Guild Gazette* it was reported that some landladies, even in approved flats, were imposing strict and sometimes unrealistic regulations on the residents. Two third-year women sharing a flat complained that their landlady had imposed a no-smoking, no-drinking rule, as well as an 11pm curfew and a compulsory inspection of all guests. At the beginning of term they only received keys on their parents' insistence; however, three days later the landlady demanded the keys back, informing the women that the doors would be 'bolted' at 11pm sharp. A further complaint of the landlady was that the girl's skirts were too short. The *Gazette* referred to further incidents in which women were subjected to the same regulations as imposed by halls of residence. One student commented:

> She will allow us to have men in during the afternoon but as for the evening, that is strictly out. It is almost as silly as Halls. I suppose that if I say I am going home for the weekend, she will suspect me of taking a passionate weekend in Paris with one of my million paramours.[60]

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[58] *Ibid.*, record 28.
[59] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[60] *Guild Gazette* (University of Liverpool, 18. 10. 1967), p. 4.

With the exception of one of the respondents, complaints of tyrannical landladies or landlords were not reflected in the respondents' experiences. Ann, who did not enjoy life in halls of residence in the 1960s, was further disillusioned with the life in 'digs': 'The owner did not allow us to have a bath, wash clothes and only return to lodgings in the evening. She gave us breakfast but no evening meal.'[61] All of the women shared rented accommodation with fellow students and by the 1970s sharing with male students was also part of the whole experience. The women generally were very positive in their recollections. One of the respondents who spent her entire undergraduate years in this type of accommodation in the 1960s noted: 'It was a great experience in sharing – food, friends, ideas and clothes'.[62] As was often the case with life in halls of residence, the friendships formed were a very important aspect of the whole experience. One respondent, sharing with a group of friends in 1967, wrote:

> Very supportive group of people in both academic and personal terms. It was a learning experience - in that we emotionally and practically became self-sufficient through mutual support. Very reminiscent of Vera Brittain and Winifred Holby![63]

At university in the 1970s Janice stressed: 'It was brilliant. I am having a meal with two of the five tomorrow. I made friends for life. The five of us are still in touch. Happy days!'[64] Similarly, Megan emphasised: 'We formed close and supportive friendships which have lasted for more than 25 years even though we are now scattered all over the country.'[65] Freedom was also an important aspect. In contrast to the *Gazette* report one women wrote: 'After two years in hall I enjoyed the independence'; whilst another highlighted how a flat 'allowed freedom and privacy,

[61] Questionnaire, record 41.
[62] *Ibid*, record 33.
[63] *Ibid*, record 36.
[64] *Ibid*, record 71.
[65] *Ibid*, record 69.

but not isolated.'[66] Two of the women, however, had mixed feelings towards life in 'digs'. Marlene, who had relished her time in University Hall, on being asked whether she had enjoyed her experience of private accommodation, stated:

> Yes and no. It was a long way out – near the football ground. We did acquire bicycles and cycled in at times. The four of us were living fairly separate lives and had different groups of friends. We often ate our meal in the Union especially when revising for finals. Weekends would be spent in the flat and shopping etc done together.[67]

Similarly, another respondent had 'mixed feelings': 'It was pleasant but working (studying) was not so easy as it had been in hall, partly because we were together and partly because we were looking after ourselves.'[68]

The parental home

The reasons articulated by those women who chose to study at their local university, as discussed in Chapter 5, were intrinsically linked to those put forward explaining why they had remained living in the parental home. For those women who studied at the university in the 1940s and 1950s it was the 'norm' to attend a local university and therefore live with one's parents.

> It was the norm to live in one's university city. No local students went into hall or 'digs', and grants were restricted. There were very few places in only two women's halls.[69]

Expense was a key issue, and in combination with limited university residential provision, finance had a very large impact upon the residential options of those women who studied at the university from the 1940s through to the 1970s. At university in the 1940s, Maureen illustrated this point:

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[66] *Ibid*, record 42 and record 64.
[67] *Ibid*, record 38.
[68] *Ibid*, record 40.
[69] *Ibid*, record 9.

> The question of expense was decisive. I would have had to win a generous scholarship to be able to study elsewhere. Grants were available for those willing to undertake to teach for two years, but I was not willing to undertake such a commitment.[70]

Similarly, Stephanie, at university in the 1970s, noted:

> I was only given the minimum grant and I did not want to be more of a financial burden on my parents than necessary. Also I was very happy at home and my parents did not restrict my personal freedom or activities.[71]

Parental attitudes were another important aspect in the decision to remain living within the family home. In discussing the question of finance, Joyce, at University in the 1940s, emphasised a further consideration: 'My Victorian father insisted.'[72] As a graduate of the university almost 30 years later, one respondent echoed Joyce's explanation:

> Money! Coupled with parental pressure. This was at a time in my parent's lives when they had some financial worries. They were also keen in any event that I remained living under their roof.[73]

A fear of being anywhere else other than at home was also emphasised by several of the women. Having explained how living at home was 'easier and cheaper', Pamela at university in the 1950s, noted:

> Besides, I was shy and the stress of leaving home would have affected my work for much of the time. I could not then have adapted to living with strangers, particularly in a crowd in hall.[74]

Similarly, Hazel, a graduate of the 1970s, highlighted the lack of confidence on her part: she had rarely left Liverpool and to live at home seemed the best option. As noted earlier in the chapter, the women who lived in the parental home predominantly did so during the whole of their undergraduate course. One

[70] *Ibid.*, record 4.
[71] *Ibid.*, record 65.
[72] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[73] *Ibid.*, record 75.
[74] *Ibid.*, record 16.

respondent, however, who had actually gained a place, and lived in halls of residence in the late 1970s, left hall to return to living with her parents. Closer to her established friends and part-time employment, she noted: 'I had all the facilities I wanted – own room, phone, TV, bathroom.'[75] For those mature students who were married, often with children, and living within their own homes, the responsibilities of family life dictated their residential accommodation. As a mature student in the 1960s, Barbara emphasised how she was in charge of the care of her mother-in-law; whilst two students of the 1970s noted how they were 'responsible' for the care of their husband and children.

The extent to which the respondents felt that living within the parental home had limited their participation in university life varied, and was equally weighted between those women who felt it had limited their participation and those who felt it had not. Maria at university in the 1940s, stressed that far from limiting participation in university life, living at home strengthened involvement:

> I found it widened my participation as my supportive parents were always prepared and interested in having open house to all my friends and encouraged me to participate fully in all student and academic activities. I also participated in my parents' lives and social activities and so felt part of both university and local community.[76]

Living at home in the 1950s, Pamela emphasised how she may have missed out on some aspects of university life, but generally felt in contrast to life in halls the parental home was a beneficial environment:

> I missed out on some spontaneous parties/serious discussions etc late at night in hall, although there being few women science students I would not have had much contact with people on the same/similar courses in a single-sex hall. I had many friends in other faculties who lived in hall and I frequently visited them, especially Rankin Hall, so I did get a flavour of hall life. I was

[75] *Ibid.*, record 80.
[76] *Ibid.*, record 9.

> freer at home, without the rules, e.g. persuade my parents to let me stay out late.[77]

Gillian, at university in the same period, similarly emphasised the benefits of living at home: 'I had a great social time, but could escape home when I wanted to.'[78] Furthermore, at seventeen Gillian had felt too young to move away from Liverpool, or live in halls or digs. In contrast to those who felt that their accommodation had not compromised their involvement, the women who felt that living at the parental home had limited their university experience were more explicit in their explanations why. The effect on the women's social lives was the central aspect emphasised. Audrey, at university in the 1940s, wrote:

> It was rather like a continuation of being at school, in that I had to be home, mostly when lectures were over...My life at university was narrowed by mother's knowledge of my timetable and what time I was due home.[79]

Gillian, whose father left home when she was eleven years old, and who studied at the university in the 1960s, was severely restricted in the extent to which she could participate in university life. Caring for her sick mother during her undergraduate years, Gillian wrote: 'I did not participate in university life. I went home to study and keep house.'[80] Furthermore, the actual practicality of getting home late in the evening to areas often some distance from the university was stressed. For those women who lived on the Wirral, the Mersey was described as a 'barrier' to an active university social life:

> Living 'across the river' meant catching the last underground train at about 11:00pm, hence leaving events when they were just 'warming up'. Probably more important than that though was a sense of isolation. I was aware that most important 'talking' went on at night in a hall of residence, or flat, where people congregated...I didn't really feel part of university life, yet I was not very close to my school friends, who all still lived near to my family home. I

[77] *Ibid*, record 16.
[78] *Ibid*, record 19.
[79] *Ibid*, record 11.
[80] *Ibid*, record 34.

> would never recommend to anyone that they lived at home – I rarely felt part of university life, and I made no close friends in those four years.[81]

At university in the 1950s, Ann further highlighted another important aspect considered missing in some of the women's lives: friendships with fellow students. Frances, as a mature student in the 1970s wrote: 'I was unable to share discussions and social events, or relaxation with like-minded students. My education was restricted to lectures and books and reports.'[82] Mature students, living in their own homes, were even more limited to the extent to which they could experience a 'full' university life.

As noted in Chapter 1, Hamilton emphasises, just as the women's educationalists had foreseen, the conflicts that could arise between home and university life. In an oral history of graduates of the Scottish Universities from 1910 to 1935, Hamilton discusses the experiences of two women. Mrs M, from an upper middle-class background, articulated how her mother wanted her at home, and how she was expected to continue her role as the social daughter. In contrast, Mrs G, from a lower middle-class background, experienced a conflict between university and home life because of household chores. Furthermore, a friendship formed with a woman from a higher social status made Mrs G uneasy, as she felt concerned as to how this friend would perceive her parental home. The feelings of inadequacy, which dominated her story, may have been reduced if she had been living in a communal environment on an equal footing.[83] With regard to the respondents, while half of the women felt that living at home had limited their participation in university life, a third of the women articulated that a conflict had occurred. Joyce, who had described

[81] *Ibid*, record 17.
[82] *Ibid*, record 55.
[83] Hamilton, S., 'Interviewing the middle class: women graduates of the Scottish Universities c. 1910 – 1935', *Oral History*, 10 (1982), pp. 58-60.

her father as 'Victorian' documented the tension that arose between her own life and her father's when at university in the 1940s:

> My father liked me to accompany him to the theatre and sometimes booked in advance when I had other engagements such as rehearsal. He always waited up for me to sit and have a 'night cap' of brandy with him. I was not allowed to go to a Drama Festival at Cambridge over New Year.[84]

Several of the women highlighted how their parents' antipathy and lack of understanding of what was required at degree level created problems. Gillian, at university in the 1950s, noted: 'Mum was concerned I had so much reading to do and was certain it would harm my social chances if I was considered 'clever'. So at home I was never 'clever' and that suited us both.'[85] As a graduate of the 1960s, Pauline, a first-generation student from a working-class background, articulated the conflict that arose:

> It was hard for my parents to understand why I had to study late and I kept getting told off for using too much electricity. Also, our home was in such a scruffy area and was so cramped that I couldn't take any friends home. It was like living in two different worlds.[86]

Marlene, who noted that her family was relatively poor in contrast to her fellow students who originated from wealthier backgrounds, also raised the concept of being part of two different worlds. Hazel, studying at the university in the 1970s and from a similar background to Pauline, wrote:

> My parents' working hours clashed with mine and my late-night deadline reading caused some tension. I missed social activities on several occasions because of parental refusal. I also missed friends 'dropping in' as those in hall enjoyed.[87]

[84] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[85] *Ibid.*, record 19.
[86] *Ibid.*, record 43.
[87] *Ibid.*, record 67.

Gillian, mentioned above, who cared for her sick mother, documented how guilty she had always felt leaving her mother, commenting: 'She used emotional blackmail, although I did not realise it at the time.'[88] As a mature student in the 1970s married to a 'busy surgeon', one woman noted that the conflict that had occurred between her home and university life stemmed from her mother-in-law's concern that she would not be able to look after her husband properly. The combination of being a wife, mother and student was a 'delicate balancing act.' Frances, mentioned earlier, noted: 'My home duties had to be carried out, so frequently my personal studies from university took place after my other duties late in the evenings and early hours.'[89] In contrast, those women who emphasised that a conflict had not arisen between their university and home life demonstrated how they were in family homes sympathetic to study and the university experience. Maureen, studying in the 1940s, emphasised: 'My parents and even my grandfather who lived with us when I was a child were very much in favour of the education of women – although they did not 'push' me.'[90] Maria, whose father was a doctor, noted: 'On the contrary there was co-operation. Lecturers visited my home; my home was an extension of my student life and nearly all my friends used my home even during vacations.'[91] At university in the 1950s, Pamela commented:

> I had plenty of peace and quiet to study. My sister was married and living elsewhere, too preoccupied with her own life to interfere in mine. I probably did less 'housework' than those living in hall and certainly less than those in digs (I must have been a spoilt child!).[92]

[88] *Ibid*, record 34.
[89] *Ibid*, record 55.
[90] *Ibid*, record 4.
[91] *Ibid*, record 9.
[92] *Ibid*, record 16.

Similarly, another respondent at university in same decade stressed: 'My parents were remarkably understanding and as time went by it became a family joke that home was the most convenient place to send my mail.'[93] On being asked whether the respondents who had lived with their parents during their undergraduate years would have preferred to live in halls of residence or private accommodation a third of the women said yes they would have done. For those women who felt restricted in their activities by their parents, freedom was a key issue. Joyce, mentioned earlier, 'longed for more freedom from parental control'; whilst Gillian, responsible for the care of her mother, felt that had she lived in alternative accommodation she would have been able to leave all her problems at home and enjoy student life. To live in a hall of residence, as opposed to digs and the corresponding domestic obligations, was the preferred option, and was perceived as more conducive to a 'fuller' social experience by those women who lived with their families.

The women's educationalists who advocated that a residential life for university women would avoid the conflicting demands of home and college life and lead to close personal friendships, certainly appears to be born out by the testimonies of those respondents who lived in both halls of residence and student 'digs'. Despite the university's unequal residential requirements for male and female students, and the complaints that prevailed in both the hall records and *Guild Gazette* throughout the 1960s, the respondents did not recount any great sense of injustice. With the exception of several women who lived in halls of residence in the 1970s, the women generally emphasised how much they had enjoyed the residential experience, and the friendships formed in both hall and rented accommodation were a very important part of the whole experience. Furthermore, their lives predominantly revolved around

[93] *Ibid.*, record 27.

university life and university friends. In comparison, for those women who lived with their parents during their undergraduate years their lives did not completely revolve around university life. On the one hand, this meant that the women could have the best of both worlds, and on the other that they did not fully belong to the university community: social life and personal friendships could be somewhat comprised. It was striking from the testimonies of all the respondents, that the section of the questionnaire that addressed their involvement in the more 'corporate' activities of student life, such as membership of clubs and societies and involvement in student politics did not provide any significantly rich data. The women documented their involvement in this corporate university culture, which revealed that they were overwhelming members of various societies, used the students' union for a variety of purposes and to varying degrees, and did not generally become involved in student politics. Nevertheless, the lack of rich material suggests that the historian's tendency towards defining students' social lives in such corporate terms fails to reveal the reality of students' social lives. For example, the testimonies of those women who lived in university halls of residence showed that it was the close friendships formed with fellow women and living their lives with these women on a day-to-day basis that was the central aspect of their social experience.

Having considered the respondents' social and residential lives, Chapters 8 and 9 of the thesis will now explore their postgraduate experiences.

Chapter 8

'What shall I be?': the postgraduate lives of women graduates of The University of Liverpool

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Considering the graduate careers of the group of respondents is an intrinsic part of exploring their life histories. This chapter is therefore concerned to track the career paths of the women, to discover the types of employment they entered on leaving university, and the impact of family life upon their career patterns. Having explored the more quantitative aspect to the respondents' working lives, the chapter will discuss their personal reflections upon their careers. Considering who or what influenced their choice of occupation since leaving university, the extent to which they felt they had made the progress in their careers that they had hoped for, whether or not they had experienced any form of discrimination throughout their careers on the grounds of sex, and their attitudes towards the importance of paid employment in women's lives are all areas of discussion. The first section of the chapter, however, will consider the occupational routes followed by women graduates of the pre-1939 period as identified by historians, and in the absence of any published historical research on British graduate women and work in the post-1939 era, contemporary sources and autobiographical accounts will be analysed to provide an insight into this latter period.

A good job for a girl?

In a study of women graduates of the Scottish universities in the pre-1939 period, Hamilton notes the ease of highlighting famous or outstanding women graduates, and advocates the need to 'get beyond' the eminent pioneers to find those less prominent

women whose experiences were more common to the majority. Such women, Hamilton concludes, became teachers, and fellow historians who consider the careers of university-educated women in the pre-1939 period also emphasise teaching as the dominant profession followed.[1] Gibert emphasises that teaching was a profession that closely conformed to Victorian concepts of propriety and femininity, but there were also economic incentives for women to enter teaching. First, against the background of an expanding educational system in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, government policies encouraged the supply of women teachers. Second, in terms of personal finance, teaching was amongst the most lucrative employment open to female graduates.[2] The marriage bar, however, prevented many women from holding positions long enough to obtain promoted posts. In considering the careers of women graduates of the post-1939 period, research currently being conducted shows that teaching continued to play a dominant role in the lives of university-educated women. For example, research into the life experiences of Girtonian women has revealed that in 1960, 50 per cent of women became teachers: by the 1970s nearly one-third of Girton graduates continued to follow this occupational route.[3]

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[1] Sanderson, M., *The Universities and British Industry 1850-1970* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), chapter 11; Hamilton, S., *Women and the Scottish Universities c. 1869-1939: a social history* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1987), chapter 6; Gibert, J., *Women at the English Universities 1880-1920* (PhD, University of North Carolina, 1988), chapter 6; Moore, L., *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen University Press, 1991), pp. 125-131; Dyhouse, C., 'Signing the pledge? Women's investment in university education and teacher training before 1939', *History of Education*, 26 (1997), p. 223; Edwards, L., *Women students at the University of Liverpool: their academic careers and postgraduate lives 1883 to 1937* (PhD, University of Liverpool, 1999), chapters 7 and 8.

[2] Gibert, J., *Ibid.*

[3] Erickson, E., 'University and Life Experiences: Graduates of Girton College, Cambridge, 1920-1990' paper presented at Academie Badan, Germany, 6/12/97, conference: 'Education as the Key to Women's Emancipation in Europe: A Twentieth Century Myth?'. See also Wakeling, J., 'University education in twentieth century Scotland, with particular reference to Glasgow University', and Sanderson, M., "...and will girls be admitted?' Women at the University of East Anglia in the 1960s' papers presented at the University of Cambridge, 24/9/98, conference: 'The transformation of an elite? Women and higher education since 1900'.

With regard to the employment opportunities for female graduates of the British universities following the Second World War, contemporary sources can help provide an insight into a period in the history of women's higher education which is currently undeveloped. Judith Hubback's *Wives who went to College*, published in 1957, offers a window into post-war attitudes to the employment of married graduate women. The study reflects the post-1945 acceptance of women returning to work after a period of childrearing. Hubback positively advocates that educated women should return to employment and lead 'more socially-directed' lives, once they are no longer required in the home to the same extent. Society was in need of competent workers in many professions, especially the female ascribed occupations of teaching, nursing and social work:

> Society can reasonably expect that after what may be called the acute stage of motherhood is over, the educated woman should have enough sense of public responsibility to try to devote at least part of her energy and ability to socially valuable work.[4]

The emphasis upon 'socially valuable' work represents the notion (discussed in Chapter 5) that women entering into the 'public' domain of employment should be concerned with the moral welfare of society. Educated women were to be surrogate mothers in the classroom, the hospital and in the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. Hubback acknowledged, however, that not all women wished to work for 'motives of civic or community responsibility'; and noted the personal motivations to return to work may have been to use a 'otherwise restless mind', or else prevent brooding over the loss that the departure of children could invoke. She noted the problems women faced in combining a family and work, and presented part-time employment as the best option. Married women without children could

[4] Hubback, J. *Wives who went to college* (William Heinemann, 1957), p. 6.

perhaps enter full-time employment, but the woman who combined family and full-time work needed to be, amongst other factors, 'ruthless towards the feminine side of her nature'. Discussing the family of the university-educated woman in terms of a disability, Hubback wrote:

> From the professional woman's point of view, marriage and motherhood constitute, in a sense, a disability. They limit her outside work and earning capacities. They may, and in many cases do, increase her qualifications for certain kinds of work...As her first loyalty is to her husband and children and home, her outside work always comes second...it is essential for her to come to terms with this disability, as she would have to, for example, with deafness or blindness.[5]

The married graduate woman was to accept her lot. On re-entering employment, Hubback advised that those professions which could benefit from the qualities developed by motherhood should be targeted. Once again, teaching, nursing and the social services were emphasised as potential avenues of employment. Following the further expansion of the education system in the post-Second World War period, the incentive for women to enter teaching continued, and in 1963 Dame Kitty Anderson drew attention to the shortage of teachers. She noted that the Association of Head Mistresses was actively campaigning to recruit married women into teaching: 'All Head Mistresses are rapidly becoming adept in the art of time-tabling for part-time teachers!'[6] Contemplating the career aspirations of women going up to university in the early 1960s, Anderson noted that in her experience women were attracted to careers that they could return to later during married life. Social work and teaching were regarded as offering such options. The primacy of women's role in society as wife and mother was not challenged.[7]

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[6] Anderson, K., *Women and the universities: a changing pattern* (Fawcett Society, 1963), p. 17.
[7] A study conducted by the British Federation of University Women can also provide an insight into the working lives of university-educated women. See Arregger, C. E., *Graduate Women at Work*, (Oriel Press, 1966).

Kelsall, Poole and Kuhn's substantial survey of every woman and every other man who had completed a first degree in 1960 concluded that:

> Highly educated women are, far more than their male counterparts, greatly restricted in their occupational achievements by prevailing conditions which bear little relation to their training and capabilities.[8]

They indicated that the prevailing ideological climate gave rise to this situation, resulting in few graduate women being employed in the older professions, management and 'high status' careers, whilst a substantial proportion were concentrated in teaching. The influence of an ideology concerned with the 'place of women' in the home and society was emphasised by Kelsall et al has having a major impact on the type of work undertaken by women. The study, published in 1972, put forward the notion that the majority of women, including their sample of women graduates, accorded to a 'moderate' conception of the role of women. Exponents of this 'moderate' ideology aimed to 'effect ways and means by which women can participate in work while continuing many of their traditional obligations at home.'[9] It was accepted that children needed security and a regular way of life and this in turn was interpreted as a mother always having to be on hand. There was also, however, the recognition that women could make a valuable contribution outside the home once their children were at school. It could be suggested that Judith Hubback was an exponent of such an ideology. Kelsall et al emphasised that this moderate position had far-reaching consequences. First, graduate women might possibly be out of paid employment for six to seven years, a situation which was inconsistent with success in many 'high status' occupations. Second, women sought employment which was best adjusted to the strain of combining home and paid employment:

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[8] Kelsall, R. K., Poole, A., and Kuhn, A., *Graduates: The Sociology of an Elite* (Methuen, 1972), p. 140.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

> And this is precisely why...the prospect of a career in teaching appeals so strongly to women generally, since no other occupation is so clearly adapted to their domestic duties.[10]

They further add: 'Yet even in teaching, of course, women compete far less successfully than men in terms of obtaining key posts in that profession.'[11] With regard to teaching Kelsall et al concludes:

> The end result is clearly that neither the occupational structure nor family organisation are forced to undergo modification necessary for graduate women to have a variety of outlets for their occupational interests and, in effect, teaching provides a safety valve which allows the status quo both in fields of employment and in domestic arrangements to be preserved.[12]

Published autobiographical accounts are also invaluable in providing an insight into graduate women and work in the post-war period. As a graduate of Nottingham University in 1955, Dulcie Groves in an autobiographical account recollects her thinking behind her initial career choice:

> after much thought about a future career...and having earlier failed the 'short' entry exams to the administrative grade of the Civil Service, I decided to take a postgraduate Froebel teacher's training diploma at Maria Grey College...This was greeted as a very strange choice by both my (female) academic tutor and my mother who did not regard primary school teaching as a graduate career. Hence I set out my reasons in a letter: the qualification offered long-term career possibilities outside schoolteaching, I could teach part time if married – it fitted in with domestic life, four years at university was infinitely better than two in a 'hen-house' – a teachers' training college.[13]

Despite the fact that Dulcie did not go on to marry and embarked on career as a lecturer in social policy in the 1960s, she emphasised how she had always imagined that she would marry, which is reflected in her decision to take a teaching diploma following graduation. Remaining single, however, was not something that she had regretted, having observed the way in which married women were discriminated

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[10] *Ibid*, p. 151.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Ibid*, p. 153.
[13] Groves, D., 'Dear Mum and Dad: letters home from a women's hall of residence at the University of Nottingham 1952-55', *History of Education*, 22 (1993), p. 300.

against in the workplace, and how restricted their lives seemed. Nevertheless, she felt: 'that I had become a 'career woman' by default'.[14] Ingham's *Now We Are Thirty*, which provides autobiographical accounts of the lives of a group of women who entered grammar school in 1958, further highlights the limited career options that were available to women in this post-war period. From school, through to graduation, a lack of careers advice was evident. A woman's career did not matter because it would be so short-lived, and Ingham emphasised that advertisements in the 1960s and early 1970s left no doubt in a woman's mind who would get the job, for example: 'opportunity for...young journalist...to rise quickly in status and salary for man willing to work hard.'[15] Graduating from the University of Liverpool in the late 1960s, Ingham's personal recollections disclose a real fear for her future at the end of her undergraduate years: 'The trouble was that the £360 a year was about to come to an end; but no had told me what happened next.'[16] Raised to understand her role in life as primarily that of wife and mother, her diary in 1968 revealed her inability to define herself in any other way: 'Oh God, why am I not married and happy with two kids?'[17] Ingham noted that her contemporaries, armed with their degrees, largely went on to teaching. For some it was a lukewarm acceptance of the only option that presented itself. Glenda stressed:

> I looked around for alternative careers, there weren't any, and it was a convenient career because you can go back after having a family, which we expected to do. I'd work for four years, have a baby or two, and then go back.[18]

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[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Ingham, M., *Now We Are Thirty: Women of the Breakthrough Generation* (Eyre Methuen, 1981), p. 97.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 116-117.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

In 1959, as a graduate of the University of Liverpool with a chemistry and physics degree, Barbara's testimony also reflected this lack of choice. Having felt encouraged by her school and industry to study at university, she recalled the dissatisfactory attitude she came up against at a university careers day:

> We had a careers convention here and I went and somebody was more or less saying there was not much for women in industry, they should go into teaching or something. So I got mad and said to this, it was somebody from Dunlop, 'why were women encouraged to come to university if they didn't give them a chance, and I thought we were just as good as men at doing these sorts of jobs.'[19]

Barbara's direct confrontation paid off – she was sent a letter soon after with an offer of employment. Beginning work for Dunlop in 1959, Barbara was an anomaly within the organisation:

> When I started work I was the first woman they had ever had in the Chemistry lab. I couldn't understand why all these people were walking through and I found out afterwards they were coming to have a look at this peculiar person.[20]

Those women who stepped outside the confines of 'female' employment could find life difficult. In 1972, Pat worked as a marketing services manager with a brewery firm:

> I met a lot of the 'What's a pretty girl like you doing in a man's world like this?/I prefer women without brains/supine' attitude and a lot of the 'Gosh you must be clever/can I lay you?' (i.e., liberated/economically independent equals promiscuous) and also the patronising – and sometimes – totally ignoring – attitudes.[21]

Dale Spender's *Learning to Lose*, published in 1980, grants an insight into the autobiographical experiences of a group of women whose education spanned the years 1946 to 1979, and of whom the majority were university graduates. Pippa

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[19] Barbara Pye, graduate of the University of Liverpool 1959, interviewed by Sarah Aiston on 16. 5. 96.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 149.

Brewster, who graduated from Durham University in 1971, notes that the autobiographies of the contributors reveal an absence of aspiration in terms of work. Not one of the women mentioned making a choice:

> I was twenty-three when I realised that I had become a teacher. I had never made any conscious decision to go into teaching. I had never felt any 'vocation' for it. I had drifted into it, carried gently on the tide of 'It's a good job for a girl. You get good money – it's equal pay. You can always go back to it after you have had children'. I didn't resist the tide.[22]

Echoing the fear recalled by Ingham on leaving university, contributors to *Learning to Lose* highlight that the 'dividends of femininity' could appear to be much greater than those of the 'career woman'. The message of maternal fulfilment was far more appealing than that of the stereotype of the 'old maid'. Born in 1950, Irene Payne emphasised that even at university sexist ideology was not challenged:

> The possibilities for female employment were presented within the confines of what was appropriate to our sex. Limitations operated even for the academic elite, for the role of wife and mother was never lost sight of; it was always taken into consideration when discussing future careers. Those careers which were presented as possibilities were the ones most easily accommodated with the female reproductive role, and were often an extension of the female involvement with children, such as teaching, for example.[23]

Katherine Clarricoates felt that the assumption that it was a man's place to work and pursue a career with single-minded dedication, whereas a woman had to divide her time between paid employment and the family, was a dominant aspect of 1970s society. Consequently, the pursuit of promotion was not part of a woman's psychological make-up; time would not allow it, nor would the guilt incurred of pursuing an individual ambition that would detract from family life.[24]

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[22] Brewster, P., 'School Days, School Days', in Spender, D. and Sarah. E. (eds.), *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education* (The Women's Press, 1980), p.7.
[23] Payne, I., 'A Working-Class Girl in a Grammar School', in Spender, D. and Sarah, E. (eds.), *Ibid.*, p.19.
[24] Clarricoates, K., 'All in a Day's Work', in Spender, D. and Sarah, E. (eds.), *Ibid.*, p.77.

Having considered the secondary literature available in respect to the career choices for graduate women in the pre-1939 period, and drawn upon contemporary and autobiographical sources to consider the post-1939 era, this chapter will now consider the career experiences of the group of respondents.

Career experiences of Liverpool women graduates

Documented below are the initial employment destinations of the group of respondents. As is shown teaching, and especially secondary school teaching, continued to be the major occupational route for the group of respondents. Historians of the pre-1939 period highlight the predominance of the teaching profession for graduate women and, as is seen above, teaching and lecturing dominated the lives of this particular group. Those who had studied for arts and science degrees (73 of the respondents), however, increasingly entered teaching to a lesser extent. For example, whilst eight women, out of thirteen arts and science graduates in the 1940s, entered teaching, only ten women, out of thirty arts and science graduates in the 1970s, did so. This entry to a wider range of occupations, however, did not represent the women entering traditionally male areas of employment on any large scale. Of those arts and science graduates who did not go into teaching, only three of the women entered what might be considered as more 'masculine' areas of employment (trainee trading standards officer, accountant, town planning officer). Those respondents who studied for professional degrees, with the exception of one woman who studied for an architecture degree and initially went into administration, followed their chosen occupations as dictated by their degree.

Table 8. 1: First employment destinations of women graduates of the University of Liverpool[25]

Occupation		Number
• Teacher/Lecturer:	Primary	4
	Secondary	24
	Further	1
	Higher	6
	Unknown	7
	Total	*42*
• Administrator		8
• Social Worker		5
• Researcher:	Science	3
	Other	1
	Total	*4*
• Dentist		3
• Vet (small animals)		2
• Architect		2
• Articled clerk (law)		2
• Accountant		2
• House Officer (doctor)		1
• Chemist		1
• Clinical psychologist		1
• Gallery curator		1
• Technical translator		1
• Civil Servant		1
• Town Planning Officer		1
• Trainee Trading Standards Officer		1
• Manager of Retail Shop		1
• Owner of Retail Shop		1
• Director in family business		1
• Unknown		1
TOTAL		**82**

While this group of women in no way form a statistically significant sample, it was interesting to note that the trends identified within the group reflected those as shown by Liverpool University's Surveys of Employment. Up until the 1970s, teaching accounted for the initial destination of approximately 45 per cent of women graduates, and by the 1970s a third of graduate women continued to enter this

[25] An individual breakdown of the respondents' initial employment is provided in Appendix 7.

profession.[26] In addition, this trend is reflected in the University Grants Committee statistics. In 1963 the University Grants Committee for the first time published statistics relating to the careers (including further education and training) followed by men and women graduating from their first degree.[27] In the mid 1960s, 42 per cent of graduate women entered teacher training or the educational sector (schools, universities, technical colleges and places of further education) on leaving university. By the early 1970s this avenue continued to account for 34 per cent of women graduates. The end of the 1970s, however, witnessed a decrease in the number of university women who initially went into teaching; just less than one-fifth of graduate women chose this option. The statistics provided by Liverpool University's Surveys of Employment and the University Grants Committee do not, however, give an insight into the career progression of male and female graduates. Nor do the figures indicate how many women entered teaching in later life.

The respondents did not always remain in the same occupation that they had entered on leaving university: thirty-five of the group went on to change occupations, and seven women changed more than once. Of those women who changed careers, eight moved into teaching, and it was evident that these women had changed to accommodate family life. As a graduate of the 1960s in Botany and Zoology, Moira was initially employed as a research assistant, but was to soon change direction. Her account of her working life is atypical of the group in terms of the variety of occupations she entered:

> Personal disenchantment with lab work led to move to farming (in spite of halving income), together with a yen for outdoor life and friends who were willing to give me a job. Pregnancy put an end to farming. Return to farm work due to need for money to finance pony, then into teaching partly because better paid than factory work and talked into it by friends. I had

[26] See *Annual Reports* (The University of Liverpool, Special Collections and Archives).
[27] See *First Employment of University Graduates*, University Grants Committee (London, HMSO). From 1971 this series continued as *First Destination of University Graduates*.

> never wanted to teach, but gave it a try. Retired when offered early retirement by LEA. Care assistant work beckoned, as my aunt lived there and I was a regular visitor.[28]

Pauline, who graduated in the 1960s and went on to teach German, had a drastic change of career following a trip to Germany where she met the Moral Rearmament Army. Once again, Pauline's experiences were not representative of the group; the majority followed much more conventional paths. Reflecting upon her change of direction, Pauline wrote: 'Meeting MRA in Berlin after seeing the wall just after it had been erected. I wanted to help build a world where such divisions would be removed.'[29] Pauline's experiences were also unusual for two further reasons. First, she was different in the sense that as a single woman, several years of her working life had been dedicated to voluntary work. While a significant number of women documented voluntary activities they had been involved in, ranging from fundraising through to school governor, voluntary work did not actually replace paid employment. Hubback, in her study of married women graduates, emphasised how post-1939 financial considerations, for example higher levels of taxation, acted as a barrier to voluntary work being carried out in the place of paid employment. Second, Pauline had not only spent most of her working life outside of the North West, but had worked abroad. In comparison, just fewer than three-quarters of the respondents had spent a substantial proportion of their lives living and working in the North West.

In the post-Second World War period, as discussed in Chapter 3, marriage no longer signified a woman's withdrawal from the labour market, and this was generally reflected in the lives of the respondents who married. Only seven, out of the 68 women who married, noted that they had given up work on marriage. For

[28] Questionnaire, record 47.
[29] *Ibid*, record 43.

three of the respondents giving up employment on marriage was not an issue, since they were undergraduates when they married; whilst two of the women noted that they had not actually given up work on marriage, but the status of their employment had changed. For example, one respondent began locum veterinary work on marriage, as opposed to continuing with full-time employment. In considering the effect of children upon the respondents' working lives it is difficult to reflect the variety of individual experiences. It is possible, however, to highlight new trends that developed as to when the women returned to work following childbirth. One of the respondents rightly pointed out that the question: 'What age/s were your children when you returned to work and what did you do then?' presupposed that the women actually did return to work. While this was a valid critique of the question, it was generally very unusual for the women not to return to some form of paid employment, with only two women never entering the labour market again. For those women who had their first child in the 1950s, a complete break from paid employment until their last child had reached school age was the general trend, followed by a return to either full or part-time work. Kathleen, who had her first child in 1958, emphasised: 'Remember – in the 40s and 50s it was <u>normal</u> for mothers to be at home and to bring up their own children. Under five care was not really available.'[30] As discussed in Chapter 3, theories of maternal deprivation combined with the lack of childcare facilities, necessitated women taking on fully the maternal role. In analysing the employment patterns of those women who had their first child in the 1960s, it was striking that a new trend had developed, whereby some of the women, who had more than one child, entered part-time employment in between children. The 1975 Employment Protection Act, which made paid maternity leave a statutory right, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy unfair and required

[30] Questionnaire, record 12.

employers to give mothers their jobs back within 29 weeks of childbirth, signified a third new trend which was reflected in some of the respondents' working experiences. Some of the women who were had their first child post-1975 returned to work following their statutory maternity leave. As stressed, however, whilst three developing trends were identified, they did not reflect the experiences of all those women who had children in any given period. For example, Janice, a social worker, who had her first child in 1980, did not return to work until her youngest child was four years old. This type of employment pattern was reminiscent of the one followed by those women who had children in the 1950s. Only two of the women stressed that they had at no point stopped working whilst bringing up children. Both of the respondents were self-employed architects. Audrey, who had her first child in 1959, wrote:

> I have never stopped working as an architect even with a very young family. Working from home fitted in with family life, and most of the drawing and plans were done at night when children were in bed![31]

The factors which influenced the respondents' decision to return to work after childbirth could be essentially reduced to five. The factor most frequently noted was financial necessity, and those women who graduated in the 1960s and 1970s particularly emphasised this point. The second most documented factor was consideration for their children's care. For example, one of the vets noted: 'What influenced me about when I returned to work was when I felt that my husband could cope with putting the children to bed – I was doing evening surgeries.'[32] Once the children were in settled circumstances, the women could then contemplate a return to work. Stimulation was the third factor mentioned by the women. While Judith emphasised that she had enjoyed being at home and only returned to employment for

[31] *Ibid*, record 8.
[32] *Ibid*, record 40.

economic reasons, other respondents stressed the boredom they had suffered and the desire for professional stimulation. Hazel wrote: 'I was dissatisfied with life at home. I mourned the loss of my career, company and independence.'[33] The fourth most cited reason was that the opportunity had simply arisen, and this was particularly specific to those women in the teaching profession:

> The opportunity arose and I was approached by friends to teach in a local school requiring a qualified teacher who could teach commercial subjects (a rare combination then) and to open the first commercial department in a Catholic SM school in Liverpool - a challenge![34]

In contrast to the fact that a selection of the women re-entered employment because the opportunity simply presented itself, a very small minority of women stated that actual enjoyment of their job was as an influential factor in the decision to re-enter employment. Career motivation, therefore formed the fifth category. While the motivation of two of the respondents could not strictly be described as career motivation, the fear of actually losing their careers provided the impetus. Rosalind, who returned to work following maternity leave, commented: '...Knowing that if I gave up my job I was unlikely to find the equivalent when I felt I wanted to return to work.'[35]

Before exploring the groups' reflections upon their working lives it is important to consider the issue of university education and social mobility. In a recent conference paper Dyhouse emphasised the difficulties of deciphering social class gains for graduate women. Women's positioning in the family, and their different career structures in contrast to male graduates, make analysis complex.[36] In

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[33] *Ibid*, record 67.
[34] *Ibid*, record 9.
[35] *Ibid*, record 76.
[36] Dyhouse, C., 'Going to university before 1939: expectations and experiences in relation to class' paper presented at the History of Education Annual Conference, 3-5/12/99, conference: 'Breaking Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Experience of Education'.

considering the social class gains of the group of respondents, their occupations on leaving university were analysed, based on the classification scheme adopted in Chapter 5, and contrasted with their social class on birth (based on father's occupation). Just over half of the women experienced social mobility, and of those women, the majority originated from working and lower middle-class backgrounds. Only a very small minority of the women actually experienced downward social mobility, and conversely the women had originated from upper middle-class backgrounds. For example, one woman, whose father was a general practitioner, was employed in clerical work on leaving university. For those women who had originated from middle middle-class backgrounds, generally no social class gains were made, as the women remained part of the same class into which they had been born.

Having discussed the defining characteristics of the career paths of the group of respondents, the chapter will now explore the more qualitative aspects of their working lives.

On being asked who or what had influenced their choice of occupation since leaving university, the respondents gave a variety of responses. For those women who emphasised that it had always been their intention to enter a certain profession, their career choices were more straightforward and had largely been mapped out. The twelve women who had studied for professional degrees, such as dentistry and law, had dictated their occupation by their choice of degree, whilst several of the women stressed that teaching had always been their original choice of career. In contrast, the majority of the women, predominantly arts and science graduates had no definite idea of what they wanted to do on graduating from university, and both availability of jobs and family circumstances and commitments played crucial roles in their life

decisions. The respondents emphasised the limited career options which faced them as women and potential mothers. As a maths graduate of the late 1940s one woman noted a: 'lack of opportunities in 1948 to work in mathematics other than teaching. After 1966 it was easier to teach with young children.'[37] Audrey, as a fellow graduate of the same period, highlighted the predominance of teaching for arts graduates, but emphasised that even in the absence of any real choice, she did go on to enjoy this occupation: 'There wasn't really anything else and I didn't really mind. I enjoyed teaching very much. (I did know one girl who went into a Liverpool store to learn retail marketing).'[38] Similarly, Anne, a graduate of the 1950s, noted:

> Teaching was one of the few careers open to a girl with an arts degree in 1959. To call it a vocation would be too strong, but I did want to do it. From starting teaching practice I knew it was the right thing and then, of course, it fitted in so comfortably with having children, and being at home when they were, once they started school.[39]

By the 1970s the options had not changed. A graduate of the life sciences wrote: 'University careers office - in view of graduation and marrying one month later said 'you can nurse or teach or nurse'...!'[40] Megan also recalled the limited choices presented by the university careers service: 'I drifted into teaching after university. The careers advice was very poor – only teaching or nursing was suggested.'[41] This limited advice from the official channels was simply a continuum from an earlier age. Joyce's testimony, as a graduate of the 1940s, illustrates not only the lack of help from both school and university, but highlights both the chance-like nature of being in an enjoyable job and the importance of external influences:

> My sister advised me to try teaching. I did not feel suited to the school regimentation – supervising lunches and games. The wife of the then Director

[37] *Ibid.*, record 1.
[38] *Ibid.*, record 11.
[39] *Ibid.*, record 17.
[40] *Ibid.*, record 57.
[41] *Ibid.*, record 69.

> of Further Education for Liverpool was a colleague in my second school post and told me that in her opinion I was ideally suited to teaching adults. My sister sent me an advertisement from the local papers whilst I was spending the summer in Spain. I replied and on my return the Principle rang me without an interview and told me I had the job - on references. No help was given either at school or at 'Varsity'. I was lucky to find an occupation which was so pleasurable I would have worked without pay.[42]

Graduating with a physics degree in the 1970s, Janet noted: 'When I left university I could not get a job in my chosen field (I WAS FEMALE!).'[43] Janet, following graduation, worked as a manageress of a women's clothes shop, and was never to be employed in an occupation that utilised her physics knowledge.

Not only were the options narrow, but for some of the women they felt that it was expected that they should enter a certain profession, namely teaching: 'It seemed to be expected of me once I came to university to do English, and there was not as much choice in those days as there is today.'[44] Similarly, one graduate commented:

> Went into teaching because it was expected of me by family - needed steady, secure job to help at home. Would have liked to something in archaeology (having studied Egyptology) but too precarious. Was also interested in Law, but family felt that it was enough for there to be one lawyer in the family (i.e. my brother). I only fulfilled that ambition recently, when I did my L.L.M![45]

Pippa Brewster, in *Learning to Lose*, emphasised that parents urged their daughters to think of 'security' when considering their futures. Education and work were circumscribed in terms of female future security.[46] Teaching was a profession that was perceived as offering such safety. Class expectations also impacted upon what was considered as achievable, as Mary's recollections illustrate:

> I had always been encouraged to think of teaching as a career, but since 1989 onwards I realise I had been blinkered by the expectation of my class. In working class environment teaching in a secondary school represents the

[42] *Ibid*, record 10.
[43] *Ibid*, record 59.
[44] *Ibid*, record 32.
[45] *Ibid*, record 24.
[46] Brewter, P., *op. cit.*, in Spender, D. and Sarah. E. (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

> pinnacle of academic achievement - and it took me a long time to discover that I had more in me.[47]

For those women graduating in the late 1940s, who took a 'pledge' to teach, no other options were available.

For many of the women who married, family life was to have a major influence upon their career paths. First and foremost they were wives and potential mothers, and their own careers were secondary to this role. As a graduate of the 1950s Gillian's testimony demonstrates this point. While highlighting a likening of a job as the main influence upon her choice of occupation, Gillian's recollections reveal that ultimately her husband's career took precedence over her own, despite her love of nursing in London:

> Actually liking the job has been the main influence. I didn't much care for the girls' boarding school life at Huyton College, though as a workplace it was a lot easier than anything since! I liked the nursing a lot, but I got married - my husband got a job in Liverpool and teaching seemed a better option than shift work. I have really enjoyed the work in both Liverpool comprehensives.[48]

Beverley, a graduate in general studies in the same decade, highlighted that a wife functioned as a necessary alternative in the absence of modern technology: 'My husband was a general practitioner until he retired and wives were expected to answer phones and be there at home during duty periods (no mobile phones or pagers).'[49] In the event of children, the children took precedence over a woman's career. As a graduate of the 1960s, Marlene wrote:

> I would not have considered travelling a long way from my family for work so jobs had to be in the Merseyside area. Until the children were at school I only considered part-time work - in fact I had ten years off with small amounts of work and became a foster parent. Children always came first.[50]

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[47] Questionnaire, record 44.
[48] *Ibid*, record 19.
[49] *Ibid*, record 20.
[50] *Ibid*, record 38.

Jane, a graduate of the 1970s who initially worked as a town planner recalled: 'Gave up planning as not compatible with raising a family. I set up a business to fit in with family commitments.'[51] Similarly, Barbara wrote:

> I intended to teach Spanish after my degree course-and had a place for a teaching certificate after one year. In that year I met my future husband we married and had a family immediately. I never considered working while they were young. This was possibly because my own mother was not in paid employment so I saw it as something women with children did not do. When the children were older I decided it was time to go into teaching - as I had originally planned.[52]

Even for those women who had always been definite in what they wanted to do, and did not face the uncertainty that many women did on graduation, limited options and family life still impacted upon their careers. As a graduate of veterinary science in the 1960s, one woman noted:

> When I qualified there was limited choice of work i.e. practice, university or industry. Being a woman, and not wishing an academic career, the most obvious direction was small animal practice. Finding employment was not difficult as women were paid less than men which obviously was in their favour. I came in on the tail end of that, but it was still accepted without question - by me any rate![53]

The veterinary profession was segregated by gender: to work in industry, or with large animals was the preserve of men, whilst small animal work was considered far more suitable for women or 'wimps'.[54] Margaret, who studied for a law degree in the 1960s, stated:

> I took an LLB with the intention of becoming a solicitor. I have practised as a solicitor since qualifying in 1963. In 1966 I had my first child. I worked from home because of domestic commitments until 1977 and because my husband was against me returning to work.[55]

[51] *Ibid*, record 60.
[52] *Ibid*, record 70.
[53] *Ibid*, record 40.
[54] Valerie Riley, graduate of the University of Liverpool 1958, interviewed on 20. 5. 96 by Sarah Aiston.
[55] Questionnaire, record 37.

The women whose answers reflected much more individual motivation for occupational choices, as opposed to other factors such as family, were in a minority. For example, one respondent wrote:

> I remain interested in people, their behaviour and emotions. Clinical psychology gives me the opportunity to offer therapy etc. that is grounded in research evidence. I now work with adults who are severely learning disabled and who challenge services. This was initially a career move for promotion, but has been a good move in terms of job satisfaction.[56]

It is interesting to note that these women were generally graduates of the 1970s, all in relationships, and all with children. This may possibly be reflective of a changing attitude towards how graduate women perceived their relationship to paid employment.

In exploring the extent to which the respondents felt they had made the progression in their careers that they would have wished, the responses were equally divided between those who felt they had made sufficient progression and those who felt they had not. Of the 41 women who said 'yes', they were happy with their career progression, several noted that they had had no desire to reach promoted positions. They regarded themselves as not particularly 'career minded' and did not have 'high flown ambitions.' As a teacher, Gillian reflected:

> I have achieved what I wanted - which was to be an efficient and influential class-room teacher - but in terms of 'career' I did not seek out promotion to senior posts since I don't think I'd be interested in or much good at the admin side.[57]

Penelope, who worked as a social worker following graduation in the 1960s, emphasised (as did several women) how a commitment to her family had been a very central aspect of her working life:

> I felt prior to marriage I had advanced as far as I would have wished - area children's officer. I never regretted making my home and children a career

[56] *Ibid*, record 58.
[57] *Ibid*, record 19.

> and feel very privileged that my return to work has been smooth and satisfactory.[58]

The final element of her statement is perhaps indicative of the fact that many women may not have experienced a smooth transition from family life back to paid employment. As a physics graduate, Janet noted:

> This may seem strange but although I have never used my physics education in my career and have worked in jobs that I was overqualified for I have progressed in my point of view because I have always enjoyed what I have done.[59]

Reflecting upon her career as a senior dental officer, one respondent highlighted that 'eventually' she had made the progress that she had wished in her career:

> Yes - eventually. Promotion linked to higher qualification. Only with a change of head of department was it considered desirable to have a member of staff with a paediatric dentistry higher degree.[60]

Conversely, Rosalind, a senior lecturer in an institute of higher education at the time of filling in the questionnaire, was attempting to prevent a career promotion:

> I am presently being pressurised into 'progressing' further up the ladder which would mean that my job would be more admin than teaching - I find that because I love the teaching side and hate admin my resistance is not going down well.[61]

For those women who felt that they had not made the progress they would have wished in their careers, the predominant reasons noted were discrimination on the grounds of their sex, and the impact of family life. As a graduate of the 1940s, Joyce, who went into secondary school teaching, felt she had:

> reached the 'glass ceiling'. I ran the business studies and A level department when my immediate supervisor - the Head of Department temporarily became acting principal - when our principal was suspended for shoplifting!

[58] *Ibid*, record 39.
[59] *Ibid*, record 59.
[60] *Ibid*, record 64.
[61] *Ibid*, record 76.

> Judging by their qualifications and lack of competence I should have ended up with more than a senior lectureship.[62]

Pamela, a maths and physics graduate of the 1950s who entered a career in industry, considered a variety of reasons why she had not made the progression she would have wished:

> Easy to say it was due to discrimination, but could have been my personality/ability, or bosses perceptions of these. Or just that I am not by nature contented with anything much I have done, and some people might have thought my progress good enough. Perhaps I paid too little attention to office politics or bootlicking, and was ready with unpopular opinions, but certainly I didn't fit the promotable stereotype of grey-suited father of two.[63]

While questioning the extent to which discrimination had played a part, on being asked directly if she had ever experienced discrimination on the grounds of her sex (to be discussed below), Pamela documented several instances. It would therefore be reasonable to suggest that being a woman had played a crucial role in Pamela's career progression; and as Pamela noted herself she did not fit the 'promoteable stereotype of grey-suited father of two.' Stephanie, a graduate of the 1970s, who also entered a 'male' occupation – trading standards officer – commented: 'No – not many openings. Local government is very much deadmen's shoes. I have progressed quite far but my profession is still very male dominated.'[64]

Family life also had a very important role to play upon career progression. Having graduated as an architecture student in the 1940s, Audrey highlighted the impact of family life, but emphasised that this was not an element of her life that she regretted:

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[62] *Ibid*, record 10.
[63] *Ibid*, record 16.
[64] *Ibid*, record 65.

> No!!-I had wished to go right to the top, but being married with a family changed the direction of my life. I am NOT SORRY as I have still continued as an architect in different circumstances and I am very happy.[65]

Family life continued to have an impact upon the lives of graduate women of the 1960s and 1970s. Margaret commented: 'I know I would have been more successful if I had either not had children or remained single or returned to work earlier.'[66] Career breaks were presented as detrimental. As a veterinary science graduate, one woman noted:

> I have not progressed because I married in 1967 and took on the expected role of wife and then mother. Now I'm nearly 'nest-free' I'm far too out of touch, I'd need to repeat the clinical years not to be dangerous to the patients![67]

Similarly, Hazel emphasised:

> My career was interrupted by a move abroad to join my husband; in the eighties my peers were building school teaching careers in this system and I was not doing so, it was hard to re-enter.[68]

Furthermore, it was not possible to become involved in a job to the extent to which may have been required in order to gain promotion. Janice, a social worker, wrote: 'It is extremely hard to do a high level managerial job if you wish to spend time with your family.'[69] The primacy of a woman's role as wife and mother was reflected in Barbara's testimony:

> I am very good at my job, however, I am married and have 3 children now. This has definitely counted against me - when you are a mother you cannot spend hours after school just talking, or going to endless meetings especially when I do schoolwork at home too[70].

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[65] *Ibid*, record 8.
[66] *Ibid*, record 37.
[67] *Ibid*, record 40.
[68] *Ibid*, record 67.
[69] *Ibid*, record 71.
[70] *Ibid*, record 81.

Barbara's career progression was secondary to her family commitments, and more than likely stood in sharp contrast to her husband's experience. While for Patricia, her career ambitions never even got off the ground:

> My original desire to be a librarian in a University was thwarted from the start - I could only gain a place for training at Hampshire and family commitments prevented this.[71]

For one graduate of the 1970s, a complete lack of support from her partner, and having sole responsibility for her child resulted in limited career progression:

> Due to an unsupportive partner who would not accept joint responsibility for childcare, then, after our divorce, he assumed none whatsoever, the pressures of coping alone with no help - financial or practical - has meant I was unable to meet the challenge of more responsibility at work.[72]

The testimony of a graduate of the 1960s not only emphasised how the family limited career progression, but also indicated the way in which women could be discriminated against for having a family:

> No. Large 'chunk' of time spent in part-time work at the critical period (30-40 years of age) when men are consolidating their careers and women are looking after children. I found it extremely difficult to get back into full-time work (my decision to go part-time had been forced on me by the illness of my son). Also, during a critical interview for a head of dept job I was asked if I intended to start a family. I had to admit that I was expecting the result of a pregnancy test as the job was an internal promotion. I was appointed to the job and two days later when the result of the test was positive, asked to resign my promotion, or rather withdraw my application and a man was appointed instead. It took me 17 years to get back to that promoted position.[73]

For some of the women who entered university as mature students the 'late start', they felt, had accounted for their personal lack of progression. Furthermore, late entry to a career simply reinforced the 'glass ceiling.'[74]

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[71] *Ibid.*, record 61
[72] *Ibid.*, record 80.
[73] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[74] *Ibid.*, record 79.

On being directly asked if they had experienced any form of discrimination throughout their careers on the grounds of their sex, just over a third of the respondents said that they had. Several of the women who entered male-dominated spheres of paid employment documented the discrimination they had faced. When applying for a post as an assistant architect in 1949, Audrey recalled: 'The architect in charge stated that he would have to put me in a room on my own and not in the drawing office with all the men! He did not want any trouble!!!'[75] Graduating as a law student in the 1960s, Margaret had found it very difficult to find a position as an articled clerk. Furthermore, her husband was not supportive of her return to work following a period of caring for the children:

> I could not get a position as an articled clerk in 1960. I met with a blank wall until a neighbour heard of my predicament and recommended me to a firm. My own husband did not want me to return to work in 1977 but accepted it eventually.[76]

Working as a small animal vet, one respondent highlighted the discrimination she had faced not from fellow vets, but from clients:

> 'Oh! It's a woman. We wanted to see Mr. X' or 'Thank you nurse, will the vet call next time?' However over the years this has dwindled to nothing, now that I am not working any more! Born too early![77]

Stephanie reflected upon her experience as a trading standards officer:

> When I was a trainee I was told that because I was female and could not pick up 56lb weights I could never be a proper trading standards officer. And I still find a considerable difference in my treatment compared to male colleagues. I also feel that within local government you do not have the opportunities for advancement.[78]

Stephanie's notion that women were not promoted in local government was reiterated in Maureen's account of working in local government administration from

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[75] *Ibid*., record 8.
[76] *Ibid*., record 37.
[77] *Ibid*., record 40.
[78] *Ibid*., record 65.

the mid-1970s: 'it was remarked that women were rarely promoted in the department in which I worked.'[79] The accounts offered by two science graduates, of the 1950s and 1960s respectively, who worked for the same firm were particularly illuminating as to male attitudes towards women working in industry. Pamela wrote:

> Always felt that a woman had to be much better at her job than a man, to get the same recognition. 'Glass ceiling' seemed real. Was moved 'temporarily' into information work because the job needed doing and Head of Research regarded it as suitable job for a woman. (I was the first woman science graduate Pilkington had employed). After being short-listed on the personal recommendation of a director, for supplies manager vacancy, was not appointed because I had no experience as a works stress manager - a job not open to women. Another job, I was told after interview that I was technically the best equipped but had no experience of selling - which they did not allow women to do. From the 1960s, before 'equal pay': a personnel manager said to me 'but you are the highest paid woman in Pilkington's if that's any consolation' - it wasn't, it only meant the other women were even worse paid. Women graduates (all 4 of us!) were in an anomalous position: when it came to pay rates we were women, but we were graduates when it came to being expected to work overtime if necessary, without pay.[80]

Having being 'temporarily' moved, Pamela never returned to research. Rather interestingly, a fellow science graduate who started at Pilkington's in 1969 as a researcher also moved from this area. The respondent did not note why she had made the change, but Pamela's account of what were considered as suitable work for a woman within the organisation may have been equally applicable in this instance. This graduate noted:

> I failed to get a post because the supervisor who would have worked for me refused to work for a woman!! Prior to that an upgrade was delayed because a male colleague was married and had a large mortgage and family therefore needed the money more than myself!!![81]

As indicated earlier in the chapter, women could be discriminated against on the basis of having a family. The following quotation illustrates this point:

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[79] *Ibid*, record 4.
[80] *Ibid*, record 16.
[81] *Ibid*, record 42.

> In 1976 in Wigan I was asked if I had a boyfriend and intended having a family when I pointed out that the question was unacceptable I was told I would be better suited to an inner city school...In 1989 at Holly Lodge Girls School I was asked about my child care arrangements. On this occasion I complained to the Equal opportunities commission but decided not to go through to an industrial tribunal.[82]

As has become apparent throughout this chapter, university-educated women were presented with a very narrow range of occupational options, with teaching seemingly offering women the possibility of combining their two roles as both wife/mother and waged worker. As the above quotation demonstrates, however, this was not always the case in reality. Lou Buchan, in *Learning to Lose*, highlights how teaching was presented as a 'good job for a girl', but that: 'should a woman wish for more than a job and aspire to a *career* in teaching, the opportunities are not quite so available and the situation is far from ideal.'[83] It was at the point at which women teachers sought promotion that discrimination could raise its ugly head. This point is illustrated in Mary Ingham's *Now We Are Thirty*, and the respondents' own testimonies. Ingham states that those women who entered teaching from her own school year who perceived their relationships with male colleagues as equal were blinkered: 'for various reasons they did not climb high enough on the ladder to feel the cold draught of male prejudice.'[84] Barbara, who taught in a technical college in the 1970s, stressed that the very concept of a woman being promoted was explicitly ruled out, unless a woman was sexually involved with a senior male member of staff:

> In 1971 at Birkenhead Technical College my Head of Department told his female staff that none of us would be promoted above the bottom grade of lecturer while he was Head of Department. The Sexual Discrimination Act came in...he never repeated this statement and did promote a female member of the department – unfortunately she was his mistress.[85]

[82] *Ibid.*, record 69.
[83] Buchan, L., "It's a good job for a girl' (but an awful career for a woman!), in Spender, D. and Sarah, E. (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[84] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 147.
[85] Questionnaire, record 46.

One graduate was forced to leave a school because promotion prospects were non-existent:

> I left Campion school because there was no chance of promotion or even senior teaching. It was a boys' school where the two female teachers were allowed to teach years 7 and 8 only.[86]

Josette noted that whilst she personally had not experienced any form of discrimination throughout her schoolteaching years, she made reference to those women who had, and qualified why she had not:

> Not as it turns out, but other women in my school have. My ambitions (head of department and head of year eight) happened to fit in with what my school sees as suitable positions for women.[87]

Those women who sought promotion *and* had families were in a hopeless situation, as the following testimony demonstrates:

> Applied for Head of History, Sacred Heart 1977 - the year my son was born. I wasn't even considered because of the baby, in spite of my having returned to work eight weeks after the birth and having maintained 100 per cent attendance. 1984 - Head of History (mixed comprehensive) I was asked at the interview how I managed, having a baby and a job! They gave the job to a man with 5 children and no degree.[88]

While for Joyce, who did receive promotion, the 'cold draught of male prejudice' was strong, and her elevated status did not last.[89] Furthermore, Barbara testimony, mentioned above, suggested that being sexually involved with the Head of Department was the only means by which a woman could be promoted in her college. This line of argument was also used against women who had gained promotion, such as Joyce, to detract from their promotion on merit:

> At Prescot College of Further Education (a small college) I received the first up grading. The males on the staff were at first resentful, because of my pay rise and spread rumours that I had a close, possibly sexual relationship with

[86] *Ibid.*, record 49.
[87] *Ibid.*, record 74.
[88] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[89] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 147.

> the Principal - a blunt Scot who was expert at dealing with people. The animosity soon disappeared as the Principal invited all the disgruntled to come to speak to him singly and he would explain his choice. Three years before I retired, seven years early, the college amalgamated with a comprehensive school and became a tertiary college...No woman received a post of any responsibility although the bulk of the students were female. ACAAS wanted to take my case but I could not face the 'aggro'.[90]

Social work was a further option presented to women as an acceptable profession, but women in senior positions were again in a minority: 'It was noticeable within Wirral Social Services that most of the team leaders, directors were men.'[91] Janice, who had become a female manager within social services, implied that the discrimination she had faced had been substantial, and also highlights the assumption that women and management were mutually exclusive entities:

> Where do I start? People often assume, when I am with men from my team, that they are my bosses. In the office, male managers talk to other male managers, neglecting female managers.[92]

This account raises two important points - the exclusion women could encounter from male colleagues, and the male culture which existed in the workplace. Working as a project worker, Valerie noted:

> In my last job in which I worked with organisations outside the public sector I was amazed at the lack of policy and practice of equal opportunities even now. There is still informal and inadvertent discrimination, e.g. male colleagues going out for a drink with the boss, etc.[93]

Those women who graduated in the 1960s and 1970s recounted more dissatisfaction with their experiences of paid employment than their predecessors. It could be suggested that those women who graduated in late 1940s and 1950s were more content; or simply had to accept their gendered role as wives and mothers first

[90] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[91] *Ibid.*, record 38.
[92] *Ibid.*, record 71.
[93] *Ibid.*, record 79.

and foremost, in the absence of any discourse which challenged their traditional role as women. Ingham raises a very important point in suggesting that those women who talked in terms of equality with their male working colleagues, perhaps had not attempted to test their relationship:

> Only those of us who've gathered the confidence to follow our own noses and stray over the borderline ever feel the electric fences of discriminatory attitudes by which women are restrained from fully participating in the men's world. Many married women workers, catching up with housework, shopping and cooking, and gaining satisfaction from this role, do not demand enough from their jobs to discover the restrictions upon them.[94]

It was not only the respondents who sought promotion, or entered male dominated areas of employment who felt that 'electric shock', but also those women who wished to return to work when their children were young.

Having tracked the career paths of the group of respondents, as was shown teaching dominated the lives of over half of the women, and it was a profession that was presented throughout this period as one of the best options open to a graduate woman. There was an overwhelming sense of the limited choices that faced women graduates and the primacy of their role as wife and mother remained prominent. Marriage no longer dictated a woman's departure from paid employment in the post-war era, and this was reflected in the respondents' biographies. For those women who had children, three trends were identified in regard to their career structures. First, there were those women who took a complete break from paid employment until their last child was school age. Second, from the 1960s, there was an increasing trend towards women working part-time in between having children, and third, following the introduction of paid maternity leave, there were those women who took their statutory leave and immediately returned to employment. Half of the

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[94] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 148.

respondents noted that they had not made the progression that they would have wished in their careers, whilst a third of the women documented the discrimination they had faced on the grounds of their sex. Women who entered male-dominated areas of employment, sought promotion, or even wished to return to work when their children were young encountered difficulties, and those women who reached senior positions were exceptional. Women's paid employment, however, was overwhelmingly described by the respondents as very important: independence, self-respect, social standing, fulfilment, along with the actual financial gains, were stressed as the rewarding aspects of women earning money.

Having discussed the postgraduate lives of the group of respondents in regard to their careers outside the home, the following chapter will now consider family life in more detail.

Chapter 9

A maternal identity: the family life of women graduates of the University of Liverpool

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Part II of the thesis demonstrated the continuing primacy of women's role as both wife and mother in the post-Second World era, whilst Chapter 8 explored the impact of family life upon a graduate woman's career. This chapter will now consider in more detail family life as experienced by the group of respondents. The first section of the chapter will consider the defining characteristics of the group: for example, how many of the women married and at what age? How many of the women had children and at what age? The second section of the chapter will then explore the respondents' personal reflections upon their experiences of family life.

Graduate women, marriage and children

Opponents of women's higher education in the nineteenth century feared that university-educated women would become 'unsexed' and refuse to take their place in the traditional family hierarchy. Advocates of the higher education of women hoped for improved occupational choices for women, and greater equality in marriage. Both opponents and advocates anticipated changes. Those who campaigned for women's higher education desired more choice for women, namely that economic self-sufficiency would grant university-educated women more discretion in choosing a marriage partner, or the option of not marrying at all. Opponents feared that such choices would undermine the family.[1] Historians who have considered the marriage

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[1] Mackinnon, A., 'Male heads on female shoulders? New questions for the history of women's higher education', *History of Education Review*, 19 (1990), p. 41.

patterns of graduate women of the pre-1939 period demonstrate both lower and later marriage rates amongst university-educated women. Hamilton and Gibert's research into the experiences of graduate women of the Scottish universities and the civic universities respectively, indicate that, as was the case at Oxford and Cambridge, educated women showed a marked tendency not to marry, and of those women who did, marriage occurred at a later age. Gibert notes that due to this latter factor, graduate women also had smaller families than the average couple.[2] Studies carried out into the marriage patterns of graduate women of the American institutions in the pre-war period similarly reflect the trends identified by historians of British graduate women.[3]

Research which considers the marriage patterns of graduate women in the post-Second World period is limited. The information available, however, indicates that these patterns diverged significantly from those of their predecessors. Kelsall, Poole and Kuhn who sent questionnaires to every woman and every other man who had completed a first degree in 1960 wrote:

> The day of the 'blue-stocking' who, it was held, would rarely have either the inclination or the opportunity to marry, is very definitely past...women graduates are on the whole more likely to marry, and to do so earlier, than ever before.[4]

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[2] Hamilton, S., *Women and the Scottish Universities c. 1869-1939: a social history* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1987), Chapter 6; Gibert, J., *Women at the English Universities 1880-1920* (PhD, University of North Carolina, 1988), chapter 6. Research conducted by Janet Howarth and Mark Curthoys into the marital patterns of Oxford women showed low marriage rates. See Howarth, J. and Curthoys, M., ' The Political Economy of Women's Higher Education in late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Britain', *Historical Research*, 60 (1987), pp. 228-229. Similarly, recent research into the life experiences of Girtonian women indicates that graduate women married later and less. Erickson, A., 'University and Life Experiences: Graduates of Girton College, Cambridge, 1920 - 1990', paper presented at Evangelische Akademie Baden, 06/12/97, conference: 'Education as the Key to Women's Emancipation in Europe: A Twentieth-Century Myth?'

[3] See for example, C. W. Conable, *Women at Cornell: the Myth of Equal Education* (Cornell University Press, 1977) and Solomon, B., *In the Company of Educated Women: a History of Women and Higher Education in America* (Yale University Press, 1985).

[4] Kelsall, R. K., Poole, A., and Kuhn, A., *Graduates: The Sociology of an Elite* (Methuen, 1972), pp. 119-120.

Wakeling's research into female graduates of Glasgow University in the post-war period reflects these earlier findings. Based on a sample of just under 2000 questionnaires, Wakeling discovered that, in contrast to the trend observable in women graduates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, marriage was increasingly popular amongst female graduates. For example, almost three-quarters of female students who graduated in the 1940s married, whilst nine out of ten women who graduated in the 1960s did so. Not only was marriage becoming more popular, it was entered into at an earlier age. Wakeling's figures show that whilst for those women who graduated between 1940 and 1961 the most popular age bracket to marry was 24 – 26 years, for those women who graduated between 1962 and 1984 it had fallen to 21 - 23 years of age. Furthermore, given the tendency towards earlier marriages, graduate women were correspondingly starting their families earlier. The number of women waiting until they were over 30 years of age to have children had decreased.[5] Hubback's study, entitled *Wives who went to college* and published in 1957, further confirms Wakeling's findings: 'The marriage rate among graduates…is now not far from the rest of the population.'[6] Similarly, Hubback found: 'among married university women far more now marry within five years of completing their degree courses than after an interval of from five to nine years.'[7] Furthermore, Hubback noted that whilst women in the population at large had more children than graduate women in the first five years of marriage, after this point they were surpassed by university-educated women. Higher education seemed to be associated with higher fertility.

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[5] Wakeling, J., 'University education in twentieth century Scotland, with particular reference to Glasgow University', paper presented at the University of Cambridge, 24/9/99, conference: 'The transformation of an elite? Women and higher education since 1900', pp. 14-15.
[6] Hubback, J., *Wives who went to college* (William Heinemann, 1957), p. 25.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

The trends identified amongst graduate women in this latter period were reflective of society in general. Lewis emphasises that marriage in the post-war period proved increasingly popular, with the marriage rate reaching a peak in the early 1970s. In addition, the age at which women entered marriage dropped from 24. 6 in 1951 to 22.6 in 1971.[8] The significant point demonstrated by Hubback, Kelsall et al and Wakeling is that university-educated women were no longer rejecting marriage on the same scale as their predecessors. Kelsall's study did discover that: 'Throughout all our investigations into the fertility of university graduates, women graduates are considerably more susceptible than men to the delaying effects on marriage and family building of continued exposure to higher education.'[9] Similarly, Ingham, who graduated from the University of Liverpool in the late 1960s, wrote:

> I imagined being married at 22, quite old really, and settling down to raise a family at 25. But at university, 22 suddenly didn't seem so old, so all the images shuffled forward a few paces.[10]

The key point, however, is that whilst graduate women were perhaps slightly delaying marriage and children in comparison to the rest of the population (including male graduates), they were now, in contrast to the earlier period, following the general trends of that population. Ingham's testimony is revealing in the fact that she does not suggest that a university education led to a rejection of marriage, simply that the 'images' shifted 'paces' by a few years. What could account for this shift in the marriage patterns of graduate women in the post-Second World War period? There are two significant factors to consider. First, as Hubback herself commented: 'The early pioneers for higher education of women thought of themselves mainly in terms

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[8] Lewis, J., *Women in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell, 1992), p. 44.
[9] Kelsall, R. K., Poole, A., and Kuhn, A., *op. cit.*, p. 135.
[10] Ingham, M., *Now We Are Thirty: Women of the Breakthrough Generation* (Eyre Methuen, 1981), p. 15.

of future salary-earners'.[11] Prior to the Second World marriage would have signified a departure from paid employment, and for those career-orientated women marriage was simply not an option. Second, as Anderson pointed out in 1963:

> The change in the proportions of men and women in the population means that there are no longer large numbers of what used to be called 'superfluous women'; spinsters will soon, I think be a race of the past.[12]

Chapter 1 made reference to the anxiety expressed by nineteenth-century middle-class families in regard to the 'odd' women problem, and both the First and Second World War had their part to play in contributing to an imbalance in the population. From this point onwards, however, demographically speaking women had a greater chance of marriage, and what is interesting from Anderson's statement is the universality of marriage: the expectation that any woman who could marry would marry.

The group of respondents for this thesis in no way form a statistically significant sample; nevertheless, in considering the defining characteristics of the group it was evident that their experiences of family life generally followed those discussed above. Not only did the overwhelming majority of the group marry, but marriage was also increasingly popular. Sixty-eight out of the 82 respondents married; and whilst seven out of the fourteen women who graduated in the 1940s remained unmarried, of the 35 women who graduated in the 1970s, only four did so. Similarly, whilst the average age of marriage for the group of respondents as a whole was 25 years of age, marriage was increasingly entered into at an early age. The average age of marriage for those women who graduated in the 1940s was 26 years, whilst for those respondents who graduated in the 1970s, the average age was 24.

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[11] Hubback, J., *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[12] Anderson, K., *Women and the Universities: a changing pattern* (Fawcett Society, 1963), p. 16.

The women who had studied for professional degrees did not particularly stand out as significantly different from those women who graduated in the arts and sciences. For example, it was not the case that these women married consistently later, as might have been expected simply because of the length of their courses (with the exception of law). Ann, a veterinary student, married in 1966 at the age of 20, which conversely was well below the average age of marriage for respondents graduating in this decade. Pauline, discussed in Chapter 8 as exceptional in her full-time commitment to voluntary work for the Moral Rearmament Army, was the respondent who married the latest at the age of 46. She herself noted: 'I married late'.[13] Frances, who entered the university as a mature student in the 1970s, was the youngest to marry at eighteen. As was the case for those respondents who studied for professional degrees, however, there was no significant difference in the average age of marriage of those women who married prior to higher education. This factor reflects the point that university women were generally following the trends experienced by the rest of the population.

In regard to marriage partners, two-thirds of the women married men who were also university graduates, and of those women who did not marry graduate men, several were mature students who had married prior to university entrance. The analysis of the *Guild Gazette* in Chapter 4 showed that from the 1940s through to the 1950s university women were derided and represented as 'targeting' university as good location in which to find a husband. Hubback, in a section entitled 'Where the husband was met', commented:

> It is sometimes remarked, perhaps rather cynically, that university is the best possible marriage market for an intelligent girl, because there she will meet such a high concentration of her mental equals; and of course, the university years are those during which it is perfectly natural for a girl to fall in love. It

[13] Questionnaire, record 43.

> would be foolish of her parents to let a girl start a university course without at any rate pointing out these facts in advance.[14]

It is difficult to determine what Hubback was implying in the final sentence, but it would suggest that she was advising parents to point out to their daughters that university was a profitable place to find a suitable husband. In considering the respondents' motivations to enter university (see Chapter 5) there was no reference to entering Liverpool University with a view to finding a husband. This process, nevertheless, may have been implicitly understood by the women. Mary Ingham's autobiographical account certainly suggested that this was the case: 'In 1965, I'd been certain of a future – a place at university and the man I was going to marry.'[15] The important point, however, is that this whole discourse illustrates the primacy of marriage in women's lives. As a consequence, not only was a woman's own intellectual motivations and needs, but also any employment prospects, perceived as secondary, perhaps irrelevant to the role of wife, and correspondingly mother. If university women married university men, then conversely university men married university women. There was, however, no corresponding dialogue that derided men on the grounds of attending university to find a wife, or parental advice pointing out that university was a good location to find a marriage partner. Male university students were not defined first and foremost by their marital status.

Only a small minority of the group of respondents experienced divorce; ten of the women were divorced and one woman was separated. Of these women, nine were graduates of the 1970s, and this factor reflected society's changing outlook upon marriage as discussed in Chapter 3. The 1969 Divorce Act conceded that when a marriage had 'irretrievably' broken down divorce was an acceptable solution. All of

[14] Hubback, J., *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[15] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 125.

the women divorced following this act; and whilst this study is not concerned with large numbers, this point is reflective of the fact that divorce rates rose following the 1969 Act. Only three of the women were to remarry. Cohabitation was not an aspect of the majority of the respondents' lives. Lewis notes that whilst the incidence of living together as married has increased, this increase has only occurred in the 1980s. Only seven per cent of couples marrying for the first time in the early 1970s had lived together; this figure had risen to 26 per cent among those marrying in the early 1980s.[16] Cohabitation, therefore, is a recent phenomenon. As noted in Chapter 7, in terms of university residential accommodation, from the mid-1970s mixed halls became a part of university life. Similarly, several women studying in the 1970s experienced living with fellow male students in shared private accommodation. It is therefore apt, that those women who noted that they had experienced living with a partner 'as married', were graduates of the 1970s. Five of the women had lived with their husbands, ranging from one to five years, before marriage; whilst two of the respondents had lived with boyfriends in the 1970s, then with their future husbands. What is interesting is that these women were not rejecting marriage in favour of cohabitation; marriage was the conventional progression. Correspondingly, children were also part of the whole 'package', and only six out of the 68 women who married did not have children. With the exception of one of the respondents, the majority of the women followed the traditional route of marriage then motherhood. The average number of children of those women who graduated in the late 1940s was three, whilst for those women who were graduates from the 1950s onwards the average number of children was two. As noted earlier, in her analysis of women who graduated in the period from 1930 to 1952, Hubback suggested that university-educated women had a tendency towards having more children than the rest of the

[16] Lewis, J., *op. cit.*, p. 108.

population. This group of respondents, however, reflected the 'two-child' norm which was firmly established in the post-war years.[17] Wakeling found that the number of women in her sample who had children over the age of 30 had decreased, and similarly the average age at which the respondents had children was 28/29, a few years after marriage. The oldest age at which a respondent had her first child was 37, one year after her marriage, whilst the youngest age at which one of the group had her first child was 21. This particular respondent, however, was a mature student who had her children prior to entering university.

Having considered the defining characteristics of the group, the chapter will now consider the respondents' personal reflections upon family life.

Family life

Marriage was something that the respondents had overwhelmingly wanted to enter into. Of the women who married, the majority noted that had wanted to do so. For two of the respondents the question: 'If you married did you want to marry?' seemed 'strange'. The very suggestion that they may have married against their will was 'stupid'.[18] In contrast to these two respondents, Marlene (who stated that 'yes' she had wanted to marry) emphasised the lack of alternatives that actually faced women in the 1960s. Marriage was a social necessity if one wanted to cohabit: '30 years ago if you were 'respectable' you did not live together before marriage.'[19] The statement further revealed the complete dominance of marriage as a social institution. Marlene did not write 'if you were respectable you did not live together', full stop, but rather 'you did not live together *before marriage*'. Marriage was the ultimate end aim. A

[17] Thane, P., 'Women since 1945', in Johnson, P. (ed.), Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social, Cultural Change (Longman, 1994), p. 392.
[18] *Ibid.*, records 29 and 51.
[19] *Ibid.*, record 38.

very small number of women were much more reticent about their desire to marry.[20] Elizabeth, who studied as a mature student in the 1970s and who had married in 1958, illustrated the unattractive alternative that faced women if they did not marry, and the complete necessity of marriage in order to enter into a sexual relationship:

> I thought that I wanted to marry – in fact, to not marry was almost a disgrace i.e. you were 'left on the shelf' and became an 'old maid'. Pre-marital sex was 'taboo' and to have a child out of wedlock would ruin a girl's life forever.[21]

The phrases 'left on the shelf' and 'old maid' demonstrate how both marriage and motherhood defined a woman's identity. Women were judged in relation to their primary role as wives and mothers. Mary, who married at the age of 25 in 1971, then again for a second time in 1995, wrote:

> I had to be persuaded in each case. I was reluctant to surrender my independence. My first husband in no way curtailed it; my second (more insecure because less educated) curtails it considerably.[22]

Mary equated marriage with a loss of independence, and also, rather interestingly, suggested that university-educated men (as her first husband was) are more liberal in their outlook. Conversely, she implies that her second husband, because of his non-graduate background, is more repressive and perhaps more traditional in his conception of a husband/wife relationship. For Megan, who married in 1982, marriage was simply an arrangement to provide financial security and was not something she desperately wanted to enter into:

> I became very panicky a few days before. We were already sharing a house we had bought together and wanted to formalise pension arrangements etc. It made no real difference to the relationship.[23]

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[20] Of those women who graduated in the 1940s and 1950s and went on to marry, not one stated that they had not wanted to marry.
[21] Questionnaire, record 66.
[22] *Ibid*, record 44.
[23] *Ibid*, record 69.

Marriage in this instance was an enforced practical measure. Lewis shows that government policy in the 1980s took into account the increased incidence of cohabitation and sought to treat cohabiting women more like married women. Even today, however, the state sanctioning of marriage as *the* appropriate relationship is evident. Partners who choose to live together (whether they are heterosexual or gay) do not stand in the same relationship to the state as a married couple. For example, both public and private pension schemes only acknowledge a 'spouse' (i.e. husband or wife) as eligible for a pension in the event of the death of the policyholder.[24]

As the majority of married respondents stated that they had wished to marry, correspondingly the majority noted that they had not felt pressurised into marriage. Some of their comments, however, reflected the societal subliminal pressure to marry. One graduate of the 1940s, who stressed that she had not felt pressurised, commented: 'I had many opportunities before', which suggested that had she not had such offers then she would have felt under pressure to find a marriage partner.[25] The stereotype of the 'old maid' was not an appealing one, and for those women 'courting' marriage was the 'appropriate' step. Married in 1973, one respondent noted: 'His job move speeded up marriage because we needed to live together – 500 miles apart.'[26] While this respondent felt she had not been pressurised, the comment demonstrated the lack of alternatives that were open to her. Living together was not an acceptable option. For the small minority of women who emphasised that they had felt pressurised into marriage, the implicit implications revealed in some of the testimonies, as discussed above, were simply more explicitly stated. It was recognised as a pervasive 'social custom' to be entered into. Janet, who married in

[24] This issue was recently discussed in the press. See 'Jobs and Money', *The Guardian*, 5/8/00, pp. 8-9.
[25] *Ibid.*, record 8.
[26] *Ibid.*, record 73.

1983, described marriage as the 'done thing to do'.[27] One respondent, who married in 1966 at the age of 31, wrote: 'I felt I was getting too old and did not want to remain a spinster!', highlighting once again the uninviting prospect of remaining single.[28] Cohabitation was not an acceptable alternative to marriage. Barbara, who stressed that she had not wished to marry and furthermore had felt pressurised to marry, commented:

> In 1951 it was scandalous to 'live together' and legally difficult to own property jointly if unmarried. My husband was keen to marry and pointed out (rightly) that my parents would never believe I wanted to 'live in sin' and would blame him for leading me astray. As he is nine years older than me, and they were hostile to him anyway, I'm sure it would have made the family problem worse.[29]

Barbara's testimony further illustrated her parent's attitude towards her as both their daughter and ultimately as a female. While Barbara would have preferred to 'live in sin', it would have been her boyfriend who would have been held responsible for the moral corruption of their daughter. Only on marriage would their 'little girl' become an adult, and in terms of her sexuality a woman. Similarly, Josette who married in 1971 and divorced seven years later, highlighted the influence of her parents upon her decision to marry: 'I would have preferred to live together but my parents would have been horrified and I was still rather under their thumb.'[30] Just as it was not acceptable to live together, for many of the women pre-marital sex was also an issue. Elizabeth, who married in the late 1950s, illustrated both how it was expected that she would marry, and how she may not have married so early if sex outside of marriage had been an option:

> I went out with the man who became my husband for five years, the relationship had become 'stagnant' but everyone expected that we would

[27] *Ibid.*, record 59.
[28] *Ibid.*, record 24.
[29] *Ibid.*, record 27.
[30] *Ibid.*, record 74.

> marry – so we did. I married him partly to defy my mother who did not like him! I probably would not have married so young (23) if I had been born ten or twenty years later when the society became 'permissive'![31]

In using the term 'permissive', Elizabeth is referring to the popular conception of the 1960s as a decade of sexual license. A study conducted in 1973, entitled *Sex and Marriage in England Today*, revealed, however, that two-thirds of women still did not have sex before marriage.[32] Married a decade later than Elizabeth in 1967, Marlene's testimony further illustrated the point that not all women experienced sexual liberation in this period : 'I did marry to some extent for a sexual relationship. The idea of sex outside of marriage was then not acceptable to me – this has completely changed over the years!'[33] In sharp contrast to those respondents who had felt pressurised into marriage, Jane conversely emphasised the lack of pressure, revealing her mother's ambiguity towards marriage:

> In some ways the reverse! In my childhood my mother seemed to be trying to convince me that marriage was a bad idea. Really she was just discouraging us from marrying too young, but her campaign put me off for many years. My mother married at the age of 28 – when I was 28, she suddenly started pressurising me to marry. Then when I got engaged she seemed to be trying to put me off again.[34]

Jane, who graduated in 1979, finally married at the age of 33 in 1991.

In regard to those respondents who did not marry, several had considered marriage. As a graduate of the late 1940s, Lucy wrote:

> In my twenties I expected to marry but was so busy with my job and running the home that it did not happen. By the time my mother died when I was 36 I was too independent and too choosy.[35]

[31] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[32] Rowbotham, S., *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (Viking, 1997), p. 361.
[33] Questionnaire, record 38.
[34] *Ibid.*, record 63.
[35] *Ibid.*, record 14.

Similarly, a fellow graduate of the same period stated: 'Left it too late – have an elderly mother to care for.'[36] One respondent raised an important point, noting that whilst she had wanted to marry, several friends had been killed during the war. Joan, also a graduate of the 1940s, had in contrast never considered marriage: 'Never met anyone I wanted to marry. Wanted to be independent.'[37] Similarly, Teresa, who graduated in the 1970s, equated not only marriage, but also cohabitation with a loss of freedom: 'Too much freedom to give up. Not prepared to make the sacrifices required (or the many compromises). To me the same applies to living with someone.'[38] For one graduate of the 1950s, marriage was perceived as a full-time career: 'I wanted to teach and I did not believe (and still do not) that ideally one should have another job if married.'[39] One graduate of the 1970s wrote: 'I am a feminist as well as a lesbian, and so if the law enabled me to marry I wouldn't take up that choice.'[40] Feminist researchers highlight the patriarchal origins of marriage: a sexual relationship whereby a man established rights in the person and property of his wife. Furthermore, marriage institutionalises heterosexuality, privileging one form of sexuality as a socially and legally valid foundation for family life.[41] This particular respondent rejected marriage on the grounds of such associations. Pamela, who graduated in the 1950s, provided a full exposition of both society's expectations and her own personal reasons for not getting married:

> It was always accepted by nearly everyone that the norm was to be married, and those not married had to explain themselves. The question 'Aren't you married yet?' always annoyed me by its assumptions. Equally annoying is the opinion of many people that any unmarried woman must be a lesbian. Also some of my parents' generation seemed to consider a 'career woman' some

[36] *Ibid.*, record 6.
[37] *Ibid.*, record 3.
[38] *Ibid.*, record 62.
[39] *Ibid.*, record 21.
[40] *Ibid.*, record 75.
[41] Jackson, S., 'Women and the Family', in Richardson, D. and Robinson, V. (eds.), *Introducing Women's Studies: Feminist Theory and Practice* (Macmillan, 1993), p. 194.

> form of different animal that would not marry. In my teens I realised I did not want children; the church then taught that the prime reason for marriage was children, so I thought marriage was not for me. Later, I did not want to give up my independence of thought and action. Later still, I realised that I was unsure of my own identity to want to get mixed up with someone else's. Also I changed so often that I did not want a permanent association with anyone. 'Relationships' were not an option when I was young, except for the outrageous few, or I might have considered that route.[42]

As noted earlier in the chapter a significant number of the respondents had children. The overwhelming majority of the women emphasised that both they and their partners had wanted a family. A small minority of the women, however, were more reticent about having children. One respondent stressed that she had had mixed feelings about the prospect, and noted that her husband wanted children *and* so did his parents.[43] This comment implied that this particular respondent had felt somewhat under pressure. Similarly, Sheila noted that she had not really wanted a family, but that she gave in out of love for her husband.[44] In several instances the respondents commented that their husbands were more enthusiastic about having children than they were themselves. Megan commented: 'He would have liked to have more children, but I felt that two children and full-time work was enough.'[45] In considering the benefits of having a family, children were described as bringing fulfilment to life on several different levels. They brought love, laughter, companionship, and were not only a source of pride, but also provided a sense of achievement. For Jane, a qualified architect, caring for her child provided fulfilment when her professional life could not: 'Everyday life is pleasant with a child because all the little humdrum tasks matter. I don't have the same sense of futility which used

[42] Questionnaire, record 16.
[43] *Ibid.*, record 40.
[44] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[45] *Ibid.*, record 69.

to affect me in my professional life.'[46] Children improved life. Frances, reflecting on the benefits of having children, wrote: 'Enriches your life beyond belief as a human being'.[47] One respondent highlighted how children added a new dimension to one's life experiences:

> Children give you another dimension to life – you can no longer think just about the two of you – you are responsible for setting your children up for whatever life will throw at them and that is one heck of a challenge![48]

For several of the women having children not only enriched and provided a new aspect to life, but actually gave 'shape and purpose to life'.[49] Gillian commented that children were: 'someone to give a good a life to. Someone to love and work for.'[50] For Jane, life would not have been complete without them, whilst Margaret could not have emphasised the importance of children in her life any further: 'They give life meaning, hope for the future, they are my world.'[51] Furthermore, personal development between parent and child could be a two-way process. Audrey noted: 'They teach adults to be patient, kind, enduring and tolerant.'[52] Similarly, Moira wrote: 'the insights gained throughout their upbringing are growth points for oneself.'[53] Having children was also discussed in biological terms:

> Life must go on, so, in assisting this, you are naturally congruent with the deepest universal forces. It is human nature to wish to continue the species. What could be more natural? Or more delightful?[54]

For Moira, having and raising children was an amazing aspect of life: 'Being part of the ongoing creativity of the universe is an awesome experience'.[55] From the

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[46] *Ibid.*, record 63.
[47] *Ibid.*, record 55.
[48] *Ibid.*, record 42.
[49] *Ibid.*, record 38.
[50] *Ibid.*, record 34.
[51] *Ibid.*, record 60 and 37.
[52] *Ibid.*, record 8.
[53] *Ibid.*, record 47.
[54] *Ibid.*, record 82.
[55] *Ibid.*, record 47.

universal to the individual level, children were described as providing: 'a 'stake in the future', something of oneself to continue after one's death. Continuation of the family line.'[56] Similarly, Elizabeth wrote: 'As an atheist I have achieved a degree of immortality on earth by passing on my genetic makeup.'[57] Furthermore, Elizabeth emphasised that she would have felt less complete as a woman if she had remained childless. Another respondent also raised this issue, commenting: 'I felt 'normal' as a mother...I feel fulfilled as a mother.'[58] Paula Nicholson, in asking the question why women become mothers, discusses several factors. On an individual level, women recognise their biological capacity to have children, and through socialisation into the female role equate femininity with marriage and motherhood. Having children provides entry into womanhood, and one of the attractions of motherhood is its 'normative quality'. Motherhood is an expected and normal role for women.[59] Nicholson's discussion is particularly pertinent in light of the respondents' comments.

One of the greatest drawbacks to having children emphasised by the women was the 'sacrifices' that had to be made in terms of personal freedom: 'when you have children you can no longer put your own interests first.'[60] The sheer hard work in bringing up children was stressed. Jane noted: 'The demands are unrelenting, one sometimes longs for an hour off.'[61] Children were a life-long commitment: 'Obviously children are a tie in that they have to be considered and cared for for years and worried about when they are older.'[62] The sense that children were a

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[56] *Ibid.*, record 16.
[57] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[58] *Ibid.*, record 64.
[59] Nicholson, P., 'Motherhood and Women's Lives', in Richardson, D. and Robinson, V., *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.
[60] Questionnaire, record 60.
[61] *Ibid.*, record 63.
[62] *Ibid.*, record 11.

constant source of worry was evident throughout the respondents' testimonies. Sue wrote: 'The drawbacks are that they worry you sick and that the umbilical cord is never really severed – you love them too much!'[63] In discussing the mother/child relationship in terms of an umbilical cord, the comment perhaps indicates that the life-long anxiety experienced by many mothers is not equally felt by fathers. Elizabeth's discussion of motherhood certainly suggested that this was the case: 'A mother is never 'free' of her children even when they grow up, she will worry about them if they are in trouble.'[64] The actual financial sacrifice made when having children was also noted, and in terms of their relationships with their partners, children were discussed as both 'welding' a couple together, but also as providing a source of friction and disruption. One respondent, who graduated in the 1950s and had children in the early 1960s, highlighted how a drawback to having children was the possible affect upon a woman's career. The testimony, however, also revealed how this particular respondent perceived the upbringing of children primarily as a woman's role:

> You must accept they need attention, even when it is difficult to give it. If a career is of primary importance, you must be very careful about having children. Under no circumstances should they be used as an 'excuse' if careers suffer.[65]

The disabling effect of children upon a woman's career was stressed by several women as a drawback to having a family. One respondent indicated not only the guilt that one could feel as a woman when pursuing a career, but also the difficulties in combining the two roles and the discrimination they could face:

> Intense guilt at leaving them to go to work...Difficult to combine childcare and career advancement. Still enormous reluctance to promote married women with children. Most of my friends 'disguise' the fact that they have

[63] *Ibid.*, record 40.
[64] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[65] *Ibid.*, record 33.

> children when going for senior level jobs – to the extent of removing child seat from car, stickers on car, etc.[66]

In terms of who was primarily responsible for the daily care of the children a large number of the women emphasised that on a day-to-day basis they ultimately took the responsibility. Phrases such as 'I was', 'I am' and 'Me' were frequently employed. For several of the women support from parents also played an important role, but more significantly nurseries or child minders were emphasised as key in combining motherhood and paid employment. It was striking that fathers were not mentioned on any large scale in contributing to the care of their children. For those women who graduated in the 1970s, however, husbands appeared to play a larger part in the upbringing of the children. For example, one respondent who had her first child in 1982, commented: 'Shared when small (and we had a childminder). My husband does more than I do now in term-time and I'm in charge in school holidays.'[67] Feminist researchers, however, have demonstrated that the 'new man' is largely a myth. Evidence suggests that whilst there has been an increasing interest and involvement in parenting by fathers this does not stretch to the daily child-care routine, or equal participation in activities such as taking time off work when the child is ill.[68] Similarly, the respondents primarily took responsibility for domestic chores on a daily basis. Paid domestic help was not a feature of the women's lives. Men were selective about what they would do. A husband's contribution frequently consisted of what may be described as more 'masculine' tasks, as Judith's testimony illustrated:

> Me mostly. My husband did the traditionally 'male' jobs – washing the car, mowing the lawn, putting up the shelves, putting out the dustbin, etc. (I am quite capable of mending a fuse, changing a plug, etc and having been

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[66] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[67] *Ibid.*, record 74.
[68] Nicholson, P., *op. cit.*, p. 219.

> labourer's mate I'm sure I could also put up shelves etc., but he preferred those jobs so I left him to it.[69]

Just as in the case of childcare, however, those women who graduated in the 1970s flagged up that in some cases there was improvement in terms of their husbands' contribution. For example, whilst only one respondent graduating in the 1940s described the household tasks as shared, eighteen out of those married women who graduated in the 1970s did so. Janices's husband was one such man, but as her comment demonstrated, there was still one task which lay beyond the realm of realisation:

> Partner has always accepted joint responsibility for children and shopping, cooking, tidying up, gardening etc. But he still thinks toilets are self-cleaning – but will do if asked. But I do need to ask.[70]

On being asked if the responsibility for household tasks had changed in any way, several of the women noted that on retirement their husband's input had increased. For Ann, however, who married in 1965 this was not the case, and her detailed account of their domestic arrangements illustrated how they had come a full circle in the household division of labour:

> Initially my husband would not clean or wash up – he believed his job was to garden and maintain the fabric of the house. When the children were small and I taught part-time this was still largely the case. As they got older he began to cook a bit. By the time they had left home he cooked, perhaps, two evenings a week. He retired a year before me and for that year he shopped and cooked, but most of the cleaning and all the washing was still left to me. Now we have retired he works all the time at restoring our old home and gardening, so we're almost back to where we were when we first married 35 years ago![71]

[69] Questionnaire, record 32.
[70] *Ibid*, record 71.
[71] *Ibid*, record 17.

Anne's testimony raised a key point, namely that whilst working part-time and caring for her children she also ultimately took responsibility for the day-to-day running of the household. Many of the women emphasised that in the event of 'working' fewer hours than their husbands this division of labour seemed just. On her husband's retirement, however, Ann who was in full-time teaching was still was responsible for cleaning and washing. Married in 1980, Patricia also highlighted this issue:

> When I was unwaged with small children, I did most household tasks, which seemed fair. Now he is early retired, I am working full-time, but a proper role-reversal has not occurred.[72]

Those women who felt they had spent a considerable part of their lives managing a household and family expressed a range of responses. Many of the respondents emphasised that they had enjoyed the experience; it had been satisfying and rewarding. Maria, who graduated in the 1940s and had a substantial break from paid employment whilst bringing up her children, commented:

> I hope I made a success of it and found it very rewarding to run a house efficiently, attain high standards of cooking and sewing, and inculcate good manners, thoughtfulness, a sense of responsibility and love of others in my children.[73]

Similarly, Joyce, who also graduated in the 1940s and spent a considerable number of years in the home, wrote:

> The results were worthwhile – my daughters have expressed their appreciation - the younger one particularly mentioned that she never was fed on 'junk' food. My marriage is a happy one; my husband is wonderful to me now and realises the work I did for over forty-five years – over twenty in a full-time post.[74]

As a graduate of the 1950s, one respondent stressed: 'I feel it was the most important part of my life and one which has given me a great deal of satisfaction.'[75] Managing

[72] *Ibid.*, record 61.
[73] *Ibid.*, record 9.
[74] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[75] *Ibid.*, record 27.

a home and family, for one woman, was not only satisfying, but also challenging: 'It was sufficiently challenging to juggle the demands of a husband and children, house, garden, social life and extended family.'[76] Taking responsibility for the family and home was described as a role that deserved brainpower. Margaret, who graduated in the 1960s, noted: 'I feel that your brain should be 'switched on' all the time, not just when doing paid employment. I have no regrets and still enjoy all aspects of life.'[77] For Moira, managing a house and family was a vital role, and one that in contrast to paid employment offered more freedom:

> I felt that I was doing an essential job which unlike 'paid work' did not tie me to the clock but gave me freedom to do all sorts of things which interested me, and a full social life with like-minded people.[78]

The extensive abilities required to care for a family were emphasised by several of the women. Judith, who also graduated in the 1960s, highlighted this point, and further lamented the attrition of the role of housewife and mother:

> I feel that it is very worthwhile but sadly undervalued. A mother running a household needs considerable management (and other) skills, but it is a role that is being eroded by the pressure on women to 'fulfil' themselves by having a career.[79]

Not all of the respondents were as positive in their evaluation of having spent a significant number of years managing a household and a family. The responsibility of domestic chores was a particular bone of contention for several women. Elizabeth, who married in the late 1950s, emphasised:

> Women of my age usually accepted that it was their role to keep house and wait on their husband/and maybe their children. Sometimes I feel resentful that I did this and wish that I had been born later when the 'new man' was invented – but realise that it was my own fault that I took on all the household chores.[80]

[76] *Ibid.*, record 28.
[77] *Ibid.*, record 37.
[78] *Ibid.*, record 47.
[79] *Ibid.*, record 32.
[80] *Ibid.*, record 66.

In making reference to the notion of the 'new man', Elizabeth indicated a belief that women's position in marriage had improved since her own. As discussed above, however, feminist researchers have dismissed the mythical concept of the 'new man' who takes equal responsibility for childcare. Similarly, Lewis emphasises that the gender division of housework has shown little change throughout the post-war period.[81] It is interesting that whilst Elizabeth was critical of the role *women* were expected to take, on an individual level Elizabeth herself ultimately took the blame for being burdened with the household chores. Ingham, in *Now We Are Thirty* published in 1981, emphasised the difficulties in applying feminist principles to one's own life and individual relationships:

> If a journalist friend of mine, committed to women's rights, had to hiss into a telephone, 'There's eggs and cheese in the fridge' when her man rang her at the office demanding 'Where's my tea?', what hope has there been for those of us cemented into traditional marriages for the past ten years?'[82]

One graduate of the 1940s lamented: 'I should have made the rest of the family share the household tasks at an early age – not helping became a habit!'[83] Hazel, who had graduated in the 1970s and had stressed that she had enjoyed raising her family, emphasised, however, that she hoped that her own daughter would be in different circumstances: 'I want my daughter to be less of a charlady than I have been when she settles with a partner.'[84] For some of the women, managing a home and family appeared to be exactly that, something to 'manage':

> I have managed a household and family at the same time as being a teacher. When the children were young I felt 'guilty' that I was not giving them as much time as I might, but on the whole I think I managed both quite well.[85]

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[81] Lewis, J., *Women in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell, 1992), p. 69.
[82] Ingham, M., *op. cit.*, p. 138.
[83] Questionnaire, record 2.
[84] *Ibid.*, record 67.
[85] *Ibid.*, record 17.

Once again Anne highlights the guilt mothers could experience when combining paid employment and motherhood. Similarly, Barbara, a graduate of the 1970s, commented:

> I feel that I have done a reasonable job. I also feel that I just drifted into it and could have planned family and career more carefully. I'm also amazed I managed it, as I'm not a very maternal person.[86]

Another respondent of the same period stressed how she had felt obliged to take on this role:

> My husband and I are both only children and at some time I have had to care for all four parents. I have not enjoyed this or managing a household, but have done it as a duty.[87]

Above all, combining women's 'dual role' as wife/waged worker was emphasised as a difficult task. Gillian commented: 'It's been hard work and I feel I missed out a lot trying to juggle home and work.'[88] Ambivalent about spending a considerable amount of time managing a household and family, Valerie recognised: 'I could have 'achieved' more professionally if I had remained childless.'[89] Frances, a graduate of the 1970s, felt:

> Females are torn between career and family, whether this is genetic, or learnt, I do not know, but family ties frequently inhibit the development of female careers more than male careers.[90]

Sue also drew upon the analogy of juggling to describe women's experiences, and similarly noted the conflicts of interest that characterised women's lives: 'Nature should not have given women brains and hormones. They are constantly trying to override each other!'[91] For the woman who combined both roles successfully, Barbara felt that a 'Superwoman' prize was warranted:

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[86] *Ibid.*, record 70.
[87] *Ibid.*, record 46.
[88] *Ibid.*, record 34.
[89] *Ibid.*, record 79.
[90] *Ibid.*, record 55.
[91] *Ibid.*, record 40.

> I feel that I deserve a 'Superwoman' award – as I held down a full-time job and manage a home and family. I feel that managing a family is grossly undervalued – I hear colleagues who are described as 'well-organised' – they are single, no children, often no home of their own to care for – and I have done a day's work before I get to my paid employment sometimes – that's being organised!![92]

Dominant feminist thought over the last twenty years has depicted the family as fundamental to women's oppression. The critique depended, however, on a particular definition of the term 'family'. The definition employed referred to the nuclear family household, comprised of a heterosexual couple sharing a home with their own children whilst they are young, but not with anyone else. Feminists perceived this arrangement as detrimental to women because 'the family' in this sense embodied a particular definition of gender relations, namely the breadwinning husband and the domesticated, dependent wife. This 'orthodox' feminist analysis has increasingly been challenged as representing the preoccupations of white, middle-class women.[93] Janet Finch emphasises, however, that it is understandable that feminists have focused on this meaning of the 'family', since it is the most commonly used meaning of the term. Not only that, but also more importantly it has represented the dominant form of the family in Britain. Finch asserts that a large proportion of people have at some point in their lives experienced living in the classic nuclear family household. Furthermore, there is a second sense in which the nuclear family household is the dominant form. The idea of a married couple plus children is presented as what counts as a 'real' family. This representation has been, and remains a pervasive and powerful ideal, with women often giving priority to

[92] *Ibid.*, record 81.

[93] Furthermore, some feminist researchers have questioned the extent to which women's subordination is located in the family. For example, are women disadvantaged in the labour market because of their domestic responsibilities, or is women's domesticity a result of gender segregation in waged work?

their roles as mothers. In considering the assertion that 'the' family is oppressive to women, Finch asks:

> Does the family represent a major factor which restricts opportunities and which puts women into a position subordinate to men, as many feminists have argued?[94]

The focus of debate is upon change and diversity. As Finch emphasises, in discussing today's society very few women expect to be without an income of their own and wholly dependent on the male wage, except perhaps for a short period when they have very young children. This therefore suggests that one of the key foundations of male power in 'the' family has been steadily eroded. Finch stresses, however, that if a woman is to avoid economic dependence on a man's income she must be able to command a secure income of her own on the same scale as his. For the majority of women this does not occur. A second area of analysis is the extent to which the domestic division of labour has been renegotiated in the home. Despite the idea that marriage could work on the basis of equality and sharing following the Second World War, Finch concludes that women are still defined as specialising in caring for the home and children. Women cannot therefore move as readily as men between the public and domestic sphere.

In considering the extent to which the group of respondents were 'entrapped' in 'the' family, it was evident that Finch's conclusions were equally applicable. The majority of the women had lived, or were living in a 'nuclear' family, and whilst Finch was pessimistic in regard to women's reliance upon male wages in today's society, this was even more the case for the group of respondents. Acknowledging

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[94] Finch, J., 'Women, 'the' family and families', in Cosslett, T., Easton, A. and Summerfield, P. (eds), *Women, Power and Resistance: An Introduction to Women's Studies* (Open University Press, 1996), p. 15.

that as a group of highly educated women, the respondents had access to 'better' occupations than the average working woman, as married women with children, their careers were exposed to interruptions. As has been shown, some of the women took complete breaks from paid employment, whilst others combined part-time work with bringing up their children. The number of women whose careers were only interrupted for a short period of time were in a minority. In this sense, therefore, the majority of married respondents with children remained economically dependent upon their husbands. Furthermore, when engaged in paid employment the respondents largely took responsibility for the care of both children and home on a daily basis. In 1956 the work of sociologists Myrdal and Klein coined the phrase women's 'dual role', whilst contemporary feminist researchers have discussed the combination of paid employment and domestic work as the 'double-edged nature of women's oppression.'[95] The concept of a woman's 'maternal identity' has played a central role in women taking ultimate responsibility for the 'private' sphere. In an analysis of motherhood, Adrienne Rich stressed that the maternal aspect of women's lives has been defined as the whole of their identity. Motherhood has been presented as 'natural', and as such it is only 'natural' that women care, selflessly and unconditionally, not only for children, but also for adult men.[96] The notion of a maternal identity also impacts upon the types of careers which are deemed suitable for women. In terms of the group of respondents, for example, the continuing importance of teaching in their lives illustrates this point. The respondents did not move between home and the workplace on the same footing as men, and

[95] Witz, A., 'Women at Work', in Richardson, D. and Robinson, V. (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 273.
[96] Rich, A., *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (Virago, 1977), discussed by Lawler, S., 'Motherhood and identity', in Cosslett, T., Easton, A. and Summerfield, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 153-164.

furthermore, as was shown in Chapter 8, graduate women could be discriminated against on the very grounds of having children.

It could be argued, therefore, that a significant number of the respondents were 'entrapped' in 'the' family. Yet in a study of the meanings and experience of 'home' for a group of women who grew up in England before 1950, Judy Giles raises an important point. The feminist analysis that domesticity is always monotonous and always stifling not only runs the risk of alienating vast numbers of women, but in avoiding a subjective understanding of women's relationship to the home avoids confronting: 'the ways in which both pleasure and aggression might be internalised and expressed by women.'[97] As has been shown, in discussing family the respondents did articulate problems and grievances. On being asked about their greatest achievements and sources of satisfaction within their lives, however, family, along with career, was fundamental to many of them. Marriage, and especially children, were emphasised as very important, rewarding aspects of the respondents' lives. For several of the women it was an aspect of their life which they felt was very worthwhile, but sadly undervalued by today's society. Family life fulfilled many of the women, and the following quotation is typical of the responses given to the questions 'What would you say has been your greatest achievement' and 'What have been your sources of greatest satisfaction throughout your life?': 'Watching my children achieve their full potential and still being married and in love with the same man for over twenty years.[98] Ann Oakley's conclusions in *The Sociology of Housework* are appropriate in the analysis of the respondents' attitudes to family life. She suggests that the contradictions and ambivalence in women's attitude to housework can be clarified by distinguishing between feelings about housework (as

[97] Giles, J., *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950* (Macmillan, 1995), p. 20.
[98] Questionnaire, record 73.

work) and their orientation to 'the housewife role'. It is the work itself that is the focus of dissatisfaction, whereas the 'housewife role' is more often understood in terms of caring for others, and creating a home is viewed far more positively.[99] Similarly, it could be argued that the majority of the respondents were not rejecting their role as wives/mothers, but simply critiquing aspects of that role. It is in this sense that feminist researchers may begin to understand both the 'pleasure and aggression' that women may experience vis-à-vis the family.

Having considered in Chapters 8 and 9 the postgraduate lives of the group of respondents in terms of career and family, the following chapter will now explore their personal reflections upon both their lives as women, and their relationship to feminism.

[99] Oakley, A., *The Sociology of Housework* (Blackwell, 1984), discussed in Jackson, S., *op. cit.*, p. 186.

Chapter 10

Being a woman: women graduates of the University of Liverpool and their reflections upon their lives as women and feminism

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Having considered the respondents' life histories in Chapters 5 to 9, the penultimate chapter of this thesis is concerned to explore their personal reflections upon both their lives as women, and their relationship to feminism. The first section of the chapter considers the extent to which, and in what ways the respondents felt that being a woman had affected their lives on a positive and negative level. This section also explores the way in which the respondents felt that women's lives had changed in their own lifetime, and the ways in which they hoped women's lives would change in the future. The second section of the chapter will discuss the respondents' subjective relationship to feminism, considering the extent to which they identified themselves as feminists and exploring what concepts of feminism they were employing.

A woman's life

In exploring how the respondents felt as women, the questions asked were 'Do you think being a woman has affected you positively in your life?', and conversely 'Do you think being a woman has affected you negatively in your life?' Several of the women answered 'No' to both of these questions and did not expand on this answer, whilst several of the women did not answer the questions in any way whatsoever, scoring a line through the questions to indicate that they had read them, but did not wish to answer them. Such responses implied that some of the women did not regard

gender as a significant issue of discussion. Similarly, some of the respondents emphasised that they *were* women, and as such found it difficult to distance themselves from this fact and reflect on how they felt *as* women. In considering the responses to the first question, 'Do you think being a woman has affected you positively in your life?', there were significantly more of the respondents who felt that it had, than those who felt that it had not. It was striking that several themes were also identifiable. Society's reduced expectations of what a woman might achieve, was actually considered by some of the women as a positive aspect to being a woman. For example, Gillian wrote: 'Many more opportunities, much less 'expected and required' as it is for a man.'[1] Similarly, Marlene emphasised that a positive aspect of being a woman, in contrast to being a man was: 'Not to be guided by ambition, or to have to work just for money', whilst Pauline stressed 'I feel that I've not been under pressure to achieve.'[2] There was the sense that because less was expected of women in career terms, women were therefore faced with more life choices. Moira, who graduated in the 1960s, highlighted:

> As a little girl I don't think expectations were as great as if I had been a boy, and since there was less pressure I probably blossomed more. Again, it was not important for a woman to get a good job/career so I was freer to do what I wanted.[3]

A fellow student of the 1960s also raised this issue of freedom: 'I have had a choice about whether to work or not. Men of my age had no such choice.'[4] As a graduate of the 1970s, one respondent further highlighted how women were faced with more options: 'You can have the best of both worlds, without people having major

[1] Questionnaire, record 19.
[2] *Ibid.*, records 43 and 38.
[3] *Ibid.*, record 47
[4] *Ibid.*, record 31.

expectations of you in one direction only.'[5] Similarly, another respondent emphasised:

> I have been able to combine a career with motherhood without the pressures which many men feel to 'get to the top', as being a father is not valued in the same way as being a mother.[6]

Motherhood was also emphasised as a positive aspect to being a woman: 'Having the responsibility to bring up and influence children is very positive. I hope that I have motivated my sons to achieve the maximum of which they are capable.'[7] Elizabeth noted: 'I have had the physical and emotional satisfaction of giving birth and being a mother.'[8] In being presented with 'more opportunities', Pamela felt that:

> Despite frustrations and discrimination, I have never wished that I had been born a man. Women tend to be interested in many things, whereas men dig deeper into fewer subjects, professionally and in hobbies.[9]

Similarly, Hazel, emphasised: 'My ability, shared with all women, to consider the needs of several people and matters at one time.'[10] One respondent stressed that this ability was a learnt skill: 'I think women learn early on to juggle lots of roles. That is a positive thing – it makes life interesting and fulfilling.'[11] The respondents described the way in which women 'multi-task' as a positive aspect to being a woman; however, the concept of women being generalists, rather than specialists, a notion often synonymous with 'expert', can be seen as problematic.

In considering the positive effects of being a woman many of the respondents wrote in terms of the characteristics of women. Several women felt that being a woman made them strong. Frances commented: 'In retrospect, 'if it doesn't kill you

[5] *Ibid.*, record 58.
[6] *Ibid.*, record 35.
[7] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[8] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[9] *Ibid.*, record 16.
[10] *Ibid.*, record 67.
[11] *Ibid.*, record 37.

it makes you stronger.' Women are lucky compared to men if inner strength is a measure of success.'[12] In recognition of the discrimination women could face, Janet emphasised the determination required by women to gain respect: 'You have to (in some cases) earn respect. It is not automatically given. It makes you a fighter!!'[13] Similarly, Sue, who studied veterinary science and who was somewhat more reticent about the positive affect of being a woman, noted:

> I think the only positive way it has affected me is that maybe it made me more determined to achieve what I planned and not cave into the 'women don't do that' attitude.[14]

Several of the women emphasised that as women they differed from men on an emotional level and in terms of how they interacted with others. Ann noted: 'I think women's friendships are deeper and more supportive than men's.'[15] In contrast to men, one respondent wrote: 'I think women look at things in a different – more reasonable way compared to men.'[16] In a sense, some of the respondents embraced perceptions of women's 'character' which feminist researchers have highlighted as problematic. For example, one respondent stated: 'Given the caring and nurturing aspects of womanhood, a woman can wield much influence for good or ill.'[17] Another respondent felt that: 'female sensitivity in general is heightened, and if you are aware of it, you think more carefully when dealing with people.'[18] Similarly, Gillian noted: 'I am more compassionate than men. I have never been violent. I do not believe in violence. Men cause most wars with their 'macho' violence.'[19] Feminist writers have emphasised the problems with equating women with a

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[12] *Ibid*, record 55.
[13] *Ibid*, record 59.
[14] *Ibid*, record 40.
[15] *Ibid*, record 17.
[16] *Ibid*, record 30.
[17] *Ibid*, record 27.
[18] *Ibid*, record 33.
[19] *Ibid*, record 34.

'maternal identity' (as discussed in Chapter 9). The notion that women have distinctive characteristics, which originate from their 'natural' maternal role, has had a profound effect upon what women can do. As has been demonstrated throughout the thesis the association of women with caring and corresponding virtues, such as compassion and sensitivity, has had a great influence upon the types of paid employment deemed as suitable for a woman. It was notable that among some of the women who graduated in the 1970s, there was a significant shift in their conception of such 'womanly' characteristics. In contrast to the notion that women possessed qualities intrinsic and more specific to their sex, there was a sense that such 'heightened' female virtues were socially constructed. For example, Patricia wrote: 'Society also still allows women to express emotions more freely than men.'[20] Similarly, Valerie emphasised: 'I have an 'emotional' health and well-being which I wouldn't have were I a man.'[21] These accounts raise an important point: namely, that the equation of men with emotion was not, and is not, part of the construction of masculinity. Stephanie, in a damning critique of men, in turn highlighted why women had 'learnt' to care:

> Men on the whole are selfish, self-centred and thoughtless. To combat their egos and selfishness you have to be positive and strong and you learn how to care because when you've been on the receiving end you wouldn't want anyone to suffer at your hands.[22]

As noted above, feminist researchers have emphasised the negative affect of equating women with care in terms of their career prospects. Women could, however, benefit from this equation. Josette felt that as a woman she had benefited from the stereotypical image of what 'woman' represented: 'I think I've benefited in teaching

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[20] *Ibid*, record 61.
[21] *Ibid*. record 79.
[22] *Ibid*, record 65.

from perceptions of what women are good at (e.g. when being considered for a pastoral post with younger pupils).'[23]

Not all of the respondents felt, however, that being a woman had affected them positively in their lives. In contrast to those who stressed that they were glad to be women and enjoyed being women, Joyce and Mary emphasised that they would have preferred to have been men. Joyce wrote:

> I have long decided that if I come back it would be as a man. Women draw the short straw. I hated childbirth, pregnancy and all the attendant indignities. I held down a man's job but worked hard at home all weekend not only with household organisation – but prep. and marking. Being attractive when younger I was sexually harassed but laughed it off.[24]

Similarly, Mary emphasised: 'I always wanted to be a boy. I think I would have made a very successful man!'[25] On an individual level, Sheila was somewhat ambivalent as to whether or not being a woman had had a positive effect upon her life. On a more general level, however, Sheila felt that women were burdened with two roles:

> Not sure, but I think so, as I'm reasonably contented with my lot! I used to think that it was possible for educated women to have the best of both worlds – home, femininity, career. Now I think men have reaped the best benefits of Women's Lib. – additional family income, plus women/wives determined to make their homes as efficient as those traditionally run by stay-at-home wives.[26]

This comment stood in sharp contrast to the opinions of some of the respondents that being able to combine career and family was a positive aspect of being a woman.

In considering how and if being a woman had affected them negatively in life, the group's responses were more equally balanced between those women who said 'No', being a woman had not affected them negatively, and those who said

[23] *Ibid*, record 74.
[24] *Ibid*, record 10.
[25] *Ibid*, record 44.
[26] *Ibid*, record 45.

'Yes', it had. It was interesting to note that there was increasing dissatisfaction from those women who graduated in the 1960s and 1970s. The autobiographical accounts of a group of girls growing in the aftermath of the Second World War, contained in Heron's *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties*, revealed that many of the women had felt a sense expanding opportunities, and anticipated a different future from their mothers in the wake of the 1944 Education Act and the establishment of the Welfare State.[27] Correspondingly, those respondents who had been born following the Second World War and were entering university in the 1960s and 1970s may have comparably felt this same sense of optimism regarding their futures, only to discover that the reality was far less rosy. The major themes that were predominant in the responses of those women who felt being a woman had affected them negatively in their lives were issues concerned with careers, the combination of women's 'two roles', and the 'maternal identity'. In regard to careers, one graduate of the 1940s, commented: 'When I was at university women were not taken so seriously. As a man I am sure I would have achieved much more in my career.'[28] Gillian emphasised the assertiveness she had had to exert, in order to be on a more equal footing with her male colleagues: 'I have always had to 'put myself forward' to make sure I got the same out of my career as men.'[29] As a lawyer, one respondent felt that generally women lacked confidence in the workplace: 'I am less confident in my work in a way I tend to see replicated in female rather than male colleagues.'[30] Graduating in the 1950s with a Bachelor of Commerce, Sheelagh highlighted how certain careers were not perceived as suitable for a woman: 'I had to become a chartered <u>public finance</u> accountant rather than an ordinary C.A. (as in

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[27] Heron, L. (ed.), *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls growing up in the Fifties* (Virago, 1985).
[28] Questionnaire, record 2.
[29] *Ibid.*, record 34.
[30] *Ibid.*, record 75.

early 1960s women accountants were not highly regarded).[31] As graduates of the 1960s and 1970s respectively, Mary and Barbara further emphasised the discrimination they had faced, in this instance within the teaching profession. Mary noted:

> No promotion opportunities in my school – all but the token female deputy went to men until about 1990. Most of these men got where they were because they have eager beaver little wives at home.[32]

It was rather interesting that Mary held those wives who stayed at home, supporting, or rather encouraging their husband's career advancement, as partly responsible for this situation. Mary was critical of the 'housewife role', which allocated women, at best a 'complementary' position, at worst a secondary role in society. Similarly, Barbara stressed the lack of promotional prospects:

> Yes, mainly because of employment restrictions. I can do more than a lot of men who are in authority over me; there are many more female teachers than male, but much fewer female head teachers than male ones, the same goes for advisors.[33]

The primacy of women's role as both wife and mother was also stressed as a negative aspect of being a woman, especially in attempting to combine family life and paid employment. One respondent noted: 'Too much responsibility in the home, too many career breaks because of children and husband's moving.'[34] Another respondent stressed: 'I progressed slowly up the career ladder because I did not want full-time work when my children were very young.'[35] Similarly, Elizabeth emphasised:

> In spite of enjoying motherhood, etc, this aspect of being a woman has brought restrictions that a man does not experience. I might have been more successful in my studies and career if I had been a man. I would rather have

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[31] *Ibid.*, record 23.
[32] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[33] *Ibid.*, record 81.
[34] *Ibid.*, record 33.
[35] *Ibid.*, record 64.

> been born male; it is more difficult to succeed/be accepted as a woman in a male dominated world.[36]

All of these testimonies reflect the points raised in Chapters 8 and 9, namely that the primacy of woman's role as that of wife and mother, ultimately had a profound affect upon a woman's working life outside of the home. The financial disadvantages of being allocated this role were also highlighted:

> Women still 'lose out' in that it is so difficult to combine having a family and full-time work that inevitably a full pension contribution cannot be acquired and so after a working life, possibly with divorce/loss of partner, women are financially penalised. This has an impact on the entire family and children with mothers only are usually poorer. Most women can never 'catch up' the financial disadvantages and be equal to men. I will never achieve a full pension.

Furthermore, the same respondent noted, as had Sheila mentioned earlier, that the post-war development of women's combined role as that of wife/mother and waged worker was not something to be celebrated:

> I do feel that the degree of so called 'equality' which prevails at present, simply allows women to work harder and longer – in that women have two full-time jobs, inside and outside the home. The expectation still is that women will do most jobs in the home and the basic organisation of childcare.[37]

The 'maternal identity' imposed upon women was also highlighted as a negative aspect of being a woman. The following quotation demonstrates how not all women were happy with this identity:

> Being left with the children has seriously affected my career, and personal life. I felt I was left with them because I was the mother (I am not a natural homemaker or particularly maternal, so this has been terribly difficult as I don't fit the stereotyped 'woman' role).[38]

As a wife and mother, one respondent noted: 'Mothers of young children and housewives don't have time off. We work while others relax.'[39] Caring, furthermore

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[36] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[37] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[38] *Ibid.*, record 80.
[39] *Ibid.*, record 52.

was not always contained within 'the' family (as discussed in Chapter 9 as the classic nuclear household). For Barbara, this extended role was not one she excepted gladly:

> Pressure has been brought on me to care for my parents and parents-in-law over a period of 37 years, my mother-in-law living in our house for 21 years. I have submitted to this but bitterly resent it.[40]

Women as carers was also a role, until very recently, which was perceived as requiring no outside support: 'When I was looking after my mother and tried in vain to get help from social services...they didn't take me seriously.'[41]

The themes discussed above were emphasised as the most negative aspects of being a woman. It is also interesting to note that in contrast to Ann's judgement that women's friendship are superior to men's, Pamela expressed the opposite opinion and also suggested that women are, in a sense, not their own people:

> Women are always aware of other women's failings, even in their best friends; friendships between men seem more loyal and uncritical, and they can immediately pick up a friendship again after a break of many years. Many women adopt their husband's/partner's opinions, whether through lack of confidence, wish for a quiet life, or just laziness in forming their own independent opinions.[42]

Pamela's comment vis-à-vis women's friendships echoed an opinion recently expressed in the national press. In an article entitled 'Beware the bitch', Ros Coward argues that feminism of the 1970s advocated sisterhood:

> Out went the bitchy, backbiting, competitive world of pre-feminist girlhood. This was redundant behaviour belonging to an era when women competed with each other to win a male.[43]

Coward suggests, however, that contemporary culture has returned to the above, whereby hostility and disloyalty once again characterise young women's relationships. As noted not all of the women felt that being a woman had affected

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[40] *Ibid.*, record 46.
[41] *Ibid.*, record 43.
[42] *Ibid.*, record 16.
[43] Coward, R., 'Beware the bitch', *The Times*, 18. 8. 00, p. 3.

their lives negatively, but several of these women implied that this was on an individual, rather than a general level. For example, Lucy noted: 'Being unmarried I have always been on an equal footing with my male colleagues', whilst Janice stated: 'No, because I've not allowed it to, but sometimes it's tiring.'[44] In highlighting that they personally felt that being a woman had not had a negative affect on their lives, there was, however, the recognition that being a woman could be problematic; in the case of Lucy if she had married and in Janice's case if she had allowed it to. Similarly, Josette emphasised that on an individual level being a woman had not had a negative affect upon her own life, but emphasised that women could experience discriminatory attitudes. Josette, however, by the end of her response, had introduced some uncertainty into her own evaluation of her personal experiences:

> No. I think I was born at a good time in this respect. Being an only child helped too – all my parents' ambitions/hopes were focused on me. Some girls my age did have parents who thought education was pointless for girls. At work there has been potential for problems. I possibly tailored my ambitions to what was possible (there's no way a woman could have become head of year eleven in my school, I suspect), but in fact I don't think I did.[45]

In discussing the ways in which women's lives had changed in the respondents' own lifetime, many of the women emphasised that there had been significant developments in women's social position. Today's young women were perceived as having a different outlook. They were described as being more self-confident, more assertive and of having greater expectations of life. This sentiment was expressed in the testimonies of those women who graduated in the late 1940s through to those women who graduated in the 1970s. One respondent commented:

[44] Questionnaire, records 14 and 71.
[45] *Ibid.*, record 74.

> Women now emerging from colleges/universities seem much more self confident and to have greater expectations as a whole than I recall either I or my fellow women graduates did in 1975.[46]

Similarly, Ann who graduated in the late 1960s, noted:

> They are independent, assertive. When I was young, the main aim in life was to have children and marriage, to become stable. Now women want much more. They still want marriage, companionship but not without other things.[47]

Barbara emphasised: 'Working mothers have become an everyday fact of life.'[48] Not only did the women highlight this point, but also that they felt that women could now enter a wider range of jobs/professions. In terms of personal relationships women were described as having more options. Several respondents emphasised that there was no longer a stigma attached to being unmarried. Ann noted: 'they can live alone without it looking 'odd'.' Furthermore, Ann stressed: 'they can have babies out of wedlock without people being horrified.'[49] Contraception had also given women the 'freedom to choose when to start a family – if at all – making the career easier to deal with.'[50] Sexual relations had also changed. Elizabeth, who married in 1958, wrote: 'Women do not need to remain 'pure' (yes, men really wanted their brides to be virgins).'[51] Moira commented that whereas sex before marriage was unusual, 'now there is peer pressure to the contrary.'[52] In regard to domestic work, some of the women felt that this burden had been somewhat elevated. Joan wrote:

> Technology has made combining home responsibilities and a career much easier. My mother did all the housework by hand – I have a washing machine, dishwasher, food mixer, etc.[53]

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[46] *Ibid.*, record 75.
[47] *Ibid.*, record 41.
[48] *Ibid.*, record 81.
[49] *Ibid.*, record 17.
[50] *Ibid.*, record 32.
[51] *Ibid.*, record 66.
[52] *Ibid.*, record 47.
[53] *Ibid.*, record 35.

Joyce felt that women did not cook as much; eating out and having take-aways was considered much more an aspect of contemporary life.[54] It was striking that whilst technological developments were highlighted as a changing and significant factor of women's lives, an increasing contribution by men to domestic life, was not.

In discussing the changes within women's lives many of the women were also somewhat critical of those changes. Emphasising the extent of change within women's lives, Mary wrote: 'Considerably but not necessarily for the better. Greater freedom and equality have not always made for greater happiness and fulfilment.'[55] The combination of work and family was a particular point of reference. Maureen, a graduate of the late 1940s, commented:

> Whilst I think the opportunity to do some sort of work outside the home is fine I think many women have exchanged one form of restriction for another. So many now have to work. The effect on children and sometimes also on husbands in high-flying jobs can be disastrous.[56]

The last sentence in the above quotation, highlights how Maureen herself understood a woman's primary role as that of wife and mother. In emphasising that so many women are now compelled to work, Maureen touched upon two factors further noted by the respondents. Women now need to work for financial reasons, and also feel it is expected that they work. Mary wrote: 'Much more is expected of them – a job, a perfect house, children, good looks all at the same time!'[57] Several of the women drew upon the concept of a 'Superwoman':

> Domestic work has become much easier but women now seem expected to be super beings combining careers and home life with equal success. This does not suit all women and they are left with a sense of guilt and also a sense of inadequacy.[58]

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[54] *Ibid.*, record 10.
[55] *Ibid.*, record 7.
[56] *Ibid.*, record 4.
[57] *Ibid.*, record 13.
[58] *Ibid.*, record 27.

The development of women's 'dual role' was described as a negative development in women lives:

> A woman with a career does not feel free to give up work and enjoy being at home bringing up a family now, unlike when I did. Many women combine homemaking and paid work to the detriment of their health (exhaustion, stress, depression) and relationships.[59]

Furthermore, Mary felt that despite the fact that women are now able to do more, they still can be treated as second class citizens.[60] Several of the women who graduated in the 1960s and 1970s, and who have contact with the next generation of young women, even questioned the extent to which women's lives have changed. Mary noted:

> Not as much as I would have expected in the 1980s. I am horrified by the return of stiletto heels and the Wonderbra! My female pupils are only slightly more ambitious than my generation were. They are still intimidated by loud-mouthed boys with often less ability.[61]

Similarly, whilst Megan felt that general changes had occurred, not all young women had benefited from the changes:

> In general, there have been great strides in educational and employment opportunities but where I work at Anfield C.C.S. the restricted outlook of many girls, the number of teenage pregnancies, the attitudes of boys, girls and their parents remains deeply depressing. There are still examples of girls being kept at home to mind younger family members, boys and their fathers not wanting to learn 'girls' subjects etc.[62]

Anfield C. C. S. is a comprehensive school in deprived, working-class area of Liverpool, and in making such observations, Megan was raising an important issue, namely the interaction of gender and class playing a significant role in women's lives. Similarly, Janice commented: 'I don't think 'socially excluded' women's lives

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[59] *Ibid.*, record 47.
[60] *Ibid.*, record 28.
[61] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[62] *Ibid.*, record 69.

have changed much.'[63] Sheila, whose own daughter graduated with a PhD in Physics in 1997, further questioned the extent to which the lives of middle-class women had changed:

> There seems to be more freedom of choice, particularly career-wise, although I sometimes doubt when discussing women's lives with my daughter whether things have progressed enough in favour of women once they are committed to a loving relationship. It still seems to be the man's career that is more important.[64]

Having reflected upon the ways in which women's lives had changed in recent history, the respondents also discussed the ways in which they hoped women's lives would change in the near future. A critical point made was that whilst women are faced with more options, in the future the respondents hoped that women would have the *freedom* to make their own personal choices. This emphasis on making one's own decisions was reflected in the advice offered to young women entering and graduating from university. Mary emphasised that she hoped: 'that a woman who chooses to spend her time looking after home and family is not looked down upon by her peers.'[65] Several women noted that the role of mother and homemaker has subsequently been denigrated, and hoped that this role would be given greater value in the future. The respondents emphasised correspondingly that those women who chose to combine both family and career should also feel free to follow that path. For example, Rosalind emphasised that she wanted women of the future to have: 'The right to be a career women and have children without being made to feel guilty.'[66] Furthermore, the respondents stressed that working women with families should receive more support; better childcare facilities, extended maternity leave, more job-sharing and men taking an equal share in childrearing and domestic arrangements.

[63] *Ibid.*, record 71.
[64] *Ibid.*, record 45.
[65] *Ibid.*, record 13.
[66] *Ibid.*, record 76.

Barbara asked: 'That women are no longer expected to automatically assume responsibility for parents, sick relatives, etc.'[67] Judith desired: 'No more 'superwoman' expectations. If a woman has to work why should she be expected to run a home as well?'[68] Similarly, Mary requested: 'The eradication of the term 'women's issues' – i. e. that child-care, the home, etc. should AUTOMATICALLY be regarded as joint responsibilities.'[69] Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, first published in 1963, referred to the lives of suburban housewives in 1950s America as 'the problem with no name'.[70] Many of the respondents, however, suggested that the combination of paid employment and family life was in itself a problem, and in contrast to Friedan's analysis, this new problem was not nameless. Mydral and Klein in 1957, discussed the post-war development towards married women entering the labour market in terms of women's 'two roles.' One respondent referred to women's 'two roles' as an 'eternal round of drudgery'.[71] In discussing women's involvement in paid employment the respondents hoped that women would reach more senior positions: 'To break through the glass ceiling and occupy more higher level managerial jobs/administrative jobs', and also be more visible in public life in general, especially politics.[72] Other issues raised in regard to improvements in women's lives in the future were, for example, advances in women's medical care and freedom from fear of attack. Katherine, who documented the domestic violence she had encountered, stressed:

> Better treatment following domestic violence. I lost everything, lived out of carrier bags, in refuges for three years. My husband, the perpetrator, still has 100 per cent of our assets. Swifter legal procedures.[73]

[67] *Ibid.*, record 46.
[68] *Ibid.*, record 32.
[69] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[70] Friedan, B., *The Feminine Mystique* (Penguin, 1965).
[71] Questionnaire, record 37.
[72] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[73] *Ibid.*, record 82.

It was also interesting to note that several respondents hoped that women would not lose their femininity and become like men. Pauline wanted: 'women to feel at peace as women' and not to 'feel they have to become like men to achieve anything.'[74] Two graduates of the 1940s further noted that they hoped that women would treat men more fairly in the future. Audrey commented: 'I think that women have done harm to men in the process of achieving what they wanted.'[75] These final points are particularly pertinent in view of the second half of the chapter.

Graduate women and feminism

The relationship between graduate women and feminism is an underdeveloped area of research. Those historians of the pre-1939 period who have considered this relationship have focused primarily on assessing the 'feminist' nature of the activities of university women. The involvement of female students in university societies and especially their involvement in suffrage societies are a means by which to measure the extent of feminism amongst university women. Delamont's work emphasises that those women who sought inclusion in higher education, for example Emily Davis feared that association with feminist issues such as the suffrage movement would damage the educational cause.[76] This caution appears to have characterised the suffrage societies of the coeducational institutions. In studying women of the Scottish Universities and their involvement in the suffrage movement, Hamilton concludes:

> Women students followed rather than led the suffrage movement. They dutifully set up their societies and paid homage to their heroines but they

[74] *Ibid*, record 43.
[75] *Ibid*, record 11.
[76] Delamont, S., 'The contradictions in Ladies' Education', in Delamont, S. and Duffin, L. (eds.), *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World* (Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 134-163.

> were cautious about involvement in militancy, the effect of which was to dilute the feminist outlook.[77]

Similarly, Dyhouse notes that many activists involved in the suffrage societies, established in most universities in the period 1906 to 1913, emphasised their preference for law-abiding tactics and were keen to dissociate themselves from militarism. Furthermore:

> There were many women, their sights often set on the sober prospect of a career as schoolmistresses, who preferred to keep out of the public eye altogether. One should remember that, in any case, the proportion of students active in university societies was always rather low.[78]

Women students involvement in suffrage societies and related activities, therefore, only provides one means of exploring the extent of feminism in universities. Dyhouse, also makes reference to a key point, namely that: 'Thinking about the extent of feminism among women university students...involves grappling with definitions.'[79] For example, what is feminism? Who is a feminist? Mackinnon emphasises that Delamont's analysis of the relationship between university women and feminism employs a rather narrow definition, which focuses upon 'public' activity.[80] In discussing the relationship between graduate women and feminism, this thesis, by adopting the use of a questionnaire, is concerned to explore the respondents personal association with feminism. Rather than assess female students' 'feminist' activity within the university environment, the respondents' testimonies provide a unique insight into their subjective relationship to feminism, considering

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[77] Hamilton, S., *Women and the Scottish Universities c. 1869-1939: A Social History* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1987), p. 380.
[78] Dyhouse, C., *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities 1870 – 1939* (UCL Press, 1995), p. 220.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 224.
[80] Mackinnon, A., 'Male heads on female shoulders? New questions for the history of women's education', *History of Education Review*, 22 (1993), p. 42.

the extent to which the women regarded themselves as feminists and what notion of feminism they were employing.

Of those respondents who graduated in the 1940s through to the 1960s, the majority quite firmly stated that 'No' they did not regard themselves as feminists. On analysing their conception of feminism, however, it became evident that the women were equating feminism with radicalism, and it was this notion that the women were rejecting. 'Aggressiveness' was a word frequently employed, and there was sense that feminism had 'gone too far': 'Some things needed changing, but it went too far. You don't have to be quite so militant to get things done.'[81] Pamela stressed:

> Some of the exaggerations by the cause of women's rights are open to ridicule, and too facile, ignoring the serious aspects, e.g. I don't mind being a chair<u>man</u> and I think 'girl' and 'lady' are useful words and hate being addressed as 'Ms'. Some feminists give the impression of hating men, rather than supporting women.[82]

The concept of 'politically correct' language, and particularly anti-male sentiment were equated with feminism by several of the respondents. 'Divisive' was the key word used in discussing feminism's approach to male/female relations. Mary perceived feminism as 'women trying to outsmart men', and similarly Judith wrote: 'To me feminism is a determination on the part of some women to show that they are superior to men.'[83] Ann commented: 'I think some feminists want a world where men become lesser in importance then women.'[84] For Sue who conceived feminism as 'pro-women' and 'anti-men', 'the cause', as it was derogatorily labelled by some of the respondents, seemed to go beyond 'fairness for women'.[85] It was in this sense that feminism was referred to, for example, as 'ugly' and 'unpleasant'. Joan noted:

[81] Questionnaire, record 3.
[82] *Ibid*., record 16.
[83] *Ibid*., records 13 and 32.
[84] *Ibid*., record 17.
[85] *Ibid*., record 40.

'Feminists seem to want special privileges rather than equal opportunities.'[86] Many of the respondents rejected the idea of positive discrimination and felt that women should 'compete on a level playing field', and that there should be, for example, 'no 'statutory' women on committees or weighed political lists.'[87]

There was a clear sense that many of the respondents felt that being a feminist entailed striving to emulate men. Frances conceived a feminist as a: 'female who attempts to behave like a male regardless of whether the male offers a good role model or not.'[88] Contemporary feminism, for Jane symbolised the expectation that women should have both a family and a full-time career, and was perceived by Jane as 'anti-feminist': 'I would call it masculinisation.'[89] The testimony of one respondent, who graduated in the 1960s, succinctly reflects the sentiments of many of the women:

> The archetypal feminist wants equality with men. I agree with the basic notion, but that does not mean that I want to do everything that has traditionally been a man's role. It was once necessary to have a man as a guarantor for a woman who wanted a mortgage, or a car on HP etc. even if the woman was on a high salary. This is patently discriminatory. However, I still enjoy having doors held open for me etc!! I have been put off by some fiercely feminist colleagues who seem to feel that it is demeaning to allow a man to change a car tyre for me, or do other jobs which I have been very grateful at times. What is wrong with accepting help? Such women give feminism a bad name. With a husband and three sons I have learned that my life is easier if I encourage them to look after me rather than treat me as a competitor![90]

There was an emphasis on the fact that the women did not want to be the *same* as men, and that men and women, rather than being in competition form a partnership. Joan noted: 'I consider that the male/female genders are symbiotic and complementary. Physically and emotionally (as a generalisation) men and women

[86] *Ibid*, record 35.
[87] *Ibid*, record 18.
[88] *Ibid*, record 55.
[89] *Ibid*, record 63.
[90] *Ibid*, record 31.

have different strengths and weaknesses – just as individuals in each gender do.'[91] For those respondents who held similar opinions to Joan's, men and women were perceived as fundamentally different. The statement: 'The archetypal feminist wants equality with men. I agree with the basic notion' is the significant point that characterised many of the testimonies of those women who stated that they did not consider themselves as feminists. As stressed earlier, many of the women were rejecting a more militant form of feminism, whilst embracing the concept of equality. As a graduate of the 1940s, Maria's comments further exemplify this point:

> It has too many negatives, anti rather than pro. It can be ugly and abrasive, unfair too men, etc. Its attitudes and ethos are the antithesis of mine and I have never supported the cause, which is how I categorise it. Women's rights are quite different and I have worked to support the basis and strong issues involved: equality of pay, fair employment opportunities, right to deal with and organise ones own finances, respect given for what I am not because I am a woman.[92]

Several women emphasised that they did not identify with feminism because in contemporary society it is 'irrelevant'.[93] Mary, a graduate of the 1940s, commented:

> That at the present time in our society it is unnecessary and unpleasant...women now have (1) equal pay for equal jobs (when I started teaching women got less which was wrong) (2) equal opportunities for all education (3) any restriction on jobs is mainly due to biological differences – why should women expect time off for child rearing (which is their choice) and still promotion on equal terms?[94]

The third point made by Audrey reflects her understanding of a woman's social position in society, in the event of having children, as caring for those children. For some of the respondents, feminism was considered as a limited position. In describing feminism, Pamela wrote: 'An exaggerated concentration on the

[91] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[92] *Ibid.*, record 9.
[93] *Ibid.*, record 29.
[94] *Ibid.*, record 13.

restrictions placed on women by current or past society, to the exclusion of other groupings of people in society.'[95] Similarly, Ann commented:

> Promotion of women's issues rather than both male/female issues. I am not a political person. I have never thought about feminism, except that I would support injustice or anyone whatever sex or race etc if this was a problem. I feel feminism is too narrow an outlook.[96]

Furthermore, there was also a sense that some of the women did not want to be categorised by their sex, and a notion of individuality was emphasised in some of the respondents' testimonies.

Those women who did identify themselves as feminists were to be found in greater numbers amongst those respondents who had graduated in the 1970s. What was striking, however, was that those women who did consider themselves as feminists, were also rejecting radicalism and defining feminism broadly in terms of equality. The only difference, therefore, between those women who did/did not relate to feminism, focused upon the issue of definition. As graduates of the 1940s, feminism for Audrey and Joyce symbolised the sentiment expressed by Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, namely that women should have power over themselves.[97] Audrey wrote: 'My notion of feminism is that all women should have the right, ability and means to make all their own decisions affecting their lives, their work and their family.'[98] Similarly, feminism for Joyce represented: 'Freedom from control and from financial control of one's own affairs. Ease of movement without answering for one's whereabouts.'[99] As a graduate of the 1970s, Hazel defined feminism as: 'A movement which made women aware of the need to speak out for justice, i.e. a movement which inspired some women to

[95] *Ibid.*, record 16.
[96] *Ibid.*, record 41.
[97] Wollstonecraft, M., *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Penguin, 1972).
[98] Questionnaire, record 8.
[99] *Ibid.*, record 10.

challenge male superiority in work and relationships.'[100] Similarly, one respondent wrote:

> A feminist promotes women's rights and believes women's rights need promoting. Women were second class citizens. Even now many have fewer privileges than men. Men still hold most of the top posts in the country - and the world.[101]

For Patricia, feminism symbolised quite simply: 'Equal opportunities, equal recognition of rights, opinions, freedom of speech and freedom to 'be'.'[102] As noted above, whilst the women who identified themselves as feminists were embracing a more liberal form of feminism, several explicitly wished to state that they did not want to be associated with radicalism. One respondent stressed that 'yes' she would call herself a feminist, but clarified not in the extreme sense which the word is sometimes used.[103] Two of the respondents actually highlighted the tendency towards equating feminism with radicalism: 'I do agree with feminism, but with qualification. I think people associate feminism with 'burn the bra' and I do not want to be associated with this attitude.'[104] Similarly, Megan was even more specific vis-à-vis her relationship to feminism: 'While I broadly support liberal feminism I find radical feminism too extreme and strident.'[105]

Just as there was those women who did not identify with feminism on the grounds that feminists wanted to emulate men, there were those respondents who did identify with feminism, but a feminism that recognised the differences between men and women. For example, Pauline, a graduate of the 1960s, defined feminism as: 'The development of the gifts and talents that are peculiar to woman's

[100] *Ibid.*, record 67.
[101] *Ibid.*, record 30.
[102] *Ibid.*, record 61.
[103] *Ibid.*, record 27.
[104] *Ibid.*, record 42.
[105] *Ibid.*, record 69.

nature...compassion, intuition, graciousness and deep care for community, family life and peoples' real needs.' She further commented:

> I always thought it meant being a Germaine Greer type, but I realise that if re-defined it could be a positive concept for the future. I do not like the aggressive type of feminism of the general perception, as I feel it is selfish...I do, however, appreciate the tough battle which has had to be waged to change thinking and attitudes of both men and women to make possible the changes as we have seen in my lifetime...I think we need a totally new concept of feminism, a greater understanding and appreciation of the qualities of a woman as those which complement those of a man. They are needed in the violent and vicious world we live in.[106]

As a graduate of the 1970s, Stephanie defined feminism as: 'A belief that everyone is equal and has great value – a belief in the female traits of mercy, compassion and love.'[107] Similarly, Barbara, a fellow student of the same decade, wrote:

> Women should be regarded as equal to men...this does not mean that they are the same. Women should not have to behave like men in order to succeed. Success should not just be measured in financial/employment terms.[108]

In sharp contrast to those respondents who emphasised the differences between men and women, whether or not they regarded themselves as feminists, stood Janice's testimony. Janice felt that emphasising differences between men and women was a means by which women were allocated an inferior position in society. In identifying herself as a feminist, Janice commented:

> Women are deemed to be 'inferior' by men, society at large, by being described as weaker physically, emotionally, dominated by their hormones, illogical, etc., etc., and that this ideology is used by men to keep their power and control over women and society at large. Sexist jokes, stereotypes all contribute to this overtly and covertly. By identifying this abuse of power, women can fight back.[109]

This viewpoint is reminiscent of much contemporary feminist theory, namely, that whilst men and women are obviously physically different (e.g. women have babies),

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[106] *Ibid.*, record 43.
[107] *Ibid.*, record 65.
[108] *Ibid.*, record 70.
[109] *Ibid.*, record 71.

the concept of difference has not ended there, and has/is used to oppress women in terms of what they can and cannot do. The idea of a 'maternal identity', has correspondingly been an important concept in this thesis, and it is a concept which has played a central role in the respondents' lives.

For several of the women, who identified with feminism, such identification had arisen from certain circumstances. For example, Mary, who defined feminism in terms of justice for women, wrote: 'I changed when I was executor for a cousin and discovered that a wife was treated as appendage of her husband!' Furthermore, Mary's second comment drew upon the academic concept of binary opposites: 'This is largely due to the convention of writing 'Mr and Mrs' – the first name is the important one.'[110] One respondent noted that her identification with feminism had been a gradual process of change:

> Based on personal experience of discrimination and also an acquired view from reading feminist writing. Some, I find ridiculously extreme and American orientated, but nevertheless thought-provoking and with some grain of truth.[111]

Similarly, another respondent noted: 'When I was younger I accepted parents and social conditioning – change was a gradual process probably accelerated at the time of my divorce.'[112] For Mary, who had been brought up in an all girl environment, it was the experience of attending a coeducational university that had made her more acutely aware of her social position in society as a woman and had facilitated an identification with feminism:

> Being one of three girls and in girls' school I did have the opportunity to become articulate and voice my opinions...When at University, I found myself rather surprised at how timid some of the women were and how ready

[110] *Ibid.*, record 28. The concept of 'binary opposites' originates from Saussure's structuralist linguistics, where meaning in language is made clear through implicit or explicit contrast with something represented as antithetical to it. Derrida took this concept further with the notion that such 'binary opposites' contain a power hierarchy because one term is always given primacy over another.
[111] *Ibid.*, record 36.
[112] *Ibid.*, record 68.

> to bow to male dominance. Perhaps the experience of education gave me even greater appreciation of the importance of being one's own person and not conforming to expected norms.[113]

In Chapter 1, the research of American educational historian Jill Conway was discussed. Conway argues that it is not simply a question of access to educational facilities which is the significant variable in tracing the 'liberation' of women's minds, rather the experience of 'role conflict'.[114] This concept would appear to be equally applicable to Mary's experiences. Having being brought up in an environment in which her sex was not an issue in terms of what she believed she could expect out of life, Mary then entered university in the 1960s whereby her position in society as a woman became much more apparent. Mary experienced this concept of 'role conflict', and it was in this sense that her university education had 'liberated' her mind from gender conformity, and further led to an embracing of feminism. Similarly, Barbara, a graduate of the 1970s, went through a similar process:

> I have not always considered myself a feminist (coming from a family of four daughters – all encouraged to do well and consequently never compared with boys), but it was only when I began work that I came across others who did not think the same way, and was often regarded as inferior.[115]

In contrast to those women who emphasised that their empathy with feminism had been a gradual process, Stephanie and Hazel noted that they had always considered themselves as feminists, and highlighted that particular members of their family had had a significant influence upon their association with feminism. Stephanie wrote:

> I have always thought of myself as a feminist. My grandfather – one of the first labour councillors in Liverpool – believed that a woman should always have an education – he felt that it didn't matter for a man because the odds were so heavily stacked in his favour.[116]

[113] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[114] Conway, J., 'Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the US', *History of Education Quarterly*, 14 (1974), pp. 1-12.
[115] Questionnaire, record 81.
[116] *Ibid.*, record 65.

For Stephanie, her grandfather had provided a very positive influence in her life. For Hazel, however, her mother's life had symbolised the antithesis of everything she had hoped for her own:

> My mother's struggles with home, children, elderly parents, poor housing and heavy boring unskilled work sat badly on her potentially bright awareness: I wanted education and opportunity.[117]

Originating from a working-class background, education, for Hazel, represented opportunity, and a means by which to escape from the life her mother had lead. In a sense, Hazel's mother had been a negative role model. In exploring the extent to which the respondents had had role models throughout their lives, many women emphasised that they had not, or that whilst they admired certain individuals they had not wished to emulate them. Those respondents who said that they had had role models it was noticeable that only a very small minority of respondents highlighted women on the grounds of what they had achieved, or how they had lived their lives *as* women. Valerie, similarly to both Stephanie and Hazel, also emphasised that she had always considered herself a feminist. Voluntary work in a women's refuge in the early 1980s, however, had strengthened her commitment to feminism.[118] Valerie was among a very small number of respondents who noted a postgraduate involvement in campaigns specific to women or women-only associations.[119]

In reflecting upon their lives as women, this chapter has shown that the majority of respondents felt that being a woman had affected their lives in a positive manner. The very reasons given for the above, were also, rather contradictorily, given as the grounds upon which being a woman could have a negative affect upon

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[117] *Ibid*, record 67.
[118] *Ibid*, record 79.
[119] The associations noted were as follows: British Federation of University Women, National Childbirth Trust, Women's Institute, Association of Women Solicitors, Rights of Women Against Violence Against Women. Involvement in a campaign for the retention of child benefit and a pro-abortion campaign were also noted by two of the respondents.

one's life. For example, whilst society's reduced expectations of women in career terms was regarded as liberating, conversely the barriers that women faced were articulated as a downside to being a woman. It was, in fact, this very narrow societal outlook regarding a woman's role that was the reason they had, as women, experienced limited career options. It was also evident that the respondents felt that women's social position had changed significantly in the course of their own lifetimes, though by no means all of the changes were perceived as providing greater happiness for women. There was a sense that women still attempt to live up to expectations, and in the future many of the respondents hoped that this situation would end and women would feel free to make their own choices. Nevertheless, the respondents did not identify with feminism as a movement which could improve women's social position. It became evident that they were overwhelmingly rejecting a more radical form of feminism. Feminism for many of the women implied anti-male sentiment, political correctness and the 1970s stereotypical image of the bra-burning women's liberationist. In discussing feminism, however, it became apparent that the women were embracing a more liberal form centred on equal rights and opportunities. These findings are consistent with a study currently being conducted into the life experiences of Girtonian women. When they were questioned on the issue of feminism, the researchers found that they rejected: 'militant feminism allied to an anti-men approach, not equal opportunities.'[120]

[120] Hunt, P., 'Emancipation of the meek', *The Guardian*, 30. 06. 98, p. iv.

Chapter 11

A Sexual Revolution?: the evidence from women graduates of the University of Liverpool

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This thesis has been concerned with exploring the life histories of a group of women who graduated from the University of Liverpool between the years 1944 and 1979, and who have spent a significant part of their lives living in close proximity to the university they attended. The respondents to the questionnaire were largely classified as originating from middle-class backgrounds, and for the majority of women, their mothers had adopted the traditional role of 'housewife' within the family structure. The post-Second World War period was one of extensive educational reform, with the introduction of 'secondary education for all' and the expansion of the higher education system. For the first time in many family histories, children now not only entered secondary education, but could also continue their education beyond compulsory school-leaving age. With the exception of the small number of respondents who had completed their schooling prior to the introduction of state secondary education, the women were predominantly beneficiaries of the 1944 Education Act. Successfully passing school entrance examinations, and after the 1944 Act the 11+, the majority of the respondents gained entry to the 'golden city', namely the grammar school.[1] Independent/GPDST and comprehensive schools only accounted for the pre-university educational experiences of the minority. Classified as academically 'more able', the group of women were encouraged to follow a more

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[1] Steedman, C., 'Landscape for a Good Woman', in Heron, L. (ed.), *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties* (Virago, 1985), p.119.

academic route, in contrast to the majority of girls for whom a more vocational training was seen as appropriate for their future 'careers' as wives and mothers. The respondents were overwhelmingly encouraged by both their parents and their schools to enter higher education. For the small number of respondents who were second generation university students, it was expected that the women would continue the precedence set by an older relative; whilst for the majority who were first generation university students, parents aspired for their children to an education they had been denied. It is important to note, however, that whilst this group of women were in an environment conducive to undertaking a higher education, it was striking from the testimonies that the respondents felt they were part of an academic elite.

The concept of being part of an academic elite was certainly supported by the female student registration statistics for the University of Liverpool in the post-Second World War period. Until the mid-1960s, women represented only a quarter of the total student body, and by 1980 still only formed one-third of the student population, despite the growth in student numbers that was underpinned by the Robbins Report of 1963. Furthermore, continuing the pre-1939 trend, the Arts Faculty continued to play a predominant role in the academic lives of women students of the post-war era. As a proportion of the total number of full-time women studying at the University of Liverpool, enrolments within the Arts Faculty from 1945 to 1980 continued to account for, on average, 54 per cent of female students. This factor was reflected in the academic paths followed by the respondents, with a significant proportion of the group having studied within the Arts Faculty. Having been differentiated at school as academically 'more-able', the decision to study for an arts degree, as opposed to a more vocational degree, provided women students with a general cultural education suited to the female ascribed occupations, such as

teaching. Despite their numerical disadvantage, however, the respondents were very positive in regard to their coeducational academic experience, with only a minority of the women highlighting problems with male staff and students. Women academics, also in a minority, were generally respected for their lecturing abilities and intelligence. The stereotype of the 'bluestocking' academic, however, lost out in terms of appeal to the female academic who retained her femininity, both physically and in terms of her marital relations.

Despite the introduction of both a national recruitment system and mandatory student grants in the early 1960s, which had the effect of breaking the link between the provincial universities and their localities, the University of Liverpool continued to play a significant role in providing educational services to the local region. In terms of the respondents, just under two-thirds of the group were living on Merseyside prior to university entrance, and locality was the main justification for studying at the University of Liverpool. Expense, and both parental attitudes and family obligations continued to be the crucial factors in the decision to study at the local university. Parental home, therefore, formed the predominant category of residence during the groups' university years. Living with one's parents could have both negative and positive implications vis-à-vis university life. For example, on the one hand, the social aspect of university life could be somewhat comprised; and on the other, remaining in the parental home meant that an involvement in both university and community life could be continued. For those women living away from home until the lowering of the age of majority in 1967, the university considered itself *in loco parentis*. This pseudo parental control was extended far further, however, towards female students, and until 1969 the university sought to differentiate the residential requirements of male and female students. Women

undergraduates were regarded as being in need of more careful supervision, and aside from those women residing with parents, relatives or guardians, they were required to live in a university hall of residence. In the late 1950s, at which point hall provision became inadequate, it was 'female beds' which dictated the admissions procedure in regard to university women, rather than academic ability. Furthermore, the rules and regulations that governed the women's halls of residence were also more stringent than those of the men's residential accommodation. By the 1960s hall records and the *Guild Gazette* contained evidence of increasing discontent with the unequal treatment that university women received. The respondents who had spent some time in halls of residence, however, did not articulate any sense of injustice, and whilst acknowledging that by today's standards life in hall was very restrictive, they personally had not found the regulations problematic. The majority emphasised how much they had enjoyed their time in halls of residence, and hall life was considered as both a gentle introduction to university life and a good environment in which to make friends. Similarly, life in 'digs' was also generally recounted by the respondents as a good experience. In terms of social life, life in halls may have been more conducive to a 'fuller' university experience. It was striking from the testimonies of all the women, however, that whilst documenting that they were, to varying degrees, members of clubs and societies and frequented the Students' Union, there was distinct lack of rich material in terms of their involvement in the more 'corporate' activities of university life. This suggests that in defining students' social lives in such terms, the historian is unable to recapture the whole picture.

Reflecting upon the coeducational aspect of their university years, many of the women emphasised that after single-sex schooling it was their first real experience of mixing with men. For some of the women, this had proved initially to

be somewhat of a culture shock. For example, one respondent stressed that she felt shy and awkward with boys, but that the experience: 'helped me to gain confidence and to mix more readily with members of the opposite sex.'[2] In contrast, there were those women who would continue to find the experience 'difficult'[3]. Mary commented: 'I honestly think I was ill-prepared for it and consequently under-achieved quite dramatically.'[4] Many of the women, however, noted they had thoroughly enjoyed the coeducational experience, and that they had met their future husbands whilst at university. Furthermore, attendance at a coeducational university was considered as important preparation for future life. Barbara noted: 'It enabled me to gain my degree in a more real-to-life atmosphere.'[5] Coeducation had: 'showed what real competition in the workplace might be like.'[6] For those women who entered more male-dominated areas of employment, it was an invaluable experience towards making them feel comfortable in largely male working environments. For example, Pamela, who studied for a science degree in the 1950s, and who went on to work in industry, stressed:

> This was...my introduction to the predominantly male society that has recurred throughout my working life, and means I was not perturbed at being the only woman at meetings, conferences, etc.[7]

In contrast to the majority of respondents who had attended single-sex schools, Joan and Ann had gone to coeducational schools and therefore emphasised that the experience was not a new one. Nevertheless, entering university, to study medicine

[2] Questionnaire, record 24.
[3] *Ibid*, record 17.
[4] *Ibid*, record 44.
[5] *Ibid*, record 81.
[6] *Ibid*, record 33.
[7] *Ibid*, record 16.

and veterinary science respectively, they became acutely aware of the numerical inequality between male and female students.[8] Joan commented:

> I realised that opportunities for men and women were not equal, which I had not realised at school. Applications for medical school – 1000 women for 25 places! 1000 men for 100 places![9]

Conversely, some of the respondents noted that studying in the Arts Faculty did not lead to a truly coeducational experience in that women dominated certain departments. On being asked: 'How did the coeducational experience of attending the University of Liverpool affect your life?' one graduate of the 1970s emphasised: 'I'm not sure that it did! There were so many more women than men studying music that the friendships with other women were the most important feature for me.'[10]

Further reflecting upon their university years, the majority of women noted that they had not felt disadvantaged in any way. For example, Lucy, who began university in the final year of the war, emphasised:

> Life during the war and after the war concentrated the mind on things that mattered. We were grateful to be able to go to university. Many of our contemporaries were in the forces and some were dead.[11]

Pamela, as a science student in the 1950s, felt that being a woman in a predominantly male faculty was in fact beneficial:

> Being a woman in the Science Faculty was a positive advantage in that my women friends were almost all in other faculties, so I learned a lot about their subjects and ways of thinking, as well as my own, and got a broader self-education than my male colleagues.[12]

The small number of respondents who felt that they were disadvantaged gave a variety of reasons, with a lack of self-confidence and shyness being particularly

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[8] *Ibid*, records 35 and 41.
[9] *Ibid*, record 35.
[10] *Ibid*, record 75.
[11] *Ibid*, record 14.
[12] *Ibid*, record 16.

pertinent factors. For Anne, living at home had been a distinct disadvantage; a sense of 'not belonging' characterised her university years. Stephanie, rather interestingly, suggested that higher education 'gives you greater expectations most of which are unlikely to be fulfilled', whilst for Mary a lack of careers advice from the university was a shortcoming: 'I never had any careers advice; when I told people I thought I'd be a teacher no-one tried to tell me that there were other things I could do. This I bitterly regret.'[13] Some of the respondents felt that they were disadvantaged at university because of their family background. For example, one respondent, who was classified as originating from a working-class background, noted: 'I was not in a position to be able to invite university friends to my home, as I would have liked – money and accommodation were not available.'[14] Megan, a graduate of the 1970s who, similarly, came from a working-class family, emphasised:

> As my parents were not prepared to pay the parental contribution the financial strain was a disadvantage i.e. I was broke a lot and left with a hefty overdraft. Many students came from middle-class backgrounds and had very different life experiences from mine – this may have affected my confidence.[15]

In directly considering how they felt their class background had affected their university experience, it was striking from the women's testimonies that there were distinct differences between those from middle-class, and those from working-class families. Megan's lack of confidence was also reflected in Janice's experiences:

> Middle class girls/women were more confident socially. I was conscious of my northern accent and lack of wide variety of life experiences of foreign travel, going out for meals, theatre, etc. My family did none of these things.[16]

Ann stressed that her working-class background had had a 'major effect' on her university experience, commenting:

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[13] *Ibid*, records 65 and 44.
[14] *Ibid*, record 33.
[15] *Ibid*, record 69.
[16] *Ibid*, record 71.

> In my household we talked a lot but didn't discuss. I never really learned the art of putting forward a point effectively in a discussion group, and having not had the stimulus from my peers/contemporaries in a social setting (e.g. in hall) didn't help.[17]

For Megan, being part of a working-class family and living within the parental home during her university years was not a conducive environment in which to study:

> My own background had not provided me with much opportunity for study as I had certain duties and responsibilities at home and homework had to be done in the kitchen with the family. I might have achieved more if things had been different, but then I might not. I did feel that my horizons were limited compared to some of the other students.[18]

Mary felt that the combination of being working class and female limited one's horizons even further. Reflecting upon her postgraduate experience, thirteen years after having graduated from her undergraduate degree, Mary commented:

> When I got my MA I felt I had finally reached what I should have done when I was younger. I felt so much more fulfilled, but also frustrated. Working-class communities STILL do not set high enough goals for women. A first degree was regarded as a great achievement. I took too long to see that it wasn't.[19]

Similarly, one respondent wrote: 'There was a certain amount of 'catching up' to do in terms of what I might expect out of life and what I could achieve.'[20] Having no conception of what university life entailed was also emphasised as a significant factor of having originated from a working-class background, but there was also a great appreciation of the education they had received, which had not been possible for earlier generations of working-class women. A further aspect that came out of the testimonies of those respondents from working-class families, was a sense that they needed to prove themselves. For example, one respondent noted: 'I felt I had to do better than fellow students from more privileged backgrounds.'[21] Correspondingly,

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[17] *Ibid.*, record 17.
[18] *Ibid.*, record 69.
[19] *Ibid.*, record 44.
[20] *Ibid.*, record 58.
[21] *Ibid.*, record 24.

those respondents who were classified as originating from middle-class families often stated that their class background had in no way affected their university experience. This point is perhaps indicative of the fact that these women were generally surrounded by students from similar backgrounds. Of those women who did comment on the way in which their middle-class upbringing had affected their university experience, their testimonies stood in stark contrast to those respondents from working-class families. One respondent emphasised how a middle-class upbringing was a good preparation for university life: 'I was adopted as a baby. My adoptive parents (a headmaster and wife) gave me a secure middle-class upbringing. I felt I adapted well to my university experience.'[22] This respondent was classified as coming from a middle-middle-class background, but it was interesting that of those middle-class women who did comment on this issue, it was more so those women from upper-middle-class families. They emphasised the confidence, the high expectations, and both the financial and family backing their social class had granted them.

In contrast to an earlier generation of university women, graduate women of the post-war period stood in a very different relationship to the labour market. In comparison to their predecessors, children rather than marriage dictated a departure from paid employment, and the number of years to which women dedicated their lives to full-time motherhood generally decreased. Women's lives in the post-Second World War era were characterised by 'two roles', namely the combination of wife/mother and paid employment. The primacy of the role of wife and mother, however, remained eminent; paid employment was allocated a secondary position. In the pre-1939 period teaching had dominated the professional lives of graduate

[22] *Ibid*, record 49.

women, and it continued to play a significant role in the lives of university women in the post-war era. Surveys of employment from the University of Liverpool showed that until the 1970s, teaching accounted for the initial destination of approximately 45 per cent of graduate women. By the mid-1970s this figure had decreased, but did not indicate that women were moving into traditionally male-dominated areas of work. Graduate women were presented with a very limited number of options, with teaching particularly heralded as 'a good job for a girl'. In the pre-war period, teaching had offered single graduate women economic independence, whilst in this latter period, teaching was promoted as an occupation that enabled women to combine both family life and paid employment. Not surprisingly, teaching dominated the lives of the group of respondents. Limited career options and family commitments were the primary influences upon the women's choice of career. Half of the group emphasised that they had not made the progression they would have hoped for in their professional lives, with sexual discrimination and family life being the primary contributory factors. Both women who entered male-dominated spheres of employment, and those women who entered the female ascribed professions, recounted the discrimination they had faced; and whilst teaching was advocated as 'a good job for a girl' it was by no means a good career for a woman. On seeking promotion, along with those women who were employed in alternative fields, women teachers experienced the 'cold draught of male prejudice'. Of those respondents who noted that they were satisfied with the progress they had made in their careers, several identified themselves as 'not particularly career minded'; whilst those women who emphasised that they had not experienced sexual discrimination within the workplace may not have demanded enough from their jobs to discover the restrictions placed upon them.

Just as graduate women of the post-Second World War period stood in a different relationship to the labour market than their predecessors, it would also appear that they followed different marital patterns. In the pre-war period, university-educated women showed a marked tendency not to marry. Two factors impacted upon this trend. First, as previously noted, marriage generally signified a departure from paid employment, and second, demographically speaking, there were 'superfluous women'. Research into the marital patterns of graduate women of the post-war period is extremely limited; however, both the research conducted for this thesis and Judy Wakeling's work suggest that university-educated women followed the marital trends of the general population. Marriage in the post-war era was universal, and the respondents' testimonies revealed the complete dominance of marriage as a social institution, morally, legally and in terms of appeal. The respectable woman was a married woman. Cohabitation was frowned upon, and was certainly not considered as an alternative to marriage. Several of the respondents also emphasised that marriage was a necessity in order to enter into a sexual relationship. In terms of legality - for example, the formalisation of pension arrangements - marriage was *the* institution that sanctioned such arrangements. Furthermore, the appeal of remaining unmarried lost out to the prospect of being granted the title 'Mrs'. Women were defined in relation to their marital status, and the label 'old maid' was not an attractive one. Marriage and children were part and parcel of the 'feminine' identity, and in the post-war years the two-child 'norm' was firmly established. Correspondingly, the group of women who form the subject of this thesis also followed this trend. On the one hand children were described by the respondents as deeply fulfilling, and on the other, were discussed in terms of sacrifice and of being a constant source of worry. The effect of having children upon a graduate

woman's career was marked; and of those respondents who had had children, three trends were identifiable in the way in which they organised their family and working lives. First, there were those women who took a complete break from paid employment until their last child was school age. Second, from the 1960s, there was an increasing trend towards working part-time in between having children; and third, following the introduction of paid maternity leave, there were those women who took their statutory leave and immediately returned to employment. Rather interestingly, finance was cited by the respondents as the predominant motivation for returning to work following their children, with actual career motivation being far further down the list of priorities. For some of the women, the combination of their role as wife/mother and waged worker was somewhat of a juggling act, especially since it was evident that the women took ultimate responsibility for not only their children, but also for domestic tasks. The respondents did not, however, generally reject the role of wife and mother *per se*, but simply critiqued aspects of that role. For the majority of women, marriage and children were both great sources of satisfaction and achievement.

On reflecting on their lives as women, the majority of the respondents felt that being a woman had affected them positively in their lives. The fact that less was expected of them, for example, in career terms was perceived as a positive aspect of being a woman. Women were faced with more options: in contrast to men, women could combine motherhood and paid employment. Furthermore, whether it was perceived as innate, or social conditioning, women were described as possessing important, but different qualities from men. Rather contradictorily, when discussing the ways in which their sex had affected their lives in a negative manner, the respondents highlighted the same points. In regard to careers, because little was

expected of them, they could, for example, experience discrimination on the grounds of their sex. Combining the role of wife/mother and waged worker was discussed as a difficult task; and the imposition of a 'maternal' identity, i.e. the concept that women are 'naturally' maternal, and therefore have characteristics and corresponding roles that originate from this 'natural' state, was seen as problematic. In a sense, the respondents were emphasising that theoretically being a woman could have a positive influence, but in reality this was not the case. Women in theory 'could have their cake and eat it', but in actuality they not only had their cake and ate it, but also cooked it and washed up the aftermath. The respondents felt that women's social position had changed significantly within their own lifetimes. Today's young women were perceived as being more confident and were faced with more options vis-à-vis their personal relationships. Technology had improved domestic work and working mothers had become a feature of everyday life. Change had not, however, necessarily made for greater happiness and fulfilment, and in the future the respondents hoped that women would have the freedom to make their own choices, rather than live up to expectations. Women of the future would not feel compelled to live up to 'Superwoman' status, nor feel inadequate if they spent time at home as wives and mothers. In discussing their life experiences, despite raising issues and problems which are specific to women, the majority of the respondents did not identify themselves as feminists, and correspondingly did not, therefore, see feminism as a concept or movement which could improve women's social position. On analysis it became evident that, regardless of whether or not the women identified themselves as feminists, the respondents were overwhelmingly rejecting radicalism. The stereotype of the 1970s bra-burning, dungaree-wearing lesbian, along with political correctness, was not something the women wished to be associated with. They were, however,

embracing a more liberal form of feminism, centred upon equal rights and opportunities.

In exploring the life histories of a group of graduate women of the post-Second World War period, this thesis could be seen to have made an important contribution to the history of women in higher education. Future research needs to extend our knowledge of the life histories of graduate women in the post-war era, incorporating not only the experiences of women graduates of the older universities, founded and chartered before the Second World War, but also those women who attended alternative higher education institutions, for example, the 'glass plate' universities established in the 1960s. Furthermore, considering the life experiences of male graduates within this latter period would not only contribute invaluable information to an area which is yet to be researched, but would also assist in further identifying the distinctiveness of the female graduate experience. The research questions within this thesis marked a further development in the British literature by asking, for example: What is the meaning of higher education in women's lives? Does a university-education significantly alter a woman's life-plans? Or have their lives been more strongly influenced by other factors? In considering the respondents' subjective evaluation of the impact that attending university and obtaining a degree had had on their lives, two themes were predominant. First, a university education had been an important source of personal development. Higher education had, for example, taught the respondents to 'think', had encouraged a love of learning, and enhanced social skills. Above all, however, a university education had given the women confidence. Second, some of the respondents also felt that their degree had given them an advantage in the labour market, had granted them entry to a career that they might not have had, and access to a worthwhile and fulfilling occupation.

Several of the women emphasised that their university-education had had an 'immense' impact upon their lives. It gave life: 'a depth, richness and fulfilment it would not otherwise have had.'[23] For those women who entered the university as mature students, they had experienced adult life as both graduate and non-graduate. Having studied as a mature student in the 1960s, higher education had had a profound affect upon Barbara:

> Attending university changed my life completely. What confidence I have (which isn't much!) I gained there, and my degree enabled me to gain a worthwhile job, which I loved. Because of this, after my death, I have arranged for a substantial sum to be put in a trust fund to help female mature students from North West England to gain a university education.[24]

Similarly, for those women who had originated from working-class backgrounds, a university-education was a life-changing experience. For example, Josette wrote: 'It enabled me to escape from a potentially restricted life. University gave me self-confidence and the qualifications needed for my chosen career.'[25] Higher education, had in a sense, made the women the people they are today.

Undoubtedly a university education had enriched the lives of the respondents, in terms of personal development and employment opportunities. The graduate woman could gain access to higher status occupations – though, as was shown in Chapter 8, it was the female ascribed occupations, particularly teaching, which were presented as the best option for the female graduate; and several of the women articulated resentment at being confined to a particular realm. The post-Second World War period witnessed a dramatic expansion in educational opportunities, but also astonishing persistence in sexist assumptions about women's life-plans. Despite the fact that for the first time in women's history, wives and increasingly mothers

[23] *Ibid.*, record 7.
[24] *Ibid.*, record 46.
[25] *Ibid.*, record 74.

were encouraged to enter paid employment, the role of wife and mother remained eminent. A woman's career was secondary to her 'maternal identity'. As part of an academic elite, the women who have been the focus of this thesis were in no way immune to the influences of wider society. To draw upon the words of Angela McRobbie: 'being a *girl* over-determined their every moment.'[26] Regardless of whether or not the women married and had children, they always stood in relation to their gendered role. For example, Pamela, who studied science in the 1950s, was in a minority because she was studying a 'male' subject. On leaving university to work in industry, Pamela once again was in a minority and discriminated against, because she working in a 'male' environment. Furthermore, throughout her life she had to justify the fact that she had not married.

A university does not exist in a cultural vacuum, and it would appear that the university was not an environment that particularly challenged sexist ideology in this period. The male student representations of university women in the *Guild Gazette* are indicative of this fact. Male contributors, who assumed that a woman's role in life was to attract a husband, saw university women as sex objects. Male students had simply internalised social values that emphasised the role of wife and mother. While many of the women respondents emphasised that a university education had given them confidence in their own abilities and taught them to 'think', access to higher education had not led them to reject their gendered role. While many of the women critiqued this role, they still wanted to be women, they wanted to be feminine and they wanted to have family lives. The opponents of women's higher education in the nineteenth century feared that a university education for women would ultimately

[26] McRobbie, A., *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen* (Macmillan, 1991), p. 64.

lead to a sexual revolution. Some feminist researchers, however, suggest that it is a 'major myth' to argue that higher education significantly improves the social position of women, and the evidence from this research would appear to support that assertion. As has been shown throughout this thesis: 'Limitations operated even for the academic elite, for the role of wife and mother was never lost sight of.' [27]

[27] Payne, I., 'A Working-Class Girl in a Grammar School', in Spender, D. and Sarah, E. (eds.), *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education* (Women's Press, 1980), p. 19.

Appendix 1

Pilot Study

Thank you for taking part in this pilot study. It is an extremely important stage of my research and I value your contribution.

I would be grateful if you could read the introductory letter which is to be sent out with the questionnaire and consider the following issues (please write your answers in the spaces provided):

Does the introductory letter inspire you to fill in the questionnaire?

Does the letter explain clearly the aims of the project and contain all the information needed in order to proceed?

Please note that the date at the bottom of the letter is simply fictitious.

Having considered the letter please fill in the questionnaire. As stated in the introductory letter, the confidentiality assured is also applied to your own answers. Please consider the following questions with regard to the questionnaire and write your answers in the spaces provided.

How long did it take you to complete?

Do you feel it was too long? If yes, where would you have shortened it?

Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous? If so, please state which ones and why?

Did you object to answering any of the questions? If so, please note which ones.

In your opinion has any major topic been omitted?

Was the layout clear/attractive?

Additional comments

Thank you for your help

Appendix 2

THE UNIVERSITY
of LIVERPOOL

Research Office

Department of Education
19 Abercromby Square
Liverpool
L69 7ZG

Telephone: 0151 794 2493
Facsimile: 0151 794 6904
E-Mail: blow@liv.ac.uk

Dear Graduate,

I am a postgraduate student studying for my PhD in the Department of Education. For my thesis I am considering the female life experience of university-educated women between the years 1944 and 1979 and I am specifically focusing upon graduates of the University of Liverpool. I am trying to explore how the lives of university women changed, if at all, during this period and I am also concerned to explore how they compare with the lives of other women.

I received your name from the Alumni Office and I hope you do not mind me contacting you in this way. The Alumni Office did not give me your address, but merely your name, subject of study and graduation year in respect of confidentiality. They themselves addressed the envelope and posted it on my behalf.

I would be extremely grateful if you would be willing to share your life experience with me and I feel it would be a great shame if the experiences of women such as yourself went unwritten. I have enclosed a questionnaire and I hope you will consider filling it in. If you have any queries before doing so, please do not hesitate to contact me at the department.

If you decide to fill in the enclosed questionnaire it may take a couple of hours to complete, but there is no need to do it all at once. There are four sections: Background, University Life, Post-University Life and Reflections. You may like to complete one section at a time, or just a few questions. Please feel free to point out any word or phrasing that strikes you as odd or any questions you feel are important, but have not been asked. Inevitably, some questions will not apply to you so please write 'not applicable' when they do so. Of course you are entirely free not to answer certain questions if you do not wish to do so. In this instance I would be grateful if you would draw a line through these questions to indicate that you have read them. Please comment as little or as much as you like. To expand on any of your answers please use the last page of this questionnaire that is left blank or additional sheets, numbering clearly the question upon which you have expanded.

The answers to all these questionnaires are <u>entirely confidential</u>. Your name is required on the questionnaire merely to identify who has responded (only my supervisor, Dr Harrop, and myself will have access to this information). No information whatsoever will be divulged in such a way that individual identification is possible.

Once again I would be extremely grateful for any help you could give. Please return the questionnaire to the address above by ***Friday 27th March***.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Jane Aiston

University switchboard
Telephone: 0151 794 2000
Facsimile: 0151 708 6502

Director of Research
Professor Alan Smithers
Telephone: 0151 794 2493
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Research Secretary
Doreen Blower
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University and Life Experience

I Background

I.1 Name: Unmarried

Married

I.2 Date of Birth:

I.3 Where were you born?

I.4 What were your parents' occupations, at the time of your birth and after?

Father:

Mother:

I.5 How would you describe your social class?

At birth:

Now:

I.6 Do you have any brothers or sisters? (Please outline if you are the youngest, eldest, etc.)

I.7 How would you describe your racial origin?

University and Life Experience

I.8 Please outline your pre-university educational background in the table below. Note: the institution and **type** of institution you attended, e.g. grammar, the dates you attended these institutions and the qualifications gained. Please note the subjects you were examined upon and your age at the time the qualifications were gained.

Institution: Note in chronological order and note **type** of institution	Dates	Qualifications (subjects/age)

I.9 If you attended a fee-paying school how were the fees met?

I.10 Did your school encourage its female pupils to apply for university?

I.11 Did many other women from your school go on to university?

University and Life Experience

I.12 What factors or forces motivated you to apply to university?

I.13 Why did you choose to study at The University of Liverpool? Was it your first choice?

I.14 Were your family/friends supportive of this decision? Was there anyone who particularly supportive?

I.15 Did any other members of your family attend university? If so, please note which members, the institution attended, in what years your relative attended and the subjects studied.

University and Life Experience

II University Life

Academic Life

II.1 How did you finance your degree/s? If you received a grant, please note the awarding body, e.g. LEA

II.2 What did you study and how did you come to decide to study that particular subject? (Please outline postgraduate study, if applicable, even if this was at another institution)

II.3 In which year and at what age did you begin? (As an undergraduate and postgraduate)

II.4 How do you feel you were treated academically by fellow male students and male staff?

University and Life Experience

II.5 Did you have or were you aware of any female lecturers? Please comment upon them.

II.6 Did you consider them as role models? Please outline.

Accommodation

- Did you live in halls of residence, at your parental home or in private lodgings? Please answer each section if you lived in a combination of the above.

Halls of Residence

II.7 Which hall did you live in?

II.8 For how long?

II.9 Was it single sex?

II.10 Did you share a room? If so, was this a problem?

University and Life Experience

II.11 Did you find hall life restrictive in any way?

II.12 Did many social activities take place within the hall? (Please outline)

II.13 To what extent did your university life revolve around life in halls and hall friends?

II.14 Did you enjoy your time in halls? Please outline why you did or why you did not enjoy this experience.

University and Life Experience

Parental Home

II.15 Was there any particular reason why you lived at home? Please give details.

II.16 Do you think living at home limited your participation in university life in any way? If so, how?

II.17 Was there any conflict between your home life and university life? If yes, please outline why.

II.18 Would you have preferred to live in halls or private accommodation? If yes, please outline why.

University and Life Experience

Private accommodation

II.19 What type of private accommodation were you in? Please specify whether rented or owned.

II.19 Did you share with others? If so, how many and was it mixed?

II.20 Did you enjoy the experience? Please outline why you did or did not.

Social Life

II.21 Did you belong to any clubs/societies at the university? If so, which ones?

II.22 Was there much participation by fellow female students?

University and Life Experience

II.23 Did you use the Student Union/Guild of Undergraduates?
If no, why not?

If yes, for what purposes?

II.24 Did you become involved in student politics and/or student concerns? If so, please give details.

II.25 Did your social life mainly revolve around university life and university friends?

University and Life Experience

III Post-university Life

<u>Career</u>

III.1 In which year and at what age did you graduate? (as a postgraduate also, if applicable)

III.2 Please outline your career after university chronologically, whether it be in the home, paid employment, voluntary work or a combination of all three.

Dates	Occupation	Place

III.3 Who or what has influenced your choice of occupation since leaving university?

University and Life Experience

III.4 Have you made the progress in your career that you would have wished? If no, why not?

III.5 Have you ever experienced any form of discrimination throughout your career on the grounds of your sex? If so, please outline.

III.6 What importance do you think paid employment has for women's lives?

III.7 Has your attitude towards the importance of paid employment changed over time? If yes, in what way

III.8 Are you or have you been a member of any organisations, societies or campaigns since leaving university? Please outline.

University and Life Experience

Family Life

III.9 Are you or have you ever been married? If yes, please note if this is more than once.

III.10 In which year/s and at what age/s did you marry?

III.11 In which year/s and at what age/s did you divorce? (If applicable)

III.12 Are you living with or have you lived with someone 'as married'? Please outline.

III.13 In which year/s and at what age/s did this occur?

III.14 In a married or living 'as married' relationship/s who is/was responsible for household tasks?

III.15 Has this changed over time? If so why?

III.16 When entering into a marriage or an 'as married' relationship/s what work were you doing?

University and Life Experience

III.17 Did you continue this work? If no, what did you do instead? If yes, for how long?

III.18 Is your husband or partner a university graduate?

III.19 If you married did you want to marry?

III.20 Did you feel pressurised to marry? If so, why?

III.21 If you have never married have you ever considered marrying? If yes, why did this not occur?

University and Life Experience

III.22 Have you not married or decided not to marry for particular reasons?

III.23 Do you have any children? If so, please state how many.

III.24 In which year/s and at what age/s did you have children?

III.25 Were you married, living 'as married', in a relationship or single when your children were born?

III.26 Did the arrival of children inspire marriage in an already settled relationship?

III.27 Before the arrival of your child(ren) what work were you doing? Please specify whether voluntary or paid part-time, full-time work.

III.28 What age/s were your children when you returned to work and what did you do then?

University and Life Experience

III.29 What influenced your decision about when to return to work after childbirth?

III.30 Who is/was primarily responsible for the daily care of your children?

III.31 Did you want to have children?

III.32 Did your husband/partner want children?

III.33 What do you think are the benefits/drawbacks of having children (whether or not you have them)?

University and Life Experience

IV Reflections

IV.1 How did the coeducational experience of attending The University of Liverpool affect your life?

IV.2 Do you feel you were disadvantaged in any way at university? If so, please outline why.

IV.3 What effect do you think your class background had upon your university experience?

University and Life Experience

IV.4 What advice would you give to women entering The University of Liverpool?

IV.5 What advice would you give to women graduating from The University of Liverpool?

IV.6 What impact do you feel attending university and obtaining a university degree has had on your life?

IV.7 Have you had any role models throughout your life? Please outline.

University and Life Experience

IV.8 If you have spent a considerable part of your life managing a household and family, how do you feel about that?

IV.9 What would you say has been your greatest achievement?

IV.10 What have been your sources of greatest satisfaction throughout your life?

IV.11 Do you think being a woman has affected you positively in your life? Please outline why.

University and Life Experience

IV.12 Do you think being a woman has affected you negatively in your life? Please outline why.

IV.13 In which ways do you think women's lives have changed in your own lifetime?

IV.14 Please name three things you would hope for women in the next 50 years.

IV.15 What is your notion of feminism?

IV.16 Do you consider yourself a feminist? Yes[ ] No[ ]

University and Life Experience

IV.17 If yes, have you always considered yourself as a feminist, and if not, what led you to this line of thinking?

IV.18 If no, why not?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Would you be willing to discuss your life experiences further?

Please tick

Yes[ ] No[ ]

If yes, please note down your address and telephone number.

Appendix 3

Constituent ID	Constituent Name	Education Date Graduated	Education Degree	Education Attributes Subject of Study Description
503271	Jean M Morton	01/06/55	B.A.(Hons.)	Geography (SES)
503271	Jean M Morton	01/06/56	Dipl.in Education	Unknown
503276	Jane E Foineau	01/06/75	B.A.(Hons.)	French
503278	Marie F Guth	01/06/75		
503280	Cynthia M Peres	01/06/59	B.A.(Hons.)	French
503280	Cynthia M Peres	01/06/69		
503280	Cynthia M Peres	01/06/71		
503382	Kathryn A Borges	01/06/71		
503387	Gwenneth Schibany	01/06/70	B.A.	German
503583	Geraldine Greineder	01/06/68		
503680	Margaret S Horne	01/07/52	B.A.(Hons.)	French
513485	Michelle P Gabisi	01/06/74	B.Sc.(Hons.)	Biochemistry
513485	Michelle P Gabisi	01/06/75		
515886	Grant	01/06/73	B.Sc.	
517018	Helen C Meehan	01/06/75	B.A.	
517221	Omar	01/06/75		
517814	Patricia A Wright	01/06/66	B.Sc.	
518723	Walker	01/06/53	B.A.	
524688	Yukiko Iwamaru	01/06/71		
525499	Susan Lynch	01/06/64	B.Sc.	
502148	Janet A Pollard	01/06/72	M.Ed.	Education
502148	Janet A Pollard	01/06/56		
503682	Patricia A O'Flanagan	01/06/64	B.A.	History
	Christine M Long	01/06/67	B.A.	
500203	Davina M Gilmore	13/07/70	B.Ed.	Education
	Valerie J Prentice	01/06/64	B.Sc.	
	Christine Rauchmann	01/06/73		
	Eleanor Green	01/06/66	B.A.	
	S M Oldroyd	01/07/63	B.Sc.(Hons.)	
503816	G Robinson	01/07/75	B.A.(Hons.)	History
529753	Mary Montague	01/07/68	B.Sc.(Hons.)	
509803	Sylvia Godber	01/07/65	B.Sc.(Hons.)	Genetics
522042	Helen Ruddock	01/07/66	B.A.	English Language & Linguistics
511824	Margaret E Allen	01/07/60	B.Sc.	
529681	S Nordberg	01/07/67	B.A.	
516823	Blackman	01/07/66	B.A.(Hons.)	
608694	Jane Adams	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608695	Catherine Ballard	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608699	Judith Grubb	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608700	Anne Hewitt	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608701	Jackie Kearns	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608702	Jane Mitchell	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608703	Janet Motton	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608704	Margaret Nicholson	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608705	Ann Rodgers	01/07/72	B.A.	German
608725	Susan C Crowther	09/07/64	B.A.(Hons.)	
608725	Susan C Crowther	07/07/66	M.A.	
608753	D Woolley	01/07/62	B.A.(Hons.)	
609062	Elizabeth R Riley	01/07/61	B.A.(Hons.)	Social Studies
609064	Jean Morrison	01/07/55	B.A.(Hons.)	Geography
609177	R Perry	01/06/45	B.A.	
609178	E B Sawyer	01/06/45	B.A.	
604941	Sheila M Williams	01/01/56	B.Sc.	
610537	Elisabeth C Lowe	01/07/47	B.A.	

Appendix 4

Appendix 4

The following table created in Access illustrates the complete classification process, and also displays the respondents' perception of their social class at birth. 'ID' refers to the respondents unique identification number, whilst 'decade' refers to the decade in which the respondent graduated. 'Social class' refers to the Registrar General's five-class scheme, 'occupational class' refers to Routh's 1-7 scale as outlined in Chapter 5, and 'social class 2' refers to Tinkler's labelling of Routh's interpretation of the 1951 Registrar General's classification. The decision was taken to classify the respondents' social class at the time of their birth. The occupation of the majority of fathers rarely changed after the birth of their daughter; only six fathers transferred to an occupation that altered their social class. Father's occupation was entered as given on the questionnaires, and the *Dictionary of Occupational Terms* was helpful in providing brief job descriptions.[1] In instances when general occupational terms were employed, for example in the case of record 20 where the father's occupation was simply described as 'civil servant', the classification was estimated at the lowest level, in this instance as a clerical worker. For those respondents who were born during the war (see record 38 and 79) their father's occupation following the war was inputted. As noted in Chapter 5 Routh does introduce some exceptions to the rules, for example the 1951 Registrar General's classification allocated 'drivers of self-propelled passenger and goods vehicles' to social class III, whilst Routh amends this decision by allocating the occupation to social class IV. For the purposes of this thesis the exceptions to the rules have been followed apart from one amendment: salesmen were removed from class III to class IV (mid-lower working class). The

[1] Ministry of Labour, *A Dictionary of Occupational Terms* (H. M. Stationary Office, 1927).

decision was taken to leave this particular occupation in social class III, as it had originally been categorised by the Registrar-General.[2]

[2] Please note that in the case of record 62 that although the occupation has been entered as wholesale sales person it has been classified as social class II, based upon the fact that this shop was owned by the respondents father.

ID	decade	father's occupation at birth	social class	occupational class	social class2	respondents categorisation
1	1940	university lecturer	II	1B	middle mc	middle class
2	1940	company director	II	2B	middle mc	middle class
3	1940	managing director	II	2B	middle mc	middle class
4	1940	office worker (insurance)	III	3	lower mc	educated poor
5	1940	schoolmaster	II	1B	middle mc	middle class
6	1940	spinning overlooker	III	4	lower mc	working class
7	1940	barber	III	5	upper wc	lower middle class
8	1940	film renter	II	2A	middle mc	upper middle class
9	1940	doctor-GP	I	1A	upper/upper mc	middle class
10	1940	glass factory owner	II	2A	middle mc	middle class
11	1940	foreign correspondant (chemical firm)	III	3	lower mc	lower middle class
12	1940	headmaster	II	1B	middle mc	lower middle class
13	1940	horticulturalist	III	5	upper wc	middle class
14	1940	headmaster	II	1B	middle mc	middle class
15	1950	grocer	II	2A	middle mc	lower middle class
16	1950	architect	I	1A	upper/upper mc	middle class
17	1950	shipwright	III	5	upper wc	working class
18	1950	officer worker for dairy	III	3	lower mc	middle class
19	1950	bank clerk	III	3	lower mc	working class
20	1950	civil servant	III	3	lower mc	middle class
21	1950	shop keeper	II	2A	middle mc	don't know
22	1950	insurance clerk	III	3	lower mc	lower middle class
23	1950	senior manager	II	2B	middle mc	upper middle class
24	1950	unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	working class
25	1950	local authority clerk	III	3	lower mc	lower middle class
26	1950	collector (money)	III	5	upper wc	working class
27	1950	factory worker	V	7	mid-lower wc	working class
28	1950	assistant bank manager	II	2B	middle mc	middle class
29	1960	company director	II	2B	middle mc	middle class

ID	decade	father's occupation at birth	social class	occupational class	social class2	respondents categorisation
30	1960	telecommunication engineer	III	5	upper wc	professional
31	1960	ran a printing firm	II	2B	middle mc	middle class
32	1960	sales representative	III	3	lower mc	middle class
33	1960	nightwatchman	V	7	mid-lower wc	working class
34	1960	quality controller in factory	III	4	lower mc	no answer
35	1960	retail grocer	II	2A	middle mc	working class
36	1960	GP	I	1A	upper/upper mc	middle class
37	1960	book binder and printer	III	5	upper wc	working class
38	1960	estimating clerk	III	3	lower mc	working class
39	1960	architect	I	1A	upper/upper mc	middle class
40	1960	representative for wholesale bakers	III	3	lower mc	middle class
41	1960	steel salesman	III	3	lower mc	working class
42	1960	auctioneer	II	2B	middle mc	middle class
43	1960	weighing machine fitter	III	5	upper wc	working class
44	1960	draughtsman	II	1B	middle mc	difficult to say
45	1960	railway worker	IV	6	mid-lower wc	upper working/lower middle
46	1960	clerk	III	3	lower mc	working class
47	1960	deceased	N/A	N/A	N/A	lower middle class
48	1970	schoolteacher	II	1B	middle mc	upper working/lower middle
49	1970	unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	working class
50	1970	schoolmaster	II	1B	middle mc	lower middle class
51	1970	unreadable	?	?	?	upper middle class
52	1970	shipping clerk	III	3	lower mc	lower middle class
53	1970	doctor	I	1A	upper/upper mc	upper middle class
54	1970	engineer	III	5	upper wc	no answer
55	1970	lorry driver	IV	6	mid-lower wc	working class
56	1970	shipping clerk	III	3	lower mc	working class
57	1970	medical practioner	I	1A	upper/upper mc	middle class
58	1970	electrician	III	5	upper wc	working class

ID	decade	father's occupation at birth	social class	occupational class	social class2	respondents categorisation
59	1970	fitters mate	V	7	mid-lower wc	working class
60	1970	factory worker	V	7	mid-lower wc	working class
61	1970	postman driver for GPO	IV	6	mid-lower wc	working class
62	1970	wholesale sales person	II	2A	middle mc	lower middle class
63	1970	architect	I	1A	upper/upper mc	socio economic group B
64	1970	bricklayer	III	5	upper wc	working class (manual skilled)
65	1970	captain	II	1B	middle mc	upper middle class
66	1970	clerk	III	3	lower mc	lower middle class
67	1970	skilled vehicle fitter	III	5	upper wc	working class
68	1970	owned haberdashery shop	II	2A	middle mc	lower middle class
69	1970	postal worker	IV	6	mid-lower wc	working class
70	1970	engineer-ship repairs	III	5	upper wc	working class
71	1970	draughtsman	II	1B	middle mc	working class
72	1970	artist	II	1B	middle mc	middle class
73	1970	post office executive engineer	III	5	upper wc	working class
74	1970	spinner in a woollen mill	III	5	upper wc	working class
75	1970	architect	I	1A	upper/upper mc	middle class
76	1970	bank official	III	3	lower mc	middle class
77	1970	captain merchant navy	II	1B	middle mc	upper middle class
78	1970	farmworker	IV	6	mid-lower wc	working class
79	1970	machine operative (boot and shoe)	III	5	upper wc	working class
80	1970	printer	III	5	upper wc	working class
81	1970	ship's rigger	III	5	upper wc	working class
82	1970	teacher	II	1B	middle mc	fairly poor intelligentsia

Appendix 5

Appendix 5

The following table created in Access provides individual details of the respondents' pre-university education. 'Type of institution' makes reference to the institution attended post-16. Records 40, 49, 55, 57, 62, 72, 75 are stared, indicating those respondents who changed institutions post-compulsory school leaving age to continue their education. The change of institutions were as follows:

Record 40 moved from an independent/GPDST school to technical college

Record 49 moved from a grammar/high school to FE college

Record 55 as above

Record 57 moved to a different convent/grammar school

Record 67 moved from a grammar/high school to FE college

Record 72 as above

Record 75 moved from a grammar/high school to a convent/grammar school

ID	decade	Type of institution	Name of institution	Fee paying	Fees paid by
1	1940	grammar/high	Aigburth Vale High School	Yes	parents
2	1940	grammar/high	Liverpool Girls College	Yes	parents
3	1940	independent/GPDST	Merchant Taylors School	Yes	parents
4	1940	convent/grammar	Broughton Hall Convent High School	No	
5	1940	grammar/high	Southport High School	Yes	parents
6	1940	grammar/high	Bingley Grammar School	No	
7	1940	convent/grammar	Notre Dame High School	No	
8	1940	further education not taken	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
9	1940	convent/grammar	Bellerive Grammar School	Yes	parents
10	1940	grammar/high	Calder High School	Yes	father
11	1940	grammar/high	Blackburne House High School	No	
12	1940	grammar/high	Wirral County Grammar School	No	
13	1940	grammar/high	Not stated	Yes	parents
14	1940	independent/GPDST	Merchant Taylors School	Yes	Ministry of education teaching bursar
15	1950	grammar/high	Ormskirk Grammar School	No	
16	1950	grammar/high	Holly Lodge High School	Yes	father
17	1950	grammar/high	Not stated	No	
18	1950	independent/GPDST	Nottingham High School	Yes	scholarship
19	1950	grammar/high	Calder High School	No	
20	1950	grammar/high	Childwall Valley Grammar School	No	
21	1950	grammar/high	Not stated	Yes	parents/scholarship
22	1950	grammar/high	Calder High School	No	
23	1950	independent/GPDST	Birkenhead High School	Yes	parents
24	1950	grammar/high	Holly Lodge High School	No	
25	1950	grammar/high	Hanson Grammar School	No	
26	1950	convent/grammar	Notre Dame High School	No	
27	1950	independent convent	Not stated	No	
28	1950	independent convent	St. Francis College	Yes	scholarship
29	1960	independent boarding	Unclear	Yes	parents

ID	decade	Type of institution	Name of institution	Fee paying	Fees paid by
30	1960	grammar/high	Blackburne House High School	No	
31	1960	grammar/high	Southport High School	No	
32	1960	grammar/high	Pentrith Grammar School	No	
33	1960	grammar/high	Not stated	No	
34	1960	convent/grammar	Bellerive Grammar School	No	
35	1960	grammar/high	Washington Grammar School	No	
36	1960	grammar/high	Not stated	No	
37	1960	convent/grammar	Broughton Hall Convent High School	No	
38	1960	grammar/high	Bilston High School	No	
39	1960	grammar/high	Not stated	No	
40	1960	technical college*	Norwich Technical College	No	
41	1960	grammar/high	Hayes County Grammar School	No	
42	1960	independent boarding	Lowther College	Yes	parents
43	1960	independent/GPDST	Birkenhead High School	Yes	scholarship
44	1960	convent/grammar	Our Lady's Convent School	No	
45	1960	independent/GPDST	Queen Mary School	Yes	scholarship
46	1960	further education not taken	Not taken	Not applicable	Not applicable
47	1960	convent/grammar	Broughton Hall Convent High School	No	
48	1970	independent/GPDST	Not stated	Yes	scholarship
49	1970	FE college*	Hugh Baird College	No	
50	1970	grammar/high	Holmevalley Grammar School	No	
51	1970	independent boarding	Not stated	Yes	father
52	1970	grammar/high	Oldershaw High School	No	
53	1970	independent/GPDST	Not stated	Yes	parents
54	1970	grammar/high	Not stated	No	
55	1970	FE college*	Not stated	No	
56	1970	grammar/high	Gravesend Grammar School	No	
57	1970	convent/grammar*	Not stated	No	
58	1970	grammar/high	Not stated	No	

ID	decade	Type of institution	Name of institution	Fee paying	Fees paid by
59	1970	grammar/high	Not stated	No	
60	1970	grammar/high	Penwortham Grammar School	No	
61	1970	grammar/high	Holly Lodge High School	No	
62	1970	FE college*	Not stated	No	
63	1970	comprehensive	Francis Bacon School	No	
64	1970	grammar/high	Pendleton High School	No	
65	1970	convent/grammar	Bellervive Grammar School	No	
66	1970	grammar/high	Waterloo Park County Grammar School	No	
67	1970	grammar/high	Holly Lodge High School	No	
68	1970	further education not taken	Not applicable	Not applicable	
69	1970	comprehensive	Pwllhei Grammar School	No	
70	1970	grammar/high	New Hays High School	No	
71	1970	grammar/high	Homelands Grammar School	No	
72	1970	FE college*	Not stated	No	
73	1970	grammar/high	Grove Park Grammar	No	
74	1970	comprehensive	Linthwaite Comprehensive	No	
75	1970	convent/grammar*	Seafield Convent Grammar School	No	
76	1970	grammar/high	Newton Grammar School	No	
77	1970	convent/grammar	Bellerive Grammar School	No	
78	1970	grammar/high	West Kirby Grammar School	No	
79	1970	grammar/high	Northampton Grammar School	No	
80	1970	convent/grammar	Seafield Convent Grammar School	No	
81	1970	grammar/high	Waterloo Park County Grammar School	No	
82	1970	grammar/high	Calder High School	No	

Appendix 6

ID	decade	Subject: undergraduate	Faculty	Date began university	Age began university
1	1940	maths	science	0	0
2	1940	maths/chemistry	science	1944	17
3	1940	biology/chemistry	science	1944	18
4	1940	english language and literature/french/histor	arts/SES	1945	17
5	1940	french/english/latin	arts/SES	1944	18
6	1940	latin/french	arts/SES	1944	18
7	1940	history/french/english	arts/SES	1944	18
8	1940	architecture	arts/SES	1943	17
9	1940	french/spanish/history	arts/SES	1941	17
10	1940	english/french/history	arts/SES	1945	17
11	1940	french/german	arts/SES	1945	19
12	1940	maths/physics/chemistry	science	1944	17
13	1940	chemistry/maths	science	1944	18
14	1940	botany/zoology/chemistry	science	1944	18
15	1950	english language and literature	arts/SES	1953	17
16	1950	maths/physics/statistics/geology	science	1947	17
17	1950	general studies	arts/SES	1956	19
18	1950	chemistry	science	1955	18
19	1950	history/economics	arts/SES	1954	17
20	1950	general studies	arts/SES	1950	18
21	1950	maths/physics/chemistry	science	1947	18
22	1950	social science	arts/SES	1956	18
23	1950	general studies	arts/SES	1953	18
24	1950	classics/egyptology	arts/SES	1953	18
25	1950	geography	arts/SES	1955	18
26	1950	hispanic studies	arts/SES	1952	17
27	1950	english/spanish	arts/SES	1956	18
28	1950	social science	arts/SES	1955	18
29	1960	classics	arts/SES	1966	17

ID	decade	Subject: undergraduate	Faculty	Date began university	Age began university
30	1960	physics	science	1959	18
31	1960	pharmacology	science	1963	18
32	1960	english	arts/SES	1963	18
33	1960	russian	arts/SES	1959	19
34	1960	dentistry	dental	1957	18
35	1960	medicine	medical	1962	19
36	1960	geography	arts/SES	1965	18
37	1960	law	law	1956	17
38	1960	sociology	arts/SES	1963	19
39	1960	social science	arts/SES	1957	18
40	1960	veterinary science	veterinary	1958	19
41	1960	veterinary science	veterinary	1964	18
42	1960	physics/maths	science	1966	18
43	1960	german	arts/SES	1960	18
44	1960	history	arts/SES	1965	19
45	1960	french/german/english/philosophy	arts/SES	1959	18
46	1960	politics/economics/history	arts/SES	1963	35
47	1960	botany/zoology	science	1962	17
48	1970	economics	arts/SES	1968	19
49	1970	english	arts/SES	1976	38
50	1970	dentistry	dental	1969	18
51	1970	classics	arts/SES	1974	46
52	1970	geography	arts/SES	1971	18
53	1970	veterinary science	veterinary	1972	18
54	1970	architecture	arts/SES	1975	18
55	1970	psychology	arts/SES	1971	33
56	1970	history	arts/SES	1971	18
57	1970	life sciences	sciences	1967	19
58	1970	psychology	arts/SES	1971	18

ID	decade	Subject: undergraduate	Faculty	Date began university	Age began university
59	1970	physics	science	1971	18
60	1970	geography	arts/SES	1968	18
61	1970	geography	arts/SES	1974	18
62	1970	economics/politics	arts/SES	1970	22
63	1970	architecture	arts/SES	1976	18
64	1970	dentistry	dental	1967	19
65	1970	chemical ocenography	science	1976	18
66	1970	biochemistry	science	1971	36
67	1970	hispanic studies	arts/SES	1966	18
68	1970	french	arts/SES	1971	36
69	1970	history/politics	arts/SES	1972	18
70	1970	hispanic studies	arts/SES	1968	18
71	1970	sociology	arts/SES	1971	18
72	1970	law	law	1975	40
73	1970	geochemistry	science	1970	19
74	1970	history	arts/SES	1970	18
75	1970	music	arts/SES	1972	17
76	1970	history/economics	arts/SES	1968	19
77	1970	bacholar of arts	arts/SES	1968	18
78	1970	maths/physics	science	1971	18
79	1970	psychology	arts/SES	1973	32
80	1970	english	arts/SES	1974	18
81	1970	english/geography	arts/SES	1976	18
82	1970	english language and literature	arts/SES	1974	28

Appendix 7

ID	decade	Initial employment
1	1940	Blank
2	1940	Chemist
3	1940	Teaching-secondary
4	1940	Medical Secretary
5	1940	Teaching
6	1940	Teaching-secondary
7	1940	Teaching-secondary
8	1940	Architect
9	1940	Administrator
10	1940	Director of Glassworks (family business)
11	1940	Teaching-secondary
12	1940	Teaching-secondary
13	1940	Teaching-secondary
14	1940	Teaching-secondary
15	1950	Teaching-secondary
16	1950	Supervisor in Research/Marketing Service
17	1950	Teaching-secondary
18	1950	Teaching-secondary
19	1950	Teaching-primary
20	1950	Teaching-secondary
21	1950	Teaching
22	1950	Child Care Officer
23	1950	Accountant
24	1950	Teaching-secondary
25	1950	Teaching-secondary
26	1950	Teaching-secondary
27	1950	Teaching-secondary
28	1950	Hospital Almoner
29	1960	Teaching-secondary
30	1960	Teaching-secondary
31	1960	Assistant Lecturer
32	1960	Teaching-secondary
33	1960	Technical Translator
34	1960	Dentist
35	1960	House Officer
36	1960	Teaching
37	1960	Articled Clerk
38	1960	Family Case Worker
39	1960	Childcare Officer
40	1960	Vet (small animal)
41	1960	Vet (small animal)
42	1960	Research Scientist
43	1960	Teaching-secondary
44	1960	Teaching-secondary
45	1960	Teaching-secondary
46	1960	University Tutor
47	1960	Research Assistant
48	1970	Researcher
49	1970	Teaching
50	1970	Dentist

ID	decade	Initial employment
51	1970	Gallery Curator
52	1970	University Tutor
53	1970	University Lecturer
54	1970	Administrator
55	1970	Teacher-primary
56	1970	Accountant
57	1970	Teaching
58	1970	Clinical Psychologist
59	1970	Shop Manageress
60	1970	Town Planning Officer
61	1970	Civil Service
62	1970	Further Education Lecturer
63	1970	Architectural Assistant
64	1970	Dental Officer
65	1970	Trainee Trading Standards Officer
66	1970	Teaching-secondary
67	1970	Clerical Worker
68	1970	Owner of retail shop
69	1970	Teaching-secondary
70	1970	Bank clerk
71	1970	Social Worker
72	1970	Articled Clerk
73	1970	Teaching-secondary
74	1970	University Teaching Assistant
75	1970	Administrative Assistant
76	1970	Higher Education Lecturer
77	1970	Teaching-primary
78	1970	Teaching-primary
79	1970	Teaching
80	1970	Officer Worker
81	1970	Teaching
82	1970	British Council Assistant

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