GREAT BRITAIN

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'Donna Britannica' — University Women Teachers in Great Britain

Women who teach in universities in Great Britain have at least one thing in common with women teaching in universities in other countries. They are greatly outnumbered by men who teach in universities. In Great Britain one finds also in university teaching the characteristic pyramidal structure of women's careers. In 1980-81 the percentage of women at the different levels was

Professors	2.64
Readers, senior lecturers	6.42
Lecturers, asst. lecturers	15.55
Others (e.g. research staff)	34.24

The overall percentage of women in university teaching was 13. 85.[1]

Many people who have this situation brought to their attention say that it is an inevitable result of past conditions: women used to have much more limited access to universities, therefore, few of them became university teachers and so there are few at the more senior levels now. But the numbers at the lower levels indicate good prospects for future increases at higher levels. This is a pleasing interpretation but is it supported by the facts?

Certainly the percentage of female university students has increased in the last two decades. In 1965 the percentage of female undergraduates in the United Kingdom as a whole was 27.7; in 1975-76, 36.2; and in 1980-81, 39.9.[2] In 1965, women were 20.6% of students at postgraduate level; by 1980-81, they were 35.4% of students at that level and 26.1% of those obtaining higher degrees.

Such an improvement in the numbers of women students is reassuring, even if the UK record has not yet reached the 50/50 levels (or even the slight majority of women) achieved by such countries as the USA, Canada, Finland and East Germany and even if the postgraduate situation still leaves room for improvement. Even so, one would have expected that the increased access for female students would have had more impact on the teaching situation by now. If one thinks of some three years after the first degree as a point of entry to university teaching and then some ten years later to reach higher levels, one would assume that already the expansionism and liberalism of the 1960s and early 1970s would clearly have changed the composition of the teaching staff. But in the 1961-61, among professor 2% were women[3]; in 1972, 1.7%; in 1978, 2%[4]; in 1980-81, 2.64%. Or, taking the overall percentages, in 1961-2, women were 10% of university teachers, in 1965, 10.6%; in 1972, 10.7%; in 1975, 11.5%; and in 1980-81, 13.85%.[5]

The proportion of women teachers remains far from equalling the proportion of women students. It is true that the expansion of universities in the 1960s produced greater *numbers*

of women staff so that the impression might be that there are many more women around in the universities. By reason of their minority situation, women are, paradoxically, in some ways much more visible than men in some university departments. One finds that within a department even women may say that the numbers of men and women at both staff and student level, especially at postgraduate level, are equal — only to discover, when actual figures are checked, that women are still decidedly in the minority. Moreover, resistance to change at staff level can be seen even within faculties where change has been radical at student level. Entry to medical faculties has altered greatly during the last decade since the abolition of quotas which restricted the number of female students to about 25% of the total entry. In 1962, female students were 22% of the total in medicine[6] whereas in 1980 they were 38.65%.[7] But the percentage of female professors in medicine remained, in 1980, 3.02%.

We cannot escape the conclusion that somewhere along the line something gets in the way of the smooth progression of women from successful undergraduate studies into the ranks of university teachers.

What does stop them? Is it the fact that on the whole fewer women than men achieve 1st class honours degrees? But nowadays many men with upper seconds go on to postgraduate studies and so do some women. Is it a matter of the higher degrees achieved? Or of publication of academic work? Or is it a matter of women's attitudes or of discrimination against women in the university appointments system? All of these are worth considering.

Yet initially it is well to remind ourselves that, whatever the explanation with regard to university teaching, women in university administration seem to be in a similar position. Figures for 1978[8] showed the percentage of women employees in university administration to be 25.7. Looking at the grades of employment from highest to lowest we find the percentages of women to be 2.9, 6.5, 18.8, 36.2, 52.8 — again the typical pyramid distribution: moreover, during 1978 women accounted for less than their proportionate share of promotions from one grade to the next higher grade. At higher levels of administration, Halsey and Trow[9] noted that in 1967 of 116 vice-chancellors, principals or heads of university colleges, 10 were women: all these women were heads of exclusively female institutions. Taking simply the office of vice-chancellor, we find that today all vice-chancellors are men: in recent years, the rare and exceptional women vice-chancellors have been those in institutions where the office rotates among heads of colleges or departments and is for a limited number of years only. No woman has been appointed to a permanent post of vice-chancellor. Thus the main reasons for women's situation in university teaching may be factors common to women's work role generally rather than specific to the work of university teachers.

Research on such factors is less frequent than it should be for, visible as women may be in some university situations, they still tend to remain invisible in analyses of people who teach in universities. The World Yearbooks of Education[10] (1971-71 and 1972-73) focusing on trends in higher education, contrived to produce large numbers of pages (some 400 on each occasion) without referring to university teachers in the gender-specification or recognising that as a group women staff or students might have the distinctive characteristics. More recently, R. Startup wrote in 1979 of *The University Teacher and His World*,[11] describing an investigation in four university departments without mentioning whether any of the teachers responding to this enquiry were women; admittedly, given the choice of departments — classics, civil engineering, psychology and mathematics — one might well expect few, if any women in two of them. Startup does give information about different

evaluations of teachers and their methods by male and female undergraduate students; but though some sex differences appear in the raw figures, this aspect is not analysed.

On such evidence as is available, let us consider the various possible causes for the present situation of women university teachers. Firstly, there is the question of level of qualification. We cannot know how that class of first degree affects initial recruitment: some women — and men — may be discouraged by this first evaluation of their potential and refrain from attempting to become university teachers. Opinion among university teachers would suggest that women are more likely to be discouraged at this point, either by their own reaction or by departmental policy in encouraging students to proceed to postgraduate studies. Sutherland[12] found the majority view to be that departments now encourage men and women students equally in this respect (or, in view of current problems, discourage anyone from so proceeding); but there is still a minority view that, in some departments at least, men are more encouraged than women to seek higher qualifications. Sommerkorn found that the distribution of first class degrees among the women in her sample was in accord with the national pattern.[13] Sutherland found 35.6% of women in her sample had obtained 1st class Honours in their first degree, compared with 35.7% of a group of men in the same subject areas in one of the universities. At Ph.D. level, however, Sommerkorn found that 45% of her group had this degree while a 1969 survey[14] found 40% of a sample of women teaching in university had Ph.Ds. compared with 54% of male university teachers. Sutherland's 1980-81 sample found 40.6% of the women responding to her questionnaire had Ph.Ds compared with 53.6% of the male group. There would appear to be a tendency for women to be less likely than men to have this high level of qualification.

But in looking at qualifications we should always bear in mind the subject areas from which the samples are drawn. For example, in medical faculties the first degree will not be differentiated into classes of Honours: yet it may be evident from information as to prizes or marks of commendation that, as in the Sutherland sample, many graduating in this field would have received 1st Honours if that had been the assessment system. Similarly for higher degrees: in many subject areas and in professional life it is not important to obtain a Ph.D. Membership of the appropriate college of medical specialists or of the appropriate professional institute is what counts. Practical experience in the field may well appear as the next important qualification rather than acquiring a further academic qualification. It is also to be noted that in some subject areas a Ph.D. may be regarded as an *entrance* qualification whereas it is a qualification taken *after* appointment (quite a number of years after) in others. Scientists are more likely to stress having a Ph.D.; as Sommerkorn found, a larger proportion of her women scientists had it. In Arts, where women are more often found, it may be less emphasised and less valued. Comparisons therefore must match groups from the same subject areas if differing levels of qualifications are to be measured. Even so, women seem still to lag behind men in respect of higher degree qualification. One hopes therefore for a rise in women doctoral candidates similar to that noted in the United States recently.[15]

Publications are a further criterion of qualification. In some cases appointments are more likely to be made on publications record than on degree qualifications. Sommerkorn found that the publication record of the women in her sample was less satisfactory than that of male university teachers though the figures she cites[16] do not seem to indicate large differences. Again, one has to note differences in attitude between subject areas. In the physical sciences, a steady annual output of articles (though possibly with multiple author-

ships) is regarded as essential; in traditional Arts disciplines, the production of more than one book in ten years could be regarded as rushing rashly into print. As we have just noted, it is in the latter area that women tend to be more numerous, though they are also well represented in some social science departments where greater frequency of publication than in other human studies is common. The 1969 sample similarly showed a lower level of publication for women than for men though, curiously enough, married women tended to have a better publication record than unmarried women.[17] In the Sutherland survey there is some evidence of a growing tendency to contribute chapters to books edited by others; yet about half the group seem to have a low or non-existent publication rate (not wholly due to youth or few years in university teaching) though some 'high-fliers' have an admirable record both of articles and books. What is evident however is that women university teachers are now very much aware of the need to publish in order to achieve advancement.

The differences just mentioned might lead us to question whether women differ from men in their interpretation of the university teacher's role. It has at times been asserted that women are more interested than men in teaching and that this interest results in less concern for research and so in fewer publications — and so in fewer chances of promotion since it is a commonplace of university folk-lore that though teaching is paid lip service as a vital part of the work it is much less often rewarded by promotion. But Sommerkorn[18] found that the women in her sample were equally devoted to teaching and research; the one area where they indicated lesser interest was in administration which reduced the time available for more desirable activities. The 1969 survey found[19] that "women do not actually teach more than men nor do they differ a great deal in terms of attitudes" and " a greater commitment to teaching on the part of women is not a valid explanation for their lower level of research productivity." Sutherland's 1980-81 questionnaire asked women whether they perceived differences between men and women university teachers with regard to interest in teaching, in research, in publication and in achieving advancement in their career. While the majority thought that there was equal interest in teaching and in research, only a minority (though a sizeable one) thought there was equal interest in publication and a smaller minority still thought there was equal interest in advancing in a career. (It is interesting that some sex-stereotyped interpretations still persist in these respects: a minority held that women are more interested in teaching and a rather larger minority held that women are less interested in research).

Some difference there may be in the attitudes of the women towards some aspects of the profession; but these do not seem major. Is the answer to our question as to what stops women from taking a greater place in university teaching to be found quite simply in discrimination against women? From the point of view of the women themselves this would not necessarily be a convincing answer. Sommerkorn found that her group believed there was little sex discrimination within the university teaching profession — except possibly at Chair level.[20] (And the majority of the group thought that, for various reasons, it would be more difficult for a women than for a man to run a university department successfully.[21]) The comment by Blackstone, in the later survey[22], is worth noting. Women did not attribute their career disadvantages to prejudice: "they exhibit surprisingly few paranoid tendencies." In 1980-81, women interviewed rarely thought that they themselves had been discriminated against though a few of them cited a case of a friend or female colleague who had suffered in this way. When responding to the section of the questionnaire asking for reasons for the present distribution of women in university teaching a considerable proportion of replies made reference to prejudice in some form or another; even so, the reference

was quite often to past prejudice; and this explanation was not the most frequently offered explanation — objective factors such as age, qualification, type of experience in professional work were also cited and still more frequently mentioned were issues relating to women's role in caring for their families. The university may be a man's world, as some women pointed out, but it is also more likely than outside society to give women a fair deal. A certain paternalism might even favour some women in making appointments at lower levels though it would certainly not persist up to Chair appointments. Yet the policy formerly found in some universities, of assuming that married couples could not be employed by one university, still less within one department — and that a woman would therefore resign on marriage to a colleague in the university — is still a matter of living memory. So some prejudice is alleged to linger in some departments and appointing committees; but it is thought to be diminishing and not many women claim to have suffered from direct prejudice in their career. One must remember of course that women studied in post are the survivors; and they have been appointed to their post, almost invariably, by men. (The minority situation means, *ipso facto*, that few women serve on appointing committees.)

In this context it is useful to know how women estimate their chances of success if they seek promotion. Sommerkorn obtained the following results for her group:[23]

Optimistic	21
Uncertain	29
Not interested in promotion	16
Pessimistic	21

Sutherland, putting a similar question in 1980-81, found a certain gloom as to future prospects:

Chances above average	7
Average	59
Below average	57

Not all women in the sample found the question appropriate; and some did say they were not interested in promotion. It could be argued that between the two investigations the situation of universities has changed so sadly that no university teacher at present could be sanguine as to promotion prospects. Yet in the group of men responding to Sutherland's questionnaire there was an even balance between above average and below average expectations.

At the same time one must note occasional checks by universities as to success rates of men and women applicants respectively. Leeds University, for instance, found for the period 1972-5 that the proportion of women applicants and of women appointed was very nearly the same — the latter being slightly higher. (This result is similar to Smelster and Content's[24] more recent finding in a case study of appointment making at Berkeley.) Such findings raise the further interesting question, as yet unanswerable, of why so few women apply for posts.

Given the possibility of discrimination against them, do university women teachers support feminist organizations enthusiastically? No strong support for such movements

was apparent in Sommerkorn's group. She concluded, ironic as this may seem, that they felt the great days of fighting for women's rights were something of the past.[25] Yet in Sutherland's interview sample there was also no great enthusiasm for membership of feminist organizations, with one or two notable exceptions. A common reaction was a slight feeling of guilt, that perhaps one should be participating; but there are already so many claims on university women teachers' time. Some women explicitly state that they think their best contribution to establishing equality for women is to get on well with their own work, carry out good research, teach well, publish — and possibly be a good wife and mother at the same time. In some cases women are not entirely sympathetic to feminist groups as they perceive them; they particularly dislike what they describe as the exaggerations of some women's groups, the tendency to be against all men or to be strident or unrealistic in claims put forward for changes in conditions.

In discussion of women's situation in university teaching, the combination of research and teaching with being a wife and mother emerges as a factor of major — possibly the greatest — importance. Although the roles of wife and mother are often taken as being one, they should be considered separately; and the third role, that of housekeeper, recognised as also separate. In the past, the married woman has been expected to put her husband's comfort first: ensuring good domestic conditions for him is likely to reduce her own availability for academic work, conference attendance or simply departmental meetings outside normal working hours. Yet the housekeeper role may be taken over by domestic help, if the couple can afford it; and many husbands now are able and willing to take a share (if not a full half share) in domestic chores. Many sons are also being educated to face such responsibilities.

More importantly, in marriage there arises the mobility question. If one spouse seeks a better post elsewhere, then another equally attractive post has to be found in the same area — or difficult commuting problems will have to be faced; or the other spouse will have to give up a good post and settle for something less in the new neighbourhood — or accept unemployment. Finding a post for both in the new area may be difficult, especially if, as often happens, both partners are in university teaching, and most especially if both are in the same field of studies. Occasionally one hears of men who, when offered a Chair in another university have enquired whether a suitable post would be available in the university for their wife; or, if the wife is not in university teaching, would be available in her line of work in the neighbourhood. Sometimes universities respond helpfully to such enquiries; but economic pressures not may make a helpful response much less probable. In other cases, the husband decides against a move because no work outlet for his wife is offered. In the past is has been probable that the wife would renounce her job when her husband obtained promotion, hoping that she might be lucky in finding work eventually in the new neighbourhood. In some cases an interim period of unemployment has been used happily by the wife to complete writing a thesis or a book; but the cases of the kind that one hears of are again the survivors; other women have simply retired permanently in such circumstances. It must be recognised, of course, that this mobility question is now not one-sided; some couples have an explicit agreement that the two will move to wherever a good job is first offered for one or the other. Or a university man teacher whose wife has a well-paid job will decide against trying to move to better his own position. Given the economic situation of the day, the couple will be very much better off enjoying two salaries than they would be if they moved and became dependent on the husband's enhanced salary alone. (Secondary

considerations such as the inadvisability of changing the children's place of education at a possibly crucial point in their school career may also work against mobility of a couple.)

Marriage in itself then does have some complicating factors. But children add considerably to the decisions the female university teacher has to make. Attitudes are all-important. Sommerkorn found that 40 of the 45 married women in her sample reported that their husbands approved of their having a career, though she did wonder whether the husbands, if interviewed, would give less enthusiastic impressions about their wives' working.[26] Married women interviewed in Sutherland's sample indicated the importance of a co-operative attitude on the part of the husband — one or two had had to come to terms with the fact that their husband was not really keen on their working (in such cases one wonders whether the marriage or the career has good prospects of survival). In both researches it was evident that women with children were much concerned that their children would not suffer by reason of their mother's career.

In Britain today there are signs of a greater willingness of men to be partners in the various tasks associated with looking after babies and children. Here attitudes have undoubtedly changed so that now many young husbands can cope as well as their wives can with the routine of child care. Even so, there remain problems as to what is to done if the child is ill — who is going to take time off work, cancel engagements in order to stay with the child? Again, there is a move towards a more equal partnership here. But it has been pointed out by many women interviewed that university teaching has advantages in its freedom to arrange timetables so that one is available to look after a child at some points in the day, e.g., when the child has to be collected from school. If both spouses are in university teaching some good sharing of such duties is possible. But again there is the matter of subject areas. Physical sciences or medicine may involve attendance during a large number of hours in the laboratory, clinic or hospital; in such cases the university teacher or researcher cannot be free at odd moments during the day; some commitments indeed involve being at the university during anti-social hours. Laboratory work cannot be done at home, whereas a good deal of reading in Arts or social sciences can be done there (though the capacity of individuals to work while keeping an eye — or ear — on children varies very greatly). A women university teacher married to someone with fixed working hours may find herself inevitably the partner who copes with the incidental child-care tasks. In such cases women, according to some informants, are likely to feel guilty about going off to attend to such tasks, while men are much less guilt-ridden if they go off in the middle of the day to attend to a domestic problem, take their car to the garage — or play golf. The married women is more likely to worry about whether such comings and goings on her part are being noted and evoking critical gossip.

Hence the relevance of the domestic help and/or other child care provision. The days of the grandmother who could deal with such tasks are unfortunately, for most couples, no more. Statistics are not readily available but many women have commented that the cost of employing a competent person to do housework or be a kind of day-housekeeper for the children is excessively high. It depends on the joint income of the couple; and expenditure now on such help may safeguard their future financial well-being. But younger people are precisely those whose income is unlikely to reach high enough levels to employ domestic help. (Sadly enough the increasing level of unemployment may lead to a return of readily available and cheap domestic help.) Meanwhile university women teachers show great ingenuity in finding suitable help — *au pair* girls are much valued by some, others do find

reliable child-minders: one actually had her own home registered as suitable for child-minding activities and combined with other university women teachers to share in employing women to cope with a group of children in this way. Of course the provision of suitable nursery schools and crêches on campus would ease the lot of the university woman teacher. The availability of places in public nursery schools is inadequate. Yet the provision of such facilities on university campus has not been accepted as a legitimate way of spending funds paid to the universities by the University Grants Committee, though some contribution towards such provision can be made. Private nursery schools raise again the question of cost.

In all this there is the further and basic question of whether the mother feels justified in leaving young children to be looked after by other people for long periods and whether her husband is of the same mind. Many women do consider that the situation is fully satisfactory if suitable people can be found to help. Those women who do not accept this have probably left university teaching and so are not available for comment. Nevertheless it is probable that in her circle of acquaintances and colleagues the university teacher will still meet with some who consider her a less than satisfactory mother because she is not devoting herself full-time to the care of her child or children. (Sommerkorn found unmarried women in her group to be three times more likely than married women to object on principle to working mothers.[27] It is not only men who are likely to be critical in such cases.) In the social life of some well-to-do neighbourhoods the working mother may well be looked on as an oddity; though in others children may take pride in comparing notes about their mothers' professional activities.

This whole question is now more important than in the past when teaching, especially in universities, tended, for women, to be associated with remaining unmarried. Today the majority of university women teachers are likely to be married — though the marriage rate may still be less than that in continental universities. In Sutherland's sample, 37.5% were unmarried (and some were still young enough to be likely to marry later): of those married women with children 18 had one child, 26 had two children, 16 had three children, 9 had four and one woman had five. So at least a goodly number of women have solved the problem of combining work with child-rearing (though some of those in the sample — a very small number — took some time out). We must of course also note that there are occasionally instances where the man opts to stay at home and look after the child or children; but such instances are, as yet, very rare.

Hence the problem of maternity leave, which has been much debated in British universities lately. From the legal point of view an employer is obliged to give a statutory number of weeks' leave before and after the birth and to reinstate the woman in her post if she has signified her intention to return — and does in fact do so. but some universities make rather more generous provision than the legal minimum, either in time or in the level of pay during weeks of maternity leave. It has been suggested that university men teachers should have paternity leave (similar to that given in Scandinavian countries) to assist in caring for the baby; or that if both man and wife are employed by the university they should share a number of weeks' leave at such times. But these suggestions do not seem to be strongly supported.

Yet the provision of maternity leave raises particularly difficult questions for the woman and for the university. In most cases — especially during the present economic crisis — it is improbable that a replacement will be employed to do the woman's work while she is

absent; where she is doing very specialised work, a replacement might in fact be difficult to find. Consequently the woman's teaching may be concentrated in the months before or after her leave — though where research and teaching are concerned, some women are prepared to work on happily till just immediately before the birth; and some return with amazing celerity afterwards. But all this depends greatly on the woman's health and that of her baby. If in fact she has to take the full allowance of time a load of additional work is likely to fall on colleagues in the department. In many cases such making-good is accepted cheerfully and willingly by colleagues — who may consider that they too will have to call on others' good-will if they take study leave; in other cases colleagues may be less accommodating and indulge in unkind comment on the woman — and women in general. If the woman is apparently inconsiderate, e.g., returns for a very brief space of time before going off again on maternity leave, colleagues may begin to feel strongly aggrieved. If it is further proposed that such maternity leave should not put the woman further back in the queue for study leave (such leave in the UK universities depending very much on the circumstances of the individual department) the situation reaches a point where the principles of justice become difficult to determine. In practice many women have shown admirable skill in having their children during university vacations so that no absence other than that normal during the summer has been incurred. But differences between women in their attitudes to maternity leave are remarkable: some see such leave simply as their right; other worry about the complications caused to the work of the department.

For a head of department concerned in making an appointment, the question of maternity leave may present additional problems. There has to be a very firm recognition of the rights of women if an interview is not going to include questions about a woman candidate's family plans; if the question is not put (and fear of complaints about infringement of equal opportunity legislation may well prevent it from being uttered) there is the even greater danger that the interviewers will assume they know the answer. (Rather similarly, if women are not asked about the mobility factor, there is the danger that it will be assumed a married woman with a husband employed in another city would be a poor member of the department because of commuting, going home for extended week-ends and so on.) As a practical technique, some women candidates' decisions to answer these questions whether they are put or not may have much to commend it. One must recognise the situation of a head of department anxious to get a new course going or to carry out a research project if there is a likelihood that after some months the person appointed to teach the course or to carry out research tests will not be available for four or five months. Further, in the present economic situation, when a post is vacated there is, in many universities, the probability that it will be 'frozen', i.e., left unfilled for an indeterminate period as part of the university's moneysaving policy. If the head of department envisages an appointee as likely to have a child and to discover that caring for that child is preferable to continuing in university work, then the head will worry that the post could be lost to the department in the near future. It may be helpful to know what the woman's plans are; but plans can change or be changed. All this is not to suggest that men are much more reliable appointees than women. Men may leave the department after a short period of service, without consideration for colleagues; their zeal for promotion may make them all the more ready to move, no matter what the consequences for the department. They may fall ill of have family problems too. But they won't want maternity leave; and as yet few still want paternity leave.

The question of children must in any case remain a major factor in women's career planning — to have children early and be free for a long and glorious career thereafter or to

have them later, when good qualifications and a high level of appointment have been achieved — or to attempt the heroic task of doing everything at once. Yet the change towards a more permissive society with regard to sexual behaviour has undoubtedly affected the situation of university women teachers. The question of marriage can now be answered by the alternative of cohabiting. (The English language will really have to find a better word for this relationship and the people who share it: lover, partner, cohabitee all have their disadvantages as terms for current use.) Having this option, in the present climate of opinion, university women teachers may avoid the earlier stereotype of the sexually unattractive bluestocking: they may also avoid, probably with impunity though some prejudices may again linger, the deprivation of normal sexual relationships which formerly seemed to be a price exacted by society from women in certain careers. Nevertheless one must recognise that cohabiting may involve precisely the same problems of mobility as marriage does; and even with changing climates of opinion it is probably not so easy to ask, before accepting an appointment, whether a post in the environment is available for a cohabitee. One notes too that, whatever the climate of opinion, gossip about colleagues' relationships remains endemic among staff and students.

In assessing future developments in the situation of women university teachers in British universities do we have grounds for optimism or pessimism? Is it likely that the minority situation of these women is going to change? There are the encouraging factors we have noted: the increases of numbers of women undergraduates and the slight but perceptible improvement in the numbers of women taking higher degrees. There is some evidence of growth of professional awareness among university women, a greater clarity of perception in career planning. This may well be associated with the general growth of consciousness about women's disadvantaged situation in higher education and in employment and society generally — though perhaps in university teaching discrepancies have been less widely perceived and discussed. But, granting that the problem of child-bearing and child rearing is not likely to go away (whatever improvements there may be in the numbers of men ready to take a large share in child rearing responsibilities), there remain some grounds for pessimism in other respects, notably in the changes taking place within the university teaching profession today. At present promotion in universities is minimal and recruitment is stagnant. So the proportion of women teachers may be crystallised at its existing level. But if more women do come in, will this be a genuine advance? Feminisation of a profession is at times regarded as leading to its downgrading. Is there a danger of this kind of development in university teaching?

A relevant factor is the level of salaries. Blackstone[28] found in the past that university women teachers were on the whole more satisfied with their pay than men were. It may be that with more recent awareness of the fact that women normally receive a lower average pay than men, women would no longer be so acceptant. But the salary position of British university teachers has been worsening steadily in comparison with that of other professions and other workers. As Gareth Williams has noted,[29] from 1965 to 1975 there was a decrease in the "real net-of-tax" pay of the university professor of 19% whereas during that period, pay levels of comparable professionals remained steady and the pay of the average manual worker rose by 13%. While enthusiasts for social equality may welcome this lessening of differentials, it is likely to have some effect on the recruitment of highly able people to university teaching. As Williams pointed out, polytechnic teachers are now at least as well paid as university teachers. School teachers also have received more generous pay rises than university teachers in recent years. Those who formerly would have seen

university teaching as an attractive profession may well look elsewhere in future; already some of the professional faculties — medicine, for example — have found difficulty in filling posts because they cannot offer salaries comparable with those the appropriately qualified person can obtain elsewhere. Present encouragement of university teachers to leave the profession to avoid compulsory redundancies may in fact encourage some to consider whether their qualifications would give them a better way of life in some other profession or occupation. But women traditionally — and they may not all have changed in this — tend to set less store by financial rewards for work. And the flexibility of hours in some university departments may, as we have seen, commend itself to married women as an advantage to be reckoned against others.

There is also the restriction of many university posts today to a limited term contract for three years of even less. The ambitious young man may not feel inclined to risk being unemployed at the end of such a contract — though if his wife is in stable employment, the risk may be acceptable. The woman who is keen to get into university teaching and is married to someone with a secure, well-paid job, may be rather more willing to risk the short-term contract all the same. It may also seem attractive to other women who have perhaps been out of university work or employed part-time while coping with bringing up children. Consequently there might in this way be an increase of women employed in university teaching but at a temporary, low-grade level.

Similarly present discussions of the possibility of limiting academic tenure to a fixed number of years may make university teaching a less appealing prospect for young men hoping to settle into a life career (if such hopes can still be entertained at this time). Women, with their haunting tendency to accept that their present occupation may not be for all their working life, could find less assured tenure no great defect.

Thus it could be possible that, by reason of the decreases in the attractiveness of university teaching, the proportions of women in the profession would increase. While this development might well be to the benefit of the women themselves and of the students, it might not be good for the universities if the right change took place for the wrong reasons. If feminisation of university teaching occurs because the profession is losing status and rewards (one has to concede that for many people status and pay are regarded as closely associated) then no victory for women has been gained. In such a situation women in university teaching would be much better qualified than the males (since the more able and highly qualified males would avoid the profession). It is, admittedly, frequently asserted that at present to teach in universities at the higher levels women have to be better than their male colleagues; but the prospect is nonetheless depressing. Undoubtedly university education is changing. It is to be hoped that whatever the future shape of this form of higher education it will still attract to it most able and highly qualified people, both male and female. Only in a balanced development of this kind will full use be made of the talents and interests of women and their capacity for teaching and research be best used. One waits with interest to see whether such an evolution will occur.

Notes

[1] *University Statistics 1980,* (Univ. Stat. Record, 1982, vol. 1), p. 51.

[2] DES *Statistics of Education, 1965, 1975,* (HMSO, 1967, 1977, vol. 6) pp. 118-119: *Univ. Stats. 1980, op. cit. supra,* pp. 22-23.

[3] Figures for 1961-62 from I. Sommerkorn, *One The Position of Women in the University Teaching Profession in England* (revision of Ph.D. London thesis 1969).

[4] DES *Statistics of Educ. 1972* (HMSO 1975): DES. *Stats. of Educ. 1975* (HMSO 1977), *1978* (HMSO 1980).

[5] Univ. Stats. 1980, ibid.

[6] I. Sommerkorn, *op. cit.* p. 93.

[7] *Univ. Stats. of Educ. 1980*, pp. 18-19.

[8] AUT Document LA/1809, (August 1981).

[9] A.H. Halsey, M.A. Trow, *The British Academics* (Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 162.

[10] World Yearbook of Education, *Higher Education in a Changing World* (Evans, 1971). World Yearbook of Education, *Universities Facing the Future* (Evans, 1972).

[11] R. Startup, *The University Teacher and His World* (Saxon House, 1979).

[12] M.B. Sutherland, "Women Who Teach in Universities", in progress. British figures based on 160 questionnaire responses by women in two universities and sixty interviews as well as 56 questionnaire responses by men in one university.

[13] Sommerkorn, p. 45.

[14] G. Williams, T. Blackstone, D. Metcalf, *The Academic Labour Market* (Elsevier, 1974), chapter nineteen.

[15] P.J. Perun (ed.) *The Undergraduate Woman* (Lexington Books, 1982), p. 54.

[16] Sommerkorn, p. 125.

[17] G. Williams, p. 387.

[18] Sommerkorn, p. 114.

[19] G. Williams, p. 398.

[20] Sommerkorn, p. 137.

[21] P. 142

[22] G. Williams, p. 401.

[23] Sommerkorn, p. 130.

[24] N.J. Smelser, and R. Content, *The Changing Academic Market* (University of California Press, 1980).

[25] Sommerkorn, p. 165 *seq.*

[26] P. 190

[27] P. 187

[28] See G. Williams, p. 392

[29] G. Williams, "Gentlemen and Players: The Changing British Professoriate", in *Comparative Perspectives on the Academic Profession*, Editor, P. Altbach (Praeger, 1977), p. 20.