

## **“Give her the apple and see what comes of it”: University Coeducation in Britain and America, c. 1860-1940**

### **Abstract**

This thesis is a comparative study of university coeducation in Britain and America. In particular, the University of Glasgow in Scotland and the University of Wisconsin at Madison are used as case studies due to their respective positions as the first state-supported universities in each country to fully admit women. While previous studies in this area argue that the admission of women to institutions of higher education countered societal norms, I propose that Victorian concepts of separate spheres continued into coeducational universities, with the intention of perpetuating these stereotypes. Therefore, the polarisation of the curricular and extracurricular lives of students on the basis of gender did not evolve in conflict with the prevailing society, as has been asserted by previous educational historians. Instead coeducational institutions in both countries actually reinforced the gender expectations of the community at large, while inadvertently reshaping them at the same time. Despite the new opportunities given to women, the structure of the institutions continued to guide them into traditionally female roles -- particularly those as wives and mothers.

Sources used in this thesis include student and administrative records housed in the archives of each institution, as well as contemporary books and newspaper and magazine articles. These sources provide a range of opinions on the progress of women in higher education, and the impact it had on society as a whole. The evidence used is broken into thematic discussions of issues on campus: academics, housing, student organisations and publications, and the efforts of university students in the First World War and suffrage campaigns. This structure provides a predominantly chronological look at the evolution of each institution, while raising individual issues of social control that pertain to each area of campus life. The result is a comparative analysis of university coeducation in two different cities through the lens of two particular, ground-breaking institutions.