

A SCOTTISH CLASSIC AFTER SIXTY YEARS: GEORGE DAVIE'S *THE DEMOCRATIC INTELLECT*: SCOTLAND AND HER UNIVERSITIES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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George Davie's book *The Democratic Intellect* (1961) was a pioneering if problematic work of university history, and also a key influence on the development of cultural nationalism in Scotland in the 1960s-70s. This paper will not directly explore that influence, or discuss the historical validity of Davie's account. The aim is rather to place his book in the general context of university history. The 1950s and 1960s were a period of intense university discussion in Britain (the Robbins report, the 'two cultures' controversy, etc.), and the paper asks what influence Davie had outside Scotland. It will discuss the sources from which he drew his interpretation, and his work's context in the wider history of universities in the 19th and 20th centuries. His focus on 'specialisation' relates to the professionalization of university disciplines under German influence and the problems which this raised for undergraduate teaching and liberal education. It also raises the question of the relations between secondary and higher education, and comparison with France is illuminating here. Within Scotland, Davie's book had more academic impact on sociologists than historians, raising as it did general questions of national identity. Finally, the paper suggests why post-war developments created a receptive atmosphere for a book which was by no means easy to read and on a somewhat esoteric subject.

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