CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This book responds to the proposition that the value of higher education can be reduced to a singular scale: the economic market. In *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative*, Mark Fisher describes how,

> over the past thirty years, capitalist realism has successfully installed a 'business ontology' in which it is simply obvious that everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business [...] emancipatory politics must destroy the appearance of a 'natural order', must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be mere contingency, just as it must make what was previously deemed to be impossible attainable. (2009, 17)

This book takes up Fisher's commentary and challenge to such economic inevitabilities, in evidencing how higher education policy between 2008 and 2018 reformed both the management and financing of higher education in England through adopting a "business ontology" (2009, 17). The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (2009–10), commonly known as the Browne Review, concluded that universities "must persuade students that they should 'pay more' in order to 'get more'. The money will follow the student" (Browne 2010, 4). Under these conditions, a university degree became a product valued at the level of the individual consumer. Increasingly, the value of research has also been configured primarily as an asset to economic growth, an indicator of the competitiveness of a university, or in terms of its demonstrable societal

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Z. H. Bulaitis, *Value and the Humanities*, Palgrave Studies in Literature, Culture and Economics, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37892-9_1

impact. The language of the Research Excellence Framework (REF henceforth) conceives of disciplinary departments as 'units of assessment' and scholarly writing as an 'output' that can be attributed a star rating. This book sets out to understand how the wider values of the humanities can be articulated within such an econocratic context. In order to achieve this, I construct and present a narrative history of how the present rhetoric and rationale has come to overshadow alternative approaches to valuation.

Historicising in the present moment is a political act. I propose that if scholars hope to address the changes occurring in the contemporary academy, they need to be able to better articulate the value of the humanities *beyond* the marketplace of higher education. Therefore, rather than writing a singular defence of the humanities against contemporary economic rationalism, this book proposes a kaleidoscopic range of ways in which value is manifested, each of which offers a different perspective on the present debate. Placing contemporary neoliberal higher education within a far longer history of liberal education reveals that "what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be mere contingency" (Fisher 2009, 17). Throughout this book, I place narratives of value in humanities scholarship between 2008 and 2018 in dialogue with nineteenth-century debates concerning liberal education, in order to demonstrate that the *way* value is articulated is as significant as *what* values are articulated. I address the following broad questions facing the humanities, exploring the contextual and historical contingencies of value: what are the differences between liberal and neoliberal education? How can critically reading policy help scholars understand a culture of economism? How does debate between the humanities and the sciences create meaning? How can fiction act as a reflective tool for articulating value? How are the academic humanities connected to other cultural institutions? These questions map directly onto the five substantive chapters of this book.

In the words of Toni Morrison, "definitions belong to the definers — not the defined" (1987, 190). With this in mind, I emphasise how self-articulation of what it is that the humanities actually 'do' can enrich the debate. My contribution pragmatically traces how the value of the humanities is expressed in the daily actions, language, and experiences of higher education. I argue that focusing on what scholars say, what they do, and how they articulate the value of their work, reveals that which policy neglects. In the spirit of communication rather than defence, this book favours the word 'articulate' in place of 'justify'. The semantic distinction between these two terms is outlined in Poul Holm et al.'s *World Humanities Report 2015*:

> by articulating, we mean explaining and differentiating the […] values or benefits humanities research is thought to have […] justifying the humanities is subtly different as it involves defending the humanities in the face of a challenge. Unlike articulation, justification is self-consciously rhetorical. There are potentially hostile audiences to consider, for instance: politicians nervous of their budgets; people who consider STEM subjects worth funding but struggle to see the point of the humanities. (2015, 38–39)

Articulating value through a demonstration of humanities practices resists being coerced into a reactive position against economics. Despite recent policy that encourages higher education to be entirely motivated by fiscal targets, the humanities continue to inspire and aspire beyond these limits. Who should define the humanities? Where do we draw the lines of disciplinary definition? How do *our* humanities differ from institutional definitions in the past? The inspiration for this book is the challenging question of how to articulate the value of, rather than to defend and define, the humanities within the neoliberal university.

Therefore, throughout this book, I suggest that it is necessary to pursue not just one but many alternative routes to the valuation of the humanities. Accordingly, the chapters each present a different route and representation of value. This heterogeneity is appropriate given that the work of the humanities is multi-faceted. As the pluralised word 'humanities' indicates, there is not one study of 'humanity'. Instead, this book considers a series of diverse relationships which collectively form a collage of mutually reinforcing values. In doing so, I follow my belief that the humanities must embrace non-hierarchical and open-ended practices. An articulation of the value of the humanities encompasses the lives, ideas, and values of people as opposed to their instrumental use as products.

1.1 Part I: The State of the Debate

I am not the first to argue that economic value is a poor measurement of the benefit of the humanities, both in terms of teaching and research. The value of the humanities has been studied across a wide range of academic disciplines including critical theory, literary and cultural studies, history, education, and sociology. This book connects philosophical debates with political effects in order to develop a critical approach to articulating

educational value.[1] The specificity of contemporary marketisation of value in higher education has led to a recent proliferation of specialist scholarship. There are three main research communities in this area: critical university studies, defences of the public value of the humanities, and social impact studies. I briefly summarise each below in order to assist readers in situating this book within the wider corpus.

1.1.1 Critical University Studies

Jeffrey Williams coined the term 'critical university studies' in 2012. Writing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Williams defined a field that focused "on the consequences of corporate methods and goals" and "scrutinize[s] central social institutions" (2012, 7). The work now recognised as critical university studies began in the 1990s as an interrogation of the management of educational institutions and attempts to uncover the effects of systems that promote economic valuation culture.[2] More recently, the focus has turned from the criticism of knowledge-exchange practices to a wider commentary concerning the decline of the public good of education. Since 2008, critical university studies have sought to demonstrate the "pressing need not only to diagnose what's happening but also to oppose changes that go against the public interest" (Williams 2012, 8).[3] Although critical university studies were founded in the US context, it has become increasingly applicable within the English higher education system after the changes to undergraduate funding in 2010.[4] Changes to education policy in the late 2000s acted as the stimulus for the present debate in English universities. As McGettigan observes "now is the time to set out what agenda the government has been pursuing, how it has been pursued without democratic mandate or oversight, and how it is being extended

[1] As a result, this study is indebted to the work of Matthew Arnold, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu as well as others within the tradition of critical theory.

[2] Williams identifies how the approach was instigated in Readings, B. *The University in Ruins* (1996) and Slaughter and Leslie's *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (1997), both of which critique the marketisation of higher education in the US context using similar methods.

[3] This approach is exemplified in Menand, L. *The Marketplace of Ideas* (2010), Newfield, C. *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (2008) and Bousquet, M. *How the University Works* (2008).

[4] See Collini, S. often cited article "Browne's Gamble" (2010), McGettigan, A. *The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets, and the Future of Higher Education* (2013), and Ball, S. *The Education Debate* (2013).

without parliamentary scrutiny" (2013, 2). This book develops such styles of scholarship, through critiquing and undermining the naturalised processes of economisation. However, I argue that the exploration of alternative sites for valuation *beyond* the market is an underdeveloped area in critical university studies. In order to redress this gap, this book contributes specific examples of ways to articulate the potential of non-economic values of the humanities, rather than solely critiquing the current economic mode.

1.1.2 The Public Value of the Humanities

Since 2008 there have been a number of edited collections from various disciplines that have concentrated on the public good of the humanities. *The Public Value of the Humanities* (2011), edited by Jonathan Bate, features responses from over thirty academics who address the influences of marketisation and financial cuts to higher education in the UK. *The Humanities and Public Life* (2014), edited by Peter Brooks and Hilary Jewett, provides philosophical reflections upon the public value of the humanities from leading literary, cultural, and critical theorists.[5] The year 2011 saw the publication of three edited collections framed as political manifestos against the marketisation of higher education in England: *A Manifesto for the Public University*, edited by John Holmwood, *The Assault on Universities: A Manifesto for Resistance*, edited by Michael Bailey and Des Freeman, and *For the University: Democracy and the Future of the Institution*, edited by Thomas Docherty.[6]

Such wealth of recent publications testifies to the influence of the post-2010 policy developments. These works draw together a community of concern and the multiplicity of responses indicates the depth of feeling, despite many of the authors not having a research background in economic policy, history of education, or critiques of neoliberalism that this study develops. Rather than reproducing these arguments that, like critical university studies, are framed in response to the economic imperative, this book adopts a less reactive stance in resisting the language of crisis or 'war'.[7] The presence of these edited collections demonstrates the wide

[5] The collection includes essays by Judith Butler, Elaine Scarry, Patricia J. Williams and Jonathan Lear, among others.

[6] This advocacy work continues, as seen in Ladkin et al. (2016) and Watts, R. (2017).

[7] Book titles invoking such violent imagery are common, see Bérubé and Nelson (1995) *Higher Education Under Fire*; Giroux, H. (2014) *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*;

community of scholars who are concerned by the changes to higher education. A plurality of responses should be recognised as a positive occurrence that is indicative of a wider resilience and resistance to the challenges facing the values of higher education. However, the need for ongoing enquiry is vital, as these collected editions are now several years old. A wider consideration of the public humanities in the twenty-first century is urgently required, and this book represents but one contribution of one voice.

1.1.3 Social Impact Studies

The third significant area of scholarly debate is found within cultural policymaking and arts management, which explores the social impact of the arts and humanities.[8] These interdisciplinary and often applied ideas about the value of the humanities are cited throughout this book and prove particularly significant to the discussion of cultural policy in Chap. 5, which explores the relationship between the management of the humanities and public museums. Most noticeably, the journal *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* has maintained a dialogue around value and 'impact', including several special issues dedicated to the topic in 2015.[9] Social impact studies draws attention to interactions between humanities scholars and other social institutions within healthcare, law, education, and culture. Therefore, research in this area helps locate the value of the humanities within wider society and connects to the above discussion of the public humanities at many points. Beyond research, there are a number of organisations that have been established in order to explore the social impact of the humanities. For example, the European Network for Research Evaluation in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (ENRESSH), which explores the consequences of research evaluation criteria from an interdisciplinary perspective and the European Consortium

Docherty, T. (2015) *Universities at War;* Wright and Shore (2017) *Death of the Public University? Uncertain Futures for Higher Education in the Knowledge Economy.*

[8] Eleonora Belfiore's work is particularly significant in this regard, from *The Cultural Value Initiative* project, to her monograph with Oliver Bennett, *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History* (2008), to her edited collection with Anna Upchurch, *Humanities in the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Utility and Markets* (2013).

[9] See Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, *Forum on the Public Value of Arts and Humanities Research* (14.1) and *Forum on Civic Engagement in the Arts and Humanities* (14.3).

for Humanities Institutes and Centres (ECHIC), founded by Rosi Braidotti in 2008, which aims "to speak on behalf of the humanities and develop a language for the (position of) humanities institutes in European universities today" ("Aims" echic.org). This book builds on work I have carried out as an active participant in both networks. Other public institutions, such as the British Academy, have been equally proactive in presenting a case for the social impact of the humanities. For example, their "Past, Present and Future" report provides narrative case studies of beneficial projects and highlights that "there is no simple way of demonstrating the subtle and unexpected ways in which academic disciplines 'contribute to the vitality of society'" (2010, 5). The growing body of scholarship in this area testifies to the value of the humanities beyond the university as a significant part of contemporary social life.

1.1.4 New Contributions

The three research communities highlighted above provide a significant body of evidence for the value of the humanities; however, this research is presented almost exclusively in relation to economic terms. Writers within critical university studies critique the processes of marketisation and are, therefore, working in direct response to economic governance. Both edited collections, which address the public value of the humanities and scholarship that documents the social impact of research, make concessions to policy demands that knowledge should be justified and made readily accountable. This book consistently pursues a valuation that is humanistic in its approach and aims. The following four chapters construct a valuation of the humanities that is in contact with policy, the sciences, fiction, and public cultural institutions. Throughout, historically aware critical interpretation is offered as a means to avoid repeating well-worn economic defences. I offer articulation in place of justification.

1.2 Part II: The Relationship with the Past: From Liberal to Neoliberal Education

The subsequent four chapters each draws nineteenth-century educational debates into contact with the present moment, and the remainder of this first introductory chapter directly addresses and initiates this methodological choice. Throughout, I establish an overarching relationship between

the value of liberal education in the Victorian past and the value of neoliberal education in the present. Nineteenth-century liberal education sought to cultivate a society of individuals equipped with faculties for making moral choices and living meaningful lives, whereas contemporary neoliberal higher education redefines individuals primarily as consumers of education. There has been a shift whereby the freedom of an individual has been transformed into an individual's freedom of choice, in a free market of economic opportunity. However, such a linear perspective of history is somewhat misleading. As Dinah Birch explains in *Our Victorian Education*, "our educational thinking reflects, often without our realizing it, patterns of thought that are rooted in the Victorian period" (2008, 123). Establishing the relationship between liberal and neoliberal education is by no means straightforward, historically, linguistically, politically, or otherwise. Therefore, this introductory chapter establishes a methodology for handling the fissure between liberal and neoliberal education that will be used throughout this book. Although the general critical consensus affirms that the Victorian period was important in the formation of the present systems of governance in education, there has been little investigation into specifically *how* these structures and discursive modes came to be adopted into twenty-first-century policymaking. With this in mind, I offer a detailed assessment of the ways in which our Victorian inheritance is partly responsible for the current econocratic context but also bequeaths the contemporary humanities valuable tools for thinking through the present challenges.

1.2.1 Describing 2008–18 as the Present Moment in Higher Education

This project delineates the period of 2008–18 as a period of particular importance within the history of higher education. This timeframe represents a significant watershed in higher education policy in England for two reasons. First, it encompasses the launch of the Browne Review in 2009, which was commissioned to "examine the balance of contributions to higher education funding by taxpayers, students, graduates and employers" (Hansard 2009). Second, it includes the publication of "Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education" (known as the *Browne Report*) in 2010 and the corresponding white paper "Students at the Heart of the System" the following year, which confirmed the shift from a public to a private funding model for higher education in England based on

undergraduate student tuition. These documents proposed significant changes in both the governance and attitude towards the value of higher education, which had long-lasting effects: education was commodified, a market of tuition was established, and students were configured as consumers. The governance of universities in England between 2008 and 2018 has been most largely shaped by the culture (if it can be called that) of the market that these landmark policies enforce.

The *Browne Report* initially suggested that the cap on tuition fees (£3225 in 2009–10) should be removed, although in practice it was not removed but raised to £9000, tripling tuition fees for most students. An arguably more profound change proposed in the report was the removal of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) block grants for undergraduate teaching. Courses that were not recognised as a national priority, which included nearly all arts and humanities courses (referred to as Band D), lost all financial support from the government. A contribution was only offered to "the most expensive subjects, such as medicine, the laboratory sciences and engineering" (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2011, 15).[10] These policies have profound effects on the valuation of the humanities. As a result, Chap. 2 presents a close analysis of the implications of the *Browne Report* in the historical context of Payment by Results, and Chap. 3 provides an extended discussion of the prioritisation of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM henceforth) subjects. In addition to changes in undergraduate tuition, research in higher education was also subject to significant reform. The year 2008 represents the start date for the contemporary period of this project because it marks the start of the first cycle of the Research Excellence Framework (REF henceforth) between 2008 and 2014. This introduced the 'impact' criterion into research assessment, which evaluates scholarly research in terms of its potential contribution to wider economic, societal, and political life, which is addressed in Chap. 5.

Throughout this study, the conceptual framing of 'the present' will be limited to the period between 2008 and 2018 in order to avoid speculation on future changes to assessment methods, for example, to explore effects of widespread implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), or the emergence of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), or to understand the consequences of the institutional

[10] The report notes that "small and specialist institutions such as music and arts conservatoires will still receive some support" (BIS 2011, 16).

tactics deployed in the REF 2021. Likewise, analysis of the recommendations and future consequences of the Augar Review (May 2019) lies beyond the scope of this book. The context of 2008–18 provides a strong body of evidence for the economisation of higher education both in terms of policymaking and wider global politics. While this project is a response to changes in the contemporary academy, it relies on establishing strong historical lineages with policy and critical ideas from the nineteenth century. I will now outline the broader context of the present including a definition of neoliberalism (Sect. 1.2.2), evidence of the domination of economic value in higher education (Sect. 1.2.3), and an account of the humanities response to the perception of crisis (Sect. 1.2.4). Once the contemporary situation is clearly established, the third part of this introductory chapter initiates the historical interconnections between liberal and neoliberal education.

1.2.2 Economic Value as a Monoculture Under Neoliberalism

The marketisation of the higher education sector is not an isolated incident. The year 2008 saw the effects of the global financial crisis permeate governance structures around the world. Austerity measures put into place following the crisis provided a context in which extended accountability and increased economic valuation were claimed to be necessary. On 26 November 2008, BBC Business reported that the UK economy was shrinking for the first time since 1991.[11] The effects of the global financial crisis led to the 2010–15 Coalition government announcing spending cuts across a large number of public sectors. Helen Carosso notes how "the wider economic climate — in which almost all areas of government were facing cuts […] made a new funding model for universities unavoidable" (2014, 33). It was under these conditions of economic retrenchment that market-led policies of higher education were introduced. I argue that, rather than presenting policymakers with an inevitable conclusion, the financial crash was used as an excuse to privatise higher education under the auspices of crisis and retrenchment.

Therein the idea of the neoliberal university in England was fully realised. Matthew Eagleton-Pierce observes that the term 'neoliberalism' is like a 'Swiss army knife' since it has been variously used for:

[11] See BBC Business (2008).

> explaining the behaviour of Wall Street banks in light of the financial crisis (Duménil and Lévy 2011); the everyday experience of life in China (Zhang and Ong 2008); the transformation of Dubai's skyline (Davis 2007); the weakening of democracy (Brown 2015); the growth of inequality, insecurity and austerity (Schrecker and Bambra 2015). (2016, xiii)

Neoliberalism is simultaneously understood as an ideology, a mode of governance, and a set of policies concerning deregulation, liberalisation, and privatisation of business.[12] For the context of this project Wendy Brown's work on how neoliberalism represents "the weakening of democracy" (Eagleton-Pierce 2016, xiii) is the most immediately useful. Brown has written extensively on the 'neglected dimensions' of moral or democratic life under neoliberalism; the devaluation of the humanities is exemplary of this decline in social values beyond the market. Her definition of neoliberalism offers a useful starting point for understanding the structures that are currently shaping the economisation of higher education in England. Her chapter "Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy", published in *Edgework,* makes an important distinction that,

> neo-liberalism is not simply a set of economic policies; it is not only about facilitating free trade, maximizing corporate profits, and challenging welfarism. Rather, neo-liberalism carries a social analysis which, when deployed as a form of governmentality, reaches from the soul of the citizen-subject to education policy to practices of empire. Neo-liberal rationality, while foregrounding the market, is not only or even primarily focused on the economy; rather it involves *extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action*, even as the market itself remains a distinctive player. (2005, 39–40)

Understanding neoliberalism as a rational approach is imperative to understanding how descriptions of value are generated. Brown's essay captures the slippery term 'neoliberalism' with relative precision. In the context of this project, which looks back to the values of liberal education as opposed to liberal economic theory, the careful handling of ideologically loaded terminology is of principal importance. Brown's observation that neoliberalism extends market rationality into "*all institutions and social action*" (2005, 40) demonstrates the possibility that not only economic policy but

[12] For key definitional texts on neoliberalism see Harvey, D. (2005); Saad-Filho, A. and Johnston, D. (2005); Boas, T. C. and Gans-Morse, J. (2009).

also the actions of government, the management of public institutions, and even the realm of individual choice can be reduced to a set of market values. Under neoliberalism, an extension of market rationality to all parts of public life sees "thinking and judging […] reduced to instrumental calculation" with "no morality, no faith, no heroism, indeed no meaning outside the market" (2005, 45). Such a mentality, Brown argues, is already "permeating universities today, from admissions and recruiting to the relentless consumer mentality of students in relationship to university brand names, courses, and services, from faculty raiding and pay scales to promotion criteria" (2005, 43). As a market-driven structure becomes the norm, activities within universities with less measurable outcomes and economic orientation are vulnerable. Neoliberalism challenges the idea of a community of interconnected individuals. As Noam Chomsky writes in *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*: "instead of citizens it produces consumers" (1998, 11). The reconfiguration of students and scholars in exclusively economic terms poses severe consequences for the value of education.

1.2.3 The Dominance of Economic Value Within Higher Education

Neoliberalism within higher education is manifested in what Regenia Gagnier describes as the emergence of "criteria of worth" (2013, 11) wherein the value of education is reduced to that which can be accounted for. Gagnier's article, "Operationalizing Hope: The Neoliberalization of British Universities in Historico-Philosophical Perspective" highlights the proliferation of "research income, league table criteria, compliance or alignment with the University's competitive drive in a global Higher Education market" (2013, 12). What is most significant is that the changes to higher education have not only affected financial and organisational processes but also have come to shape the wider values of higher education. Mark Fisher describes how what was previously periodic assessment has been "superseded by a permanent and ubiquitous measurement which cannot help but generate the same perpetual anxiety" (2009, 52).[13] Within a student (read consumer) led sector (read market) of higher education

[13] For example, until 2008, the REF's predecessor, the Research Assessment Exercise was conducted through peer-review and at the level of the department, not at the level of individual outputs.

(read product manufacturing facility), scholars are increasingly required to articulate themselves as offering desirable commodities that produce a financial return on investment.

Although the ascendancy of the processes and practices of economic valuation in higher education is ubiquitous, it has rarely been documented in a scholarly fashion. Close examination of policy reports and white papers reveals the extent to which the language of value has become reduced to financial indicators and incentives. For example, the Universities UK report "The Economic Impact of Higher Education Institutions in England" details how higher education in England "has a total revenue of £23.3 billion, employs over 262,700 staff and has over two million students" (2014, 1). The language chosen, in which scholars are 'staff' and students are framed as an asset that the country 'has' (2014, 1), is representative of this shift.[14] The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has been quick to conform to economic justifications of the value of scholarship. Their "Leading the World" report estimated that "the value of non-UK undergraduates and postgraduates attracted here to undertake arts and humanities degrees lies in the range £2.05 billion and £3.29 billion" (AHRC 2009, 11). The imprecision of cultural economics (the potential difference between two and three billion pounds) is indicative of the challenges of financial valuation of the humanities. More importantly, such attempts at economic justification draw attention to a lack of acceptable languages with which to publicly articulate the work of the humanities beyond financial description.

Flora S. Michaels describes the danger of accepting economic value as the natural order under neoliberalism in *Monoculture: How One Story Is Changing Everything*. She argues that contemporary culture has become dominated by a single mode of thinking in which "the master story is economic" (2011, 9). This logic forms a "governing pattern that [a] culture obeys" (1) and the effect of this master story is the economisation of everything.[15] Michaels' account pays particular attention to narrative and language. Today, words such as 'performance', 'speculation', and 'value' connote the financial market more readily than anything else.[16] However, it is worthwhile remembering that *King Lear* is also performance, just as

[14] The data cited in the UUK 2014 report is derived from statistics gathered in 2011–12.

[15] See also Sandel, M. (2012) especially pp. 8–11.

[16] For further thought on economic language and fiction see Marsh, N. (2007); Hitchcock, P. (2014).

Brave New World is a speculation. The word 'value' should not simply concern economic value, but also social, ethical, and moral values. Neoliberalism would have us forget that economic value is just one voice among many. Economic modes of thinking can "become so engrained as the only reasonable reality that we begin to forget our other stories, and fail to see the monoculture in its totality, never mind question it" (Michaels 2011, 9). Arguments for the value of the humanities need to address this monoculture directly and articulate the alternatives. In her keynote address at Loyola University, Chicago, Naomi Klein explicitly stated that if "we lose our narrative, we lose our story, we become disorientated" (2009). The following section explores how a sense of disorientation and a narrative of crisis presently dominate critical responses to neoliberal changes within higher education.

1.2.4 *Arguing Against Crisis in the Humanities*

The opening pages of Martha Nussbaum's *Not for Profit* describe that "we are in the midst of a crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance [...] a crisis that goes largely unnoticed like a cancer [...] a worldwide crisis in education" (2010, 1–2). Since 2008, these neoliberal pressures of "decentralization, market competition, and institutional pluralism" (Graham and Diamond 1997, 18) have created an "acute atmosphere of crisis" (Amsler 2011, 62) within the English higher education system. An urgent and defensive mentality is reflected throughout literature concerning the contemporary academy.[17] John H. Plumb presents the following options available to humanities scholars within the context of a crisis:

> either they blindly cling to their traditional attitudes, and pretend that their function is what it was, and that all will be well, so long as change is repelled, or they retreat into their own private professional world, and deny any social function to their subject. And so the humanities are at a cross-roads, at a crisis in their existence: they must either change the image that they present, adapt themselves to the needs of a society dominated by science and technology, or retreat into social triviality. (1964, 8)

[17] See Shattock, M. (2008); Eagleton, T. (2010); Vernon, J. (2010); Bailey and Freedman (2011); Docherty, T. (2011); Giroux, H. (2014).

According to Plumb, the humanities are in "crisis" in a "society dominated by science and technology" (1964, 8). However, it is important to note that this book was published fifty years ago, and total 'social triviality' is not yet the fate of such scholarship. Yet, the notion of crisis still haunts the humanities. Although the future of the humanities in the 2010s is contested, many of the current debates have precedence in the past. Plumb's vision has not yet been fulfilled, despite nearly half a century of change. Another group of texts suggests that the crisis for the humanities occurred in the mid-1990s.[18] The intention of drawing attention to these previous moments of crisis is not to dismiss nor downplay the implications of past policymaking. However, evaluating current policymaking in light of a longer historical context of uncertainty or dispute allows for a clearer understanding of the state of 'crisis' that surrounds the humanities.

In *The Humanities and the Dream of America*, Geoffrey Galt Harpham argues that "the humanities represent by their very nature a crisis [...and] the humanities must understand this condition as its strength, not its weakness" (2011, 40). Here, Harpham refers to the orientation of the humanities "toward acts of reflection and representation, their invitation to a loss of self, their investment in unconscious forces, and their confusion of intellect and imagination" (2011, 39). These are properties that resist the neoliberal trappings of singular answers, irrefutable data, and tangible results. Jonathan Culler suggests that, above and beyond these approaches, research in the humanities involves "redescription and recontextualization" which is a "metaoperation, involved in thinking about thinking" (2005, 38). Culler argues that further engagement with the idea of the "reflexive propensity" (2005, 38) of the humanities might prove to be a useful tool in defining alternative values. The task of returning, of 'redescription', echoes Fisher's definition of emancipatory politics as a means of revealing—"what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be mere contingency" (Fisher 2009, 17)—in which there is potential to reimagine and disrupt economic rationalities that have only recently been adopted as natural fact.

Helen Small provides an excellent explanation of the benefit of redescription in *The Value of the Humanities.* In consensus with Fisher, Harpham, and Culler, she maintains that

[18] See Bérubé and Nelson (1995); Ryan, A. (1999); and especially Waugh, P. (2010) which identifies how "similar debates have run at different moments of the twentieth century — the 20s and 30s, in particular, and the end of the 50s and early 60s".

> one function of scholarship in the humanities is, after all, to go over ground that generations have been over before, not only because interpretations and evaluations may change but because it is part of the scholar's responsibility to keep reinterpreting and re-evaluating that cultural memory in the context of the now. (2013, 145)

This is an important realisation for the value of the humanities, especially since policymaking often does not benefit from the possession of a long cultural memory. Nick Hillman, the former special adviser to David Willetts (then Minister of State for Universities and Science 2010–14), stated that when tuition fees were increased in 2010, there was "no institutional memory on which to rely" (2016a, 331). Elsewhere, Hillman describes that "when the policy to triple tuition fees was being drawn up in 2010, there was barely anyone around who had worked on Tony Blair's tripling of fees just a few years beforehand" (2016b). This personal reflection from a reformed civil servant offers practical insight into institutional amnesia in contemporary policymaking culture.[19] As Small suggests, it is "part of the scholar's responsibility" to uphold the importance of "cultural memory in the context of the now" (2013, 145). Nowhere is this more pertinent than in the present valuation of our own disciplines.

The reduction of education to instrumental and economic forms is objectionable to many teachers, researchers, and practitioners within the arts and humanities. Speaking for the humanities scholar, James Vernon exclaims: "economic utility is not the measure of who we are or who we want to become" (2010, my italics). This pronouncement captures the tension between the aspirations of policy, which configures higher education as a business, and the values of education and research as understood by humanities scholars. Rick Rylance best describes this conflict in *Literature and the Public Good*:

> the use of measurement data and justificatory requirements […] are ubiquitous in public life and rile humanistic opinion. When decision-makers demand 'value assurance', humanists see a category mistake. The *intrinsic* value of art, or scholarly learning, or abstract ideas, or faith beliefs, or one's inwardness with foreign languages, for example, are said to be good in themselves. They demonstrate their worth by existing, and only incidentally through worldly activity simulated by them. (2016, 14)

[19] Although no longer a civil servant, Hillman is the director of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI).

The value of the humanities has been recognised for much longer than the existence of the REF; Rens Bod's *A New History of the Humanities* (2013) observes how the humanistic tradition is centuries old. Although values have adapted within various contexts, the work of the humanities continually "seeks principles and patterns while at the same time giving us an understanding of what makes us human" (2013, 10). Economically minded policy flourishes when the long and rich history of alternative values in humanistic study becomes obscured. This book enacts a return, a remembrance, and a re-envisioning of the potential value of the humanities in order to face such narrow evaluations in the twenty-first century. Engagement with the rich history of value between the individual, the university, and the state, reveals the present monoculture to be a contingency. The remainder of this introductory chapter initiates the process of contextualising the current debates by exploring the connection between liberal and neoliberal educational policy and practices.

1.3 Part III: From Liberal to Neoliberal Education

1.3.1 Articulating the Values of a Liberal Education

In *Values in Conflict: The University, the Marketplace and the Trials of Liberal Education* (2002) Paul Axelrod describes how "definitions of liberal education can be overly general, in conflict, or steeped in nostalgia" (2002, 8). A liberal education is, at its most basic level, one of the broadest definitions of an education, since it aims to instil both general knowledge and moral values. However, the definition of a liberal education is in conflict because, as Mary Evans argues, despite it being "for everyone and of value to everyone" (2014, 22), it is closely tied to "associations to privilege and the assumption that universities are in some sense 'separate' from other forms of social inequality" (20). This is a tension between the perceived, or actual, elitism of studying high culture and universal access to education. This tension is central to the best known section of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, in which he argues society should

> do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as [culture] uses them itself, freely, — nourished, and not bound by them. (1869, 79)

The Victorian ideal of a liberal education would be democratically available to all. Ralph White emphasises how the social value of liberal education in the nineteenth century "was to be achieved by its dissemination, to a greater or lesser degree, through society, than as a specific training for philosopher kings" (1986, 63). Individual autonomy, or what Elaine Hadley describes as "the Victorian fantasy of liberal agency" (2005, 93), is recurrent in definitions of a liberal education. Amanda Anderson's *Bleak Liberalism* provides a useful list of the kinds of approaches that this liberal attitude might include: "open-mindedness, tolerance, sympathy, responsiveness, and a set of aesthetic features associated with these postures — perspectivalism, particularity, complexity, density of representation" (2016, 4). Therefore, it should be understood that claims for the value of a liberal education in the Victorian period were highly aspirational concerning the potential of self-civilising individuals. Arnold, alongside Thomas H. Huxley, John Stuart Mill, John Ruskin, and many others, wrote in favour of the value of a liberal education within a culture in which specialisation and vocational training were promoted to the lower and middle classes, against the elitism of traditional university education, and as a challenge to the selfish individualism inherent in laissez-faire industrial society.

In opposition to the values of a liberal education, with its appeal to the inward cultivation of citizenry with general rather than technical intellects, the economic liberal sought freedom from regulation and the ability to pursue capital gains in a free market. Herbert Spencer is representative of the belief in economic liberalism, which argues that individuals can better manage their own lives than the state. For example, in *The Man* Versus *the State*, Spencer observes that "officialism is stupid. Under the natural course of things each citizen tends towards his fittest function" (1884, 138) and in contrast "the direct employment by society of individuals, private companies, and spontaneously-formed institutions, is good in virtue of its simplicity" (137). Many of the beneficial examples of liberalism cited in *The Man* Versus *the State* relate to commercial activity. Spencer conceptualises the idea of a public good in relation to an individual's freedom, in the sense that a "citizen may act unchecked" (1884, 5). An individual acting in their own interest, Spencer argued, was the best thing for society as a whole. This enactment of social Darwinism saw state interference as an obstacle to the innate instincts of individual character. Gagnier observes in *Individualism, Decadence and Globalization* how Spencer believed that "with character the state becomes unnecessary" (2010, 32). The successful cultivation of personal qualities such as effort, thrift, duty,

and personal responsibility would mean that "the individual would be self-, not State-regulated" (Gagnier 2010, 32). The extent to which these ambitions are reinforced within the neoliberal university system is worthy of consideration, especially in the context of the deregulated market of student tuition. Further analysis of the relationship between the individual and the market, without state intervention, is explored in Chap. 2 (Sect. 2.3).

However, nineteenth-century social liberal theory was more hesitant to dismiss the role of the state entirely. Arnold identifies that "a State is in reality made up of the individuals who compose it, and that every individual is the best judge of his own interests" (1869, 83). John Stuart Mill concurs: "the worth of the state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it" (1859, 219). Mill's use of the word 'worth' is non-economic; his use encompasses a wider notion of social value, which is expressed by a liberal education. The purpose of the state for Mill and Arnold is to protect against a kind of selfish-individualism and encourage the cultivation of people who would collectively create an equal and civil society. This is built upon values of tolerance and openness: what John Ruskin called "affections as one man *owes* to another" (1860, 169) and George Eliot termed "the extension of our sympathies" (1856, 144).

In "The Anatomy of a Victorian Debate: An Essay in the History of Liberal Education" Ralph White identifies five seminal figures in the debates concerning liberal education between 1850 and 1870: John Henry Newman, John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, Thomas Henry Huxley, and Matthew Arnold. Although each has much to contribute to the debate, and are cited throughout this book, I concur with White that Arnold's account of liberal education is the "most synthetic" (1986, 58). Arnold's position as an individual within the education sector, both as the son of the eminent headmaster of Rugby school and his own career as a school inspector, is significant in his success in capturing the distinctive properties of a liberal education. Despite being remembered for the lofty ideals of "sweetness and light" (1869, 79) much of Arnold's writing, elsewhere and in *Culture and Anarchy* itself, addresses practical implications such as administrative reform (74), class prejudices (103), and urban overpopulation (176). White argues that in its social importance Arnold's "surpassed Mill's and Huxley's [writings] in its urgent contemporaneity" (1986, 58). At Arnold's funeral, Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College Oxford, declared that "he was the most sensible man of genius I have ever known" (qtd. in Collini 2008, 24). Arnold's writing as a social critic provides

arguments that are rooted in the classical themes of a liberal education while being actively engaged in the politics of his time. Fred Clarke recognises how "Arnold was the creator in this country of what may be called, as a study, the 'politics' of education" (qtd. in Connell 1950, ix). Therefore, the application of Arnold's ideas on a liberal education will be incorporated throughout this book, since his writings offer a means through which to politicise a set of policies that seek to appear neutral.

An Arnoldian perspective of a liberal education rejects the idea that individuals should do what they like and challenges Spencer's preference for laissez-faire economic value as a suitable model for governance. Although a liberal education does not configure value in economic terms, it shares an aspiration towards an agency of individuals that economic liberalism also champions. In *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*, Lauren Goodlad suggests that Victorian liberalism "persistently asserted itself as antipathy toward statist interference — a discourse that anticipated the ardent neoliberalism […] of our own day" (2003, viii). There is a somewhat uneasy interconnection between the recognition of the ability for self-autonomous moral improvement and the emergence of a conception of the individual as a discrete economic agent in a market. Despite the tensions between liberal economics and a liberal education, one similarity is clear: they both champion the cultivation of the individual over the power of the governing body of the state.

Goodlad describes this irregularity as being indicative of a "dueling worldview" (2003, 22) that pervades much critical thinking at the time. This contradiction is also discussed in David Wayne Thomas' *Cultivating Victorians*, which explores the "many-sidedness" (2004, 26) of Victorian liberalism. Thomas notes how the liberalism of Mill and Arnold in particular, does not offer an "especially coherent or predictable stance" (2004, 39). However, he suggests that this "so-called incoherence of many-sidedness in these instances might more charitably be taken as a reflection of […] the inherent precariousness of the self-conception underlying liberal agency" (2004, 39). The experience of living in a time of complex liberalisms produces precarious results. John Frow connects these two contradictory definitions of 'liberalism' through the image of a contract: "at once a commercial instrument and an instrument for the imaginary institution of the social" (1999, 426). These are oppositional images: as a legal and commercial instrument a contract secures private ownership, as an imaginary institution of the social a contract is a collective and civic

responsibility. Frow's imagery captures the contradiction between these two diverse liberalisms that co-existed in the mid-nineteenth century.

A liberal education is further distinguished from the liberal economic model in its pursuit of immaterial instead of material value. Goodlad argues that "the high-minded cooperation sought by John Stuart Mill, [...] Harriet Martineau's vision of a society fuelled by individual self-improvement, [... and] Matthew Arnold's conviction in the enlightening potential of a cultured elite" all exhibit a common adherence to "an anti-materialist and moral worldview" (2004, 22). When an individual is considered as a consumer they are identified as a singular entity. Expressions of individuality in descriptions of a liberal education are in association with, and connection to, other people. For example, Arnold's description in *Culture and Anarchy* argues that "perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection" (1869, 62). A community is built up, not by the state, but by a collection of liberally educated (and thus liberated) individuals. The conclusion of John Ruskin's speech 'Traffic' presented at the Town Hall in Bradford, best captures the spirit of this particular kind of collective individualism that liberal educators pursued:

> sanctifying wealth into 'commonwealth,' all your art, your literature, your daily labours, your domestic affection, and citizen's duty, will join and increase into one magnificent harmony. You will know then how to build, well enough; you will build with stone well, but with flesh better; temples not made with hands, but riveted of hearts; and that kind of marble, crimson-veined, is indeed eternal. (1864, 32)

This is a powerful image for two reasons. First, because it captures the spirit of individual intellectual wealth contributing to wider social and public goods, a commonwealth; and second, because it describes the immaterialism of developing a fulfilled life in concert with others. For Ruskin, the greatest success is the cultivation and culmination of human flesh, and agency, into something greater than the sum of its parts.

Such anti-materialistic attitudes make a liberal education incompatible with the material interests of economic liberalism. This parallels the value problem experienced in the economic-education debate in England today (albeit under the organisation of neoliberal ideologies as opposed to

liberal ones): the non-instrumental and socio-ethical dimensions of the humanities are incompatible with the "business ontology" (Fisher 2009, 17) of higher education policy. The difference is that in the mid-nineteenth century liberal education and liberal economics were both held in esteem and, therefore, simultaneously shaped policymaking. In our present culture, expressions of the value of non-instrumental education in the Victorian period are continually inspiring because of their confident oration. Such debates concerning the economy and education during the Victorian period were at their height between 1850 and 1880. The decades of extensive reform produced some of the most passionate and well-defined defences of the value of a liberal education. Returning to this historical context re-animates critiques that were created in a time when Fisher's titular question, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* had yet to become a necessary enquiry. The plurality of nineteenth-century liberalisms is unlike the monoculture of neoliberalism. Co-existent alternatives and opinions sparked open debate; Amanda Anderson recognises a general trend that "liberalism is prompted by enduring challenges, often born of crisis, that exert their pressure on the internal dynamics of liberal thought" (2016, 2). The following section explores the potential for bringing the contradictions and confidence of liberalism into closer contact with the narrative of neoliberalism.

1.3.2 Speaking of Liberal Values in the Neoliberal University

The clearest and most convincing iterations of the value of a liberal education are found in our Victorian past. Therefore, returning to this rich site of discussion can provide useful provocations for the present. Dinah Birch observes that we cannot seek to directly replicate the work of the Victorians, because "their understanding of politics, race, class, and gender is not ours" (2008, 44). However, it is beneficial to return to their debates and reconsider the challenges that they pose in the context of our dominant neoliberal paradigm, since they remind us that "all economies, however defined, are social in their origins and in their consequences, and bind us together in a reciprocal process that can still construct and confirm our shared understanding of value" (2008, 46). The above discussion of liberal education demonstrates that a reconsideration of the past not only informs us about history but can also come to alter our perceptions about the present. An extensive body of scholarship has explored the

interrelations between the Victorian period and policymaking today. Dinah Birch, Helen Small, and Stefan Collini are three eminent examples. They each have responded to the present state of education in England by drawing upon Victorian literature and cultural ideas. Birch's handling of the dynamic history of reform in nineteenth-century schools in *Our Victorian Education* reminds us how "we need not feel paralysed, helplessly bound to continue in our present direction" (2008, 144). Collini's *What are Universities For?* provides a polemical call to arms to "revitalize ways of understanding the nature and importance that are in danger of being lost sight of in the present" (2012, 19). Small's precise taxonomical approach to rhetoric and argument in *The Value of the Humanities* proves an invaluable weapon for any would-be tactician in the war of value. She identifies how "it is vital to preserve a core description of the distinctiveness of humanistic interpretation" (2013, 4), a theory which is also pursued throughout this study. In this book, I offer articulations of the value of the humanities which are presented as diverse historically and culturally rich narratives as opposed to lists of bullet-points or budget sheets.

Examination of the social origins and consequences of the neoliberal economy is productive since it disturbs the current economic valuation of education. What qualities of a liberal education persist in the contemporary academy? How has neoliberalism changed "our shared understanding of value" (Birch 2008, 46)? In order to answer these questions, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which a liberal education became 'liberalised' over the past 150 years, in the sense that it is open to a wider demographic of students. In 2015–16, 49% of young people (under the age of thirty) had attended university in England, a higher percentage than at any other point in history, despite the increasing financial burdens on the individual students.[20] The number of universities in England has grown from 2 in 1826 to 110 in 2018.[21] The 1960s saw a prominent leap, whereby the number of universities rose from twenty-two (in 1959) to forty-five (in 1969) as a result of the recognition of plate-glass universities by the University Grants Committee in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the publication of the *Robbins Report* in 1963.[22] Widening access to free

[20] Source: Department for Education. (2017) "Participation Rates In Higher Education: Academic Years 2006/2007–2015/2016".

[21] Note that Scotland had five universities in 1826 and fifteen in 2018.

[22] The year 1992 saw a second surge in expansion with the Further and Higher Education Act transforming polytechnic colleges into universities able to award their own degrees. The number of universities rose from forty-six in 1990 to eighty-eight in 1994.

education was the ambition of the welfare state, which blossomed out of late-Victorian liberalism and persisted until the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s. Between 1962 to the early 1990s, education was free for individuals and was supported by a state maintenance grant. The institution of tuition fees under Tony Blair's administration in 1998 marked the start of a shift from state investment in higher education to a system of individual fiscal responsibility for students.

The year 2010 saw the free market of higher education being fully realised as the state support for the arts and humanities undergraduate courses was removed entirely. The policy implemented by the *Browne Report* fits into a longer history of neoliberalism but represents a sea change in the valuation of higher education. The relationship between the individual and the state was significantly altered since students were now customers at private universities, rather than citizens benefiting from education as part of a liberal democracy. However, it is worthwhile to consider that whilst policy may reconfigure students as consumers, the actual people opting to attend universities represent a range of individual people with alternative interests and motivations. Both Spencer's economic liberalism and Arnold's liberal education recognised the potential power of the individual in relation to the state. An autonomous dimension, inherent in definitions of a liberal education, demonstrated above, is also found in the language used to describe and define the value of higher education. Universities promise students an abundance of possibilities: "diverse study choices" (University of Brighton); "the largest ranges of subjects of any university in the UK" (University of Kent); "a wide array of related disciplines, offering outstanding flexibility and choice" (University of Exeter).[23] The above definitions are taken from the respective college homepages for the humanities and are designed to appeal to the student-as-consumer through a proliferation of personal choice. Further examination of the marketing language of the humanities reveals that this supermarket of values operates in a more nuanced way than simple economic calculation.[24] For example, the University of Chester's

[23] Sources: University of Brighton "Course in Brief"; University of Kent "Humanities at Kent"; University of Exeter "College of Humanities".

[24] A brief note of caution against unbridled optimism: most institutional definitions of the humanities in the UK focus on the strength of the departments in league tables and in the REF, citing statistics and numerical representations of status.

response to "Why Study the Humanities" is not a typical neoliberal defence. On a page aimed at prospective students, the college promotes the benefits of uncertainty and complexity:

> there is no final answer in scholarly inquiry in the Humanities [...] there is no quick fix, no easy solution, no off-the-shelf final answer. This means the harder you work, reading around your subject and developing your understanding, the greater your reward. (University of Chester)

The University of Chester Humanities Department places a strong emphasis on continuing development and the lack of a 'final answer'. Instead, the individual student of the humanities is offered the potential of unending self-development. Although the promise of a 'reward' hints at economic or cultural return on their financial investment, the phrasing remains distinctly non-specific.

Such articulations of the humanities suggest that the consumers, as well as the providers, are not solely interested in the financial return of education.[25] The humanities offer prospective students an opportunity to pursue alternative values. The tagline for the Humanities BA at the University of Brighton is "if you want to change the world you live in, while challenging yourself, then this is the degree for you" (University of Brighton), the phrasing of which revives the kind of liberal self-fashioning that the Victorians celebrated.[26] Cynically, it is clear that universities are targeting a student desire to be recognised as an individual. However, as Fisher observes: "the tiniest event can tear a hole in the grey curtain of reaction which has marked the horizons of possibility under capitalist realism" (2009, 81). I argue that any persistent conception of self-agency is promising. The relationship between liberal education and neoliberal education might appear to be linear when reading government white papers. However, in reconsidering the narrative from the perspective of individuals, both of students and scholars, an alternative set of values can be understood and articulated. The specific ways in which the following four chapters establish these unorthodox models of value are discussed in the outline that follows below.

[25] Further discussion of the multi-faceted values of students is raised in Chap. 2 (Sect. 2.3).

[26] Elaine Hadley provides a thoughtful critique of this conception of applying this particularly heroic form of cognitive liberalism to twenty-first-century phenomena in "On a Darkling Plain: Victorian Liberalism and the Fantasy of Agency" (2005).

1.4 Part IV: Chapter Synopses

This introductory chapter has emphasised how the relationship between liberalism and neoliberalism is composed of a series of inheritances, correspondences, and echoes. The relationship between liberal and neoliberal education will be explored in each chapter of this book, and the following four chapters each explore a particular relationship that generates value. The overarching research question: "what is the value of the humanities within the contemporary university in England?" is answered in four different fora. I discuss interventions and interpretations of policy in Chap. 2, the relationship between the humanities and the sciences in Chap. 3, the productive capacities of fictional representations of humanities scholarship in Chap. 4, and correspondences in narratives of accountability within the public cultural sector in Chap. 5. Further detail of the content and argument of each chapter follows.

1.4.1 How Can Critically Reading Policy Help Scholars Understand a Culture of Economism?

Chapter 2 offers a close reading of two policy documents that are representative of a particular kind of economisation within educational policy. A history of Payment by Results is developed through reinterpretation of *The Revised Code of Minutes and Regulations of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education* of 1862 (known as *Lowe's Code*) and *The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance* (known as the *Browne Report*), 12 October 2010. These two examples of educational policy build a tangible foundation from which the subsequent discussion of value extrapolates. A. J. Marcham counsels: "any analysis of the motives of policy is a hazardous business, and in order to be convincing, it should rest upon the particular ideological, institutional and social context of that policy" (1979, 131). Therefore, explaining how educational policy was economised between 1858 and 1888, exposes a formerly missing history of how economism operates within the very practice of government. Following on from this, critical interpretation of the *Browne Report* (2010) reveals its interest in fulfilling a national skills deficit as opposed to the cultivating well-rounded citizens. This chapter also observes how the prioritisation of individualism in higher education raises the potential for liberal and neoliberal futures to be reinstated in the direct relationship between the university and individual students.

1.4.2 How Does Debate Between the Humanities and the Sciences Create Meaning?

Chapter 3 seeks to understand the relationship between the sciences and the humanities through histories of cross-disciplinary debate. Returning to the infamous exchange between C. P. Snow and F. R. Leavis offers the opportunity to pay particular attention to the rhetorical expression of value in historical debates between the sciences and the humanities. Understanding the power of recurring modes of rhetoric in public debate is central to this chapter since the division between scientific rationalism and cultural values has deep historical roots. A reconsideration of the two cultures debate opens up the productive potential of agonism in articulations of value. Re-examining a Victorian iteration of the long-held debate between Matthew Arnold and Thomas H. Huxley presents a more amicable consideration of disciplinary knowledge boundaries. In their shared pursuit of a liberal education, the value of the humanities and the sciences is seen to be less oppositional than present policy might regard. Given the present prioritisation of STEM subjects as being nationally useful, this chapter offers an intervention in the myopic language of educational policy. Returning to these famous interdisciplinary exchanges emphasises the plurality of voices and values within higher education.

1.4.3 How Can Fiction Act as a Reflective Tool for Articulating Value?

Chapter 4 builds on the argument regarding the importance of rhetoric and expression established in Chap. 3, while turning to fictional representation. The chapter offers an exploration of the ethical values that academic novels can articulate in describing the work of the humanities. Here, fiction is deployed as an alternative language to fiscal policy. Victorian examples, including *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1859), *Middlemarch* (1871–2), and *Jude the Obscure* (1894–5), provide a historical framework for a set of three investigations into literary representations of the value of the humanities. The chapter develops three themes: first, representations of students' education in the humanities; second, the experience of humanities scholarship; and finally, the relationships between humanities scholars and economic value in fiction. In the literary examples presented, the value of the humanities is animated in a particularly *human* way. This chapter explores the consequences of humanities scholars using skills they already

have at their disposal—as trained experts in the art of analysis, interpretation and expression—to develop more productive and characteristic statements on the value of their disciplines. This chapter focuses on literary work that does not write *against* economic valuation culture, but *for* something beyond it. In the face of accountability indices and impact agendas, scholars can no longer rely on arguments of intrinsic value to justify the value of the humanities. However, this chapter posits that the language of economics is found to be equally ill-equipped to articulate the value of our disciplines. The three literary investigations offer up challenges the myopic narrative of economic value and create imaginative spaces in which to consider the strengths and limitations of a liberal education in the twenty-first century.

1.4.4 How Are the Academic Humanities Connected to Other Cultural Institutions?

Chapter 5 approaches the value of the humanities in the context of public accountability. As Chap. 2 specifically highlights the seminal changes to undergraduate teaching in the *Browne Report*, this chapter explores the implications of instrumentality within a restructuring of research assessment. This final chapter represents the most contemporary moment in this book with its analysis of the 2014 REF and the 'impact' agenda. In order to do so, the chapter draws a parallel with the history of museum management and accountability within the public cultural sector. There has been much research into the impacts of policy changes within the museum sector, however, this research has not been analysed outside of its original context. I argue that drawing such a parallel provides a clear body of evidence that lies outside the language of policy and humanistic self-defence. This rich narrative counteracts the deficit of evidence concerning the REF impact criterion. Recognition of similar debates concerning the measurement of impact within the public museum provides valuable testimonies to consider in the near future for the academic humanities. Following this specific history of cultural assessment mechanisms in the UK, I conclude that neither conforming to a purely economic approach nor refusing to be accountable will serve the humanities. Although a wealth of social science research explores the effects of valuation methods and assessment culture, there is a lack of humanities research within this vital field of debate. This chapter raises awareness of the urgent need for humanities scholars to engage in these emerging debates concerning the future of research assessment in England.

Overall, this book offers a critical examination and articulation of the value of the work of humanities in the context of these four various relationships, both within and outside the university. In *What Are Universities For?*, Collini argues that "the humanities embody an alternative set of values in their very rationale" (2012, 199), which act in opposition to some of the economic demands of contemporary policymaking. In speaking up for these alternative values *through* their rationale, rather than the rationality of the market, humanities scholars can more effectively intervene in debates concerning definitions of value. Argumentation that solely relies on the terms of debate provided by economic white papers and policy documents represents a state of higher education that does not articulate the *lived* experience of humanities scholarship. The cultivation of an alternative set of values to the monoculture of economic valuation in higher education policy is the essential motivation throughout this work.

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