

An edited transcript of the Round Table/General Discussion involving the panel of speakers at the Colloquium and members of the audience

Susan Manning: I'd like to begin by asking members of the audience to give preliminary responses from their own perspectives. I call first on Richard Holloway, the current Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council.

Richard Holloway: I found it a helpful and stimulating afternoon, but at the beginning, and then again towards the end, I became very aware of a paradox. We were warned by Professor Langford to resist the instrumentalisation of the arts and it seemed to me that, rather defensively, that's what a lot of the arts community is in the process of doing. I think I detected that in the early presentations this afternoon: that we are useful, that we're good for the tourist trade - all of that was a justification of the arts that will appeal to the dominant market ideology that I think controls the cosmos at the moment. I would like to challenge the arts community, and especially the academic part of it, because working artists have to appease and placate the powers that be, since they get money from government nowadays because the old forms of patronage are over. I hope that the Academy and the various Institutes represented here today would do a bit more to challenge the ascendant discourse, rather than to appease it, rather than trying to justify and explain themselves within that particular understanding. I think the dominance of a purely market approach to everything, so that you measure everything by purely market values, is killing the globe: it's a kind of Moloch that eats its children. If the arts community, which is traditionally the community that challenges existing idols, conceptual or otherwise, is giving in to this, then we are utterly lost. So I hope the Academy would do a bit more challenging of the very discourse that's so dominant in society today.

I'd like, however, to reverse my attitude now, and to say something in response to what Magnus Linklater said at the end. One of the things that we do know is that the arts do have a profoundly transformative instrumental value: they do actually change lives. The role of the instrumentality approach is in precisely transforming the lives of the poor – culturally poor and economically poor – and I think that that's one way we can get decent alliances with politicians who may not understand the intrinsic value of the arts, but may want to change for the better the life of society. We all know that the arts can transform lives – I'm just back from Venezuela, where Abreu, thirty years ago, decided to change the lives of three out of four poor children in Venezuela by exploiting the European classical music repertoire. He changed their lives, but Simon Rattle says he's also produced the best classical musicians in the world today. So there can be a virtuous circle here, there can be an appropriate instrumentality, and I think the point I want to make here is that I wish the academy would challenge the ascendant idol of the market more, because I think it might end up not only squashing art, but everything else on the planet.

Iain Macwhirter: I'm a journalist, I work for the BBC but don't speak on behalf of them, or the Herald or the Sunday Herald. As far as politicians are concerned, they're probably the politicians we deserve. They're more like journalists than they are academics, and they're not artists – they wouldn't pretend to be – they feel very exposed and vulnerable in intellectual communities, particularly the arts community. This is partly because they end up having to adjudicate on things like 'What is excellence in art?' and they're not equipped to do that. I'm not even sure we should be asking them: I don't think that's a role for politicians. In fact, I find it a horrific thought that we expect our politicians to be artists, or to have that kind of artistic sensibility. They would tend to take the title of this colloquium pretty literally: they see the arts and the humanities as a 'wealth of ideas' as part of the 'wealth of nations' in a very concrete sense, and will always do that. They'll tend to regard the arts in terms of strategies of urban regeneration, as they've been saying in Glasgow – the arts as social improvement, an adjunct to tourism, and also in a more diffuse sense as

part of the branding of Scottish culture abroad. These are very unpleasant and crude concepts, but they needn't necessarily be utterly philistine. They're philistine in themselves, because they have no artistic content and they don't address any kind of artistic discourse. But that doesn't mean that politicians are wrong to look at the arts, broadly speaking, in those terms, because they are the managers of the nation's finances and they have to generate the wealth to provide any cultural infrastructure that there is. So they would tend to look at things like the Angel of the North - a good example of public art - in that way. But if they are going to look at the arts as an aspect of branding, then there is a way in there, in the sense that for that branding to be viable and good, the art has to be good. There has to be an excellence spilled into that, and that seems to be a way to get round the instrumentality of politicians' attitude to art. If they're serious about instrumentality, about the way in which they look at art as achieving other purposes, then they have to ensure that the resources and infrastructure are there to provide that quality and that branding.

Paul Langford: I think what Richard Holloway said is very fair, and the point about instrumentalism is very significant, but it's quite a complicated subject. I have no trouble with there being outcomes of arts and humanities which are valuable, but I've got two qualifications. The first is, those outcomes may well not be matters of economic or financial benefit, they may well be much broader, which would then bring in a lot of what Richard wants. But, even more important, I'm really worried about the doctrine that the outcome should determine the input, and that's really what government does want to do quite a lot of the time. It assumes that if there are outcomes that it likes, then it wants more outcomes like that. But what drives creative activity and intellectual enquiry is not the thought of the specific outcome that might result, but the desire to search for truth, creativity or whatever it might be – ultimately a fascination with one's discipline, one's activity and so on, and that's the terrain that we have to protect at all costs. What we're doing may well be valued by others, may well be subsidised by others, but the freedom of enquiry is absolutely essential to doing it at all, let alone doing it really well.

Fiona Watson: I was going to say something similar. It seems to me that, in relation to universities or operas, our society has said 'We want to know what the value for money is'. I'm afraid universities are very much subject to those pressures: every day there's something new along that line. So it seems to me at the moment we've lost the battle. What society would say to us is, 'Why should you be exempt from justifying why you have public money?' and I think that is a very valid point. I absolutely agree that maybe what we need to challenge is the definition of value for money: opening the whole thing, including eclecticism, saying that there is a value in eclecticism, and a whole range of things, rather than the much more narrow definitions that have been prevailing at the moment.

Onora O'Neill: I wanted to come in on this very point, because I've been thinking a lot about the first comment this afternoon, the question of whether there is a defensive tone to the report. I think, seen in a certain perspective, there is a defensive tone, and it has a lot to do with the question of what the real situation of the academy is now. That, I think, is something that is not so apparent among people who imagine that we're sitting there, nicely publicly funded, and therefore why can't we, with the protection of academic freedom and the rest of it, be extremely bold? I think what has happened over some years – it's well documented – is that we're not merely (and appropriately) regulated for our use of public money, but we are hyper-regulated (I chose that from Michael Moran's excellent study of what has happened to all the institutions in the UK, except possibly the church). We're also hyper-incentivised: the cost of not doing what our masters want is very, very high indeed. I suppose most of us see it reflected in the casualisation of the employment of a huge proportion of our colleagues these days, perhaps something that again is not so visible beyond the academy. Now what is going on fundamentally, I think politically, in this discussion that we are having about establishing the value of the arts, the fine arts, the humanities, and the social sciences,

is, as it were, an attempt to steal the other side's clothing. Don't see it as quite as pusillanimous as perhaps some are depicting it – we are not trying to say 'yes, us too, we contribute to the knowledge economy and the bottom line' - we think it's rather nice that we win that argument, because when people throw it at us, we've got it - but that's not what it's about. What it's about, and what the title of this report is about, is insisting that the proper interpretation of the terms 'wealth' and 'value' should be broader than the bottom line interpretation. Now, we may not win this battle. I was very struck that the Better Regulation Task Force, who broadly are on the side of this sort of thing, said it is very peculiar that when the university sector is such a very low risk sector, it is being subjected to such extraordinary levels of regulation and accountability - not just the absolutely acceptable accountability for the use of public funds. What we really need in this community is, I suppose, the support of people in the arts. We're not being pusillanimous, we're trying to steal the other side's rhetoric and take it back to its original purpose. Thank you Adam Smith.

David Breeze: This comes back to value, narrowing of horizons, and the role of television in this. It seems to me that television narrows horizons in a way that we should be worried about. As an archaeologist I watch Time Team, as I'm sure many of you do, and it gives the impression that you can discover all you need to know about an archaeological site in three days. Any archaeologist knows that this is absolute nonsense, and every person in the audience who does research knows that television treats their own subject in precisely the same way. My question is, should we be worried about this, should we be worried about the trivialisation of research on television, which may well lead the public eventually to say 'Why do you want so many big bucks to do this research programme? We've seen it on television and it only takes you three days to do it'?

Iain Macwhirter: I'm not going to answer for the editorial policy of science programmes, but I think the BBC is incredibly patronising in its science, in its attitude towards the ability of the general public to understand scientific concepts. It reduces them to a kind of 'Multi-coloured Swap Shop' approach, which I don't think really helps or furthers any sort of scientific understanding.

If you're going to talk about the BBC, what concerns me more is the dramatic changes taking place in broadcasting in the future, as the channels dissolve into this white noise of broadband where you're not going to have BBC4, Radio 3, or these kinds of programmes in any meaningful sense in future – you're going to be downloading things off versions of iTunes. The BBC is already planning for this future and realises it is coming quickly, the era of broadcasting is over, so no longer will you have scientific or cultural arbiters in the BBC saying 'this is quality programming, this is good art, and we're going to put it out to people whether they like it or not'. They're going to be much more driven by this market imperative that you were talking about a moment ago, and the trouble is nobody knows what to do about this: it's a monster, it's taking over our culture very fast. The BBC is still the dominant sheet-anchor of broadcasting, and what quality exists in British broadcasting is largely down to the BBC. Certainly that's what a lot of people in the commercial sector believe: that the BBC keeps them honest. It's going to be very difficult for the BBC to perform this role in the future. That's one of the reasons the BBC is in such a weak position with the current licence fee negotiations. This is extremely dangerous: from my point of view as a political journalist I'm very worried about this, not just because of the erosion of cultural standards which will come with this morphing into broadband, but what is going to happen as the BBC remains the dominant instrument in political broadcasting, in current affairs, in news. The newspapers are getting worried that more people read the BBC on the internet than read newspapers, and they're as bereft of ideas about how to deal with the internet as are the broadcasters, so it could be that the BBC remains in a tremendously important and influential position as far as not just broadcasting is concerned, but the new media. We're only one year away from both the Director General of the BBC and the Chairman of the Board of Governors being

sacked by the government for telling the truth about what was happening in Iraq, and that seems tremendously worrying.

Magnus Linklater: I must say that's a profoundly pessimistic view. I remember in this very city, maybe fifteen years ago, listening to Rupert Murdoch deliver the James MacTaggart lecture, in which he announced the imminent demise of the BBC, which would be threatened by the kind of nightmare vision that Iain's now unfolding, i.e. a plethora of satellite channels which would deliver specialised things, so that we would no longer have James Boyle's eclecticism, you'd have science programmes, music programmes, culture programmes hived off, they would have tiny audiences, the BBC would disappear down a black hole. It hasn't happened – there have been lots of complaints made about the BBC, but it hasn't happened – and I bet it's not going to disappear because of iPods either. No more do I think – and this is a much bolder assertion – that newspapers, which are certainly facing a huge crisis in terms of competition from the internet, mainly on the advertising side but also on the circulation side, will disappear. I still would argue that newspapers will survive so long as they do the job of explaining things to people and still retain their loyalty and have - dare I say it? - trust between them and their readers. I think the readers of the future, possibly the audiences of the future, are going to need those kinds of media almost because of the plethora of information from elsewhere.

Hector MacQueen: At the moment I'm trying to put the finishing touches to a book on copyright intended for students. One of the difficulties one has in doing that is that, as one encounters every day, in my teaching place across the quad here, there are a lot of things that students don't know. I suppose that's why they're students and why someone like me is a perpetual student, there's quite a lot I'm clear I don't know. But one of the things I do to eliminate my ignorance is to go on the internet and use Google, and I've discovered that for virtually anything which turns up in this infinite wonderful multitudinous range of copyright cases which wouldn't necessarily be general knowledge, there will be a website or quite possibly a selection of websites to deal with the problem. The particular example that comes to mind is a case a few years ago about the copyright in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a very interesting question, with lots of problems, so I've discussed it at length. It occurred to me that quite possibly very few of the students who will read this book would know anything about James Joyce: they probably wouldn't have read, or even tried to read, *Ulysses*. Hence there was some need to explain who James Joyce was, but I wasn't going to explain at length in my text, so I googled 'James Joyce' and I stopped collecting James Joyce websites at twenty. It's extremely easy to find out about James Joyce and also to find out what the text of *Ulysses* is: it's all over the internet, with or without the licence of the James Joyce estate. And the same applies across a whole range of cultural figures. So it seems to me that the internet is far from a monster, but is a glorious and wonderful opportunity. The only question is, how to use it? Perhaps we shouldn't even be thinking about that in a broad sense, but encouraging people to think about how to use it as a way to take the culture – to use that phrase at the moment as a collective noun for what we're discussing – forward.

Judith Henderson: The things that I've been thinking about in the course of the day link to some of the work that the Scottish Funding Council is doing. As you may be aware, knowledge transfer is the current 'new black' in terms of government thinking, and at the Council we have established a Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Group, because innovation is the other new black (you may know that the Department of Science and Technology is now the Department of Science and Innovation). One of the sub-groups of our Knowledge Transfer group is called 'Cultural Engagement', and as we speak there are people from Universities Scotland trying to develop some cultural engagement metrics, which does suggest counting, and brings us back to the point that Janet Ritterman made, that we need to have impact studies that go beyond counting. That links into the things a number of people have talked about – value, and finding new definitions of value. One of those definitions would be public value, it seems to me, and the internet demonstrates what

people value because it demonstrates what they're interested in. You can even look up dating websites for pigeon fanciers: there are all kinds of small subcultures flourishing there. It seems to me that those definitions of value can help feed into this debate. It's important that we come up with different definitions of value, that are not just around money, because everyone here knows how many different kinds of value there are - personal, spiritual, social, and moral value - and again, that links back into the idea of language and the need to find a language with which to convey those ideas of value. I hope that I've convinced at least some of you that the Funding Council is at least thinking, and engaging with these ideas and with the arts and humanities as a whole.

Vicki Bruce: I wondered if I might chip in on that value point with an anecdote. I absolutely agree with everything Onora O'Neill was saying: that we live in a world where we do have to fight for the money to do the things we do under the banner of freedom. But as soon as we're in these areas of culture and art, we're in areas where definitions of value are actually rather personal ones. I'm really worried about the notion that one can put metrics on some of these things at all, and I'll illustrate that with an anecdote. I'm a Geordie, and I was showing a Canadian visitor around the Baltic, which is the big new gallery in Gateshead built out of an old flour mill, next door to the Sage, all part of the fantastic regeneration of the Newcastle Gateshead waterfront, and it's wonderful. I also think the Angel of the North is wonderful, and one of the reasons is because of what it sits on top of - if you're not a Geordie and you don't know that particular area, you don't know what an awful, poverty-stricken environment the Angel of the North sits upon, triumphantly demonstrating a whole set of things and bringing into that landscape people who wouldn't normally go there. I think it's a wonderful thing. So here I am in the Baltic, waxing lyrical to this visitor about the Angel of the North, and somebody in the lift says 'waste of money', and we get into a debate about the waste of money of the Angel of the North with locals whose rates have gone into it, who are themselves spending the afternoon in the Baltic - that's the thing I think is interesting. I have no idea what it cost to regenerate the Baltic and to run it, but I bet it makes the Angel of the North look like absolute peanuts. So I think the whole notion of value in this area is a really tricky one, and I would urge the Funding Council to tread very carefully.

Sir Gerald Elliot: I would like to come back to a more specific point which is about the development and appreciation of arts in Britain and particularly in Scotland. James Boyle impressed me by deploring the lack of selectivity or eclecticism about audiences and people who patronise and, we hope, are educated and uplifted by their attendance at arts events. He was giving as an example the occasion at the Usher Hall of a programme of American music which was practically unattended. I would like to hear from him what he thinks either we or Arts Councils or government could do about this to improve things.

James Boyle: I think our educational system is there to be used not as an instrument of social engineering but as an instrument of pleasure for youngsters. I can't think of anything better or more productive than educating youngsters through cultural means. It seems to me that in Scotland the pre-school system is one of the outstanding successes in education, and it's there to be developed further, as is primary education. I think the natural partner in that is the university sector in bringing educators to that particular trough to drink. The fear of the arts is one of the first things to be overcome.

I'd like to add a separate point about the notion of choice and the future of the media. One of the great fashionable words of the 1980s was 'choice'. In fact, any statistician worth her or his salt will tell you that people do not choose, and that's one of the great factors about the media. The more we digitise and move away from terrestrial broadcasting, the more we're going to see, not the end of the BBC, but a polarised system, where those who are educated to it and have a taste for it will take

services like the rich services of the BBC, and others will simply be shuffled off onto endless football, endless pop and endless cartoons. It's easily demonstrable that proliferation does not equal the encouragement of choices.

Hector MacQueen: Just a very swift observation in connection with the science centres, like Our Dynamic Earth, the Glasgow Science Centre, and so on. A lot of what's just been said reminded me of the discussion I've heard there. It appears under the banner of public engagement with science, at least in the Scottish context, and I think there is a wider context as well. The scientists blame the media for public disengagement with science. They cite examples like genetically modified food, BSE and that sort of thing as instances of the problems that are caused by the media's pursuit of 'good stories' which are sometimes unhelpful.

John Haldane: Could I go back to the framework or structural issue with which we began this smorgasbord of discussions, because it seems to me this is one area in which real progress has been achieved. Those who had the benefit of studying an Arts degree in a Scottish university up to a certain period ought to have been reminded of something that would have been one of the set texts, the first chapter of Plato's *Republic*, in which the discussion about instrumental versus intrinsic value is absolutely central. The point there is that this is a false opposition. That is to say, if you take a set of areas in which you might be interested, for example health or family life (or justice, which is the subject of the first book of the *Republic*), and ask the question 'do we value these things as instruments or do we value them as ends in themselves?', then what Plato teaches us and what would be held constant all the way through that philosophical tradition is that the answer is both. That is to say that health is valued as an instrument, because if you're healthy there are things you can do which otherwise you couldn't do, but it's also valued as an end in itself. Family life is valued as an instrument because it's a form of social co-operation, but also as an end in itself, because people are often fulfilled in a family in a way that they aren't solitarily. When it comes to justice – do we value it as an instrument of social arbitration and control or do we value it in its own right? – the answer again is both: we have the legal system as an instrument, but we also revere justice as an end in its own right. It seems that the theoretical question about intrinsic versus extrinsic, or instrumental versus intrinsic, or good-for as against good-in-itself, is just ill-posed. There are some things that are purely instrumental and there are some things that are ends in themselves, but there are lots of things – art and justice and family life and health and mental health – which are good in both respects and everybody knows that; it's amazing it should have been forgotten about.

There is – and this hasn't been explored sufficiently, in part because people are slightly concerned about it – the issue of public accountability. My own view is that we should seek to diversify the sources of funding as much as we can. The universities particularly show the costs that you pay when you go over to public funding. The state of the British universities as against the American universities in this respect is very marked by the fact that American universities have enormously diversified sources of funding, including public funding of course. But if you go in the direction of public funding, then public accountability becomes extremely important. It's not this question of instrumental versus intrinsic values, it's a question of harmonising your own endeavour to the expectations of society as a whole. Janet Ritterman at one point said that one of the things we value the arts for is challenging orthodoxies, but there is a danger of a certain radical self-indulgence here. Chesterton wrote that there's a kind of challenging orthodoxies that has about it the logic of attacking your own grandmother, that's to say you attack old orthodoxies. What it takes real guts to do is to attack new orthodoxies. There is a certain posing that academics and arts people go in for, which is seeing themselves as radical critics, when in fact they're self-indulgent beneficiaries of public funding, and a willingness to examine oneself in that light would seem to me to be worthwhile.

Janet Ritterman: I take your point in terms of the potential for regarding artists as self-indulgent in the approach they're taking. I think, though, many artists, if reviewing the extent to which they're publicly funded for the activities they're doing, would not necessarily assume that the second part of your proposition stands, even if the first may. But I think there are a number of reasons that artists do at the moment feel a necessity to be careful not to bite the hand that, if not yet feeding them, might conceivably feed them, and the question I was attempting to raise was whether that is good for the artist, for the arts or for society more broadly.

Stuart MacRae: I spoke earlier of the embarrassment of self-justification. This comes from the point of view of contemporary music, the point of view that perhaps the majority of the public are not particularly engaged with or interested in the type of modern atonal music that I write. Its primary function is not entertainment or relaxation, but it is to do with challenging orthodoxies, confronting people perhaps with some of their darkest perceptions, and it is also all too easy to criticise and to bite the hand that feeds you. I must say I'm very encouraged by all the things I've heard from both current and former chairmen of the Scottish Arts Council: I had no idea how much they are on artists' side, never having had the chance to discuss things at length with them. But as an example of the kind of thing I feel it's important to stand up for myself about, it's important for an artist to have the freedom to produce whatever they want to without any caveat being in place beforehand. I'll give an example – a private trust commissioned a piece from me and handed me a piece of paper saying the aims of the trust were to produce works at which the audience would come out and not say 'this work is challenging or interesting' but say 'this work is beautiful and uplifting'. They actually said this is what people should say after they hear the work. I said to my commissioner, 'I don't see any conflict between those statements, so what I hope is that my work would be all four of these things', but in a sense you feel that pressure towards self-censorship against which you have to fight as an artist.

The other point that I'd like to make is that the extent to which I am funded, mainly publicly, is something from which great encouragement can be taken. I do earn my living almost exclusively from composing, but could earn twice as much by going into schools and running workshops using the ideas and techniques in composition. That strikes me as being slightly skewed, slightly focussed in the wrong direction

Michael Conway: Fiona Watson referred to the history departments in various Scottish schools being abolished. Could the panel discuss this threat? Could history go the same way as Greek and Latin? What do the panel think of the abolition of the arts in Scottish schools from the historical point of view?

Fiona Watson: I've been corrected – Mr. Peacock did not say he wanted to abolish history as a discrete subject, but the Scottish media reported that he did. The issue is less political will than that that should happen, and more the pressures of the curricula and the increasing number of subjects, and society perhaps not knowing what our children should be educated in as long as it's more, more, more. The pressures mean the amalgamation of subjects is happening, and history and modern languages are suffering.

Magnus Linklater: This is a big issue. Professor Tom Devine is extremely exercised about it, as every Scottish historian is. This approach to education, the notion that you educate your young people on a broad front, is not specific to history. It's almost an impressionistic education, and if I talk to young people, even those who have been taught history, the way they've been taught history is in a completely different way from the way our generation have been taught it. They have a completely different understanding of certain aspects of history, but have no idea of context, have

no idea in which century things took place. So it's not the question of the abolition of history as a discrete subject, but the whole way in which history and related subjects are taught.

Charles Withers: In thinking about values, as we have been this afternoon, the topics that have connected the papers for me have cohered around the notions of language, responsibility and accountability, audiences and audience understanding, and institutions (I mean institutions in terms of them as funders, or drivers of policy, or providers of education, and so on).

Let me in my comments return to the British Academy Report of 2004 to connect with my list. The recommendations at the end of the report are threefold, and they do connect with the comments that we've heard from speakers. First, more inclusive concepts, language and terminology; second, to review the basis on which resources are allocated; and third, that the institutional frameworks should be reviewed. I think those points connect with what we've heard, but it strikes me in these terms that if we're addressing the value of the humanities, however understood – utilitarian or metrological or in other ways – that the value rests, for me at least, in being continuously critical of the taken-for-granted, in being critical of the audit culture of fiscal rhetoric within which we're all forced to work, in being sensitive to the political consequences of differences in meaning, and in taking seriously the production, circulation and reception of ideas precisely because these different categories have to be taken seriously and always kept in view. Matters of trust, of authenticity, identity, freedom of enquiry, tolerance and so on, strike me as actually central to what I understand the value of the humanities to be. In making those observations, let me make four comments in considering the value of the humanities.

First, we will not take seriously these categories and these issues if we separate (or imagine we can separate) humanities from science, or indeed work consistently with those labels, because those labels actually in some contexts mislead.

Second, institutional structures in research councils currently do not help. I'm a geographer, albeit an historical geographer, but my physical geography colleagues are currently at loggerheads with one of the leading research councils, NERC, over matters to do with climate change. Why? Because the facts of climate change are now incontrovertible, but what is not are the meanings. What is not are the human consequences to do with the interpretation of the facts of climate change, and there's a geography to that knowledge: Bush's America is not Blair's Britain.

Third, it is not, it strikes me, by links between higher educational institutions that we will address and keep under review values of the humanities, but by taking seriously the links between HEIs and non-HE institutions. Yes, of course there's a great deal of good work being done in the academy, but sometimes it can look inside the ramparts and not outside, when it should more often look out. This might help challenge the instrumentalisation that Richard Holloway and others have rightly cautioned against.

My last point is perhaps an obvious one: namely, that some of the questions around the value of the humanities in modern society this afternoon have struck me as very Western-centric. Some of the issues that we face here about social access, even to questions of talking about the environment, mean very different things in other parts of the world: social access to the internet, questions of copyright and so on, actually do have very profound differences in other parts of the world, and we ought not to forget, I think, that the value of the humanities means very different things in different places.

Hector MacQueen: I hope I mentioned Charles's last issue at the very end of my talk. There clearly is an issue. The interesting thing is that it's an issue that is being addressed, not least by our

own government, in a commission on Intellectual Property Rights and the Developing World, which published its conclusions three or four years ago. In fairness to this government it has pursued some policies at international level which attempt to give effect to that, so this is alive and well as far as Intellectual Property is concerned. Whether this is true in other contexts is not for me to say.

Janet Ritterman: The third of the projects that I mentioned, the Arts and Ecology project, was one I selected for the reason that it didn't include only the HEIs, and it strikes me that one of the great potentials of that project, which has I think about a year to run at least at this stage, is that it's working with HEIs but not only with HEIs, and is drawing as broadly as it can, because it feels that some of the issues can best be raised in precisely the way you were mentioning.

Wilson Poon: I'm a hard physicist, so I'm the guy whose clothes you're apparently trying to steal. Let me tell you a little parable just to prove that some of us on the other side think the Emperor has no clothes, so don't try to steal them. I was at a disciplinary review panel in the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) chaired by Richard Brook. This is one of these themed reviews where the EPSRC try to figure out whether a particular area they fund is getting full value for money, and what Richard Brook tried to ask all the academics around the table was 'Why is this interesting?'. All the academics whose grant had been reviewed spent their entire morning telling the chairman why what they did was *useful*, and Richard Brook was absolutely furious – 'Dammit, I know why it's useful – I want to know why it's *interesting!*' Apparently there are scientists that are so brainwashed into the usefulness rhetoric that we've completely forgotten that we went into science because we're curious overgrown kids. I long for the day when I can be honest in my grant applications, and say 'I want to do this because it's interesting'. So please don't ape the other side.

I'd like to go back to Richard Holloway's challenge to send the academy off to come up with a new justification for why the humanities are doing what they do. At the moment I'm working through Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. It seems to me that the battle he was fighting was that in a previous generation the humanities were trying to ape the method of the sciences, and it seems that what is needed now is a philosopher to produce a book called *Truth and Value*. You guys are particularly good at narrative – scientists are not! You are paid to narrate, so if you want to go away from numbers, what you need is a narrative justification of value. So don't try to ape the other side. The Emperor has no clothes, don't try to steal them.

Marion Cochrane: I was struck by what Iain Macwhirter and Michael Conway were saying – I think it's a complete scunner that we've voted for our own parliament again after three hundred years and our politicians, so-called servants and representatives of our democracy and civilisation, have so little of an education in anything like the humanities that, as Iain put it, they're not equipped to deal with questions of the arts, and they do feel intimidated. In terms of the discussion today, it's a bit of an *Alice through the Looking Glass* scenario: we are having to deal with these people, but they haven't got a clue what it is we want from them. Some of them are openly hostile to the very idea of what we're here for today. They won't appreciate it, they don't accept it, they don't see it as valid or relevant, and I think we've got a long and hard battle on our hands, and I wish they'd bring back Greek and Latin in every single school.

Magnus Linklater: I think Iain exaggerates. I don't think it's as bad as that... almost, but not quite. There are a dozen or so who do understand the importance of the arts and do go to arts events and are genuinely involved and can speak perfectly well about the arts. We're going slightly over the top, as journalists do, in describing a situation. I would put up a modest defence of our MSPs and say it's not quite as bad as Iain suggests.

Iain Macwhirter: I'm not sure that it's as bad as I suggest either. I thought I was being quite sympathetic to our politicians. There's a kind of default philistinism or instrumentalism in all politicians, because that's their kind of discourse. There are two ways of looking at these things: whether they're useful or whether they're valuable in themselves. When it comes down to whether they're valuable in themselves, politicians are in great difficulty because they don't have an arts or humanities background, and don't want to get involved in debates about quality or excellence. I wouldn't want to get involved in a debate about quality or excellence. I don't know what excellence is now in art, whether it's the Angel of the North, the Turner Prize or anything like that, I find it difficult myself, so I'm not surprised that politicians have great difficulty. Actually I think we have the politicians we deserve, and they're not as bad as you or I suggested they were. Most of them do have a cultural dimension and go out now and again. You've got to remember that there are more people than simply the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament, and in any case a number of people there do care sincerely and passionately about the future of the arts, but in that forum they will have to argue it in terms of the instrumental value of culture. That doesn't necessarily mean they're saying that all culture should be reduced to the lowest common denominator – not at all - their job is to attempt to create a creative space within which artists and people better equipped to do it can practise.

Vicki Bruce: I really want to respond to Wilson Poon's comment, and I want to play the science card for a moment. There's been a major campaign in this country for a long time which used to be called Save British Science, because there was an extremely difficult battle to be won about the funding of university research, particularly in the sciences. Bill Stewart, from this country, played a blinder in developing foresight and selling (in a sense) the importance of funding science in the economic framework. That is what has kept the funding of the research councils buoyant, and it turned a corner and produced new money into research: new money from which there has developed an attitude and a capacity to fund the humanities and arts, as well as the other things. There was a real battle there, where the argument had to be made that funding universities mattered, and it's complicated of course south of the border in various ways. I think that the increased funding in science (which has admittedly led to a bit of an attitude problem now in some of Wilson's colleagues, because we're so focussed on utilitarianism) is an important lesson. We have to win political battles in order to get funding to do the sorts of things we're really good at. But we mustn't lose track of what we're really good at.

I also wanted to pick up another point, which is about the very sad changes in the definition of the curriculum within our schools. We shouldn't despair: this is where universities have to keep their nerve. Many of us in the social sciences studied 'ologies' at university which were brand new 'ologies', not taught in schools. When I was a girl, psychology was not taught in any school at all: I had to float into it via sciences. That happened in many of the different disciplines, and it's because the universities were developing those disciplines and developing new ways of thinking. Universities can allow people to pick up things that they haven't studied under that heading at school. We keep our nerve and do it really well, and what we must also do (as well as encouraging interdisciplinarity, of course) is be the guardians of the disciplines that the schools may not be able to deliver any more. I'm very proud of the fact that at this university at the moment we are building Classics, and we are actually doing well in languages. There are many universities around the country which for economic reasons are having to close down departments because they're not getting the interest from the school kids coming through because the school kids haven't studied it. The universities that can keep these subjects going have to hold their nerve, be in a sense the guardians of these disciplines, and hopefully eventually, when there's a change in climate or fashion, shove out the next generation of schoolteachers back into the schools with these kinds of things.

Judith Henderson: My previous job was to clerk the Enterprise and Culture Committee at the Scottish Parliament, the committee responsible for scrutinising higher education and business and culture. During the time I worked for that committee they looked at higher education and the funding of higher education, particularly in the context of the English proposals. They also looked at arts in the community, because the perception among many of the MSPs is that high art is not for them, and this perception reflects the people of Scotland. There are cross-party groups on pop music and on traditional arts, but there aren't cross-party groups on opera or literature. It's a question of convincing the politicians. They are convinced that higher education is worth the money, there's no doubt about it whatsoever, they really know that research is important. The reasons why they think it's important may not necessarily be the ones that you would want, and that's the job I think you've got to do. But they do know it's important, and they also know about the transformative power of art in people's lives, in real people's lives, particularly in poor people's lives. So if you can join up some of those things and convince the politicians, then that's something that needs to be done, I think.

Hector MacQueen: It's a good idea to have a look at the *Who's Who* entries for our politicians – those who are graduates are by and large graduates in humanities, the arts and social sciences. You could say that is a demonstration of the value of humanities, the arts and social sciences. When Cathy Jamieson was appointed Minister of Justice she was the first non-lawyer to have charge of the legal system, and some lawyers were a bit agitated about this, but there hasn't been a whisper about it. No-one says she shouldn't be in charge of the justice system because she isn't a lawyer. That's an important point to make, and we shouldn't dismiss our politicians for many of the reasons which have been given.

Going back to the science point, there was a letter to *The Times* this week from a chemist, who pointed out (I don't know how true it was) that there is now no Chemistry taught between Manchester and Glasgow, as a result of the lack of funding for that particular discipline. As far as I know no arts or social science disciplines are yet in that position.

Nicholas Phillipson: Going back to Ian Macwhirter's point, it isn't the job of politicians to ask what the value of various disciplines is. If they do, that way madness lies. I would argue the same for the fine arts. I remember a story about one of Scottish Opera's early crises, in the early '80s, which ended up around the Cabinet table, and Margaret Thatcher said 'opera is not to be discussed around this Cabinet table again', and by and large that is right – it's the job of politicians to ask difficult questions and to ask them in an interesting way. It's one of the fascinating characteristics of university culture since the mid '70s, and I think performing arts culture since the early '80s, that both communities, singularly and overlapping, have been extraordinarily clumsy in developing a language in which to talk about the various levels at which these disciplines can be discussed in public. The mistake has been to look for the holy grail of a single language (whatever a single language is, and in many respects it's an absurd notion). This, I think, has put both politicians and the academic community, and certainly the performing arts community, consistently in false places. The encouraging thing over the last ten years is that there is the making of a serious discourse which is capable of feeding into different areas of public life, of the humanities. I hope that Wilson's ghastly stories about his colleagues making fools of themselves with the funding councils will shortly start to look like one of these extraordinary historical redundancies, which historians will have great difficulty explaining in credible terms to a later generation.