

Cultural Trends, 17, 4, 2008**‘In defence of instrumentality’**

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Abstract: The discussion of the so called ‘instrumentalisation’ of cultural institutions and programmes has been a key focus for the cultural policy, museum and heritage studies literatures over the past few years. This article will challenge the historical accuracy of claims that ‘instrumentality’ is a recent ‘threat’ to the management and funding of culture. Rather I will argue that historically, instrumental cultural policies have been *policies of production*. Further, through an analysis of the terms of the ‘instrumentalisation debate’ in relation to museums I will show that there is no consensus in the understanding of what constitutes instrumental or intrinsic functions. The ‘instrumental /intrinsic’ dichotomy is too simplistic to allow grounded critical engagement with the real complexities of cultural institutions and programmes. Finally, I argue that in order to work critically with institutions, policies and programmes it is necessary to engage with the practicalities of their arrangements. To do so is to recognise the complexity of institutions which are often internally divided. While commentators continue to simply deconstruct the ‘instrumentalist’ cultural policy agenda the reality is that some cultural institutions continue to pay, at best, lip service to the political imperative to become more inclusive. In this social and political context critical engagement which is *grounded* in the practicalities of culture’s administration is crucial if we are to develop analyses which seek to understand and contribute to the development of programmes which break with the elitisms which have characterised cultural programmes in the past.

Keywords: Instrumentality, Museums, Cultural Policy, Value, Critique**Introduction**

Recently the cultural policy, museum and heritage studies literatures have contained a great deal of discussion of the so called ‘instrumentalisation’ of cultural institutions and programmes which is described as emerging over the last thirty or so years. This perception of culture’s so called ‘instrumentalisation’ seems to be widespread and is primarily perceived as a ‘threat’ (e.g. Belfiore, 2002; Selwood, 2002; Holden 2006 & 2004). Even accounts which aim to focus on the specifics of policy development and operation have posited and criticised the recent development of an ‘instrumentality’ in cultural policy (Gray, 2007 and 2000). However, in these deconstructions, primarily aimed at the poor impact studies and overblown claims made for the arts and culture, there is little to guide us towards a way of thinking about cultural policy which is constructive. That is, an analysis which while critical also takes seriously the *practical* challenges for cultural management and policy. One of the problems with this open season attack on, so called, ‘instrumentalisation’ is that in the absence of analyses which seek to follow up these deconstructions with alternative proposals for ways of thinking about culture and its administration the field is left open for a return to the kinds of elite, exclusionary policies which have characterised cultural administration in the past, and in many cases still does. As Mark O’Neill, Head of Museums and Galleries for Glasgow City Council, concludes in his critique of John Holden’s *Capturing Cultural Value*

Targets and measurements can be refined, but what can be done about the profound sense amongst... groups of entitlement– entitlement to having their cultural recreations funded without being troubled by the values of a wider society based on democracy, accountability, equity and fairness? (2005, 124).

An illustration will serve to set the scene and develop my point further. The current terms of the debate within cultural policy can be summarised by quoting from Elenora Belfiore’s much cited article ‘Art as a means of alleviating social exclusion: Does it really work? A critique of instrumental cultural policies and social impact studies in the UK’ (2002). The introductory sentence of one of the concluding paragraphs states

This study is not aimed at advocating a model of public support for the arts based on the ‘art for art’s sake’ rationale... However, the aim of this paper is to show how instrumental cultural policies are not sustainable in the long term (2002, 104).

Belfiore tells us that instead we should think of culture in the following terms ‘Culture is not a means to an end. It is an end itself’ (ibid). But isn’t the real challenge for cultural policy analysts and practitioners to identify the ways in which cultures can be funded, supported or created using the public purse in ways which are democratic and accountable? To support one person’s or groups’ culture is also to make a decision not to support another’s; on what bases do we make these decisions?

The primary focus of Belfiore’s paper is a critique of the overly ambitious assertions of some in the arts and heritage sectors as to the ability of their programmes to address, seemingly, all social ills. As I have argued in relation to the use of arts marketing and economic impact arguments in the Australian cultural policy context (Gibson, 1999a, 2001 & 2002a) so too Belfiore points to the limitations of the evidence which is commissioned and presented to justify and ‘prove’ the social impact of the arts and heritage. Where I want to part ways with Belfiore however is in her conclusion that bad evidence and over hyped statements of social, cultural or even economic significance means that instrumental cultural policies are ‘policies of extinction’ (ibid.). On the contrary, I argue that instrumentalism has always been integral to cultural policy, and that instrumental cultural policies are *policies of production*.

In the first place this paper will argue that the oft repeated assertion of a recently introduced instrumentality in cultural policy has no basis in historical fact. While others have covered aspects of this historical ground (see for instance Bennett 1995 & 1998; Gibson, 1999b & 2001; and, O’Neill, this issue) in view of the seeming wholesale collective memory loss of cultural policy’s history in the recent ‘instrumentality’ debate it seems timely to briefly remind ourselves that cultural institutions and programmes, whether government funded or supported privately, have had an instrumental dimension since before the Thatcher or New Labour Governments in the UK. In the second place this article will review some of the languages which inform recent discussions of ‘instrumentality’. There is a long history to the discourses which inform the current discussion of instrumentality and culture. Many cultural theorists have discussed this lineage in various ways (for instance, the recent contributions from Belfiore and Bennett, 2007 and 2006) but despite the well established nature of this lineage, discussions of ‘instrumentality’ in contemporary cultural policy often proceed from the basis that the

debate is novel. However, as we will see in relation to discussions of instrumentality and museums, there is no consensus over what constitutes ‘instrumental’ activities and which are ‘intrinsic’. I will argue that not only is the instrumental/ intrinsic dichotomy false but it does not assist us in thinking about the specific operations of particular programme and policy environments, such as museums, where the complexity of purpose and operation cannot be reduced to a simplistic binary opposition. The ‘instrumentalisation debate’ also has a lot to say about cultural personnel, this discursive thread also has a history in dialectical discussions of culture and administration (Adorno, 1991). On one view personnel can be neatly mapped against the culture and administration divide so that policy makers, administrators, and managers become actors who merely respond to already established government programmes, on the other side are ‘critical intellectuals’ who, because of their untied status— usually academic— are able to have a critical perspective on the programmes of government and the management of culture not available to the cultural administrators. In the final section of this paper I want to reject these dialectics not in order to propose a remaking of the lost truth of culture and its administration but in order to propose a corrective to the terms in which the current discussion of instrumentalisation in relation, especially, to the museums and heritage sector is conducted.

Cultural policy is constitutively instrumental

I want to commence with a brief schematic outline of some key recent historical moments— by which I mean the last two hundred years— of cultural programmes and policy in Anglophone countries. My main intention here is to remind readers that there is nothing remotely new about instrumentalism in cultural policy. In fact, if we consider the history of the modern public museum, for instance, we find that it is in fact *constitutively instrumental* as has been well established, for instance, in various histories of British and Australian museums (e.g. Bennett, 1995 & 1998; Gibson, 1999b & 2001). There is nothing new about the use of cultural programmes to affect a population’s health. Famously Henry Cole, the architect of the South Kensington Museum system (later the V&A), justified public expenditure on the gas lighting of the museum in order to enable evening opening and thus provide a healthy alternative to the gin palaces of nineteenth

century London. The use of cultural programmes to affect national economic or trade goals is not a Thatcher innovation. Before the 'rational recreation' ethos which came to dominate museum discourse in the late nineteenth century the argument for public expenditure on the development of the South Kensington museum and the Schools of Design was economic. Specifically these cultural programmes were to provide an education in good design to 'mechanicks' in an attempt to improve the flagging national lace industry which was losing out to better designed product imported from Italy (Gibson, 1999b). Nor is the use of cultural programmes to effect community cohesion an invention of New Labour, the first Chair of the Arts Council was economist Maynard Keynes whose aim to 'pump prime' the arts was, at least in the very early years of the Arts Council's history, to do with community rebuilding after WWII (Gibson, 1997 & 1999b). In Australia too it was the economist H.C. Coombs most associated with a range of cultural programmes which aimed to educate the returning soldier and the post-war citizen in order to enable them to contribute better to post-war reconstruction efforts (Gibson, 2001 & 2002b). Neither is culture's use for urban, social and economic regeneration a recent invention. See for instance, Suzanne MacLeod's discussion of the reasons for the late nineteenth century development of the Walker Art Gallery and the cultural institutions with which it is co-sited in Liverpool. MacLeod demonstrates how this was part of a programme of municipal development which, in addition to building what in today's terms would be described a 'cultural quarter', also involved the installation of sewers and fresh water supplies in an aim to address 'the highest mortality rates of any town in the country, including London' (2005, 14). In all of these historical examples cultural programmes and policies have quite specific instrumental aims.

It is not that the absence of history from some discussions of contemporary cultural policy which allows them to understand instrumentalism as a recent 'threat' to cultural policy is merely a question of semantics, far from it. The key point here is that, as O'Neill puts it in relation to museums in his contribution to this issue, 'the lack of historical context means that museums can be presented as being outside history, as having an unchanging essence which is now under attack' (this issue). In relation to studies of cultural programmes more generally Tony Bennett, Francis Dodsworth and Patrick Joyce have argued that despite the valuable contributions made by detailed

studies of contemporary cultural institutions, policies and programmes they usually operate ‘within quite short time lines with the consequence that the present is often brought into view *too conjuncturally* by being separated off from the longer histories of its formation’ (2007, 526). The discussions of instrumentality in the recent cultural policy literature are a case in point. Despite the excellent work which has been done deconstructing the overblown claims made by some arts and heritage advocates and the poor quality of some of the evidence commissioned and used by the cultural sector, to conclude from this that instrumentalism per se is a ‘threat’ is to hand over rationales for culture’s management to those who believe that cultural funding and management needs no justification and should not be accounted for because certain people ‘just know’ what is worthy. The Anglophone history of cultural policy tells us that to allow the management of culture to be determined without reference to public accountability results in cultural support and management which is exclusivist in its basic logic (for instance, for a critique of museum policy and programmes see Hooper-Greenhill 2000 & 1992). The recently released ‘McMaster report’, *Supporting Excellence in the Arts*, is a direct result of the overt criticism of the British government’s ‘instrumentalism’ in relation to the arts (McMaster, 2008). It is an excellent example of the types of policy proscriptions which result from a return to a discourse based on ‘provide excellence and they will come’, most notoriously in its proposal to open high cultural institutions to the general public for free for a week every year (2008, 17). Such simplistic ‘access’ measures take no account of the myriad of research which shows that access and participation is influenced by a range of complex factors and is not simply a matter of reducing the entrance fee. For instance, despite the introduction of free entry to British national museums and galleries in 2001, MORI have shown that ‘the profile of a typical “population” of museum and gallery visitors have remained stable, and firmly biased in favour of the “traditional” visitor groups’ (2003, 4). In other words, when the national museums in England dropped their entrance fees this did not broaden the audience for museums but rather meant that the already existing primarily middle class audience went more often. So according to the recent debate what then constitutes the instrumental and intrinsic qualities of museums?

Instrumental and intrinsic cultural policy

My intention here is not to revisit theoretical and philosophical debates on the instrumental and intrinsic dialectics of cultural policy and cultural value; this has been done at length elsewhere.¹ Instead I want to explore here the ways in which these categorisations have been played out in recent discussions of heritage and museum policy and the problems inherent in attempting to characterise contemporary cultural initiatives as either one or the other.

Clive Gray's contribution to this volume proposes that we can understand museum policy as being driven by 'endogenous and exogenous motors of policy change and development' (Gray, this issue). His identification of the 'core' or 'endogenous' parts of the museums and galleries sector comprises 'curatorship, education, entertainment and the infra-structural management of resources' (ibid). 'Instrumentality' according to Gray, would mean a shift away from these ... towards other policy intentions. This would mean that internal matters of policy emphasis concerned with the sector's core... would become replaced by a concern for externally derived objectives or policy priorities, such as, social inclusion or community regeneration (ibid.).

However, the examples Gray gives of 'externally derived objectives'— social inclusion and community regeneration— are often inextricably part of museum education programmes which Gray defines as 'endogenous' or 'core' museum functions. Furthermore, it is precisely the museums educational functions which others classify as instrumental.

John Holden's co called 'new language' for 'cultural value' was initially developed with Robert Hewison in an evaluation framework commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2004. The resulting *Challenge and Change* report first proposed the triangular framework for the assessment of cultural value which Holden has since developed (see Holden 2006 & 2004). This framework is made up of intrinsic values, instrumental benefits and institutional values (Hewison & Holden, 2004). According to Kate Clark, the HLF's Deputy Director of Policy and Research, and Gareth Maeer, a HLF Policy Advisor, the instrumental benefits proposed by Hewison and

¹ See for example Belfiore & Bennett, 2007 for a review of the key literature; in relation to heritage values Gibson and Pendlebury, 2009; McGuigan, 1996; Bennett, 1998 especially chapter 8 and 2000 for a response to McGuigan's critiques; Yúdice, 2003, and for a critique of Yúdice see Osborne, 2006.

Holden included 'learning, individual well-being, strengthened local communities; prosperity' (Clark & Maer, 2008, 26). So while as we have seen for Gray education or 'learning' is not instrumental, in contrast, for Holden education is an instrumental benefit of culture. Indeed at the annual Museum Association conference in 2007 Holden had to defend his list of 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' values from robust critique by a number of senior museum directors and educationists. These practitioners interpreted his categorisation of 'learning' as an instrumental quality as an elitist attack on the significant efforts made in the museum sector especially over the last twenty years to make museums more accessible and relevant to wider cross sections of the tax paying public. This 'new museology' has been most associated with the development of education programmes which aim to be inclusive both by bringing new material culture into museums as well as new audiences (Vergo, 1989). While for Gray education is not instrumental some of the other 'access and inclusion' measures associated with museum education programmes are; for Holden, on the other hand, all of these learning or access based initiatives are not 'intrinsic' to the museums function but are instrumental.

In contrast Carol Scott reporting on an audience study at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia, despite using the Holden framework, deems learning an 'intangible' and therefore intrinsic benefit of museums. There are a number of other qualities she identifies from her research participants, responses which despite their clear instrumentalism, as generally defined, she deems 'intangible'. The 'intangible' benefits she identifies include 'access to the past' illustrated by a respondent's statement that 'our community needs to learn about it's history, to ... develop ourselves further from the mistakes and achievements of others' (2006, 66). Further evidence of the 'intangible' values provided by the Powerhouse are evidenced in a respondent's comment on the benefits of learning about Australia's indigenous history. Summarising the intangible benefits Scott concluded 'that museums provided people with accessible, tangible learning experiences' (ibid, 67). Is a museum programme which aims to offer people an alternative view of history with the goal of facilitating community cohesion an 'intrinsic' benefit of a museum programme, as it is for Scott? Or is, at least, the community cohesion element of such a programme, an 'exogenous' activity for the museum and thus

such a programme is an example of the museum being used ‘instrumentally’, as it is for Gray?

It is clear then that there is no consensus about what particular elements of museum and heritage programmes might constitute instrumental or intrinsic values. This lack of clarity militates against the assessment of the ‘instrumental’ outcomes of particular cultural programmes. Clark and Maeer’s discussion of the application of the Hewison and Holden evaluation framework to HLF projects is enlightening on the difficulties experienced attempting to evaluate using some of its ‘instrumental’ elements. They found that the only way they could measure categories of ‘learning’, ‘strengthening local communities’ and ‘wellbeing’ was through ‘social impact case studies’ which were short term and produced research which was ‘avowedly anecdotal’ (2008, 49). Clark and Maeer describe how the research found that the categories of ‘learning’ and ‘well-being’ were more prominent than the wider community benefits linked to ‘strengthening local communities’. They surmise that this was because ‘these wider benefits are more difficult to achieve, that they are more difficult to detect without dedicated long-term research, or ... simply because the concepts and mechanisms for such social change are so little understood’ (2008, 50). One could also surmise that evaluative elements such as ‘strengthening local communities’ are too vague to be useful as a concrete category to which research might be applied; for instance, what is meant by ‘strengthening’, is this in the economic sense or is this about neighbourhood cohesion; how would this be measured, and so on.² But is this a problem because of the so called instrumentality of cultural programmes per se or is this due to a problematic research framework and method?

In an article critical of the British government’s requirement for museums to affect social inclusion Celine West and Charlotte Smith make a series of valuable points regarding the lack of clarity in government directives in relation to cultural policy and social inclusion (2005). Speaking from inside the museum sector they recognise that the development of inclusive museum programmes is central to the *modus operandi* of contemporary museums. However, they argue ‘that a high level of expectation is

² See Merli, 2002 for a discussion of vague impact measurements in her critique of François Matarasso’s *Use or Ornament?*. See also Gibson 2009 for a discussion of the problems with community consultation in heritage policy.

combined with minimal indication of how museums may implement such generalised points as engaging with the socially excluded: the terminology used is often vague and hence defeats the objective' (2005, 279). The persistence of this outmoded language which insists on understanding culture and its management in terms of its 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' values militates against cultural management which is articulated to democratic access, representation and accountability. For museum and heritage management this means supporting programmes which aim to make museums relevant to the contemporary British public, in all its diversity. This might mean exploring ways of achieving a better relevance in the ways museum collections are displayed by, for instance, diversifying the types the material culture on display or exploring new modes for the presentation to others of intangible heritage. That such programmes are concerned with communities who are not part of the 'traditional' museum going public does not mean that these programmes are external or 'exogenous' to the museums function and therefore 'instrumental', on the contrary, the drive to achieve representation and relevance is the basic defining discourse for the twenty-first century public 'post-museum' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000).

In defence of instrumentality– the critical and the practical

So as cultural policy, museum and heritage studies researchers, practitioners or administrators how then are we to think through culture and its administration in relation to the current critique of 'instrumental' cultural policies and programmes? Should we be practicing so called 'progressive' critique, where we take the 'progressive' status of our critique as self-evident, and which is always critical of arts policy, arts evidence, and suspicious of any claims which art might make for itself (Miller & Yúdice, 2002)? Or another choice might be analysis which takes cultural policies and programmes at face value (Schuster, 2002). Such is Oliver Bennett's categorisation of the 'torn halves of cultural policy research' (2004). For Bennett, the first position, in its simplistic dismissal of subsidised culture as elite, ignores 'any recognition that the arts can act as an emancipatory resource for all classes' (ibid, 240). The second position, in its constitution of cultural policy as limited to programmes developed by the state or government agencies and its interest almost exclusively in empirical and operational concerns leaves

no space for the analysis of the historically and culturally specific discourses and their power effects which are constructed and reproduced through them (ibid, 242–244). For Bennett these are ‘the torn halves that never add up to a whole;... research can be practical, or it can be critical, but it can never be both at the same time’ (ibid, 246). Bennett does not attempt to rejoin these ‘torn halves’ rather he proposes that despite the sundering nevertheless

the field of cultural policy research is still defined by a shared commitment to investigating the conditions under which culture is produced, reproduced and experienced. This is a complex and multifaceted task, requiring a broad range of intellectual practices, none of which holds a monopoly (ibid.).

For Jim McGuigan however the resolution is not so clear. He asks two questions, ‘how can critical intellectuals be practical?’ and ‘how can practical intellectuals be critical?’ (1996, 190). McGuigan’s aim, drawing on Jurgen Habermas, is to recover ‘theoretically informed practice’ (*praxis*) from its reduction to mere technical means (*techne*) (ibid, 187). For McGuigan this division between *praxis* and *techne* maps conveniently onto employment positions within the cultural sector, so critical intellectuals are academics and other ‘untied’ intellectuals, and practical intellectuals are those engaged in ‘some form of communication and cultural management’ (ibid, 190). McGuigan is quite clear about the relative ability of these positions to be critical, this is revealed in the way he caricatures the practical intellectual who he thinks might be ‘disappointed’ in his book as ‘it does not purport to provide recipe knowledge’. According to McGuigan this is ‘to do with fact that the possibilities of critical knowledge in a practical context have already been closed off’ (ibid, 190). It is for this reason that McGuigan argues that ‘questions of cultural policy are too important to be left solely to cultural technicians’ (ibid, 188).

This argument makes little sense when applied to museums and the museum profession. If we take the example of the training of museum practitioners in the key museum studies courses in Britain- Leicester, Manchester and Newcastle for instance- students completing these courses are better placed than most to engage with the continuing exclusionary practices of some museums and museum professionals. The courses are designed to give them a historical and theoretical understanding which allows them a critical perspective on museum operations. Crucially, in addition, they are given a

technical understanding of museum operations which allows them, for instance, to understand how technical aspects of display can best be utilised to design exhibitions which are not exclusionary in their architecture. Thus, the ‘technical’ knowledge they gain is not secondary to the historical and theoretical understandings of museums that they are encouraged to develop. On the contrary, without the *technical* knowledge they would not be able to practice in a historically and theoretically informed *critical* way. I argue in contrast to McGuigan that it is this combination of theoretical, historical and technical knowledges that make these ‘cultural technicians’ best equipped to think about and respond to ‘questions of cultural policy’.

The best critical analyses can only be those which engage with the detailed specifics of the institution, policy or programme in question. Such analyses of the particular necessitate leaving behind worn categorisations such as ‘instrumentalism’ and require attention to the specificity of particular contexts. This results in more nuanced understandings of the dynamics and effects of cultural programmes.

Let us consider briefly the National Gallery’s purchase of Raphael’s ‘Madonna of the Pinks’ for £22 million in 2004. The purchase can be schematically characterised in two different ways. On the one hand, we can think of this massive expenditure of public money as evidence of a continuing elitism in the *raison d’être* of the National Gallery. On the other hand, we can take at face value the National Gallery’s presentation of the painting which is that the Raphael is symbolic not of Christianity or a particular art history but of motherhood and therefore was an important purchase for the nation due to its universal appeal. One of the conditions imposed by the HLF on the National Gallery when they gave it the loan to purchase the Raphael was that the Gallery should make the picture ‘accessible’ to non-traditional museum audiences. Thus the Gallery toured the ‘Madonna’ around the regions and organised a programme which targeted various excluded communities, including teenage single mothers in the Welsh Valley’s and children in remote rural areas in the North East. These groups were dutifully bussed to the nearest Gallery to gaze upon the ‘Great Art’ and be duly changed forever by their exposure. This is a classic case of the ‘instrumentalism’ that the commentators bemoan and it is easy to caricature and indeed be offended by such a program, which takes people experiencing real economic and social difficulties to see a £22 million pound painting in

the expectation that this will somehow change their lives. It does not take a 'critical' intellectual to recognise a poor program and it is programs like this that continue to make the arts an easy target. But is this because of 'instrumentalism'? The fact that the painting is being used as a tool for something is surely central to the very meaning of this painting, after all this is a painting specifically designed to be an *instrument* for personal worship.

Helen Rees Leahy gives a more nuanced critique of the programmes accompanying the purchase of the 'Madonna of the Pinks'. She describes how in addition to the national tour which aimed to expose the Raphael to 'diverse' audiences, at the same time the painting featured in a blockbuster, 'Raphael: from Urbino to Rome', organised at the Gallery in 2004/5. This exhibition and its organisation had all the attributes of a traditional elite museum exhibition:

conservative scholarship that privileges the expertise of the connoisseur; a monographic focus rather than thematic perspectives; visible participation in a network of cultural capital via prestigious loans from peer institutions; sponsorship from a blue chip company... (Rees Leahy, 2007, 710)

Was the 'access' tour of the regions merely a ruse to get the funding from the HLF? Or are these seemingly contradictory programmes better viewed, as Rees Leahy argues, as evidence of a complex institution in which there is 'a mixed economy of cultural management that accommodates connoisseurship and populism, exclusivity and diversity, incongruity and contradiction' (ibid, 699). The point here is not that we can or should apologise for the elitism of some museum programmes or the poor quality of others by presenting a relativistic analysis of the institutions internal culture. Rather it is to propose that in order to work critically with institutions, policies and programmes it is necessary to engage with the practicalities of their arrangements. To do so is to recognise the complexity of institutions which are often, and museums are a great example of this, internally divided. While commentators continue to simply deconstruct the 'instrumentalist' cultural policy agenda the reality is that some cultural institutions continue to pay, at best, lip service to the political imperative to become more inclusive. This political imperative requires museums to become more representative in their collections and to think differently about the ways material cultures are displayed in order

to upset and challenge the hierarchical discourses of power which have traditionally shaped museum exhibitions.

Conclusion

To return to the question I started with, if we consider that to support one person's or groups' culture is also to make a decision not to support another's; on what bases do we make these decisions? I have argued that far from there being a division between the critical and practical which means that it is not possible to be both critical *and* practical; on the contrary, valid critique is *only* possible through attendance to the technical contexts and conditions for cultural policy and programmes. Such an analysis would have to reject simplistic dichotomies such as 'instrumentalism' and 'intrinsic' as concepts unable to describe and therefore enable critical engagement with the specificities of a cultural institutions or programmes operation. If the findings of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and more recently in the British context, Bennett et al (2006 & 2004) are correct, then cultural programmes and their consumption have real social and political power effects. In this social and political context critical engagement which is grounded in the practicalities of culture's administration is crucial if we are to develop analyses which seek to understand and contribute to the development of programmes which break with the elitisms which have characterised cultural programmes in the past. I want to conclude with a comment from Mark O'Neill who argues that 'the implications of the fact that the twin processes of inclusion and exclusion are self-reinforcing systems are very clear: any organization that is not working to break down barriers to access is actively maintaining them. Neutrality is not possible' (2002, 34).

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