CHAPTER 6

Assessing the Value of the Arts

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Every art contributes to the greatest art of all, the art of living
— Bertolt Brecht (1964)

Introduction

This chapter presents a general introduction to the contemporary concern of public value in relation to the arts, and particularly how this relates to the concept of social impact – an issue that has dominated the public funding agenda for the arts in the UK and beyond since the 1990s. What follows is an analysis of how the public value of the arts has been framed and assessed in recent times, and how this reflects adaptations to changes in the political climate.

This analysis will be illustrated through a brief historical and conceptual overview of attempts to capture public value, followed by a review and critical evaluation of some models and frameworks that have attempted to capture the benefits of the arts. The challenges of assessing and measuring value are then further discussed through a case study on the National Theatre of Scotland's production, *Black Watch*, to demonstrate the reductive nature of traditional models and point towards the need for developing more nuanced and reflexive approaches to assessing value, informed (and preferably led) by the practice of the art in question. We can call this a 'situational' approach to research.

The chapter therefore argues for approaches informed by these principles. Drawing parallels with themes from Performance Studies, it suggests that greater account needs to be given to *context* and the conditions of the context, including its social formation and relations, which requires reflexivity and ethnographic analysis. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the dialectical conditions of value (as both instrumental *and* intrinsic), particularly emphasising the spatial dimension of practice, which emphasises that the arts are not just situated in a temporal context of ideological shifts, but are active players in the making of value as a practice of cultural production. This spatial dimension is brought into being as a practice of social relations through articulations of inter-subjective values, thereby broadening the dialogue on the subject of public value and considering the productive value of the arts as a wider practice of living.

Benefits or value?

> '[I]nstrumentalism' should not be just be seen as a recent and unwelcome encroachment of politics in the aesthetic sphere. It should, perhaps, be seen more as a mode of understanding, which, far from being peripheral, has actually been central to the long, intellectual tradition that we have traced […].
> The arts have been a tool to enforce and express power in social relations for as long as the arts themselves have been around.'
> (Belfiore and Bennett 2008: 190, 194).

If you take a scan through an industry magazine such as *Arts Professional* (www.artsprofessional.co.uk), you will frequently find commentary or reportage on what the arts are good for (health, justice, social inclusion, and sometimes just sheer output or even making money). This is understandable in an industry magazine. But it is also representative of a defensive stance of advocacy imposed on the arts by tough (and increasingly tougher) funding regimes. Advocacy, then, is frequently about benefits and is actually a value judgement, depending on the value system by which we measure what is a 'good' outcome.

The point here is that the arts are very rarely measured in terms of anything other than a so-called 'instrumental' outcome (such as alignment with broader public policy aims including making money, which is often the most valued outcome). In their book *The Social Impact of the Arts*, Belfiore and Bennet (2008) present a robust scholarly argument on the intellectual history of the theme at large here. They conclude that there is something of a false dichotomy in the either/or debate on the instrumental and intrinsic value of the arts, and that instrumental arguments have always been made for the arts (citing Plato's Republic as one of the first). The broad inference is that instrumental and intrinsic values are mutually informing and reflective of socio-cultural relations over time.

More importantly, Belfiore and Bennet recognise the error of a dualism that only serves to reinforce the structures that perpetuate it (i.e. if you value one concept over the other and seek to demonstrate that by exclusive examples, then the dualism is reinforced and the structures that validate it are merely reproduced). Instead, the instrumental versus intrinsic debate needs to be understood in terms of a relational and situational dialectic, to lay bare the structures that seek to contain (and potentially limit and exclude) the contingent and negotiated processes and experiences of social relations and cultural production.

What is generally at stake, then, is the efficacy of measurement in the context of a hierarchy of knowledge (qualitative knowledge being lower down the food chain than quantitative knowledge). On this point, there has been much research conducted in relation to cultural policy and its overlaps into other policy areas (Galloway, 2009; Galloway et al., 2006). A broad conclusion of this research is that there are problems quantifying the effects of the arts at the level of social impact. Nevertheless, it has also been noted that this is largely due to a 'dominant rationalist-modernist paradigm' (Sanderson, 2000: 439) and a related 'dominant successionist model of causation' (Galloway, 2009: 127).

Here's the underlying problem: the arts are rarely afforded benchmark status in their own right, but are subject to the benchmarks of other disciplines and practices. In plainer terms, cultural value in terms of public value is subject to the cultural values in society at large (including the ordering of knowledge). This is a problem for all socio-cultural practices and processes that are to an extent reliant on public funding, the vagaries of cultural policy and the subjective gaze of evaluation – unlike other human practices, such as science, that are internally calibrated by metrics and therefore measured for validity in their own terms.

Our approach to value here therefore argues for stronger, practice-based models of value within the arts, and consequently a stronger foundation of and reference to practice-based and practice-led research. In a sense, it is about engaging with our own roles and values concerning the arts in society. A key argument is that we must approach value *reflexively* and that this must inform our methodologies of analysis (either as artists or cultural producers) in order to overcome reductive dualisms or dichotomies that are the mainstay of entrenched debates on value. In doing so, we contend that the central dualism in the cultural field, the so-called intrinsic and instrumental divide, is artificial and should instead be understood as part

of the spatial (or situational) dialogic of practice and production, incorporating the dialectic of social relations and structures (including public policy).

Historical and Conceptual Framing

The arts are increasingly positioned within what is now being referred to as a creative economy. This is revealing of the overriding economic gaze of government; and in recent years, there has been an increased policy emphasis on the creative industries, largely driven by forms of creativity explored through technological innovation, screen industries and new media production (and, crucially, reproduction) as a commercial model for cultural activity. This philosophy has led to a reductive emphasis on consumption over the broader artistic focus on experience.

This works well for many players in the so-called creative economy. According to Government figures, the creative industries accounted for 7.3% of the UK's GDP in 2007 (DCMS, 2008) and 5.6% of its 'Gross Value Added' in 2008 (DCMS, 2011). However, this measurement shift to metrics in the form of economic rationalism also demonstrates a paradox (and gap) where the perceived market value of particular creative practices is elevated as the key performance indicator in terms of public value for the arts and culture more broadly. This is, of course, problematic where public funding is crucial in terms of access to or participation in artistic events and of them ever even happening in the first place.

Public funding of the arts is always subject to the shadow of doubt and public debate, which is a good thing, and this is where the first ideological markers can be laid bare – where people can test whether they are more inclined towards the economic rationalist view that only the 'fittest' of the arts (as in fit-for-purpose) should survive. This question should lead people to consider what the fundamental purpose of the arts really is, which should in turn make them consider what their public value is and how that is most appropriately accounted for. The answers to these questions may appear simple to some, but for many people, they become increasingly complex.

Superficially, public value can be perceived to be about the politics of 'value for money' and why money should or should not be allocated in a particular arena. But the economics of culture is not specifically what this chapter will be looking at – see Hesmondhalgh (2007) and Throsby (2001) for a thorough analysis of this. In the context of the dialectic regarding intrinsic and instrumental value, public value becomes part of a broader political economy where economics should be regarded as embedded in the social and therefore imbued with social foundations as much as implications (Polanyi, 2001).

The arts in the UK were ostensibly 'protected' by royal charter through the original founding of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1946 (now dissolved into national agencies) on the back of what might be termed an Arnoldian view of culture (in reference to Matthew Arnold, the 19th Century poet and cultural critic). This was effectively predicated on the view that the (high) arts are edifying, if not transformative, for both the individual and society; and, importantly, that they should be afforded autonomy, or 'arm's length' governance. The premise of that charter is now challenged because the edifying or transformative power is no longer assumed, at least not in all instances, and certainly not across all art forms; and the arts, where implicated in cultural policy, are conceived as being in service of the state's interests, as determined through increasing economic rationalism and risk aversion strategies as a means of calculating and inculcating levels of trust and promoting public value.

Of course, this is all very normative language within so-called progressive democratic societies, and is certainly intended to appear as such. The key substantive task remains how to measure or evaluate policy achievements. One way is to set the parameters of public engagement. In terms of policy, this has been advanced through developments such as 'evidence-based policy making' in the public sector, which offered a boon for research practitioners across the academic and consulting fields as well as for arts projects. But this policy direction also led the arts into the value framework of the pre-determined outcomes of government agendas. Hence the arts, particularly since the New Labour governments of 1997, have been obligated and contracted to fulfil many social policy or health policy objectives of government, where so-called softer outcomes are desirable and achievable towards building social capital, promoting social cohesion, developing community wellbeing, etc. Of course, the community arts and arts-in-health practitioners had always been doing such work – for an interesting overview of this area see White (2009). So in terms of public value, there was enough evidence available to justify funding similar projects in the wider arts community. But there has been little commitment to exploring the value of such arts practice beyond the limited terms of 'proving' impact.

In short, we live in an increasingly global political world, which models itself on corporate business and managerial practices. This is related to other developments in public policy relating to notions of open government, accountability, efficiency, and crucially, it seems, public value. Administration skills are not only highly valued but are evaluated through Public Service Agreements with defined targets and Key Performance Indicators that become the gold standard of public value for bureaucrats and politicians alike. As indicated above, it is not only a public value based on conceptions of economic growth, but one based on minimising risk and maximising trust; and with such process comes a trickle-down of this modelling of value into everyday governance practices and its distribution throughout workforces – including the almost ubiquitous 'outcome-focussed evaluations' that attend any publicly funded project or organisation, including in the arts. This is not to devalue evaluation or outcomes per se, which can play an important role in terms of maintaining and developing good arts practice. But evaluation that is based on the needs or expectations of the paymaster does not necessarily adequately reflect the performance of an artist or arts organisation in terms of their own practice, needs and expectations (let's say creativity). In terms of public value, there is an over-evaluation of the arts in terms of impact outcomes and an under-researching in terms of practice leading the terms of discussion and analysis on value and impact.

Modelling Value

At this point, it is appropriate to introduce the key concern and concept in this discussion, which is also a very practical or practice-based issue, a form of praxis (whether in terms of the arts, research or governance) known as reflexivity. Reflexivity is more then the mere reflection on, or documentation of, who we are and what we do, whether as individuals or as a collective. Rather, it is a form of critical analysis of *context* (including the subjective) to inform action. Particularly, it relates to an acknowledgement of the conditions (social, cultural, economic and political) of the contexts we are operating in, including our own role in producing, reproducing or even obviating those conditions.

In terms of public value, reflexivity is about not taking the so-called objective or subjective measures of value for granted, of imagining one or the other to be real or true, but in seeking out greater objectivity, recognising that it can only be approached from various inter-

subjectivities (including institutional) with a central reference point being practice, its conditions and situation. A consequence of this praxis should be to challenge a predetermined value that is imagined as the real goal or achievement, and thereby challenge a conception of value based on a single or linear reality of practice and its productions. In other words, value is emergent, not fixed and given; but as a dialectic of practice and its productions (the spaces of social relations), it is always under negotiation and in-the-making, and contingent on the multiple experiences and expressions of inter-subjectivity.

In terms of thinking of this spatially, particularly in terms of informing a 'situational' approach as intimated in the introduction, we are following on here from Doreen Massey (2005), who broadly describes space as the product of social relations, as multiple in its formations and negotiations, and as always in the making. This imagining of space can also be applied to everyday human practices of living, including arts practice and the public value it may have; and, as stated above in the introduction, greater account needs to be given to context and the conditions of the context, including its social formation and relations, which demands a reflexive and ethnographic approach.

This approach is broadly aligned with what Richard Schechner (2007) refers to as the 'broad spectrum' approach to Performance Studies, by drawing on the initial conception of everyday life as performative. The arts formulate part of that performativity and, in cultural terms at least, this approach has something to add to conceptions of public value: 'Because of the inclusionary spirit of Performance Studies (and the theoretical concerns with what inclusion presumes), the field is particularly attuned to issues of place, personhood, cultural citizenship, and equity' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2007: 51). Under this 'broad spectrum' approach, anthropological and ethnographic perspectives on arts practice are crucial because of the central focus of reflexivity in ethnographic practice: in what is effectively a spatial and situational practice, context will be included and made visible. It is also interesting here to reflect on what Brecht contended was the reflexive point of Epic Theatre – which he saw as not about lulling people into a false situation of consciousness or reality (an emotional 'suspension of disbelief'), but rather as an opportunity to provoke people into action with what is not real or linear by creating multiple inter-subjectivities.

In the context of assessing the value of the arts, then, reflexivity is about theorising practice as spatial and situational; and as Appadurai (1996: 182) reminds us, ethnography is 'isomorphic with the very knowledge it seeks to discover and document, as both the ethnographic project and the social projects it seeks to describe have the production of locality as their governing ethos'. We will illustrate the benefits of a reflexive, ethnographic approach to understanding the value of the arts in a case study of National Theatre of Scotland's *Black Watch*. But first, we will trace the more traditional benefits-based approaches to capturing artistic value.

**Figure 1: Audiences engaged in a National Theatre of Scotland production**

Image by Dominic Ibbotson, courtesy of National Theatre of Scotland.

Benefits models and frameworks

In the past decade, there has been a revival of interest in the intrinsic, as opposed to instrumental, benefits of the arts, and this has led to a rebalancing in the critical debate on impact. But the nuanced concept of value discussed above, based on a reflexive, ethnographic approach, has consistently been eclipsed by a more rudimentary and even quantitative focus on benefits. To illustrate the thinking behind this benefits approach, we will now compare and contrast three key models that have emerged in the literature over the past few years: McCarthy *et al*'s (2004) benefits framework; Brown's (2006) benefits map; and White and Hede's (2008) schema of impacts and enablers.

McCarthy et al's (2004) *Gifts of the Muse* marked an attempt to reframe the debate on the benefits of the arts. It strove to achieve this by reviewing the totality of arts-related benefits, illustrating the relationship between private and public benefits and dichotomising them into intrinsic and instrumental benefits. The resulting framework is depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts
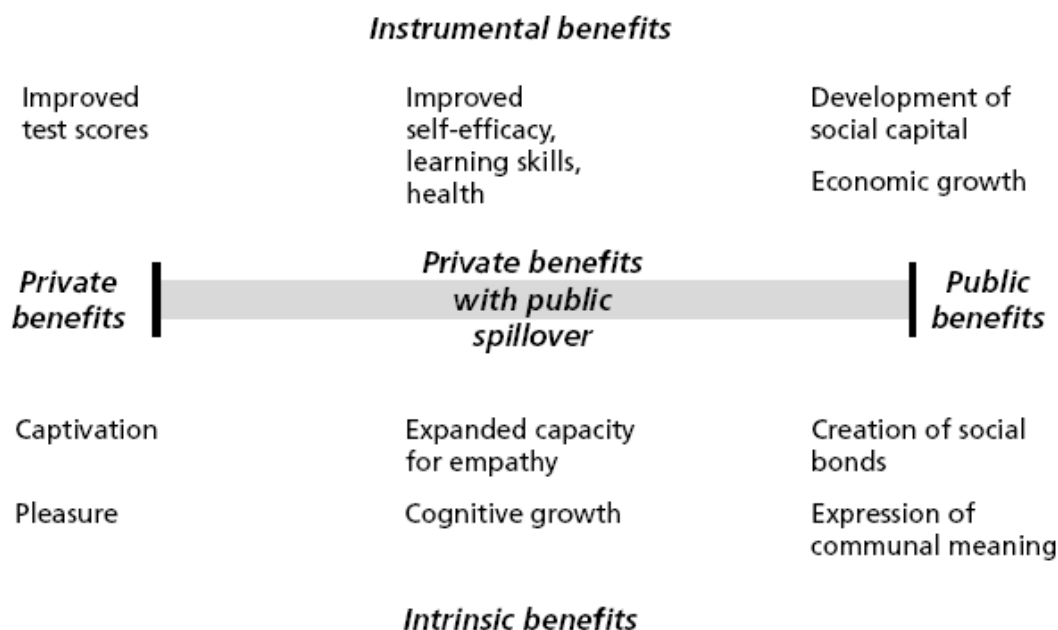

Source: McCarthy *et al* (2004).

This framework raised a few eyebrows amongst academics and practitioners when it was first published and it has certainly succeeded in refocusing the impact debate, if only by posing some pertinent questions. The benefits illustrated here all represent claims that have been made for the arts over the years and we can all probably relate to some of the private, intrinsic benefits such as 'pleasure' and 'captivation'. But the public and instrumental benefits identified in the framework are harder to conceptualise, possibly because they are longer-term and far removed in space and time from the immediate context of the artwork or performance. There are also some high claims here that are almost impossible to evidence: for example, does seeing a good production of *Macbeth* really improve students' test scores and expand their capacity for empathy? Complex psychological concepts like empathy illustrate the need for a more nuanced, reflexive and ethnographic approach to conceiving value.

McCarthy *et al* (2004: xvi) contextualise public value in the following terms: 'Intrinsic benefits accrue to the public sphere when works of art convey what whole communities of people yearn to express. Examples of what can produce these benefits are art that commemorates events significant to a nation's history or a community's identity, art that provides a voice to communities the culture at large has largely ignored, and art that critiques the culture for the express purpose of changing people's views.' In the fields of Sociology and Leisure Studies, there is an increasing interest in the importance of the arts in enhancing community and social engagement. Nicholson and Pearce (2001: 460) list 'enhanced socialization' as a benefit of cultural events and at the heart of this philosophy is Borgmann's notion of 'focal practices – those pursuits which bring an engagement of mind and body and a centring power – and the way in which such practices create shared meaning and communities of celebration' (Arai and Pedlar, 2003: 185). There is a clear link here with anthropologist Victor Turner's (1969) concept of 'communitas' and with Ehrenreich's (2007) notion of 'effervescence'. To this extent, McCarthy *et al*'s framework represents the literature relatively well, acknowledging intrinsic public benefits which are often overlooked within more instrumental language of policy.

A key insight of this framework is that it presents a balanced map of both intrinsic and instrumental benefits and attempts to demonstrate the relationship (or 'spill-over') between private and public benefits. But it ignores the complex interrelationships between these benefits and disregards the growing body of literature on aesthetic growth, wellbeing, self-fulfilment and transformation. By placing private and public, and intrinsic and instrumental benefits in a transecting opposition, the framework simplifies the debate and arguably reinforces the dichotomies it is aiming to destroy.

However, as Brown (2006) points out, the authors' intention was to spark a policy debate rather than to provide a comprehensive toolkit for practitioners. With this in mind, he proposes an extended version of the framework, aimed at providing a kaleidoscopic 'architecture of value' to visually articulate the arts experience (Brown, 2006: 19). This value architecture is displayed in Figure 3. It maps a range of arts benefits by value cluster and Brown divides these clusters as follows: imprint of the arts experience; personal development; human interaction; communal meaning; and economic and social benefits. As we can see, he broadens the framework out from one of opposition to one of interaction, which succeeds in highlighting the connections, complexities and inter-relationships of the various different benefits.

**Figure 3: Map of arts benefits by value cluster**
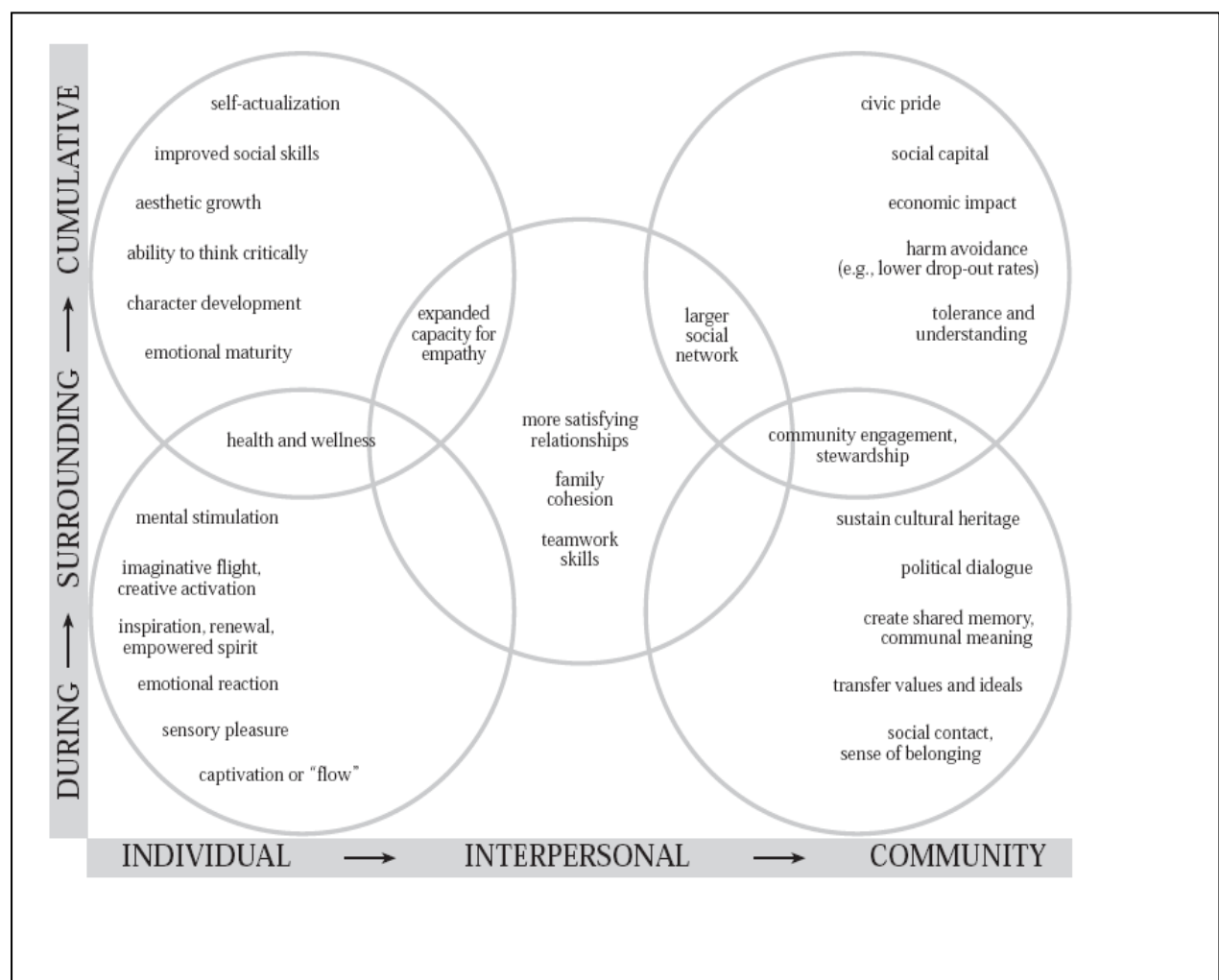
Source: Brown (2006: 21).

This enhanced model rectifies some of its predecessor's omissions, including aesthetic growth, self-actualisation and wellbeing. It also includes 'interpersonal needs', which Getz (1991: 85) defines as 'expressions of community and national identity'. However, as before, the separation of some of these benefits is somewhat arbitrary, with cultural heritage, for example, in a different sphere from civic pride; and although there is an indication of the direction of 'benefits transfer', from the individual to the community and from the instantaneous to the cumulative, there is again a limited focus on process or context. This weakness is acknowledged by Brown (2006: 20), who himself advocates further research into the connections between benefits and enablers: 'Many factors affect the creation of value, and a next step would be to gain a better understanding of the full range of factors and to connect them with specific benefits.'

Brown and Novak's (2007) subsequent research into the intrinsic impacts of live performances attempted to address this weakness and culminated in the delineation of a 3-stage process, namely: Anticipation » Captivation » Intrinsic Impacts. Their survey of 19 artistic performances in 2006 aimed to provide a toolkit with which to *measure* intrinsic impact and concluded that captivation was the most reliable determinant of satisfaction and therefore represented the very 'lynchpin of impact' idealised in 'the state of consciousness described by Csikszentmihlyi's as "Flow"' (Brown and Novak, 2007: 11). To the delight of performers, producers, programmers, ethnographers and sometimes even audiences themselves, this privileged state of consciousness is often visibly manifest in the spectator: 'Through their facial expressions, body language and audible reactions, audiences communicate impact as it is happening. There is no mistaking the silence of rapture during a concert, the moments of shared emotion in a theater [sic] when the plot takes a dramatic twist or the post-performance buzz in the lobby. All are reliable evidence of intrinsic impact' (Brown and Novak, 2007: 5). Brown and Novak are touching on something of profound importance here: namely the role of context and the ethnographer in understanding and capturing or articulating value, particularly as a situational experience.

White and Hede also pick up Brown's challenge to explore the relationship between benefits and enablers, defining an enabler as 'a factor that facilitates the occurrence of impact' (White and Hede, 2008: 27). Their model, replicated in Figure 4, illustrates the various dimensions of the impact of art. Unlike the previous two examples, this model combines individual and collective impact, depicting the blurred lines between the personal and social benefits of the arts. The inner circles again reflect the main themes from the literature – wellbeing, social bonding, aesthetic growth, vision and empathy. But whereas the previous models illustrated the direction of the benefits' inter-connectedness, White and Hede's 'circumplex' portrays impact as a ripple effect, emanating outwards from the core artistic experience. This is an interesting development and provides us with a fresh, more situational perspective, but it again fails to reveal the process or context through which value is created in the first place.

Figure 4: Circumplex of preliminary impacts and enablers of the impact of art
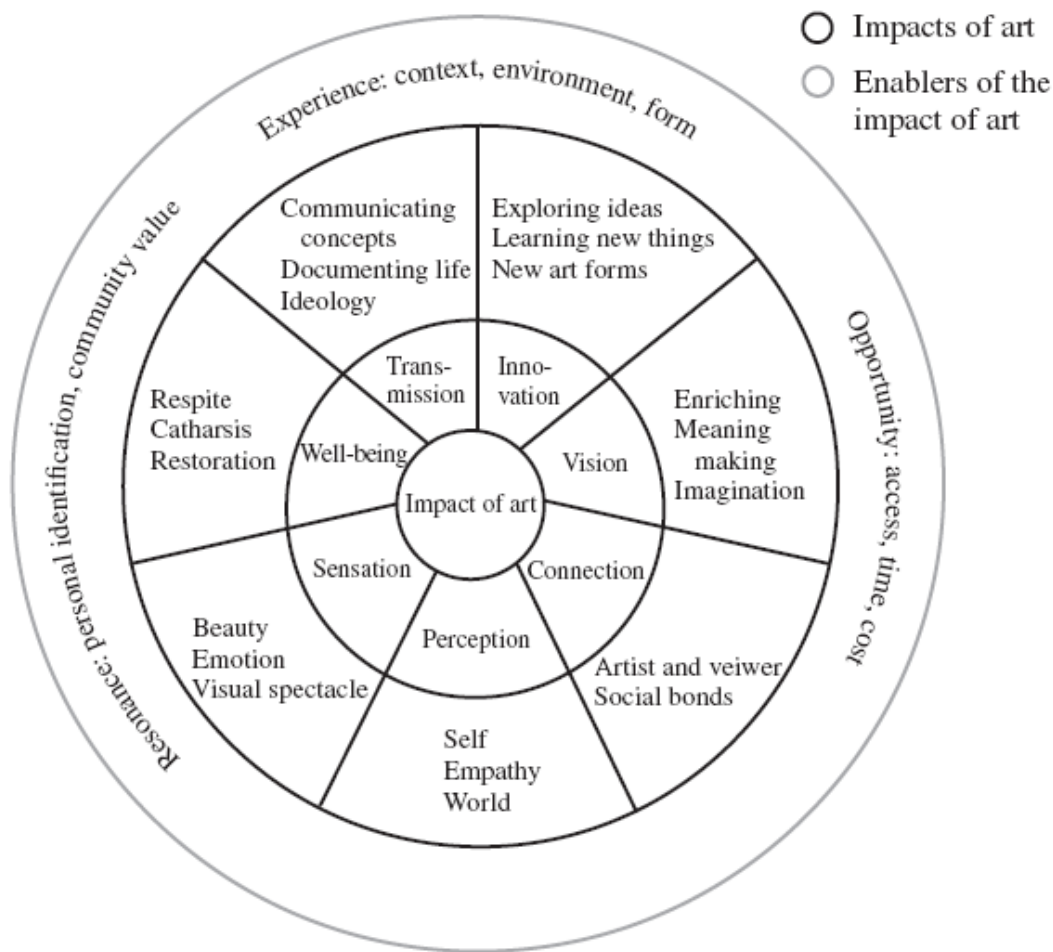
Source: White and Hede (2008: 27).

However, the introduction of the realm of enablers is a big strength here, reflecting significant elements of the literature absent from the previous frameworks. The notion of self-congruence, for example, is reflected in the resonance enabler, which proposes personal identification and the value placed on the art form by the community as significant indicators of impact. The opportunity enabler reflects the marketing impact – the relationship between the consumer and the artistic product in terms of price, location and distribution. The experience realm covers the three areas of context, environment and form, and thus incorporates Brown and Novak's (2007) anticipation or 'readiness to receive' construct as well as the physical and social packaging (the augmented product) and the presentation of the core artistic product itself.

Arguably the most significant addition provided by this model is the inclusion of the concept of catharsis. Catharsis is a complex concept, whose precise interpretation has triggered centuries of critical debate. The dominant view of catharsis has been the purgation theory, which holds that tragic drama can arouse emotions of pity and fear in an audience, which it then quells or purges in the resolution. Falassi's (1987: 4-6) typologies of ritual fit with this interpretation, identifying the rite of purification as 'a cleansing, or chasing away of evil'. But there remains strong opposition to the purgation theory. According to Golden (1973: 473), there are three main schools of thought in the opposition camp: those who see catharsis as a

'moral purification'; those who perceive it as a 'structural purification in which the development of the plot purifies the tragic deed of its moral pollution'; and a third group who recognise the concept as 'a form of intellectual clarification in which the concepts of pity and fear are clarified by the artistic representation of them'. There is no room here to extend this critical review of catharsis, but its inclusion in White and Hede's model succeeds in establishing a link between classical and modern performance theory.

This brief survey of benefits models has shown particular areas of convergence on the theory of impact, with key concepts such as individual pleasure and wellbeing and the creation of social bonds represented in all three models. As discussed, each model has its strengths and weaknesses and each poses some pertinent questions. But by focussing on benefits and impacts, rather than on the less tangible concept of value, all these models are guilty of reducing the arts experience from an inter-subjective, situational, relational and ever-emerging process to a two-dimensional series of outputs, whose values are pre-determined and externally imposed. They thereby risk reproducing the dualisms they may well be trying to counter, such as the intrinsic/instrumental or objective/subjective. By reducing complex benefits to measurable outputs, these frameworks reflect the metric approach to policy in a market-driven economy; but they inevitably fail to fully represent the complexity of art form and practice as situational and relational – i.e. as social and spatial contexts that variously contain the dialectic or embeddedness of process and product and of experience and value, as both intrinsic and instrumental. This shortfall highlights the need to move beyond bounded or outcome based theories and models of value, and to take more ethnographic and reflexive account of arts practice as situational forms which comprise it or to assess them on their own terms and in their own vernacular. This call is expanded in the following analysis of *Black Watch*.

Case Study: National Theatre of Scotland's *Black Watch*

Black Watch recounts the story, from the soldiers' perspective, of the deployment of Scotland's Black Watch regiment at Camp Dogwood during the Iraq War. The play premiered at Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2006 to uniformly rave reviews and has since played to audiences all over the world, with performances at London's Barbican Centre, the Sydney Festival, the New Zealand International Arts Festival, Toronto's Luminato Festival and several runs in New York.

In terms of critical acclaim, *Black Watch* has won a Herald Angel, a Scotsman Fringe First, a List Best Theatre Writing Award, a Stage Award for Best Ensemble, the South Bank Show Award for Theatre, a Writers' Guild of Great Britain Award and four Critics Awards for Theatre in Scotland. *Time Out New York* featured the play in its best plays of 2007 and *New York Magazine* gave it the accolade of Theatrical Event of the Year. This last award is perhaps the most telling, because *Black Watch* is indeed more of an event than a traditional play. Combining documentary drama with political theatre, stylised movement, bagpipes, film, surround sound, and military songs and laments, the play engages with its audience on a range of levels and provides them with a multi-sensory experience, not only of what it's like to fight a modern war but also of what influences people to join an army – a reflexive and situational analysis of war.

National Theatre of Scotland's Artistic Director, Vicky Featherstone summarises the play's global success as follows: '*Black Watch* has been described in the press as a cultural landmark of the twenty-first century (*Sunday Herald*, March 2007). A lofty claim indeed, but it is only once in a lifetime that a piece of theatre is created which celebrates the vibrancy and

possibility of the art form with every second of its performance, which explodes something we are collectively struggling to understand – in this case the Iraq War – and provides a visceral resonance which permeates universally" (Burke, 2007: xv).

Given its global success and the almost unanimously positive response from its audiences, it is fair to conclude that *Black Watch* has had a significant impact. But how can we even begin to capture and assess the value of this impact? In economic terms, this may be relatively easy because this can be measured in terms of box office income and net profit (although as a highly subsidised piece of theatre which was never designed to tour, it took the play almost two years to break even). But even this crude analysis fails to capture the wider economic impact and valuation of the play (the value of cultural tourism, for example).

In terms of 'value for money', it is fair to say that the Scottish Government's investment has paid off – not only by raising the international profile of Scotland's flagship new national company but also by touring the Scottish brand (along with the Scottish National Party's anti-war message, of course) abroad. This recognition was acknowledged in 2007 with the Government's unprecedented invitation to National Theatre of Scotland to open the parliamentary session with a gala performance of *Black Watch*.

If we apply McCarthy *et al*'s framework to *Black Watch*, we can identify clear links between the theory and the audience response. In terms of intrinsic benefits, audience members consistently reported feelings of pleasure and captivation, employing adjectives such as 'magnificent', 'fantastic', 'moving' and 'intense', while critics found it 'thrilling', 'spectacular' and 'compelling' (National Theatre of Scotland, 2009). Many spectators spontaneously communicated their increased understanding of and empathy with the soldiers, whether physically (by laughing and crying) or verbally: '[The play] humanized people who sometimes are not understood in society' (David Loyn, quoted in Artworks Scotland, 2007). There was also strong evidence of a creation of social bonds: 'Burke's play [represents] a massive step forward in our understanding and recognition of a vital part in our national story, and – potentially – of the relationship between Scottish theatre and the widest possible popular audience, both at home, and far beyond our shores' (McMillan, 2007). McMillan's review expresses the collective empathy and cognitive growth unleashed by the play and demonstrates the ability of theatre to engage audiences far beyond the immediate theatre space itself. Her review also touches on the much more complex area of communal meaning.

In terms of McCarthy *et al*'s intrinsic public benefits, *Black Watch* commemorated a significant event in Scotland's (and indeed the world's) history, providing a voice to the ordinary soldier and changing people's views by critiquing the whole premise and operation of the Iraq War. As the psychotherapist Shapiro (1998: 100) points out, 'the stories of our lives, told by our most talented writers […] help us enrich our resources for living and healing'. Anecdotal evidence has revealed the therapeutic benefits of *Black Watch* to a host of soldiers past and present, particularly in regards to post-traumatic stress disorder; indeed the BBC documentary on the play concludes with the girlfriend of David Ironside, one of the soldiers interviewed by the playwright, declaring: 'I hope it brings a closure to it for him' (Artworks Scotland, 2007).

There is no scope here to delve into the educational benefits of the play – suffice to say that the play has already been adopted onto Scottish drama syllabuses. But in terms of social capital, the cumulative benefits of creating new communal meaning and social bonds have perhaps left a lasting legacy. Brown (2006: 20) defines social capital as 'the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values that bind human networks into communities'. By tackling

such a timely and explosive social issue in such a politically neutral and empathetic way, *Black Watch* has certainly succeeded in fostering a sense of mutual understanding of its subject matter amongst an international audience of largely non-traditional theatre-goers.

Regarding enablers, there is also a close fit with White and Hede's model. Feedback from the play's audiences revealed a strong element of personal and social resonance, both generally among the war-weary spectators and specifically among the strong military component of the audience. In terms of catharsis, there is certainly an abundance of pity and fear in *Black Watch*. Audience members often spoke of being 'touched' and 'moved' and of the 'pulsating', 'visceral' brutality of their experience (National Theatre of Scotland, 2009).

So benefits models can clearly provide a framework and vocabulary to articulate some key aspects of value. But they fail to provide the whole picture because, as discussed earlier, they reduce the complexity of the audience experience and shoehorn it into pre-determined outcomes. White and Hede's experience enablers of context and environment illustrate this point perfectly, and they take us back to our previous discussion on ethnography and reflexivity. For how can we properly capture and assess the holistic value of plays like *Black Watch* if we don't understand the context and the environment of the play? And how can we understand the context and environment of the play unless we are *there*, immersed in the physical environment and witnessing the value emerge? If we consider reflexivity as a critical analysis of context concerned with inter-subjectivity, then the only way to reach a reflexive assessment of a play's value is through an ethnography which embeds us in the context of the play. For if we don't *experience* what the actors and audiences do, how else can we appreciate the creative process and assess the myriad layers of value it creates?

In relation to *Black Watch*, a situational, ethnographic approach might have captured the value of the stories generated in the initial research process; it might have described the authenticity of the rehearsal process, during which the cast were ordered to march around Glasgow by a serving Sergeant Major; and it might have depicted the sense of anticipation on the first preview of the play as the audience took their seats in two opposing banks and noted their tears as they rose as one to applaud at the end.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have addressed the relevance of the concept of 'value' in the arts sector and critically analysed traditional ways of assessing it. This is of particular relevance to contemporary concerns with the impact of the arts on society (both economic and social), and particularly where public funding or interest is identified. The point has not been to define or measure 'value' but to emphasise the situational and relational context of attempts to capture it. In part, this recognises that 'value' is formed from a social and cultural imaginary that emphasises an economy or balance sheet of dualisms (e.g. insert the word 'value' after any of these words: positive and negative, traditional and modern, product and process, intrinsic and instrumental).

The rationale, therefore, has been to subvert dualistic and didactic statements such as 'the arts are of intrinsic *or* instrumental benefit'. Rather, value is deemed to be practice-based, performed and experienced in situational, relational and ethnographic contexts. Broadening access to the arts, whether through audience development, co-creation or participatory projects, can therefore only broaden our knowledge of the conditions and articulations of cultural value.

In brief, 'value' needs to be considered both intrinsically *and* instrumentally, and spatially as well as socially: value is a consequence of, and embedded in, social relations (which include cultural, economic and political dimensions); value can be understood and interpreted in multiple ways in any given context or time (directly related to the previous point of social relations); and value is contingent, negotiable and always in formation. 'Value' is therefore a dialectic of these conditions and should be understood as such, particularly when questions of impact are being considered.

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