

Economics is Meaningless

Gavin Wade

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Economics is meaningless. Culture is meaning.

Economics is meaningless without culture.

Culture is primary. Economics is secondary.

To gain traction with her government colleagues and the country at large Maria Miller, the Culture Secretary, needs to make convincing cultural arguments not convincing economic arguments.

Making economic arguments for culture promotes the idea that culture can be measured by economics, should be measured by economics. It promotes the idea that it is desirable to produce culture to be measured by economics. It promotes the idea that good culture is culture that is easily measurable through economic systems. This is not true, never has been true and will never be true.

Promoting the idea that good art and culture is easily measurable is an aggressive tactic to ensure that culture is conformist, compliant, obedient, and manageable within economic systems.

Beyond that it is to misunderstand why Britain's culture is successful. Culture is marketable but it is not because it is designed to be marketable or measured in economic or marketing terms. Culture is marketable because it is successful on cultural terms.

Culture is primary. Marketing is secondary.

To attempt to make arguments that ignore the difference between these two positions is dangerous for both the support of culture and the understanding of culture.

Markets can be indifferent to quality but culture cannot be indifferent to quality. A Culture Secretary should know this and be able to argue robustly for quality against profit, quality against value for money, quality against marketability, quality against economic measurement.

Economic arguments for culture come across as elitist and old fashioned. To perceive culture by idealising the market as democratic, or to make cultural arguments based on a doctrine of consumer sovereignty, is to appear as a 'Gordon Gekko' of culture. This is no image for a Culture Secretary.

Argument for funding must be made on cultural grounds not economic grounds.

British Culture should NOT be presented as commodity. Culture should never be presented as 'compelling product' to sell anywhere.

This will destroy culture.

If the Culture Secretary pledges to 'fight the corner' for culture with the treasury in the runup to the spending review then she needs to act culturally, she needs to encourage the treasury to think culturally.

Saying that the treasury will never think culturally and that the treasury is not interested in meaning is one thing, and likely the current reality, but then say that. Acknowledge the reality of the existing conditions in order to change them, not to bend culture to fit them. Acknowledge it but don't give up.

Never give up.

Culture is worth fighting for and that is the function of a Culture Secretary – to never give up on culture.

Economic conditions are now being programmed to give the appearance of being cultural conditions without acting in any way, shape or form like culture.

Arguments for economic measuring should be made on cultural grounds, on health grounds, on education grounds, on environmental grounds.

Imagine this instead. Imagine having to fight for economics based on the grounds of culture, health, education and environment.

This is a much healthier and more appropriate way to utilise economics. Economics is a vital human system of organisation, exchange and distribution. It is a tool to support the important aspects of being human. It is not the function of humanity. It is a tool. Culture is the function of humanity and a culture secretary should be able to fight the corner of culture by making compelling arguments for how to support culture with the appropriate level of economic investment to maintain and to grow the international standing and national vitality of British Arts and Culture.

The Culture Secretary says "British culture and creativity are now more in demand than ever before." It is in demand because of its quality based on cultural grounds.

Now then is the time to invest more in culture based on arguments of quality, to further grow culture on cultural grounds, supported by the culture secretary, the treasury, the British people, and economics as a whole.

Thankyou.