

provide and, above all, a commitment to the central values found in the arts and the humanities. I have no argument with that, nor with the specific list of values to which Carsaniga draws attention in his paper. Perhaps our agreement could also extend to the following concluding consideration.

We have to recognise that a study of the arts and humanities is likely to throw up conflicting views about the nature of value and to furnish us with conflicting sets of values. The absence of agreement on a common set of values and the fragmented state of modern culture are further components of the problems which beset us. In this situation, the idea of a unified culture marked by a common measure of minds, and some shared set of general beliefs (including perhaps some myths), and commitment to a common set of values, commends itself. At the same time, unity within a culture is not an unalloyed good, as any careful reader of Plato's *Republic* or observer of modern totalitarian states would recognise. Concern with a basic sense of common good, in terms of respect and justice and related values, is necessary across a society and between peoples to overcome harmful factionalism and the damaging effects of fragmentation and to promote the conditions for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of the world of which we are part. But such concern does not require anything like a totally unified community characterised by uniform beliefs and practices and moral unanimity. I do not think that it is best to see culture as a single whole. A society can be best understood, as Aristotle proposed, as a community of communities within which a wide variety of associations and practices can flourish. Some values need to run across the whole of a society, but the unity of a rich culture presupposes the existence of immense diversity.

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## Rejoinder

GIOVANNI CARSANIGA

I welcome Paul Crittenden's response because, as he himself points out, it is difficult to deal unambiguously with complex issues in the space of a couple of sentences; and what he writes helps me to explain my position. By denying the existence of a dichotomy

between the arts and the sciences, and by affirming the need for both to pursue the advancement of knowledge in a rational and rigorous manner, I did not intend to suggest that there may not be diversity in unity, or that the same standards of proof should prevail in both humanities and sciences. It would certainly be a mistake to model all philosophical inquiry on mathematics for the very good reason that not all scientific inquiry is modelled on mathematics. Since the days of Heisenberg and Gödel scientists have come to realise that many problems in physics and indeed in mathematics cannot be subject to a clear decision procedure or to logically rigorous proof any more than (even if not in the same sense as) problems in philosophy or literary criticism. Some areas of human knowledge may be more concerned with facts, and some others with values, principles and criteria: but this is a distinction common to both sciences and the humanities.

I concur with Dr Crittenden's view that the problems we contend with are deeply embedded in our culture and cannot be accounted for *solely* by reference to the characters or doings of our politicians. It is nevertheless those whom we allow to carry the responsibility of government who spend trillions on arms, wage wars, cut University funds, allow industry to pollute the environment, etc., not the common people. Whether Eisenhower is in power, or Bush, may not make much difference: but I still have to hear from the present incumbent any warning about the excessive powers of the industrial-military complex. The point I was trying to make is that we cannot afford to let our politicians run the whole show, because most of them do not understand the long-term consequences of their myopic and ill-informed short-term decisions. And, since the problems are embedded in our culture, we have to revise and reform our own conception of what culture is and does.