

**Institution:**

University of St Andrews

**Unit of Assessment: 32 – Philosophy****Title of case study: Philosophy and Public Affairs****1. Summary of the impact**

St Andrews philosophers have brought their expertise into dialogue with professionals and members of the wider public, on matters of current concern. The impact has been created in three domains:

- Impact on professional practice (Haldane's research on values, practical reasoning and punishment helps healthcare professionals make difficult decisions, and helps judges reflect upon ethical dilemmas);
- Impact on Christian organisations and institutions (Haldane's research on the role of religion in education and in public life influences educators, campaigners, and policy-makers);
- Impact on public debate about environmentalism and climate change (Mulgan's work on future generations and Scruton's research on environmental conservatism have played significant roles in public debate, in part mediated by Mulgan's introductory writings).

**2. Underpinning research**

**John Haldane** (Professor, in post since 1983) has written widely across areas of ethical theory and practical ethics, social and political philosophy, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of education; many of his papers are collected in his *Faithful Reason* (2004), *Reasonable Faith* (2009) and *Practical Philosophy* (2010). He has developed a distinctive account of the role of philosophy in the wider world, arguing against an idea of 'applied philosophy' according to which philosophy is first completed and then applied to practical issues, preferring instead a 'practical philosophy' which begins with questions posed by human practice and develops philosophical responses to the issues raised [1, especially the 'Introduction' and chapter 1]. Haldane articulates an account of the 'public philosopher', set in contrast with those presented by Rawls and by Habermas, with a particular focus on questions about how religious commitments and concepts can enter into public reasoning about the practical challenges which face us [2].

Haldane has a long-standing research interest in the role of values in education, in the context of an account of education as a norm-bearing and norm-constrained social practice. For example, he edited *Values, Education and the Human World* (St Andrews Studies in Philosophy and Public Affairs, Imprint Academic, 2004), a collection of the Victor Cook lectures, contributing his own chapter 'The Nature of Values' to section I 'Values and Values Education'; the volume was described as 'highly engaging...well-written and thought-provoking' (*Journal of the Philosophy of Education*). Earlier work includes 'Education: Conserving Tradition' in Almond (ed.) *An Introduction to Applied Ethics* (Blackwell 1995), and 'The Very Idea of Spiritual Values' [3]. Haldane's recent 'Understanding Education' (chapter 13 of [1]) argues for a conception of education as 'conserving bodies of knowledge, sentiment and conduct as these are incarnate in traditional practices.' (p.333)

**Roger Scruton** (Professorial Fellow, in post since 2011) argues for a conservative environmentalism in his *Green Philosophy: How to think seriously about the Planet* [4]. Ideas of trusteeship, tradition, home and land are set in a philosophical context reaching back to Hume, Smith, Burke, Hegel, and Tocqueville; Scruton develops a notion of 'oikophilia', love of the household, which enables him to distinguish his conservatism from more market-focused strains. For example, chapter 8, 'Beauty, Piety and Desecration', draws upon Scruton's earlier work in aesthetics, particularly his books on architecture, to argue that 'no cogent environmental policy can be developed that does not, in the contest between beauty and utility, put beauty first' [4, p.257].

**Tim Mulgan** (Professor, in post since 2005) has developed a much-discussed theory of our obligations to future generations, based on a distinctive rule-consequentialist account of the morality of individual reproduction. In his *Future People* [5], he argues that the resulting theory accounts for a wide range of independently plausible intuitions concerning individual morality, intergenerational justice, and international justice. In his 'The Demanding Future' [6], he develops these ideas further, by drawing on connections with his earlier book *The Demands of Consequentialism* (Oxford University Press 2005).

### 3. References to the research

[1] John Haldane: *Practical Philosophy: Ethics, Society and Culture* (St Andrews Studies in Philosophy and Public Affairs, Imprint Academic, 2010). [Book] Evidence of quality: reprints 11 essays published since 1993 (plus some earlier pieces), original sources include journals such as *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, *Philosophy*, and *Social Philosophy and Policy* (CUP); described as 'erudite, sharp and wide-ranging' (*Philosophical Quarterly*).

[2] John Haldane: 'Reasoning about the Good and the Role of the Public Philosopher' in John Keown and Robert P. George (eds.) *Reason, Morality and Law* (Oxford University Press, 2013). [Chapter] Evidence of quality: leading publisher; other distinguished contributors include Raz, Waldron, Crisp, Kenny, Gardner, Kramer, and Pink.

[3] John Haldane: 'The Very Idea of Spiritual Values' in Carr and Haldane (eds.) *Spirituality, Philosophy and Education* (Routledge 2003). [Chapter] Evidence of quality: well-regarded publisher; other contributors include Cottingham, Halstead, Dunne; to be re-issued in paperback 15/09/2014.

[4] Roger Scruton: *Green Philosophy: How to Think Seriously About the Planet* (Atlantic Books, January 2012), published as *How to Think Seriously About the Planet: The Case for an Environmental Conservatism* by Oxford University Press in the US. [Book] Evidence of quality: described as 'dazzling' (Simon Jenkins, *Sunday Times*) and 'valuable' (Caroline Lucas, *Independent*); published by OUP Philosophy (within 'Practical Ethics' list).

[5] Tim Mulgan: *Future People*, (Oxford University Press, 2006). [Book] Evidence of quality: leading publisher; described as 'incredibly impressive' (*NDPR*), 'fascinating and extremely worthwhile' (*Mind*); 59 citations listed on Google Scholar.

[6] Tim Mulgan: 'The Demanding Future' in Chappell (ed.) *The Problem of Moral Demandingness* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009). [Chapter] Evidence of quality: well-regarded publisher; other contributors include O'Neill, Swanton, Cruft, Hooker; Mulgan's chapter appears on reading list for IDEA5270M (*Global Environmental Ethics*) at the University of Leeds.

**4. Details of the impact** This research has had significant impact in three domains: professional practice, Christian organisations, and public debate about environmentalism.

#### Impact on professional practice

Together with clinicians and other professionals from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government, Haldane was a member of the working group which produced the report *Making Difficult Decisions in NHS Boards in Scotland*, published March 2010 (the difficult decisions in question concern prioritisation of healthcare resources) [S3]. Haldane, the only philosopher involved, was able to draw upon his research on values and practical reasoning (e.g. [1], especially the papers in section I). This report has been cited by further NHS documents, for example *A Framework for Decision-Making for the Scottish Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis and Screening Service*, and the *NHS Shetland Decision-Making Policy*; it was cited by Nicola Sturgeon MSP in responding to written question S3W-39407 in the Scottish Parliament In March 2011. [S4]

Between 2010 and 2013, both Haldane and Dr Lisa Jones (Principal Teaching Fellow, in post since 2004), have worked with the Judicial Skills Committee of the Scottish Judiciary, providing ethics training as part of quarterly residential courses. These courses were attended by judges, sheriffs and other judicial officials from Scotland, Italy, Ireland, Romania, Germany, and elsewhere, including Chief Justices of the UK and Canada, and the Master of the Rolls. Feedback on these

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

courses includes “*Excellent contribution that set agenda for a very lively discussion of a wide range of topical issues with direct bearing on judicial work*” (25/2/2010) and “*made me give thought to the time I take in my working day to think of fundamental ethical or philosophical issues arising in cases. I will now make time*” (2/2/11). [S2]

In developing this training, Jones and Haldane used various elements of Haldane’s research in practical philosophy. For example, ‘Crime, Compensation and Social Solidarity’ ([1], chapter 11), was relevant to the following session held in 2012-13: “*Ethics of Punishment’ by Prof John Haldane, University of St Andrews. This presentation looked at theories of punishment and the philosophical angle of what punishment entails. This was followed by some problem scenarios put to the participants, looking at ethical dilemmas they could potentially face. Feedback for the course was positive. Delegates noted that the sessions were interesting and informative.*” [S5, p.16]

**Impact on Christian institutions and organisations**

Haldane is a leading Catholic thinker, who has published philosophical research on the role of religion and philosophy in the public sphere (e.g. [2]), including work in philosophy of education (e.g. [1] chapter 13 ‘Understanding Education’, and [3]). Christian institutions worldwide have sought his expertise, and he has engaged formally with the following:

- *Pontifical Council for Culture* (Rome): Haldane is a Consultor, one of a group of experts asked to, ‘assist the Council by their research and the information and opinions they provide’.
- The *Center for Ethics and Culture* (Notre Dame, US) brings together policymakers, physicians and academics ‘to share the richness of [the] Catholic moral and intellectual tradition’): Haldane is a Senior Research Fellow.
- The *Anscombe Bioethics Centre* (Oxford) is not affiliated to any HEI, but ‘engages in scholarly dialogue with academics and practitioners of other traditions. It contributes to public policy debates as well as to debates and consultations within the Church. It runs educational programmes for, and gives advice to, Catholics and other interested healthcare professionals and biomedical scientists’: Haldane is a member of the Academic Advisory Council.
- *Campion College* (Sydney) is a Catholic liberal arts college (the first in Australia): Haldane is a member of the International Advisory Board, tasked with ‘providing advice and assistance to the College on issues related to its broad educational interests and initiatives’.
- The *St Ninian Institute* (Dundee) is an educational institute serving the Diocese of Dunkeld as well as the Catholic community in Scotland: Haldane is a member of the Board of Trustees.
- The *Catholic Union of Great Britain* is the leading lay organization in Great Britain to champion the teachings of the Catholic Church in the public sphere: Haldane is Vice-President (Scotland).

Some of this impact lies within the higher education sector, and is included not as impact on research or the advancement of academic knowledge, but as impact on students, teachers and administrators in these institutions, via advice on structures, curricula and public activities (as per Annex C of the REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions). [S6]

Haldane has taken part in several high-profile public debates about the role of religion in public affairs. For example, he debated ‘Secularism and Faith in the Public Square’ with Christopher Hitchens in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford (2010); the video has been downloaded over 200,000 times from YouTube [S7], and prompted debate across blogs from many different perspectives. He spoke at the 2012 Battle of Ideas at the Barbican on ‘The New Culture Wars’, and debated ‘Tradition: Friend or Foe of Freedom’ live on Australia’s ABC network (July 2013). He has also engaged with politicians and other public figures; for example, one crossbench peer writes “*I have benefited from John Haldane’s writings on fundamental ethical, social and political ideas, as are found in his book Practical Philosophy: Ethics, Culture and Society (2010) [1], finding them useful in my own thinking for example about the nature of liberalism and about difficult and contested issues such as euthanasia.*” [S1]

**Impact on public debate about environmentalism and climate change**

Tim Mulgan’s *Future People* [6] paved the way for his *Ethics for a Broken World: Imagining*

## Impact case study (REF3b)

*Philosophy After Catastrophe* (Acumen, October 2011). Aimed at a broad audience, this book takes the perspective of future people living in a world where material resources are insufficient to meet everyone's basic needs, and is presented as a series of 'history of philosophy' lectures reflecting back on the thought of our times. The ethical questions which currently concern us are shown to look very different from the perspective of a ruined world.

*Ethics for a Broken World* has sold over 800 copies to date, and has been warmly reviewed both in academic journals, and in wider fora: "What is particularly impressive about this book is the engaging style in which it is written. It is accessible, entertaining, and even funny. This makes it the perfect book for those with an amateur interest in the subject." (*Philosophy Now* July 2013).

Likewise, Mulgan's research has influenced Scruton's *Green Philosophy* [3]: e.g. reference to Mulgan's [6] on p.187 of Scruton's [3]. *Green Philosophy* has been received with great interest by reviewers across the national press: "philosopher Roger Scruton's thoughtful study on environmentalism in the conservative tradition arrives at a timely moment ... a valuable contribution to the debate over environmental politics" (Caroline Lucas MP, *Independent* 13/1/12), "Agree or disagree, Scruton has written a dazzling book" (Simon Jenkins, *Sunday Times* 1/1/12), "Scruton's case for a green conservatism is compelling" (Julian Baggini, *Financial Times* 30/12/11). [S8] It has attracted widespread discussion on websites including lowimpact.org, bryanappleyard.com, themonthly.com.au, conservativehome.blogs.org, and Critical Marxist blog tendancecoatsey.wordpress.com, typically with lively debate in the comments section. [S9]

Both Mulgan and Scruton have given a number of public talks based on this research. For Mulgan, these include public lectures about the 'Broken World' ideas in St Andrews (2008), Auckland (2009), and at Dutch think-tank the Club of Amsterdam (2010). For Scruton these include talks and debates about environmentalism at UK think-tank the Policy Exchange (2012), the Royal Society of Arts (2012), the Gladstone Club (2012) the Forum for European Philosophy at the LSE (2013), and in Basel (2012); he also discussed *Green Philosophy* on Radio 4's *Start the Week* (5/12/2011). [S10].

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[S1] Email from member of the House of Lords, confirming Haldane's interactions with him.

[S2] Letter from Director of the Judicial Institute for Scotland, confirming feedback from judges and others on ethics training provided by Haldane and Jones.

[S3] *Making Difficult Decision in NHS Boards in Scotland*, 2010. Haldane's membership of working group confirmed on p.32.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00392165.pdf>

[S4] <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S3W-39407&ResultsPerPage=10> Report referred to in Scottish parliament.

[S5] <http://www.scotland-judiciary.org.uk/Upload/Documents/JudicialInstituteForScotlandAnnualReport201213.pdf>

Source of quotation on 'punishment' session for Judicial Skills Committee (p.16).

[S6] Websites confirming Haldane's roles within various Christian institutions: [Pontifical Council for Culture](#), [The Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture](#), [The Anscombe Bioethics Centre](#), [Campion College](#) and [The Catholic Union of Great Britain](#).

[S7] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pflU-nnY4MA> Download figures for Haldane-Hitchens.

[S8] Reviews of *Green Philosophy* in the national press.

[S9] Blog discussions of *Green Philosophy*

[S10] Evidence of public lectures, talks and debates by Mulgan and Scruton.