Reply to Jordan

Andrew McPherson and Charles D Raab

Jordan warns of Babel but claims that different 'truths   t be arbitrated. He cannot intend this self-contradictory position.   s he maintain it when he prefers his account of the Scottish myth to   ain, he says, rightly, that we show 'how networks can operate by sub   usly selecting participants with particular values'. Thus Jordan co   that there can be logical grounds for preferring a particular accour   iers' views and behaviour. Were there not, Babel would multiply an   ould indeed 'wring our hands' over reality.

Description is practical politics. Does 'vocational education   be a liberating or an enslaving curriculum? The Labour Party has nev   led. Description is also academic politics. Can the reality of   onal governance be adequately expressed by the vocabulary of on   mic discipline? One must look to other social sciences as well,   o to educational practice. Is this 'self-indulgent'? No, but it risks s   est. Hence our concern with the safeguards of theory, method, and   ce.

Jordan writes that 'pluralism and corporatism have   een constructed as clearly specified and easily applied theories. It is   g to see them as alternatives but unwise'. We say the same (pp. xii,   173, 482). We discuss big ideas, not big names. A pervasive theme of   k is the effect of educational expansion on power-dependencies in g   nt. This is more than a 'nod' in Rhodes' direction (see p.472). Jo   wn work equates the concepts of 'subgovernment' and 'policy cc   ty'. The latter is a second pervasive theme, *pace* Jordan. We   eed conclude that educational governance since 1945 fits no theory   But how could a reader conclude the same before we presented the s   ne- tenths of the book)? Is Jordan really content to write for a r   vho 'simply wants to know who exercised power'? Simply indeed! In   lly, Jordan's preferred account of myth is ours too. We explicitly re   the view, wrongly attributed to us, that myth is merely false belief (s   07, 498-501).