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Glasgow's Year of Culture and Discourses of Cultural Policy on the Cusp of Globalisation

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During the course of 2002–03, the European Capital of Culture title was the subject of a widely publicised bidding war between British cities hoping to host the award in 2008. Much of the discussion surrounding this nomination process was about Glasgow, which celebrated its own Year of Culture in 1990 – an event that has been widely credited with inspiring a renaissance in the city's fortunes. Today, over and above any potential cultural legacies,[1] 'Glasgow 1990' is frequently cited as a benchmark example of arts-led urban regeneration and successful city re-branding, a lasting perception that is indicative of how the event itself was conceived within cultural policy discourses of marketing, tourism and economic enterprise.

1. The definition of 'culture' is clearly a complex and mobile area of discussion, including broad understandings within anthropology where culture includes the entirety of human activity. Here 'culture' is used in a narrower sense, meaning the arts, literatures and crafts created and experienced by professionals, amateurs and audiences. This reflects the definition most often employed within cultural policy research and cultural management studies.

Indeed, as this paper will explore, Glasgow 1990 provides an apposite forum through which to examine how cultural policy has become articulated in terms of an increasingly dominant ideology of the enterprise economy. As this suggests, a central focus of this paper is on ideological exchange and discourse and on how prominent dialogues that occurred during Glasgow 1990 can today be seen as located at a key point in the intersection between globalisation and cultural policy.

This paper will explore the relationship between two particular aspects of globalisation and cultural policy initiatives such as Glasgow 1990. First, and for this paper most significantly, globalisation can be seen as the predominance of a particular way of seeing the world, manifested through a discourse that places corporate and individual economic enterprise at the centre of the liberal democracy. It is here, in particular, that Glasgow's Year of Culture – located at the cusp of the formalisation of 'globalisation' as a centrally resonate term of our times – intersects revealingly with now dominant ideologies of enterprise and the

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production and reception of cultural activity. For, as this paper will explore, the challenge that met the cultural policy discourses of 1990 are in clear contrast to their general acceptance today as almost common sense pillars of the way the world works, both generally and specifically in terms of the arts. Second, globalisation can be articulated in terms of an increasing obliteration of boundaries and differences, with the application of the logic of market forces tending to both economic and cultural homogenisation. In this context, this paper will also ask to what extent Glasgow's Year of Culture delivered a homogenised and consumption orientated cultural-economic 'product', or whether City of Culture programming more successfully connected the international with local artists and audiences.

To explore these themes, this paper will first set out the narrative behind Glasgow's Year of Culture, revealing how Glasgow 1990 was located in disputed articulations of the relationship between art and enterprise – and how this was played out between Thatcherite, traditional socialist, and pragmatic Labour ideologies. It will also examine how these competing discourses impacted on the production and reception of three prominent examples of City of Culture programming. Finally, the paper will ask to what extent it is the dominance of discourses that place culture as servant to economic utility and urban regeneration that is the real legacy of Glasgow 1990.[2]

2. This paper emerges from an extensive research project, carried out by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, examining the long-term social and cultural impacts of Glasgow 1990. Particular thanks are due to Beatriz Garcia, the project leader in this study, for her advice and comments on this paper.

GLASGOW'S YEAR OF CULTURE

The European City of Culture title was initiated by the European Union in 1985 and first held by an unsurprising roll call of great European cities – Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, West Berlin and Paris – who all celebrated the year as a marker of their already-apparent cultural status. The 1990 title was scheduled to be in the United Kingdom, where for the first time rather than a closed nomination system an open competition was held to find the host-city. Nine cities competed, with Glasgow receiving the nomination in October 1986.

With a very different status and image than the first five host cities, a degree of astonishment accompanied this decision to select Glasgow. (Image 1 illustrates the visceral response in some quarters to the idea that Glasgow could be a cultural city.) In a way, however, this surprise was appropriate, as the British government explicitly wanted to differentiate their approach to the City of Culture initiative from that elsewhere in Europe:

> In general we resist European attempts to take a centralist view on a wide variety of subject matter. The UK choice of our 'city of culture' should reflect this developed approach. [Glasgow's bid] has focussed on [the city's] regeneration as a post-industrial success story, and there is little doubt that much of this commerce-orientated approach will seep into the City of Culture promotion too. . . . Glasgow presents an image in tune with the present Government's policy of partnership between business and public funding.[3]

3. Office of Arts and Libraries, *UK Nomination for European City of Culture*. Minutes. 1 October 1986. (Department of Culture, Media and Sport Archives, London).

Image 1 Cartoon by Mel Calman, *The Times*, 21 October 1986 – announcing Glasgow's nomination as European City of Culture. Reproduced courtesy of S & C Calman

This desire to employ the City of Culture title as a tool to drive economic and urban regeneration, rather than as an event to be led by central subsidy, clearly matched the political ideology of the Thatcher government of the time – right down to the competitive edge that was inspired between cities in the bidding process. This Westminster agenda was echoed by the intentions of those behind Glasgow's bid locally, who also perceived the title as not just being about the celebration of culture. Instead, Glasgow 1990 was intended to play a role in transforming perceptions of the city, as the city's bid document for the City of Culture title put it: '[The] European City of Culture will have an enormously beneficial effect on the city in continuing the momentum of the regeneration process and by providing the opportunity, perhaps once and for all, of confirming the new image of Glasgow'.[4]

The attitude of the Glasgow authorities to the title was therefore largely opportunistic, seeking to use the 'culture city' tag as a vehicle for marketing and regenerative purposes. Consequently, from Glasgow's successful nomination bid, through to 1990 and beyond, the explicit intention was to exploit the City of Culture title for pragmatic ends. As the then leader of Glasgow District Council, Pat Lally, expressed it,

4. City of Glasgow District Council, 'European City of Culture 1990: Supplementary Submission'. Unpublished Document (Glasgow: Glasgow University Library, 1986). See also Glasgow Action, *Glasgow Action: The First Steps* (Glasgow: Glasgow Action, 1987).

'we are going to use the title for maximum advantage – we are going to milk it for all it is worth'.[5]

5. Pat Lally, 'Why Glasgow Should Ignore the Hysteria in Culture Debate', *The Herald* (30 June 1990).

1990 OPPOSITION

Unequivocal and defiant, this statement by Pat Lally was his response to what became during 1990 a growing, although never mass-movement, level of opposition and disquiet about the City of Culture project. At the time, the most widely vocalised criticism was simply that the large amount of public money being spent on the arts might be better used elsewhere. Populist and largely apolitical, this articulated the ever-prominent awareness of Glasgow's continuing and desperate status in terms of unemployment, health and housing, alongside which expenditure on the arts could be perceived as an unaffordable luxury. This perspective was epitomised in the frequently repeated pun that the only culture relevant to Glaswegians was the culture that grew on the walls of their damp and badly maintained council housing.[6]

Taking this populist rejection further were the more explicitly political critiques that questioned the objectives and ideology of the initiative. This opposition was lead by the 'Workers City' group, along with a small number of prominent artists and writers – including Alasdair Gray, David Kemp,[7] James Kelman, and Tom Leonard.[8] Here criticisms included the perception that the city was being gentrified at the expense and exclusion of local residents; and that the entire event was intricately tied up with the needs of big business rather than those of culture, let alone the people of Glasgow. For example, Farquhar McLay, leader of Workers City, argued that:

> At heavy cost to the public purse Glasgow's image is to be overhauled and tarted-up so that financial services can flourish, up-market shopping malls thrive and high-priced luxury flats proliferate to the glory of capitalism. It is the year of the exploitation of art by big business for big business.[9]

Emerging from a traditionally socialist perspective, the language used by Workers City and similar campaigners is familiar as that of the oppositional left. Today, 'globalisation' would no doubt replace 'big business' in the above quotation – the vocabulary moving on but retaining the same criticism of socially heartless and geographically footloose corporate enterprise. What is particularly intriguing here, however, is that while the eventual target of Workers City was the Conservative government in London, their more immediate target was the Labour leadership of Glasgow District Council and the City of Culture. The two perspectives that are presented in this controversy over culture can therefore be seen as part of the then emerging battle between what became old and new Labour. Indeed, examining Glasgow 1990 within this context is particularly appropriate given the parallels made at the time between the 'pragmatic' and business-friendly Labour leadership in Glasgow and that of Militant Labour in Liverpool.

6. By no means the only expression of this was *Dampbusters*, a community production by the Easthall Theatre Group, described as a 'play about a city where culture means the stuff on your walls'.

7. See David Kemp, *Glasgow 1990: The True Story Behind the Hype* (Glasgow: ArtWork, 1990).

8. For a satirical attack on Culture City from an artist's perspective see Tom Leonard, 'A Handy Form for Artists for Use in Connection with the City of Culture', in *Two Members' Monologues* (Glasgow: The Edward Polin Press, 1989).

9. Farquhar McLay. 'Glasgow 1990: The Shameless Endorsement of Greed', in McLay (ed.), *The Reckoning: Public Loss, Private Gain (Beyond the Culture City Rip Off)* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1990), pp. 86–87.

CULTURAL POLITICS

Recognition of these oppositional voices, therefore, allows the ideological perspective implicit within the Glasgow 1990 project to become visible. This is particularly telling, as it is clear that concepts of artistic entrepreneurialism, city marketing and economic utility emerging in 1990 have all become increasingly normalised within discourses of cultural policy. Indeed, the ambitions of Conservative central and Labour local government are clear examples of what has today (under a New Labour ideology) become an entrenched discourse that stresses the role of culture (the 'creative industries') in economic development and enterprise. The value of paying attention to past critical voices of the left is perhaps, therefore, to highlight how they were articulated in opposition to increasingly dominant discourses of the right.

Indeed, today this employment of a cultural event or festival as a tool in 'arts-led urban regeneration' is very familiar, with Glasgow perceived as a model to follow. This was abundantly manifested during the competition for the 2008 Capital of Culture title and particularly for Liverpool, the eventual winner of the nomination, whose bid declared: 'The template of Glasgow, which made such a success of their City of Culture year in 1990, sits most comfortably with Liverpool ... The legacy is a new Glasgow ... again this could be Liverpool.'[10]

10. City of Liverpool Council. *City of Culture 2008: Executive Summary* (2003). Available: <www.liverpool.gov.uk/pdfs/Bids_Summary.pdf> (visited April 2003).

Here, as during 1990, the predominant official and media discourses are largely about external projection – whether that is in terms of image, tourism or investment – with internal, local demands far less prominent. In contrast to Glasgow's Year of Culture, however, the bidding process for the 2008 title was accompanied by almost no significant oppositional criticism, suggesting again that what was part of a disputed discourse has become increasingly ideologically normalised.

The small battleground of Glasgow 1990 was therefore played out against a larger national and international debate that was to see contested ideologies become increasingly adopted as common sense positions. As James Kelman suggested, the argument was that 'business sense equates with common sense' and it was becoming increasingly less acceptable to suggest otherwise.[11] Business sense is, of course, also the central tenet of globalisation as defined for this paper, and it is possible to see the most overarching cultural policy manifestation of this in the perception that modern cities are in active competition with each other. Such city marketing and competition naturally exists on regional, national and global levels; it assumes a high and unhindered mobility of capital, tourism and labour. While in theory suggesting each city markets itself as a unique location, it in fact assumes that barriers are lowered and borders an insignificant matter of choice and perception. In all these matters city competition is a clear manifestation of globalisation.

11. James Kelman, 'Art and Subsidy, and Some Politics of Culture City', in McLay (ed.), *The Reckoning*, pp. 126–133.

For Glasgow this competition was absolute in the bidding process for the 1990 title. It also continued implicitly as the Year of Culture was articulated as part of a mammoth and internationally targeted attempt to market the city as a brand – selling Glasgow as creative, vibrant and cultured. Within such a discourse Glasgow was in competition with other cities for external investment, for corporate HQs and employment

relocation, for skilled, educated and creative workforces and, of course, for tourism.[12] For those behind the Glasgow 1990 project this city marketing was a natural and unquestionably sensible activity. For Workers City, in contrast, the very concept of trying to market Glasgow was obscene, merely cosmetic and designed to mask or undermine the city's real identity. Significantly, such criticisms articulate one of the recognised difficulties within city marketing projects, as policy makers attempt to reconcile the competing and often contradictory realities of a city and at the same time market it as a clear, singular, global brand.

12. Appropriately enough tourism, according to Dean MacCannell, is the cultural component of globalisation. G. Evans, 'Hard-branding the Cultural City: From Prado to Prada', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27:2 (2003), 417–440.

It was in the context of these discourses, amid competing local demands and globally oriented perspectives, that the cultural events of Glasgow's Year of Culture took place. The programme, therefore, needed to be internationally targeted, but locally rooted; widely appealing, yet unique; it needed to promote Glasgow in its diversity, but at the same time contain it within a single brand. Consequently, it is worth exploring how key performance events during 1990 were produced, and consumed, in the context of these competing and defining discourses.

1990 PROGRAMMING

While the controversies surrounding Glasgow 1990 emerged across extremely wide political and social agendas, the debate also frequently coalesced around questions of culture. Indeed, many of the objections can be summarised in the vocally expressed refrain, 'Whose culture is it anyway?', which clearly feeds back into many of the ideas explored here of cultural identity and ownership in the context of competing local and global perspectives.

In terms of programming, however, the scale and range of 1990 projects was huge, diverse and (largely) both geographically and socially inclusive. Programming ranged from community and children's events, to amateur groups, international theatre, world-class orchestras, specially commissioned projects and major touring art exhibitions. It would be impossible here to given any real indication of the scope of 1990 projects, with events including Fablevision's *Ruchazie Ruchazie*, Liz Lochhead's *Jock Tamson's Bairns*, the community participation project *Call That Singing*, the European Special Olympics and performances by the Bolshoi Opera. Significantly it was the involvement of the Strathclyde Regional Council, who co-funded 1990 programming with a strong social and educational agenda, which ensured the existence of extensive programming in schools, communities and outlying estates.

Indeed, the diversity of Glasgow 1990 in terms of programming and the inclusiveness of the Year of Culture in terms of audience attendance is very impressive.[13] Tellingly, however, this range of programming did not achieve significant prominence outside of Glasgow and certainly failed to become widely identified within the media as the essence of the 1990 project. Instead, a small number of headlining events not only began to assume a particularly high profile but also to represent in microcosm perceptions and arguments concerning the event as a whole. The

13. Research at the time suggests that 79 per cent of adult Glasgow residents attended at least one event or attraction during the year, with 56 per cent attending at least one performing arts event, and Glasgow residents attending 52 per cent more cultural events than indicated by comparative figures for 1986. John Myerscough, *Monitoring Glasgow 1990* (Glasgow City Council, Strathclyde Regional Council and Scottish Enterprise: Glasgow, 1991), pp. 71, 82.

following discussion will examine three of these high-profile events – Bill Bryden's *The Ship*, a Luciano Pavarotti concert and Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata* – using them as lightning rods to explore how the ideological discourses surrounding Glasgow 1990 affected cultural production and reception during the course of the City of Culture project.

The Ship

The Ship was a major commission for 1990 by writer and director Bill Bryden, which from the initial stages of its conception was to feature the building and launching of a ship during the course of each performance. Eventually performed in an old Harland and Wolff engine shed in Govan, the production clearly latched onto important Glasgow narratives of the city's working class, industrial identity. The production is particularly interesting here, as in staging the image and identity of Glasgow it clearly entered what became disputed territory in the context of Year of Culture city marketing initiatives. Indeed, in terms of Year of Culture programming, *The Ship* met a number of significant demands: being local in its production, conception and subject; and being enormous in scale, unique in design and spectacular enough to capture a global imagination.[14]

After some initial problems *The Ship* became a popular success, with additional performances arranged at the end of the original run to accommodate demand and large numbers of local schoolchildren attending through a subsidised ticketing scheme. *The Ship* also fulfilled its objectives in providing a hallmark production that could be sold (as a production and as an iconic event) both locally and globally. However, treading a line close to nostalgia and sentimentalism, *The Ship* was not a widespread critical success, with cultural commentators suggesting it was an event for passive if fervent consumption.[15] From an external perspective, *The Ship* seemed to be looking backwards rather than forwards and for some was out of tune with the current of political ideology, as suggested by a *Sunday Times* editorial: 'Will Scotland ever learn that there is neither virtue nor profit in pretending that industries which offered dangerous working environments and paltry wages should be sanctified'.[16]

Perhaps ironically, therefore, given the city marketing objective of recasting Glasgow as a new Cultural City, *The Ship* retold familiar narratives. Indeed, in terms of projecting an image of Glasgow, *The Ship* looked back to days when the city did possess an internationally recognised, locally rooted and unifying identity in the brand 'Clyde Built'. With shipbuilding and industry largely gone, however, this could clearly not be a sustainable identity for the 1990s.

Instead the organisers behind Glasgow 1990 were actively attempting to establish a new global brand for the city, with the local and global strength of Clyde Built but based in some broad sense of culture. The answer was sought from Saatchi and Saatchi, the advertising company behind Margaret Thatcher's election campaigns, who attempted to brand the Year of Culture with the slogan 'There's a lot Glasgowing on in

14. Occupying such disputed territory at this time was a sensitive business, as demonstrated by another flagship 1990 event: the *Glasgow's Glasgow* exhibition which was hugely criticised as sanitising Glasgow's heritage for external consumption, was cripplingly under attended and which lost vast amounts of money for the city – but which did result in the development and legacy of the Arches as a performance and club venue.

15. Michael Billington, for example, suggested that *The Ship* was 'full of poignancy but lacking political analysis', *Guardian* (29 December 1990).

16. Editorial, 'After the Ball Is Over…', *Sunday Times* (30 December 1990).

1990' written in the locally orientating but internationally recognisable and appealing Charles Rennie Mackintosh typeface.[17] Local responses to both the commissioning of Saatchi and Saatchi and their eventual campaign were widely hostile, with the slogan satirised by Workers City as 'There's a lot of con going on in 1990'. The use of the Mackintosh typeface in the slogan can also be seen as part of the process by which a once unique and powerful identity gradually becomes eroded through constant use and misuse.

17. It is also significant that Glasgow's Year of Culture arrived soon after the largely successful but more narrowly and locally directed 'Glasgow's Miles Better' marketing campaign. The City of Culture was intended to target a much wider, national and international audience. Today Glasgow is continuing this process of branding and city marketing with a new slogan launched in 2004 – 'Glasgow: Scotland with Style'.

Clearly *The Ship*, let alone the Saatchi advertising campaign, never really had a hope of representing the whole, diverse and contradictory identity of Glasgow. Even the idea that there is any single Glasgow identity is problematic. Yet within a globalised economy and following corporate templates, it is exactly such a unifying brand image that discourses of city marketing demand. Consequently, particularly if a city is to sell itself as a cultural city, this pressure to speak *for* the city and become part of the 'experience' of that city starts to contradict more complex and diverse artistic objectives.

Luciano Pavarotti

Amongst all the events occurring during 1990 a single concert visit by Luciano Pavarotti became the touchstone for many of the objections to Glasgow's Year of Culture. This concert is worth exploring here as an example of culture produced and consumed as an internationally replicated 'product' and yet, at the same time, continuing to promote itself as a unique experience of an immediate and unrepeatable *live* event.

Pavarotti performed at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre on 16 May 1990 with tickets for this huge venue sold out almost immediately, despite their high price. In response to this public demand Strathclyde Regional Council organised an accompanying 'Pavarotti Screen Event', whereby a second audience could watch the performance in an adjacent exhibition space on a 'live' large-screen relay. This screen concert, with a large number of tickets distributed through the Regional Council's education and social work departments, was also immediately sold out. From these perspectives the concert was a huge success, generating large audiences for a 'high' culture event and attracting this international star to perform in Scotland for the first time.

However, while a success on many levels, the Pavarotti concert also generated a significant degree of oppositional anger and criticism. Workers City picketed the concert, with the immediate objection that, despite the screen relay, ticket prices made the event inaccessible to the average Glaswegian. The concert was also lambasted as an example of imported, elitist and irrelevant culture, and as being a 'safe commodity', which served only to stabilise officially sanctioned values of a conservative and capitalist agenda.[18] It was also a gift to cartoonists, for whom the instinctive association of opera with high culture starkly contrasted with the dominant and enduring perceptions of Glasgow (see Image 2).

18. Farquhar McLay (ed.), *Workers City: The Real Glasgow Stands Up* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1988), p. 4.

For opponents, therefore, the Pavarotti concert was a perfect example of City of Culture programming at its worst: an alien,

Image 2 Cartoon by Rod, *Daily Record* 16 May 1990 – one of many cartoons commenting on Pavarotti's visit to Glasgow in 1990. (Sydney Devine is a Scottish country-folk singer with a devoted following but little critical acclaim.) Reproduced courtesy of the *Daily Record*.

inaccessible cultural product, flown in and out of Glasgow, leaving little or no trace behind. Further, its location in the aircraft-hanger—like SECC left the event vulnerable to criticism as an antiseptic, unreal, drive-thru experience, completely divorced from Glasgow's indigenous and continuing cultural communities. The concert could have been occurring anywhere, in any city, appearing homogenised across all borders and consumed as a globally marketed commodity. For Workers City these criticisms extended out from the Pavarotti concert to cover the entire City of Culture event: an alien, centrally originating product, flown in and out of Glasgow leaving little trace behind and paying little recognition to the real needs or distinctiveness of the city. At the same time, however, it is without doubt that a Glasgow audience did actively desire the Pavarotti concert, and in response to criticisms of the event Pat Lally wrote how he 'recalls with glee the sight of a Workers' City type being harangued outside the SECC by one of my Castlemilk constituents, intensely

proud that she had the opportunity of seeing her idol, Pavarotti, in Glasgow'.[19]

19. Lally, 'Why Glasgow Should Ignore the Hysteria in Culture Debate'.

This meeting of large and eager audiences with endlessly replicated and mass consumable cultural products presents a number of uneasy dilemmas. With live performances often articulated as presenting immediate and vital experiences and in direct opposition to mass consumption and mass production,[20] how can we understand globally touring performances such as this Pavarotti concert? With the Glasgow 1990 concert this question is further complicated by the accompanying screen event, which can variously be seen as an example of democratic audience development or of mediatisation only serving to highlight the mass-produced nature of the original product. It is also clear that the Pavarotti concert was unequivocally an *event*: produced specifically to be spectacular and to be hyped with all other considerations secondary. In other words, it was part of what is now known as the 'experience economy', designed for an industry of cultural consumption, producing tourists and driving spending rather than invigorating thought, meaning or reflection. In this sense Brendan McLaughlin's fear that 1990 was making Glaswegians 'tourists in their own city'[21] was very apposite – within the experience economy we all become tourists.

20. This debate is well presented from contrasting positions in two books: Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999).

21. Brendan McLaughlin, 'Glasgow's Not For Sale', in McLay (ed.), *The Reckoning*, p. 44.

It is demonstrably not the case that live performances are unavailable to mass consumption on a global scale, with uniqueness and ubiquity somehow sustaining a mutual existence within the same event. Here the application of criticisms of globalisation and cultural homogenisation to an international arts festival such as Glasgow 1990 is significant, allowing us to see how uniqueness in the live experience can itself become commodity of a globally marketed product.

The Mahabharata

In 1988, as part of City of Culture programming, Peter Brook brought his production of *The Mahabharata* to Glasgow. Although very different artistically, this event bears some pragmatic similarities to the Pavarotti concert that occurred two years later. Like the Pavarotti concert, *The Mahabharata* was imported culture: a bought-in rather than home-produced show. Similarly, it was presented in a venue (the 'Old Museum of Transport') that, at the time, had nothing to do with Glasgow's existing cultural infrastructure or community. And finally, it could be deemed irrelevant to 'real' Glasgow culture.[22] Like the Pavarotti concert, *The Mahabharata* might, therefore, also be seen as an example of culture as globally marketed and consumed product. However, there are a number of key differences that make the legacy of *The Mahabharata* much more significant.

22. For discussion of the 'real' in relation to Glasgow 1990 see Mark Boyle and George Hughes, 'The Politics of Representation of the "Real": Discourses from the Left on Glasgow's Role as European City of Culture', *Area*, 23 (1991), 217–228 (pp. 217–218).

In 'Culture, Conflicts and Cities', Franco Bianchini outlines three key areas where some of the competing demands explored in this paper present dilemmas in urban cultural policy development.[23] To a certain extent, and largely not as a result of deliberate planning, *The Mahabharata* manages to resolve or subvert all three of these dilemmas.

It is what Bianchini describes as the cultural funding dilemma, between landmark artistic (but ephemeral) programmes and landmark permanent legacies, which *The Mahabharata* most successfully resolves. The Glasgow performances of *The Mahabharata* were the only ones in Britain, introducing new audiences and critics to the city, with dramatic knock-on effects on Glasgow's cultural confidence, status and ambitions. Indeed, Brook's production raised ambitions to such an extent that Pat Lally went as far as demanding that he 'wanted to have one such show every week'.[24] As a tangible realisation of the ambition, delight in the ephemeral event lead to the temporary venue becoming permanent and, as Tramway, gaining an international reputation for the performing and visual arts, something it continues to have today.

Bianchini also outlines spatial dilemmas in cultural policy, particularly between city centre investment and periphery neglect. It is here that Glasgow 1990 as a whole is open to the greatest criticism, as the explicit objective behind much of the strategic planning was to establish Glasgow's city centre as a world class destination while the city's surrounding estates continued to be extremely socially and economically deprived. With Tramway, however, the geographic cultural map of Glasgow shifted slightly, as previously industrial space was made accessible – although there is potential to view this as part of a culture-led process of gentrification. Tramway has, however, attempted to resist such possibilities, with The Hidden Gardens opening in 2003 as a flexible new public space developed with the involvement of sections of the local community.[25]

At the same time, however, *The Mahabharata* could still be criticised for what Bianchini argues is a third dilemma between the stimulation of cultural consumption and the enabling of cultural production within a city. For *The Mahabharata* can be seen as fundamentally about consumption, bringing product to Glasgow, rather than being about enhancing local talent and cultural production. However, there is significant evidence that *The Mahabharata*, and other international performances presented during 1990, had a significant impact on local artists and local cultural abilities. This perception emerged strongly in a series of focus groups held by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research with people from various cultural and creative sectors within Glasgow. In these group discussions the place the Year of Culture played within the careers of artists, audiences and activists was extremely prominent: with the event acting to draw artists to Glasgow in the first place, inspiring those that were there already and helping ensure that people stayed within the city. The following observation is typical: 'What I think can't be emphasised too strongly [is] the colossal impact that the experience of year of 1990 had on a generation of artists . . . they say, I went to the Tramway in 1990 and I saw these things and it blew me away'.[26]

On all three of these cultural policy dilemmas that Bianchini presents it is therefore possible to suggest that, to a degree at least, *The Mahabharata* and Tramway managed to bridge competing demands and discourses. Events within an experience economy seek to flatten borders and present a kind of universalised product that is truly a globalised commodity, responding neither to local artists, audiences or

23. Franco Bianchini, 'Culture, Conflict and Cities: Issues and Prospects for the 1990s', in Bianchini and Michael Parkinson (eds), *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1993), pp. 200–204.

24. Widespread anecdote, see for example Neil Cooper, 'The Bus Stops Here', *Scotland on Sunday* (5 July 1998), p. 16.

25. See www.thehiddengardens.org.uk (visited April 2003).

26. Journalists and Cultural Commentators Focus Group, CCPR, University of Glasgow, 15 September 2003. The impact of the Year of Culture on producing artists has also emerged in newspaper coverage. See for example Joyce McMillan, 'Boyd's Brigade' (interview), *The Scotsman* (10 May 2000), p. 14.

environments. In contrast risk-taking or multicultural performances, such as *The Mahabharata*, may tour internationally but actively re-establish borders and differences, challenging universality and easy, passive consumption and as a result provide ongoing inspiration and motivation for audiences and artists alike.[27]

27. At the same time the depth and detail of ongoing debates about multicultural performance needs to be acknowledged. See, for example, Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992) and J. Ellen Gainor (ed.), *Imperialism and Theatre: Essays on World Theatre, Drama and Performance, 1795–1995* (London: Routledge, 1995).

CULTURAL ECONOMICS

The Ship, Pavarotti and *The Mahabharata* were three very different events that together came to represent the somewhat contradictory and problematic nature of Glasgow's Year of Culture. The above discussion has explored the extent to which such performances can either become, or resist becoming, commodities in a globalised cultural exchange and tools within a cultural policy discourse of economic enterprise. And it is against this background that it is also worth returning to the Year of Culture as a whole, and the possible legacies that have resulted from 1990.

Having adopted the language of privatisation, entrepreneurialism and marketing, most notably in the official discourses surrounding the event, Glasgow's Year of Culture became a ripe and appropriate target for political and social critiques of its relevancy for the disenfranchised underclass of the city. In this context the Workers City critique is significant, especially in terms of it conceptualisation of the event within discourses of marketing and private finance. It is noticeable, however, that comparison of the Workers City criticisms with the stated objectives and discourses of those promoting and organising Glasgow 1990 reveals a strong similarity in conceptualisation – both saw the event in terms of city branding, economic enterprise and high-level strategy. The difference is that from one perspective the application and ideology of such ideas was abhorrent; to the other it was good business and good politics.

Moving to the present day, it is possible to argue that many of the ideological divisions present during 1990 have receded or become normalised. In some instances this is because the political ground has shifted, with New Labour moving the debate to the right through the promotion of public–private partnerships and other enterprise initiatives. In other areas this shift or normalisation of conflicts seems even more extreme; this is particularly so where the arguments impact directly on culture. Today concepts of city marketing and branding, and the relationship between the arts and economic regeneration, are much more established and accepted.

Glasgow 1990 was certainly not the earliest example of arts-led urban regeneration. However, as a historical case study it represents a telling point in the emergence of a now dominant discourse of cultural economics that allied the arts to urban regeneration, economic development and city marketing. During 1990, as explored in this paper, this resulted in fierce conflicts over the ideological acceptance or rejection of this discourse. However, just as Glasgow 1990 has itself become an accepted and almost unquestioned model, so has there been an increase in acceptance within cultural policy and the arts of what were previously perceived (particularly by groups such as Workers City) as

contested discourses. The cultural economics discourse, in other words, has been adopted, wholesale, by the cultural sector.

Recognising the dominance of this discourse, Jo Caust argues that 'arts policy has been "captured" by the economists and marketers'. This discourse of cultural economics, Caust suggests, has been adopted not just by those explicitly on the right, nor just within government cultural policy, but also within the arts community as they seek funding and government support. This, Caust argues, presents significant potential dangers, as 'when this language and policy become the entire raison d'être then the discourse itself becomes self-defeating. Adopting the language and ideology of a market-driven approach presents a very real danger that arts activity should only be pursued for market-driven objectives'.[28]

Tellingly here, given the Thatcherite historical context to Glasgow's Year of Culture, Caust also cites Will Hutton's description of how in the United Kingdom radical conservative and economic rationalist policies have become normalised as an accepted discourse. As Hutton writes, 'This language is but the first step in the construction of a sealed thought process impregnable to criticism or evidence from the outside world.'[29] Similarly, the dominance of a discourse of cultural economics can potentially begin to shape the very way in which society not only organises and funds but also thinks about the arts.

However, Glasgow 1990 should not be taken only as a model for economic regeneration, but instead also considered in terms of its impact as a cultural event and in terms of its cultural legacy. Here, the three case studies considered in this paper demonstrate the limited impact of culture when it becomes merely another product to be passively consumed. In contrast, culture is most valuable when it is challenging, diversifying and groundbreaking, demanding active engagement from both its audiences and the city within which it is located. Here there were noticeable successes in Glasgow's City of Culture programming, but also evident limitations and failures. Overall, therefore, perhaps the greatest limitation of the cultural legacy of Glasgow 1990 was the very dominance of the cultural economic agenda that came afterwards, and a failure to develop a discourse that valued longer term cultural confidence and participation. The prominence during 1990 of languages of privatisation, entrepreneurialism and marketing placed Glasgow's City of Culture firmly within discourses of globalisation, with culture – or at least the meaningful experience of culture – merely being an accidental and subservient by-product.

28. Jo Caust. 'Putting the "Art" Back into Arts Policy Making: How Arts Policy Has Been "Captured" by the Economists and the Marketers', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9:1 (2003), 51–63.

29. Will Hutton, *The State to Come* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 29.