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# Museums, Meaning and Money in Glasgow

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This paper explores how formal, publicly-funded culture, in the form of museums, engages with issues of identity in the city of Glasgow, through the prism of John O'Hagan's taxonomy of wealth.<sup>1</sup> Like Barcelona and Bilbao, Baltimore and Melbourne, Glasgow is known for deploying cultural institutions and events to drive urban regeneration.<sup>2</sup> Some of these were explicitly designed to achieve economic spillover effects and to improve the attractiveness of the city to tourists and inward investors. The most notable of these was the city's reign as European City of Culture in 1990, which is widely acknowledged as one of the most successful, in terms of rebranding the city as a significant tourist destination.<sup>3</sup> However, 1990 was only a high point in a general trajectory which, at least in tourist terms, has been successful. In 2010 Glasgow was the third most visited tourist city in the UK (after London and Edinburgh). The publisher of the *Lonely Planet* guides named Glasgow as one of the top ten places in the world which tourists should visit in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See article in this issue.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Gomez, 'Reflective images: the case of urban regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 22, 1 (1998), 106–21; Beatriz Plaza, "'The Guggenheim-Bilbao Museum effect': a reply to Maria V. Gómez", 'Reflective images: the case of urban regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 23, 3, 589–92; Maria Gomez and S. Gonzalez, 'A reply to Beatriz Plaza's "The Guggenheim-Bilbao Museum Effect"', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 25, 4 (2001), 898–900; Evdoxia Baniotopolou, 'Art for Whose Sake? Modern Art Museums and Their Role in Transforming Societies: the Case of the Guggenheim Bilbao', *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 7 (2001), 1–15.

<sup>3</sup> For debates about the success of Glasgow's year as City of Culture see: Peter Booth and Robin Boyle, 'See Glasgow, see Culture' in Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson (eds), *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration, The West European Experience* (Manchester, 1993); Beatriz Garcia, 'Deconstructing the City of Culture: The long term cultural legacies of Glasgow 1990', *Urban Studies* (2006); Gerry Mooney and Mike Danson, 'Beyond "Culture City": Glasgow as a 'dual city' in Nick Jewson and Susanne Macgregor (eds), *Transforming Cities, Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions* (London: 1997), 73–86.

<sup>4</sup> Lonely Planet website, <http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:jgIUYyHH7dAJ:www.lonelyplanet.com/press-centre/press-release>, accessed 8 July 2009.





Glasgow has undergone a major transformation and consistently invests more in culture per head of population than any other UK city. At the time of writing major projects which are due for completion in the next two years include Trongate 103, a £7 million visual arts centre housing nine different organizations in an 80,000 square foot building; a £6 million new headquarters for Scottish Ballet in Tramway (itself a legacy of 1990); and the second phase of Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, an £11 million museum store, with a unique level of public access (see below). The most spectacular and expensive current cultural project is the Riverside Museum, an £80 million iconic building designed by acclaimed architect Zaha Hadid,<sup>5</sup> which is due to open in 2011. It will tell the story of travel and transport in the city and is thus a characteristically Glaswegian combination of international prestige with local identity and pride. While economic impacts are an essential part of the rationale for all these projects, they are not the only or even the most important form of value which motivates the city's investment. This paper will explore the interaction of econometric rationales with those based on other forms of wealth.

What kind of a place is Glasgow? What are the local circumstances that shape cultural policy and practice? The city has a population of 600,000—the largest in Scotland. It is, and since the mid-eighteenth century has been, a city of extremes. Rapid industrialization made Glasgow one of the wealthiest cities in the British Empire. Its huge slums also earned it the title of Cancer of Empire. The wealthy merchants and industrialists of Victorian Glasgow created huge collections, which they gifted or bequeathed to their city's museums, which were appropriately splendid buildings. The result is that Glasgow has the largest civic museum service in the UK, with the best collections of European Old Masters, arms and armour, decorative arts, French Impressionists and post-Impressionists and medieval tapestries and sculpture outside the national museums. It also has the best preserved Victorian urban architecture in the UK, and the buildings of now internationally-recognised Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The city spends £14 million a year on museums, which represents c. 0.7% of the total civic budget, £23 per head of population and about half of all local authority expenditure on museums in Scotland. Crucial in making this substantial investment sustainable in political terms is that (with one significant exception which is discussed below) museums are not seen as elitist—Glasgow has a rare, possibly unique, tradition in which museum

<sup>5</sup> Described on the cover of *The Economist's Intelligent Life* magazine as 'The First Great Female Architect', Summer, 2008.





visiting is part of popular as well as high culture. The 600,000 residents of Glasgow make over 1.2 million museum visits a year; of these 40% are by people from C2DE groups.

While it may be implicit in O'Hagan's taxonomy of culturally-generated wealth, it is worth making explicit what might be called the legacy value of Glasgow's cultural infrastructure. While financing this heritage may be seen in part as a maintenance burden, sustained mainly by the political difficulty of closing down existing amenities, it must also appear in any assessment of the city's assets. These assets then create options which other cities may not have, or may have to spend a lot more to acquire. In addition, legacy value in part addresses the issue of opportunity cost. Because of the immense and multiple values of museum buildings and collections, it would be difficult to get as much value from spending £14 million a year on other investments. Nor are the outcomes of alternative investments significantly more assured than those of culture, since activities ranging from education to business development are as much arts as sciences. Further, culture is an area which cities can not only influence but in which they can take direct action—unlike many areas of social and economic life. In an era of increased government centralization and ring-fencing of local authority allocations this is an important value—what might be called agency value. This, as much as any precise economic impact assessment, explains the decision to create the Riverside Museum—the existence of a strong museum infrastructure means that civic leaders understand the medium, and can deploy it to make a powerful statement of civic ambition.

Despite 30 years of investment in regeneration, Glasgow still has one of the largest concentrations of poor and unhealthy people in Western Europe.<sup>6</sup> The life expectancy of men in the deprived parts of Glasgow is the same as in the West Bank in Palestine. A third of the population lives in poverty, with multi-generational unemployment, drugs, violence and other social problems, which have proven extremely resistant to state intervention. Part of the driving force of Glasgow Museum's policy is an awareness of the need to make a direct contribution to the lives of all citizens, no matter what their circumstances, not assuming that museums' input to regeneration would be through tourist revenue and trickle down economics. In O'Hagan's terms, 'concern for user interests' and 'value for money' are major influences on museum policy. Both of these are also of importance not just in absolute terms, but also in terms

<sup>6</sup> For extensive analysis see the research published on the website of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, [www.gcph.co.uk](http://www.gcph.co.uk).





of the opportunity cost in relation to other aspects of the city which require civic investment—education for example.

### **Culture—Some Definitions**

Glasgow Museums do not have an essentialist or exclusivist view of the definition of culture or the kinds of wealth it generates, but work with all of the following:

1. The patterned way of life of a people, everything that is externalised from inside people's heads—language, processes, artefacts and so on.
2. High Culture, the canon of elite forms, built on those inherited from the European aristocracy as a result of the bourgeois revolution of the nineteenth century.
3. Popular culture, either folk and traditional or mass produced and distributed through the market. Derided by High Culture exponents of both left and right as commodified soma designed to create a quiescent public, Glasgow Museums see it as a legitimate form of expression in which we celebrate the best.
4. Culture as meaning-making, the resources through which we make sense of life and death, love and loyalty, individuality and belonging, work and family, and the relationship of people to place and history.

Each of these definitions reflects a different dimension of identity, how specific communities develop ways of dealing with local circumstances and with the universals of the human condition. While museum policy recognises the importance of economic drivers and of value for money, many of the kinds of wealth embedded in these definitions are not readily—or meaningfully—converted into economic currencies.

### **The Burrell Collection**

The first major modern, conscious, deployment of culture (and specifically, High Culture) to promote regeneration was the opening of the Burrell Collection in 1983, nearly 40 years after Sir William and Lady Burrell gifted their collection to the City. The literature on museums and regeneration almost





without exception focuses on the Guggenheim in Bilbao as the exemplar, and it is certainly the highest profile example. However Bilbao's decision to build the Guggenheim was made after studying Glasgow and the Burrell Collection.<sup>7</sup> Lacking historical cultural assets Bilbao could capitalize on, they bought in to the Guggenheim franchise. Even though the Burrell Collection thus has deep local roots, it does not partake of the local tradition of museum visiting. It has the highest percentage of tourists of any of the city's museums—it is the one museum overseas visitors have heard of. And of the 30% of visitors who are local, the vast majority are well-off and well-educated. It thus conforms to the model of the art museum analyzed by Bourdieu, its style of presentation requiring considerable cultural capital for visitors not just to make sense of the objects, but to feel welcome or at home.<sup>8</sup> It thus represents a value omitted from O'Hagan's taxonomy—the legitimation and reproduction of the identity of an elite social group.<sup>9</sup>

This links to questions about the capacity of cultural institutions to represent the unitary identity of complex societies. Social and political, as opposed to economic, elites are frequently content to have their national or civic identity represented by high status institutions—even if their members have no interest in culture *per se*. The most prestigious cultural institutions are not those which represent internal diversity, or distinctive indigenous culture, but those which partake of the highest status international culture in the form of masterpieces of fine art, or opera, ballet or classical music.<sup>10</sup> And some non-elite, non-users are also willing to accept the 'existence value' of these cultural institutions, reflecting national pride rather than national identity. Perhaps part of the answer to the question of how much tax revenue should be spent on culture is the political limit on what a government can spend on 'public' institutions whose benefits are enjoyed almost exclusively by an elite minority and which partake of a communal form of conspicuous consumption. While the better-off and better-educated in general benefit disproportionately from all publicly funded amenities, it becomes politically unacceptable when this reaches a degree when it is seen as a flagrant form of rent seeking.

<sup>7</sup> See Gomez, 'Reflective Images'.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art*, trans Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman (Paris, 1968; London, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals; inside public art museums* (New York, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Brandon Taylor *Art for the Nation* (Manchester 1999).





## The Gallery of Modern Art

Glasgow opened its Gallery of Modern Art in 1996, consciously intending to enlist the prestige of contemporary art to enhance the reputation of the city (and intentionally choosing not, for example, to create an industrial museum which would have been seen as backward looking, and, therefore, not encouraging people to adapt to the city's new economic circumstances). In its first phase (1996–c1998) it was programmed by Julian Spalding, then director of Glasgow Museums, whose conservative populist taste explicitly rejected 'experimental and innovative work', despite the fact that Glasgow-based artists had an international reputation and had, for example, a unique success rate in the Turner Prize. After Spalding's departure GOMA set about redefining its identity, seeking to show locally based and international artists of high quality, while retaining large audiences. In addition GOMA developed a vision of the role of a contemporary art gallery which reflected the cultural aspirations and social realities of the city.<sup>11</sup> This revolves around its biennial exhibition on themes related to Contemporary Art and Human Rights:

2003 Seeking Freedom, on the subject of asylum seekers

2005 Rule of Thumb, on the subject of violence against women<sup>12</sup>

2007 Sectarianism, on the Catholic-Protestant divide in Glasgow

2009 sh(OUT) on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex and Transgender art and artists

Each of these combined an exhibition of work by artists with an international reputation and a city-wide programme of engagement. For 'Rule of Thumb' the main show was by American feminist artist Barbara Kruger. The outreach programme was called Elbow Room and involved women who had been victims of violence, and/or had drug problems, and/or were involved in prostitution, making artwork with a member of staff and two other artists. This was the first ever 'community art' exhibition we had mounted which was reviewed by a broadsheet newspaper art critic, who said it was 'unmissable' and 'worthy of the Turner Prize'. He had 'never seen a better interpretation of the despair,

<sup>11</sup> Katie Bruce, Victoria Hollows, Ben Harman *Towards an Engaged Gallery: Contemporary Art and Human Rights – GoMA's Social Justice Programmes* (Glasgow, 2007). See also Robert R. Janes, *Museums in a Troubled World, Renewal, Irrelevance or Collapse?* (Routledge, 2009), 131–34.

<sup>12</sup> The title refers to the tradition by which it was legal for a man to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb.





tragedy and helpless plight of the abused woman'.<sup>13</sup> This was a breakthrough, showing that a museum could engage with the most marginalised people in society and simultaneously achieve the highest standards of artistic excellence. In terms of O'Hagan's argument, the Contemporary Art and Human Rights programme represents an attempt to reconcile the values of art as conferring prestige, as an expression of identity and as providing a critique of society. Its symbolism is that the city values serious (rather than shocking or sensational) contemporary art and that it is prepared not just to accept but to host in its most high status city centre space, the honest responses of artists of international standing to the difficult aspects of city life.

### **The People's Palace**

The People's Palace is Glasgow's local history museum. Founded in 1898 as what we would now think of as a cultural centre in one of most industrialized parts of the city, it became a social history museum in the 1980s. The museum was the centre of considerable controversy during 1990, when it was seen as an emblem of authentic working class culture which had been sold out by the European City of Culture project.<sup>14</sup> The left-wing position had however been seriously damaged by far greater forces the year before with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and the City Council was determined not to be held back by what they saw as a hankering for a communal culture which depended on an industrial economy which no longer existed. 1990 was followed by a period of exhaustion and loss of direction and it took some years to raise the funds to redisplay the People's Palace, in two phases between 1995 and 1998. The main gallery represents the competing *Visions of the City* which have shaped it over the past 200 years. These are the Capitalist, Socialist and Civic visions, which are displayed together in one gallery. Above these displays is a cycle of history paintings by Ken Currie, reflecting the labour history of the city. Given the rapid and dramatic change in Glasgow in the past thirty years, it is often visited by people seeking the solace of nostalgia—lots of visits are made by grandparents with their grandchildren. However, for neither tourists or locals does the museum airbrush the city's dark side; there are displays on crime, the

<sup>13</sup> Iain Gale, 'Sound of Suffering in Silence', *Scotland on Sunday*, 16 January 2005, <http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/review.cfm?id=5446200>, accessed 8 July 2009.

<sup>14</sup> See for example James Kelman, 'Foreword', *Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural and Political* (Stirling, 1992), 1–4.







abuse of alcohol and on poverty, historic and contemporary. The museum is not a civic promotion, but an attempt at a rigorous history. Or rather it is a civic promotion—of a city which seeks to create institutions which reflect its multiple histories and negative realities as well as celebrating its positive cultures and achievements.

### **Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC)**

The 'option demand for future generations' is a powerful reality for museums, not least in terms of gifts and bequests, through which donors (such as Sir William Burrell) seek a form of secular immortality. This applies especially in the vast proportion (over 95%) of the collection which is not displayed. Between 2001 and 2009 Glasgow has invested £18.4 million on improved storage for its reserve collection. The balance of benefit between current and future generations was shifted, however, by a radical innovation in access—GMRC is open to the general public 361 days a year. When the second phase opens in late October 2009, 30,000 visits a year are expected, half of from schoolchildren. As the embodiment of the future, children also bridge the gap between present taxpayers and 'option demand for future generations'. Glasgow has invested hugely in museum education and outreach with a team of nearly 50 staff, the largest in the UK.

### **The St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art**

The objective of this museum, which opened in 1993, is stated in the foyer: 'Our aim is to promote mutual understanding and mutual respect amongst people of all faiths and none'. It has three long-term exhibits, one of religious art, one relating to religion and everyday life and another about religion in Scotland, along with a temporary exhibition gallery and an education space. Over 120 different faiths are represented, spread across 5,000 years of human history. The texts express external (curatorial) and internal (believer) perspectives. The majority of the exhibits are celebratory of the human search for meaning, though the destructive power of religion is acknowledged in a few, key, examples. These include references to the links between religion and war, religious persecution, sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, the Holocaust and female genital mutilation in Africa. For the museum to function it had





to accept that not all heritages are positive, nor all identities worthy of equal respect. The basic values by which the museum navigates these controversial and difficult territories is the International Declaration of Human Rights, and the way these are reflected in the City's various equality policies.

In economic terms this museum was designed as an international quality tourist attraction to solve the problem of a new building adjacent to the medieval cathedral which had run out of funds prior to completion. The solution reflects the matrix of forces at play in museum policy formation in the city. The museum was able to draw on its legacy collection to achieve the required aesthetic and historic quality—50% of the 200,000 annual visits are made by tourists. This is combined with representations of the internal diversity of the city's many religions and some of the more difficult realities inherent in the subject matter. At a deeper level St Mungo's explicitly embodies a form of wealth which is present implicitly in the other museums described in this paper. They provide cultural resources which visitors can use to explore profound existential issues in a unique way. The quasi-ritual of museum visiting provides opportunities for contact with powerful aesthetic and historical real objects in atmospheric spaces, in the presence of strangers, in complete safety, either alone or with friends, spouse, parents or children. They fulfill a need in a secular, pluralist, society with few collective rituals.<sup>15</sup> No other medium replicates this combination of rich meaning embedded in material objects, a lack of generational segregation and the option for solitary or sociable attendance.<sup>16</sup> The fact that large numbers of people visit museums all over the world suggests that they represent a kind of good which underlies most of the kinds of wealth identified by O'Hagan. They provide resources which speak to the deep human need to create meaning in the face of mortality, to explore individual and collective identity, to generate new meanings in response to puzzling and painful social changes, and perhaps above all to create enduring institutions which gather what is of value from the past and promise to preserve it into an enduring future.<sup>17</sup> The combination of legacy value with option demand for future generations, generating continuity from past to future, is thus, in part, a response to mortality. It is precisely to reflect this meaning-generating quality

<sup>15</sup> Jem Fraser, 'Museums—drama, ritual and power', in Simon Knell *et al.* (eds), *Museum Revolutions* (Abingdon, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> The social/solitary options, combined with the personal experience in the presence of strangers means that museums generate a hybrid of private and non-private wealth.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York, 1956), Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York, 1956).





that museums are institutionalized outside the market, even in the most free-market economies, such as that of the United States.<sup>18</sup> While museums are embedded in markets, to subject them completely to the market would destroy their functionality, which is precisely to create non-market wealth. Eternity is a long time, even in economics.

### Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

The redisplay of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, as part of a £30 million Heritage Lottery funded project, brought together many of the lessons of these museum developments. Opened in 1901, Kelvingrove has long been the most popular museum in Britain outside London, averaging a million visits a year in the 1980s and 1990s. About a third of its visitors are from Glasgow, 40% from elsewhere in Scotland and the remaining 30% are UK or overseas tourists. Renewing the encyclopedic displays in Kelvingrove's 22 galleries highlighted the challenge of representing the world of art, history and natural history to twenty-first century audiences. The shift in understanding was from Victorian ideas of being cultured and of the mind as a passive *tabula rasa* to a sociological and psychological understanding of people as diverse and active agents in learning and in negotiating their identities. There is a strong continuity however with the Victorian ideals of public education—and of social renewal, though with a deep awareness of how resistant to social engineering long-term social problems really are. In the first year after reopening in 2006, Kelvingrove had 3.2 million visits, making it the fourteenth most visited museum in the world, ahead of MOMA in New York and the Uffizi in Florence. More than 50% of the Glasgow's population made an average of four visits in that first year. 42% of these came from C2DE social groups. In tourist terms Kelvingrove surpassed Edinburgh Castle as the most visited tourist attraction in Scotland, a position which it has retained.

In general the critical response was extremely positive, from both the professional<sup>19</sup> and broadsheet press. For example *The Observer's* was not the most positive review, but the one which best captured the spirit of the

<sup>18</sup> Even though few museums in America are state funded the vast majority gain substantial tax benefits by being charities and only a tiny proportion charge entrance fees which meet the real economic costs of running them.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, Elaine H Gurian, 'Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum', *Curator*, Vol. 50 No. 3 (2007), 359–61, and Helen Rees Leahy 'Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum', *Museum Practice* (Autumn 2006).





redisplay. Kelvingrove is 'not so much a museum of culture as of life itself, Kelvingrove is almost unique: part National Gallery, part V&A, part British Museum and Tate—all in one building'.<sup>20</sup> However, *The Burlington Magazine* (which describes itself as 'the world's leading monthly publication devoted to the fine and decorative arts') complained that 'Kelvingrove appeals ... to the lowest common denominator'.<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy that this criticises not just the quality of the displays but the quality of the *audience*. In other words the semiotics of the redisplay failed to communicate that the collections were reserved for the cultural elite.<sup>22</sup> This is further evidence of the importance of taking class identity value into account in reviewing the kinds of wealth generated by museums.

The above account of museums policy in Glasgow can be seen as a series of working hypotheses about the kinds of wealth generated by these institutions, set in the city's specific cultural, social and historical context. Museums in Glasgow are embedded in local culture, in all four senses defined above—anthropological, high culture, popular culture and culture as meaning-making. By refusing to recognize artificial barriers between these definitions they seek to realize all the forms of 'wealth' identified by O'Hagan. They try to provide locals and tourists alike with high quality, accessible cultural resources to explore their own and others' heritage and identities. Rather than seeing tourists merely as cash cows, the displays see them as united with locals in the search for meaning-making activities (tourism is as much a strategy of death defiance as any other cultural elaboration). Glasgow Museums acknowledge that organised culture is an active agent in producing and reproducing the power structures of society. This means accepting responsibility for validating some identities and heritages and challenging others—on the basis of civic values and human rights.

While there are important economic dimensions to museums which, historically, emerged as characteristic institutions of capitalist societies, even the broader definitions of wealth adapted by O'Hagan's survey literature, do not capture the motivations of visitors. For museums to express national or civic prestige, to generate economic externalities by attracting tourists or to promote social cohesion or particular kinds of valued identity, the experience they provide has to have a richness of meaning which motivates people to

<sup>20</sup> Laura Cumming, 'Heady Heights', *The Observer*, Sunday 9 July 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Unsigned Editorial, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 1261 (2007).

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of this argument see Mark O'Neill, 'The Good Enough Visitor', in *Social Inclusion in Museums* (Leicester, 2001).





engage. These meanings have, by definition, to transcend the market and the present generation in a way which is only guaranteed by state funding (or state authorization as a charity). The primary evidence that Glasgow's museum policy is more than a simple assertion that museums create extensive 'non-private wealth', that there is some validity to the hypotheses, is the large numbers of people (local and tourists) who visit museums and who vote for politicians who agree to fund them. On the unfortunately rare occasions when visitor experiences are explored in any depth, evidence supporting these hypotheses does emerge.<sup>23</sup> Sandell in particular uses ethnographic methodologies to explore visitors' reactions to St Mungo's (comparing them with reactions to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam). The hypotheses may also help explain the unusually large range of museum provision in Glasgow, as a function of the historic legacy combined with an unusually broad scale of economic extremes. Economic wealth made possible the great collections and museum buildings, while the great inequalities created a proportionately greater need for institutions which try to generate meaning and which aspire (even if they don't completely succeed) to create a civic public space which is genuinely inclusive. For this inclusivity (even if it were symbolic rather than real) to carry conviction, museums cannot charge the full economic cost of entry and so require public funding.

To summarise, museums in Glasgow can be seen as trans-generational institutions which have complex internal and external functions based on their provision of powerful resources which stimulate and nourish people's meaning-making capacities. For citizens, they provide rich cultural experiences: for exploring local and world identities; for confronting the difficulties of existence both universal and local; and for expressing a sense of their city as a cultured, honest place which both participates in international high and popular culture and produces its own versions of significant quality. Externally, they communicate this identity to the world, attracting tourists and inward investment and, above all, asserting the existence of Glasgow and its right to define itself, its own meaning. While this meaning is not unitary or without conflict, and is to a degree, very consciously, commodified in response to global economic forces, its main directions and content are decided locally and reflect local realities and aspirations. If Thomas Szasz was right when he

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Newman, Fiona McLean, Gordon Urquhart, 'Museums and the Active Citizen: Tackling the Problem of Social Inclusion', *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2005), 41–57; Richard Sandell, *Museums, Prejudice and the Reframing of Difference* (London, 2007).





said that 'In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten: in the human kingdom, define or be defined', agency value in the domain of meaning is the key source of many of the other kinds of wealth which museums generate.<sup>24</sup>

*Glasgow City Council*

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Szasz, *The Second Sin* (New York, 1973)

