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Heritage, Community, Blade, and Gold Nose: Towards a Model for the Creative Producer in UK City of Culture 2017

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Abstract

The UK City of Culture 2017 in Hull serves as a useful archive to develop a new model for the Creative Producer, a designation of a new type of producer that recognises the remit and capabilities of contemporary producing practice. The title of UK City of Culture is often presented as a panacea for the host city's social and economic issues. Cultural events are expected to be the catalysts of this socioeconomic boost. This dissertation contributes to the fields of theatre and performance, cultural policy, and arts management by problematising the producing of cultural mega-events through the lens of UK City of Culture 2017. Many studies investigating Cities of Culture have been grounded in cultural policy or cultural geography. This thesis uses the field of theatre and performance to demonstrate how contemporary producing practice can play a key role in developing wider social, economic, and cultural effects throughout the cultural year. Looking at key case studies from the UK City of Culture 2017 programme, I analyse the impacts the events had on members of Hull's communities and how they contributed to the wider objectives that underpinned the event. Using a synthesis of contemporary scholarship and archival material from the cultural year I argue that critical lessons from the Hull UK City of Culture 2017 can inform future models of producing and provide useful insights to develop critical methodologies for the Creative Producer. My measures of success are not solely based on quantifiable outcomes, rather on ways in which these events had lasting transformational effects on Hull's various hyperlocal communities. I specifically focus on how the UK City of Culture 2017 inflected people's notions of cultural identity and why this is a crucial aspect to the producing of future works.

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Introduction

Overview of research

This study analyses the unique production opportunities that UK City of Culture 2017 presented in Hull. Through identifying key case studies, I aim to form examples of good practice to devise and refine the concept of the Creative Producer, as a theatre-maker and public artist who can make effective interventions in activating and including various publics and further social action. These interventions not only build a notion of identity and public image, but they also help address some of the socio-economic issues around deprivation. The production opportunities offered by UK City of Culture 2017 (referred to throughout as Hull2017) develops new ways to understand whether the forms of engagement offered in cultural mega-events were truly participatory and empowering or whether they feign participation in favour of fulfilling pre-existing agendas thus casting a mask over the socio-economic realities that allow the host cities' communities to question why these conditions exist.

The term Creative Producer has been historically used interchangeably with the term producer. Traditionally, within the theatre industry the producer has been framed around the logistical and financial management of the creative output. Creative Producing, as I discuss in chapter 3, suggests that current producing practice must extend beyond fundraising, financial and logistical management of a production. Instead, I illustrate how Creative Producing has moved beyond the myopic realm of finance towards facilitation of the 'political, social, economic and environmental landscape' (Mountview Drama School n.d.) Throughout this study I use the term 'Creative Producer' as a new model that recognises the full scope of current theatre producers. The model of producing that I propose sees the producer's practice integrally aligned to the 'political, social, economic and environmental landscape[s]' of contemporary producing. The model acknowledges and capitalises on the creativity of the producer and distances their practice from the notion that producing is focused purely on operational management and finance. In turn, the Creative Producer is recognised as an expert in working with the public: a critical instigator

and catalyst for long-term economic and social transformation in audiences and communities. The Creative Producer is an acknowledgement of how contemporary producing practice is a fundamental role in building relationships with audiences and communities that engage with performance. This definition of the Creative Producer does not distance itself from previous definitions per se, but rather this study further expands this definition to fully acknowledge the creative capabilities of the producer to frame engagement with audiences and by extension the performance output.

My study demonstrates that the cultural mega-events of UK City of Culture and EU Capital of Culture (referred to as CoCs) are useful tools to identify best practice that develop the methods & processes of the contemporary Creative Producer. New best practice for the Creative Producer can be identified specifically within CoCs because of the scope of social and economic objectives attributed to the events. I develop a theoretical framework that is rooted in applied theatre, focusing on community engagement and participation to establish a new method of producing. The framework encourages a creative producing approach that situates audiences and communities at the forefront of the producing process whilst balancing high-quality performance and financial feasibility. The approach I posit also recognises and encourages the creative possibilities of modern producers. Arguably, the discipline has not given the Creative Producer the appreciation as a creative leader that can positively contribute to the engagement of new audiences and develop the artistic rigour of productions. Current artistic practice often situates the role of the producer as a fundraiser, a budget-holder, and a logistical manager. However, to narrow down the role of the producer to that of a fundraising or logistical manager obfuscates the role's creative potential – a potential it can realise to great effect, as evidenced by the good practice I identify in this thesis. The model I propose for the Creative Producer encourages more cultural and artistic participation with disengaged communities and offers audiences creative autonomy on the type of art they want to participate in and enjoy.

CoCs are international events that showcase people and places on the world stage. The events are often focused on cities that require economic and social rejuvenation. The model of CoC's being regenerative tools was implemented after the 1990 European Capital of Culture in Glasgow, because of its success in regenerating the city. The regenerative model

of culture was used as the benchmark for future CoCs. Although the cities benefit from boosted tourism figures and a cash injection into the local economy, evidence demonstrates that not all areas of the host cities receive the benefits. Many studies suggest that often the areas outside of the city centre have been overlooked in the process of producing the cultural years. The evidence further suggests when the process of producing these events is carried out in a private sphere and producers do not involve the local communities it can create frustration and have a detrimental impact in the city (Boland, 2010; Murtagh et al., 2019; Doak, 2018).

A plethora of benefits are said to emerge from the CoC title, the benefits are purportedly far reaching with policy makers offering the opportunity for host cities to benefit from: higher levels of tourism, increased community cohesion and generation of pride from the residents of the host city (DCMS, 2014: 6). The title offers the opportunity for many locals from the host cities to engage with arts and culture, with some figures post-Hull2017 suggesting 95 per cent of Hull residents engaged with Hull2017 (Hull UK City of Culture, 2018: 18). The discourse surrounding cities and capitals of culture propels the often-ubiquitous understanding of the benefits of the title, illustrated by the number of articles online which have been published in the wake of the submissions of bids for CoC 2025 (Ord, 2022; BBC, 2022; Mather, 2022). Many of the articles suggest that CoCs can act as a catalyst for a city's social and economic issues.

Many scholars have focused their studies on CoCs and the problems that emerged were often a result of the programming and producing processes. My thesis builds primarily on the work of Phillip Boland, Brendan Murtagh, Peter Shirlow and Peter Doak. As they document, the lack of dialogues with communities and members of the host cities regularly created incongruous events that presented an idealised (and arguably false) image to the rest of the world. The cultural years projected images of a city's heritage and identity that were repeatedly detached from local cultures. The accessibility of the events has also been called into question. Communities of the host cities have frequently been overlooked by producers. The communities are commonly located on the periphery of the city and are often socio-economically disadvantaged. In overlooking other audiences and communities, producers have often created events for only those who have the economic means to

engage. The new model for the Creative Producer uses the shortcomings and feedback from previous CoCs as learning tools to suggest new opportunities to incorporate practices of community engagement to create work that is more responsive and relevant to the audiences of the host city.

This study affords a basis for the self-actualisation of members of hyperlocal communities using arts and culture (I will be using *hyperlocal* to mean small, specific postcodes or areas which operate in a distinct socio-economic context.) As such it aspires to serve as a useful approach within the field of applied theatre and community engagement. Using CoCs as a case study can demonstrate how the role of arts and culture can act as an impetus for long-term social, cultural, and economic change. Arts and culture come to the fore in equally useful ways for producers in meeting social and economic objectives, not only in cultural mega-events but in theatrical practice also. At a time when Arts Council England's remit is focused on widening participation opportunities for audiences (Arts Council England, 2020) this study underscores how the development of producing practice can have a practical application that is developmental for a wide range of audiences in different contexts. Drawing on community development theory and issues with participation, my study identifies the specific ways in which the Hull2017 offered unique opportunities to measure the success of engagement. The good practice outlined throughout this study can serve to develop the role of the Creative Producer that engenders events that are truly participatory and offer communities more autonomy in the creation of arts and culture.

Clarification of positionality

My angle of research is predicated on my professional practice as a producer; I have worked in a number of environments, predominantly in the subsidised theatre sector. My experience has been shaped by two key factors. Firstly, my extensive work in applied theatre where I worked to provide artistic and cultural provision to new audiences who are generally considered to face barriers to engagement with the arts. Furthermore, my angle of research is formed by my work as a producer and programmer of a theatre and balancing the needs of high-quality work, audience engagement and financial profit. Therefore, this thesis is positioned to identify key case studies of good practice and develop the role of the

Creative Producer to provide provision to a wide range of demographics within further CoCs and the theatre sector. I do so by applying the work of community development theory to understand the means to deliver effective engagement and participation that further supports my own work as a producer.

Although CoCs are lauded in popular discourse as a panacea for a city's issues, critical literature from scholars has been clear in suggesting that there is often an exaggeration of these curative abilities. As a result, when the producing and programming of these events is carried out in a separate sphere from the hyperlocal communities of the city the events can cause tensions. The CoC events have repeatedly been criticised in their various iterations because of their tendency to be exclusive and unrepresentative. To address these concerns, the ethical and social implications that govern the CoCs need to be central to the producers and planners of these events. As this study aims to show, the historic failures and successes throughout a series of CoCs provide useful models to highlight that a bottom-up and co-creative approach to the producing and curating of these events are key. Co-creation is an ambiguous term, indeed as Walmsley (2013: 3) suggests 'There is no generally accepted set of terms to describe arts participation, but an evolving lexicon of words and phrases that describe how people encounter and express their creative selves.' Nonetheless, I am defining *co-creative approach* as the way that producers actively involve local communities in the creation and development of performance. I am describing the producing process that creates a reciprocal relationship between communities and producers whereby producers respond to the needs of local communities and in turn the communities develop and enhance the performance. The residents of the host cities need to be central stakeholders to decide how the events represent them on the national and international stage and how the benefits impact them. Therefore, by using case studies from Hull2017 and taking an approach that is underpinned by key academic literature, new models can emerge for the Creative Producer that provides artistically and ethically stronger foundations for future producing practice.

Research Questions and aims.

This study has two main aims. Firstly, it sets out to investigate the Hull2017 during its 365-day residency to understand the tension that exists between CoCs and the artists and residents of the host city. CoCs are often celebrated in popular discourse as economically and socially regenerative mega-events. However, evidence from researchers and opinions and feedback from communities of the host cities suggest this success is spurious and misleading. This study explores why CoCs continually fall short of what is expected by many residents in the host cities and why the opinion of researchers and residents often diverges from the popular discourse.

The other aim is to use the evidence and knowledge gained from the events, producers, artists, audiences, and communities of Hull2017, to develop a new model of producing that reflects the reality of current producing practice. I aim to deploy the knowledge gained from the unique production opportunities of Hull2017 to develop a new model that can be used in future producing practice to break down barriers for demographics of people who do not typically engage in the arts.

My research questions are:
- How have the cultural events produced during the UK City of Culture and EU Capital of Culture deployed new ways of working with audiences that are inclusive, representative, and truly engaging and empowering, for Creative Producers?
- How does the experience of the UK City of Culture 2017 redefine and progress the role of the Creative Producer beyond its conventional industry remit and how does it cultivate future producing practice?

Methodology

To support the development of my arguments and reformulation of producer practice my methodology is split into three distinct strands: (1) the use of archival data, (2) a thematic analysis of focus group transcripts; and (3) the use of other scholars' work on UK Cities of Culture & EU Capitals of Culture.

UK Cities of Culture & EU Capitals of Culture studies

Throughout this study, I draw on the work of researchers that have undertaken studies examining CoCs. I analyse the findings from previous events, many of which have been based on feedback and opinions from local people within the host city's communities. I use the patterns within these studies to form the basis of my discussions on heritage and community. Very often criticism around CoCs has focused on community, participation opportunities, and identity, and these key themes underscore my work throughout this study. I build on the existing criticism that forms my contextual framework to analyse how the issues that occurred during the CoCs did not exist in isolation and similar issues were reflected in previous events. By charting a lineage of shortfalls, it crucially supports the cultivation of the Creative Producer's role by developing a resilient and flexible model of working that is reflective of the audience's needs.

Archival Research

This study relies heavily on the digital archival data from The University of Hull. The archives frame the contexts of the events that I use as case studies and their measures of success. The role of archives and their usage has long been debated, quite notably by Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of knowledge* (2002) and the literature generally agrees that the use of archives in research can be a problematic research method. Despite its apparent objectivity, the use of archives can become problematic when they are skewed by selection or by ideological biases. In response to this, Helen Freshwater (2003: 734) calls for an embedded statement and analysis of the materials that are used. The archival researcher often 'acts as a conduit between the past and the contemporary present' (734). To avoid the potentially problematic use of archival materials, I will form my own statement and analysis of materials.

The archival data I use serves a dual function to both underpin my arguments for the success of the festival and orient the reader further in the context of the case studies. In utilising the archival material, I can elicit new insights about the potential of CoCs as a tool

for the development of social and economic objectives. The use of archival material in many ways is a call to Gale & Featherstone's discussion around the use of the archive:

> Researchers remake history, making objects and materials from the past relevant to the ways in which we understand our present and conceptualise our futures, and this contributes to the process of cultural meaning-making. (2011: 20)

I focus on the use of transcripts, recordings, meeting minutes, and season guides. The prioritisation of archival materials is particularly relevant to this study as they are primary sources that remove the obfuscating and often flowery rhetoric around impact and legacy reports. Many of the impact reports prioritise a narrative of positive social, physical, and economic impacts of these events, possibly to justify the large amounts of expenditure. The use of archival materials as primary sources can offer first-hand insights and opinions of the experiences of contemporary local audiences. As this study argues for a reinvigoration of the Creative Producer's practice towards working with audiences from a bottom-up, inclusive approach. My use of archival materials reflects this practice. By using the opinions of local people to support the arguments, this study is able to distance itself from the 'tyrannical' (Cooke & Kothari, 1999) approach of engagement and participation that fails to give true autonomy towards offering communities a platform to express how they want to engage with art and what they wish to gain from it.

Thematic Analysis of focus groups

Clarke and Braun (2017: 297) describe thematic analysis as 'A method for identifying, analysing and interpreting patters of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data'. I use thematic analysis of focus group interviews to serve a dual purpose for this study. I apply this method as a primary source of information on how audiences and participants were directly involved in projects and the participatory methods used. I employ my analysis to qualify the success of events within the Hull2017 and more broadly, the wider festival, using the opinions of the audiences and local people who participated or watched the project at the time. Thematic analysis offers an approach to identify and explain the success and

shortcomings within the framework of Hull2017. Thematic analysis is an inclusive and bottom-up approach to formulating successful criteria by enabling local people to decide their own measures of success. It is important to note here that these were small segments of the population. The sample size presents some issues with proportional representation, and it would take further research from more participants to consider this a representative view of Hull's population. Nonetheless, there still exists value in the opinions of these focus group members as audience members and locals in how they felt these events and festivals benefitted them in their hyperlocal context within their communities. I place a significant value on the role of the focus groups and thematic analysis from a variety of groups throughout the Hull2017 year. The focus groups act as an oral, first-hand account of the lived experience of how local people engaged with Hull2017 year. To this extent, thematic analysis enables a clearer understanding of how successful the role of theatre and performance was within Hull2017 when deployed as a tool to generate social and economic regeneration.

Measures of Success

My measures of success are grounded in the tangible effects of the bottom-up approach to the engagement of Hull's local communities using theatre and performance. As I have stated, although I draw heavily on studies that assess other CoCs, these studies often aim to analyse the events through the lens of cultural policy and cultural geography. As a result, many of the studies often fail to appropriately interrogate many of the artistic merits of performance and how these may have had a lasting and transformational effect on local people from the host cities. In this way, my study distances itself from this tradition framed by cultural policy and geography.

I draw on case studies of performances, installations, and community focused engagement work to exemplify the role of theatre and performance as a conceptual framework that can lead to lasting social and economic change. Therefore, whilst this study makes claims for the success or shortfalls of specific case studies, it does so to highlight the importance of the role of the Creative Producer, rather than a statement of success or failure on the part of Hull2017 as a whole.

As stated above, thematic analysis in this study enables Hull's local participants and communities to decide what success meant to them. The themes that I extrapolate throughout this study demonstrate that the measures of success fell into four categories.

Category 1: Engagement and participation of local people.

> [I]n some senses it didn't, it didn't reflect its people at all, this was a year of events that was bussed in and done to the people of Hull rather than done with them. It was a huge success so it is hard to be critical but there is no reason why this couldn't have been much more grassroots. (UCOC2019/18).

One of the themes suggests that an event was considered a success when the methods employed by producers were able to engage wide demographics of people, especially those considered disengaged with the arts. (It is important to note with this measure of success I am looking at both attendance from low arts-engagement demographics and the meaningful participation opportunities offered to people living within the host city and the positive social effects this fostered). I will assess the success of the Hull2017 by its ability to break down barriers to engagement for Hull's hyperlocal communities. This measure of success will focus on what opportunities communities were offered and if the communities were able to participate in cultural and artistic works. Many studies that focus on CoCs demonstrate that although these events may have a varied programme, very often these were based geographically in the city centre. It has been widely discussed that this is a barrier to engagement with the festival through financial, physical, and social factors. As such the city centre may have received the benefits of social and economic generation but the benefits were not reflected in the surrounding areas.

Category 2: Representation.

> That is my point about Hull being about its people so therefore its people should have some say about how the story is told... and I am sure some people would love to have seen a massive light show but they couldn't afford to bring their family into the centre to watch it, so may be an event that wasn't as big that could have moved around the city would have been more inclusive? (UCOC2019/18).

The analysis of the themes also suggests success was measured for local people against how performance appropriately represented the people of Hull. This was focussed on how performance reflected their voices and opinions to develop a co-creative approach to performance-making. I will measure success against whether the events within the local community were able to reflect the needs of the local communities through dialogues with local members from a bottom-up approach. A common criticism within the literature regarding CoCs is directed at the lack of work that was reflective of local voices and their cultural identity. Many of the themes that run throughout the feedback and other CoC years suggests that many events were a simplification or caricature of the city's image and heritage.

Category 3: Positive impacts and changed perceptions.

> 'It made me realise that the area was more interesting than ever I thought it was' (UCOC2019/18)

Further analysis of the themes within the focus groups indicates the events were considered successful if members of the community and participants felt a positive impact for their area through changed perceptions as a result of the use of theatre and performance.

Category 4: Pride.

> I think there is a lot to be proud of, a lot I enjoyed but I think if I have to name a specific event, it would be Made in Hull which opened the seasons. It just set the tone, it surprised people, it surpassed expectation, it really did work. (UCOC2019/18)

Finally, the events were considered successful if local people felt increased pride through opportunity and provision with theatre and performance.

Key ideas and themes within the study

Heritage

The newest application guidance for UK City of Culture 2025 states that the title can:

> [H]ave a hugely positive impact on a place – helping to bring partners together and develop strategic cultural leadership, showcasing and opening up access to your local heritage, art and culture. (DCMS, 2022)

Yet as I argue, the role of identity and heritage has been fiercely contested throughout the cultural years. Heritage forms an integral part of the UK City of Culture; CoCs aims to celebrate and share a city's unique heritage with the rest of the world. By utilising heritage in this way, it can:

> bring communities together, build local pride, develop new partnerships, and attract tourists from across the UK and beyond. (DCMS, 2016: 2)

I use heritage throughout this thesis to illustrate how heritage is an effective approach in building local pride, connecting communities and developing new place-brand images, but when it is not deployed correctly this can cause tensions within the host cities. Theatre and performance offer new ways of considering heritage as a tool for social cohesion when applied using scenography. As I will discuss in further detail later, scenography has moved beyond the historic certitudes of being synonymous with stage design towards a *lived* process. Heritage as a scenographic process is a methodological bridge to my discussion of the development of the Creative Producer. The application of heritage in this fashion aligns with the work of producers and the development of their creative capabilities, especially regarding the creative process of programming. Heritage can be deployed as a responsive process to the way in which cities brand themselves and how those living within the host cities performatively present themselves, in turn developing place-making and city pride.

Community

Engagement and participation opportunities form a key part of the criticisms levelled at CoCs. Opening up access to cultural participation opportunities form the foundation for my discussions on how producing practice can be developed to programme more work with (and into) hyperlocal communities. As I discuss throughout Chapter 2, work produced and programming work collaboratively in cultural mega-events are crucial to meet the needs of historically underserved communities. Moreover, the role of identity and participation in producing practice is the impetus behind my analysis of the successes of *7 Alleys* & *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger.* Anthony P. Cohen's arguments on community and their symbols predicate my arguments on the differentiation between the notion of grassroots community

and the notion of community that is often referred to in cultural and social policy. His work is pertinent when considering the tension between hyperlocal communities and CoCs. I identify how symbols and interpretation can be a tool for Creative Producers to target their practice to create more inclusive and relevant events for new publics that are responsive to their needs. Moreover, symbols can be used as totems to develop shared values of understanding. Cohen's work is crucial because it resists the concept that community is a catch-all term. Rather he refers to community as amorphous and more difficult to define, which as I will discuss later, in a globalised postmodern world is crucial to make producing practice reflect contemporary trends.

Producing and Programming

Producing and programming form the bedrock of any of CoC. Evidence has shown that when the producing and programming of CoCs are done in isolation, or with little input from the host cities communities, tensions arise around the title. I use the work on heritage and community to adapt, develop and update the role of the producer.

As I have observed earlier, the remit of Arts Council England has made a shift towards targeting funding that is focused on underserved audiences. Arts Council England has recognised that there is still 'widespread socio-economic and geographic variances in levels of engagement with publicly funded culture' (Arts Council England, n.d.). As the case studies within this thesis will demonstrate, when events are produced alongside audiences, they can be the catalyst for serving both engaged and less-engaged audiences and present useful lessons for the Creative Producer's praxis. These lessons can have tangible benefits for the modern Creative Producer in developing new methods for their work. The Hull2017 case studies will demonstrate best practice for working with communities to develop long-term, transformational performance. Balancing the social and economic needs of audiences is key to my development of the role of the Creative Producer and forms the basis of my dialogues on contemporary producing practice.

Clarification of terms

Performative

The term *performative* is used throughout this study and to avoid confusion with other terms I will clarify my use. Performative is used as an *adjective* meaning relating to the nature of performance. This is not to be confused with the concept of performativity associated with the likes of J. L. Austin, John Searle and Richard Schechner, as a concept of embodiment of actions that 'do' things.

Community

Although difficult to define, I use community as a small, specific postcode or area that operates in a distinct socio-economic context.

Producer

A producer is a theatre-maker and artist who is responsible for the financial and managerial aspects of realising a project or performance. Producers are also an expert in working with the public: a critical instigator and catalyst for long-term economic and social transformation in audiences and communities. In this thesis, I argue for a need to redefine the role of the producer in long term-engagement cultural events, and offer a new, revised conception of Creative Producer.

Mega-Event

Mega-events have often lacked clarity. I will be defining a mega-event in a similar sense to (Jones, 2020: 20) who states that a mega-event:

> 'begins with a bidding phase followed by a subsequent period of planning and implementation that has some kind of impact on local communities, the physical fabric of the city and the project image of the city that continues to be felt in some way during the legacy phase following the event.'

Scenography

A synthesis of light, sound, set design, costume design, choreography and dramaturgy coming together to world-build and create affective atmospheres. Scenography is an artistic discipline that creates performance spaces. These spaces enable the Creative Producer to

engage publics in a cultural dialogue: dialectics. Creative Producers build a public sphere that allows people to step out of their community identities for new engagements.

Dialectics

Throughout this study I build on the notion of dialectics (*Dialektik*). When I use this term, I am drawing upon Hegelian philosophy. Hegel argues that varying arguments form part of a larger picture. Through reasoned discourse these arguments can be synthesised to establish new understandings and truths. I use this tradition specifically as Hegel's notion of dialectis aligns itself well to my later arguments surrounding the concept of the Public Sphere as a mode of intercommunication in cities that host CoCs. Promoting Hegel's notion of dialectics can empower members of the host cities to create wider discourses around social, cultural, and political issues that exist in these cities and develop lasting change in a reasoned way.

Public Sphere

Following Jürgen Habermas's definition, Public Sphere is the discursive arena of intercommunication between reasoned individuals on matters of public interest. It is a space for discursive and open-ended practices of knowledge sharing and dialogue. It is a space where social and political change can take place through dialogue, enhanced by performance.

Introduction to Hull2017

The UK City of Culture is a competition run by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). Hosted by a different UK city every four years, cities submit bids to try and secure their place as CoC. If successful, the winning city hosts a year-long residency of artistic and cultural events that aims to regenerate the city both socially and economically. CoC was created in response to its European counterpart, European Capital of Culture specifically, the 2008 CoC. Hosted by Liverpool, it has been lauded as one of the most successful cultural events in recent years because of the economic, cultural, and urban rejuvenation it had on the city (Boland, Murtagh & Shirlow, 2016: 246., Doak, 2020: 48). More recent cities to have held the title of CoC began with Derry-Londonderry in 2013 and then Hull in 2017. The title has most recently been held by Coventry and as of 2022, Bradford is set to be the UK's next UK City of Culture 2025.

Kingston Upon Hull is a city in the Northeast of England with an estimated population of 267,000 (ONS, 2023). It is a city that suffers high levels of socio-economic deprivation, according to The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)[1]. The 2015 IMD demonstrates that Hull was ranked third in the highest number of deprived neighbourhoods nationally (45.2%), just behind Knowsley and Middlesborough (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015: 10). Hull had in fact ranked higher in the IMD compared to 2010 (10). The report further stated that 25.7% of the population of Hull were living in income deprived households making it the 4th highest local authority district in the country (22).

Hull received its title of UK City of Culture 2017 on 20th November 2013, beating off Leicester, Dundee, and Swansea Bay. Hull promised to re-brand its image as a city that deserved more prominence, distancing itself from the previous national perception of a city on the geographical and social periphery. The former head of Hull City Council, Stephen Brady stated in an interview: 'Never again will Hull have the reputation that some people have put on it in the past' (BBC, 2013). Alongside the commitment to Hull's rebranding came the promise of economic and urban regeneration; a promise that has become a staple of other CoCs (Boland, 2010: 632, Boland, Murtagh & Shirlow, 2016: 248) and many of the local residents were excited that the cities' aspirations were about to be raised (Simpson, 2013). The promise of transcendence beyond the negative image it had historically been associated with created a buzz of excitement. Reporter Caroline Bilton summed it up well on the night of Hull's victory:

> Hull has spent many many years at the bottom of lists, at the bottom of league tables, it has high unemployment. But this competition has raised aspirations here [...] people here believe this is a turning point for Hull. Aspirations have been raised and this is the start of something new, for the city of Hull, the City of Culture. (BBC, 2013)

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[1] The IMD is a study that in its various forms has been in existence since the 1970s. It was developed by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The study collates statistics from areas across the country to understand the levels of deprivation across the country. It combines data sets of information across seven domains: Income; Employment; Skills and Training; Health and Disability; Crime; Barriers to Housing Services; and, Living Environment. Each of these domains themselves are weighted depending on a variety of indicators that are underpinned by academic literature on poverty and deprivation.

There were hopes for the transformation of Hull through the CoC programme. Throughout Hull2017 there are key case studies that illustrate how performance was able to raise aspirations of local people. It is these case studies that highlight best practice for producing practice and can be implemented by Creative Producers in the future.

Yet the 2017 CoC suffered from some issues throughout the year. Throughout the event there were issues of representing identity and heritage in a way that was nuanced and appropriate. Furthermore, the tendency of the Hull2017 team to place many events in the city centre created a barrier to engaging peripheral communities of the city (many of which do not have the economic means to visit regularly). These concerns did not exist in isolation, rather they were reflective of a wider history of issues in the CoCs. The issues that exist in CoCs demonstrate the need of Creative Producers to balance the needs of various communities and organisations. I suggest that the curation of the events that take a bottom-up and co-creative approach are crucial to balance the needs of stakeholders, funders, and the needs of the host city's communities. The cited issues across many CoCs indicate a need for the development of new models for Creative Producers that are reactive to the needs of hyperlocal communities.

The representation of the host cities and its communities is particularly relevant. There are often problems with the way that the people from the CoCs are represented. Boland (2010: 637-639) makes a similar observation regarding Liverpool's 2008 CoC tenure. Boland argues that many of the people in the surrounding areas of Liverpool felt that their local ways of life were not represented properly. The city centre became the main attraction for the events of CoC, yet many residents felt that focussing the culture and regeneration on the city centre did not represent a large majority of the communities of Liverpool. The central attractions were 'guilty of sanitising equally real ways of life' (637). The focus on economic regeneration was seen by some as a way to keep stakeholders happy and make the overall event more palatable for visitors. Members of the Liverpool's communities felt this approach contradicted the 'glossy messages emanating from Liverpool Culture Company' (639). Hull2017 and other CoC demonstrate how the producing and programming of these cultural mega-events offer useful new models to develop the praxis of Creative Producers.

Chapter One

Chapter 1 focuses on producers' deployment of heritage and scenography in Hull2017 and how the synthesis of these methods can impact the Creative Producer's practice. Heritage has been used repeatedly throughout CoCs, to generate new place-branding images and reconstitute how the cities are understood and engaged with by visitors and locals. I use the case study of Nayan Kulkarni's *Blade* to examine how approaches to heritage and scenography can be successfully deployed to create new images of a city.

I then examine and analyse heritage throughout other CoCs to illustrate the wider questions and issues regarding representation of heritage. Specifically, how heritage has sometimes been criticised for being a reductive version of a city's diverse histories. In Hull, the deployment of heritage manifested in its celebration of its trawling industry. The view of Hull as a port city has characterised the place in the national and international eye over the last century. I analyse the celebration of trawling in the Hull2017 year and argue that the deployment of trawling heritage distanced many people from engaging with the cultural year because they did not feel represented. Furthermore, concerns were raised about how there seems to have been little debate about how the people of Hull would like to be represented throughout the Hull2017 programme. The branding of Hull as a trawling city resulted in some members of Hull's communities feeling that Hull2017 did not serve to move the city forward, but rather have it perpetually looking to its past.

Chapter Two

In Chapter 2 I discuss how the implementation of community in Hull2017 directly informed the engagement of many members of hyperlocal communities on the periphery of the city. Community-based arts activity was used to attract various demographics of people throughout the city to engage with arts and culture. The engagement of Hull's hyperlocal communities was particularly salient because of the high percentages of local people who do not engage with the arts regularly. Despite the attempt to engage communities in Hull2017 the concept of community is repeatedly unclear, and whilst many people may be able to describe it, it is much harder to define. I utilise Raymond Williams' (1976) discussions on community to chart how community has transformed over time. Williams suggests that

the growth of capitalism has shifted from a localised iteration that is clear to define to a looser and harder to define version. This provides critical context to understand not only why community has become an amorphous and difficult term to use but also why bottom-up approaches are crucial for the producing and programming of projects in communities. I heavily draw on the work of Anthony P. Cohen (1985) who argues that symbols are an important part of constituting communities because they act as shared totems. Cohen takes a hermeneutic approach to community, stating that although community can be interpreted differently, a symbol that represents a community can create a shared sense of pride and community cohesion both within the community and externally to it.

Using Cohen's hermeneutic approach to community I look towards the *Land of Green Ginger* and the performances that formed the *Acts of Wanton Wonder* in Hull2017. The project involved a series of events that were targeted and programmed for areas outside of the city centre. I focus on *7 Alleys* that took place in East Hull and *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* that took place in Bransholme*.* I argue that these models were successful in their approach to community engagement as they created projects that gave participants creative autonomy and produced transformative change for many of them. *7 Alleys* was an outdoor promenade performance taking place in East Park. *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* was a scenographically curated space for sharing that took place over two months in 2017. Whilst the mode of delivery of both projects was different, they were both successful in developing longer term engagements. They adopted a model that saw the members of the community placed at the core of their practice. The methods employed by producers provide a unique model for engaging wide demographics of people.

Chapter Three

In my final chapter I synthesise the lessons from Chapter One and Chapter Two to form the model of The Creative Producer. I turn my attention towards contemporary models of arts management, focussing specifically on the role of contemporary producing practice. I begin by discussing contemporary writing on producers to understand how their roles have been defined. I posit that definitions have been disparate and unhelpful. The lack of clarity on how the producer situates themselves in artistic processes and how they can create

transformational effects in society has resulted in a reductive view of contemporary producers that see them viewed as fundraisers and logistical managers.

I go on to discuss the role of creative producing and how it is a concept that distances producers from the idea that producing practice is inherently about management and finance. I use the knowledge gained from Hull2017 to critique the traditional notion of the producer and call for a renewed model called the Creative Producer. The model that I suggest develops the contemporary producer as a holistic theatre-maker by creating a synthesis of creative and managerial approaches. From this synthesis, new methods can emerge from well-tried artistic processes, resulting in a reinvigorated and activated spectatorship from the producer's audiences.

I draw on the work of Christopher Balme (2014) and Jürgen Habermas (1962) as a bedrock for developing the new methodology of the Creative Producer. I argue that it is crucial that a Creative Producer's role must be rooted in bringing artists and various publics together. I use the concept of the Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*), a form of mediatised intercommunication embodied by people, to argue that bridging the gap between artists, their work, and communities creates public dialectics. Public dialectics thus produces an activated spectatorship that can foster the desired effects of social and economic transformation in CoCs.

Finally, I implement the work of Slavoj Žižek and Robert Pfaller's discussions on interpassivity. I discuss how some projects have displacement of the enjoyment of art and media production onto the artwork. I examine how Creative Producers can actively embed participation into their practice to ensure that the engagement of their projects does not get diluted and that the producing process can become an active process that supports dialogues between communities and Creative Producers.

Chapter 1 – Heritage, *Blade,* and Scenography in Hull2017

In this chapter I aim to analyse how producers can collaborate with scenographers to curate spaces of engagement and make cultural heritages physically available. I look at how Creative Producers used cultural identity as a tool to celebrate Hull and reconfigure the conception of Hull as a deprived city. I use this learning to then propose future practice models for Creative Producers.

I begin by laying out the changing aims and objectives of CoCs. I go on to discuss how Hull has become synonymous with a city associated with trawling. I analyse the factors that saw Hull cemented as a national symbol of social and economic decline because of the decline of its trawling occupation. The factors I discuss lay the groundwork for analysing key examples of how scenography and heritage was used to reconfigure the concept of Hull as a city of socio-economic decline. I problematise my analysis by suggesting that particular Hull totems were prioritised, and they were viewed by some locals as not representative of the wider cultures that make up Hull. I draw on other examples of CoCs to demonstrate how redacted cultural heritage has failed before.

Heritage, Culture and Urban Policy: A retrospective

Prior to the 1980s, the arts were not viewed as a means for social and economic development and did not hold the same influence in the public eye as it often does today. The role of art in public policy was relatively unimportant, cultural policy was aimed at upholding both the standards of artistic excellence and a notion of national culture (Griffiths et al., 2003: 155), but the arts was not seen as a tool for urban renewal or the development of the tourism sector. In fact, as Bianchini and Parkinson state prior to the 1980s:

> Municipal committees in charge of cultural policy were often political backwaters, attracting politicians with no particular abilities, often nearing the end of their careers. (1993: 9)

The role of the arts in policy terms was regularly overlooked and was used as a way of producing official culture.

Throughout the 1980s there was a shift in how the arts was viewed by politicians and policy planners. The arts were viewed as a tool for public good but not necessarily as a socio-economic factor. This move can be seen as being in response to the neoliberal philosophy that began to dominate politics in the West. Neoliberal politics categorised citizens as consumers and promoted market competition across the globe. The move resulted in the arts no longer being viewed as 'intrinsically valuable, as expressions of national character and national worth; they were now to be viewed as an investment' (Griffiths et al., 2003: 155). In the United Kingdom, neoliberal politics emphasised a move away from local government, that at the time was under intense financial pressure because of the continuation of soaring inflation in the mid-to-late 1970s and a recession in 1981. For arts and culture, the political shift emphasised the importance of 'partnerships between business and public sector agencies, the value of 'flagship' cultural projects in promoting a city's image and the contribution of culture to economic development.' (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993: 2). As a result, there was a pressing need for policy actors to implement the use of arts and culture in a way that was entrepreneurial in its outlook to foster growth and encourage inward investment from business and stakeholders.

A common implementation of this entrepreneurial outlook was the development of festivals. Over this period there was an exponential growth of arts festivals across the United Kingdom and Europe. The growth is seen in the survey of arts festivals in the UK conducted by the British Arts Festival Association in 2008. Out of 193 festivals that participated in the study 51.8% were established after 1990 with only 2.6% of festivals established between 1951 and 1960 (10). These figures reflect the shift in the 1980s around the role of arts and the requirement of the arts to be a catalyst for economic change. This philosophy has impacted the remit and agendas of modern cultural mega-events like the CoC, where they are continually viewed as a catalyst to regeneration in urban centres around the UK.

Heritage regularly plays a significant role in the generation of income and local pride in festivals. A key example is London's Notting Hill Carnival that celebrates the cultural diversity of the city after the race riots in 1958 as Tallon (2014: 2) posits that in 2002 the

carnival contributed £93 million to the economy. The use of heritage as a product to be bought and sold has often been deployed as a tool within cultural policy to foster urban renewal through place-branding. City planners, politicians, and other cultural stakeholders often use this method to commodify and sell pre-packaged heritage products that are utilised to create new images of a city in the hopes of attracting tourists and generating economic and social growth. For this thesis, it is important to define heritage to appropriately analyse how it is used within the CoC frameworks.

Heritage is not solely an object, or artefacts, heritage emerges as a selective process that is entirely responsive to the social, cultural, and political contexts that surround it. Heritage is different to history. The etymology of these words can shed some light on this difference. Heritage comes from the Old French word *eritage* to mean 'inherit', which can be understood in terms of inheriting material objects such as property. It is possible to infer then, that when heritage is used, it is intended in terms of practices and objects that are inherited and passed down through generations. Heritage is different to history. Occurring from the Greek *Historia* meaning inquiry or the seeking of knowledge, *Historia* came into the English vernacular through the French *l'histoire* meaning story or narrative. History can be read as a collection or organisation of past events, people, and places. In short, heritage is inherited practices and objects of value which are passed down through generations, and history is the collection of past facts. These etymological roots reflect the work of G.J. Ashworth who suggests that heritage itself is not necessarily material, rather 'It is an activity in the past imagined in the present […] for the construction of products for current consumption' (2014: 6). Heritage viewed as a product is at the core of how it is utilised in cultural mega-events as a way of generating a new place-branding. Place-branding emphasises a chosen narrative (or narratives) that either changes or reinforces perceptions of a particular place or area in the public eye. For example, cities like London and New York have used their heritage to brand themselves as cities of cosmopolitan living, rich histories and high quality of life. Therefore, heritage is a collection of selective personal and communal pasts that are deployed in the present to create a selective image of a city to generate income and catalyse urban regeneration.

The European Capital of Culture (known at the time as 'Cities of Culture') programme was first proposed by the Greek minister for culture in 1983 and later picked up by the Council of Cultural Ministers in 1985. The programme was foregrounded by a set of principles that aimed to support the European community using arts and culture at a time when 'it did not have a defined remit for cultural action' (García, 2004: 318). The original cities of culture promoted and celebrated a city's existing cultural offer with some of the first cities to hold the title being Athens (1985), Florence (1986) and Amsterdam (1987). Cities of Culture were chosen by a process of intergovernmental agreements between member states. It was not until the late 1980s that the City of Culture programme was offered to other European countries (Gomes & Librero-Cano: 2018: 59). The first CoC to 'win' the title after the programme was opened was Glasgow. Glasgow was a significant turning point for the CoC programme because it shifted perceptions in what a CoC can achieve.

The success of Glasgow's 1990 CoC in regenerating the city has been discussed widely (García 2005; Quinn, 2009; Palmer, 2004; Richards & Palmer, 2010; Richards & Wilson, 2004) so this study shall not discuss this example extensively. However, long-term evaluations of the 1990 cultural year demonstrate the value of place branding on the legacy of shifted perceptions and images of a city. Beatriz García was a leading voice in researching and evaluating the short and long-term evaluation of Glasgow's cultural year. García's findings illustrated that the long-term legacy within Glasgow after 1990 has been largely positive, especially regarding *City Image* and *Economics and Tourism* (Garcia, 2005: 851). García's work particularly demonstrates the importance of media marketing and the narrative framing of a city in how it is perceived externally. National and local newspapers and broadsheets played a vital role in the dissemination of the more positive narrative of Glasgow and it found that 55.3% of discussions of Glasgow's city image was positive which was 'even higher when separating discussion around image and perceptions properly (7.1 per cent of all themes, presented in a positive light in 70.2 per cent of cases)' (854).

Glasgow's success illustrated how built and imagined heritage can be a successful tool to regenerate and re-brand areas by developing a new, more attractive place image. A narrative of forging a new future for Glasgow was coupled with a physical redevelopment of the city with new shopping centres, artistic institutions and renovated cultural landmarks.

The redevelopment of the city distanced the area from previous negative associations that had often been cemented in the national consciousness such as mass unemployment, deindustrialisation and high levels of urban decay, (Pike, 2017: 9). The rebranding of Glasgow illustrated how success for image legacies is often achieved through selecting personal and communal heritage narratives and filtering them into a product that can be deployed. This is particularly significant since the rebranding of an area can be seen to have very real social and economic effects on these areas. For example, market surveys have demonstrated how cultural heritage can be a differentiator of destinations for tourists (Benson et al., 2013: 4). The role of place branding and heritage has tangible effects on the prospects of a city and the relationship between external actors and the city.

Glasgow's model has subsequently been used as a point of interest for the proponents of future CoCs. Glasgow was referenced when Liverpool was planning their 2008 CoC year. The then culture Secretary Chris Smith emphasised within the bidding document the success of Glasgow in changing the cities offer (Connolly, 2013: 169). Glasgow's successful urban regeneration also found its way into the rhetoric of the UK City of Culture title. The idea of a UK CoC title emerged in public discourse in 2009 when the culture secretary, Andy Burnham, wanted to pursue a UK CoC prize that would be held outside of London. Burnham spoke of the benefits of cultural activity after the widely praised success of Liverpool's 2008 CoC regeneration. A panel was set up, chaired by Phil Redmond, who led Liverpool's 2008 programme, to discuss the feasibility of the project (Jones, 2009.) The working group consisted of various governmental and cultural organisation figures.

The panel found unanimously that

> [T]he UK City of Culture concept is both desirable and feasible and should go ahead, but that careful consideration would need to be given to the scheme's practical implementation, taking into account such issues as the timetable for bidding, and the costing of the scheme (DCMS, 2009: 6)

The panel did not comment on some of the wider concerns that have been raised with previous (and subsequent) CoCs, such as the exacerbation of social exclusion and the issues of representation when conflating heritage. These issues occurred throughout the 2013 CoC

in Derry-Londonderry and Hull2017 and the omission on the part of the working group was significant in how these issues went on to affect local people within the host cities.

For example, Derry-Londonderry suffered issues of how heritage was deployed as the area suffered against the backdrop of 'The Troubles.' The Troubles took place in the 1960s and it was an ethno-nationalist conflict mainly taking place in Northern Ireland about the status of Northern Ireland and whether it should remain part of a wider United Kingdom. The results of the conflict led to high concentrations of poverty and multiple deprivation in Derry-Londonderry in addition to a divided city that was divided both religiously and politically. This troubled context formed the backdrop of the 2013 year (Doak, 2020: 54). A consistent struggle for producers of the CoC was producing an event that was mutually beneficial for a landscape that was deeply divided. The use of heritage had a much wider symbolic consequence in how community memories were legitimised and as a result the way the programme was produced had effects on the tensions within Derry-LondonDerry throughout the 2013 year (Murtagh et al. 2017: 508). Many of the tensions manifested in the planning phase of 2013. The issues emerged from the problematic 'UK' prefix. The Sinn Féin strongly opposed the prefix as it was unrepresentative of their culture and heritage, whereas on the other hand the Democratic Unionist Party felt that the 2013 CoC year was being 'hijacked' (Doak, 2020: 51-52).

Many of the locals were alienated due to the conflicts surrounding the legitimation of how heritage was performed. The contention from both sides of the ethno-political spectrum demonstrated the importance of how heritage is deployed in CoCs. Heritage came to the fore as more than an abstraction, rather it was a performative and lived experience that was rooted in the day-to-day lives of those living in the city. The curation of CoCs that situate certain heritage totems as a key focal point across the year often results in the erasure of other heritages that are vital to understanding a city and the variety of people that inhabit it. When one heritage is prioritised over others in a selective process it often results in a homogenising culture.

Similar issues were raised in Liverpool's 2008 CoC. The theme of Liverpool's bid was the 'The World in One City' (Boland, 2010: 633). Despite the cultural programme and the media

attention it garnered, it did not attempt to analyse or acknowledge the culture of local life that was marked by issues of poverty and gang violence (638). Instead, it attempted to bring to the fore the celebrities that the city had produced like The Beatles. Feedback from a Toxteth woman (an area of Liverpool situated on the periphery of the city) demonstrated a wider distrust of the CoC title. She was critical of the ways that the same money could have been spent on deprived communities. The feedback highlights the distancing between members of communities within the host cities and the CoC title when heritage is misrepresented. The feedback from the Toxteth woman suggests that she did not see the need for such an event to take place when the investment could have been spent directly on these neighbourhoods. This could be read as a disengaged individual who is quick to find fault with anything that does not bring tangible benefit, however, to move beyond this, it indicates that there was a wider failure on the part of the CoC team to use heritage appropriately to represent and engage people with the arts that were outside of the immediate city centre. The prioritisation of certain narratives during Liverpool's cultural year such as 'The World in One City' obscured the acknowledgement of other realities that focused on social and economic issues of the present. There was no apparent attempt to ameliorate the issue or even acknowledge it (Boland, 2010: 638). The use of heritage to present glossy images, conflated the wider stories and issues within and city and in turn sanitised it for the consumer as an attractive location to visit. Consequently, any unpalatable aspects of cultural life or heritage were omitted to make way for heritage totems that could reframe image legacies. The examples highlight that many Coc events are not being developed and curated alongside members of the host cities. Rather, these were produced for more economically grounded reasons, the place-branding of cities to encourage inward investment. The totem-making culture presents palatable and false images that the producers consider create glossy images that also fulfil economic and social agendas.

An argument could be made that it would simply not be possible to adequately represent the sheer number of cultures and heritages that have formed a particular city in events such as CoC with its timeframe being somewhat restrictive in respect to programming. To produce an event of this size, despite its lead in time of 5 years, does not necessitate the ability to represent all the heritages of those living in the host cities. Such cultural mega-events require a balance between the needs of funders, stakeholders, and the local people.

To deliver an event that uses a superficial pre-packaged heritage place-image does not deliver a full, clear, and adequate image of a city. Instead, it creates a false presentation that is sterile and is palatable to attract tourists to visit.

Hull: A brief trawling history

Hull is a city situated 22 miles from the North Sea and was originally established as a port by the monks of the Meaux Abbey to export wool in the 13th century. The river Hull provided a safe and convenient harbour for the import and export of goods, the continual use of the harbour because of its safety and convenience cemented Hull as a trading hub and has had an unbroken history as a port ever since. Since the 14th century, Hull has been one of the most important ports on the east coast of England and as such it became vital in the import of wine and cloth. It was not until the early 19th century that Hull had a key development in its industry which resulted in a fishing boom in the 1920s (Hull History Centre, n.d.: 5-6).

Hull as a fishing port grew exponentially over the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Prior to the 1840s its relative isolation made it difficult to transport fish because the fish deteriorated quickly, making it a luxury (Horobin, 1962: 45). It was not until the early 1840s with the discovery of the 'silver pits' (48) that Hull started to grow as a port. The silver pits were a valley in the North Sea seventy miles east of the Humber that were host to large quantities of sole. The discovery of the silver pits resulted in an exponential growth in the number of trawlers because large quantities could be caught and transported with relative ease. In 1837 Hull had a small number of trawlers but by 1863 this had grown to 270 (48). In 1869 the Albert Dock was completed, the dock overlooked the northeast of the river and many fishing merchants who owned trawlers moved their icehouses, stores, and smokehouses to the dock. This move resulted in the creation of many new homes for the workers all centred around the Hessle Road area of Hull. Despite steam power having been introduced to the fishing industry relatively late, the investment of steam trawling between 1884 and 1889 meant that the fishing enterprises in Hull were able to fish further afield. These included the seas off the coasts of Norway, Iceland, and Russia which fostered bigger catches and created a need to continually upscale their vessels and businesses to accommodate the vast quantities of fish. By the 1930s Hull had further cemented itself in the national and international consciousness as one of the prime fishing ports in England.

The importance of fishing industry came with a particular way of life that was rooted in the social consciousness of many living in Hull.

Jeremy Tunstall stated that the way of life on the trawlers and in the community of Hull was 'ordained' (1969: 134). The role of fishing was embedded in the local consciousness in a way that many people of Hull did not feel that it would ever change. It was a culturally significant part of the lives of Hull's locals. Hull's fishing industry had been growing rapidly since the discovery of the silver pits in the 1840s and it created a new way of life in Hull. The move of the port to the Albert Dock in 1869 saw homes built to house the growing number of fishermen moving to the area. The building of new properties happened again when the dock was finally moved in 1883 some two and a half miles away to St Andrews Fishing Dock. Coupled with population growth and an increase in migration from the countryside to the city, Hessle Road, just a short distance from the dock became known as 'Trawlertown' (Starkey, 2017: 209). The close geographic proximity of houses that were bonded by the same occupation developed a close-knit community of people who had a unique 'rhythm' in their way of life (Byrne & Ombler, 2017: 272). One example of these 'rhythms' was that the local shops adjusted the prices of their goods in relation to the state of the fishing market. If there was a period of fewer catches and by less income, the shops would lower prices to accommodate (Horobin, 1957: 348). Therefore, when Tunstall suggests that it was an 'ordained' way of life, he does not mean in a solely occupational sense, rather fishing extended into the lifeblood of the community. It became a social sub-system informed by the occupation.

Hull's trawling industry was an extremely dangerous profession. There was consistent tragedy that struck the Hessle Road community. Nine hundred ships were lost between 1835 and 1987, an average of five a year (Gill, 2003: 11) which is a significant number for one community. The St Andrews Dock Heritage Park Action Group (STAND) state that on a trawler there would be a Skipper, a Mate, a Botswain, a Deckhand, Engine room personnel, Galley staff and a radio operator (STAND, n.d.) A trawler required many crew to man it and often when a trawler was lost at sea or men were swept overboard no bodies were recovered therefore there was often no sense of closure through a funeral. Moreover, wages for the workers were often low. The workers were paid a base salary, but it was not a

sustainable income, their main source of income was in 'poundage' a share of the cost of the gross catch (Horobin, 1957: 347). Many of the families of the trawler workers would struggle whilst the men were away on the trawlers, often living below the poverty line. Not to mention the 'Triple Trawler Tragedy', the sinking of three ships in the period between January and February 1968, that resulted in 58 trawlermen losing their lives with only one survivor. These tragedies garnered national press and cast a spotlight on the dangerous working conditions of the trawlermen.

The ordained way of life that existed in Hessle Road was disrupted by the Cod Wars. The Cod Wars were a series of seaborne conflicts between the UK and Iceland taking place intermittently from 1952 to 1975. These conflicts were about territorial limits and the right to fish in North Atlantic waters. These ultimately had a severe impact on the industry in Hull. The first Cod War broke out in September 1958 when Iceland extended their fishing limit from four to twelve miles. A series of conflicts over almost the next twenty years saw the fishery limit finally extended in November to two hundred miles. Whilst the geo-political factors behind the conflicts were complex, the effects that emerged from it were felt in very real terms in Hull. The territorial limits on trawling depleted the local economy resulting in a need for companies to diversify the industry to survive. The number of fish landing at Hull's docks daily was on average 597 tonnes. This number was reduced by such a significant amount in the following years that by 1983 it struggled to maintain one daily landing (Byrne, 2016: 256). The trawling economy was no longer profitable in the way it had been in previous decades. The number of trawling jobs fell from 8600 in 1976 to 4495 just 7 years later (256). The rapid depletion of stock resulted in other areas of the country suffering from depletion of their fish stocks (Byrne, 2015: 819). The result of years of conflicts and unsustainable trawling methods meant that by the end of 1986 only two trawling firms remained and the major damage to Hull's Trawlertown community had been dealt. The once close-knit community that relied on the trawling industry had been slowly broken and dispersed throughout Hull and beyond. Yet despite the dispersal of locals, Hull remained in the national and international eye as a city that was inseparable from its life as a fishing port city.

Heritage as scenography: The successes and setbacks of heritage in UK City of Culture 2017.

> Embracing the rivers, waterfront, rich architectural heritage, parks, schools and neighbourhoods, Hull 2017 will enable locals and visitors alike to see and experience the city in a new way. (Hull UK City of Culture 2017, 2017: 33)

The quote above is from Hull2017s strategic business plan and it is an illustration of the aims of the Hull2017 year. One of the legacy aims of the 2017 year was to use heritage both built and imagined as a way for locals and tourists to experience Hull in a new way (Hull UK City of Culture 2017, 2013: 4). The final bid from the Hull team opens with a quote from the *Observer*

> When Hull enters the national consciousness it is usually as a totem of social deprivation (Hull UK City of Culture 2017, 2013: 4)

Often featuring on the 'Crap Towns' list (Wainwright, 2003; Murphy, 2019), Hull has historically been viewed nationally as a deprived area both socially and economically. Upon winning the bid some commentators suggested 'once you took away the titanic figures of Andrew Marvell and Philip Larkin, the place was pretty much devoid of this desirable quality' (Taylor, 2013). The bid highlighted the challenges that Hull faced including high unemployment, health inequalities, high rates of poverty and low academic attainment, and how this was viewed nationally (UK City of Culture 2017, 2013: 4-5). The final bid then set out how the CoC team would use the arts and culture alongside built and imagined heritage to distance Hull from previous negative place images towards a new, more positive place image that situates Hull as a place to 'live, work and visit' (Hull UK City of Culture 2017, 2013: 11).

To shift the perceptions of Hull as a socio-economically deprived city, heritage was stated to be a key factor. The bid team laid out their process for delivery in the bids 'step change' table (UK City of Culture 2017, 2013: 24). To change perceptions using heritage, the 2017 team set out two pathways. Firstly, the use of built heritage. The bid team posited to achieve shifting perceptions it would need to build new museums, galleries, hotels, dance centres and conference centres as well as the regeneration of the Waterfront, Old Town,

and city centre (24). Secondly, shifting perceptions would also be achieved by using Hull's cultural icons and existing heritage. As the quote from the beginning of this section suggests the strategic business plan set out that by using existing cultural and heritage assets in new and exciting ways, it would 'bring new life' to neglected places and this would open new possibilities for locals and visitors to view Hull and what it has to offer as a city.

The hope for the Hull2017 team was that by using heritage as a catalyst for cultural regeneration the future image and prospects of the city would transform and shift perceptions of Hull. The strategic business plan linked this transformation to the concept of the 'Northern Powerhouse.' The Northern Powerhouse is 'about boosting the local economy by investing in skills, innovation, transport and culture […] to ensure decisions in the North are made by the North.' (Northern Powerhouse, n.d.). The idea of the Northern Powerhouse is significant in this context because it demonstrates the ambition placed on culture and heritage by the Hull2017 team as a tool grow the city socially and economically and situate Hull as a key Northern city in the future. I assert that heritage not only served as a cornerstone to the ambition and success of Hull2017, but it presented a critical performative and scenographic function throughout the 2017 year to distance the city away from its negative connotations.

Scenography can shed new light on the uses of heritage for developing image-legacies and public engagements and establish critical learning for the Creative Producer. In this instance to use public art as a site for the participation of publics to engage in dialogues and renegotiate conceptions of Hull beyond its idea as a deprived city. The term scenography within this study refers to the act of creating scenic worlds through the synthesis of contemporary technologies, including design from stage, lighting, costume, choreography, digital technologies, and the synthesis of these components with written material. It is important to further clarify that written material does not mean a script but rather the bids, business plans, programming and other elements that reinforce a wider narrative.

There has been a move in recent decades to recognise the capabilities of scenography beyond the four walls of the theatre. Scholars tend to agree that scenography is no longer bound by the theatre but rather it is a performative and lived process that plays out in our day-to-day lives. Hannah and Harsløf (2008) suggest, a more inclusive and appropriate term

for scenography could be 'performance design' as this term moves beyond traditional notions of scenography inextricably linked to theatre and instead incorporates interdisciplinary fields such as fashion, architecture, and music (18). The adoption of a more inclusive and open-ended approach to scenography is key to analysing good practice in Hull2017 because it presents a renewed scope of the capability of scenography in shaping the artistic processes of Creative Producers and regenerating a city's image. In short, scenography is a holistic process of space and place creation. A key thinker on the modern application of scenography is Rachel Hann and particularly her work on the role of scenographic 'atmospheres', (Hann, 2018: 68).

Rachel Hann's asserts that scenography is a synthesis of light, sound, set design, costume design, choreography and dramaturgy synthesising to world-build and create affective atmospheres. The synthesis of scenography in this way can be used as a model for place-orientation that happens in time (68-71). The scenographer is not a single entity, but rather it is the task of a team of people, materials, and technologies that infuses with any artistic elements (47). Hann's comments reflect Howard's suggestion (2019: xxxii) that scenography as an inherently collaborative act:

> Scenography – the creation of the stage space – does not exist as a self-
> contained art work […] scenography is the joint statement of the director and
> the visual artist of their view of the play, opera or dance that is being presented
> to the audience as a united piece of work.

Howard's notion of scenography as a collaborative act is significant for Hull2017. The deployment of heritage as a scenographic act involves the collaborative work of a group of producers, programmers, urban planners, amongst other key stakeholders, to deliver an effective scenographic world that attracts inward investment and distances the city from a negative place image. The synthesis of various aesthetic and performative elements contribute to how spectators engage with a place or area; it creates within each spectator a feeling that goes beyond the limits of the observable scenery towards the emotional that is reflective of wider social and emotional influences. The feeling constitutes a relationship

within each spectator beyond the physical space towards an emotional connection that orientates the spectator as part of the 'world' of the city.

To view heritage as a scenographic process I suggest can allow for the re-conception of urban space in the minds of participants and spectators, taking familiar spaces and reframing them in new ways to create a new sense of place-branding in a city. As McKinney and Palmer (2017) suggest, scenography is particularly resonant when considering the role of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics (2002) whereby the artwork is not viewed as autonomous but founded on the dialectic relationship between spectators and the environment. The intersubjective human encounters within natural and built environments reframe how individuals view their environment. To view heritage through the lens of scenography opens new possibilities to interrogate the creation of new, more positive image legacies and the practice of Creative Producing.

In short, I situate scenography as an artistic discipline that creates performances that enable the Creative Producer to curate spaces for publics to meet in engage in dialectics. Creative Producers' build a public sphere that allows people to step out of their community identities for new engagements. They create spaces, opportunities, and interactions where people can come in and see themselves reflected in others. This is not to wipe out their identities but to enrich their ways of seeing it and discover the role that they play within it.

A key example of scenography and the Creative Producer's ability to galvanise public dialectics is illustrated in the *Look Up* programme. *Look Up* was a year-long programme of site-specific installations that were designed 'to encourage people to look up, offering different perspectives and ways to experience the city' (British Council, n.d.). Throughout *Look Up*, the producers used scenography to frame Hull as a trawling city whilst also challenging many of the negative connotations it had historically acquired. In an interview for the evaluation of Hull2017, Sam Hunt, the producer of *Look Up,* stated that the bid writers initially wanted a programme called 'looking up' that aimed to display a series of 52 interventions that responded to the architecture of the city (UCOC2018/19). After their initial discussions, the bid-writing team felt that 52 projects were too many to deliver and

this was streamlined to 10. In Hunt's words, the artists' brief for the *Look Up* installation was:

> [R]esponding to Hull and also us[ing] this as an opportunity to use the visual arts to drive footfall through the city centre and experience a new public realm (UCOC2018/19).

Across the year the *Look Up* installations varied in size and themes. *Blade* (2017) for instance, focused on the architecture of the city whilst *The Train Track and the Basket* (2017) commented on the role of Hull as a transient city of migration. Across the 2017 year the 10 *Look Up* installations were: *Blade, City Speaks, Paper City, Elephant in the Room, Washed up Car-go, A Hall for Hull, Floe, Bleached, The Train Track and the Basket,* and *This is a Freedom of Expression Centre.*

The *Look Up* installation that garnered a large local and national impact was *Blade* (2017) and I would like to analyse it as an example of inspirational practice in the public space. This installation was arguably the most prominent event to bring scenography to the fore. For this reason, it is pertinent to analyse *Blade* to understand how scenography can be a vital tool for Creative Producers to maximise the impact with audiences by materialising heritage, community, and identity as a tool for repositioning negative conceptions of place and communities.

Figure 1. Blade in Queen Victoria Square (The Guardian, 2017)

Blade was an installation from the visual artist Nayan Kulkarni that saw a 75-metre wind turbine blade placed in Queen Victoria Square in the city centre of Hull in January 2017 (see Figure 1 above). The project was a collaboration between Hull2017 and the local Siemens factory. Partnerships played a key role in the *Look Up* programme. The producing team for the project suggested the idea of having 'creative partners' rather than partners aligned with the Hull2017 as a whole. The budget for the programme was £750,000, yet with the installations varying in size and resource it required the producers to facilitate a set of key partnerships to supplement the budget and realise the projects. Feedback from the delivery partners suggests that a common motivator in helping support the project was to collaborate with artists and to demonstrate a commitment to Hull and the community. Across the *Look Up* programme there were more than 25 organisations that took part. Their responsibilities varied from venue provision, co-commissioning of artworks and project management support (UCOC2019/18). The data collected after the completion of the *Look Up* programme suggest that the partnerships were a unique opportunity to create a legacy of partnerships focussed on public art projects. Four of six partners would be more confident in working on a similar project in future; three of five felt their organisation's

profile had improved; and two of five felt they attracted a larger audience and new audiences via Look Up (UCOC2019/18).

Nayan Kulkarni was chosen by the Hull2017 producers on account of a long-term relationship with the *Look Up* curators Hazel Colquhoun and Andrew Knight. In his post-2017 interview, Kulkarni detailed how he had been 'pouring over' the idea for months prior. He felt that with his installation he could make a statement about 'ideas to do with ready-made, new labour, talking about spectacle, talk about cultural capital, actual capital and it all folded into one huge gesture' (UCOC2018/19). Before the installation there was a period of research and development. Siemens were able to close a section of the factory to facilitate Kulkarni's research. In the R&D process it became apparent that the blade structure was unstable, and modifications had to be made to ensure its stability. For the structure to be transported from the factory, it took two lorries and four hours to travel two-and-a-half miles from the factory. *Blade* took a large amount of human resource with 70 members of Siemens staff needed to transport and position the blade five metres above the ground. Moreover, it involved the task of removing and moving street furniture and fixtures to accommodate its 75-metre size.

Blade then remained in Queen Victoria Square from 8th January to 18th March 2017. The *Hull City of Culture 2017 Look Up 1 – Blade* report calculated that over the period of the installation 420,888 people attended to engage with it. Visitor numbers were originally taken manually but soon after the installation began, video cameras were installed to capture the number of visitors. As the report states

> For 2 days, 18th and 21st January, 5 minutes of footage were counted 3 times per hour, a total of 72 counts per day. For the remaining 56 days, 5 minutes of footage were counted a total of 30 counts per day. (UCOC2019/18)

Blade drew upon Hull's heritage, identity, and community to develop a scenographic worlding of Hull that connected the city to its architectural and seafaring past to reconstitute feelings of Hull. But also, *Blade* could be read as a metaphor for Hull's future, drawing on notions of regeneration, green energy, and the Northern Powerhouse. The location and positioning of *Blade* in Queen Victoria Square is significant. Queen Victoria

Square is home to the Hull Maritime Museum. The building was constructed in 1871 and it was originally the home of the Hull Dock Company that formed the main offices of the trawling fleet. The *Look Up* programme was able to 'offer different ways to experience the city' (British Council, n.d.) and *Blade* in its size and positioning encouraged spectators to look up and notice these buildings and invited them to engage with their history. The intervention into the habitual space of Queen Victoria Square de-automated ways of looking at the architecture and invited a novel engagement.

On account of what they call *expanded scenography*, McKinney & Palmer (2017: 10) suggest that scenography can activate the latent dramaturgical potential of the built environment. For some members of the *Look Up* focus groups, *Blade* was able to activate such a dramaturgical potential of the scenographic worlding, bringing to the life the wider narrative of Hull as 'coming out of the shadows' and connected with trawling to create a positive image legacy. Several members of the focus groups commented on how *Blade* was a juxtaposition:

> it was like post future against staged past.
>
> It was a juxtaposition as well. The very modern thing out of place, and looking at it again, to some of the beautiful old buildings of Hull. You know, City Hall, and that red brick pub. (UCOC2019/18)

In turn another focus group member commented on how *Blade* made them feel emotional because of its sheer size.

It was not just within the focus groups that the feedback acknowledged Hull's identity. Feedback suggests that *Blade* was able to represent identity using scenography and performance architecture and it was largely successful as an encounter to reconstitute how spectators understood Hull's architecture and by extension its public image. From a sample size of 600 when asked if *Blade* made them 'look at Hull's buildings and public spaces in a new way', 77.9% either agreed or strongly agreed. Moreover, evidence suggests that the reframing of Hull's image reached beyond Hull's locals. 58.8% of the feedback was collected from people visiting from outside Hull. (UCOC2019/18). *Blade* was largely successful in

reframing the built spaces by forming a scenographic worlding in the minds of the spectators. It drew upon the built heritage and the imagined framings of the city associated with its maritime past and Northern Powerhouse future to create a new sense of the city. The feedback indicates that the Hull2017 producers were able to use *Blade* successfully reframe Hull's image brand beyond its historic connotations of economic and social deprivation.

What is arguably more important, is that *Blade* moved beyond the ability to just shift perceptions towards creating tangible positive impact for local people. *Blade* acted as a galvanising force for social interaction between local communities. 54% of participant feedback indicated that they either strongly agree or agree that *Blade* acted as an opportunity for people to engage with others from outside their community or immediate circle. This is significant because it aligns closely with the thematic analysis of feedback from the Hull2017 focus groups as I discussed in the introduction: the feedback illustrated that a key element of success was the opportunity for Hull2017 to act as a catalyst for community cohesion.

The responses suggests that those who were classified as 'most deprived' were the most likely to engage with new people because of *Blade.* This is notable because it shows scenography and heritage as an approach for Creative Producer's to overcome social barriers and act as a catalyst for social cohesion. The focus group feedback of *Look Up* also highlighted that *Blade* was able to engage new people with art and culture.

> Phil: Certainly brought me to a lot of things that I would never have
>   thought that I would've enjoyed. If somebody told me that
>   there'd be a wind turbine blade in the middle of the top, I
>   would've thought, "Yeah, okay."
> Tina: Yeah, it was accessible.

The notion that the produced works of Hull2017 like *Blade* were accessible is significant because many people prior to the cultural year did not feel as though art was for them. To look towards the market research carried out in 2015 for Hull2017, it demonstrated that particular areas were less likely to be confident in taking part in arts and cultural activity. As I go on to discuss in more depth in Chapter 2, there are large disparities throughout areas of

Hull and people who were least likely to be confident in engaging with arts and culture correlated closely with areas that lived in deprived communities.
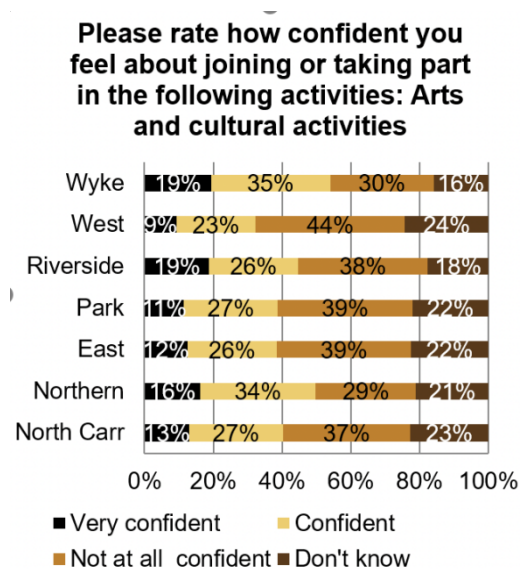

Figure 1.2 A graph showing confidence levels in engaging in art based on ward in Hull (UCOC2019/18)

Blade was aligned with the wider scenographic worlding of the year particularly with the narrative of water and trawling that it utilised since the stages of the 2017 bid. A link was made between *Blade* and the sea as Martin Green stated:

> It's a structure we would normally expect out at sea and in a way it might remind you of a giant sea creature, which seems appropriate with Hull's maritime history. (Bond, 2017).

Green's comments link *Blade* to the wider image of Hull's maritime and fishing heritage through Hull2017. As Daniel Libeskind argues, scenography draws its emotional impact from the treatment of a chosen narrative (Brejzek, 2017: 69). The overarching narrative of Hull2017 was aligned with Hull's trawling history. The bid and the video *This City Belongs To Everyone*[2] that accompanied it were just several ways in which this scenographic worlding was realised. Throughout the 2017 year there was a surge of heritage from the mixture of exhibits, installations, plays, and lectures. These events tried to build a sense of civic pride

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXJkDgBUR9c&t=100s

on the basis of trawling heritage. The theme was repeatedly seen throughout the programme.

The scenographic worlding that emerged from using heritage was a useful tool to create pride in Hull and developing the image legacies of the city. Evidence suggests that internal attitudes and perceptions rose in Hull from 70 to 75 per cent between 2016 and 2017 (Cultural Place and Policy Institute, 2018: 15). Externally there was a difference in the image legacies produced by the changed image of Hull. In a national survey, 3 in 4 visitors said that the Hull2017 changed their perceptions of Hull for the better and 61% of them said that they were likely to return (Tommarchi & Bianchini, 2022: 485). Scenographic interventions like *Blade* can contribute to the feelings of pride and belonging in areas that in the national consciousness may have been considered deprived areas. It was put well when a focus group member stated:

> People were getting prouder and they're not so reluctant to say they are from Hull. That was me actually, I was a bit of a snob there. (UCOC2018/19)

The reluctance exhibited by this focus group member is a common theme that runs throughout the Hull2017 focus groups (UCOC2018/19). As a result of *Blade* many locals felt Hull had repositioned itself in the public eye. The installation activated many of the city's locals to feel a new sense of pride to be associated with the city. The use of scenographic worlding takes on a further significance because it speaks to the one of the measures of success highlighted by the post-2017 focus groups. The focus groups raised that Hull 2017 was successful when the event was able to challenge perceptions, largely externally from the city. The data suggests that when heritage was deployed it was able to positively challenge perceptions and create new image legacies for the city. This highlights the importance of the buy-in from locals towards the deployment of heritage.

Blade was a non-conventional scenographic intervention that engaged local people with heritage. It was a spectacle, and spectators appreciated the scale and skill that was required to realise the project. *Blade* demonstrates good practice for the Creative Producer because it had no preconceived notions of being high-art. It was a spectacle that enabled spectators

to engage how they wanted. It reframed how Creative Producers can make impacts through scenography which has very often not been considered part of the producers' remit. However, it must be acknowledged that there was a lack of effects for other communities. I will discuss this further in chapter two and three, but a critical issue with the practice of producers in projects like *Blade* is that when producers prioritise the city centre for the delivery of performances, it stops some communities from being able to engage. Crucially, a result of this prioritisation of certain spaces is that tensions and frustrations can arise, and the impacts producers hope to make are not realised. Moreover, whilst the data suggests *Blade* generated pride, developed social cohesion, and reframed place-images, to what extent the project was able to empower and enable Hull's locals to continue this legacy remains to be seen. *Blade* had a certain passivity, and it might have benefitted from a more interactive approach to the engagement of local people to create a future legacy to engagement and social change.

Problematic Heritage in Hull2017

Despite the success of scenographic worlding in producing new positive image legacies, Hull2017 also had issues with the way that certain elements of heritage represented local people. Hull's key heritage markers were clearly crucial to the development of a new place-branding that distanced Hull from an area associated with socio-economic deprivation – a point I discussed above in the introduction. Nevertheless, there have always been many other stories that are crucial to the understanding of Hull. These stories were not told or were under-represented, which often led to a conflation of the public image of life in Hull. It is perhaps unsurprising then that one key measure of success highlighted by the focus groups was the appropriate representation. In the eyes of local people, representative heritage played a crucial role in the success of the Hull2017 year.

The conflation of heritage can result in a loss of many of the other crucial heritage markers that present a richer understanding of the city. The complication of reductive heritage is an issue continually raised by scholars (Mooney, 2004; Boland, 2010; Boland et al., 2016; Doak, 2020). The conflation often leads to certain heritage and cultural products being prioritised over others to develop positive image legacies. The problem is best understood in terms of certain reductive icons being deployed to performatively display a city's image to the rest of

the world. For example, Liverpool has become synonymous with the Beatles and Salzburg has become synonymous with Mozart (Ashworth, 2014: 14). This is insufficient because it results in local people feeling their communal identities are diluted and that their heritage has been sanitised and exploitatively streamlined.

Despite the largely positive impact reports from Hull2017 in regard to the role of heritage within the cultural year (Culture, Place & Policy Institute, 2018: 32; Culture, Place & Policy Institute, 2021: 25), opinions from the focus groups offer a more nuanced outlook. Locals recognised the prioritisation of particular heritage totems, and their feedback sits in contrast to the disseminated reports.

> [T]he quality of Hull2017 as a programme of art and culture events, then I would say it is an 8 or 9, but it was like a roadshow, it was events and artists bussed in from all over the world and then they left. The quality was high, not the same throughout the year but it was high. If you want to know if it was a representation of Hull, its people and its places then no, I think the quality drops to 6 or 7. I think that is the reality of the situation. (UCOC2018/19)

The feedback from the focus group member suggests some audience members felt the methods used by the CoC team in deploying heritage were not appropriate; they believed Hull needed a longer-term engagement with its inhabitants to fully understand how the people wanted to be represented. This was further reflected by another member who raised concerns over the prioritisation of trawling heritage. The member believed that such a sanitisation stopped Hull from looking to the future.

> I do think that we do need to look forward as well as sort of, back to history, back past the fishing industry. You know, Brexit will happen, but we still should be looking at Europe and we should still be looking at the scientific innovation that Hull has brought to manufacturing and engineering. There should be more about what happens next. (UCOC2019/18).

The feedback from the focus group member highlights some of the concerns from local people that heritage potentially damaged the image legacies for the future. It resulted in an image of Hull as a city that perpetually looks to its past. One participant noted that the heritage deployed throughout the year was important to celebrating Hull's roots and its people but there were few events or narratives around looking at Hull's future.

Yes, I think it captured the essence Yes, we've got our roots and we've got this history, but we've got to move forward as well haven't we? That's what I feel.

This is supported by the work of Bianchini and Tommarchi who in a series of interviews with City Council officers found that 'fishing heritage became prominent, overshadowing other aspects of port activity' (2021: 489).

Moreover, the reality of trawlermen with dangerous working conditions and low pay casts a problematic lens on the romanticisation and glamorisation of the past that casts a façade over the reality of the trawling industry, which was not only exploitative of workers, but caused suffering to many in the community. In this sense, Hull's fishing heritage is ambivalent and if producers reduce it to an object of celebration and programmed events that forefront this static image, they not only run the risk of alienating the communities that suffered the trawler tragedies but also rescind the traumatic memories of closure-less grief and poverty. The heritage markers, especially in relation to Hull's trawling past used the emotionally resonant aspects of Hull's heritage for tourism and economic regeneration but leaving very little legacy for those who lived in the city, making the use of heritage exploitative.

Conclusion

Heritage has come to the fore as a commodifiable product that is 'an activity in the past imagined in the present […] for the construction of products for current consumption' (Ashworth, 2014: 6). Heritage has often featured as an important element in CoCs because it represents the city and its locals on the national and international stage. Moreover, heritage has been deployed in CoCs to engage local people and visitors in the programme and reframe often negative place images.

In Hull2017, *Blade* represented a key example of how the synthesis of heritage and scenography can be used to create positive image legacies for a city. The process of developing positive place-branding through heritage was similar to scenographic practice and the creation of theatrical worlds. A positive place-branding image was developed

through a synthesis of many strands of the Hull2017 programme including bid material, media, interviews, heritage, architecture, and social and cultural memory. The Hull2017 producers worked with artists to create scenographic interventions that linked scenography and heritage to reconstitute the notion of Hull as a city that was a symbol of economic and social deprivation.

The use of heritage and scenography can sometimes result in representational issues with locals, illustrated by the prioritisation of trawling in the Hull2017 programme. The decision to often prioritise Hull's trawling heritage created for some the notion that Hull was perpetually looking to its past. Thus, creating a disconnect between some of the locals and the producers. Some locals felt unrepresented as the place-branding image was largely one-dimensional. The issues regarding heritage were reflected throughout previous CoCs, often occurring because of producers did not appropriately engage with locals of the host cities to create dialogues on how they would like to be represented. Instead, my findings suggest heritage often prioritised specific cultural totems (Mozart, The Beatles, Trawling) linked with the host cities that created a superficial reading of a city's cultural landscape.

I do not aim to argue that certain key heritage totems cannot be celebrated, however I would suggest that the feedback from local people means that the Creative Producer must be careful about how heritage is deployed in the future. Although, the strategy of using heritage can create a new, positive image of a city to attract people to stay and live, when producers are selective about heritage it can often be misleading and cause tensions. As a result, it can ignore problematic but equally valid realities that could be discussed and critically questioned, thus allowing local people the opportunity to make social change in their environments.

Chapter 2: *The Land of Green Ginger:* Producing for communities

Understanding Community:

> 'Community' is one of those words – like 'culture', 'myth', 'ritual', 'symbol' – bandied around in ordinary, everyday speech, apparently readily intelligible to speaker and listener, which, when imported into the discourse of social science, however, causes immense difficulty. (Cohen, 1985: 11)

I have detailed how heritage was deployed in Hull2017 and similarly, there was a marked emphasis on community. Community was a conceptual pillar for the programming and delivery of Hull2017. The term community is mentioned no less than 12 times throughout its strategic business plan (Hull UK City of Culture 2017, n.d.), it is also repeated throughout the board meetings in May, July, September, August, and November as well as its programming minutes (UCOC2019/18). The consistent reiteration of community strongly suggests that it was used as a buzzword from the Hull2017 team to develop new audiences and promote its inclusive nature (Hull UK City of Culture 2017, 2017: 12, 30, 82) to bolster a wider sense of pride throughout the city. The repeated use of community through the Hull2017 discourse indicates that community was an important concept to use in the delivery of the cultural year. Arguably, to distance the event from some past shortcomings in the previous CoC programmes. Specifically, it has been raised by locals and critics that there was a lack of inclusivity to some audience demographics and communities. Community was utilised throughout Hull2017 as a presentation of identity ownership. First seen in the promotional material, *This City Belongs To Everyone,* the video supported a sense of community through its repetition of 'We are Hull' (Hull2017), explaining the 'Golden rules of Hull' fostering an egalitarian identity and ownership of Hull which is welcoming for everybody.

Community is a concept that emerges out of a shared mythos or narrative of heritage (Williams, 2015: 71). However, like *heritage*, it is a term that is also often insufficiently defined. Over the last thirty years there has been a proliferation in community studies as a subdiscipline of sociology and anthropology in the endeavour to understand not only what community is, but its effects. Despite a world in which there is increasing assimilation of different peoples through the developing power of technology and transport, the notion of

community and identifying oneself with a specific area or people is still crucial to the everyday lives of many people. One would not have to look very far to see the application of community in the day-to-day. For example, on a Sunday there will be many likeminded people who go to a church in communal worship of God and find themselves in a religious community. One might find a group in a football stadium watching their home teams compete and find themselves amongst a football community. Community may be also less tangible and be found by logging onto a social media site and connecting with similar people around the world in a Facebook group to create an online community. Raymond Williams suggests that community is 'warmly persuasive', a word that suggests a connection beyond the rational or contractual remit of individuals towards one that is emotionally charged (1976: 71). This seems to be true for many of the definitions of community. Zygmunt Bauman claims that 'community is nowadays another name for paradise lost' (2001: 3), by which he suggests community is a concept that goes beyond a word, but instead has a *feel* to it which is safe and often gives the impression of being a positive entity (1). The work of Ferdinand Tönnies helps chart the development of community from a succinct definition based in geographical proximity to a looser definition.

Early twentieth-century German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (*Community and Society*) was an influential source for community studies scholars to understand what community is and how it is organised (2002: 42). *Gemeinschaft* (community) is understood in two different ways. *Gemeinschaft* can denote a shared geographical location of people. *Gemeinschaft* may also refer to 'Gemeinschaft of mind' by which he means community through kinship of shared goals or beliefs. In this way *Gemeinschaft* is the bond of human beings because of one's investment and interest in other humans (42). Community as understood by Tönnies is one of mutual affirmation, it is a self-sustaining and self-serving group of individuals that represents 'unity in plurality and plurality in unity' (33). Gemeinschaft is a relationship that provides support and assistance to those who subscribe to the rules of the wider community. Tönnies observed that we were undeniably moving from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft. *Gesellschaft* is the process of impersonal roles, actions, and beliefs. Tönnies referred to this as an 'imaginary or mechanical structure' where the primary function of membership is self-interest (33). An example of this would be in modern business where individuals come together under

mechanical structures that are formed to progress the self-interest of the individuals. In short, *Gemeinschaft* is the organisation of people through shared beliefs and close proximity, *Gesellschaft* is the organisation of people through structures that fulfil a self-interest. Tönnies' work has been fundamental in the development of the sociological scholarship of community and laid the foundations for many future iterations of the understanding of community.

If Tönnies was able to lay the foundations for different forms of community, Raymond Williams was seminal in charting the historical development of community with a particular focus on how the emergence of how capitalism changed how community has been constituted. Williams (2015: 72) posits that the growth of industrialisation and consumerism throughout the 20th century resulted in the evolution of community becoming organised on a societal level. The development in technologies and travel brought forth an age of globalisation that meant small-scale community life, that had historically emerged from a common identity and a geographical proximity, began to wane. Many new studies emerged after Williams' work and tried to define community in a postmodern age where the previous certitudes of how communities were defined were shifting. This shift contributed to Cohen's assertion at the beginning of this section that states the term community is 'bandied around in ordinary, everyday speech' (11). Williams argues that community 'implies a connection such as cultural heritage, shared values and goals' (Williams, 2015: 71). He identified ties that bind members of communities moved beyond geographical proximity, these ties are emotional and deeply personal. The bonds that reinforce community often emerge from the camaraderie, friendship and support that is fostered in a community. However, while these definitions are useful it is also a contested term and one which supports Cohen's claim that community causes 'immense difficulty' (Cohen, 1985: 11).

Despite its positive contributions to cultural identity, the term *community* can cause issues with engagement when producers try to create work for a specific community from the outside. To look once more to the work of Bauman, although he claims that community is another name for 'paradise lost', his argument highlights how a community's strengths of camaraderie, friendship or support are also some of its biggest weaknesses. Community demands unfettered loyalty and treats difference within the community as treasonous (4).

An individual may join a community and be surrounded by similar people who provide emotional and physical support to the individual, however, in doing so a certain freedom is lost as the individual must conform to the community's rules and regulations. As Sen, (2006) argues, when communal identity is deeply rooted, the illusion of communal identity can produce distrust of outsiders and lead to overt physical violence. This distrust might be best observed through football communities and the 'united' and 'city' tensions, whereby their identity and understanding of their own community is symbolic and in opposition to the categorisation from outsiders (Blackshaw, 2008: 329). The creation of new performance set in communities must account for how different host cities and their hyperlocal communities operate. The emotional and personal ties that bind these communities can cause issues for producers who may lack the knowledge of how each community operates. As I will demonstrate, a lack of nuanced understanding of hyperlocal communities when producing performance can cause difficulty for producers in fostering meaningful engagement in hyperlocal settings.

Throughout previous CoCs there have been consistent issues with the lack of care given to the needs of hyperlocal communities. Looking towards the lineage of CoCs, many responses from members of hyperlocal communities have illustrated that they did not feel included or engaged in their cultural year. This was largely a result of two factors. Firstly, often the city centre hosted many of the programmed events in their cultural years resulting in certain barriers to accessing and engaging with the events. Secondly, there are agendas from various stakeholders, partners and funders of the CoCs years that area are often at odds with what the communities want. This has often resulted in frustration from the local communities due to the lack of cultural autonomy and recognition of local artists and talent, as highlighted by the work of Boland and Doak (Boland, 2010: 634; Boland et al., 2016; Doak, 2020). For Creative Producers to ensure inclusivity in CoCs, I suggest there must be two main concerns embedded into their practice. For Creative Producers to engage local communities with the cultural year, they must have a sustained engagement with the communities they want to engage with, and Creative Producers must produce their work in collaboration hyperlocal communities. By producing in collaboration with local communities, Creative Producers can overcome many of the barriers to engagement and

participation that have formed some of the main concerns within community development theory.

The concerns highlighted throughout discourse on community development theory often focuses on the lack of autonomy for participants and the need for flexibility in projects that are not aligned to governmental or organisational agendas. As I will show, when producers embed autonomy and flexibility into their work, they offer communities the opportunity to question and critique their social and economic lived experience. Through undertaking a series of practices that are flexible and longer-term, Creative Producers can develop, and programme work that is responsive to the communities' needs and aspirations. Throughout this chapter, I will argue for the centrality of this form of embedded community-based practice, and show how, when overlooked, frustrations from the host cities' communities can arise. Before I explore the importance of the community-based practice for Creative Producers, I look towards the work of Anthony P. Cohen's whose work provides an insight into how the concept of community is crucial to the producing of engaging work for communities in CoCs.

Anthony P. Cohen's work focuses on defining what community *does* rather than what community *is.* Cohen begins with two assumptions: First, that communities have something in common, and second, they have something that distinguishes them from other groups. Cohen argues the boundaries of communities define their difference, the boundaries could be a physical boundary such as an ocean or a land border or they may be more intangible and subjective, such as religious beliefs. Cohen argues that to understand community better it would be pertinent to explore the boundaries of different communities through *negative dialectics* and what they are *not* (12-15). For example, the Catholic Church and Church of England both take communion, but the boundary lies where the Church of England consider this a symbolic act. Both communities partake in the same act but there exists a boundary between these communities that differentiate them and their practices. In this example, the historic continuity and the past of the Catholic Church and Church of England play a very significant role. The members of these communities may well be unable to explain what makes them Roman Catholic or Church of England, but they are defined in opposition to one another, again highlighting the *negative dialectics*: "we are *not* Church of England." "We are

not Roman Catholic." Going further still, the real currency in understanding communities is in its symbols. Symbols are vital within communities because they are shared and provide shared meanings (16). Cohen compares symbols to a type of vocabulary; it is possible to learn this vocabulary to communicate with others in the community. Both parties have access to a shared symbol that has a variety of meanings; therefore, each party can communicate meanings without imposing that meaning on the other party (18). Cohen's approach to using symbols is useful in developing a method for Creative Producers when producing community-based work. This approach acknowledges how communities may seem to operate as singular organisms, but the way local people operate within their hyperlocal context is more nuanced and many within the community hold different understandings of what community means to them.

Symbols allow for a hermeneutic approach to community meaning that while the symbol is shared, the individual's interpretation of the symbol may differ. This accounts for why community may mean different things to different individuals. Cohen's use of symbols attests to Williams' concept of 'shared values' in communities (2015: 71). The shared use of symbols is found throughout communities, and they act as 'totems' that foster collective values. Such totems could be football teams, spaces, activities et cetera. It is in that sense that Émile Durkheim (1915: 206) theorised the concept of the *totem* and its symbolic use in societies. He argued that the use of the totem is a method of creating collective unity of religion. Totems provide a collective sense of a particular version of a creation myth, making totems integral to the reception of shared culturally specific values and ideals. This is reflected in the work of Stratton and Northcote (2014), who argue that consumerism has created brand identities that foster shared understandings through various marketing campaigns, which in turn creates brand loyal communities (e.g., iPhone users, Nike wearers). As a result, the consumer creates a shared understanding of values through identification with the totem and creates their own 'membership' (496). Totems and totemic rituals are a symbolic way of constituting shared community values and understandings. To go even further, I suggest a totem can be an action or experience that creates a collective sense of values and identities through its shared lived experience that fosters social interaction. Totems are often also symbolic acts that create a performative presentation to the rest of the world. For example, the crucifix has become a performative

and symbolic presentation of faith around the world that defines many Christians. Symbols and totems can have effects beyond fostering shared values and can also represent the voices and identities of the communities within the host city. This approach provides a way of thinking about community that distances itself from previous systems of engagement in previous CoCs. Past CoC events have attempted to treat *community* as a catch-all term, and this has often resulted in criticism, as Guijt and Shah (1998) argue, to consider community as a homogenous and static is problematic as it conceals power relations within communities and masks biases, interests, and their individual needs (Guijt & Shah, 1998). Cohen's hermeneutic approach provides a helpful practice for Creative Producers to develop curated experiences for the host city's communities that are responsive and reflective to a community's needs that can be empowering and create a legacy of change.

Community no longer exists as the kind of feudal *Gemeinschaft* Tönnies referred to; rather, it exists as a far more complicated entity that has forced Creative Producers to rethink traditional modes of engagement with communities. The continuing trend throughout the CoCs demonstrate that Creative Producers must take particular care in their practice when engaging communities. When Creative Producers do not take appropriate care, it can create a distrust of the title and distance communities from arts and culture. This nuanced and enhanced understanding of *community* as a concept may help Creative Producers develop robust models of engagement and producing of their events. However, caution must be taken with the producing with and for hyperlocal communities. When events are programmed with a lack of participation and input from hyperlocal communities it often leaves no legacy and causes tensions.

Historical Shortcomings of Community

Community has come to the fore as an important element in the reception of performance within CoCs. Yet despite its importance, the nature and nuance of community has often been ignored by producers. This has often created a distance between producers and members of the host cities and has resulted in various countercultural movements that sought to reclaim the imbalance of power within their cultural years. The imbalance of power manifested itself in a cultural programme that was produced without the opinions and creative involvement of hyperlocal communities within the host city. The criticisms of

community and the issues of participation levelled at previous CoCs are useful lessons to develop the Creative Producers practice.

As available documentation shows, throughout CoCs there have been numerous failures to engage communities on anything beyond a superficial level. This has resulted in frustrated locals and in some cases the frustration led to the creation of counter-cultural movements. Counter-cultural movements do not necessarily indicate a failure in the cultural year as local people took the cultural process into their own hands. Moreover, these movements serve as critical lessons in developing contemporary producer practice. Counter-cultural movements encourage the Creative Producer and CoC teams to understand the importance of community in the successful delivery of arts and culture as without a clear understanding their events can be result in contestations. Counter-cultural movements also indicate the need for community development theory to become part of the Creative Producer's practice. Specifically, ensuring a flexibility in the Creative Producers practice that fosters an autonomy amongst community members that is not restricted by external agendas. In allowing flexibility in their projects, it can place local people at the centre of the producing and programming process. In turn, it fosters a cultural ownership by local people that is reflective and responsive to their needs.

Finland's European Capital of Culture took place in Turku in 2011 and the festival year was programmed and organised by a separate third-party company called the Turku 2011 Foundation (https://www.turku.fi/en/2011). The company introduced an open project call that encouraged individuals to send in suggestions for inclusion in its programme. This was a resounding success, out of 155 projects over 100 were chosen from the open call, (Lähdesmäki, 2013: 604). To supplement this engagement there was a volunteer programme that saw over 400 citizens volunteering to help facilitate the cultural year. This successful model of volunteering can be seen six years later with Hull (although to much greater success with over 2,400 volunteers taking part). Despite the original success in the response to the open call, many of the projects were only partly delivered because of a lack of funding, which caused frustration and disappointment towards the delivery of the cultural year. This formed just one strand of consistent issues that began not long after Turku won its bid in 2008.

The Turku 2011 foundation received widespread criticism from the local communities. They felt that despite the funding and attention the cultural year garnered, the Turku 2011 foundation were ignoring their needs. Funding for local cultural institutions was cut, this included local libraries and workspaces meaning that local artists did not have access to vital resources (Lähdesmäki, 2013: 604). Moreover, many citizens felt that organisers were ignoring the city's architectural heritage. In 2011, the city planners chose to demolish one of several historic wooden houses that formed part of the city's architectural history. This was a cause of frustration from locals because there was no attempt to renovate and utilise these historic buildings. In short, the reality of many in Turku was at odds with the aims of the Turku 2011 year.

In response to this dissatisfaction, in 2008 a group of individuals came together and created a counter-cultural movement known as the Festival of Free Culture. The festival took a non-hierarchical approach to the curation and development of its cultural activities, emphasising a rhetoric of the bottom-up approach to culture. The festival had a total financial budget of €10.40, but despite this, it created tens of voluntary organised cultural performances (606). It is important to clarify however that there were significant non-financial resources attributed to this event: human resource, time, venues, so the counter-programme's full economic costings are much higher. The festival was aimed at resisting the notion of undemocratic models of arts management in CoCs that saw members of the host cities as passive actors of projects produced by external producers. This criticism is common throughout literature on community development theory, particularly in relation to issues of participation.

Cooke & Kothari (2001) recognised that participation and engagement are often not delivered democratically. As a result, participatory projects often situate local people as passive bystanders that do not have a voice in delivering projects that are, on their surface are designed for them. Many projects that are linked to funders and organisations (both governmental and private) often have pre-set outcomes and in doing so, do not truly empower people to have autonomy or make changes in their area. Cooke & Kothari argued that there must be a change in the way that participatory practice is performed because this

creates a 'tyranny'. Cooke & Kothari use the term *tyranny* to describe the undemocratic models of participation that are often linked to governmental or organisational agendas. These agendas reinforce the power imbalances and institutions that often negatively impact communities. The counter-cultural movement of The Festival of Free Culture resisted the tyranny suggested by Cooke and Kothari by empowering local people towards collective cultural action. It encouraged local people to take the management of local arts in culture into their own hands. The emerging countermovement in Turku reflected local needs and interests rather than the aims and objectives set out by external funders, partners, and stakeholders. In doing so, The Festival of Free Culture gave local people an autonomy and power that can often be supplanted by CoC processes.

The Festival of Free Culture acted as a precursor to the Capital of Subculture that took place in Turku during its 2011 tenure. The Capital of Subculture was a series of festivals that ran in parallel to the 2011 CoC. The programme offered an opportunity for local artists to display their work as an alternative to the official Turku 2011 programme. The planners invited local people to create artistic performances under the banner of Capital of Subculture and stressed that all the events across the festival were free. The planners emphasised their desire for the events to take place in public spaces. The 2008 Festival of Free culture resisted the notion of commercialisation often seen in CoCs. The model emphasised accessibility, with many events taking place in the streets and open air (610). Furthermore, the Capital of Subculture planners encouraged local people to contribute to the festival. The emphasis on local artists was a recognition of the frustrations of local people that they felt local art and artists were not being nurtured. Locals felt 2011 CoC planners were reliant on importing spectacles. The planners of the Capital of Subculture argued that the importation of spectacles was indicative of a wider neoliberal market that forces market competition to import bigger and flashier names that ignores the autonomy and opinions of those who live within the host city.

Turku 2011 illustrated the wider damaging effects of the top-down approach to culture when there is a disconnect between the producing teams and the needs and desires of the local communities. Turku demonstrated the need for producers to incorporate a flexibility into their producing practice. The top-down approach seen in Turku created a barrier to

engagement with the 2011 programme that could have empowered hyperlocal communities within the city. A broad view of CoCs demonstrates a trend of producing the cultural years that takes a top-down approach and eschews opinions from the host cities communities. This approach often causes frustration amongst the public. It is not only the lack of creative input that causes frustration, but for many it is the conflicting aims that underpin the cultural mega-event.

Cork's 2005 CoC year failed to engage many because of its fragmented outlook on what a CoC should be. Some have argued that CoCs should be used as a tool for economic and social regeneration. Alternatively, there are many critics who argue that CoCs should be used as a way of stimulating cultural pride and ownership (O'Callaghan, 2012: 187). Locals felt that there was a lack of cultural ownership in Cork's 2005 CoC and what resulted was a counter-cultural movement known as Where's Me Culture?, or WMC?. The WMC? mobilised to create a counter-discourse that emphasised the city's 'DIY Philosophy' (193). The DIY philosophy emphasised by the WMC? movement was in response to the tendency in CoCs to import spectacles and talent to boost tourism numbers and economic capital. Historically, cultural institutions in Cork had supported homegrown artists; yet much like Turku, the host city's communities did not feel represented, or their needs responded to.

In April of 2003, organisers of Cork's 2005 CoC issued a public callout for programming ideas to the public. Over 2000 ideas were submitted from the public, yet the WMC? movement raised concerns surrounding the final programme and whether it was representative of the local community's culture (191). Cork is known as rebel county because of its history of guerrilla fighting during the Civil War and War of Independence. O'Callaghan (2012: 191) posits that the rebel status is still culturally resonant and has generated much local pride. The notion of local pride and independence had encouraged the development of local home-grown talent and institutions. One such institution was the music venue Sir Henry's, a vibrant nightclub that was founded in the 1970s and throughout its existence hosted bands such as Nirvana, The Fall and Heretic. Another local institution of note is the theatre company Corcadorca. Founded in 1991, Corcadorca had great success with their shows including *Disco Pigs* starring Cillian Murphy and Eileen Walsh, touring worldwide from 1996

to 1997. These institutions were resonant of the DIY philosophy emphasised by the WMC?, and was an important concept to consider and apply throughout the cultural year.

In contrast to the pride and development of cultural institutions, the image presented to the rest of the world in Cork's CoC year was far more neutral, specifically its brand elements (194). Producers eschewed the local home-grown talent in favour of an economically safer, consumable option. Cork raised questions of the purpose of CoCs. Specifically, if the CoCs are created to regenerate host cities, then Cork and Turku call into question to what extent these events can improve local conditions. On both occasions the CoCs curated a programme of events that excluded many local communities from the producing process. In Cork's case, this exclusion was predicated on developing a programme that was a safer consumable option linked to largely economic agendas. CoC policy has been largely influenced by the success of the Glasgow's 1990 CoC as a hallmark of what culturally based activity can achieve in urban regeneration. The investment in the 1990 CoC transformed the city's image in the national and international eye from a city linked with 'gangs, unemployment and alcoholism' to one that was a premier location for shopping, business investment, conferences and living (Garcia, 2005: 107-108). This has resulted in what Bayliss (2007: 889) suggests is '[T]he use of culture as a driver for urban economic growth is now an established feature of the policy agenda.' The case of Cork's cultural year is indicative of wider tensions that exist within CoCs that increasingly sees what defines a 'good' capital or city of culture event as its ability to regenerate a city (Caust, 2003: 61). As such for producers it has become increasingly important to balance the needs of local people with the ability to attract visitors to the city and encourage urban regeneration.

The imbalance between economic factors and social objectives has sometimes distanced local people from the CoC year. When the frameworks for success are foregrounded in economic growth they often result in residents and artists from the host cities feeling disregarded, thus raising barriers to communities of the host city being able to engage with the CoC year. As a result, this causes more social and cultural issues than they solve. Nonetheless, economic regeneration is often an important factor of success in CoCs and there is an intersection between economic and social regeneration. A key element of the Creative Producer's role is to balance these needs.

Caust (2003: 58) contributes to this discourse by stating:

> [T]here is a real danger that this approach [the privileging of economic targets and urban regeneration in the framework of the cultural mega-event] will lead to the production of safe consumer-oriented arts product which, in the end, may not be what the audience wants or needs. (2003: 58)

The need in current discourse for the arts to continually justify itself in economic terms has created a flawed framework for success and confusion of what the purpose of CoCs are. The development of an 'audit society' (Boland et al., 2020: 3) consistently values economic targets and results in an obsessive need to use target-based quotas to justify the large amounts of spending in CoCs. The need to reach targets is very often to deliver upon a pre-conceived notion of the possible socio-economic impacts of CoCs. The same pattern of assessment appears in the reports from Hull published post-2017 (Culture, Place & Policy Institute, 2018; Hull UK City of Culture 2017, 2017) and is embedded in the bidding process as seen in the 2013 bidding guidance (The National Archives, 2009: 1).The continual use of percentages and figures create a 'wishy-washy' culture of justifying the arts in numerical terms. In doing so, the figures almost always conceal the scope of the events to have the potential for transformational change on a human level. The distancing from this economically justificatory philosophy foregrounded the Festival of Subculture and influenced the impetus behind Cork's WMC?

Turku and Cork demonstrate when the practice of producers is arguably restrained by quota fulfilment and justificatory figures it reinforces undemocratic models of arts management. I would argue this adds to the 'tyranny' that Cooke & Kothari discuss, as the model does not enable communities to address the concerns and issues within their areas. Furthermore, the culture of undemocratic arts models that are often created in CoCs stops communities from having the agency to collectively address issues in their areas and be able to grow creatively. Instead, to justify their spending producers continually look towards importing bigger and flashier names which was reflected in Hull2017s programme.
Sea of Hull by Spencer Tunick provides a key illustration on the issue of importing of flashy names for the justification of expenditure and the wider public recognition of a CoC.

Spencer Tunick is a prolific American photographer whose large-scale nudity photographs have earned him international notoriety. His high-profile works include his 2010 work which saw 5000 nude volunteers photographed in front of the Sydney Opera House to celebrate Sydney's Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras and his work of 1200 people in the Dead Sea, that aimed to raise awareness of the importance in preserving the Dead Sea. Tunick has been organising installations since 1994 and he has organised over 100 site-related events (Spencertunick, n.d.). He was commissioned in 2016 by Ferens Art Gallery to photograph over 3200 people naked and painted blue. There were two main aims of the project, firstly to show the link between Hull and its maritime heritage and secondly, to raise attention to rising sea levels propelled by climate change (Bruner, 2016).

Sea of Hull took place in July 2016. Volunteers were asked to arrive at Hull's Queens Gardens located in the city centre and each volunteer was provided a small tub of paint containing one of four different shades of blue. The volunteers painted themselves blue. Once the painting was complete, the event organisers then facilitated the movement of the volunteers to selected areas around the city. Four photos were taken throughout the day. Firstly, at Queens Gardens and then next to Hull's Guildhall, Lowgate and at Scale Lane Bridge, both located in Hull's old town (Perraudin, 2016). After the event, volunteers received a print of the installation as a gift and were invited to a preview of the event with Tunick (BBC, 2017).

The exhibition was unveiled during the 2017 year where it was on display from April to August. Ferens Art Gallery claimed that 519,000 people visited throughout the year, which was the highest in its 90-year history (BBC, 2018). It is important to note that in 2017 the Ferens Art Gallery also hosted the Turner Prize, as well as other notable exhibitions including those from Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon and Rembrandt. While *Sea of Hull* arguably was an important factor for the increased attendance figures, there is no evidence to indicate that Tunick's art alone was responsible for the success in attendance. *Sea of Hull* participant feedback suggested that it was a positive and liberating experience for them, 'It has definitely increased my confidence [...] I think quite liberating', 'It was just a fantastic experience [...] it's been amazing' (KCOM Culture, 2017). Participants felt as though they

were part of a project that had a legacy to it, and it broke down barriers for people to engage with one another.

Cathy Phillips the chief marketing officer of KCOM (a partner in delivering the work) stated:

> It's really what City of Culture is all about, about inspiring people to get involved and start immersing themselves in and doing things that are different really.
> (KCOM Culture, 2017)

Despite the positive outcomes presented in this project I would claim that *Sea of Hull* is an example that perpetuates an undemocratic process of arts management in CoCs. Whilst Phillips' statement that CoC is about 'inspiring people to get involved' there are issues that underlie Tunick's work that are not acknowledged. Firstly, Phillips cites the notion of participation within CoC as important to the aims of the cultural year. This aim of participation is reflected in Hull2017's key performance indicators. One of these was to 'Drive a 7% increase in cultural participation among Hull's residents' (UCOC2019/18). However, an issue with this indicator is its lack of definition around the term 'cultural participation'. The indicator does not specify the parameters around whether those who are participating are already individuals engaged in the arts or targeting those who do not usually engage. This distinction is important if, as the guidance for bidding cities (DCMS, 2016: 5-6) states, the aims of the year are to create lasting social regeneration and engage with a wide range of audiences. Whilst it is important for a range of audiences to be participating in arts and culture when there is no legacy to the participation it is arguably not effective in driving change towards the wider aims of regenerating a city.

On the surface, *Sea of Hull* may seem participatory in its outlook and appears as a success that large numbers of people engaged with the work. But projects such as this should be treated with caution as the mode of delivery can mask the reality of participation. *Sea of Hull* arguably reflects White's (2010: 8) concept of *Nominal participation.* White argues that this form of participation exists to show that organisations are 'doing something' (8) to support their claims that they are supporting people; but the mode of participation only serves to legitimise themselves and it often serves the function of display. Although White's

argument focuses on participation in the context of the developing world, the theory does hold currency when applying it in an arts context.

There was a public call out for *Sea of Hull,* and this was put out through popular media channels and new outlets and from the figures of volunteers, this clearly worked. The politics of participation requires specific mechanisms to support the engagement of relatively disadvantaged groups (White, 2010: 7), and these mechanisms were not deployed throughout this project. Despite callouts through media channels there is no evidence to suggest that there was any form of targeted engagement in areas that do not engage with the arts. The Audience Agency Group are a charity that provides national demographics data to aid arts organisation in the United Kingdom to develop their 'relevance, reach and resilience' (Audience Agency Group, n.d.). Their area profile report of Yorkshire and the Humber suggest that the engagement with the arts in Hull is on average lower than that compared to the rest of the country. Out of the ten audience-spectrum segments the largest percentage of the Yorkshire and the Humber area is 'Trips & Treats' and 'Facebook Families' (the Audience Agency, 2018). Trips & Treats are characterised by often having children whose cultural activities are part of a day out. Facebook Families are harder pressed suburban and semi-urban households and arts, and culture plays a very small role. When the audience segments are considered, it suggests that many in the area do not regularly engage in arts and culture, however when they do this is based around family activity. Therefore, *Sea of Hull* presents an issue in its ability to engage harder pressed communities and individuals within the city. This is at odds with the aims of the project to encourage participation and raise awareness of rising sea levels. The impact would arguably have been enhanced if the mechanisms of engagement and participation that White speaks of were deployed to encourage engagement from communities throughout the city to take part. However, the Hull2017 team did not seem to consider this approach.

Sea of Hull took place in a matter of hours and was ephemeral. Although this does not mean it was not transformative for people on the ground (indeed, as the feedback from participants indicated, for some they found it a profound experience), I would call into question how this form of *nominal participation* fits in with the wider aims of encouraging

people to engage with arts and culture in the future, especially those who are traditionally disengaged. As Pollock and Sharpe indicate

> Beyond this, the temporality of the public art process within regeneration is similarly fraught with difficulty, particularly if that process is participatory—the timetable for deliverables and outcomes not necessarily melding with the nuanced process of building trust. (Pollock and Sharpe 2012: 3067)

For the participants there was some sense of legacy, they were invited to the preview of the exhibition, but there is little evidence to suggest the Hull2017 team used this event to build a sense of trust with the local people or communities to encourage them to participate in the future. The ephemerality of *Sea of Hull*, whilst it may have encouraged many people to participate is arguably contradictory to the wider aims of CoCs and their hope for a legacy of cultural participation (DCMS, 2016: 8), especially at those who are categorised as typically disengaged.

Another of the organiser's performance indicators was to 'Attract one million extra visitors to Hull in 2017' on top of the 7.4 million that was proposed in its bid (UCOC2019/18). The decision to import Tunick could be read as a strategy on the part of producers to fulfil this key performance indicator. The use of the flashy name of Tunick drew some people in as they wanted to be part of something big – or as Tomes puts it, 'I couldn't pass up the experience of posing naked for a world-famous photographer' (Tomes, 2016). Ferens Art Gallery's accounts and annual returns for 2018 show that the expenditure for this project in relation to Spencer Tunick was £120,632 (Charity Commission, 2017). The large amount of expenditure directed towards one project that did not allow for a wider transformative participation is problematic. I would argue *Sea of Hull* attests to Caust's claim that the result 'in the end, may not be what the audience wants or needs'. Looking towards the desires of the local people prior to the Hull2017, Hull Live, a local online publication held interviews throughout Hull soon after the success of its 2013 bid to understand local opinion. Evidence gathered from these interviews suggest that many people of Hull wanted longer-term legacy effects, including the city to be renegotiated in the national consciousness and improved prospects for people in the city with more opportunities for local people and businesses (Hull Live, 2013). Whilst *Sea of Hull* may have garnered widespread notoriety,

how this directly speaks to some of the other wishes and desires of Hull's local communities remains to be seen. This kind of spectacle 'divebombs' into a city under the premise of creating social and economic regeneration, but there is often very little, if any demonstrable legacy left behind.

Ten years after the Liverpool 2008 CoC, similar concerns were raised on the ground about the ephemerality of the cultural year

> The glory of one-off events burns brightly for a while, but their lasting benefits are harder to find. The problems that existed in 2008 have continued to affect the cultural life of the city, endemic as they are to a particular approach to policy that emphasises the collateral economic benefits of the arts at the expense of local history and experience. (Harris, 2018)

Harris calls into question the high-profile nature of some events, whilst the events are positive in the short-term with increased investment and tourism numbers, the figures often do not correlate to legacy benefits after the event has ended. As such, Creative Producers must be cautious with the programming of high-profile events that might detract from local institutions in the long-term. There is not inherently an issue with importing acclaimed and famous names, however, Creative Producers must consider how such events may potentially detract from providing representation and opportunity to local artists.

Despite the work of Tunick being problematic to some of the wider transformational aims of the Hull2017 year, there was other work taking place during the cultural year that directly engaged communities on Hull's peripheries. *The Land of Green Ginger* developed a series of co-creative events that developed the communities they worked in. The models of performance and producing employed throughout the 2017 year recognised the communities and their unique ways of operating. *The Land of Green Ginger* events built upon the shortcomings of previous CoCs highlighted by Turku and Cork and created successful and unique future models for Creative Producers to deploy in a variety of settings.

7 Alleys – The Land of Green Ginger

The *Land of Green Ginger* provides several critical case studies of how effective models of community engagement were used in Hull2017. The *Land of Green Ginger* acts as a key example of best practice to develop the model of the Creative Producer. The *Land of Green Ginger*, as Katy Fuller (one of the executive producers for Hull2017) explains, is 'a series of Acts of Wanton Wonder that are united under one story that we are telling across the city' (Hull2017, 2017). *The Land of Green Ginger* was a series of events run in targeted areas of Hull that had historically been disengaged with the arts or had a lack of artistic and cultural provision.

The *Land of Green Ginger* had 6 individual events with an overarching narrative that linked them together. The story began with a fabricated group (created by the producing team) known as The Green Ginger Fellowship. The Green Ginger Fellowship was an investigative organisation who found a cache of packing crates in an underground vault in Hull's city centre. On the crates was printed 'From: *The Land of Green Ginger*.' The crates were a narrative device deployed by the organisers of Hull2017 to create a sense of intrigue and mystery. The Green Ginger Fellowship documented their discoveries and put them online[3]. The process of posting the discovery of the crates online was repeated when the team wanted to grow an audience for the next event. The public would be able to engage with the story at any point and follow the discoveries of the crates. The discoveries of the crates acted as a way of signposting and encouraging individuals to engage with the projects. The *Land of Green Ginger* crates were placed in areas of the city where one of the six events would take place and the Green Ginger Fellowship would document this to target media engagement in the local area to intrigue and excite local people. Whenever there was a 'discovery' of the crates it was disseminated through news outlets (O'Leary, 2017; Robinson, 2017

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[3] Greenginger.org. This website was a repository for the findings of the new crates and a way to tell the story but it is now no longer operating.

These six events of The *Land of Green Ginger* were:

Act I: 7 Alleys.
Act II: The Gold Nose of Green Ginger.
Act III: The Longhill Burn.
Act IV: Re-diffusions voice park.
Act V: Micropolis.
Act VI: The Land of Green Ginger unleashed.

The first *Act of Wanton Wonder* took place in East Park in Hull, located in the East of the city. East Hull is comprised of six wards, and Hull is made up of twenty-one wards in total. These are Holderness, Sutton, Ings, Longhill & Bilton, Southcoates, and Marfleet. The first *Act of Wanton Wonder* took place across the Holderness and Marfleet wards of the city. The Marfleet ward is home to approximately 13,000 people making up approximately 7000 households. The Hull Data Observatory is a resource that collates data from The Indicies of Multiple Deprivation. The data observatory indicates that Marfleet is an area of high deprivation (Kingston Upon Hull Data Observatory, n.d.) Among the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Marfleet falls one hundred per cent into Decile 1 of the index of multiple deprivation, thus situating it as one of the top 1% most deprived areas in the United Kingdom (Hull City Council, 2015: 10). This includes being in Decile 1 (90.09%) and 2 (9.1%) for low-income deprivation, Decile 1 (91%) and 2 (9%) for employment, Decile 1 (90.9%) and 2 (9.1%) for Education and Decile 1 through to 4 for crime (Kingston Upon Hull Data Observatory, n.d.). This data paints a rather bleak picture of the Marfleet area and therefore under the banner of Hull2017 it indicates why this area was chosen to deliver the project. The data suggests that many of those who live in this area of Hull do not have the economic means to engage in arts and culture in the same sustained way as others in the city.

The project, *7 Alleys* was an outdoor, site-specific spectacle performance that told the local folklore tales of the mysterious 7th alley, a magical portal in Hull that only appears under certain conditions, whose folkloric origins were specifically resonant to East Hull's hyperlocal communities. *7 Alleys* was delivered by Periplum, a group formed in 1999 that creates 360-degree performance in outdoor, dynamic spaces. According to local belief, the 7 alleys have been reportedly a hotbed of paranormal activity and the stories surrounding the 7 alleys served to develop the performance. One tale was of the Bubblegum boy, a story that has been told throughout Hull since the 1960s but is now used more as a cautionary

tale for children (Preston, 2015). The story tells of the ghost of a boy that can be seen around the Holderness drain where the 7th alley is suspected to be located. The boy died from swallowing gum which wrapped around his heart. Another story tells of the White Lady, a spirit that is said to haunt the pathways around the railway's lines near the 7 alleys. There are two stories of the White Lady, depending on the source material. One story tells of a lady who was kidnapped and murdered near the railway lines. Another version says that the same lady's child died, and she took her own life by jumping from the railway line bridge. The folkloric foundation behind the event emerged from conversations between the producer Louise Yates, Periplum and East Hull's hyperlocal communities. Yates and the Periplum team had an artistic imperative to create an event outside of the city centre primarily for the communities based within these neighbourhood locations.

The development of *7 Alleys* began with a trial event in the autumn of 2016 that involved the members of Periplum navigating the Holderness and Preston Road areas of Hull on horse and carriage. Periplum began a message-in-a-bottle campaign that saw the team travel around East Hull inviting members of the community, businesses, and local organisations to be part of a period of research collecting stories. Periplum invited the community to meet with them, get a ride on the horse and cart, and as part of this ride, Periplum got the opportunity to chat with locals about the local history, folklore, and urban legends. This activity was supplemented with callouts through social media channels that requested members of the community to make a wish for another member of the community. The capacity for the number of wishes was limited, but if successful the participant would have their wish bottled up and the Periplum team would make their way to the nominee and deliver the bottle to them.

> It became a kind of vehicle for people to just really care about each other and just really think about who they were nominating. (UCOC2019/18)

The archival data offers very little to suggest concrete conclusions about how the trial event was met amongst the members of the East Hull community. Nonetheless, the Hopkins Van Mil report (UCOC2019/18) can offer some insight into how this was received. Hopkins Van Mil are an external company that focus on evaluating engagement. They were

commissioned by Hull2017 to evaluate *7 Alleys.* Many people that were interviewed for the report did not know the trial event had happened so this provides limited feedback. However, I would suggest as Periplum's activity was hyperlocally rooted, it is not anomalous that the trial event was not widely known across Hull. Nonetheless, one participant's response in the report was positive. She stated that she had been invited to take part in the research after a bottle left at her place of business. She took her children with her, who rode on the horse and cart. She connected with Periplum and discussed the myths of the 7 Alleys and the White Lady that she was told as a child. This example is a demonstration of of how a bottom-up approach to project delivery can inform the wider narrative of creative pieces. Periplum were able to gather locally rooted knowledge from their conversations with locals and the stories directly impacted the narrative of the overall piece, making it responsive and resonant to local people.

A Facebook page still exists that acted as a channel of communication to those living around Holderness Road and Preston Road[4]. The responses that remain, suggest the event was received well by local community members. The comments indicate that the event had created a sense of wonder and magic for those involved. Many were grateful that this had happened in their area.

> Thank u (*sic*) all it was a lovely experience for the local community. Thanks for
> the additional deliveries too (Ingram, 2016)

> [S]uch a shame there going (*sic*) it was so magical to such a treat for East Hull
> (Oglesby, 2016).

The trial event offered a way of developing a long-term engagement with residents from the local area. Periplum knew they were going to return for the Hull2017 event, and this sowed the seeds for Periplum to root themselves firmly in the East Hull community. The longer-term engagement method employed by Periplum was needed. As the data on this ward suggests, it is an area of high deprivation and coupled with the data from the audience agency, this is an area where arts and culture do not play an important role in the lives of its inhabitants. Therefore, longer periods of time to engage with the community within this

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[4] https://www.facebook.com/SevenAlleysEastHull

area was vital to develop strong relationships and demonstrate the benefits of the CoC year beyond an economic lens that is often rooted into the discourse around the cultural year. To return once more to the interviews conducted by Hull Live after the award was announced, the conversations of local people were largely rooted in supporting local people and businesses through an economic lens 'We've got a lot of businesses going bust […] a cash increase for everybody benefits us all' (Hull Live, 2013). Whilst this may only represent a small portion of the population, it offers an insight into how local people felt the Hull2017 award would benefit the city.

When asked what the best part of delivering the pilot project was Periplum stated:

> The creative investment and generous resourcing of the project by community organisations - Child Dynamix, Preston Road Women's Centre and the Freedom Centre in particular […] These manifestations of the strength and creativity of community spirit were reinforced through the 'deliveries' strand of the project, which was met with real engagement by local residents (UCOC2019/18).

Periplum had worked with a variety of organisations who had a crucial understanding of the area and its people geared towards a single project. As Periplum stated, these partnerships supplemented their own work to create a nuanced understanding of the area and its urban legends to develop this into the fully formed show that felt reflective of the local people. Periplum were able to learn about the legends first-hand from voices within the community. (UCOC2019/18).

The trial event reflected some of the key points that were highlighted in the thematic analysis of the Hull2017 focus groups. Many members of the 2017 focus groups stated that they believed that 'a lot of events felt like they were sort of dropped into certain places a rather than actually going out and asking communities what they wanted.' (UCOC2019/18). One of the measures of success was the importance of reflecting the local communities' needs in the programme. This measure can go further to encompass an understanding of what the local community requires to engage with performance. It was clear from the outset that East Hull's hyperlocal communities do not often access arts and culture, yet the trial event produced by Periplum was responsive to this context and developed a gentle and

effective approach to engagement. The use of the horse and cart was a dramatic hook for the people of East Hull, and it created a sense of excitement and intrigue. Periplum stated in their discussions with producer Louise Yates (who had spent many years engaging these communities on the periphery) that their work needed to have an edge to it to engage these communities. Yates claimed that the lives of many living in these deprived socio-economic areas of the city would not take the time to engage if there wasn't a sense of excitement or a dramatic hook which would give them a vested interest (UCOC2019/18). Locally rooted knowledge from organisations and local people supported the building of trust and reflecting local people's voices and opinions. As such, this method of engagement emerged as a critical mechanism to develop hyperlocally rooted projects.

Following from the trial project, *7 Alleys* was programmed back to the Holderness area for the 2017 year. The return was prompted after repeated calls from community members contacting the Periplum team. The community members asked them to return to their area to do a project once more. What is key about community members contacting Periplum is that it supports the concept that a longer-term engagement that takes a bottom-up approach sees community members activated into individuals who want to experience arts and culture, for community members there was a sense of trust.

Periplum returned in 2017 to produce *7 Alleys* as a show following the engagement in 2016. Periplum continued their engagement with the members of the Holderness area through developing their discussions on local folklore. There was little for the Periplum team to research through the normal means of research, therefore it provided a further impetus for Periplum to connect with local members of the East Hull community to learn more about their folklore and from this emerged the story of the 7th Alley. The 7th Alley story was rooted in the lived childhood experiences of many East Hull residents. The CoC producers and the Periplum team used the local folklore to continue their approach that encouraged an activation of local people geared towards engagement with the arts, their local community and wider citizenship.

7 Alleys allowed audiences to feel as though they had a key role in the heart of the performance creation process. Periplum heavily involved a cast of community members

across the city that became integral to the final show. *7 Alleys* was performed across three nights and each night had 20 spaces for volunteers to sign up to take part. The community cast were recruited in a variety of ways. Almost all of the cast members came through Better Impact[5], a website used by volunteers of Hull2017 to browse and request volunteering opportunities. The call out had the subject line 'Top Secret' and it emphasised the elements of pyrotechnics and fireworks. It created a sense of excitement for many of the cast who immediately signed up for the opportunity (UCOC2019/18). Another cast member was recruited when she attended a presentation about the *7 Alleys* project from some of the Periplum team. The cast member spoke to the Periplum team about how she lived around the area and knew about the *7 Alleys* from school. The Periplum team offered her the opportunity to be part of the process.

Each community cast member had a different reason to participate in the *7 Alleys*. Some wanted to take part because the opportunity offered a sense of intrigue and they wanted to be part of an exciting project. Others wanted to join as an opportunity to push themselves to perform. Some signed up without reading the brief because they simply wanted to immerse themselves in as much of the Hull2017 year as possible. The community cast discovered quickly that the opportunity would not be static, in handing out programmes or guiding audiences to their seats. The performance was an outdoor promenade piece, and it required the volunteers to guide the flow of audiences as the story of the *7 Alleys* unfurled. The community cast became integral to facilitating the narrative of *7 Alleys*. They did not have speaking roles but rather they were choreographed at key moments to guide audiences. They used large white flags to draw the audiences in and guide them through the performance in character. Some members would also later become part of the performance, holding large balloons as a symbol of the Bubblegum Boy. The community members were integral to the narrative development of the story as the Periplum performers would interact with the balloons, letting them soar into the night.

Arguably, a weakness lies in Periplum's participation strategy of targeting community cast members. Although Periplum and the producing team must be commended for using the

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[5] https://www.betterimpact.com/

people of Hull as members of the community cast to facilitate the story, participant feedback data demonstrates that of the 58 people that took part in *7 Alleys,* 50 heard about the *7 Alleys* opportunity through the Better Impact website. This presents a gap in the targeted engagement for participatory performance opportunities for those living in the hyperlocal communities. Data from the Hull 2017 Volunteer Programme End of Year Evaluation Report (UCOC2019/18) demonstrates that there is a correlation between employed and retired individuals and the likelihood of volunteering or participating at 2017 events. A sample size of 385 volunteers were contacted. Only 3% who participated or volunteered in Hull2017 were unemployed, and less than 1% were unable to work. This is in stark contrast to the 28% that were retired and the 55% that were employed, working full or part-time. When referring once again to the ward data, East Hull's hyperlocal communities are in the top 10% most deprived areas for employment. This strongly suggests that it was likely that many of those who lived in these communities were unlikely to be engaged enough to volunteer or participate. The data does have some limitations as there is a lack of evidence to determine the postcode areas in which the volunteers lived. Nonetheless, those who signed up to the Better Impact website would likely have been engaged enough with arts and culture to want to volunteer throughout the 2017 year.

I would suggest that to support the engagement of individuals within the hyperlocal communities of East Hull to engage with arts and culture, a recruitment drive targeted to these areas to engage people to be part of the community cast would have been more successful. To touch upon once again the focus group feedback, there was a sense that many of the events were 'dropped into certain places' (UCOC2019/18), and whilst the work of *7 Alleys* was not done so in this manner, to use engaged individuals from outside the hyperlocal communities does present a particular weakness in their engagement strategy. Nonetheless, volunteers from other Hull postcodes are clearly much less of 'drop-ins' than imported artists. They could help activate neighbours from these targeted postcodes. Despite this, for the volunteers who participated in *7 Alleys,* it presented a transformative experience for many.

Many of the members when they signed up to take part in this process did not expect to be as involved. One participant observed:

Yeah when I saw the fence [surrounding a portion of the performance area] I thought we'd be inside that enclosure and they'd all be watching and standing round the outside looking in! (UCOC 2019/18)

Some of the members thought that the extent of their involvement would be 'holding a lamp or showing people in' (UCOC 2019/18). Periplum made many of the community cast members feel as though they were integral to the outcome of the performance through their co-creative approach 'They couldn't have done it without us', 'It felt like we were an integral part of the team, we seemed to do more than the actors!' (UCOC 2019/18). The community cast spoke about themselves as a crucial component of the process and to a similar calibre of the actors. Their comments demonstrate how the approach from the Hull2017 producers to community performance offered those involved an important sense of agency and this approach represents a wider respect that sees the community cast as serious collaborators on the project. The approach of Periplum was effective in empowering the community members and instilling a sense of pride. *7 Alleys* represents a positive contribution to the Hull2017 year when the measures of success are considered. The participants felt a sense of pride in their work that they were able to develop their own skills and contribute to the cultural year.

One participant in the community focus group stated:

It doesn't matter how exhausted you feel, you went back for more. I did about 74 hours that week because I was at work at a full-time job, and then I got 45 minutes from when I was being picked up at half 5, and it was almost like a routine, a sandwich, bag of crisps, fruit, drink, routine, flags, back, home bed, 11pm and then 8 o clock at work the next morning

This was echoed by another member:

[Y]ou can't wind down! You go to bed, you go home, go straight to bed and you're laying (*sic)* there for about two hours thinking 'go to sleep, go to sleep, go to sleep' you're too excited. (UCOC2018/19)

Many of the participants in *7 Alleys* had full-time commitments outside of the show, whether that was their jobs, or caring responsibilities. Nevertheless, the participants were demonstrably excited by their experiences, many worked all day and would continue late into the night with rehearsals and shows. Periplum and the producing team created a sense

of excitement and responsibility to enable the participants to actively facilitate and develop the performance. The excitement did not just last during the period of the rehearsals and the shows; after the participants had completed *7 Alleys*, they still had a sense of excitement. Linking back to the work of Durkheim and Cohen, the use of ritual acted as an instigator for further social interaction and cohesion.

> You were reliving it, everything that you did, on Sunday night, because we've got a Facebook page, so I was putting like 'half past 9 we'd do the warm-up, quarter to 9 we'd be doing this. (UCOC2018/19)

The repetition of rehearsals and routine of *7 Alleys* acted as a type of ritual that was a catalyst for social interaction and cohesion. The process formed a coded language between participants. The symbol or totem in this instance was the performance, it was an entity that connected people in this group (community) where each individual thought about the project in a different way, but overall, it was a shared process that was able to foster social cohesion and create communal bonds. It was further noted by participants that their attitudes and perceptions towards the areas that they had performed had changed substantially compared to when they had started:

> I thought about the history of the place more, and a slightly deeper understanding and more respect for the people. Because it is kind of like, there are other places in Hull, there are many, that you've got multi-generational dole families and you tend to look down on people slightly in those areas. And you sometimes forget everything else about the history and where people have come from and why that's happened, and as you said, it's not their fault. (UCOC 2019/18)

The bottom-up approach of local engagement was underpinned in a way that is reflective of Cohen's hermeneutic theory. Periplum understood the hyperlocal and specific needs of each area. The model fostered by Periplum and the CoC producers acknowledged that these areas have particular social, economic, and cultural idiosyncrasies. The approach required a consideration of these contexts when developing and programming the show. Periplum centred the participants in East Hull for rehearsals and performances and as a result it fostered a new sense of place making for many involved. The participants importantly acknowledged that they 'looked down' on the families in these areas. The model nurtured social cohesion and interaction with local people, thus avoiding the previous shortfalls of

some CoCs to appropriately engage local people. Moreover, the participant feedback shows that when asked how *7 Alleys* changed how connected they felt to the hyperlocal communities of East Hull, of the 58 volunteers that were involved in the project, half said they felt just as connected to them and half felt more connected (UCOC2019/18). The data illustrates that on the ground the performance opportunities offered by *7 Alleys* was able to destabilise harmful narratives about East Hull's hyperlocal communities and allowed audiences to engage more with the area and the people that live there. The success of this approach was also reflected in the audiences that came to watch which importantly contributes to the measure of success of creating a sense of pride in their hyperlocal community.

The performance of *7 Alleys* acted as an impetus to begin creating a legacy of behavioural change about how this area of East Hull was characterised. One audience member said:

> I think of Pound Shops, Bagging shops, Boyes and people looking pissed off [...] I think Hull has got potential, a lot of potential but people have to embrace what's going on, things like 7 Alleys. (UCOC2019/18)

Moreover, it was also appreciated by the members of the East Hull community that the performance was brought to their area:

> [W]hat I really liked was that it was the community all together. You know like East Park and East Hull. West Hull and the outskirts of West Hull are seen as an affluent area. So, for this to happen in East Hull, in East Park for the people of East Hull, it was, well I felt very proud. (UCOC2019/18)

The positive change was cultivated through the shared legends and folklore of Hull that created shared symbols and totems, thus developing a communal identification between different communities. Furthermore, the performance contributed to the CoC programme outcomes of creating:

> Lasting social regeneration through building engagement, widening participation, supporting cultural diversity and cohesion, contributing to the localism agenda and reaching out to sectors of the community who are disenfranchised and isolated (DCMS, 2013: 6).

Audience feedback collected at the event suggests that this type of high-quality community performance enabled participants and audiences to become activated into engaging with

the arts after the performance had ended. When asked 'as a result of attending 7 Alleys at East Park will you, or will you plan to, attend more arts or cultural activity in the city', of the 375 respondents, 221 said 'strongly agree' and 137 said 'agree'. The sample size is considerably smaller than the 12,000 audience members that attended. Nonetheless, the evidence does present findings that suggest *7 Alleys* was positive in encouraging local people to attend arts and culture in the future.

On the other hand, whilst there was an encouraging change in breaking down social barriers to engaging with cultural opportunities that could widen participation, the remit of Hull2017 and its funders may not have fully allowed *7 Alleys* to contribute to lasting social regeneration. Although the feedback suggests that *7 Alleys* was transformative and of high-quality for many of the participants and audiences, it perhaps reflects the notion of Mosse in Cooke & Kothari (2001: 17) that local knowledge and participatory approaches do not necessitate the tipping of the scales, in terms of power imbalance. Rather it can mask power relations. The artistic imperative of *7 Alleys* although participatory did not create an arena that empowered local people to discuss power imbalances (economic inequality, deprivation, unemployment) in their socio-economic context. To return once more to the questions raised by Cork's 2005 CoC, namely, what the purpose of CoCs should be. The Hull example calls into question once more to what extent social change can truly be delivered by CoCs, and whether cultural events that can bring about effective community interaction and social cohesion, can and should address socio-economic imbalances. Local knowledge certainly aided the delivery and responsiveness of *7 Alleys,* yet if there is a lack of opportunity for local people to engage beyond the project, it presents issues of how local people can ameliorate concerns in their area.

Moreover, the 'localism agenda' that is discussed in the bidding guidance (DCMS, 2013: 6) can perpetuate the power imbalance. As Gilchrist and Taylor (2011: 120) suggest, in many ways it is important to move beyond the local 'so as to understand and tackle the root causes of their problems which may be located far away and influenced by a distant set of political levers.' Whilst I am not arguing that *7 Alleys* failed to demonstrate change in Hull's communities, the change was contained to a small area. Nonetheless, the remit from Hull2017 and its outcomes potentially restricted the ability to contribute to conversations

about how to make lasting social change using arts and culture in a more structural sense therefore being viewed as a 'domestication of the transformative potential of participation.' (Pollock & Sharpe, 2012: 3066).

Despite this, the methods deployed by Periplum and the producing team recognised how the East Hull community performatively presented itself. Periplum's model had positive impacts on the East Hull community because it reflected Cohen's discussion on symbols and Williams' dialogues on the shifting role of community. Periplum adapted their approach to how living on the periphery of the city centre effected the way the community members lived day-to-day. The 7th alley and characters like the Bubblegum Boy and The White Lady were shared symbols and totems of the East Hull community. These symbols forged a common cultural identity. Placing the performance in a space in East Hull and developing the performance with community members rooted in the area, meant that Periplum created an event that encouraged audiences to move outside of the city centre to watch the performance. The move encouraged catalysed a behavioural change as it forced audiences to re-think their biases and assumptions about the East Hull community whilst also developing social cohesion in the community. It can be inferred that *7 Alleys* as a result of being rooted in the East Hull community as a high-quality piece of performance, lowered barriers to future engagement with the Hull2017 and beyond.

The Gold Nose of Green Ginger

Following *7 Alleys* the next event in *The Land of Green Ginger* was *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger*. *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* was developed and delivered outside of the city centre. Taking place in a shop unit in North Point shopping centre in Bransholme, an area located on the North periphery of Hull, the project sought to explore and celebrate the area and its people (UCOC 2019/18).

Bransholme falls into two wards in the city: North and West Carr. North Carr is home to approximately 16,000 people with West Carr containing around 12,000 people. The Hull Data Observatory states that, 55.6% of West Carr and 70% of North Carr falls into Decile 1, indicating large areas of these wards are in the top 10% deprived areas of the country.

Amongst income deprivation North Carr (70%) and West Carr (55.6%) fall into Decile 1. For employment deprivation the figures are largely similar with North Carr being 70% in Decile 1 and West Carr being 56%. Education and crime are similarly affected with Education being 55.6% Decile 1 for West Carr, 70% in Decile 1 for North Carr, and crime 90% of North Carr being split between Decile 1 and 2 and 66.6% being split between Decile 1 and 2 for West Carr (Hull Data Observatory, n.d.). The data indicates that Bransholme was an area that is socially and economically under resourced. As I described previously, the population demographics of Hull are unlikely to engage arts and culture (Facebook Families, Trips & Treats), coupled with the data from the ward, it suggests that audiences in Bransholme were unlikely to engage with arts and culture.

The *Gold Nose of Green Ginger* was a piece made of crooked ginger, heated and shaped by artist Joshua Sofaer to create the effect of a 'wizened, kind of warty look' (Sofaer, 2018). In a continuation of the overarching narrative of the *Acts of Wanton Wonder*, a local newspaper ran with a fictitious story that explained how the Green Ginger fellowship had located another of the Land of Green Ginger crates and inside they found the Gold Nose. The nose was considered an urban legend that was said to give those who touched it 'unexplainable and plentiful good luck' (Grove, 2017). The nose was given a historic connection to Bransholme as it was said to be first discovered there fifty years prior in the foundations of the first houses of the Bransholme estate. The Gold Nose was displayed in the shop for local people 'to see the nose, spend time with it and really understand this forgotten part of local history' (Sofaer, 2017). The Gold Nose and the forgotten part of this history are themselves a narrative that was fabricated by Sofaer and the Hull2017 team as a dramatic device.

The nose was protected by the 'nose guardian' while it was in Bransholme, who ensured that the locals understood its story. The nose guardian was a mantle taken by performer Jade Wasling. She was employed by Hull2017 team to ensure the smooth running of the shop and engage members of the community with the Gold Nose shop. The shop was also manned by Nose Guardian assistants (Hull2017 volunteers) who supported the work of the Nose Guardian by facilitating the activities that happened in the shop. The Nose Guardian and her assistants would work to explain the discovery of the Gold Nose, and this galvanised a social interaction that was a way of connecting people through shared histories and beliefs

of their local area. The guardians wore costumes that were adorned with effervescent and bold pieces of folded paper.

Figure 2.1 The Nose Guardian opens the Gold Nose shop (Spereall, 2017)

The artist Tsai-Chun Huang stated that the use of paper was for its relative cheapness, but the design was to create a sense of vibrancy and sophistication (Huang, n.d.). The costumes, I would argue, added to the scenography of the project and drew locals in with its whimsical and fantastical nature. As *7 Alleys* demonstrated*,* when projects are aimed at hyperlocal communities where arts and culture do not play an important role in the lives of the individuals, spectacle plays an important role in generating intrigue and attention to the project. When the nose first arrived at North Point Shopping Centre it was revealed with a procession. The nose was brought on a horse and carriage and carried into the centre to the fanfare of trumpets. The procession was documented by Joel Stickley, who stated that 'They are greeted with a mixed reaction […] but it certainly draws a crowd.' (Sofaer, 2018). The use of costumes constructed from paper, the procession and the narrative that had been disseminated through media channels developed this fantastical quality and caught the attention of many locals.

Compared to *7 Alleys*, the project took a different approach to engagement. *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* took place from June to August 2017. It responded to a larger need in the Bransholme community for a more sustained and longer form of engagement (UCOC 2019/18). The Gold Nose shop was originally an empty shop unit in Bransholme North Point Shopping Centre (commonly shortened to Bransholme Centre). The shop sold some nose souvenirs; however, the main aim and use of the nose shop was to be a space for locals to spend time in the shop with the nose and other people.

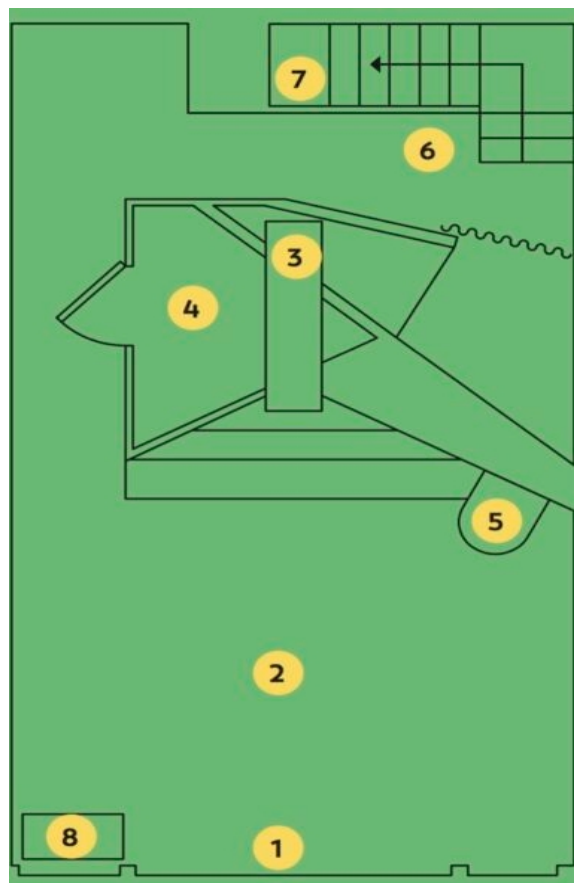The shop space was simple but was also diverse and allowed for a range of activities to take place:

Figure 2.2 Gold Nose of Green Ginger Shop layout (Sofaer, n.d.)

1. Noses of Bransholme
On the lintel above the main door are impressions from the noses of Bransholme residents.
2. Central Chamber
The central chamber is an adaptable space for social occasions, workshops, and performances.

3. Vessel of The Gold Nose of Green Ginger
The Gold Nose of Green Ginger is held in a tubular vessel on a procession staff behind a magnifying lens at the top of a stepped dais. It can also be viewed from behind the dais.

4. Secret Pocket
To the right of the arched corridor, there is a private chamber for one person at a time to share a secret with The Gold Nose of Green Ginger.

5. Guardian's Stand
The Nose Guardian can address the audience from this podium.

6. & 7. Wish Making
You are invited to make a wish. Write down your hopes and dreams and post them to The Gold Nose of Green Ginger. (All wishes remain confidential and will not be read by any third party.)

8. Shop
A select choice of souvenirs are available in our shop. (Sofaer, n.d.)
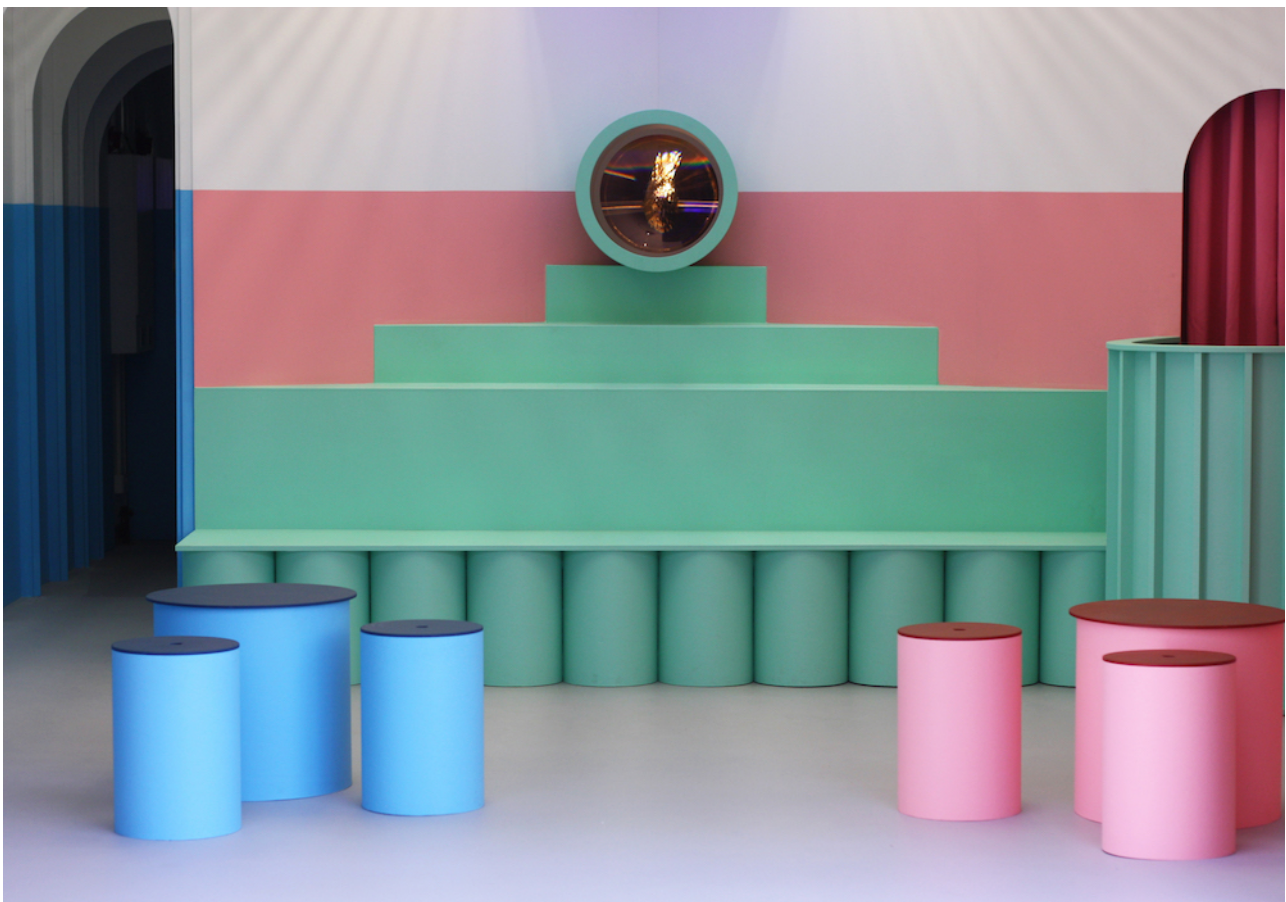

Figure 2.3 Gold Nose of Green Ginger interior (Sofaer, n.d.)

The shop regularly held events that encouraged participation. The schedule outlined by

Sofaer (n.d.) was:

Monday – Music.
Tuesday – Music.
Wednesday – Nose flute lessons.
Thursday – Creative Day.
Friday – Party.

The events would have a similar routine every week but there was flexibility as the events were often programmed in response to the needs of the shop's visitors. For example, there was an afternoon tea for local residents to come and have a chat. Some young girls who regularly attended requested to help as waitresses for the event and were allowed to do so. This led to some participants using their time regularly to volunteer (e.g. giving out leaflets). Beyond this, Sofaer describes how those who would engage with the shop might come up with an idea for an event:

> 'we're bored, what can we do?' and then we'd say 'you can do a catwalk show.'
> And they would sing or do dancing themselves. (UCOC2019/18)

Engagement came in many different forms, from the participation in activities like a catwalk or leaflet distributing to other more passive forms of engagement. Many of the attendees were primarily young (under 13) or older (over 75), and often engaging the older attendees came in the form of a cup of tea and a chat with the crew in the shop. This developed a less prescriptive but equally valuable type of engagement.

The use of dramatic aesthetics and performance facilitated a social interaction and engagement with the arts in Hull2017. Moreover, the Hull2017 team set up a mutual relationship that allowed participants to engage in the way that they wanted. The Hull2017 team would respond accordingly to their needs, thus enabling residents to take control of their own artistic process. The needs were both a synthesis of what community members desired on an individual level and a response to the wider wishes of the community geared towards their self-actualisation. The shop became a scenographic space, a tangible location of community with no other purpose than the community's actualised presence. The longer-term and lighter touch model of engagement prompted a type of skills development to many who engaged with the shop and the social interaction in turn fostered a support network.

The type of engagement delivered in the shop gave local people a level of autonomy about how they would like to inhabit the space. The flexibility offered by the Gold Nose shop arguably resists Cooke and Kothari's notion of 'tyranny'. The producers' ability to respond to the needs of local people was not constrained by any outcomes beyond the requirement to

engage local people. The mode of delivery resisted the means/ends dichotomy. The means/ends dichotomy posited by Cleaver (1999: 598) is when the outcome of a participatory project is considered more important than the process of delivery and working with communities. As a result, the relationships and dialogues with communities are subordinate to the outcome. The underpinned principle of the shop was the engagement of local people without the necessity of a performative outcome. As Cleaver states

> A project is, by definition, a clearly defined set of activities, concerned with quantifiable costs and benefits, with time-limited activities and budgets. The project imperative emphasizes meeting practical rather than strategic needs, instrumentality rather than empowerment. (Cleaver, 1999: 598).

Therefore, the means in this instance was also the end and the emphasis placed on the process encouraged a sustained level of engagement.

The regularity of *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* sat in slight contrast to the transience and ephemerality of *7 Alleys.* Periplum had a certain level of sustained engagement through their trial work in 2016 before the project in 2017. However, for many audience members, despite the performance being transformational, it was a transient spectacle. The engagement of *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* was underpinned by the fabricated dramatic aesthetic of the Gold Nose story. The hook for participants was different from *7 Alleys.* The mystery the nose produced created a sense of magic and wonder towards the object, and it drew people in. The mystery surrounding the origins of the nose meant that many of the locals who became acquainted with the story did not know whether it was true or not (Sofaer, 2018). *7 Alleys* was framed as a performance and therefore participants understood the framing of the performance. The fact that such large numbers of people who attended the Gold Nose to make a wish, some 35,000 (Sofaer, n.d.), demonstrates that the ambiguity surrounding the nose's origin seems to be a very useful tool to facilitate social interaction. Many people firstly did not know if the origins of the nose were real and secondly whether the wishes that people were granting to the nose would come true. This ambiguity was employed by those who worked in the Gold Nose shop to create social interaction with locals and visitors. The ambiguity acted as a springboard to connect with people about their stories about Bransholme and their home more broadly. This often developed a sense of pride about where they lived and encouraged sharing stories of cultural and social memory

with others as Joshua Sofaer suggests in his interview post-2017 'engagement with the story was kind of secondary to the engagement with the people' (UCOC 2019/18).

The Gold Nose of Green Ginger highlights how the role of drama and performance can be integral in the day-to-day lives of these participants. The methods of drama and performance made an actual difference to those in the area. One participant's response from the audience interviews says that she visited the shop nearly every time that it was open because of:

> The history of it and the meeting people and not being lonely […] it makes you feel different. It's the best thing that happened this [sic] (UCOC 2019/18)

The participant goes on to say:

> [L]ots of them [Bransholme locals] are lonely and they come for coffee and tea and they meet people that they wouldn't even talk to if they were on their own. (UCOC 2019/18)

The Gold Nose script both highlighted the need for engagement in the Bransholme area and offered the ability to connect and make a change in their lives. Audience responses from the Gold Nose shop demonstrate that many people engaged with the dramatic narrative because of the possibility that the nose would grant their wishes. To what extent the participants believed the nose was truly magical remains to be seen, although some evidence suggests the power of dramatic aesthetic attributed to the Gold Nose script was effective in creating a sense of belief. The Gold Nose became a shared symbol in the community, a kind of playful totem that the community was able to engage with. One local participant cried after making their wish in the hope that the Gold Nose would cast its power. The power of belief in the magic of the Gold Nose suggests that this goes much deeper than a superficial urge to have their wishes granted but it offered the possibility of hope or transcendence for many of the participants. For the producers of the *Gold Nose of Green Ginger* by rooting their dramatic and performance praxis in the hearts of the Bransholme community, it activated local participants to engage with a narrative and by extension, engage with one another.

The Gold Nose brought people from different areas of the city which is reflected in the

postcode data (see figure 2.3). There are two key factors from the postcode data of *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* that are significant. Firstly, the highest number of attendees were from the Bransholme area. Whilst it may be the case that the geographical proximity was critical in the high attendance, I would caution against this reading. The data suggests it was an area of low-arts engagement and despite it being within a shared location, assumptions cannot be made that the local people would engage with the project. The attendance figures are significant because one of the main aims of the project was to engage people in areas outside of the city centre. The data suggests that the use of dramatic aesthetics coupled with the whimsical scenography helped create a sense of intrigue and drew participants into the shopping centre to engage with the project. Furthermore, evidence collected from onsite audience surveys strongly suggest that participants who engaged with the Gold Nose shop were happier for having visited (148 out of 175 responses) (UCOC2019/18).
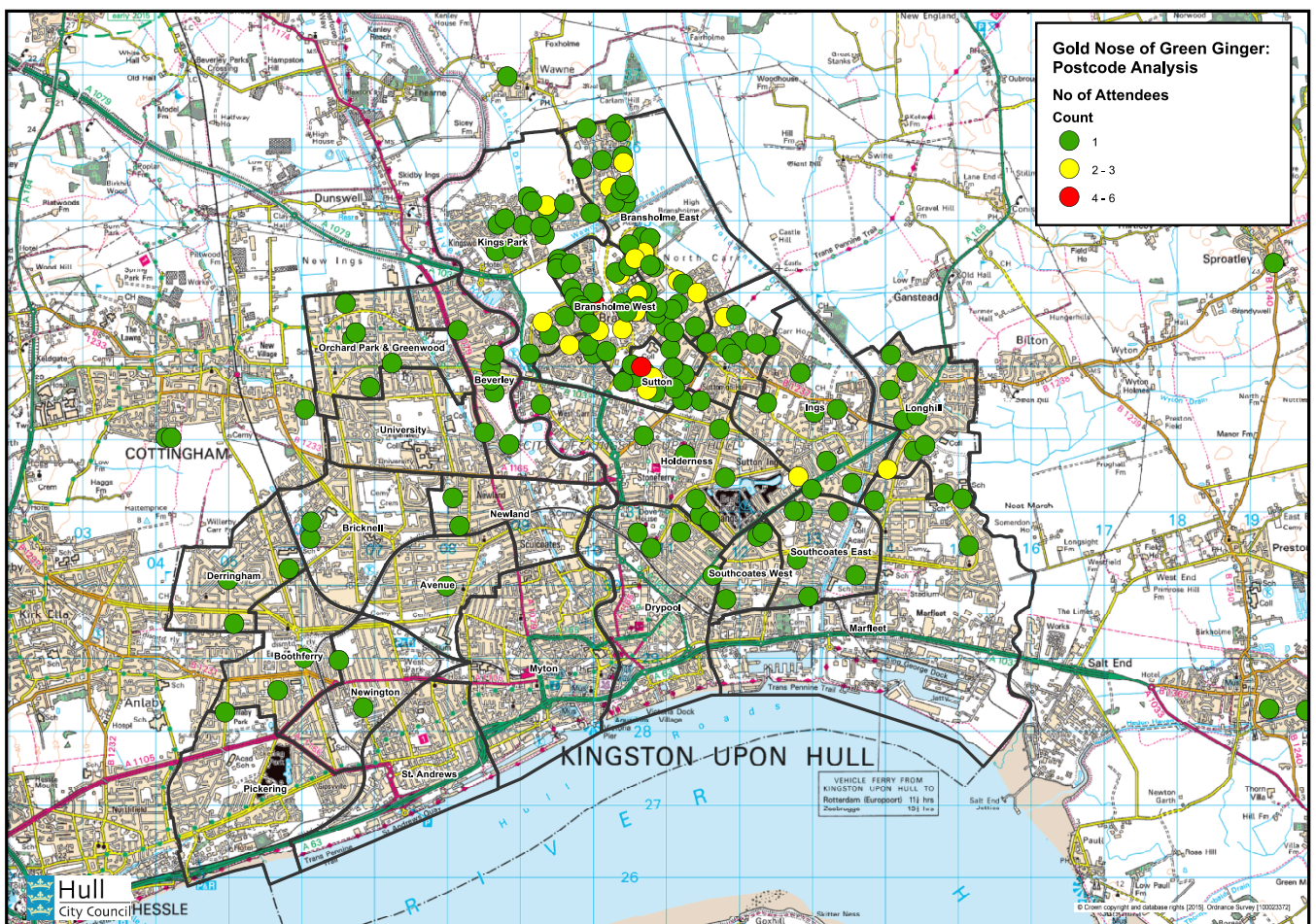

Figure 2.4 Gold Nose of Green Ginger postcode analysis (UCOC2019/18).

The second key factor of the postcode data indicates that the Gold Nose shop had a wide reach across the city. A significant number of people outside of Bransholme attended the Gold Nose shop. The data does not state whether those who attended were doing so specifically to visit the Gold Nose shop or were just passing through the shopping centre. Nonetheless, the wide demographics of people illustrate that the shop became a hub galvanising social interaction amongst different groups of people across the city.

Although *7 Alleys* and *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* were conceptually different projects, the activation that the Gold Nose effected was not far removed from that of *7 Alleys*. It brought people into a social space through a shared local history. Apparently, the fact that it was imagined did not matter. The shared history, even if fabricated, acted once again as a shared totem or symbol. It became a useful segue to creating further discussion and facilitating a social interaction and cohesion between individuals, and it helped build a sense of community. The Gold Nose became a genuine totem, metaphorically and materially. It became a physical centrepiece that attracted and helped forge a community. Furthermore, the fact that the Gold Nose was located in Bransholme excited locals because their area had been used to bring a sense of positivity and change in the city.

> I think just seeing good news instead of all the bad news for a change. Because so often, Hull is portrayed negatively […] let's face it, Bransholme is largely a housing estate. There's not much else here, so for a lot of the people here, there's not a lot. So something that brings positivity into this area can only help. (UCOC2019/18)

The participant's comments once again brings to the fore the useful practice of theatre and performance in facilitating the transformative social impacts. The Gold Nose was a totem that attracted different audiences to the area and it acted as the impetus for positive changed perceptions about the area. Bransholme had historically been associated with negative perceptions: 'The way Hull is represented around the country – Hull looks at Bransholme the same way, without getting to know it' (Walsh, 2017). *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* provided the opportunity for audiences to visit the centre and facilitated a social change by challenging audiences on their own biases.

The use of scenography is particularly pertinent to the delivery of the project. The shop was a scenographic space that underpinned the Gold Nose story. To reiterate how I am using this term, when I refer to scenography, I denote the creation of spaces for cultural performance. This understanding of scenography extends beyond the traditional notions of stage design towards the curation of space that uses different technologies (lighting, sound, set, costume) as well as wider social, political and cultural contexts to create a space that connects emotionally with its audiences and participants. The shop became a key space that was social and had a purpose beyond solely a space to see the nose. It acted as a space that was able to tell the story of the Gold Nose whilst also being a space that was able to represent many of the stories of Bransholme and a wider history of Hull. The shop became a space that held cultural and social memory through the sharing of participants' stories. As such, it became a space imbued with emotion and cultural momentum. It went beyond the physical towards a space that told a wider story of Hull. It broke down the distance between the performer or object (Gold Nose) and the participant whilst also bringing to the fore discussions around these areas of Hull on the periphery.

Despite many of the positive outcomes of the project, the project in some ways beclouds the wider issues that exist within in the Bransholme area. The project facilitated the self-actualisation of community members to undertake the delivery of culture into their own hands, but this did little to tackle the more structural issues in this area. It empowered local community members to the extent of project delivery, but as the earlier data on the ward suggests there are wide ranging issues within this area. Cleaver (1999: 599) argues that empowerment as a term throughout participatory discourse has become individualised and depoliticised. In many ways *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* is an example of the depoliticisation of projects. Like many other CoCs the remit of funder and stakeholder agendas do not allow for the politicisation of the projects that would empower local people to challenge structural issues and improve their areas. Although this may have been participatory for the individuals it did not catalyse a wider collective action on how the project could be developed to ameliorate many of the issues within Bransholme. Therefore, despite the success in many elements of this model, there is still further to go in the producing approach to make the best transformative impacts. I shall attempt to address in chapter three in my discussions on the Creative Producer.

Conclusion

The term *community* has been widely used throughout CoCs as a way of connecting the large-scale mega-event with the local sphere. *Community* however is not a catch-all term, with a universal meaning. It is more complicated. When producers have not engaged with local communities this has caused some issues within their cultural years. Frustrations have often occurred when the producers practice has not encouraged a responsive and longer-term community engagement. Specifically, focused on dialogues of how local communities want to be represented and what they need from the cultural year. This disconnect was exhibited in the counter-cultural movements of WMC? in Cork and Turku's Capital of Subculture. Each of these movements resisted the culture of producing events within host cities that ignored or displaced the opinions and needs of these host city's communities. *The Land of Green Ginger* demonstrated a bottom-up model that distanced itself from the concerns and frustrations of some previous CoCs.

Anthony P. Cohen's work on symbols and community provides a useful approach for the Creative Producer in how specific totems, rituals and symbolic actions can be used within hyperlocal settings. Cohen's hermeneutic approach to symbols can be applied to hyperlocal communities to understand how they operate. Furthermore, it offers a unique and helpful model for the Creative Producer to produce events that respond to specific community needs. Hull2017s *Land of Green Ginger* affords a meaningful engagement strategy before and beyond the CoC year. The approach of the Hull2017 team was used in areas of Hull situated on the peripheries that were characterised by low-arts engagement and it created heightened levels of engagement and participation. *7 Alleys and The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* offer a critical insight into how shared narratives can be utilised to create a sense of community cohesion. Both projects built on local narratives to scenographically curate shared spaces.

7 Alleys used urban legends and folklore whilst *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* worked with local stories of Bransholme that evoked cultural and social memory of the area. The use of scenography in the Gold Nose shop also raises questions around the politics of place and how space was utilised within the cityscape. The act of moving beyond the centre casts a

critical lens on the disparities between Hull's centre and the areas on the periphery. It asks for a reversal in power dynamics. The regular programming of events in the city centre often requires those living outside of the centre to travel in. In placing the events outside of the city centre, it reverses this dynamic and encouraged intercommunication from a wide range of people across the city. As I observed with *7 Alleys,* placing high-quality artistic experiences outside the city centre can shift perceptions of how these areas are viewed. Such a reversal becomes a crucial element for Creative Producers in how they curate their programming in areas to be inclusive events.

These events drew upon the emotions of the participants to foster a sense of pride. The process of encouraging people from across the city to share in engaging with local narratives created spaces for social interaction to take place. These projects themselves became cultural totems – centrepieces of actualised communities. The producers developed a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the Hull's communities and illustrated best practice for the Creative Producer. *The Land of Green Ginger* not only fostered engagement for the event but it created an engagement with other members in the community and as available responses suggest it had a transformative impact on the lives of those people in the community.

Chapter 3 – A new model for the 'Creative Producer'

This chapter aims to consolidate the lessons from Hull2017 with contemporary theories and writing on modern producing to inform my model of the Creative Producer that embeds best practice in their work. This chapter aims to build on the good practice of chapters one and two to enhance the opportunities afforded to the Creative Producer. I use the lessons learned from chapters one and two to highlight the gaps in knowledge on the role of producers in contemporary discourse and I use the case studies from Hull2017 to demonstrate the possibilities of the Creative Producer beyond what current writing usually claims.

I firstly discuss how the producer's role is described in contemporary discourse and how very often the same discourse does not recognise the full scope and impact of producers on productions and their audiences. I continue to explore the contemporary view of the theatre producer and analyse how the role is shifting in its capacity to facilitate social action. I explore the significance of the shift of creative producing to analyse how this designation of the role is a more accurate representation of current producing practices.

I recap the best practice demonstrated in chapter one and two and consolidate this into a comprehensive framework and series of lessons for future Creative Producers. To supplement the best practice from my chapter on heritage (chapter one) and to address the problems with the approaches of producers in CoCs, I return to the lessons on heritage and apply the learning to Jürgen Habermas' theory of the Public Sphere, through the lens of Christopher Balme's writing. I use the Public Sphere to demonstrate how Creative Producers can facilitate dialogue through heritage and scenography to empower communities towards collective social action. The synthesis between these approaches can further the aims of Creative Producers in CoCs and beyond. Moreover, I suggest how the Creative Producer can embed the cultural identities from host cities into their practice that can challenge issues of representation. I then revisit the lessons of community engagement in Hull2017 to summarise the lessons for the Creative Producer. I reference the work of Slavoj Žižek and Robert Pfaller's theory on interpassivity to explore the significance of producing CoC events

that are active in the participation and engagement of audiences. I do this to address the setbacks of the approaches of producers that I identified in chapter two and to empower Creative Producer's to create a legacy in their work for local people to take the creation of arts and culture into their own hands.

The 'Industry' Producer

Despite the fact that producers are crucial in the creation of the CoCs little has been written about their impact, not only in relation to cultural mega-events but the theatre sector at large. There are, however, scholars who have discussed the role of 'arts managers' (Pick & Anderton, 1996) and there are elements of arts managers that intersect with producers. The writing on arts managers is particularly useful to my discussions on the Creative Producer as there are intersections in their approaches to producing. The approaches of arts managers discussed by scholars in this field have identified key elements of best practice that can be utilised for the Creative Producer. To first understand how it is possible to move beyond traditional notions of a producer and identify best practice it is first necessary to establish a clear framework of what is meant by a producer.

The role of the theatre producer is often unclear. The lack of extended writing about the theatre producer may arise from an absence of universality within the role, as Hescott (2015, n.d.) states 'Universally a producer ensures that a production happens on time and in budget – after that, the role varies enormously.' In a similar strain David Sabel, Director of Creative Development at London Theatre Company, posits:

> Producer can be a really brilliant title but it can be a really terrible title because it actually doesn't say what somebody really does. There are so many different kinds of producing and there are lots of different aspects of the job. (Barbican, n.d.)

The concept that the theatre producer is a nebulous title is discussed widely throughout theatre discourse, not least amongst theatre producers themselves (Hishon, n.d.; RSC, n.d.). One of the clearest examples of the lack of transparency surrounding producers has been documented by Baggaley (2008). A series of industry talks were hosted at the Young Vic in

2008, organised by the Stellar Network. In one room was thirty theatre producers, their task was to try and define their job specifications, in another room of thirty directors, they were tasked to discuss what they think a producer does. On both accounts there was little agreement in the description of their role.

Despite the uncertainty around the role and its definition, there are resources that can illustrate some of the producer's responsibilities. Stage One is a charity that have been running for over 40 years. The charity supports the training of theatre producers by offering CPD training opportunities, mentorships, and bursaries. Stage One says a producer is responsible for:

> oversee[ing] all aspects of a theatre production, from the generation of an idea to the day-to-day management when it is on stage. They are the person responsible for the financial, strategic and managerial aspects of staging the production. (Stage One, n.d.)

They continue to list some of the key responsibilities of the producer:

- Obtain the rights for the project (play or musical)
- Select and engage the creative team.
- Negotiate and issue contracts.
- Ensure legal compliance.
- Create and manage a budget.
- Book the venue.
- Create a production timeline.
- Raise the money. (Stage One, n.d.)

Get into theatre, an internet resource for opportunities and information about theatre careers in the UK offers a definition, 'A theatre Producer oversees all aspects of a theatre production […] their role and duties change constantly' (Get into Theatre, n.d.). Get into theatre offers a similar list of the producer's key responsibilities:

- Look after the finances and manage how the budget is spent.
- Negotiate and issue contracts.
- Organise and manage technical, stage management and workshop functions.
- Agreeing projects and financial backers
- Agreeing production timelines
- Setting ticket prices and influencing the marketing strategy
- Holding regular meetings with Directors, creative teams and Artists
- Ensuring legal compliance such as copyright law, insurance liability, payroll and
- tax. (Get into Theatre, n.d)

Stage One and Get into Theatre suggest that although their roles can shift to meet the needs of the production, the producer is a role that oversees the creative process from conception to delivery. Beginning with understanding how the budget effects wider finances, to contracting artists, to the delivery of the performance. Both sources demonstrate that the producer manages money, time, and people. On both accounts the producer develops a show from the initial concept into the final production that audiences would like to watch. As the process continues and the creative and production teams develop the show from the initial concept, the producer continues to oversee the process to ensure both that the show is high-quality and that it retains its appeal to target audiences. However, these sources are a description of their work programme and even though they are helpful to understand further what a produces job role might do, this does little to define what a producer is.

Despite the overlap between Stage One and Get into Theatre, the lack of clarity, and the prioritisation of money and management has often resulted in:

> Those old cliches com[ing] into play: the cigar-chomping producer with dollar signs in his eyes, vetoing the extravagant requests of the tantrum-prone director. It's profit versus "artistic temperament", and the picture doesn't flatter either party. (Baggaley, 2008).

The lack of clarity or continuity surrounding the role of a producer is significant because it can cause a misleading image and create confusion about the role. The role of the producer is regularly described in relation to management and finance. This is problematic as it prescribes an image to producers as individuals who are only concerned with the financial and managerial aspects of the production. The sources from Stage One and Get into Theatre paint a two-dimensional view of the producer. These descriptions fail to hold the producer as an entity that is *as* creative as other members of the creative team. Constance DeVereaux explains this well when she states that arts managers are spoken of usually in relation to their responsibilities and this does not do justice to the full extent of their role. For example, 'A doctor's role is to heal' is entirely different to say 'An arts manager's role is to manage the arts' (2019: 15-16). A general lack of awareness can becloud the nature of the

producers' role and as a result the lack of definition creates a reductive image of the producer's impact.

What I refer to as *Creative Producer* sometimes passes under other names. John Pick and Malcolm Anderton also refer to an arts administrator. They argue that the arts administrator must facilitate an artistic contract between artist, artwork, and audience (1996: 16-17). The evidence demonstrated throughout chapter one and two reflects Pick and Anderton's comments. The producers were crucial in creating high-quality performance, whilst liaising and mediating between audiences and artists to create shows that encouraged participation and engagement. What Hull2017 shows is that Creative Producers are central to creating long lasting social and economic effects in new areas and with new audiences. In this way the Creative Producer must be able to understand how to balance the needs of 'production costs or sales figures' (17) whilst also ensuring that 'the largest possible number of people receive the maximum pleasure and benefit of the art' (16). Furthermore, Hull2017 also illustrated that the way in which producers are described and discussed in contemporary discourse sits at odds with the reality of their job roles.

To challenge the misleading image of contemporary theatre producers it is necessary to recognise the scope of their role as evidenced in CoCs. Firstly, it seems crucial to move towards a renewed understanding of the producer that is a symbiosis of the various academic, social, economic, and creative strands that they curate. The practice presented in Hull2017 is exemplary of the producers' wider scope responsibilities. Hull2017 presents a strong case for a shift in thinking about producers in the arts industry that recognise the role as creative entities, who are often critical in developing economic and social transformation as well as building relationships with audiences and communities.

In recent years, the term 'Creative Producer' has become more prominent in discussions surrounding producing. The addition of 'creative' has been largely a response to the historical image prescribed to producers that they are concerned with finance and management. In turn there has also been a growth in the number of courses focused on Creative Producing. As Baggeley (2008) suggests 'any producers now add the word "creative" to their job title, staking their claim in the artistic product as more than mere

facilitators.' Yet despite this there has been little discourse on Creative Producing. In the United Kingdom there are a number of MA and MFA courses that focus on creative producing. These courses demonstrate a shift from the producer of old, who was focused on the financial and managerial elements of producing, towards one that is more creative in their output and integral to the producing of projects that can develop new audiences and be transformational economically and socially. Moreover, the MA courses illustrate that whilst little writing exists on creative producing, there is a developing distinction between the type of producer as described by Stage One and Get into Theatre, and the emerging Creative Producer.

Mountview Arts School delivers a course on creative producing. Whilst the course does not define what a Creative Producer is their course content for 'Not-for-profit transformative theatre' (n.d.) does shed some light on the development in thinking about the capability of producing:

> The module will place theatre activities in the political, social, economic, and environmental landscape and investigate the resultant business framing […] This module looks at sources of finance and fundraising alongside the core necessary tools needed to market creative products by identifying, reaching, and attracting an audience.

Similar sentiments are raised in Central School of Speech and Drama's Creative Producing MA. Their unit on *Cultural Landscape* states:

> The unit explores the economics of arts practice, from government subsidy to the strategies of small-scale arts organisations. We will consider the roles of participants in the cultural and creative industries (for example, artists, audience members, critics, dramaturgs, or fundraisers).

Quite crucially, the courses acknowledge a more nuanced image of the producer as someone whose practice extends beyond managerial and financial. The courses acknowledge that the producer must consider the 'political, social, economic and environmental landscape' in order to deliver best practice and high-quality work. The importance placed on the Creative Producer beyond the financial and managerial job responsibilities described by Stage One and Get into Theatre situate creative producing as an interdisciplinary practice. In short, the course acknowledges the importance of the

producer in both their strategic business capacity and their capacity as a holistic theatre-maker that makes social change and develops audiences.

To take the example of *7 Alleys* using the description of the producers' role from Stage One and Get into Theatre, it would suggest that their role was to book the venues, liaise with production, issue contracts, and ensure wider legal compliance. This process undoubtedly happened for the project to be realised, yet the evidence illustrates that the success of the producer, so crucially dependent on wider participation in low arts-engagement communities, required the producer to embed themselves in the communities. Therefore, there are distinct gaps in the description of producer's roles in the wider industry – such as the organic, rather than transactional interaction with the key players: the public. The gaps in the producer's role make the Mountview and Central courses significant because it recognises the larger remit of the role. To further understand the remit of the Creative Producer's role, it is necessary to consolidate the lessons from Hull2017 and address the setbacks outlined in chapters one and two.

The Creative Producer

Chapter One explored how heritage has been used in CoCs. The chapter focused on *Blade*, a wind turbine blade that was placed in Hull's city centre. *Blade* demonstrated that heritage and scenography can reconstitute feelings towards a particular area from both locals and visitors. In turn, *Blade* demonstrated that produced events that deploy heritage can foster feelings of pride, develop social cohesion and encourage those less likely to be engaged, to be more confident in engaging in the future. I also analysed how heritage can be a problematic concept. The use of local heritage in CoCs has previously resulted in a misrepresentation on the part of the producers, which prioritised certain selected totems of the city (e.g. Trawling, Mozart, The Beatles).

One key lesson from Hull2017 was how Creative Producers could use scenography and heritage to reshape their engagement with local people. This approach shifted perceptions of Hull and encouraged locals and external visitors to connect and engage with the city in a new way. As demonstrated by *Blade,* when scenography was used with the architectonic heritage of the city it created a site for interaction and engagement between different

audiences. It created a sense of pride for locals who saw their city reframed in a new, more positive light. In this way, the *Blade*'s intervention in the public space helped redefine the city's heritage and contributed to a new branding of Hull. The synthesis of heritage and scenography challenged negative perceptions of Hull – a city that has been associated with deprivation and decline.

A crucial component of the Creative Producer's practice that emerged from *Blade* was the art work's accessibility, both in location and in its concept. Its positioning in Queen Victoria Square (and by virtue of it being a spectacle) meant that audiences were able to engage with *Blade* in their own way. The installation did not have any preconceived notions of it being high art. Spectators were able to engage with *Blade* on their own terms and in doing so it encouraged audiences to engage with heritage, thus reconstituting the relationship between locals, visitors, and the city. Scenography and heritage came to the fore as a tool for the Creative Producer to attract new demographics in the arts and the city in novel ways. As reflected from *Blade's* data, audiences from backgrounds who do not usually engage, or do not feel confident to participate in the arts, were more likely to engage after. For a Creative Producer who aims to build a longer-term relationship with new audiences, scenography can be a critical tool to deliver this.

Despite these positive outcomes, Hull2017 highlighted that Creative Producers cannot create these sites of intervention using caricatures of the city. When heritage is not curated appropriately it can cause frustration amongst locals. As demonstrated by Boland, Murtagh, and the Hull focus group members, when certain totems are prioritised, it can give a false and sanitised image that does nothing to engage or further the development of image legacies. In fact, it can mean that some CoCs might be perpetually looking to the past. This outlook has on occasion resulted in dissatisfied locals and unimpressed external visitors. The work of Jürgen Habermas and Christopher Balme is helpful in tackling these challenges and in developing the positive impacts. Christopher Balme's *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (2014) documents how the Public Sphere aligns with theatre and performance. Balme uses Jürgen Habermas' concept of the Public Sphere to understand how theatre makers can use theories of the public sphere to drive social change. Balme frames his work around the context of present day Munich, where there had been ongoing public debates amongst locals around

issues like refugee mobility, carbon emissions, and real estate prices after the city's rapid growth.

The Public Sphere is a term from Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher and sociologist. In his work *The structural transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Habermas argued that the Public Sphere is the discursive arena of intercommunication between reasoned individuals on matters of public interest. Habermas suggests that prior to the 18th century the open-ended practice of dialectics on matters of public interest was decided through the courts of kings and queens. The distribution of power was held with several high-ranking individuals. Therefore, the capacity for anyone outside of the aristocracy to make social or political change through debate in the realm of the Public Sphere was little to none. General masses were often unable to debate and create social and political change. In the 18th century there was a series of political and social shifts in parallel with the industrial revolution. As a result of these shifts, the population saw power move from the absolutist political regimes towards more discursive and open-ended practices of knowledge within a wider public. The process of public dialectics continued to develop during the late 19th and 20th centuries where now public dialectics can catalyse social and political change through public movements such as Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion and Occupy.

Christopher Balme examines models of spectatorship to understand how to re-politicise theatre and the community to make lasting social effects (2014: 3). One of Balme's most salient points is that a key reason the theatrical institution has lost much of its ability to further political or social change is the institution of the 'black-box theatre' (14). The black-box theatre, in its division between the stage and the auditorium, denotes the separation of the theatre and the Public Sphere to create high artistic ambition and intensify the aesthetic experience. The black-box theatre demands 'aesthetic absorption' (7). The lights are dimmed, audiences clap when they feel they must, and they do not talk whilst the show is being performed. In the black-box theatre, the audience's experience is curated in an attempt to heighten the aesthetic experience. The black-box model has resulted in theatre spaces becoming seen as exclusionary and as a result this has impacted the efficacy that dialectics from theatre can have on the public sphere.

The evidence has shown that many CoCs have been criticised by locals for their repeated prioritisation of the city centre as the location for many of the programmed events. Although *Blade* owed much of its success to its positioning in the city centre and its accessibility, its impact could have been more prominent. Balme's work suggests how the Creative Producer might use academic theories to reframe community place-images. The practice Balme presents, illustrates the importance of interventions that can encourage dialectics between communities. Although producers demonstrated good practice in Hull2017, this could have gone further to engage visitors and locals with dialogues that catalysed social change.

The CoCs are predicated on the notion that the year of cultural events can bring lasting economic, social, and cultural change to the host city. However, evidence suggests that the expectations of the cultural years are met to varying degrees of success. As seen in Liverpool, Derry-Londonderry, as well as Hull, short-term economic and social benefits are clear (Culture, Place & Policy institute, 2018., Boland, 2010: 632., Boland et al., 2016: 257) yet the lasting cultural and social impact beyond the festival year is often not evident. The lack of legacy benefits may be partly due to legacy funding, but this may also emerge as a result of the black-box model. In an analogical way, the majority of events taking place in the space of the city centre, I argue, serves a similar effect: they compartmentalise culture geographically and draw a dividing line between a cultural centre with high-art events, and a cultural periphery. As *7 Alleys* and *The Land of Green Ginger* have demonstrated, moving beyond the confines of the city centre can have great impacts on audiences and hyperlocal communities. *Blade* has further demonstrated that scenographic interventions that use heritage can reconstitute how locals and visitors engage with urban spaces. When the city centre acts as the space where the majority of events take place in CoCs it has limited opportunity to create legacy changes across the city. In such centralised production work, the distinction between the centre and the periphery may reinforce the inherited negative traits of social and cultural seclusion of communities on the city outskirts. The lack of events programmed and produced that are embedded in communities means that communities are overlooked. Such producing practice does not engender decentralised dialectics and does not encourage or empower local communities to use arts and culture as a tool for a

legacy of social change. Balme and Habermas' notion of the Public Sphere provides an effective model for the Creative Producer to develop a legacy of social objectives in CoCs.

Heritage can be a key element of legacy impacts and the continuing success of projects. A particular issue that was raised by locals at the time of Hull2017 was the sanitisation of the city image. The heritage that was displayed throughout the year prioritised certain totems, specifically, its trawling history. Some members of the focus groups felt that these totems were caricatures of the city that framed Hull as a one-dimensional port city, looking perpetually to its past. Furthermore, it was acknowledged by some members of the focus groups that there was almost no programming that tried to interrogate a narrative beyond a glossy and positive version of the city and its heritage. One participant stated:

> part of Hull's diversity is its low employment, high crime, deprivation and low-incomes, that wasn't captured in Hull2017 I don't think. (UCOC2019/18)

It was further recognised by locals that the place-branding images prioritised by the producers failed to incorporate a diverse range of voices and opinions:

> I see people from a lot of communities, and they were unaware of a lot of the things on the programmes […] if you check the statistics are (sic) migrated from other cities or countries, asylum seekers, refugees for example, they are actually part of the community and they want to be part of the community and we ought to be wanting them to actually be integrated. (UCOC 2019/18)

The focus group members' comments demonstrate that some of those living in Hull did not feel that the glossy images presented were appropriate and the lack of diversity may have created barriers that prevented other communities from engaging. CoCs cannot be a panacea for all of a city's issue, yet there are some studies that suggest highlighting and fostering dialogue around the structural issues of an area can be successful in cultural mega-events. Kaplanidou et al. (2013) studied quality of life of residents both before and after the 2010 South African World Cup and found that the recognition and discussion of South Africa's turbulent political system had increased benefits in undermining social segregation (639). Although, Kaplanidou's study is in the context of a South Africa's turbulent political system, what it does illustrate is that dialogues fostered in cultural mega-events can have

tangible social effects amongst local people. Therefore, it should be recognised that Creative Producers must be aware and attuned to the importance of how their producing impacts can catalyse legacy impacts for host cities. This study in particular supports Balme's premise that the facilitation of dialogues outside of the black-box can drive social change. Therefore, to make a similar legacy of change the Creative Producer can use the theories of the Public Sphere to catalyse social transformation.

I suggest that the Creative Producer can use scenography in a co-creative manner with peripheral communities to generate public intercommunication. The intercommunication between communities can then enhance social cohesion and renegotiate negative narratives about particular areas. The idea of moving beyond the city centre is significant as Balme (2014: 14) states that the act of moving outside the theatre building that is infused with its own assumptions, biases and agendas can activate political and social efficacy. Balme's point is reflective in CoCs, when performances move beyond the city centre towards peripheral communities. The evidence from previous CoCs has illustrated that many of the programmed events are situated in the city centre. Through producing scenographic interventions beyond the city centre (the 'black-box') the producer can drive change. If *Blade* could encourage locals and visitors to engage with their areas in a new way, scenographic interventions that are created in a co-creative way with communities of a host city suggests it could draw attention to elements of the area that are important to those communities. This would not only reframe new image legacies for these areas but also generate public dialectics and debate.

For the Creative Producer to curate successful interventions that could generate social benefits for the host cities communities, they first need to understand what is important to local communities. The linking of heritage with Balme's and Habermas' theories encourages the Creative Producer to have dialogues with local people. These dialogues allow for a clearer understanding of how local communities would like to be involved and develop what issues and needs are important to them. The measures of success from Hull2017 (as well as previous CoC locals) stipulate that identity, heritage, and representation is vital to the success of a cultural year. The Public Sphere and the ability to produce projects that

facilitate dialectics and public debate comes to the fore as vital for the Creative Producer's practice.

My findings highlight that the description of the producer as given by Stage One and Get into Theatre, whilst not incorrect, do not represent the curatorial and responsive role of the Creative Producer. The lessons outlined give a clearer focus to the Creative Producer and fill the gaps in some of the shortcoming of the historic CoCs. My findings restructure the positioning of the Creative Producer in contemporary arts management. Creative Producers become more of a creative asset and the role is distanced from the idea that Creative Producers are only concerned with finances and operational management. The omission of creativity in contemporary discourse is significant because it further perpetuates the idea that the producer is not a creative role. As a result, it can limit their capabilities and remit. Kuesters (2010) has found that there is a commonly held belief in the way that artists and society at large speak about arts managers. Her research has shown that many people often speak about arts managers as diametrically opposed to the artists or the art. This is perhaps perpetuated further when the role of the producer is spoken about in terms of administration and finances.

It was highlighted by Pick and Anderton that the arts administrator needs to create an artistic contract between artist, artwork and audience that ensures the greatest benefit of the audience whilst generating income. The methods outlined for the Creative Producer not only demonstrate the implementation of best practice for producing, but they also balance the role of supporting artists and audiences as well as generating income. The methods outlined from Balme, and the lessons learned from Hull2017, amalgamate the concerns raised by local people and scholars to foster a new model that opens positive dialogues geared towards social action that develop a positive city brand for the enhancement of image legacies.

In Chapter Two, I discussed the critical role of community engagement in bridging the gap between peripheral communities of the host cities and the CoC events. The evidence from Hull2017 demonstrates that work placed outside of the city centre was more likely to engage communities who have historically not engaged in the arts. The producers

embedded high-quality performance outside of the city centre, and in so doing succeeded in breaking down barriers to locals' and visitors' coming to East Hull and Bransholme. *7 Alleys and The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* challenged negative views of East Hull and Bransholme both locally and nationally:

> I think of Pound Shops, Bagging shops, Boyes and people looking pissed off […] I think Hull has got potential, a lot of potential but people have to embrace what's going on, things like 7 Alleys. (UCOC2019/18)

> I think just seeing good news instead of all the bad news for a change. Because so often, Hull is portrayed negatively […] let's face it, Bransholme is largely a housing estate. There's not much else here, so for a lot of the people here, there's not a lot. So something that brings positivity into this area can only help. (UCOC2019/18)

The Land of Green Ginger programme highlighted that although the events were positive in some aspects of social action, Creative Producers could have gone further to empower local communities to create dialogues about issues in their environment and give them a set of tools to challenge and target change in their area. *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* represents a vital piece of good practice for Creative Producers to respond to the needs of the local community. The Creative Producer must understand the audience's needs and how their producing practice can make the biggest impact and legacy. This may not necessarily be what was planned but as *7 Alley* and *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* highlight it is integral to deliver a responsive and engaging programme. Furthermore, by involving live humans and not just subjects in the transaction, the projects organically evolve. The Creative Producer needs to respond to the organic evolution and effectively combine the original objectives with the situation on the ground *here and now.*

The Gold Nose of Green Ginger demonstrated that when producers make work with the aim of social transformation there is a move away from the means/ends dichotomy of participation. The dichotomy can reduce the impacts of the project by focusing on the project outcomes as a way of fulfilling targets or key performance indicators. When the outcome is considered the most crucial element, the project can become what Cooke & Kothari refer to as 'tyranny'. *The Land of Green Ginger* demonstrated that the creation and building of local relationships is crucial to the engagement and participation to local people. When the performance outcome is the goal, it can be to the detriment of offering

opportunities for participatory experimentation and empowerment within projects. I draw on Robert Pfaller and Slavoj Žižek's theory of interpassivity to take the lessons from Hull2017 and go even further to bridge the gaps that I highlighted in the *Land of Green Ginger.* Pfaller's and Žižek's concept of interpassivity can help clarify my idea of successful and not-just-superficial engagement for Creative Producers. When I use the term interactive, I am not denoting the concept of necessarily interacting with the artwork 'hands on', rather I am referring to a wider engagement with the work on a level beyond the superficial. Interactive art gives its participants agency. Or, in the sense of Nicolas Bourriaud's *relational aesthetics*, it is only the participants' active involvement that completes the artwork and makes it whole.

Interpassivity is a concept coined by Robert Pfaller and Slavoj Žižek to describe the displacement of the enjoyment of art and media production onto the artwork (Pfaller, 2017: 17). A useful example used by Žižek is the concept of canned laughter. Žižek argues that the art (the television show) is doing the laughing for you, and as such has relegated pleasure and outsourced the enjoyment on behalf of the spectator onto the medium, because it is more comfortable that way. One doesn't need to take the effort of laughing, and not even of figuring out if it actually *is* funny. Žižek asserts that as such our feelings can have an external 'objective' existence (17). As a result, there are artworks that have the consumption of its own work developed into it, making a requisite passivity. The artwork is doing it for you. A common example of interpassivity is found throughout social media interactions. When a public debate or socio-political issue occurs in the public domain, social media users may share on Facebook or retweet on Twitter. The act of sharing the content on social media channels outsources the social action. The share does the social and political 'slacktivism' on behalf of the user.

The narrative that the CoC titles are panaceas for social and economic issues often results in an outsourcing of the dialectics. This "does the community" on behalf of the actual communities with their interpassive participation but without their full engagement. In turn, the outsourcing hinders the possibility of creating lasting social and economic change in the host city. The idea that a CoC boosts a city's economy and acts as an answer for the host city's wider social concerns often outsources the social action onto the publicity wave

around the title rather than actively change the landscape of the host cities. Hull Live's interviews with local people shortly after the success of achieving the Hull2017 title focused on how the title could bring growth for business and boost the local economy (Hull Live, 2013). There was very little said about how local people could foster a legacy. Rather, the interviews focused on how the title would do the social and economic action on behalf of the people of Hull. In other words, this was an example of interpassivity at large.

The *Land of Green Ginger* provides a useful example because in some ways interpassivity also played a role in *7 Alleys* and *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger.* The *Land of Green Ginger* offered a model that bridged the gap between the interpassive and the interactive to activate the communities of Hull to have dialogues about the negative narratives of particular areas. The focus groups that emerged out of *7 Alleys* observed how the experience had changed many individuals' understandings of East Hull. Periplum and the Hull2017 producers made a co-creative experience for their participants and for hyperlocal communities. The process made many of the community cast feel integral to the overall shaping of the show and the evidence suggests it empowered locals from East Hull to contribute and take charge of artistic processes that occurred around them. Furthermore, creating and rooting high-quality performance about East Hull, rather than a version of a show that had trickled down from the city centre, fostered feelings of inclusivity and community within the East Hull residents: 'It was really nice to see so many people in East Park, to see so many people on our doorstep!' And this fostered feelings of pride because:

> It was like a showcase for East Park [...] it didn't feel like you were going to the theatre, it felt more exciting. (UCOC2018/19)

The participants' feedback demonstrates the importance for Creative Producers to produce their shows in a way that engages audiences interactively and fosters a public dialogue. By connecting art with the Public Sphere, transformative social changes can take place. In Hull2017 this approach generated feelings of pride and community as well as changed perceptions of the areas.

However, in my study, I have identified gaps in *7 Alleys* and *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* in progressing some elements of social action. To look once more towards community

development theory the *Land of Green Ginger* enabled local people to participate in and engage with arts and culture. Nevertheless, neither project created a discursive sphere to create a legacy of change that could use arts and culture to help ameliorate issues and concerns in their hyperlocal areas. For example, *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* created a space that was for the people of Bransholme. The audiences from both within and outside the community would turn up and take part in activities. It was even highlighted by members of the community that the Gold Nose shop became a crucial part of building community ties in the area.

> The history of it and the meeting people and not being lonely […] it makes you feel different. It's the best thing that happened this [sic] (UCOC 2019/18)

> [L]ots of them [Bransholme locals] are lonely and they come for coffee and tea and they meet people that they wouldn't even talk to if they were on their own. (UCOC 2019/18)

The Gold Nose shop was important to locals as important because it created a space for galvanising social interaction and social cohesion through performance. Yet despite this, the project created a space that dealt with the symptoms, not the cause. In this way it was an interpassive project that outsourced genuine engagement onto the project. The *Gold Nose of Green Ginger* despite having success in arts engagement did very little to highlight the issues and engage local people towards a public dialogue and collective action to champion more spaces for different types of social interaction in the area. Therefore, it did not necessarily create a legacy to fulfil the bidding guidance that stated the year needed to:

> Lead to lasting social regeneration through building engagement, widening participation, supporting cultural diversity and cohesion, contributing to the localism agenda and reaching out to sectors of the community who are disenfranchised and isolated (DCMS, 2016).

The theory of interpassivity takes on a new significance in the development of the legacy of engagement and social aims. To overcome an issue of legacy outputs, it seems necessary that the Creative Producer builds upon the success of the engagement to produce projects that actively implements legacy outcomes into it. Interpassivity can play a key role for the Creative Producer because their oversight and engagement with local people can shape a production that is reflective of local people's concerns geared towards social action.

What Hull2017 illustrates is that the socially effective and widely engaging events redefine the remit and understanding of what a producer can deliver. Hull2017 shows that a Creative Producer should not be defined solely by the 'financial, strategic and managerial aspects of staging the production' (Stage One, n.d.). The role needs to be redefined as an instigator and catalyst for long-term change in audiences and communities. Far more than a mere administrator, financial and operational manager, the Creative Producer holds vital relationships with audiences and communities, and through their producing at the heart of hyperlocal communities makes arts and culture more accessible. What has occurred, as demonstrated by my findings above, is that the Creative Producer's role has become (or at least viewed as) increasingly specialised. Hull2017 demonstrates that Creative Producers can move beyond the simplified notion of their job roles as arts managers. I propose a countermovement to this specialisation. In the same way that Macdonnell and Bereson (2019) argue that the continuous managerialism can impede the creative process, I assert that the over-specialisation of contemporary producing has created a role that has often foregrounded the managerial aspects at the expense of the producer's creative abilities. To return to Kuesters' study (2010), this could further perpetuate the notion of producers being opposed to creativity in a misguided managerial search for project outcomes. My findings from Hull2017 undermine this designation of the role and think of the Creative Producer as a first and foremost, a creative.

The countermovement that acknowledges the Creative Producers' cultural and artistic remit can begin to reclaim the arts from the bureaucratic processes and specialisation as rejected by Macdonnell & Bereson (2019: 11-13). They call for the 'closed circle of management' to be opened so the collaborative processes of theatre making can create an investment from all parties involved. The case studies of Hull2017 highlight that Creative Producers can situate themselves at the centre of the artistic process to create a more holistic and open-ended producing practice. When entrepreneurism, finance and managerialism take over the Creative Producers' practice it will ultimately 'slow down and eat itself' (13). The collaborative elements of their practice as exhibited in *The Land of Green Ginger* demonstrate that performance can become a transformative process, where the communities of the host cities are central in the creation and programming of the events. Creative Producers who engage in collaborative practice can produce projects that are

'personal and emotive rather than isolating and divisive' (12) and Creative Producers in turn develop relationships with participants who want to be actively involved. The collaborative practice can reflect the work that people in hyperlocal communities want to see and ultimately create lasting, social, economic, and cultural change. The lessons of Hull2017 demonstrate that the current movement of UK institutions teaching creative producing as a more holistic method of producing should continue to grow as it is a more accurate representation of the current producing practice. In turn, whilst the role may remain slightly ambiguous and determined by the project, Creative Producing as a whole can be recognised as far more holistic and creative.

Conclusion

Producers have very often been regarded as financial and logistical managers. The available writing on the subject demonstrates that producer is a muddy term and that the description of producers do very little to recognise the true remit of the role. In recent years there has been a move towards the term 'Creative Producer' which is in an attempt to 'stak[e] their claim in the artistic product as more than mere facilitators.' (Baggaley, 2008). Although there is not extensive writing on the topic, some MA courses are useful in demonstrating this shift in thinking.

I revisited the good practice from chapter one and two to consolidate the key lessons into a comprehensive framework for future producing practice that I refered to as the Creative Producer. The new model recognises the true scope of current arts producers. The model of producing sees producers engage with the 'political, social, economic and environmental landscape[s]'. As I have mentioned in my introduction, the Creative Producer is recognised as an expert in working with the public: a critical instigator and catalyst for long-term economic and social transformation in audiences and communities.

Despite the good practice that I have extrapolated from the case studies in chapter one and two, I noted the gaps in the approach from the producers. I specifically focus on how the case studies could have gone further to encourage participants in hyperlocal communities to take arts and culture into their own hands in an attempt to develop social changes in the future. I suggest that the work of the Public Sphere, notably discussed by Jürgen Habermas

and Christopher Balme can enhance this good practice. The Public Sphere as a theory to deploy gives Creative Producers a model to create scenographic interventions that move beyond the 'black-box' and create dialogues between communities. This would not only reframe how visitors and locals engage with urban spaces, but it would also drive social change by allowing local audiences to discuss their local areas.

I further suggest that there were gaps in *7 Alleys and The Gold Nose of Green Ginger.* Although these projects were clearly transformative for audiences and participants, I posit that there was also a requisite passivity in the project. Robert Pfaller and Slavoj Žižek's discussions on interpassivity would provide an approach for Creative Producersthat would build an active participation into the delivery of their projects. As a result, this can act as the impetus for social change with hyperlocal audiences who feel empowered to be able to drive change in their environments.

All of the lessons outlined from chapter one and two, supplemented by the work of Balme, Pfaller and Žižek afford a new approach for Creative Producers that is open and collaborative. The collaborative approach between audiences and producers can drive social change. Furthermore, this approach would recognise the capabilities of modern Creative Producers as a theatre-maker and public artist who can make effective interventions in activating and including various publics and further social action. These projects and interventions delivered by Creative Producers would not only build a notion of identity and public image, but they also help address some of the socio-economic issues around deprivation with their audiences.

Conclusion

Throughout this study I have attempted to understand and refine a model for the Creative Producer's by analysing examples of good practice in Hull's 2017 CoC. I have examined to what extent producers in CoCs created engaging and truly participatory events for visitors and locals. I have used a range of studies that reflect on the past of CoCs and crucially the measures of success outlined by Hull locals to support my argument for a new approach and model for the Creative Producer.

Chapter one illustrated how heritage has often been used throughout CoCs to develop new place-branding images, that distances the city away from historical negative connotations (ie. Glasgow and Hull as deprived cities.) Producers of CoCs have often used heritage in this way to attract tourism and inward investment. I posited that through the lens of theatre and performance, heritage acts as a scenographic process that can enhance the producer's deployment of heritage to develop a city's image. Nayan Kulkarni's *Blade* served as a useful case study to highlight how scenographic interventions can reconstitute feelings towards a city from both visitors and locals. *Blade* shifted negative perceptions of Hull from locals and visitors as it encouraged spectators to look up and engage with local heritage, thus redefining their relationship with the urban space. The shifted perceptions created pride in local people about the city. The accessibility of *Blade* as a scenographic performance where audiences could engage in their own way meant locals were more likely to be confident in participating with performance after engaging with *Blade.* This is particularly significant as Hull has historically been an area of low engagement with arts and culture. *Blade* illustrated that scenographic practice can be a crucial tool to develop new images of urban spaces and can catalyse social transformations and as a result it is a crucial tool to be embedded in the Creative Producer's approach.

Although heritage has been successful in some instances in CoCs, when heritage has not been deployed appropriately it has created discontent amongst some of the host cities communities. Specifically, in the way that hyperlocal communities would like to be represented. When a city has the CoC title many local communities feel strongly about how they are represented. The problematising of this issue was not confined to the 2017 year.

Concerns and contestations were reported in response to the ethno-political tensions and the use of public space in Derry-Londonderry in the 2013 CoC. Locals from Liverpool's 2008 CoC also scrutinised the deployment of heritage as it was used a way of hero-making. The prioritisation of The Beatles obfuscated acknowledgement of other important social issues within the city. In Hull, locals in the post-2017 focus groups raised concerns with how there was a prioritisation of trawling heritage. Although Hull had been categorised as a trawling city in the national eye, many locals felt that the prioritisation of this narrative meant that Hull seemed like a city that was perpetually looking to its past. Moreover, some felt that although the quality of the year was high, when external companies were brought in throughout the year, the CoC did not fully reflect the communities of Hull. Chapter one highlighted how heritage is a lived concept that is resonant and meaningful to hyperlocal communities. Therefore, scenography and heritage can be used strategically by Creative Producers to further social action in CoC years.

Chapter two built on my analysis of heritage. I addressed the notion of representation and participation further to take a view of community and how it was used in Hull2017. Like heritage, community has often been used in CoCs as a buzzword. Community is a word that is often used as a catch-all term without being interrogated properly. Using the work of community studies scholars, with a focus of Raymond Williams and Anthony P. Cohen, I attempted to develop a clearer understanding of community, a term that is often loose and hard to define. Very often when community has been used as a catch-all term and not underpinned by an understanding of how hyperlocal communities operate, it has created approaches from producers that were unsuccessful and resulted in tensions from local people.

The CoCs of Turku and Cork served as crucial examples of when there was a disconnect between producers and hyperlocal communities. The frustrations were a result of the approaches of the producers that did not reflect or respond appropriately to the communities of the host cities. The respective CoC years led to the exclusion of local people and resulted in countercultural movements that rejected the 'official' cultural programmes. Anthony P. Cohen's work on symbols was a useful tool for Creative Producers to understand how hyperlocal communities operate in distinct ways. Cohen recognised that communities

use symbols to differentiate themselves from others. Symbolic actions, or totems (to use Durkheim's term) became integral to the way that communities are constituted. Approaching the producing of events as symbolic action offers a hermeneutic approach to communities and their lived experiences.

The *Land of Green Ginger* offered a useful approach for the model of the Creative Producer into how to develop co-creative and bottom-up producing methods. The process undertaken by Periplum in *7 Alleys* used folklore as a way of creating a shared performative totem for the community members to connect with. Moreover, spatially the show was removed from the city centre and placed in a peripheral community that challenged audiences' negative perceptions of East Hull. Consequently, the feedback and data demonstrated that the methods employed by the producers had transformative social effects including pride in the area, social cohesion and the lowering of barriers to engagement in the arts. The model employed by Periplum and the Hull2017 team illustrated best practice for the Creative Producer to build and support relationships with local communities. The Hull2017 producers demonstrated how a person-centred approach can develop the engagement of hyperlocal communities and those who typically do not engage in arts and culture. This approach can support the development of local people and form a reciprocal relationship that in turn enhances the performance.

The *Gold Nose of Green Ginger* was another approach to engaging hyperlocal communities but it was not defined by a performance output. *The Gold Nose of Green Ginger* used a shop unit within North Point Shopping Centre that was transformed spatially into a unique and magical space. Scenographically, the space was curated to give a sense of intrigue and magic that acted as a dramatic hook for locals and visitors. The space drew people in and distanced the area from the negative connotations it had historically been aligned with. The sense of mystery and magic was supplemented by the dramatic narrative created by the Hull2017 producing team about the mystery of the Gold Nose and how it can grant wishes. As the methods employed by the Hull2017 team was not defined by a performance output there was a flexibility in the way that the producers were able to produce the project and local people could engage with the project how they wanted. The flexibility meant that local

people felt a sense of ownership over the space, and it empowered them to make their own events.

Chapter three summarised the findings of chapters one and two to comprehensively suggest a new model of producing practice for contemporary arts producers known as the Creative Producer. My findings illustrated that the current scope of producers in the arts industry, evidenced by a range of arts bodies, is quite small. Producers are often defined by their managerial and financial roles. The evidence demonstrated that little consideration is given to producer's creative capabilities or their importance in building relationships with new communities and audiences. As a result, the lack of clarity almost always does not account for the true scope of the producer's role in transformational social action. A newer phenomenon that has been reflected in many MA and MFA courses in the United Kingdom has been the creative producing. This designation of the role has a broader creative autonomy than the traditional industry remit of the producer and recognises the producers' wider capabilities. I used this designation as a springboard to argue for a re-negotiation of the role of the producer at large.

Despite the good practice demonstrated in chapter one and chapter two, I had highlighted there was still some gaps in the methods employed by the producers. Using the theory of the Public Sphere, I suggest that moving beyond a black-box model can create positive dialogues between audiences that catalyse social action through discussion of their environments. I also used Pflaller's discussions on interpassivity to encourage producers to build interactive participation and engagement into the producing of their projects to encourage and drive further social change.

The findings afforded from Hull2017 provide new models for producing practice. These methods I propose can be deployed to engage new communities and audiences in cultural mega-events and beyond. I have sought to reframe the narrative that prioritises the curative nature of arts and culture, without acknowledging the damaging effects that the lack of long-term and meaningful engagement can have on the host cities and their communities. As I stated in my introduction, many of the studies that have surveyed CoCs have come from the fields of cultural studies, sociology, and geography. These studies therefore have

overlooked how performance has been a crucial component to the delivery of the CoC years and a critical driver of transformative social change. Analysing CoCs through the lens of theatre and performance has developed a new reading of how Creative Producers can deliver cultural mega-events to improve future iterations. Developing new approaches for Creative Producers offers the opportunity to foster a new type of arts practice that fosters co-creative and bottom-up approaches which in turn breaks down the barriers which inhibit many people from engaging in arts and culture whilst generating a legacy of social, political, and cultural change.

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