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Heritage, hauntology and future Paisley

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Heritage, Hauntology and Future Paisley: Visions of the Future in Urban Regeneration Discourse(s)

Culture and heritage have come to occupy a certain ubiquity within discourse of urban regeneration, particularly in 'post-industrial' contexts (see Miles and Paddison, 2005). This creates the immediate paradox wherein discourses of the past have become implicated in visions of the future, echoing what Derrida termed 'Hauntology'. Hauntology, for Derrida (1993), describes the (im)possibility of being fully present, instead arguing the present (as a seemingly fixed temporal context) always exists in tandem with the past and the future. Mark Fisher (2014) used the term in a somewhat more specific manner, articulating the tendency to invoke notions of the future by retreating into the past. It is clear, therefore, how this might be applied to discourse(s) on heritage, culture and regeneration insofar as urban regeneration policy has, with increasing frequency, sought to invoke discourse(s) of the past.

The presentation explores recent regeneration policy in the Scottish town of Paisley, and in doing so explores discourse(s) of the past, present and future within the town's 'cultural regeneration' programme. This presentation, therefore, presents a discourse analysis of newspaper coverage between 2015 and 2020 to explore the key messages that have been communicated about Paisley and 'regeneration' and, in doing so, demonstrate how narratives of regeneration in Paisley pivot on discourse(s) of the past to (re)create a vision for the future. This presentation aims, therefore, to generate a series of practical and theoretical questions that might inform further research and debate across the intersecting areas of place, heritage and regeneration.

References

Derrida, J. (1993) Specters of Marx. London: Routledge.

Fisher, M. (2014) Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures. London: Zero Books.

Miles, S and Paddison, R. (2005) Introduction: The Rise and Rise of Culture-Led Urban Regeneration. Urban Studies. Vol.42 (5/6), pp. 838-839.