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Creativity, Self-Expression and Leisure

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Abstract: The links between creativity, self-expression and leisure practices are underexplored within leisure literature. Despite research that documents the centrality of leisure as a worked-at process of self actualisation and self identity (Stebbins, 2004, for example), the practice of leisure is still predominately viewed as one of consumption rather than production and of passivity rather than creativity. This paper, supported by empirical evidence through qualitative research into the lives of users of the leisure spaces of the 'provincial bohemia' of the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle upon Tyne, argues that there is a strong component of creativity in this group's leisure activity. This component, we argue, has, in recent years, become more important for 'aesthetic-reflexive' social actors in particular, as acts of self-authored and individual-expressive creativity have become more central to economic production, and to social identity. The rise in creative leisure is strongly linked to the valorisation of the romantic-artistic ethic of inalienable creative self-expression and the rejection of mass and putatively passive forms of leisure consumption common within previous Fordist modes of economic production and social ordering.

Key Words: Leisure; Creativity; Artists; Romanticism; Newcastle upon Tyne; the Creative Class.

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Introduction

In recent years the theme of creativity in a number of fields of study has become more important. The role of creativity and of a 'creative class' (Florida, 2002) in the forging of new markets and spurring national, regional and urban growth has caused great debate within urban studies literatures (Florida, 2002; Peck, 2005; Evans, 2009; Markusen, 2006) and has fed into growth agendas at both national and local policy levels (DCMS, 2001). In closer relation to leisure foci, creativity's role in tourism development has been investigated (Richards and Wilson, 2007; Richards, 2011). Creativity in this sphere is seen to herald a more active (less passive), aesthetically aware and individualistic form of consumer, concerned with 'inalienable' tourist experiences that are as much produced as consumed. Leisure literature however appears to have largely overlooked the links between creativity and leisure practice (Hegarty, 2009), apart from in studies that look at the psychological and therapeutic benefits of creativity during leisure time (Reynolds, 2002; Creek, 2008).

This paper looks at the role of creativity in leisure in the lives of working artists and users of the Ouseburn Valley in Newcastle upon Tyne, and explores the idea of leisure as a work of self expression. We argue that the working artists in this study, who form the majority of the respondents, can be understood as comprising a specific segment of Florida's creative class (see Markusen, 2006), and are inheritors and promoters of a 'way of being' that values self expressive individuality, and an integrated lifestyle. This form of integrated individuality that values the 'auratic presence' (Benjamin, 1936) of objects and people – in shorthand their individuality – is deeply indebted to the form of emotive or spiritual individualism that has its foundations within the European Romantic Movement (Lukes, 1973; Hampson, 1968; Blanning, 2010). The ideal of self-expressive uses of leisure time is not only restricted to artists in the Valley though, and broader user groups also view this space as an arena for the expression of creative sensibilities.

The Ethic of the Creative Self and Leisure

In the late 18th century, the qualities of creativity and individuality under the guise of the artist, as a *modern* and *critical* social agent, began to be bestowed with a secular spiritual dimension

(Blanning, 2010; Pevsner, 1975; Lukes, 1973). This link was initially facilitated in relation to Enlightenment empirico-deductive critiques of scripture based in the faltering moral and spiritual authority of absolutist regimes in Europe; particularly France (Darnton, 1984; Hampson, 1968; Wedd, 1998). Fused to this emerging 'space' in the realm of spiritual life, opened up by critiques of scripture and the authority of the Church, were romantic and pre-romantic counter-reactions to Enlightenment views of the self (see Hall, 1992) as a *wholly or predominantly* rational individual (Cantor, 2004; Hampson, 1968; Campbell, 1987) whose individuality was only expressed in terms of being a legal, political or economic subject (Siegel, 1986; Lukes, 1973). Taking the new emphasis on the elevation of the 'sovereign individual' into realms of the spiritual, pre-romantics such as Blake and Rousseau began to look at the individual's possibilities for self-expression as containing spiritual dimensions. As such, this confluence of suspicion of organised religion, the 'falsification' of its precepts, and the emergence of emphases on individuals as autonomous subjects allowed for a form of *emotive individualism* (Lukes, 1973), with secular spiritual qualities to emerge (Blanning, 2010). This was the Romantic ideal of the modern artist, as an expresser of an 'inner voice' (Hampson, 1968), a 'priest' (Pevsner, 1975) not bound by formalities of expression and aesthetics; giving light to an inner 'divine spark' (Blanning, 2010).

In the 19th Century, the desire to express this 'divine spark' through creativity and originality is often seen to have created tensions between the Romantic or the Bohemian and their Bourgeois counterpart, with the latter favouring reason and utility, and the former emotion and sensuality (Grana, 1964). In reality however, although often in conflict (Frank, 2001; De Botton, 2004; Goffman and Joy, 2004; Siegel, 1986; Wilson, 2000), the bourgeois and the bohemian can be seen to have been closely related, fighting over the modern 'territory' of what the purpose and limits to modern individuals' lives should be (Siegel, 1986; Young, 2002; Forkert, 2013). In relation to the idea of leisure, we can see that the 'bohémias' and 'territories' of 'creatives', that embody 'subterranean values' (Young, 1971) of hedonism, have often been enjoyed by people from 'broader society' in their spare time. This leads to situations where, demonstrating their "love-hate relationship" (Wilson, 2000, p7), the 'bourgeois' is a bohemian for the weekend (Siegel, 1986), or for an evening (Hall, 1998) or the straight attempts to become hip (Becker, 1951), and bohemian places become spaces for leisure and tourism consumption (Hall, 1998; Wilson, 2000).

The ideal of the creative individual, greatly strengthened by the deeper spiritual connotations of creative expression identified above, can be seen as prominent in many artistic and associated countercultural movements from the turn of the 19th century to the late 20th century. Modern artistic movements and styles formed around ideals of originality and emotive self expression could include: Romantic poetry and Literature (Drabble, 2000); American transcendentalism; the Arts and Crafts movement (Pevsner, 1975; Tones and Armstrong, 2010); the Beat poets and authors (Gair, 2007); Impressionism (Katz and Dars, 1991); Cubism and Abstract Expressionism; popular musical forms such as Rock n Roll and the democratised DIY ethic of Punk Rock (Savage, 1991) and Hip Hop. All of these styles of expression can be seen to have emotive self expression of the individual as a guiding tenet. Many of them provided direct challenges to paradigmatic modes of artistic production, in their respective eras, as increasingly 'the artist' not 'rules' dictated the mode of expression.

However, the above 'ethic' is a somewhat rather narrow form of focus as it is circumscribed to groups of artists with quite particular value systems. In fact we can see that post-war consumer capitalism has ensured the 'transmission' of the 'artistic ethic' [\(Campbell 1987; Heath and Potter 2005\)](#). Explanations of this process can be found in the argument that, since the 1960s, the value systems of artists have been transferred from smaller cohorts of critical-expressive artists active in music, poetry, literature and film to broader sections of the 'new middle class' associated with other forms of cultural consumption including the built environment and hence gentrification processes (Kaufmann, 2004; Caulfield, 1989; Ley, 1996, 2003; Zukin, 1989; Forkert, 2013). These transmissions, through modes of popular cultural consumption were often tied to critiques of 'regulated Fordist life' that was seen to mitigate against individuality and to prize utilitarian gains over emotive (or spiritual) engagements with the world. This cultural transmission, facilitated also by rising educational levels and associated degrees of (counter) cultural capital and aesthetic-reflexivity (Lash and Urry, 1994) within broader segments of the population can be seen to have created cultural desire (Caulfield, 1989) on behalf of the 'new middle classes' (Ley, 1996) to inhabit the secular spiritual realm of 'the artist'; thus the pursuit of creativity as a valued aspect of lifestyle can be seen to have become more popular also.

The above 'transmission belt' of desires for artistic lifestyles may be seen as the cultural context for broader sections of the population wanting to inhabit and experience artistic places (bohémias) and perhaps, as will be explored further below, to engage in the modern-artistic ethic of individual self expressive creativity. At the same time, in more recent years, the 'rise of the creative class' (Florida, 2002) has witnessed the growth of creative industries in the West (DCMS, 2000), as global divisions of labour, (Frobel *et al*, 1980; Harvey, 1989) have created a workforce often located in specific areas of urban agglomerations within Europe and America that have been concerned with new intellectual property rights, design inputs, research and development and marketing roles. These roles have required increasing numbers of Western knowledge workers to adopt creative modes of thinking and aesthetic reflexive (Lash and Urry, 1994) sensibilities in regards to economic production, and as such, for authors such as Florida (2002), Ray and Anderson (2000) and Brooks (2000) have resulted in a fusion of the dichotomous ethics of the bohemian and the bourgeois. The need for creativity as an essential facet of industrial production and service provision, as well as its importance as a performative node for the validation of the self has thus, in later capitalism in Western societies, led to greater imperatives to 'be creative' and 'experience creativity'. As such, what were once fairly hermetic 'artistic values' have been transmitted to broader components of the 'experience economy', such as, for example tourists' desires (Richards and Wilson, 2007).

Leisure has traditionally been viewed to lie within the realm of *consumption*, the time and space that lies outside the realm of production (Rojek, 1995). The realms of production and consumption are often viewed to have bifurcated during the industrial revolution, with the rise of time-monitored machine work (Thompson, 1967; Thomas, 1964) in disciplined (Foucault, 1977; O'Neill, 1986) spatially and temporally distinct workplaces (Wang, 2000; Fulcher, 2004), and the growth of leisure in discreet spaces elsewhere (Veal, 2004a, 2004b; Rojek, 2004; Urry, 2002; Wang, 2000). Originally within a subaltern position in the capitalist West, the realms of consumption and leisure time can be seen to have become the dominant economic realm in the post war era (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010) with the rise of initially the (high-modern) mass consumption (fordist in production terms) society based primarily in the utilitarian meanings of goods, and latterly the (postmodern) consumer society (post-fordist in production terms) based primarily in the social and psychological

significance of goods and services (Bocock, 1992; Lury, 1996; Harvey, 1989; Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry, 1987).

Despite the fact that as we have seen in the discussions of the rise of creative working, and the desire for many members of the broader liberal middle class to be associated with artist lifestyles and places (driving the 'cultural desire' side of gentrification for example), the realm of leisure (notwithstanding Stebbins, 2004) is still overwhelmingly viewed as an area of passivity and receptivity divorced from production (Campbell, 2005). Notions of leisure as a passive form of consumption can be found in critiques emanating from the neo-Marxist perspectives of the Frankfurt School (Rojek 1995) and the Situationists (Debord 1967; Ball 1987), with media consumption in particular often being viewed as an ideological spectacle, holding the gaze of the 'masses'. This view of 'passive leisure', undoubtedly an oversimplified representation (Jones 1977) of the use and meaning of such times and spaces to actual people involved in these activities is none-the-less a powerful one, so much so that it informs English language literature on dystopias (Burnett and Rollins 2000).

Certain positions within postmodern consumer theory challenge this view of passivity and give light to what may be termed 'modular', 'semiotic' or 'rearranged' forms of creativity within consumption and leisure time (de Certeau, 1986), where products from the mass market can be used in unusual ways of form new types of significations for groups (usually youth subcultures – see Hebdige, 1979), and hence can attain group or ritual meaning rather than intended utilitarian purpose or prescribed social significance. The actual act of creativity, in terms of making something or performing, however, rather than a postmodern identity play with market goods, would appear to have been under investigated with Campbell (2005) suggesting that what he terms 'craft consumers', those individuals who "consume out of a desire for creative self expression" (Campbell, 2005, p.3) being largely ignored. This link between consumption and leisure is even indicated by the focus of the current journal's articles – in volume 32, issue 4, of Leisure Studies, out of seven articles, three of them refer to 'consumer culture', 'consumption' and 'audiences'. –The empirical evidence from this study suggests that actors found within the 'new' or 'liberal' middle class often search for a considerable degree of creative self expression in leisure activities; activities that are as much about production as they are consumption.

Methodology

The empirical basis of this paper is founded in 18 months of interview and participant observation research, in 2010 and 2011, in the Ouseburn Valley area of Newcastle upon Tyne. The Ouseburn Valley, a location for early industrial production in Newcastle (Morgan, 1995), and following relocations and declines in these industries, a dilapidated, neglected and polluted area of post-industrial decay has been transformed in recent decades to being a centre of creative industry and 'alternative' (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001) leisure consumption in the city (Newcastle City Council 2003, 2007, 2012; Ouseburn Trust, 2012). The 'Valley' has undergone this renewal through a process of regeneration and gentrification that has seen its landscape and buildings being revalorised through the settlement of artists in the area since the 1980s. The increased importance of creative industries to local government growth agendas since the turn of the Millennium (Florida, 2002; Evans, 2009; Zimmerman, 2008) has witnessed the development of the area as a 'creative hub' for the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the 'Valley' now boasts hundreds of artists' workspaces and creative enterprises.

In-depth semi-structured Interviews, that lasted between 20 minutes and over one and a half hours, were conducted with 24 people; a mixture of working artists (who work in the Valley) and broader users of the Valley. Many of the interviewees were generated through formal requests for interview (email requests) and further interviewees were contacted through a process of 'snowballing' or generating further contacts from initial respondents. This qualitative, semi-structured approach, granted the research project an *emic* epistemological stance, giving priority to the views of the workers' and users' of the Valley in relation to their leisure practices; and importantly allowed their views to guide the conceptual focus of the research. Half of the interviewees (12) came from 36 Lime Street Artists' Cooperative and Studios – the oldest and most central (figuratively and geographically) artists' workspace in the Valley, that has been in operation since the mid 1980's. Other interviewees (four) came from three other studios and display spaces around the rim of the Valley – two from Test House Five, and one each from The Biscuit Factory and the now closed Artworks Gallery. Other

interviewees included the area's former arts officer³, a member of the Ouseburn Festival Committee, the bar manager of the iconic Cumberland Arms pub in the Valley with the remaining participants being made up of users of the Valley. The gender profile of the interviewees was made up of nine females and 15 males and the ages of the respondents (at time of interview) was between 25 and 62.

Participant observation of activities in the Valley ~~was~~^{were} also conducted, with visits to the Valley's pubs and festival, as well as a degree of volunteering within the Valley's oral history society giving opportunities for the generation of analytically relevant field notes and allowing for meeting new contacts and arranging more formal interviews with willing interviewees. Participant observation was an important process as it allowed me a broader view of behaviours within and uses of the Valley; and the fact that new contacts could be created outwith of snowballing and formal requests for interview added greater validity and breadth to my understanding of leisure practices in the area.

An iterative approach to data collection was used in this study; the leisure practices of my interviewees and participants, and importantly the *meaning* of these practices that emerged through initial interviews and visits to the Valley were focused around a number of themes that were then further explored in later interviews and visits to the Valley. Emergent themes were coded around three main axis of creative leisure:

1/ *Practices* – what people actually said they did in their leisure time: activities that can be categorised as *self-expressive* in the production of leisure experiences.

2/ *Holism of life* – Viewing creativity as central to an integrated life, that implies a de-differentiation of the spheres of work and leisure.

3/ *Critiques* of seen-to-be 'passive' forms of 'mass' or 'popular' leisure, found in more 'mainstream' areas of leisure consumption in the city.

³ The arts officer, respondent three, had moved posts to the west of the city a few weeks before interviewing him but had been responsible for over 18 years for Newcastle east – the area within which the Valley is situated

Findings – Creative Leisure

The above codified themes were explored until no new conceptually relevant information was being generated (i.e. saturation of categories was beginning to take place). The following discussions utilise the most salient examples from the interviews and observations to explore, empirically, the phenomena of creative leisure. Many respondents were active in creative practices during both work and leisure time. One user, (respondent 13) although not a working artist in the Valley in terms of their primary employment, suggested that their spare time was often taken up with pursuing art and painting, stand-up comedy and music production, and that this leisure time activity was often taken on holiday also, with trips to the Edinburgh Festival to perform routines, and trips to Berlin to interact with and learn from other practicing artists being an important part of their time away from work. Another respondent (nine) suggested that although they were in fact a photographic technician they often defined themselves as a 'musician' as the creation of music in time outside of work was a key point of their leisure practice and self identification. Music, and the performance of and taking of group sessions with aspiring guitarists was also important to respondent 15, and as this particular person was an actor and performing musician for paid employment at times, this again called into question the clear boundaries between work and leisure pursuits. Respondent seven, a lead singer in a well known Newcastle based punk band suggested that visual art and painting had increasingly taken up her leisure time, an interest in a different creative field to her music and singing. Similarly respondent 12 suggested that even though his main employment was as a puppeteer, music still informed an important part of his creative self expression outside of puppetry.

Other examples of leisure based creativity can be seen in respondent two's suggestion that, although she was a photography lecturer, photography was more of a vocation than a job, with spare time often being spent on taking photographs and attempting to get them exhibited in gallery spaces. Other examples of creativity in putatively non-working time were given by a number of respondents in relation to interactions with the landscape of the Valley and the wider city. Two respondents suggested that they were involved in 'guerrilla greening', involving the greening of urban spaces, and the creative transformation of neglected areas of land into garden spaces. A number of other respondents suggested that the Ouseburn Valley Festival was (more so in the past as it was seen to

have become more 'commercialised' and 'regulated' in recent years) an opportunity for both the creative production of experiences and experiencing the creativity of others. Examples of spontaneous creative practice in this regard involved the spray painting of one artists' car and its conversion into a 'flower box'; the spontaneous setting up of sound equipment to have impromptu shows and parties, and the setting light of bonfires in the area to celebrate summer solstice.

We can see that the practices above suggest that creative expressions in leisure activities were reported by many of the working artists and broader users of the Valley. The use of the term 'leisure' however is problematic for what is being discussed here, as many of the respondents, particularly the working artists, suggested that clear distinctions between 'work' and 'leisure' in their lives were not present. An important aspect of this de-differentiation of these spheres was found in the drinking establishments in the Valley. These pubs and bars were often seen as places where 'likeminded' people congregated, and where contacts and networks for artistic projects, co-working or new creative directions could be found. One respondent (respondent 10) commented on the Free Trade Inn (a pub in the Valley) that:

It's not a typical corporate sort of place...I attracts similar thinking people with creative thinking or approaches...There's a kind of networking element as well which is sort of a big thing in the art world y'know – building those relationships – and whether it's collaboration on a piece of work or an exhibition opportunity or just sort of telling people to spread the word of an exhibition that you're in or something ... I suppose those sorts of people gravitate to those sorts of boozers.

Networking, and the generation of contacts and a degree of self publicity was also commented upon by a number of other respondents, who suggested that part of the attraction of the Valley's pubs was the fact that 'likeminded' (respondents three, four and seven) people congregated there, and it was a way to maintain relationships within the 'relatively small Newcastle arts scene' (respondent five). The de-differentiation between the 'traditional' spatial and temporal realms of leisure and work as classically imagined to exist as separate spheres within Fordist realms of economic and social production (Rojek, 1995), is strongly related to broader practices within 'flexible modes of accumulation' (Harvey, 1989), where Western economies have witnessed the decline of

large scale manufacturing (Harvey, 1989; Lash and Urry, 1986) and the growth of smaller scale R and D, market knowledge and creative enterprises (see also Lewis, (2003) and Adler and Adler, (1999), for examples of this in other areas of labour). These enterprises, due to their reliance on personal contacts to quickly 'fill the gaps' in the service or production chain that is required to complete project based tasks at short notice often rely upon a pool of flexible labour, maintained through circuits of working and leisure locations for their successful completion.

This de-differentiation clearly echoes the practices of the broader 'creative class' as suggested by Florida (2002), but as well as having clear functional-economic efficiencies in terms of meeting the requirements of flexible accumulation, the de-differentiation between leisure and work also has clear ideological precepts. These are based in Romantic and later 'countercultural' critiques of the fracturing tendencies of modernity on the 'wholeness of the self'. Divisions of labour, and the accompanying rationalising and atomising tendencies of modernity, that were accused of fracturing the 'authentic self' and limiting the creativity of the individual, have often been central targets for creative countercultures. Common critiques of the above tendencies in modern life range from Blake, (Cantor, 2004), Rousseau and Marx, through the emergence of bohemianism (Siegel, 1986; Frank, 2001; Wilson, 2002; Grana, 1964) to the oppositional voices of creative countercultures of the 1960s (Gair, 2007; Doyle and Braunstein, 2002; Goffman and Joy, 2004).

Many of the respondents clearly stated that the leisure practices in the Ouseburn Valley were in their view, quite different from those that could be found in other parts of the city. A number of participants mentioned one pub in the Valley in particular – the Cumberland Arms – that was seen to be a place of both the production of (a number of participants engaged with poetry readings and musical performance at the pub) and the experience of 'creative leisure', in terms of bearing witness to other people's creativity in music, dance, poetry and comedy. The Valley as a whole and particularly the Cumberland Arms was often viewed as a space where 'mass' or 'popular' leisure was generally not found. One respondent commented on the pub that "It has no T.V.!" and this lack of a television was also commented on by another participant who suggested that the pub was special due to the fact that: "It's not commercial ... it doesn't have a television does it ... nothing like that...people just go along with their musical instruments at night and play and you're guaranteed to meet someone

there who can play an instrument, and will play an instrument with you!". Another respondent (respondent eight) suggested that "It's totally independent; and that's quite rare... It has a culture of people coming together to play music together". Here we clearly see how the lack of a television is contrasted with the experience and participation in the production of leisure experiences. To many respondents the creativity of the Cumberland Arms was defined by the numbers of creative workers that drink there: "The staff are all musicians and there are lots of artists and actors [who go there]" (Respondent 15), and as discussed above this was often seen as offering potential for networking. The 'creativity' of the environment was also defined by the aesthetic of the pub, it being seen to be 'characterful' and 'individual'. Respondent 12 commented that:

It is run by individuals, it's not part of a brewery group, it has a particular personality, it err keeps its beer and its drinks very very well, it's clean – it's scruffy but it's clean...there's a certain sort of, for the use of a better word, creativity about it, difference about it...and it has I suppose that word 'authenticity' about it.

Similarly, respondent 10 commented that: "The Cumberland Arms is my favourite pub of anywhere ... it's an individual, just as I'm an individual ... there's only one Cumberland Arms". The perception of the Cumberland Arms as an 'individual' bar with 'character' is thus strongly related to the perception of it as a creative space. The Cumberland Arms, as a totemic emblem of the 'creativity' of the Ouseburn Valley was often contrasted with other areas of the city in terms of the aesthetic of the bar and the leisure opportunities that it offers. Many respondents looked unfavourably on the leisure spaces in the Centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. Respondent 12 commented that the efforts to mould Newcastle into a 'cosmopolitan consumptive centre' (see Wilkinson, 1992; Binnie *et al*, 2006) had led to a flattening of leisure opportunities in the city centre and a loss of 'authenticity' to the centre of the city:

I think that in some ways it is useful for planners and policy-makers [to promote Newcastle as a 'cosmopolitan' centre] and can make for some interesting venues and things that happen but what I also see is a loss of authenticity in that you know it's full of Starbucks and Café Nero but where can you get a decent cup of tea and a ham and pease pudding stottie?...There's a lot lost there and I think it's all tied up with the whole global culture.

Here we see how the 'individuality' of the Cumberland Arms and the Valley more broadly is implicitly contrasted with a 'loss of place' in the city centre, where leisure spaces are standardised and replicated. Similarly, respondent 10 suggested that the city centre was full of 'plastic bars', and respondent seven suggested that the city centre had become a 'bit over gentrified... it's become just like anywhere else'. Another respondent (three) suggested that the city centre had due to regeneration strategies, become rather 'flat' in terms of its aesthetic, embracing a chrome and glass design standard, similar to many other 'regenerated' areas of contemporary British cities. Respondent 14 suggested that Newcastle city centre had had "the heart ripped out of it ... it's just chain stores like everywhere else", the same respondent explicitly contrasted the 'chaining' of the city centre with the fact that the Ouseburn Valley had 'no chain bars'. Another respondent commented on how the city centre in Newcastle had become "generic" in recent years, whilst another suggested that "in recent years the city centre has become one horrible machine for generating cash" (respondents 17 and 21 respectively).

The large part of Newcastle city centre then was viewed in a strongly pejorative tone by many respondents. The aesthetics of the centre were often seen to be distinct from those of the Valley, and these distinctions held deeper significations for the performance of self-expressivity in leisure time. One respondent commented that bars in the city centre often had a 'commercial aesthetic' with 'bashy music' emanating from juke boxes; this statement can be seen as positioning the centre of the city as an arena of more 'passive' leisure consumption – in contrast to the Cumberland Arms for example where music is 'produced' by patrons. The city centre was also seen by respondent seven as an area where heavy drinking was prominent, whereas the Cumberland arms was a place where there were 'no booze offers' and the city centre was occupied by "idiots flying around with bottles ... I don't feel safe". The city centre was similarly seen by respondent 10 as a place where people went to get "thoroughly pissed", and respondent 6 further commented that "I always feel an edge if I'm in a bar in town". The links between leisure activities in the city centre and the possibilities for self expression were made by respondent 11, who further suggested that: "I can go out and walk around and play my mandolin and nobody bats an eyelid...my wife can walk around wearing fairy wings and a tutu and that's acceptable here where maybe it isn't in the outer world". Again here we can see that the

Ouseburn Valley area of Newcastle upon Tyne is viewed as a space where creative individual expression is welcomed and accepted.

Conclusions

This study has looked at aspects of creative leisure, a form of leisure that has ve, arguably, been given lesser attention in the realm of leisure studies been largely ignored. It has explored the genealogy of the creative self; tracing this mode of being back to the role of the romantically imagined modern artist. The transmission of this ontological ethic has been linked to developments in education and popular culture in the post war era, meaning that larger sections of the population have become critical of the perceived 'passive' mode of much traditional modern leisure and the transmission of this ethic of self expression and individuality from artist groups to the broader population has been noted by scholars in disciplines outwith of leisure studies (c.f. Heath and Potter 2005; Ley 1996; Caulfield 1989; Campbell 1987). The empirical findings have, arguably, shown how the participants in this research are still, in the 21st century, strongly influenced by the tropes of the European Romantic Movement – tropes that have been, as was discussed in the literature section of this paper, clearly carried into 20th century 'countercultural' ideologies and practices, and further, into the modern lifestyle aspirations of creative workers in later capitalism (Florida 2002).

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Leisure is seen as a realm of creative activity for many, where self expression is possible. Furthermore, clear distinctions between putatively bounded spheres of 'leisure' and 'work' are often challenged by this group, as leisure practices spill into working practices and vice versa. This differentiation is related to both ideological (Romantic worldviews) and economic imperatives, with creative working having become a much more important mode of development for Western economies in recent years. The performance of creative leisure also becomes a point of 'distinction' and group identity formation for the respondents in this research; more 'mainstream' areas of leisure consumption, and their perceived lack of possibilities for creative self expression are denigrated as a realm of the 'Other', a subject not suitable nor capable of displays of creative leisure.

Further critical thought in relation to these findings raises issues that are problematic however and invoke the necessity for further empirical research and different avenues of theorisation. Firstly, is the remit for 'creativity' in leisure time as investigated in this paper too narrow? In what ways do other leisure practices, that don't involve such obvious desires for self expression as are discussed here, creative? Would more 'banal' aspects of leisure such as storytelling, getting 'dressed up' to go for a night out, customising cars or 'modding' computer games and developing unique characters and 'self-authored' narratives in modern video gaming come within the remit of 'creative self expression'? Can the way one chooses to perform in a game of football or in a dance class be deemed self expressive? Creativity in leisure may, therefore, take many different forms and need not necessarily be wedded to lifestyles of artists and the creative class.

Secondly, a point in relation to the political economy and modes of regulation in later capitalism may need to be explored in more depth. The fact that, for many creative workers, as is evidenced in this study and in much previous work also (Florida 2002 for example), the spheres of work and leisure are dedifferentiated or blurred is often heralded as a triumph of Romantic and countercultural values over assumed to be 'alienated' modes of 'Fordist' rote work. This dedifferentiation, may, for some, not be so positive. Does this blurring of boundaries of creative work and leisure and the need to network to find employment and opportunity mean that for some workers they are never 'not at work' (c.f. Banks 2009)? Does the need for displays of appropriate 'creative capitals' in the hope of generating social capital, and ultimately employment, mean that 'creative leisure' can in fact, be seen as an *instrumental* performance? These questions point to further need for research and theorisation in the area of creative leisure.

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