

**Creativity and local regeneration:
the possibility of hybrid cultures**

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Summary

In response to the critique of overly top-down approaches to policy formation and implementation, neighbourhood / community regeneration is increasingly being based on the recovery and valorisation of local culture, with local people recast not only as the deserving targets of intervention but also as the embodiment of latent assets and as the mechanisms by which to valorise and embed locally-calibrated beneficial impacts in the territory. Yet, the localist approach is inherently conservative and can thus undermine the aim, promised in the discourse, of driving social change within marginalised communities. This paper considers whether the adoption of the concept of hybridity — explicitly applied to the local level — would enable interventions to follow a more progressive, yet still locally-embedded, trajectory. A case study is presented of a creative writing project based on local participation in a deprived neighborhood in the North East of England.

1. Introduction

In the British context, it has become almost a touchstone of the times that policies and interventions aimed at socio-economic regeneration of ailing areas - whether at the regional level or the urban neighbourhood / rural locality - should include the recruitment of the social and cultural characteristics of the territory concerned. It is almost unthinkable nowadays for policies originating from a government department, its agencies, voluntary sector organisations or a European Commission programme not to signal local / regional cultural identity and popular participation as lynchpin principles of intervention funding. Local specificity — what is taken to distinguish one territory from another — is thereby to be variously recovered, reinvented and valorised. Moreover, local people are recast not only as the deserving targets of intervention but also as the embodiment of latent assets and as the mechanisms by which to valorise and embed locally-calibrated beneficial impacts in the territory.

To recruit 'culture' — at whatever geographical level — into publicly funded interventions for socio-economic regeneration is to take an instrumentalist view: exploiting the cultural realm in pursuit of various ends. Formulations of the ideology of post-productive capitalism (for example, Bell, 1976; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Lash & Urry, 1994) manifest themselves in the notion of economies being driven by the creative / design sector as not only the new imperative for national economies but also a mechanism for regional (and sub-regional) socio-economic vibrancy. The conditions of capitalism emphasise both innovation and the specific characteristics of place and so the response by governments has included interventions to foster cultural vibrancy at various geographical levels. There is, thus, an implicit theory at work which links (a) present cultural conditions to (b) the potential roles of various actors (from the state through to members of local socially excluded groups) to (c) enhancements in the level and distribution of social (including cultural) and economic vibrancy.

Much of the social enquiry in this field — in general as well as for specific interventions — has focused on how the approach can be made to be more 'genuinely' participative. As such, the general tone is either humanitarian (advocating agency) and / or critical theoretical (enquiry from the perspective of marginalised social categories and local populations). It is taken as a given that, done 'correctly' and transparently, the diptych of local participation and local cultural capital will produce desirable outcomes and should thus be supported by enlightened governments and the agencies. Other studies have garnered arguments for assessing the value of culture-based interventions according to sets of criteria which transcend the 'merely' material and easily measurable results identified in the aims of interventions. Somewhat partisan studies such as Matarasso (1997), have attempted to construct the case for policy evaluation to

be expanded so as to include the social impact of participation in culture / art.

It is a central contention of the present paper, however, that a glib acceptance of the efficacy of 'local - participation - based - on - local - cultural - identity' can blind us to the possibility of outcomes of an ambiguous. Explicit intentions and initial ambitions in interventions need to be juxtaposed with critical theoretic analysis of potential unintended outcomes, an awareness of ultimate aims over intervention objectives, and of the sometimes indirect way that social structure might become reinforced at the expense of social change.

Central to the scheme proposed below is the hypothesis that localness (local identity, endogenous action) per se should be seen as only one element in the equation of culture-based local regeneration. A cosmopolitan / extralocal component may also be necessary, so that local cultural identity does not merely reproduce itself but, rather, develops an additional dimension, or even mutates into an unique phenomenon through a process of cultural hybridisation. Such a politico-economic analysis of local - regional regeneration requires, therefore, not just the identification of local specificity but also a way of recruiting aspects of the local and the extralocal into the pursuit of social change, and to allow for a certain level of dynamic anarchy. The cultural studies concept of hybridity may provide the lynchpin for the required framework.

This paper starts with the apparent orthodoxy of basing regeneration on local culture and popular participation and summarises the main components of the underlying discourse. Yet this orthodoxy obscures potentially negative or self-defeating dimensions. Two prominent generic types of action are of particular concern: culture - as - heritage (historical interest, arts and crafts, the reinvention of pre-modern technologies such as organic farming, etc.) that is a particular feature of much local development in the rural domain; and the present-day lived experience of marginalised groups and sub-cultures — an approach that figures much in urban neighbourhood regeneration projects. Both of these generic activities can be seen as being inherently conservative. Seemingly avant-garde and democratic interventions, contrary to intuition, may therefore undermine the potential for social (and therefore economic) change. By inadvertently supporting hegemonic forces, these generic activities might represent a neo-conservative form of localism. Moreover, although the analysis straddles the urban and rural context, there may be particular issues concerning the rural domain.

An alternative, progressive analytical framework would employ and develop, on two levels, Bourdieu's ideas on cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). The first concerns the embodied form of capital. Is there a way of allying the collective dimension of local culture with an enhanced

role for the individual person that more closely resonates with the concept of Individualisation Society / Reflexive Modernity ? The second switches the focus onto the conditions for cultural capital accumulation as mediated by institutions and social systems. Specifically, what role can intermediary organisations and professionals play in animating progressive change and, on the systemic dimension, is there significance to be found in interactions between local actors across territorial boundaries? In proposing this framework, the objective is to enable the production of critical-theoretic policy evaluations. This requires a consideration of to what extent, if at all, debates over the intrinsic value to society of overt cultural activity and aesthetics are relevant to activity driven by notions of local popular participation and instrumentalism ?

2. Local culture and regeneration strategies

The notion of animating indigenous cultural 'resources' in the social and economic regeneration of ailing or vulnerable areas is now a commonplace. In the North East region of UK, alone, strategy documents abound. The Tyne and Wear Economic Strategy (Tyne & Wear Partnership, 2005) talks specifically of how cultural activity will "inspire local people, attract world-wide attention, support community engagement and deliver economic benefits for our most deprived communities". Among the objectives of the strategy is to "support activities that use culture, creativity and sport to support re-engagement with the labour market, raise participation in cultural activity, promote active lifestyles and build a sense of identity". The Culture North East partnership (2001) is also signed-up to the instrumentalist perspective, proclaiming that "our natural and cultural assets present very significant economic opportunities". The cultural strategy, they claim, will "provide a cohesive vision for the region" as a whole and its component localities. It also, however, acknowledges the social impact of cultural intervention, namely the "potential to enrich individual lives ... and reach out to communities which feel excluded". Nested in these regional plans are initiatives such as that of North and South Tyneside Councils (2005) which have produced a Coastal Regeneration Strategy. Again, this aims to use the local culture as a resource to "activate re-engagement in labour markets; build, develop and sustain SMEs ... and ensure culture is as the heart of raising aspirations of socially excluded groups". National level institutions such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2004) and the Arts Council are similarly signed up to the rhetoric.

The utilitarian rhetoric is thus well established in regeneration strategy. Culture — from the local to the regional level — is regarded as a key mechanism by which to bring about both economic and social benefits to the resident population of ailing areas. It is a resource to be mobilised either in the economic domain (the commoditisation of local culture etc), the social domain (enhanced vibrancy of civil society and the building of social capital) and / or the

cultural domain itself (as activity which raises awareness and valorisation of local patriotism and of indigenous creativity).

One approach to this process of mobilisation looks for ways in which to boost a territory's shared identity so that it can become more robust in the face of exogenous and historical forces of decline. Investments are made in order to accumulate capital: symbolic-cultural, social and financial capital that is somehow embedded in the territory and thus available for consumption and further exploitation by the resident population. Bourdieu (1984), in coining these terms, stressed how these forms of capital reflected and reproduced social structure (by implication, on a national scale). Capital is unevenly distributed in society according to the social class, with privilege mainly residing in the middle class. The analysis of Putnam (2000; and later Fukuyama, 1995), focused on how historical, organic processes in certain societies had manifested in present day mores of social capital. For Bourdieu, the prevailing social structure works to reproduce the distribution of cultural and other forms of capital for the material benefit of the middle class.

The proposition underpinning contemporary regeneration is that strategic action can be taken to accumulate these forms of capital in presently disadvantaged territories and among various marginalised social categories (the idea of embeddedness). In other words, cultural capital and human capacities (agency) get redefined and thereby redistributed for the material benefit of ailing areas and marginalised social categories. Local cultural identity might be revalorised by raising awareness of it and by developing its capacity as symbolic-cultural capital to accumulate benefit for the locality. Social capital is similarly said to be amenable to strategic engineering so as to foster the integration of local actors (voluntary sector, private enterprise etc.) into a collective and participative collaboration

Hence, the model of a 'culture economy' has been proposed (Ray, 2001), one mode of which entails the commoditisation of local/regional culture. In essence, this refers to the creation and valorisation of resources which have a place identity and which can be marketed directly or used in the marketing of the territory. The advent of ethno / cultural / green tourism in which culture and history are 'sold' is an example of this. Other examples include regional agri-food products, regional cuisines and crafts. Two rationales underpin this mode: one being that the fixing of product/service to territory enables the locality to retain more of the economic benefit; while the other emphasises the ability of local fragile cultures to mediate the type of economic activity that occurs, moulding it to support, rather than dilute, the local culture. The emphasis is on the encapsulation of territory / culture within products (goods and services).

In another mode, the emphasis is still on territorial strategies but focuses on the way a territorial initiative promotes to its own local actors — the communities, businesses, associations and official bodies of the local area — the idea of a collective endeavour. The rhetoric of such initiatives talks of raising the self-confidence of local people, building confidence in their own capacities to bring about development and valorising local resources. These resources include the local culture which, historically, may have been the object of suppression by a more dominant culture associated with the construction and maintenance of a nation state or imperialist trade (see, for example, Hechter, 1975 and the thesis of the 'internal colony'). The culture economy approach talks of the reinvigoration of a local culture to be the foundation for local/regional socio-economic well-being. From this raising of consciousness, according to the rhetoric, arise new economic opportunities, innovation and a socio-cultural vibrancy that would counter economic vulnerability and traditional forces for emigration, especially by the economically active. A strategically reinvigorated territorial identity invites local capital and entrepreneurship to commit themselves to the culture-territory by presenting common territorial strategic images which businesses and other bodies might exploit. This territorial 'selling itself to itself' can face substantial inertia in those areas where the rhetoric talks of local subjugation to centuries of indoctrination that has devalued the local culture, casting it as a barrier to development. Yet once a territory has been reconstructed as a coherent entity, the argument is that it can function as a catalyst for local co-operative action and the generation of a sense of culture-territorial solidarity in civil society and private enterprise.

3. The perils of conservative localism?

This general phenomenon might be thought of as a form of localism: "social measures or trends which emphasise or value local and small-scale phenomena ... in contrast to large, all-encompassing frameworks for action or belief" (Wikipedia, 23.1.06). Yet the search for strategic local specificity is often based on historicism: the view that concepts, beliefs, truths and even standards of truth can be understood only in relation to the culture and period in which they arise. As a consequence, local culture is cast as something to be preserved or replicated. The incorporation of local culture into regeneration interventions frames an apparent dynamic of development within constructions of the past: rediscovered and fixed with reference to a particular moment in history.

These interpretations of local culture manifest themselves in regeneration as resources to be exploited on the 'front stage': that is, the ways in which local people attempt to present themselves to others: outsiders, visitors, markets and officialdom (Goffman, 1959/1971 and subsequently Boissevain, 1996). The front stage might be populated by festivals, stereotypes,

local products, landscape management, craft production, the preservation of historical sites and so on. Reproduction occurs at the interplay of production (the design strategies of local actors) and consumption (the experiential economy of cultural / eco-tourism and the consumption away from the territory of products imbued with local cultural aura), as catalysed by the actions of intermediary policy and commercial organisations.

Insofar as local culture is taken to be whatever is performed primarily on the front stage, then consumers may be thought of as being driven by an interest in allegory, as distinct from authenticity per se (Lash & Urry, 1994). Theoretically, the front stage can exist with as much separation from the back stage as felt desirable by the indigenous population. The front stage is merely a realm of commoditisation in which the local economy cultivates niche markets. The back stage accumulates economic benefit from this activity but otherwise pursues its separate, 'natural' trajectory.

In fact, the front stage will inevitably impact in other ways on the backstage. On a positive note, Biossevain has produced evidence of how local people cope in various ways to the exogenous pressures or opportunities that play out on the front stage. Local people have shown great adeptness in securing benefits for themselves from development aimed primarily at the tourist. The lived experience of locals may thereby be largely unaffected or even enhanced in unforeseen ways by an increasingly prominent front stage.

However, the valorisation of local specificity also has a more ambiguous aspect to it. Given that local culture not only takes material form but also has symbolic value, the symbolism of locality can all too easily take on an aspect of Romanticism. A locality can become defined as a place where the putative inheritors or guardians of that particular set of values reside. Regeneration interventions that recruit local specificity thus valorise — implicitly and some ways explicitly — a discourse of heritage and thereby potentially compromise any discourse of endogenous innovation. Any talk of participation, social change and physical developments, therefore, has to be made to fit the imperative of heritage.

This is particularly so in the context of rural development where arts / culture is increasingly employed in the pursuit of the regeneration of local areas. The Arts Council has devised a strategy to rationalise its funding decisions. The arts, it claims, "is at the heart of rural regeneration in market towns and villages ... a part of farm diversification and the extension of tourism ... helping village organisations to thrive and encouraging community cohesion" (Matarasso, 2005). The recognition and reinvigoration of local culture is also central to the contemporary approach to rural development, epitomised by the European Commission's

LEADER Initiative.

Yet, by adopting the local culture approach, regeneration works to favour certain types of development over others. The development trajectories of local areas become a function of their capacity to accumulate generic rural values specified in the prevailing discourse of English rurality whereby the countryside is valued as a refuge from the ills of modernity and urban culture. In various ways, rural development is captured by a conservative ideology: a section of an area's population — whether indigenous or incomer — will look to reproduce versions of the rural idyll in securing their quality of life aspirations; voluntary sector organisations lobby for the recreational and aesthetic value of a preserved countryside (whether expressed as direct consumption or as existence value); and a section of rural society politicises traditional rural life, presenting it as the quintessence of English national identity (Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). Regeneration based on local specificity in its rural guise seems bound to conservative rhetorics such as nationalism, heritage and environmentalism and in which the backstage — as socially constructed — is regarded as inalienable.

With these social and political forces abroad in the countryside, options for socio-economic change in rural areas become path dependant. Conservative localism — paraded as decentralised and participative, and aided by rural partisan academic studies and evaluations — infiltrates the ethos of policy-making and, thus, the rules governing which types of regeneration action can benefit from public funding. Reinforced by values institutionalised in physical planning regulations, the repertoire of rural development pathways — the main mode of production — is increasingly populated by the (very) small business model, short supply chains, craft / artisan production, social enterprises, green tourism and so on.

4. Lived experience of marginalised categories as a more radical approach?

A somewhat different approach to socio-economic regeneration entails creative professionals working with marginalised local groups to generate culture / arts products and productions based on the latter's particular everyday perspective. The context for the intended action is locality together with social disadvantage. Categories of participant will include youth and children, women, older people, teenage mothers, ethnic minorities and the long-term unemployed. Interventions take place in territorial domains — urban neighbourhoods, rural settlements — or institutions such as hospitals, schools and community centres.

This contrasts with the approach described in the previous section in that, although both are localist and culture-arts based, the 'lived experience' approach is more closely allied to the

objectives of social policy in targeting intervention at socially excluded categories. The rhetoric is partly populist, characterised by Midgley et al. (1986, p.14) as the idea that "virtue resides in the simple people who are the overwhelming majority": not only virtue but also — for the purposes of the present paper — the raw material (cultural identity) to fuel local socio-economic regeneration. It is ordinary and disadvantaged people who care to be enabled to bring about their own material salvation.

The lexicon has expanded over time so that the approach is frequently described as one of 'empowerment'. This, refers back to the anti-colonial ideology of the 1960s and 1970s associated with activist-commentators such as Freire (1972), Scott (1987) and Hechter (1975) and implies a radical political objective. It "begins with self-definition and is concerned with the transformation of the structures of subordination" (Pieterse, 1992 p.10). The scenario is one in which socio-economic co-ordination at the local level is reorganised and political consciousness heightened so that the locality can redefine the rules of engagement between it and the panoply of exogenous threatening forces. Social and territorial groups can, thereby, make claims on the distribution of national and international resources (public funding) and the impacts of consumers (moral economy). Bourdieu demonstrated how the social position of the middle class is sustained through the interrelated processes of cultural and educational capital accumulation and how, therefore, certain forms of art were regarded as more serious (high art) and more worthy of state subsidy than popular forms (see, also Wilson, 2004). By contrast, the populist / empowerment approach attempts to reverse the logic by arguing that local (low / folk / popular) culture and 'sub-cultures should, at least in the utilitarian sense discussed above, be accorded equal status. This echoes the concept of emancipation, i.e. "the liberation of creative human potentialities from suffocating social structure" through "a collective struggle on the part of a thus far underprivileged group or category" (Pieterse, p9).

Use of the term culture thereby came to include 'everyday life'. In contrast not only to notions of serious art and national identity but also to blanket generalisations that underpin the top-down approach to policy design, the quotidian emerged as a valid, socially progressive meaning of cultural identity (Smith, 2000). Empowerment could be pursued through a process that valorised (disadvantaged) people's lives. Local people would be invited, and assisted, to research, reflect upon and variously present their lived experience: local social history, individual biographies, local norms, the natural and built environment, and so on.

In arts / culture-based regeneration, local people are being invited to cultivate an awareness of local specificity. Although this results in social and economic problems being defined and expressed, the primary emphasis is on what is of worth, initially in local and personal terms. Alain

de Botton (2002) in *The Art of Travel* explored how a deliberate and systematic shift in perception is required. In order to enhance the indigenous perspective, locals would also need temporarily to assume the perspective of the outsider / visitor for whom all aspects of the mundane and local seem exotic and of value. The self-gaze required of local actors is therefore both parochial and transcendental. The objective is to reflect on what is of value about everyday culture (intrinsic value) and also what can be used as raw material for socio-economic regeneration (utilitarian value). In Bourdieu's terms, the aim is to engineer forms of cultural capital, accumulated by: invoking local knowledge and skills — enhanced through involvement in arts / culture-based projects; converting them into products and services; and institutionalising them as enhanced civil society. Cultural capital would thereby become 'embodied' in presently marginalised social categories and 'embedded' in their particular disadvantaged localities.

Emancipation and empowerment in a post-Marxian sense might have relevance if they are understood within broad characterisations of present-day society, particularly populism (see above), Individualisation (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim), democratised / 'disorganised' consumer capitalism (Lash & Urry) and the modern political rhetoric of 'opportunity society'. If this is the framework for local cultural interventions, then the potential for social change might indeed exist, but the form it might take would seem to be somewhat anarchic.

However, in contemporary arts / culture-based regeneration interventions — those with a public funding component — therefore, neo-Marxist revolutionary politics is rarely to the fore: at least not in the explicit objectives of funders, and not particularly in the consciousness of the intended participants. For some commentators, that other prominent term in the regeneration lexicon — participation — would seem to be more apposite for present purposes, referring "to integration rather than transformation ... taking part in something which itself is not necessarily changing" (Pieterse, p.10). Yet this itself raises an important critical-theoretic question: is the prospect of a more equal society (albeit, equality of 'opportunity' in the contemporary political slogan) realistic or illusory. Will the participative approach produce social change? Or, will Bourdieu's analysis prevail so that, in the example of 'community drama', a momentary diversion is created for local people (perhaps resolving a local protest issue), before social structure (and the prevailing distribution of economic power and benefit) reasserts itself ?

Commonly, this sort of intervention employs creative professional to work with the target local groups. Expressing aspects of local life from a local perspective is the primary raw material. Valorisation occurs through the 'conversion' of this raw material into products and through its performance in events. Yet it is far from clear what are the mechanisms for this valorisation and,

indeed, beyond attitudinal collected by researchers such as Matarraso (although he was addressing the more general phenomenon of participation in the arts), there is little evidence of what happens once the funding period of an intervention has finished. In the first case, although the rediscovery of local culture might well raise consciousness among local participants of their socio-economic conditions and of the forces driving their present marginalisation, this does not necessarily result in progressive social change. Searching for raw material in the local lived experience whilst necessary may not be sufficient in itself: youth subcultures, for example, may be not only parochial but also focussed on the dysfunctional aspects of life (being framed by the forces of marginalisation); while the culture of older people can often be saddled with a Romantic perspective. Second, even well-intentioned interventions can be blighted with a 'project syndrome' in which local impact quickly disappears (and sometimes even turns to a negative effect) once the funding for the initiative comes to an end. Although interventions typically aim to raise the capacity for culture-art activity within local institutions, doubts abound as to the robustness / longevity of the legacy left by many interventions. This is partly an issue of the dearth of longitudinal empirical data on the aftermath of local projects. It also brings us to the primary concern of the present paper: the need to conceptualise the mechanisms by which local culture-arts participation is recruited into sustained social change.

5. Hybridity

The nucleus of the framework may be provided by the idea of hybridity. This focuses on the way new transcultural forms can arise in the contact zone between a local culture and an extralocal cultural entity: an interaction over time whose product is distinct from its progenitors. In the linguistic realm, examples include pidginisation and creolisation (Clarke, 2005). Postcolonial studies use hybridity to analyse how host populations, rather than falling prey to the processes of assimilation or integration, may also be party to a creative, and thereby locally beneficial, engagement with the extralocal force. Thus pidgin / patois languages result from the osmosis of one vocabulary into the grammar of the other and develop as an additional mode of expression for the locals .

Whilst all cultures could be thought of as outcomes of repeated hybridisation influences (Kraidy, 2002), the term hybridity is used in the present paper in the specific sense of how a local area (and the agents of any intervention) might conceptualise, and then evaluate, strategic action in pursuit of benefits to the host / local population. Hybridity provides a conceptual framework in which regeneration activity based on local art-culture might be steered in a progressive trajectory.

Clarke (citing Yao) proposes a typology of ways in which hybrids in general can occur: mimicry, grafting, transplantation, cross-fertilisation and mutation. In the case of local socio-economic regeneration interventions, Clarke / Yao's modes must be left for the moment as a list of hypotheses, their analytical applicability being a function of context. Here, however, we are interested in the potential for hybridity between a rediscovered sense of local specificity and various manifestations of the 'extralocal' / 'others' or, rather, how the adoption of a strategy of hybridisation might bring into being, and then influence, a dynamic of the local interacting with the extralocal, the indigenous with the cosmopolitan.

The concept of hybridity thus transcends concerns over 'local authenticity', i.e. the extent to which cultural capital in any given case can claim to be truly indigenous (or, indeed, comprehensively participative). A hybrid cultural activity, rather, is nurtured by a creative interaction between two cultural entities that have not previously done so). A hybrid is 'local' (that is, an embedded form of cultural capital) in the sense that it requires the active and on-going actions by local actors in order for it to survive and flourish. It would not, however, be confined to any antecedent version(s) of local identity. For Clarke, the definition of a hybrid is that it must be more than merely an addition or refinement to aspects of a culture; rather, it must be materially different from its precursors; hybridity manifests out of clashes between different elements (Hutnyk, 2005). This is important for our present purpose because it is only by being both local *and* different that the hybrid might avoid the pitfalls of the heritage and lived-experience approaches critiqued above.

The emergence of a hybrid form does not require the abolition or denigration of its precursor local culture. It might be possible, for example, for a heritage-focused identity to exist alongside the new hybrid; but this would require the two entities to serve separate functions, in other words, to occupy different niches within the local economy / habitat. A hybrid is therefore also defined by its efficacy or viability (Clarke); it must have the capacity to enable accumulations of cultural capital within the territory concerned, and it must be able to survive and adapt once the initial intervention-funding has come to an end.

Hybridity serves, therefore, to describe a cultural phenomenon or, rather, the adoption of the concept furnishes us with a tool by which to analyse events from a particular ideological perspective. However, the purpose in the present paper is to identify a conceptual framework that would address the concerns expressed above about the conservativeness of how local culture-art is often employed in socio-economic regeneration interventions. The question to be asked now, therefore, is can hybridity be engineered, that is, can local potential and activity be

steered so as to bring about a dynamic of hybridity? If so, what might be the general features of such hybrids?

The phenomenon of World Music (admittedly, a nebulous term) contains a growing number of types of latent or embryonic hybrids (Connell & Gibson, 2004). Some of these have been created from the interaction between an indigenous music and a cosmopolitan form. Although examples are numerous, Connell & Gibson note the catalysing effect on participating Black South African musicians — especially Ladysmith Black Mambazo — of Paul Simon's 1986 'Gracelands' album. Subsequently, with the emergence of 'world music' as not only a marketing category but also a transcultural movement, experiments have been tried that, although instigated by a 'cosmopolitan' actor, nonetheless demonstrate the potential for vibrant hybrids to emerge. For example, in 2000, Biosphere (a group of experimental, computer-based musicians) collaborated with the San Bushmen of the Kalahari in a venture (Sanscapes Two). According to the parties concerned:

"The difference in attitude between our Namibian friends and the Western ethnomusicologists that pretend to protect this ancient culture is remarkable in the extreme. Sanscapes Two sees the future visions of the Bushmen continue in emphatic style. This time we have attempted to go even deeper and challenge the concept of what is old and what is new, what is future music and what is ancient rhythm."

Instances such as this provide only provisional evidence of hybridity. Action was taken by the parties concerned in the zone of contact between two cultural systems. The interaction manifested as a product: several compositions in which the indigenous rhythms, language and symbolism of the Bushmen were clearly identifiable but were intermingled with, and influenced the form of, the cosmopolitan / electronic force. In one sense, the interaction was led by Biosphere who, in our terms, would represent the extralocal / cosmopolitan force and this might suggest that the Bushmen (i.e. local) component was vulnerable to being plundered for the sole benefit of the extralocal actor. In another sense, the extralocal player in this example could themselves be thought of as 'local' in that they are an 'indie' artist in their own way troubled / threatened by aspects of global capitalism. In fact, the embryonic hybrid contained altered element of both precursor cultures without necessarily undermining the nature or trajectory of those precursors. The experience of composing and performing raised the capacity (awareness, contacts) of *both* contributors to develop hybrid musics. The potential within the experiment was available to both 'sides' — separately if they wished — to develop further, even though for any given instance, there is no way of anticipating whether an interaction will emerge as a coherent, sustainable and viable hybrid.

The domain of World Music is instructive because it enables us not only to focus on the separate one-to-one experimental interactions such as the Biosphere / Bushmen example, but also to see the potential of each experiment within a more general and heterogeneous phenomenon. Connell & Gibson point out how the motivations for participation can vary between musicians: to revive one's local tradition, to stir national or ethnic political consciousness, to cultivate transnational movements, to pursue commercial success or the creative impulse that drives all artists. The indigenous local culture component serves as raw material for innovation whilst the cosmopolitan component provides a means to transcend the parochial. World Music experiments can take place, therefore, within various economic, cultural and political networks.

The Biosphere-Bushmen initiative entailed an enlightened cosmopolitan actor seeking to engage with a local / indigenous actor. The embryonic hybrid which emerged was mutually and explicitly agreed and created by the two actors. By contrast, Papastergiadis (2005) provides an analysis of the hybridisation dynamic from the perspective of individual creative professionals. In this case, the local culture side of the equation was represented by the artist who had been raised in the locality and continued to employ an indigenous perspective in their art, whilst the cosmopolitan side was provided by the material manifestations of global capitalism (as commodities and as an universalising culture). According to his analysis, the artists were neither locked into localism / essentialism nor into the abstraction / universalism of the cosmopolitan, extralocal viewpoint. Rather, they acknowledged and explored how their everyday experiences and globalisation interacted with each other. Territorial-aware artists would not invariably "confine their cultural imaginations to the territorial boundaries and ancestral techniques of their homeland" (p.43). Their creative agendas — their notion of authenticity — required a wider and contemporary dynamic. Thus, the 'Prototypes for New Understanding', 1999 sculptures by Brian Jungen:

"from a distance ... appeared as conventional North West American ceremonial masks. They were displayed in typical ethnographic museum cabinets.... [But] The masks were entirely composed of tongues, soles, laces and straps from Nike shoes. Even the 'made in China' labels were visible." (p.43)

The globalisation provided material components and a generic sense of the extralocal that stimulated locally-based creativity. This creativity could be seen as either a critique of exogenous forces or, more progressively, as an exploration of new opportunities for engagement (exploitation) by the local level in the global dynamic.

The trajectory of any given local-extralocal interaction might continue to be based on its original and local rational and modus operandi. However, it is also possible that an embryonic hybrid would evolve over time to appeal less to its original parochial rationale and more to the dynamic underpinning any number of broader networks. Thus, we could imagine the case of a local regeneration initiative which starts from its specific concerns and raw material (local cultural capital) but which subsequently begins to feed off the dynamic of being a part of (and even influencing the significance attached to) a generic phenomenon (such as World Music) for which a local base is important but no longer the sole criteria.

6. The Longbenton (Yuill Hoardings) initiative

Longbenton is a suburban area of North Tyneside, in North East England, some five kilometres from Newcastle upon Tyne and with a population of nearly 6000 in 2001. The Yuill Hoardings initiative, realised during the summer of 2005, was a collaboration between an autonomous development agency for creative writing in the North East of England (New Writing North) and North Tyneside District Council. The objective was to produce a piece of tangible community public art to be mounted on the hoardings around a housing construction site being developed by Yuill Homes, a major financial contributor to the initiative. The artwork — comprising text and graphics — was to emerge out of a series of creative writing workshops involving local people — animated and directed by a professional writer-in-residence.

The aim of the intervention was framed by that of an intended successor project:

to create a sustainable artistic resource in two North Tyneside community centres, run over a year by an artist who will work with users to create their own artistic work and invite collaborators in to create a series of artistic commissions.

In terms of the hybridity framework proposed above, the initial stock of cultural resources was somewhat depleted. Longbenton identity had become synonymous with socio-economic deprivation: a dysfunctional and degenerating area in urgent need of transformation. Between 1991 and 2001, the ward population fell by 23.6%, from 7619 to 5819 (compared with an average 0.3% decrease for North Tyneside and + 4.3% for England & Wales). As much as 22% of properties had become empty. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2000, the area was within the most deprived 10% of wards (693rd out of 8414 wards). Local identity had become stigmatised; it was an area from which to escape. The quality of life and aspirations of those who remained was depressed and seemingly in terminal decline.

In one sense, therefore, the locality had a discrete socio-cultural identity, with a population overwhelmingly working class and a recent history of social decline. Moreover, although falling within the catchment area of the region's major city, Longbenton continued to serve as the focus for many domains of its residents lives. This was partly due to its geography (with open countryside on its northern boundary); partly economics (depressed average incomes); but also a function of its close internal social and kinship networks and an identifiable civil society.

In another — albeit still local — sense, however, the area was anything but discrete. For a start, a number of apparently indigenous people had in fact be previously displaced by regeneration projects in the 1970s in the East of Newcastle (the areas of Byker and Walker), the latter days of which were chronicled in Konttinen (1985). More generally, the indigenous population are more likely to describe themselves, culturally-linguistically, as Geordies than as Longbentonians *per se*.

But then, from 1996, another factor was added to the portfolio of Longbenton identity. It is now an area under *regeneration*. The Longbenton Estate attracted urban regeneration money through a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme that ran up to 2005. By 2004, the SRB Partnership had spent some £17.8 million of which 14% went on 'quality of life and community development'. [Other headings were: environment and physical infrastructure (31%), crime and community safety (27%), housing improvements (11%), skills and educational provision (5%) and economic growth (4%)]. An evaluation of the programme (North Tyneside Challenge, 2005) reported that, by 2004, appreciable change could be identified in a number of domains (although the estate was still well below district and national average). The point was that Longbenton was no longer an area in terminal decline, abandoned to its own fate; the Hoardings initiative had been superseded by a major investment of public money.

Some of the regeneration effect manifested in a changes to the existing built environment; double glazing for the housing stock, new shops and a new community centre. Yet regeneration also underpinned the construction of new housing with the aim of attracting relatively more affluent incomers into the area. Social and economic processes of change had been set in motion, the most prominent of which was the change instigated in the housing stock. Owner-occupation increased to 44% of all dwellings (from 29% in 1991); housing association units increased (from 4% to 10%), whilst the Local Authority rented sector reduced its presence (from 66% to 42%). At the same time, the problem of empty dwelling had largely disappeared (reducing from 21.8% to 1.8%). A marked social division was thereby arising between the incomer population (people attracted to the area by regeneration activity) and the indigenous population (those already resident before regeneration started). The process of

gentrification — manifested not only in the incomers housing but also in their higher levels of educational capital * — was creating an incipient socio-cultural divide between indigenous and incomer; although the former was itself disaggregating into new owner-occupiers and those remaining in the rented social housing sector.

The project

The brief for the writer-in-residence was framed by the wider goal of cultivating within local people the capacity to maintain and develop endogenous creativity beyond the time period of the initiative. This would entail the writer not only being embedded in the locality but also in his modus operandi being driven by a set of principles that owe as much to the realm of community development as to outreach activity. This was to translate as a set of objectives: to nurture awareness among local people of their innate capacity to be creative and of the contribution made by local cultural identity; and to demonstrate the potential of the arts to enhance local quality of life (aesthetically and socio-economically) and thereby raise aspirations of the indigenous population.

Central to the intervention was to be the 'lived experience' approach described above, an objective being to "*encourage participants to use their locality as a starting point for their own creative work*". Implementation of the project was to proceed consecutively from recruitment of participants, to a series of creative writing workshops, design (and production) of the artwork and finally the on-site unveiling of the hoardings product. A total of 67 people participated in the various creative writing sessions: youth, 3rd Age, and mothers and toddlers. Their participation was instigated, in each case, through a direct informal approach by the writer. Each session entailed him working with whichever individuals expressed interest and were present at the time; participation was solely on a voluntary basis. Moreover, the sessions for a given group did not necessarily involve the same individuals each time.

* Although Longbenton's ranking in the education domain of the MDI has improved from being within the worst 24% in 2000 to the worst 28% in 2004, the evaluation reported that: residents in Longbenton were less well qualified than average, and were more likely to have no qualifications.



The design of the intervention also explicitly included a cosmopolitan element. The writer (Paul Summers) was avowedly empathic with the target participants, having been born and brought up in the region, speaking the dialect, and having experience of working in community arts / community development. Yet he was also a creative professional, active in the realms of poetry, film scripts and publishing on a regional and national level and this cast him also in the role of an 'extralocal cosmopolitan' actor. Community / participative art was to be animated but also valorised, and even changed, through an interaction with aesthetics, skills and standards of the arts professional:

The high production values and wide dissemination of the artistic products developed will help the participants to tap into their own creative skills and feel more confident about using them (Hoardings project design document).

In turn, the cosmopolitan factor embodied in the writer was to interact with other 'extralocal' actors. The private sector in the form of the housebuilding business was a significant actor and not merely in terms of its financial contribution to the project. The site which was to host the proposed artwork would be addressing contrasting audiences. By celebrating selective aspects of local culture, the housebuilder could be seen to be supporting the indigenous element. But, implicitly, the site would also be required to serve the more usual function of projecting an image of the area and new housing that would resonate more directly with the social characteristics of the incomer population. The private sector actor was thus also a force for cosmopolitanisation.

The process

In total, the workshops animated by the writer with various local groups produced some 35 poems. Participants were invited to think about aspects of everyday life on the estate. Each group, therefore, tended to present its particular worldview. This was assisted by locating each session in the group's natural habitat. In one sense, sessions were conducted in a formulaic manner. Yet the flow of contributions was also influenced by the writer adapting to the dynamics of each group so that, in the case of the youth groups for example, participants would not be censured if they intermittently ran off to play with friends or, in the case of older people, if they were temporarily distracted by conversations with non-participants.

Yet, given that the project aims and methods were rather novel and even mysterious to many participants, The writer had to include an extractive approach to enhance the flow of indigenous contributions to each poem. Few of the participants had any experience of creative writing, let alone the use of everyday experience as the raw material for poetry. He was deliberately formulaic in the way that each session constructed a poem: in terms of the required components and structure. A workshop conducted with a youth group of under-10s illustrates some of the dynamics.

In encouraging participants to reflect local identity, the writer invited participants to ground their contributions in the real events, characters and features of the estate.

Writer: *Which shop are we stood outside of?*

Kids: Boozies. 'Cause just bought wor [our] cans o' beer.

Writer: *Right. Ye'r outside Boozies.*

Writer: *OK. eight thirty, someone's just gone into Boozies.*

Kids: All the old men

Writer: *What're they buyin'?*

Kids: Crack.

Drunken men, fallin' all over the place.

D'ye know Stevey E?

Writer: *No. Is he young? Is he old?*

Kids: About 48

Writer: *Oh. He's crackin on, then.*

This included the encouragement of dialect / sociolect words and phrases — much to the bemusement of participants (although deciding against phonetic spellings of local words).

Writer: *If he was drinkin, how would he walk?*

Kids: He's mortal.

Like a smacked penguin.

That's funny. Like a smacked penguin. What, like staggered?

The writer was also aware of the necessity, if the project was to serve as the first stage of a process of building local cultural capital, of lightly engineering the nature of the resulting poems. Realism was a fundamental requirement but it seemed important not to dwell overmuch on the dysfunctional aspects of local life.

Writer: *Right, so shall we start by describing what all the charvas look like outside?*

Kids: Bad, small,

Writer: *Right, tell ye what.*

Kids: Tried to stab somebody

Writer: *So all I've got so far is: Something .. charva supping Stella outside Boozies. Right?*

But ...

Kids: Ah think.

Budweiser

Writer: *So what else are they doin. Smokin*

Kids: A lot of them take drugs

Writer: *What else are they doin. You said before they were spittin.*

Kids: They smashed windows.

They gang up on kids for no reason.

Writer: *Which windows did they smash?*

Kids: Any.

Old biddies' homes

No they dont.

Smash the library windows

So?

Writer: *So, actually at the Oxford Centre?*

Kids: Aye

Writer: *Yeh, I saw that actually, last week. It was all cracked on both sides. Has the Oxford Centre got a nickname yet or not?*

Rather, the ethos was to celebrate the locality — its diversity and strengths — thereby enchanting the quotidian and vernacular. Participants were coaxed into embellishing local references with imaginative / metaphorical language.

Writer: *Here's a hard question for yeh, right? Instead of seein a gang, a gang of charvas, what's another word for ...*

Kids: Crew

Writer: *Crew. Right. And they're eating burgers? "The Burgerhouse crew sucks Stella outside Boozies, smokin, spittin, smashin windows at the Oxford". Right? What else is happening? Think about the sky. A day like today. What colour is it?*

Kids: Blue

Navy blue

Is that what yeh call it, navy blue?

Writer: *I dunno, that's a good question. Is it navy blue? Or is it blue like something else?*

Kids: Light blue

Writer: *What else is blue like that?*

Kids: A pair of jeans

Writer: *Are all jeans that colour? Or just like washed out ones, or?*

Kids: Washed-out ones

Writer: *Right. So that's better isn't it. "The sky is like washed-out jeans? Any clouds?*

Kids: Yeh

Writer: *Cotton wool clouds. Doin what?*

Kids: Flyin' over the school

Writer: *Baliol School. What else can we see? Anythin?*

Kids: Grass, Needs cuttin'

And there's someone on it

Writer: *What a little lad, a lass?*

Kids: A lad, sneezin'

Writer: *What does he look like when he sneezes? D'ye think there'd be snot?*

Kids: Aye.

Writer: *What does it look like?*

Kids: Mushed banana

Writer: *"A little lad sneezes, like mushed banana". We said this little lad sneezes, and all the bogies come out of his nose. They fire out, what can we say they fire out like?*

Kids: Like meteors.

Writer: *Right , tell yeh what, we haven't done any sounds, have we? We're stood on the Boulevard, it's haff past eight at night, right. Ye'r just listenin, really really carefully. What can yeh hear?*

Kids: car horn.

Writer: *And where's car horn comin from?*

Kids: A Subaru. A silver Subaru

Writer: *So "a silver subaru beeps as it passes". Is it goin fast or is it goin slow, this car?*

Kids: Fast.

Writer: *So it's bombing along West Farm Avenue. What other noise can we hear?*

Kids: Brum brum

The engine

Writer: *So what does the engine noise sound like?*

Kids: Gallopin

A car dinna make a gallopin noise.

A horse does

Writer: *Doesn't matter. It's quite nice to mix things up. I like the idea of a car gallopin.*

The final poem

*Outside Boozies the Berghaus crew sup Stella
Smoking, spitting, swearing, smashing windows at the Oxford
The sky is like washed out jeans, cotton wool clouds over Balliol
Michael has dreams in his eyes –
A little lad sneezes, mashed banana snot firing out like meteors
Cheryl and Connor act out Fifa Street moves on the car-park
And Muckle thinks of swimming pools with wheels
Stevie E is mortal; walks like a smacked penguin,
Staggering from side to side
Clutching a bottle of 1860 vodka like a twenty quid note
Music and voices whisper from the hoppings
Carried on a wave of hot breeze: "We have a winner!"
A silver Subaru beeps as it passes, gallops along West Farm
"Just loose it", blasting and booming like a foghorn
The air reeks of sweat and sweet and sour rice
I'm thinking about St James, the stands bursting full,
54 thousand people jumping about like hooligans
Scott Parker knocks in the fifth and the crowd goes mental,*

*Petr Czech, sad eyed and tired, staring at the penalty spot -
Wishing he was dead.....*

The writer further enhanced the endogenous process by embellishing the contributions by participants with his expert skills in poetic language. In real time, he would construct verses from participants' ideas and, as he wrote them down, add devices such as internal rhymes, alliteration and assonance. Throughout the session, the group would see how he was adding value to their words.

Reactions garnered from participants in the immediate post-project phase were universally positive. They found the experience of participation enjoyable. Generally, they were fascinated by what the writer had crafted from their contributions. There was a feeling, therefore, that although the raw material had been generated by them as local people, and was clearly descriptive of estate life, that the poems (and the material selected for the Hoardings boards) had also acquired an objectified quality because of their being seen as out-of-the-ordinary artefacts.

Yet it was clear that the most significant driver of the process was the 'emotional intelligence' (Ray, 2000) embodied in the figure of writer-animator. Participants were well aware of the emotionally supportive atmosphere that the writer had created in the creative workshops. Not only was this crucial in driving the process of endogenous creativity during the period of the project, but the emotional intelligence effect would also underpin the hoped-for emergence from the Hoardings initiative of a sustainable dynamic.

The design phase

In the design and production phase of the project, the participative principle was deliberately put to one side. There was very little time left between the end of the creative workshop phase and the deadline for the official unveiling of the Hoardings site. Moreover, it was imperative that the material that was to go onto the boards met professional design and production standards of quality. Knowing this, the writer had commissioned a professional graphic designer to work on the project from the outset. The design that emerged was a function of the artistic criteria employed by (a) the writer in selecting only certain phrases from the poems to appear on the boards and (b) the graphic design in juxtaposing the text with photographic images.

Local cultural capital was valorised in a number of ways. First, the delivery of a professional quality product added value to local identity by demonstrating to local residents that their

creativity can be successfully transferred to the domain of (professional) public art. Second, a high quality product raises the status of community projects in the eyes of the private (Yuill) and public (North Tyneside Council) sectors with implications for the financial support of future projects. Third, the involvement of creative professionals in the Hoardings project had a tangible effect on local residents. Pride — a raised collective awareness — resulted from local people realising that they were worthy of the attention and respect of creative professionals. These professionals started from the local worldviews embedded in the poem-phrases and elaborated them into a local iconography.



Thus, the boards elevated local people and their work into icons in the public domain whilst, at simultaneously, re-introducing the personal connection back into a piece of public art: actual local people and their habitat. Fourth, consultation with local residents over the design of the boards had been deliberately token in nature. Yet, the graphic designer also animated workshops with each participant group in order to introduce the design process to them. He demonstrated to participants how design could add value to their creative 'raw material'. He was deliberately seeking to demystify the process, showing people what was possible, in a technical sense. As such, the design phase served as a precursor to any skills transfer effect that might feature in the anticipated subsequent project.

Objectified cultural capital

The most remarkable attribute of the artwork was the physical scale. With a surface area of nearly 300 m² (120m long x 2.5m tall), the scale not only made the work highly visible but also might raise the status among local people of their latent cultural capital.



Situating the boards along one of the main thoroughfares was also propitious. Located close a new retail development and community centre, meant that the Hoardings were on display to local people; their creativity was thereby variously feed-back to them in the domains of the everyday lives. The prominent location also meant that the work was able to communicate with non-locals, whether they were passing through the area in cars and buses or visiting the community centre. The scale and location of the boards was thus cultivating awareness of local cultural capital both within and outwith the locality. The potential to accumulate cultural capital was further enhanced by the aesthetics which informed the collage of images and words: part social realism and part pop-art. Photographs of the locality and of local people were transformed through posterization and conversion to monochrome. The output from the creative workshops together with images of the locality thus became 'art' in the public domain.



The selection by the writer of which phrases to use for the boards was informed by a number of criteria. On the aesthetic level, he isolated phrases from the stock of poems which seemed most striking (poetic, insightful). However, on the tactical level, he worked to ensure that each participating group was represented in the final selection. At the same time it was decided to keep the total amount of text to a minimum so as not to overwhelm the visual components of the boards; the work was to be as much visual as textual.

Tactics also required him to be sensitive to the perspectives of the funders, in particular Yuill Homes (see above). Although never explicit, there was a sense in which the one product was required to speak to two different audiences and, thus, to represent two different worldviews. On the one hand, is 'indigenous Longbenton' — beneficiaries of regeneration spending but still a somewhat underprivileged community. Explicitly, this had always been understood as what the project was meant to be about and as the source of the primary participants. The images and text, therefore, provide insights into dimensions of their world (or, rather, 'worlds' given that the youth perspective contrasts sharply with that of older residents). Consequently, the boards' collage of words and images was strongly in the social realist genre: folk / street art. Indigenous life was clearly identifiable in the words and images. However, actors such as Yuill would typically expect its new-housing marketing to speak to a different set of social conditions through depictions of a prospective middle class suburbia rather than gritty working class realism. This would be 'new Longbenton' — the dynamic of new owner-occupier housing and the changes to socio-economic structure driven by recent incomers. Yet, the world of the incomer Longbentonians — admittedly still emerging — was not at all prominent in the images and texts of the boards.

7. Conclusion

The Hoardings initiative was an attempt to stimulate a process of cultural capital accumulation within a socially deprived yet changing locality. The approach had been to start from the lived-experience of local residents and to frame this into a trajectory of hybridity (although the term was not employed by those directly involved), and thereby facilitate (a) a sustained impact and (b) social change among the indigenous population. So, what might be the mechanism by which this, albeit incipient, hybridity might emerge? Local culture in the above case study — insofar as it could be distinguished from the wider geography — had become devalued to the point of working to reinforce the social marginalisation of indigenous residents. How might it be rescued and valorised while avoiding the pitfalls of localism noted above? How, then, might various cosmopolitan factors be employed / managed so as not to overcome local specificity but, rather to facilitate the emergence of a new hybrid? Moreover, what might cultural hybridity mean on such a local geographical level?

The 'lived-experience' reflected aspects of social realm of the locality: the mundane and the notable; the personal (personalities) and the collective (types); places and actions. In the case of the Hoardings initiative, natural forms of speech (dialect, sociolect, argot, idioms) not only served as a mechanism to enable participants to identify the quotidian but were also manifestations of latent local cultural capital in their own right.

Thus, focussing participants gaze onto the locality as an object of fascination created a new potential aesthetics. Expressing the lived-experience also required the animating effect of an empathic outsider's curiosity gaze, interacting directly with local people (in the case above, the professional writer-in-residence).

The aesthetics could emerge from a recovered awareness of local specificity that was being 'converted' by the gaze of cosmopolitan actors (the writer, the private sector funders). Local identity was being valorised but essentially by interacting with the resources and sensibility practiced in the domain of professional art (creative writing, graphic design, photography).

The result of the initial local-cosmopolitan interaction is not yet a hybrid. At best, it is an experimental prototype. By displaying the results (the poems and graphics) in a novel domain — where one would expect to see either examples of public art or corporate advertising by the site developers — the potential hybrid is being tested for its efficacy or viability; will it inspire local actors to accumulate new hybrid cultural capital? Will it survive and adapt — or generate yet

more prototypes — once the initial intervention-funding has come to an end ? Thus, the discourse often employed in outreach interventions — that of skills transfer — would need to be supplemented by that of aesthetic experimentation and development.

The way in which interventions based on the 'lived-experience' might develop into viable local cultural hybrids is still a matter of speculation. Further research — comparative across contexts as well as longitudinal (to track impacts, both individual and collective) over years — will be required.

Holden (2004), although primarily concerned with devising a conceptual framework that would enable the public funding of 'culture' so as to recognise the range of values expressed through culture and not be confined to instrumentalist and (observable) evidence-based evaluations, included a reference to a cultural ecological approach: juxtaposing an anthropological with an environmentalist approach:

"Environmentalists recognise that fecundity occurs in places where differences meet... We might therefore conclude that features of change and characteristics of creativity — stimulus, experimentation, discomfort, shock — are vital signs of a healthy culture ... We can have both the canon and the experimental and new (p38-39)

Although it should be noted that Holden's anthropological and environmental dimensions have a capacity for the very conservative localism critiqued above, the idea of cultural ecology may be useful in the conceptual framework sought in this paper. It focuses on the ecotones between one habitat and another, as an analogy between a local area and its environment or another locality. It also reflects the idea of progress over time, the capacity for which is innate in the way the locality (genes) interact with each other and the environment (fitness, adaptation). Moreover, it allows for the notion of niches (sub-cultures, social categories) within a given habitat. However, any talk of ecology would also need to allow for change to be stimulated through interventions, even if, as Holden (p.19) remarks: "mass social outcomes cannot be predicted from the evidence because the consequences of cultural engagement are too remote". In the Hoardings case, would the trajectory that emerged be of a reinvigorated indigenous solidarity: essentially a socialist and even reactionary form of localism ? Or would cosmopolitan factors drive a process of embourgeoisement, leading to social mobility or demographic displacement and thus the dissolution of the indigenous precursor ? Or might hybridity emerge and, if so, would it be played out solely on the frontstage — as theatre for public / visitor consumption — or would it feedback to affect the local backstage ? Moreover,

if an incipient hybrid were to emerge, what would this mean for the social structure within the locality: especially the relationship between indigenous and incomer populations ?

The objective of social change — and of stimulating cultural / artistic innovation for its own sake — ought to underpin the design and evaluation of such initiatives even if identification of the resultant trajectories of change has inevitably to be interim or imprecise.

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