

The potpourri of the popular music festival experience?

Caroline Jackson

This paper will be based upon the findings of an in-depth study of the lived experience of popular music festival-goers in the UK. The research was grounded in the philosophical roots of both experience and descriptive phenomenology. Phenomenological research is about “going back to people’s specific experiences and letting the concepts come from there” (Todres and Holloway 2010, p183). The research used Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method (2009). Giorgi’s method is based on the early twentieth century philosopher Husserl’s scientific approach to developing phenomenology. Giorgi (2009) offers a robust process for analysing situated experiences that gives a clear insight into a phenomenon. The constituents discovered that form the structure of the phenomenon of the popular music festival experience can be drawn as polar opposites. However the nature of the experience is more about the mixed valence of emotions rather than the bipolar explanation of concepts such as reversal theory. This resonates with the critical theories of leisure, especially that of freedom and constraint and the need to accept negative as well as positive emotions in a holistic view of the experience. Stebbins (2006) may have referred to leisure studies as the 'happy science', but this study not only identified the highs experienced by the participants but also their depths of despair.

Giorgi, A., 2009. *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology. A Modified Husserlian Approach*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Stebbins, R.A., 2006. Leisure Reflections No. 14. Leisure Studies: the Happy Science. *LSA Newsletter No. 75*. Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association, 20-22.

Todres, L. and Holloway, I., 2010. Phenomenological Research. *In: Gerrish, K. and Lacey, A., eds. The research process in nursing* 6th edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 177-187.